

# The History of the Twentieth Century

## Episode 253

### “Alfonso the African”

#### Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

*We live in different ages, the foreigners and ourselves:  
They in an age of silver; we in an age of brass.*

Lope Félix de Vega Carpio.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 253. Alfonso the African.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was not kind to the Kingdom of Spain.

Spain is adjacent to France, of course, and the ideological, political, and social turmoil of the French Revolution spilled over into Spain. During the Napoleonic Wars, Spain was allied with France in the war against the Third Coalition, during which the Spanish and French fleets combined in an effort intended to gain naval superiority in the English Channel as a prelude to a French invasion. This effort was memorably disrupted by a British fleet commanded by Lord Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar, off the southwest coast of Spain, on October 21, 1805.

Popular discontent with the war and with the Spanish monarch, Charles IV, Carlos IV in Spain, led to a popular uprising that the King's heir, Prince Fernando, used to force his father's abdication. The Prince and his father did not get on very well and the King had completely shut out the 24-year-old Fernando from anything to do with governing the country. Fernando had already made one unsuccessful attempt to overthrow his father; this time, he succeeded. Kind of. Napoleon summoned father and son to Bayonne, just across the border in southwestern France, ostensibly to negotiate an end to the royal conflict, but there forced both of them to abdicate, an event known to history as the Abdications of Bayonne.

Napoleon named his older brother Joseph to the Spanish throne, a development most Spaniards objected to, which led to the Peninsular War and a guerilla campaign against the French. In fact,

this is the war from which we get the word guerilla, or *guerilla*, a Spanish word that literally means “little war.”

For the record, guerilla warfare has nothing to do with gorillas, the primates native to Africa. The similarity in the sounds of these two words is a coincidence.

The anti-Napoleonic Spanish authorities refused to recognize Fernando’s forced abdication. In 1813, Napoleon was forced to release Fernando, who was being held in France, so he could return to Spain and rule as Fernando VII, or Ferdinand VII.

But a lot had changed in Spain during those five years. Napoleon may have been losing the wars, but the ideas that inspired the French Revolution had percolated into Spain. In the King’s absence, commoners had gotten used to running the country and having a say and had even drafted a new constitution. Ferdinand had to pledge loyalty to the new constitution as a condition of his restoration, but he had not changed nearly as much as his kingdom had, and when he returned he quickly reneged on that promise. The constitution was abolished; the liberal political leaders who had drafted it were arrested.

Ferdinand ruled with an iron fist, or as close to one as he could manage. It was said of him that he was “no more than the leading police agent and prison warden of his country.” His reign was marked by political instability and revolt at home, and the revolutions in the Americas that won independence for most of Spain’s empire in the New World.

In 1830, the 45-year-old Ferdinand had no living heir, though the Queen, his fourth wife, was pregnant at that time. Ferdinand issued what is known to history as the Pragmatic Sanction, which revised the Spanish succession law. Under the old law, if Ferdinand did not produce a male heir, the crown would go to his younger brother, Carlos. Ferdinand changed the law to allow a prospective daughter to inherit the crown. When the baby was born, it was indeed a girl.

Ferdinand died in 1833. Per the terms of the Pragmatic Sanction, his three-year-old daughter succeeded to the throne as Isabella II, with her mother as regent. Don Carlos, needless to say, was less than fully content with this state of affairs. An ugly civil war broke out, which lasted nearly seven years and cost 100,000 lives.

I want to especially call your attention to this moment in Spanish history, because the dispute over the succession—whether the crown would go to Isabella or Carlos, who would have reigned as Charles V—this dispute will play a major political role in Spain for the next one hundred years, well into the twentieth century, so take note of it.

Now, looking at these affairs from the outside, it may seem puzzling, quaint even, that an argument over whether or not a girl should be allowed to inherit her father’s crown could cause so much bitterness, conflict, and bloodshed, and that the dispute would rage on for generation after generation, long after both Isabella and Carlos were dead, in fact.

To understand this, you have to understand that Isabella and Carlos were both symbols for a much deeper conflict. You already know that in France, the French Revolution may have ended, Napoleon may be gone, but the conflict between conservative Catholic monarchists and liberal secular republicans would play a major role in French politics for the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the twentieth. In Spain, it is just the same. It was the conservative Catholic absolute monarchists who aligned with Carlos, in a political movement the Spanish call *carlistas*, or Carlists in English. When Ferdinand passed away, liberal reformers in Spain embraced the child Queen and her mother the regent as the best hope for an end to absolutism and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, as did the governments of France and Britain, both of which also wanted to see liberal reforms in Spain. Liberal political leaders in exile returned home upon the old King's death, while the City in London loaned money to the chronically underfunded Spanish government, now under the new Queen.

This civil war is known to history as the First Carlist War. The Second would follow just a few years later, but Isabella would remain Queen. When she was sixteen, she was made to marry her first cousin, Francisco de Asís. The marriage was not a happy one. The king consort is widely believed to have been gay; Isabella supposedly remarked that on their wedding night, she discovered that he was wearing more lace than she was. They had five children that lived to adulthood, four daughters and a son. Officially, they were all Francisco's children, although many think that some, perhaps all, of them were illegitimate.

In 1868, a coalition of liberal republican forces overthrew Isabella, an episode known in Spain as the Glorious Revolution. The 37-year-old Queen lived out the rest of her life in Paris; she died in 1904. The Spanish Parliament, the Cortés, chose Amadeo of Savoy, the second son of King of Italy, to be the first King of a new Spanish dynasty, but the choice did not quell the political unrest in Spain and following an assassination attempt, Amadeo declared Spain ungovernable and abdicated.

A republic was proclaimed, the First Spanish Republic, which lasted less than two years before it was overthrown in a military coup that restored the Bourbon dynasty in the person of Isabella's son, who reigned as Alfonso XII. He was just 17 when he returned to Spain to assume the throne, but his reign was relatively quiet. A new Liberal Party was permitted to form, and Spain settled into a system called *turnismo*, under which the Liberals and Conservatives agreed to alternate governments under an electoral system that was largely a formality. We saw a similar arrangement in Portugal, episode 128.

This arrangement helped keep things stable, but most ordinary Spaniards had no say in the government. Among the groups shut out were rural farmers and socialists, who were especially strong in Catalonia, Spain's most industrialized region. Catalonia, or Catalán, in southeastern Spain, is culturally and linguistically a distinct region. It had once been the heart of the Kingdom of Aragón. Few Catalan nationalists sought full independence, but many wanted regional

autonomy. And then there were the Basques, another distinct ethnic group in the northeast of the country, where separatism was a more common position.

Alas and despite his youth, Alfonso XII reigned less than eleven years before he died of tuberculosis and dysentery in 1885, just shy of his 28<sup>th</sup> birthday. At that time, the King and Queen had two daughters and the Queen was pregnant with a third child, who proved to be a boy, born in 1886. He was thus King upon his birth, and the story goes that as soon as he was born and cleaned up, the naked infant was plunked down onto a silver tray and delivered to the prime minister for inspection, presumably to demonstrate that he was indeed a boy and born alive. His regnal name would be Alfonso XIII, and yes, there was concern at the time that this number was inauspicious. On the other hand, it was felt useful to name him after his late father, thus emphasizing continuity, and that argument won the day.

The Queen Mother served as regent for the next sixteen years. It was during this regency that the conflict with the United States broke out, episode 3. An effort was made to negotiate a settlement between Spain and the US, but this was complicated by the regency and the fact that right-wing Carlists were still waiting in the wings, ready to pounce if the Queen Mother made concessions to the Americans, which would allow these right-wing nationalists to declare her weak and unpatriotic.

So the negotiations failed and the Spanish-American War was fought in 1898. The result was devastating to the Spanish, who lost virtually all their remaining colonial holdings to the Americans. All that was left were a few islands off the coast of Africa and two enclaves on the African mainland: Rio Muñi, in equatorial Africa, and the Spanish Sahara.

Alfonso came of age in 1902 and began to reign in his own right. In 1905, he married Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg, one of British Queen Victoria's numerous grandchildren. The wedding procession through the streets of Madrid was marred by an assassination attempt, a bombing by a Catalan anarchist. The bomb killed 30 and wounded more than 100, though not the bride or the groom.

Alfonso XIII had received a military education and as a young man he took a keen interest in things military and was an ardent Spanish nationalist. The same could be said of a lot of Spaniards of the time, still resentful over the war with the United States.

[music: de Falla, "Danse Espagnole" from *La vida breve*]

The nation of Morocco was officially a kingdom, ruled by a Sultan, but in many parts of the country, the Sultan's rule was in name only and the locals did as they pleased. The country went deeply into debt to European powers.

We talked about Morocco at some length during the Belle Époque days. You'll recall there were not one but two international crises, followed by international conferences, over the fate of

Morocco, which we covered in episodes 40 and 65. The French were keen on taking control of the country, the Germans were also eyeing it, and then there were the Spanish. Geography alone gives Spain an interest in Moroccan affairs. Morocco is just across the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain and the Spanish and Moroccan Mediterranean coasts face each other.

There's another reason. Because of an historical quirk, there are two towns on the Moroccan Mediterranean coast that have been part of the Kingdom of Spain since the Renaissance. They are called Ceuta and Melilla. Spanish nationalists, especially on the political right, wanted Spain to take control of Morocco, or at least over the Mediterranean coastal region. It seemed a natural extension of Spanish interests, and might help make up for what was lost in the Spanish-American War. Nationalists speculated about the mineral wealth in the region, a potential treasure house waiting for Spanish exploitation. Liberals and leftists in Spain scoffed at this talk; to them, it was just one more example of how Spanish elites used the Army and the nation to enrich themselves.

At this time, the French were maneuvering to take control of Morocco. Germany wanted the same thing. As early as 1902, the French made an offer to Spain to grant Spanish control over that strip of Mediterranean coast in exchange for Spain's support of French ambitions in the rest of the country.

You also have to consider British interests here. The British hold Gibraltar, a peninsula on the coast of Spain, a valuable naval base that gives the Royal Navy control over who passes between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. The British were not keen on allowing either German or French control over the Moroccan coast opposite, out of a concern that another Great Power might be able to close the Strait to the British. Spanish control, on the other hand, was easier for the British to accept, since Spain lacked the naval power to threaten British control over the Strait. As for the French, granting the coast to Spain removed the British objections and thus made it possible for France and Britain to stand together against the Germans.

And so, in 1911, after the Second Moroccan Crisis and the Algeiras Conference, episode 65, France was awarded a protectorate over most of Morocco, while Spain was granted a strip of Moroccan coast, from Algeria to the Atlantic and extending inland about 40 kilometers, or 25 miles. Spain also got a few concessions in southern Morocco.

This northern coastal strip would be known as Spanish Morocco. It is a fertile mountainous region called the Rif, that's R-I-F. The people of the Rif are a culturally distinct group. It's a fact of human nature that people who live in mountainous regions typically adopt a decentralized way of life that looks like anarchy to outsiders, and a stiff-necked attitude of "I mind *my* own business and I expect other people to do the same." And so it was in the Rif. The people of the Rif had flouted the authority of the Sultan; they were even less inclined to accept the authority of the Spanish, which had been imposed on them by a bunch of European diplomats.

Spanish troubles in the Rif began even before the Algeciras Conference met. In 1909, Spanish projects to open a mine in the Rif and build a railway from the mine to Melilla were attacked by Rif fighters. Call them guerilla soldiers, if you like, or bandits, which is what the Spanish called them. The fact was, Spanish mining operations were displacing native Rifians and no one in the Rif was getting any of the profits from the mine, so they had had just about enough of that.

The Spanish were able to subdue the attackers and keep the mine open, but only by sending more than 40,000 Spanish soldiers into Morocco and sustaining over 2,000 casualties. The Spanish got their way for the time being, but the irregulars of the Rif had demonstrated they could fight on equal terms with the Spanish Army, though no one in Spanish political or military leadership wanted to admit it.

The fighting in the Rif also sparked protests back in Spain. The government had called up reservists to fight in Morocco; many of them were working-class family men with wives and children whose families could not afford them giving up their civilian jobs. To add insult to injury, the wealthy could hire substitutes to fight in their place, but this option was too expensive for an ordinary Spaniard. To Spanish socialists, this was merely one more example of Spanish workers sent to fight and die in colonial adventures that benefited no one but the capitalists.

These protests came to a head in the city of Barcelona, Spain's second largest, and the largest city in the region of Catalonia. Socialists, anarchists, pacifists, anti-colonialists, anti-militarists, and republicans called a general strike and took to the streets to block the military call-up. Violence and looting followed, in what came to be known as *La Semana Trágica*, the Tragic Week. Over a hundred people died in the violence and hundreds more were injured. About 1,700 people were prosecuted in military courts. Those convicted were given sentences that ranged up to the 59 who were given life sentences and five who were executed.

The *Semana Trágica* must be understood as not only about Spanish colonial policy, but also about the political grievances of ordinary Spaniards in general. Still, in the aftermath of the violence and the crackdown, support for Spanish colonial policy in Morocco became an article of faith for the royalist, nationalist political right, and opposition to it became an article of faith for the socialist, republican political left. The Catholic Church in Spain preached that conquest of Morocco was a holy project, a continuation of the *Reconquista* that had overthrown Muslim rule in Spain.

And no one in Spain was more enthusiastic about the colonial adventure in Morocco than the King himself; so much so that he was derided as "Alfonso the African" by his opponents on the left.

In 1914 came the Great War. The Spanish government adopted a policy of neutrality, but within the country, sympathies for the warring coalitions broke down along the same political lines. Spanish elites, royalists, Carlists, military leaders, and the Catholic Church generally favored the Central Powers, while the socialists, republicans, and Catalan nationalists generally favored

the Allies. Even neutral countries were affected by the war, as we've seen. On the plus side, Spanish exports of agricultural and manufactured products boomed, Spanish gold reserves grew, and the government even got its debt under control. On the minus side, Spain experienced the same food shortages as everyone else, along with inflation and a serious economic slowdown after the war ended.

And as you know from episode 172, King Alfonso XIII and most of the Spanish Cabinet fell seriously ill in 1918, becoming among the first publicly reported cases of the influenza pandemic, which led to the unfortunate development of the disease becoming labeled as the "Spanish flu," even though the Spanish had nothing to do with it, other than that they got sick along with everyone else.

There was some German kibitzing in Morocco during the war, as German agents attempted to aid and encourage Moroccan resistance to French rule. This benefitted Spain, by directing the Moroccan resistance toward the French and away from the Spanish, though Spain's authority over its Moroccan protectorate was limited to a few enclaves, and largely theoretical everywhere else. Still, Spanish Morocco remained quiet, and Spanish authorities forgot the lessons of 1909.

This began to change as soon as the Armistice was signed. The Spanish government resolved to gradually occupy and take control over the entirety of Spanish Morocco. They were egged on by the French government, because now that the war was over, the French would also be turning their attention back to their unruly protectorate. Morocco was by this time awash in modern arms smuggled into the country during and after the war, and the French were unhappy with raiders from the Spanish Rif region preying on French territory.

The first Spanish efforts to assert control originated at Ceuta, in western Spanish Morocco in 1920 and were initially successful, although the Spanish quickly developed a reputation for treating the native Moroccans with contempt and ruling them with an iron fist. Still, these successes encouraged the Spanish commander at Melilla, in eastern Spanish Morocco, a general named Manuel Fernández y Silvestre. He requested permission to begin moving his own soldiers out of Melilla and into the countryside. His requests were at first denied; he persisted until by 1921, things were going well enough that he got the green light to advance.

The Rif irregulars were outnumbered by the Spanish, but they were skilled fighters, armed with Great War surplus weapons that were state of the art. The Spanish soldiers were conscripts, who wanted nothing more than to go home. They were poorly paid, poorly led, and poorly fed. Spanish Army officers commonly sold supplies meant for their soldiers on the black market and pocketed the proceeds.

Long time listeners may remember Raisuli, the Moroccan rebel leader who provoked a confrontation with the United States back in 1903, episode 24. He's still around, although by 1921 a new leader was rising to prominence in the Rif. His full name was Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi, but he is usually known to English-speaking historians as Abd el-Krim. He

actually worked for the Spanish administration in Melilla during the war, until the French accused him of helping to smuggle German aid to the Moroccan resistance. In 1920, he took up arms against the Spanish.

The following year, as General Fernández Silvestre began expanding the Spanish occupation in the east, Abd el-Krim wrote him a letter warning him not to advance his forces past the Amekran River. If Fernández did, Abd el-Krim warned, he would die. Fernández scoffed at this message, and advanced with a force of 60,000 Spanish soldiers, which was about triple the number of fighters available to Abd el-Krim. Fernández publicly dismissed Abd el-Krim as “crazy.”

Fernández and his forces moved south and west from the Spanish enclave at Melilla occupying Moroccan territory at an impressive pace. The Spanish cribbed from the British playbook in South Africa, securing their occupied territory with a system of blockhouses—called *blocaos* in Spanish. His ultimate goal was to seize the town of Alhucemas on the Mediterranean coast in central Spanish Morocco, a location known to be where Rif fighters met and organized.

Alas for General Fernández, in his haste to move quickly and impress his superiors, and in his contempt for the fighters of the Rif, he paid little attention to establishing and securing his lines of supply and communication back to Melilla.

Fernández occupied a village about 130 kilometers southwest of Melilla called Annual, which he used as his headquarters. With Rif fighters harassing his defenses, in June of 1921, he ordered work to begin on a new forward base at a town called Igueriben. This new position was besieged by the Rifians, coming under artillery attack beginning July 14, before work on it was completed. The garrison held out for a week before withdrawing; out of a force of about 300, only 33 of the garrison survived the siege and withdrawal.

Meanwhile, the Rif fighters had also begun attacks on the headquarters at Annual. On July 22, with the base at Igueriben fallen, the 5,000 Spanish soldiers at Annual, including General Fernández himself, found themselves isolated and under artillery attack. Fernández ordered a withdrawal, but the combination of poor leadership, low morale, lack of supplies, especially water in the summer heat, and enemy harassment quickly turned the withdrawal into a rout. The Spanish units dissolved into confusion and panic as soldiers were picked off one by one by the Rifians.

The Spanish retreated all the way back to Melilla, giving up all the gains they had won since 1909, as the Rifians pursued them. The 130 or so blockhouses Fernández had established across the region were isolated and helpless; the Rifians picked them off one by one. The total number of Spanish soldiers killed was reported at more than 13,000. The Rif fighters lost about 800. Some 300 Spanish soldiers and civilians were taken prisoner; the Spanish government eventually paid a ransom of four million pesetas for their release. As for General Fernández Silvestre, he too died in the retreat. This is known for certain only because Abd el-Krim was later seen wearing



his enemy's gold and scarlet sash. There are reports Fernández Silvestre killed himself, but it is more likely he fell during the retreat, like so many of his men.

The Spanish were driven all the way back to Melilla, but Abd el-Krim did not attack the city. He explained later that there were foreign nationals living in Melilla, and he did not want to provoke any other European power into an intervention. He came to regret that decision.

The defeat was a bitter humiliation to the Spanish. This was only the second time in modern history that a European army was defeated by an African one, the first being the Battle of Adwa in Ethiopia in 1896, episode 23, which ended the Italian effort to occupy that country.

King Alfonso XIII was vacationing in the south of France at this time. The story goes that he received the news of the disaster at Annual by telegram while playing golf, read the telegram, then resumed his golf game. This story is reminiscent of the similar story told of the Russian Emperor Nikolai II, who received a telegram relaying the news of the Russian Navy's defeat in the Tsushima Strait while playing tennis, read it, then resumed his tennis match. What makes this story even more appalling is the report that the King responded to the news by remarking that, "Chicken meat is cheap."

The political repercussions in Spain were serious and further polarized Spanish politics between the *africanistas*, who wanted to stay and have it out in Morocco, and the *abandonistas*, who wanted to quit the war. The King was Spain's *africanista número uno*, and was accused not merely of responding callously to the news of the defeat, but of having egged on Fernández Silvestre in the first place. The late general was said to have been one of the King's favorite military commanders and that the King shared his eagerness to win the war in the Rif quickly and decisively.

The civilian political leaders in the Cortés and the government found themselves in a position which would become familiar to governments of nations fighting colonial wars against a guerilla resistance. To quit the war would lead to accusations from the political right that the government had shamed the Army and the nation by cowardly betrayal. To continue fighting would mean committing to an endless, bloody, debilitating, unpopular war with no real hope of achieving anything that could be called victory. Like most governments in this position, they chose to hang on for the time being and hope something happened to change the *status quo*, without any clear vision of what that something might be.

Reinforcements were sent to Spanish Morocco, and some of the lost territory regained, but the war devolved into a stalemate. Spanish soldiers, outraged over the indiscriminate killing of the retreating Spanish force, responded in kind and then some, imposing forced labor and torture on captured Rifian fighters and civilians.

In 1923, the Rifians declared the establishment of an independent state, the Republic of the Rif. That same year, the Spanish resorted to the use of chemical weapons, becoming the first military

to do so since the end of the Great War. These weapons included phosgene and mustard gas, two of the most feared chemicals, and this conflict marks the first time chemical weapons were used against civilians, which the Spanish Army justified on the grounds that the Rifians were treacherous and uncivilized and you couldn't tell the fighters apart from the civilians anyway. Also that year, in August, Spain suffered a further military embarrassment when the Navy's first dreadnought battleship, *España*, the flagship of the fleet, launched in 1912, ran aground in Morocco while shelling Rifian positions. Attempts to refloat the ship failed, and it had to be abandoned.

Back home in Spain, the right-wing *africanistas* were in the minority, but had strong support in the military and the aristocracy. Still, with the war growing increasingly unpopular, it seemed inevitable that the *abandonistas* would eventually have their way and force a withdrawal. Faced with those circumstances, the military launched a coup in September 1923, and installed an aristocrat and general named Miguel Primo de Rivera y Orbaneja as a military dictator. The King supported the coup and endorsed it by appointing Primo de Rivera prime minister. In explaining the coup to the nation, he said, "Our aim is to open a brief parenthesis in the constitutional life of Spain and to re-establish it as soon as the country offers us men uncontaminated with the vices of political organization." He also suspended the constitution and dissolved the Cortés.

Primo de Rivera was described by one American journalist as a "moderate dictator." He tried to split the difference between the right and left in Spain, by adopting a set of policies inspired by those of Benito Mussolini in nearby Italy, including programs intended to spur economic growth and improve wages and working conditions. But he also cracked down hard on the press, intellectuals, and Catalan nationalism.

With regard to the war in Morocco, though he was a military officer, Primo de Rivera was a skeptic on the war there and began searching for a plausible strategy of withdrawal. This was an open secret among Army officers serving in Morocco, who were among the most militant of *africanistas*. One such militant *africanista*, a colonel named Francisco Franco, the commander of the Spanish Foreign Legion, published an article in which he openly defied the government, announcing that he would disobey any order to withdraw. In 1924, when Primo de Rivera visited Morocco for an inspection tour, and likely also to assess the mood of the Army, he was subjected to insults and open defiance.

It's anybody's guess how this standoff between the Spanish King and his dictator and his disaffected Army versus the rebels of the Rif Republic would have played out on its own. But the status quo was upended in April 1925, when Abd el-Krim led his fighters south into French Morocco. After the Great War had ended, the French had reinforced their own occupation of French Morocco and pacified it by 1921. The French had been complaining ever since about Spanish inability to control their own portion of Morocco, though they had not offered Spain any assistance. Instead, the French had set up a line of outposts along the border. Thousands of Rif fighters attacked and overran these border outposts, killing more than a thousand French soldiers

and forcing a French withdrawal. The Rifians advanced farther south, attacking French economic targets and even threatening the city of Fez.

The French government responded with a huge show of force, dispatching over 150,000 French and colonial regulars under the command of Marshal Philippe Pétain, the hero of Verdun. This force counterattacked into the Rif in coordination with the 90,000 Spanish troops already there. A joint Franco-Spanish naval force landed 13,000 Spanish soldiers at Alhucemas, supported by naval gunfire, aircraft and tanks.

The Rif fighters were now outnumbered by the Europeans by more than twenty to one. Even so, they held out for another desperate year before Abd el-Krim finally surrendered in 1926. The war was over, the Republic of the Rif had been dismantled, and Spanish rule over northern Morocco was now secure.

But at what cost? Back home in Spain, what democracy the Spanish had enjoyed had been snuffed out by a military dictatorship. In 1927, the regime created a National Assembly that met in the chamber formerly occupied by the Cortés, though its members were appointed by the military regime and it was limited to an advisory role. Primo de Rivera asked it to draft a new constitution, which it did in 1929. There was to have been a plebiscite on the new constitution in 1930, but by then, the global economic crisis had reached Spain. Unhappiness with the government was now nearly universal, with even the military becoming uneasy. With protestors marching in the streets of Madrid, Primo de Rivera resigned in January 1930 and fled the country for Paris, where he died just weeks later, at the age of 60.

This left Spain with no government and an unpopular King, floundering in the middle of the biggest economic crisis in modern history. Can the Spanish restore a democratic constitutional order, or will the country fall to yet another military dictator?

We'll come back to that question in a future episode, but we'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd especially like to thank Brett and Russell for their kind donations, and thank you to Will for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Brett and Russell and Will help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, just visit the website, [historyofthetwentiethcentury.com](http://historyofthetwentiethcentury.com) and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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Next week is a bye week for the podcast, but I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we check in on the latest developments in Italy, which we last visited all the way back in episode 198, during our 1919 World Tour. In that episode, the Fascists marched on Rome and Benito Mussolini was appointed prime minister. With this change came not only a new Italian government—we've had plenty of those—but a new governing ideology, the twentieth century's distinctive contribution to political thought. Will Fascism turn the twentieth century into the Century of the State? We'll look into it, in two weeks' time, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. The French captured Abd el-Krim and exiled him to the French-controlled island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean, where he lived for the next twenty years as an exile and a fierce critic of Western imperialism. In 1947, when he reached the age of 65, the French authorities granted him permission to live in France. Along the way, he escaped French custody and was granted asylum in Egypt, where he lived out the rest of his life. In 1956, after Morocco regained its independence, the Sultan invited him to return to his native country, but Abd el-Krim refused, saying he would not return to Morocco until all of North Africa was liberated from French rule.

He lived just long enough to see that become a reality before passing away in 1963, at the age of 81.

The guerilla warfare tactics pioneered by Abd el-Krim in Morocco inspired later twentieth-century insurgencies, including the Yugoslav campaign against the German occupation, the Algerian war of independence, and the war in Vietnam against the United States.

[music: Closing Theme]