

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 51

“Goodbye, Youth!”

Transcript

[music: fanfare]

When the then eighteen-year old Archduke Franz Josef took his coronation oath in December, 1848, and became the Emperor of Austria, he reputedly remarked to himself just afterward, “Goodbye, youth!”

If fate cheated this young man out of the opportunity to sow a few wild oats before taking on the responsibilities of an Empire, it more than made it up to him by giving him the opportunity to rule over one of the world’s great powers for a staggering reign of just short of 68 years.

But fate did the Empire no favors by entrusting its rule to a conservative old man during an age when the world was changing so very rapidly.

Welcome to the History of the Twentieth Century.

[music: opening theme]

Episode 51. Goodbye, Youth!

In the previous two episodes, I talked a lot about Austria-Hungary. We’re going to move the story of Austria-Hungary into the twentieth century today, but first I want to circle back a little bit and talk a little more about the Emperor, Franz Josef.

Although he gave his youth a reluctant farewell on the day he became Emperor, the truth was that Franz Josef was an earnest and serious young man even before then. On his fifteenth birthday, he wrote in his journal, “Fifteen years old! Only a little more time to get educated. *Ich muss mich sehr anstrengen!* In modern colloquial English, you could read that last line as “I really need to get my act together!”

The Emperor would grow up to be a humble man, humble by emperor standards, anyway, cautious, moody, even a little shy. In fine Hapsburg tradition, he married his first cousin, Elisabeth, in 1854, when she was sixteen. It was not a happy marriage and, as you recall, it produced only one son, Rudolf, who married Stephanie, the daughter of King Leopold II of Belgium, and who died in an apparent suicide pact with his mistress in 1889.

The Imperial marriage was never strong, and Rudolf's death appears to have ended whatever was left of it. The Kaiserin wore black the rest of her life, and was seldom again seen at Court. She was assassinated in 1898, in Geneva, where she was traveling incognito, but a Geneva newspaper had reported that she was in town. An Italian anarchist encountered her on the street, accompanied only by one lady in waiting and stabbed her with a homemade weapon.

The Emperor, meanwhile, as his marriage to Elisabeth deteriorated, had begun a relationship with Katharina Schratt, an Austrian actress who was 23 years his junior and separated from her own husband, a Hungarian aristocrat. The relationship was apparently platonic. Franz Josef would not be unfaithful to his wife during their marriage; after her death, he is reported to have told Katharina that their relationship would not endure unless it remained chaste, and that their relationship was too important to him to jeopardize. He did lavish expensive gifts on her and she lived like an Empress.

Franz Josef was a cautious man, rigidly traditional. He had few confidantes, besides Katharina. He lived frugally, for an Emperor, although he spent a lot of money on his wife and then on Katharina.

Like his fellow Kaiser, Wilhelm II of Germany, Franz Josef liked to wear military uniforms, and that was his normal garb. He was a stickler for protocol and insisted that everyone at court wear proper court attire, the sort of thing no one would be caught dead wearing on the streets of Vienna.

Last time, I talked a lot about music. It will not surprise you to learn that Franz Josef's favorite composer was Johann Strauss the younger, composer of *Tales of the Vienna Woods* and *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*. He had no use for the likes of Mahler. His taste in art was similarly conservative. He liked heroic Romantic paintings.

But Romanticism was on its way out. In 1897, a group of avant-garde painters, sculptors, and architects quit the stuffy Association of Austrian Artists, and founded the rival Union of Austrian Artists, which has come to be called the Vienna Secession. They built their own exhibition hall, designed by one of their own architects, in modern style, the building itself meant to be a sort of statement of principles. Above the door is written *Der Zeit ihre Kunst. Der Kunst ihre Freiheit*. "The age its art. The art its freedom." The building is crowned with a dome decorated in golden laurel leaves, inspiring the cynical in Vienna to dub it *Goldenes Krauthäupl*, "The Golden Cabbage."

It was a ferment of new styles of art, as we have seen in Paris. Now, Vienna was an arts capital every bit as much as Paris was. But in secular, republican France, new artists with new ideas found a warmer reception. Austria was aristocratic and deeply conservative. So was the Austrian Catholic Church, which had a great deal of clout and was ready to use it against artists who depicted nudity or eroticism in their work.

The Vienna Secession was organized to promote and defend modern aesthetics against this Viennese traditionalism that was trying to smother them. These were also the artists the young Alma Schindler hung out with, as I described last time. Their new building guaranteed modern artists a place to show off their work, as well as put on exhibitions of French art. The Vienna Secession published its own magazine, *Ver Sacrum*, Latin for “sacred spring,” to defend their aesthetic, in much the same way as Sergei Diaghilev and the *miriskusstniki* were doing the same work in St. Petersburg at this very same time.

In the realm of music, after the deaths of Dvořák in 1904 and Mahler in 1911, modernism was also on the move, and in Vienna its face was Arnold Schönberg. Arnold Schönberg was born to a Jewish family in Vienna in 1874. In 1898, he converted to Lutheranism. As both a composer and a teacher of composition, he would exert a remarkable influence on twentieth century music. During these early days, he became best known in Vienna for a concert he organized and conducted on March 31, 1913, featuring one of his own works as well as works by Alexander von Zemilinsky and two of Schönberg’s students, Anton Webern and Alban Berg. The concert ended early when a riot broke out, a riot that included one of the concert organizers punching one member of the audience. The composer Oscar Straus—no relation to any of the other Strausses we’ve talked about—testified later that that punch was the most harmonious sound of the evening. Another audience member climbed up onto the stage with the intention of boxing Schönberg’s ears, hence the name by which history remembers this event, Watscherkonzert, or “the ear-boxing concert.”

It would be just a few weeks later in Paris, you will recall, that the premiere of the Ballets Russes’ *Rite of Spring* would provoke a similar reaction.

[music: *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*]

Austria had already lost much territory and influence to Germany and Italy. And it all happened during the reign of Franz Josef. The string of embarrassments and defeats had left their mark on the man, making him pessimistic and untrusting. But it also drove him to expansion in the Balkans. Think about it. The loss of Italian territories might be avenged by annexing Slav territories. A port on the Mediterranean, like Salonika, could enhance trade and make Austria a Mediterranean naval power. Austria had missed out on the rush for colonial territories. So why shouldn’t the Balkans become Austria’s colonies? And who knows? With a naval base in Salonika, perhaps Austrian colonies in Asia and Africa aren’t out of the question after all.

It looked possible, because everyone knew that the Ottoman Empire was on the brink of collapse. It was a humiliating decline for a power that had once terrorized Europe. The Ottoman Turks had ended the Byzantine Empire, turned Constantinople from the Rome of Eastern Orthodoxy into a Muslim capital, and advanced into southeastern Europe, conquering as far as Hungary and reaching their high water mark in a siege of Vienna itself.

But fortune eventually failed her. In 1699, the Austrians retook Hungary, which became a Hapsburg possession, and Ottoman power began to recede. By the late nineteenth century, it had become a question of when, not if, Turkey would be driven out of Europe altogether.

Of course, there were problems with Austrian expansion into the Balkans. There was Russia, for one, another empire equally interested in expanding into the Balkans. Historically, relations between Russia and Austria have been quite good. They have been allies against Napoleon, and, you will recall that the Russian Emperor had sent troops to help Austria hold on to Hungary.

Russia had interests in the Balkans, too. The people there were Slavs, and alongside rising Slav nationalism there also arose pan-Slavism, the idea that Slavs were brothers, with common interests, who should stand up for one another. There was Constantinople. The Russian Empire saw itself as the successor to the Byzantine Empire. To recapture Constantinople and restore Orthodox rule over it was a powerful dream. And there was the pragmatic issue that 40% of Russia's foreign trade passes through the Bosphorus, which is controlled by the Turks. Wouldn't it be better if *we* controlled that?

In the nineteenth century, Russia and Austria were perfectly aware of each other's interests in the Balkans, and they moved carefully, not wanting to damage their good relations. You can see room for a compromise here, where Russia would get the straits and control—or at least influence—in the eastern Balkans, while Austria gets the Adriatic and control—or at least influence—in the western Balkans. And maybe Salonika, too. We'll see.

In 1875, Orthodox Christians in Bulgaria and in Herzegovina revolted against Ottoman rule. Ottoman forces committed atrocities that shocked the Europeans. Serbia stepped in, and then Russia, and it became the latest Russo-Turkish War. Russia almost took Constantinople, but held off when the British threatened to intervene, and so the Russians settled for reorganizing most of the Balkans into a Bulgarian super-state. The great powers didn't like that idea either, and at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the map of the Balkans was redrawn once again. Serbia, Montenegro and Romania would become officially independent, as opposed to their previous status of nominally part of the Ottoman Empire but in fact independent in all but name. And once again, do you notice how often that word “nominally” keeps coming up whenever I talk about the Ottoman Empire?

And also, a much smaller Bulgaria was recognized, but it didn't get full independence, just that “nominally part of the Ottoman Empire but in fact independent in all but name” status that Romania, Montenegro and Serbia had just graduated out of. You follow me?

Good. Because now we have to talk about Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Great Powers at the Conference of Berlin also needed to do something to protect the rights of Christians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who had also revolted against the Ottoman Empire. And by the way, I'm going to call Bosnia and Herzegovina collectively just plain “Bosnia” from now on to simplify at least one aspect of this story. Anyway, the obvious solution here would be to do the same as was done

with Bulgaria: give Bosnia self-government with nominal Ottoman sovereignty. The problem with this idea was that a lot of Serb nationalists in both Serbia and in Bosnia who wanted to see Serbia annex Bosnia. But the Croats and Bosniaks of Bosnia didn't like that idea very much, and neither did the Great Powers, so the administration of Bosnia was placed in the hands of Austria-Hungary.

The religious situation in Bosnia was volatile. You had Catholic Croats, Muslim Bosniaks, and Orthodox Serbs. Vienna cut deals with the Ottoman Sultan, as the titular Caliph of Islam, with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and with the Vatican in Rome to put all Bosnian clergy of all three faiths under the control of the Dual Monarchy. This had the effect, of course, of alienating the common people of all three communions from Austrian rule.

Austria also won the right to garrison the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. That's a small strip of territory that borders, roughly, on Bosnia to the north, Ottoman lands to the south, Serbia to the east, and Montenegro to the west. It was important to Austria to hold this territory, lest Serbia seize it and realize its ambition to annex Montenegro and thereby get an ocean port, because, you see, both the Austrian and Ottoman Empires much preferred a landlocked Serbia that would have to deal with one of the other of them.

Germany, Russia, and Austria were at that time all allied in the Three Emperors' League, and they agreed among themselves that ultimately Austria was going to annex Bosnia outright. But later, when Russia left the League, and Alexander III succeeded Alexander II as the Russian Emperor, the Russian government began to backpedal on that agreement.

[music: *Strauss Medley*]

The newer, smaller Bulgaria at first had close ties to Russia. Bulgarians, as we have seen, are Slavs and are Orthodox, so there's some affinity there. But the newer, smaller Bulgaria couldn't let go of the dream of going back to being the older, larger Bulgaria. After it picked a few fights with the Turks and the Serbs, its relations with Russia became chilly. In the Russian view, Russia had sacrificed much to rescue the Bulgarians from Ottoman oppression, and the Bulgarians were acting like spoiled children who didn't know how good they had it. Naturally, Austria and Germany moved to exploit this rift.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the Balkans, Romania had a king who was a distant relative of Kaiser Wilhelm's and at first had good relations with Germany and Austria. Romania and Austria signed a secret alliance in 1883, making Romania practically the fourth member of the Triple Alliance except it was a secret, so no one knew about it.

But relations between Romania and Austria-Hungary were complicated by the Romanian minority in Transylvania, and the Hungarian government's aggressive effort to force the Hungarian language on them and generally force them to assimilate, as I talked about last time. This naturally alienated Romania, which figured it would make a lot of sense to, you know, just

give Transylvania to them. And the Romanian people are traditionally Orthodox, which gives them more of an affinity with Russia than with Catholic Austria and Hungary.

It's an interesting historical footnote that Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, and who, spoiler alert, will never get there because he's going to be assassinated in 1914, was toying with the idea of giving Transylvania to Romania when he became Emperor. He liked this idea because it would improve relations with Romania while at the same time knocking the Hungarians down a peg or two. What chance he might have had to pull this off without inciting a civil war, well, I guess we'll never know, will we?

But the real fly in the ointment was Serbia. It may surprise you to learn that in the nineteenth century, as Serbia gradually emerged from the Ottoman Empire, relations between her and Austria were at first cordial. Serbia and Austria had a common enemy then, the Ottoman Empire, and landlocked Serbia's only other option for foreign trade was with Austria. The Serbian economy became dependent on trade with Austria. Over 75% of her exports—mostly pigs and cattle—went to the Dual Monarchy.

In 1885, the then 31-year old King of Serbia, Milan, actually went so far as to suggest to the Austrians that he would be willing to hand his country over to the Hapsburgs in exchange for a sufficiently lavish pension from the Austrian government.

Unfortunately for the Austrians, they figured the Russians would never stand for such a thing, so they passed up the offer. The Austrian Foreign Minister instead lectured the King on his duty to his country. Now, you probably think that being a king sounds pretty good, even if you've only got a small country like Serbia to rule over. But Milan seems to have really hated being King, because, after being turned down by the Austrians, he could only manage to hold out for four more years, until 1889, when he gave Serbia a constitution, and then abdicated in favor of his then 12-year old son, Alexander.

Milan wasn't getting on with his wife Natalija, either, who was as pro-Russian as he was pro-Austrian. The former king left both his Queen and his country behind, and even gave up his Serbian citizenship, while his wife, Queen Natalija served as regent until King Alexander turned 16, at which time he unilaterally proclaimed himself of age and ended his regency, which was a popular move among the Serbian public, who were not at all comfortable with all this cozying up to the Russians that the regency was into.

Apparently, whatever family issues there were here got resolved, at least temporarily, and Milan returned to Serbia in 1894 and his son the king appointed him commander-in-chief of the Serbian Army. But then family issues re-emerged in 1900 when then now 23-year old King announced his engagement to the 35-year old Draga Mašin. She was of an aristocratic Serbian family, all well and good, but she was much older than the King, probably incapable of producing an heir, was previously married and widowed, and had a reputation as a schemer.

Neither of Alexander's parents approved of this marriage; it seems to have been one of the few points they ever agreed on. Milan had been in the middle of marriage negotiations with a German aristocratic family at this time, and he was blindsided by his son's announcement. He resigned as commander-in-chief of the Serbian Army, the Serbian Prime Minister resigned in protest, and the Queen Mother raised such a fuss that Alexander had her banished from the country.

The Serbian public didn't approve of the marriage, either. It was very unpopular in the kingdom, and rumors flew that the young king was just a foolish child who was allowing himself to be manipulated by the Queen, who was scheming to have her brother placed next in line for the throne, which, you know, meant he would probably get it, since she was unlikely to bear the King a child.

And so things stood in January 1901, when the twentieth century dawned. The comic opera hijinks in Serbia were beginning to cause some concern in Vienna, although most Austrian government officials assumed any crisis with Serbia could be contained, and there was no doubt which of them was the stronger country, right? The Austrian Foreign Minister told the German ambassador that "should anything serious happen in the Balkans, and the Serbs follow a policy we do not like, we shall simply strangle Serbia."

Early in the morning of June 11, 1903, a group of conspirators from the Serbian Army cut off the electricity to the palace and entered it, intending to kill the King and Queen. They forced their way into the royal bedroom, but could not find them. They searched the palace for hours, finally discovering the royal couple hiding in the Queen's clothes closet. They were murdered, the bodies stripped naked, and flung out the window. Peter Karadjordjevic, a fifty-eight year old member of a rival faction of the royal family, was named King.

Now this was an era of many assassinations of heads of state, as we have seen. Recall that the Austrian Empress was assassinated in 1898, just five years ago, the King of Italy was assassinated in 1900, just three years ago, and the President of the United States, William McKinley, was assassinated in 1901, just two years ago.

But even in the aftermath of this string of killings, the murders of the King and Queen of Serbia shocked the world of 1903. They were particularly sudden and brutal and, unlike the other crimes I just mentioned, the perpetrators were never brought to justice. They were a cabal of junior officers in the Serbian Army who stayed right where they were and, indeed, advanced in rank over the decade to come. The new King Peter owed his crown to them, and was inclined to let them have their way.

King Peter was much more liberal than his predecessor, which helped everyone to overlook how he had gotten to the throne. Serbia got a new and more liberal constitution, with freedom of speech and press and governments selected by a representative parliament. After the first parliamentary election in 1903, Nikola Pašić of the Radical Party would become Prime Minister.

Pašić and the Radicals would control the government of Serbia for the next 15 years. Pašić and his party, too, owed their positions to the military clique that had killed the previous king. So their platform was liberal at home, but embraced a pro-military foreign policy of staunch Serbian nationalism, with the goal of bringing all Serbs together into the Serbian nation.

Ah, but who is a Serb, anyway? Are the Montenegrins Serbs? Well, a lot of Serbs thought so. There are definitely Serbs in Bosnia, but there are also Muslim Bosniaks. But are Muslim Bosniaks a different ethnic group, or are they merely Muslim Serbs? Are Croats a different ethnic group, or are they just Catholic Serbs? Wouldn't it make more sense to gather all these Serbs into one ethnic state that would grant Catholic and Muslim Serbs the freedom to practice their minority faiths...until such time as they can be brought to understand that real Serbs practice the true faith of Orthodoxy...?

Yeah, you can see how this can get nasty real fast. To what extent are the different cultures of the Balkans different cultures, as opposed to being merely Slavic—or Serb—subcultures? It may seem strange to see the people of one ethnic group point to a neighboring ethnic group and say, “Hey, you guys aren't *really* a different ethnic group. You're actually the same ethnic group we are, you're just lying about it.” But this is something of a Balkan tradition, so get used to it.

Now, if you're like me, you've probably looked at maps of the Balkans in the early twentieth century, and puzzled over the question of why it is that the huge, sprawling Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy is so obsessed with this pipsqueak nation of Serbia nestled up against it. Surely little tiny Serbia is no threat to the mighty Empire next door, right?

Well, you try telling that to Franz Josef. And he'll tell you that in the fifty plus years he's been Kaiser, he's been around long enough to see the pipsqueak nation of Prussia kick the Austrian army out of Germany and create a united Germany dominated by Prussia. And the pipsqueak nation of Piedmont-Sardinia kick the Austrian army out of Italy and create a united Italy dominated by Piedmont-Sardinia. You getting the picture? It's not hard at all for the Austrian Kaiser and his government to imagine the pipsqueak nation of Serbia kicking the Austrian army out of the Balkans and creating a south Slav state—a Yugoslav state, if you will—dominated by Serbia.

You see, in Franz Josef's experience, great powers like Britain or Russia aren't the problem. It's these little pipsqueak nations that get you every time.

And if this still sounds far-fetched to you, here are some more facts to consider. Serb nationalists in Serbia are starting to make an explicit analogy, calling Serbia “the Prussia of the Slavs.” In 1905, Serb and Croat political leaders inside the Dual Monarchy issued a statement calling on their fellow Serbs and Croats to oppose “the anti-Slav Hapsburg dualists.”

[music: *Strauss Medley*]

In 1906, Serbia and Bulgaria announced a customs union. This move was a clear sign that Serbia was pursuing a policy of building trade relationships with fellow Slavs while reducing its economic dependence on Austria, not to mention that Vienna believed the new arrangement with Bulgaria violated existing trade agreements with Austria-Hungary, since the new arrangement meant a higher tariff on Austrian imports into Serbia. If that message wasn't clear enough, soon after the Serbian government placed a huge arms order with a French armaments firm, rather than the Austrian Skoda works, which is where Serbia had previously been buying its military equipment.

Also in 1906, two important appointments were made in the Austrian government. Alois von Aehrenthal, previously Vienna's ambassador to Russia, would become foreign minister, and Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf became the Chief of the General Staff. Conrad was regarded as a brilliant military theoretician, although he had no combat experience himself. Bear in mind that it's been some forty years now since Austria was last at war, and hardly anyone in the Austrian military has ever seen live combat. It seems as if Conrad never saw a war he didn't like, in theory, as befits a theoretician. As Chief of Staff, he would repeatedly recommend war with Italy or Serbia whenever he saw an opportunity.

Aehrenthal's experience with Russian diplomats convinced him that the key to Austrian security lay in maintaining good relations with Russia. In 1904, when Russia went to war with Japan, for example, Austria pledged neutrality, a gesture helpful to Russia, as it allowed her to redeploy troops on the Austrian frontier to the Far East. Conrad, characteristically, suggested that the Austrian troops on the Russian frontier who now had nothing better to do might be redeployed and used to take Venice back from Italy.

But I digress. Let's get back to Serbia. The Serbian government seemed pretty keen on severing economic ties with Austria. Vienna decided that Serbia needed to be taught a lesson and imposed an economic embargo on her. No more imports of pigs and cattle, live or slaughtered.

This so-called "Pig War" lasted for two years, and failed miserably. Vienna had expected that it was dealing a crushing blow to the Serbian economy, but with help from France and Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Serbia managed to keep up its export trade, and suffered very little.

So by the beginning of 1908, Serbia now has a four-year track record of repeatedly thumbing its nose at its much more powerful neighbor to the north and getting away with it, in spite of Vienna's old vow to strangle Serbia if it got out of hand. Something needs to be done. Yes, Conrad, we know *you* want to do; you want to invade Serbia, but the rest of us are hoping for something a little less drastic.

In January 1908, the Austrian government announced a deal with the Ottoman Empire to build a rail line from Bosnia, through Novi Pazar, and on into Ottoman Macedonia. This was a calculated slap at Serbia in a few ways. For one, it heralded more trade between Austria and Turkey, bypassing Serbia figuratively as well as literally. Second, it hinted that Austria wasn't

planning on leaving Bosnia anytime soon, and remember that Serbia sees Bosnia as belonging to the Yugoslav state that Serbia dreams of building. Third, and in particular, it signals Austrian opposition to Serbia ever annexing Novi Pazar, which is another Serbian ambition.

As I said, Serbia wants Novi Pazar, because that would extend her border all the way to Montenegro, which would then make Montenegro ripe for Serbian annexation, which would in turn give Serbia a seacoast on the Adriatic, which would benefit her trade, making her less dependent on the goodwill of the Ottoman Empire or Austria. Austria, on the other hand, very much does *not* want to see Serbia reach the Adriatic coast.

Now, this rail line was all well and good, but what Austria really wants is to annex Bosnia outright. This has been an open secret for thirty years, but world opinion in general and Russian opinion in particular, were holding Austria back. Under the new and more aggressive leadership of Aerenthal and Conrad, Austria was feeling ready.

Of course, Russia had to be consulted. Aerenthal reached out to the new Russian foreign minister, Alexander Izvolsky. Izvolsky had already floated the idea that Russia would drop any objection to the annexation of Bosnia in exchange for Austrian support for Russia's goal: freedom of Russian warships of the Black Sea Fleet to pass through the Bosphorus at will and not have to seek permission from Turkey. This has been a goal of the Russians, and a fear of the British, for a long time, too.

The Austrian Kaiser Franz Josef, and the foreign minister, Aerenthal dithered for a while over this offer. But history wasn't willing to wait for them forever. In July, 1908, the Young Turks revolted.

Now, I need to back up and spend some time explaining this, as I have been remiss in not talking more about internal Ottoman politics. But back in the bad old days of 1876, when those revolts in Bulgaria and Herzegovina broke out, the Ottoman Sultan, then, as now, was Abdul Hamid II. He was forced to concede to the Young Turks, a group of liberals agitating for reform, a constitutional government with an elected parliament, in place of absolute rule. By now, you've heard this story so often in places like Austria and Hungary and Italy to guess what happened next. Once the wars and revolts were settled in 1878, the Sultan reneged on the deal and returned the Empire to absolute rule.

The Young Turk movement went underground, but it didn't go away. And now, in July 1908, a group of Young Turk military officers in Macedonia revolted against the Sultan, demanding the reinstatement of the 1876 constitution. You may have noticed that the 19th century saw a number of these liberal nationalist movements that called themselves Young Something-or-other. There was Young Italy and Young Germany, and Young Poland, Young Belgium, Young Scandinavia, Young Turks, and so on. The Young Turks are the most famous, and to this day the phrase "Young Turk" is used figuratively to describe a person who is radical or rebellious or some

combination of those things. Which should give you an idea of how often the Young Turks were being talked about during this time.

Anyway, the Young Turk rebellion, and the restoration of the Ottoman constitution, was greeted in the Ottoman Empire with a burst of optimism. Promises were made that this would be a new era in the Empire, an era of freedom, equality, and brotherhood. No longer would Slavs or Greeks or Armenians or Arabs or Jews be second-class citizens. Elections were called for a restored Ottoman Chamber of Deputies for November of 1908, and from now on everyone was going to have an equal say in the government of the Empire.

[music: *Strauss Medley*]

Well, you know what George Carlin said. Behind every silver lining, there's a big, dark cloud. For Austria and Russia, the big dark cloud was all this talk of brotherhood and equality might make the people of Bulgaria and Bosnia more content to remain in the Ottoman Empire. Austria wanted to annex Bosnia and Russia wanted to see Bulgarian independence. But if there were to be elections...if there were to be Bosnian and Bulgarian deputies in the Ottoman legislature, well, that makes the rationale for a Bosnian annexation or a Bulgarian declaration of independence less persuasive, doesn't it?

Aerenthal and Izvolsky met in September to discuss the situation. And it's hard to report exactly what happened at this meeting, as no minutes were kept, and the two parties would later disagree, publicly and sharply, about what was discussed.

Aerenthal believed, or claimed to believe, that the Russian foreign minister had consented to an annexation of Bosnia, in exchange for Austrian support for Bulgarian independence and Russian rights to use the Bosphorus. It may have been that Izvolsky hadn't had time to get the Russian Emperor's approval for this deal; perhaps he didn't realize what a big hurry Aerenthal was in, because of the upcoming elections.

On October 6, 1908, Austria-Hungary announced the annexation of Bosnia. Bulgaria blindsided everybody by declaring its own independence a day earlier, jumping the gun a little bit. But the annexation of Bosnia, the prize that had hung just out of Austria's reach for thirty years, was finally a reality. And the Austrian Kaiser, Franz Josef, had gained the first new territory for his Empire in the almost sixty years of his reign. For sixty years, he had ruled an Empire in decline, an Empire that was losing both prestige and territory. And now, at last, he had turned that around.

But the rest of Europe was in an uproar. Italy, Austria's nominal ally, which also had an interest in the Balkans, as it claimed the Dalmatian coast and the right to be consulted in any tinkering with the boundaries in the region, condemned the annexation and called it a breach of the Triple Alliance. There were anti-Austrian demonstrations in major Italian cities. The German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, who was also blindsided by the news, was equally unhappy, although he kept his

rebuke of Austria private, and the German government publicly took no position. But the British government protested publicly. And there were anti-Austrian demonstrations in the Ottoman Empire as well, including in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, and there was a rush to withdraw Turkish money from Austrian banks.

Serbia actually called up its reservists, as if preparing for war. But the biggest uproar was in Russia, where the press and public harshly condemned Austria. The Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, traveled to St. Petersburg to stir up Pan-Slavic outrage.

Izvolsky told everyone that Aehrenthal had lied to him. As I said, it may have been more likely that Izvolsky was open to the deal, but thought he would have more time to sell it in St. Petersburg, and then when the Bulgarians jumped the gun, he felt he had no choice but to disavow the whole deal. And then there was the Bosphorus agreement. Russia never did get passage rights through the Bosphorus, so from the Russian point of view, it's easy to say that Russia got cheated out of what she was supposed to get for agreeing to this annexation.

Austria found itself isolated. Vienna tried to smooth some ruffled feathers by offering the Ottoman Empire monetary compensation for the province, and by pledging to Russia that Austria would not take advantage of the crisis to seize any territory from Serbia or Montenegro, even if one or both of those states should go to war with Austria.

The crisis continued into 1909, and ended only after the German government confronted the Russians, demanding that the Russian government declare publicly, once and for all, whether or not it accepted the annexation. This bit of diplomacy was probably way too hamfisted. Russia might well have accepted anyway, after a face-saving way out of the crisis was found, but instead, Russia was forced simply to lose face. Still weakened from that recent war with Japan, Russia was in no position to escalate tensions with Germany, so she backed down. Serbia and Montenegro reluctantly gave in, as well.

Although the Russian government had been forced to give in this time, a determination arose in St. Petersburg that they were not about to let Austria or Aehrenthal get away with any more stunts like this.

This will have consequences.

It's hard to understand why so many officials in Vienna thought that annexing a region as awash in ethnic and religious tensions as Bosnia would be beneficial to the Dual Monarchy, a state which already has about as much ethnic tension as it can handle. The incorporation of Bosnia into Austria-Hungary meant that Austria-Hungary now had a Slavic majority. It may have had one even before the annexation; it certainly has one now. German and Hungarian speakers are minorities in the country they rule. How is this a good idea?

The heir to the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, agreed with this view, and said so out loud. He also believed that the hope of the Empire lay in granting to the south Slavs the same degree of autonomy that had already been given to Hungary. A Triple Monarchy, if you will. Whether he ever could have gotten the Austrians or the Hungarians to agree to that, well, we'll never know because he never got the chance to try.

We'll have to stop there for today, but I hope you'll join me next week on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we take a look at the emerging technologies of sound recording and amplification and most dramatic of all, radio, a means of sending signals over long distances without bothering about wires. The birth of electronics, next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. In October 1907, a Russian socialist political refugee named Leon Trotsky moved to Vienna. In 1908, he joined the staff of a Russian-language newspaper published in Vienna and smuggled into Russia. It was called *Pravda*, the Russian word for "truth." *Pravda* was popular in Russia, although in those early days it was published on an irregular and unpredictable schedule. In 1912, following the expulsion of the Mensheviks, *Pravda's* operations would move to St. Petersburg, and it would become the official newspaper of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.

[music: *Strauss Medley*]