

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 70

“The *Schlemiel* of Europe”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

1912 and 1913 were frustrating years for Austrian ambitions in the Balkans. Not one, but *two* Balkan wars redrew the map of the peninsula, with minimal input from Austria. And it left Serbia, Russia’s best ally and Austria’s worst nightmare, more powerful than ever. And on top of all that, multiple scandals at the highest levels in Vienna made everyone wonder, Who is in charge around here? Is *anyone* in charge around here?

It’s small wonder that in 1913, a Viennese newspaper editorial, drawing upon a Yiddish word that means something like “pathetic loser,” declared that Austria, the nation that was once the continent’s most formidable land power, was now “the *schlemiel* of Europe.”

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 70. The *Schlemiel* of Europe.

Last week, we followed the story of the 1912 war in the Balkans. As you may recall, the European part of the Ottoman Empire was attacked at once by the four states of the Balkan League—Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. The Ottomans were losing ground on all fronts, and the Bulgarians have even gotten tantalizingly close to Constantinople, but not quite close enough for Tsar Ferdinand to be able to pull his Byzantine Emperor get-up out of the closet just yet. And if the Turks don’t have enough headaches already, well, the Albanians are rising up and demanding independence, too.

The great powers have been caught flatfooted. The Russians aren’t happy at the thought of Bulgaria controlling the all-important straits between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The Austrians actually mobilized their army over the prospect of Serbia getting an Adriatic seacoast and becoming yet another naval rival to Austria.

An armistice was agreed to in December, and the Balkan states and the Great Powers have accepted an invitation from the British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, to a conference in London to work all this out. Because this is how things are done in the Concert of Europe.

As the conference was getting started, a scandal erupted in Vienna, when newspapers made public the Austrian military's secret plan U. The Austrians had a plan B, for war in the Balkans, and a plan R for war with Russia and a plan I for a war with Italy, but now it became public that the military had also drafted a plan U—U as in Ungarn, the German name for Hungary. That's right, the Austro-Hungarian military had a plan to invade and occupy Hungary, for the purpose of overthrowing the Hungarian government and restoring direct rule by the Emperor.

You may recall from our earlier episodes on Austria-Hungary that this had been done once before, in 1849. We've seen how difficult Hungary has been since she was granted her autonomy in 1867. Hungary has been repressive toward its own internal minorities even as Vienna has been trying to pursue a multiethnic approach. Hungary has denied suffrage rights to its own minorities even as Vienna has been pushing for universal suffrage. And in particular, the Austrian military has been stunted by repeated Hungarian opposition to increasing the size of the military as the country grows and as the situation in the Balkans and in Central Europe becomes tenser.

If you've been wondering what the Hungarians have against the military, well, here's your answer. Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the Emperor's heir presumptive, is known to have been plotting ways of cutting Hungary down to size after he inherits the Empire. The Archduke had ambitions when he became Emperor of granting the South Slavs of the Empire rights equal to the Austrian Germans and the Hungarians, turning the Dual Monarchy into a Triple Monarchy.

The Archduke also had a plan for dealing with Rumania. Rumanians are a non-Slavic people living on the doorstep of the Russian Empire. They have territorial claims against Russia and Bulgaria, their two Slavic neighbors. So right there are a couple of good reasons for Rumania to be leery of a rising Russian influence in the Balkans. Sounds like Rumania is a natural ally for Austria-Hungary, doesn't it? Except, the thing is, Rumania has a bigger territorial dispute with Hungary, over Transylvania, the region of Hungary that contains some three million ethnic Rumanians who would likely rather be part of Rumania than having their kids being taught Hungarian in Hungarian schools. The Archduke's big idea that he is nurturing secretly is to hand over Transylvania to Rumania, which would likely seal the friendship between Austria and Rumania on the one hand, while weakening Hungary on the other. So, a win-win, as far as the Archduke is concerned.

But anyway, when Plan U was exposed, this news created a scandal. The chief of staff had to resign, which cleared the way for the return of Conrad, the Austrian military chief who so far is best known in this podcast for basically lobbying for Austria to go to war with either Serbia or Italy for something like four years now. Conrad had had to resign, briefly, when the Austrian foreign minister von Aerenthal had gotten sick of his constant lobbying for war, which Aerenthal felt was undermining his diplomacy. But now Aerenthal was dead and Conrad was back in his old job. The war minister, Moritz von Auffenberg, a favorite of the heir, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, also had to resign.

It looks a lot like the existence of Plan U was leaked to the press by none other than the Emperor himself, Franz Josef, as a bit of palace intrigue to keep his heir, the Archduke, in his place and his friends out of the government and basically to remind the heir that he wasn't Emperor just yet.

The publication of Plan U was only one of several scandals that rocked the Austrian court in the fateful years of 1912 and 1913. Another revolved around the launch of the Austrian Navy's first dreadnought battleship, the *Viribus Unitis*. *Viribus Unitis* means "Forces United," and was the personal motto of the Emperor. I guess it's supposed to represent the unity of Austria and Hungary, which is ironic, under the circumstances. This ship would be commissioned into the Austrian Navy in December 1912, as Austria's entry into the developing dreadnought race with her supposed ally across the Adriatic, Italy, which is building its own dreadnoughts. *Viribus Unitis* was designed to steam at 20 knots, but after she was fully armed and armored, she was only managing ten knots. Oops. Naval officers and directors at the shipyard in Trieste where she was laid down were sacked.

Then there was the case of Lieutenant Čedomil Jandrić, an ethnic Serb from Bosnia, serving in the Austrian army. Jandrić was discovered to be selling Austrian military secrets to the Russians. He was also friends with Kurt Conrad, the son of our friend the once and now again Austrian Chief of Staff, General Conrad von Hötzendorf, and the investigation of the Jandrić case revealed that the younger Conrad's Italian girlfriend was also involved in espionage, giving rise to speculation that Kurt Conrad himself was, unwittingly, or maybe even wittingly, the conduit by which his closest friends were acquiring state secrets out of his dad's office. Both the German and the Austrian governments knew that Vienna leaked like a sieve. It had gotten so bad that the German General Staff were reluctant to discuss military secrets with their counterparts in Austria, because what was said in secret in Vienna today had a tendency to become common knowledge in St. Petersburg by lunchtime tomorrow.

The elder Conrad, the Austrian military chief of staff, speaking of scandals, was carrying on a love affair with a married woman, more or less openly, which in conservative, Catholic Austria is supposed to be a big no-no, but somehow it's always a yes-yes when a member of the aristocracy is doing it.

And then it came out that Moritz von Auffenberg, the former war minister who had resigned following the Plan U revelation, had been taking advantage of his position to do a little insider trading in the shares of military contractors. You know, the companies the war minister awards contracts to? Yeah. But the biggest scandal yet in Austrian government isn't going to come out until May 1913, so before I get to that latest scandal in Vienna, give me a few minutes to discuss the latest coup in Constantinople.

Yes, there was another coup in Constantinople in January 1913. As you may recall, more liberal elements of the Young Turks broke away from the ruling CUP—that's Committee of Union and

Progress—and formed the rival Freedom and Accord Party, and a good chunk of the Chamber of Deputies, about 70, switched to the new party. The CUP responded by calling an election in 1912 that was marred by fraud and violence and reduced the Freedom and Accord Party to a mere six seats. But a group of military officers calling themselves the Savior Officers, dissatisfied with conditions in the military, aligned with the opponents of the CUP and forced the formation of a new cabinet with no CUP members.

But the CUP still controlled the Chamber of Deputies. This anti-CUP government called new elections in the hope they would be fairer and break the CUP stranglehold on the Chamber, but then the Balkan War broke out. And so in Constantinople, the elections were cancelled and martial law declared.

But the Ottomans' poor performance in the war, and especially the sight of Edirne, or Adrianople, under siege and Bulgarians advancing on Constantinople itself, discredited the new government. In January 1913, after the armistice, and amid rumors that the government was about to cede Edirne, the city that was the Ottoman capital before the capture of Constantinople, an angry mob gathered before the Sublime Porte in Constantinople. The Sublime Porte was a collection of buildings in the capital that held the highest government offices. I haven't been using the term this way myself, but if you look in the sources from the period, they often refer to the Ottoman government as the Sublime Porte, as in "the Sublime Porte needs to acknowledge that..." or "he was sent as ambassador to the Sublime Porte," in the way that we sometimes say "Washington" when we mean the government of the United States.

Anyway, I mention all this to make the point that the Sublime Porte had great symbolic significance, and for a protesting mob to collect there would be like an angry mob appearing in front of the White House in Washington or filling up Whitehall in London. But this was not a spontaneous demonstration. It had been orchestrated by a military commander, Ismail Enver Bey, who was also a key leader of the CUP, and there were some 60 CUP agitators in the crowd. Enver Bey arrived on a white horse and promptly led a charge into the complex.

The crowd burst into the building where a Cabinet meeting was in progress. Shots were exchanged with military men. Hearing the shots, the war minister confronted the invaders, angry words were exchanged, and one of the CUP men shot and killed the war minister. The mob then seized the Grand Vizier, who is equivalent to a prime minister, and forced him to resign by putting a gun to his head. And no, that is not a metaphor.

Enver Pasha installed a new cabinet of CUP supporters. He and two other CUP leaders, Mehmed Talaat Pasha, and Ahmed Djemal Pasha, would become known as the three pashas and would be the real rulers of the Ottoman Empire for the rest of its existence, which, if you have read ahead in the history of the twentieth century, you know is ten more years of war, genocide, and ultimate collapse.

In the short run, the new government is going to respond to Turkey's recent military failures by centralizing and reforming the army, which was probably long overdue, inviting Germany to train the new army, and generally becoming more right-wing, nationalist, and aligned with Germany.

But for our purposes today, the most important consequence of the coup will be that the Ottomans will restart the fighting against Bulgaria, and launch an offensive intended to relieve the still-besieged garrison at Adrianople. This offensive would accomplish nothing more than deaths of thousands more Ottoman soldiers, and Adrianople would finally fall to the Bulgarians in March.

You may recall that this Balkan War began with Montenegro declaring war on the Ottoman Empire and immediately sending its small army to grab the town of Scutari, or Shkodër, if you like. That was October 1912. The siege of Scutari has been continuing ever since, as the Ottoman and Albanian defenders of the town have proved surprisingly difficult to defeat. The Serbian army has even sent reinforcements to assist their ally, but Scutari has stubbornly refused to surrender, and the siege has been costly.

1912 had seen the beginning of another Albanian revolt against the Ottomans, and this revolt has been going on in parallel with the Balkan War. In November 1912, Albanian rebels declared independence from the Ottoman Empire, although at first, no other country was prepared to recognize an independent Albania.

One of the reasons Shkodër held out so ferociously is that many of its defenders were ethnic Albanians. Whether they were loyal to the Empire or to the rebels didn't matter, because either way, they didn't want to see Serbians or Montenegrins in control of Shkodër. Another reason was that the Ottoman commander of the defenders of Shkodër—an ethnic Albanian who was a career soldier for the Empire, and whose name I will not trouble you with, because he's going to die in a few minutes—put up a determined defense. He told his soldiers that Scutari “is our fate or our grave, but not our shame.”

It would prove to be his grave. He was assassinated on January 30, 1913, by his second in command, Essad Pasha, who was also an ethnic Albanian, though one who was prepared to surrender Shkodër to the King of Montenegro for the right price. The right price turned out to be in the tens of thousands of pounds, the sources vary, so let's say in the millions of US dollars in today's currency, and on April 23, he surrendered the town in exchange for his payment, and celebrations erupted across little Montenegro.

But by this time, the major powers had taken an interest in the fate of Scutari, most notably Austria-Hungary, which remained hostile to the idea of Serbia or Montenegro gaining or extending their coastline, respectively. The Austrian Navy blockaded Montenegro, an action which increased tensions with Russia. But Britain and Italy backed Austria, sending some of their own ships to reinforce the blockade. After some feverish diplomacy between Vienna and St.

Petersburg, the Russians reluctantly agreed to join the other powers in pressing Montenegro to give up Scutari, in exchange for recognition of some of Serbia's gains in Macedonia, including the region of Kosovo, which had once been occupied by Serbs, centuries ago, but was now inhabited primarily by ethnic Albanians.

On May 2, Austria gave Montenegro a 48-hour ultimatum to withdraw from Scutari. On May 4, King Nicola of Montenegro announced that he would comply with the Austrian demand, and leave the fate of Scutari to be negotiated in London. It seemed there was life in the Concert of Europe still. But the Austrian chief of staff, Conrad, was unhappy with this outcome. As usual, Conrad had been chomping at the bit to invade Montenegro, hoping that a quick victory over the tiny country would restore Austrian prestige. He was also worried about Serbia's territorial gains. Serbia had by now doubled in size, making it that much more dangerous an adversary.

[music: "Wiener Blut"]

On May 30, after months of long deliberations, the conferees signed the Treaty of London, which brought the war in the Balkans to an end. Under the terms of the treaty, the Ottoman Empire would lose all its European possessions except Albania and the small strip of land it still controlled in eastern Thrace, which included Gallipoli and the city of Constantinople. Albania was to become an autonomous, self-governing province under Ottoman sovereignty, like the deal Bulgaria had before it claimed full independence back in 1908. The rest of Macedonia would be divided among the members of the Balkan League.

Ah, but here's the rub: where do you draw the boundaries? With regard to the old Sanjak of Novi Pazar—remember the Sanjak of Novi Pazar? Good times—well, that was divided between Montenegro and Serbia. That's pretty obvious. Those two nations finally get a common border. As for Albania, both Austria and Italy were adamant at the conference that there be an Albania between Montenegro and Greece. Neither country wanted Serbia to get a port on the Adriatic, because both of them feared it would simply become a Russian naval base. You might also recall that hardcore Italian irredentists regard the eastern shores of the Adriatic as territory properly part of Italy. The Albanians and the Dalmatians are descended from the very peoples who lived under Roman rule for centuries back in the good old days, and as far as the Italian nationalists were concerned, an Albanian state was a first step toward bringing those people back under Roman rule.

But it's hard to draw ethnic lines in Macedonia. The different ethnic groups who live there are thoroughly intermingled. So where should the borders of this Albanian state be? Lacking demographic markers, the representatives of the Great Powers in London studied detailed maps of the region and drew the border based on factors such as the terrain, rivers and roads, and places where it seemed communities were naturally connected or naturally divided. It goes without saying that the people making these decisions had never visited any of the towns whose fates they were now deciding, and had no first-hand knowledge of the peoples or the places.

Scutari, incidentally, ended up inside Albania, but only after some moments of tension that involved partial army mobilizations in Austria and Russia.

Albanians have ever since resented the border they were given, as it left some 40% of the ethnic Albanian people in the Balkans outside of Albania, especially in Kosovo, a region now under Serbian occupation. At the same time, ethnic Greeks in southern Albania revolted, because they wanted their region to be part of Greece.

Trying to define the borders of Albania proved harrowing enough; trying to divvy up the rest of Ottoman Macedonia between Serbia and Greece and Bulgaria was just too much. The Great Powers were content to allow those three nations to hold the territory they'd occupied during the war and let them sort it out among themselves. Which they would, in the soon-to-break-out Second Balkan War. But before we get to that story, I promised you one more Austrian scandal, and now it's a good time to take a look at it, because this story broke publicly in May 1913, right in the middle of the final negotiations to end the First Balkan War, although the story begins much sooner than that.

The story begins, in fact, in April, in Berlin, just about the same time that Vienna is preparing its ultimatum to Montenegro to get the hell out of Scutari. Two bulky envelopes had been mailed from Berlin to Vienna, addressed to one Nikon Nizetas, General Delivery, Vienna. I suppose I should explain, for the benefit of you young people, that "general delivery" means the Vienna Post Office is supposed to just hold onto the letters until Herr Nizetas comes in to pick them up. But he never showed, and so the Vienna Post Office eventually sent the envelopes back to Berlin.

So German intelligence officers got curious, and steamed the envelopes open. Inside was a total of 6,000 Austrian crowns, in cash, about US\$30,000 in today's money. The envelopes were traced back to two addresses, one in Paris, the other in Geneva. Both of them known to German intelligence to be used by Russian spies. Jandrić had already been exposed by this time, so this evidence implied there was yet another well-placed Russian agent in Vienna. Who might it be?

The Germans turned the matter over to Austrian counterintelligence. From 1907 to 1912, the head of the counter-intelligence office of the Austrian military had been Colonel Alfred Redl, a career army officer from a poor family in Galicia, who was smart and able and had risen quickly through the ranks. In the five years he was in charge, he had improved and modernized Austrian counterintelligence, resulting in the identification of several Austrian soldiers who were selling military secrets to the Russians. Redl seemed a rare case of competence in the Austrian military. Rumor had it he was being considered for promotion to Chief of Intelligence.

Anyway, the counterintelligence office now put its new and improved methods to work on capturing this newly detected spy. They resealed the envelopes and returned them to the Vienna Post Office. An electric button was installed under the counter at the General Delivery window.

This button was connected to wires that ran to a bell in a flat across the street, where two investigators were stationed on a round-the-clock vigil, waiting for Herr Nizetas to turn up.

And they waited. And they waited. Colonel Redl, their boss, was transferred to a temporary post as Chief of Staff to the Eighth Army Corps, headquartered in Prague. The wait went on. More weeks passed, and nothing happened, except two more letters addressed to Herr Nizetas turned up. These also proved to contain wads of cash.

On Saturday, May 24, 1913, at just before six o'clock in the evening, the bell finally rang. As luck would have it, at that particular moment, one of the investigators was having a cup of coffee in the café on the ground floor of the building, and the other one was in the men's room down the hall. They met up on their way back to the flat. When they reached the door and heard the bell ringing, they didn't even stop to unlock it. They turned around at once, ran down the stairs and across the street to the post office.

The clerk on duty at the General Delivery window told them that yes, Herr Nizetas had just been here, signed for his letters, and departed. If you hurry, you might catch him outside.

The two investigators rushed out the door and onto the sidewalk, just in time to see a cab pull out into the street and disappear. One of the investigators managed to glimpse the license plate: A3313. But that didn't seem to be much use. They didn't have computers back then, and in the time it would take to look up that number, identify the driver, and track him down, well, that would take hours at least. Maybe days. Ample time for Herr Nizetas, who was clearly not an amateur, to disappear, and that's even assuming the driver could remember where he'd dropped him off.

So the investigators went back into the post office to question the clerk, but he was little help. The clerk remembered only a nondescript man with a nondescript gray hat pulled down so far that the brim covered most of his face. Average height, average build, spoke German with a typical Viennese accent. Nothing special about him at all.

The two investigators trudged out of the post office disheartened. A six-week stakeout, and nothing to show for it. No doubt they were rehearsing in their minds how they intended to explain to their superiors that they had been entrusted with the most important active investigation in the counterintelligence office, and had flubbed it. Colonel Redl will have their heads for this.

But their luck is about to change. As they left the post office the second time, a cab pulled into the queue in front of the building. License number A3313. It was back! The pair rushed the driver, waving their badges and shouting questions. "Your last hire. What did he look like? Where did you take him? Did he say anything?"

“Oh, yes, the gentleman in the gray hat. Well, he’d just picked up some mail in the post office. He had a penknife, which he used to open the envelopes while he was riding in my cab. Oh, look. He left the sheath to his knife on my back seat. Where did I drop him off? At the Café Kaiserhof.”

The cabbie drove them to the Café Kaiserhof, which was about three blocks away. They confiscated the penknife sheath, and went inside. But the maître d’ was insistent that no lone gentleman in a gray hat had entered the café recently. They went back outside and questioned the taxi drivers in the queue there. Yes, one of them remembered seeing a man with a gray hat get out of one cab and right back into another one. Pretty strange behavior, now that you mention it. Yes, as a matter of fact, the driver did overhear the man give his destination. The Hotel Klomser.

The concierge at the Hotel Klomser was unhelpful. There was no one registered at the hotel named Nizetas. No, not a guest, either. Guests also have to give their names. All right, then, who had come through the door in the last half hour? Well, let’s see. There was Herr Kraus. There was Dr. Mautner and his wife. There was Colonel Redl. There were the ladies, Frau Schimpf and Frau—

Wait a minute. Did you say Redl? As in Colonel Alfred Redl, the army officer? Yes, he always stays with us when he comes in from Prague. Was he in uniform? No, but he is always well dressed. How about a hat? Yes, he was wearing a gray hat.

The investigators gave the concierge the penknife sheath, and asked him to ask Colonel Redl if he’d lost it. Then they sat in a dark corner of the hotel lobby and waited. About an hour later, Colonel Redl came downstairs in his dress uniform, heading out to dinner. The concierge held up the sheath and asked the Colonel if it was his. “Ah, yes,” Redl said, and reached for the sheath. Then he froze, as the realization dawned that he had just betrayed himself. An instant later, the two investigators pounced.

Which brings us back to General Franz Josef Conrad von Hötzendorf, the Austrian military chief of staff. When we last met him he was reeling from a scandal that raised questions as to whether his son was spying for the Russians, which was an unwelcome diversion from Conrad’s usual pastime, urging the Emperor to declare war on Italy or Serbia or Montenegro, as circumstances warranted. Conrad was a widower, and as I said, he had been carrying on a lengthy and scandalously public affair with a much younger married woman, Virginia von Reininghaus. Joseph and Ginny, as he called her, were having dinner together that night at the Grand Hotel, when the Chief of Intelligence interrupted their date with the news that the former Chief of Counterintelligence had been revealed to be a Russian spy.

Conrad issued orders, and, just after midnight on Sunday the 25th, Alfred Redl exchanged a signed confession for a loaded revolver, which he used to kill himself. It was the honorable way out, according to the standards of the day. Of course, it also meant that a valuable Russian intelligence asset had been allowed the release of death before he could be fully interrogated, and

much useful information on Russian intelligence methods was probably lost. Whether Conrad's motive really was honor, or a desire to sweep the scandal under the rug as quietly as possible, I will leave to you to decide, but if his motive was the latter it didn't work. In spite of the military's best efforts to keep a lid on the scandal, the full story hit the press in Vienna and Prague in a matter of days.

You see, Alfred Redl was gay. Earlier in his career, back in 1901, he had spent some time in Russia as a military attaché, and during that time, he had gotten himself a little too attaché to certain members of the Russian military, if you know what I mean, and I think you do. Russian military intelligence soon found out about his little extracurricular activity and blackmailed him into selling them Austrian secrets. The smart way to handle an intelligence asset like Redl is with a carrot and stick approach. You reward him richly when he gives you what you want, and at the first sign of resistance, you remind him that you have the power to destroy his life. Had his homosexuality become known to the Austrian military, the very least he could expect would be the end of his military career and a one-way ticket back to poverty in Galicia, and more likely, a prison sentence.

The Russians managed him brilliantly. They even gave up the names of other, lesser Austrian soldiers working for them to Redl when he was Chief of Counterintelligence, so that he could “catch” the spies—quote-unquote—and thus burnish his reputation.

It appears Redl sold the Russians Plan B and Plan R, the Austrian military plans for war with Serbia and Russia. These mobilization plans are precise and intricate, down to which soldiers will ride which trains on which schedule, and they are not easy to change. Those of you who have read ahead in the history of the twentieth century know that Austria will be at war with both Serbia and Russia fourteen months from now, and that was probably not enough time to make extensive revisions to the plans. In other words, Redl may bear a large share of the responsibility for the disasters that will befall the Austrian army in the early days of the coming war, and this has to be ranked as one of the most catastrophic intelligence failures in history. Or one of the biggest intelligence coups in history, depending on whose side you are on.

But some of the blame has to go to Conrad and other high-ranking officers who failed to notice that this son of a poor family in Galicia, who was supposedly dependent on his army pay at a time when the Austrian military pay was the worst in Europe, was living a lavish lifestyle, with automobiles, fancy clothes, and the finest everything. When they searched his rooms in Prague, they found ample evidence of his high living. They also found expensive cosmetics and perfumes, women's clothing, whips, and some very interesting leather goods. It's hard to keep that sort of thing a secret, which is how the newspaper reporters found out.

The result was a few early retirements among senior staff, but the only person who was actually prosecuted and punished over this intelligence disaster was a young ethnic Czech cavalry

lieutenant named Stefan Hromodka—Alfred Redl’s lover, and the chief beneficiary of his extravagant lifestyle.

All these scandals on top of scandals within the Austrian government make Emperor Franz Josef and his ministers look rather like Casey Stengel and the 1962 Mets, as in, “Can’t anybody here play this game?” Add to that how two wars were fought in the Balkans and the map of Eastern Europe redrawn twice in one year with minimal input from Austria, even though she is right next door and is allegedly a great power, and you begin to understand why Austria would begin to look like “the *schlemiel* of Europe.”

One Hungarian newspaper summarized the affair this way:

“[T]he Redl affair cannot be seen as a private matter. Redl is not an individual but a system. Whilst soldiers elsewhere are taught to love their homelands, lack of patriotism is held to be the greatest military virtue in this unfortunate monarchy. With us military education culminates in all national feeling being driven out of our soldiers...In the Redl affair this spirit has had its revenge. The Austrian and the Hungarian soldiers possess no fatherland; they only have a war lord.”

It was true enough. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was a state that had outlived its day, and the rising tides of nationalism that were binding some nations closer together, were pulling the Empire apart.

We’ll have to stop there for today. Thanks for listening, and I hope you’ll join me next week on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as the problems in the Balkans continue to multiply. The ink will still be wet on the Treaty of London when the Second Balkan War breaks out, Austria will once again prove impotent, and Europe takes one more step toward a general war. That’s next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. The official story was that both Redl’s treason and his homosexuality—which would have been regarded as equally heinous at the time—resulted from his being a commoner and a Jew. What the army really needed, was the implication, was more good, upstanding Catholic aristocrats. You know, like Conrad, the man carrying on a public affair with a younger, married woman? Or like the Emperor’s little brother, remember him, from all the way back in episode one?

As for the accusation that Redl was a Jew, the sources conflict. Some say he actually was Jewish, others say that he was from an ethnic German Catholic family, and that his being labeled Jewish after the scandal broke is simply an example of the Austrian anti-Semitism of the period. The latter seems more plausible to me, and it seems likely, if unfortunate, that early twentieth century anti-Semitic propaganda lives on in the history books.

But in the end, Redl's religious background isn't important. What's notable from the perspective of history is how, when his crimes were exposed, that was the explanation so many leapt to.

[music: Closing Theme]

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