

## Bernadotte, Folke

(1895-1948), Swedish statesman; count of Wisborg and nephew of King Gustav V. During World War II Bernadotte represented the Swedish red cross in the exchange of prisoners between Germany and the Allies. In 1943 he became its vice president and in 1946 he was appointed its president. Bernadotte negotiated with Heinrich Himmler on behalf of the Swedish Red Cross, and in March and April of 1945 succeeded in persuading him to release more than seven thousand Scandinavian nationals who were being held in Nazi concentration camps; these included over four hundred Danish Jews imprisoned in Theresienstadt.

Following a meeting between Norbert Masur, the representative of the World Jewish Congress in Sweden, and Himmler, Bernadotte also succeeded in arranging for the release of ten thousand women from the Ravensbruck concentration camp; two thousand of the women, who were nationals of various countries, were Jewish. Most of them were transferred to Sweden.

On May 20, 1948, the United Nations Security Council appointed Bernadotte as a mediator on its behalf between Israel and the invading Arab countries. He negotiated a four-week truce, beginning on June 11, 1948, but was unable to obtain from the Arab states an agreement for its extension. Bernadotte then worked out a plan for the settlement of the conflict based on Israeli concessions to the Arabs, but on September 17 of that year he was assassinated in Jerusalem by Hazit ha-Moledet (Fatherland Front), a group connected with the Lohamei Herut Israel organization.

The Jewish National Fund planted a forest in the hills of Jerusalem in honor of Folke Bernadotte. His book, *Instead of Arms*, was published in 1949.