

# The History of the Twentieth Century

## Episode 10

### “Lest We Forget”

#### Transcript

*(Provided by listener Joseph M.)*

[music: Fanfare]

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is the most powerful and advanced nation in the world, with a colonial empire that reaches to every continent on the planet. Naturally, Britain needs a world-class navy, and it has one. A navy that is the undisputed master of the seas. At home the British are the wealthiest people anywhere, and enjoy individual rights and political freedoms most continental Europeans envy.

So why is there so much poverty? Why is the nation being run by the same hundred or so families that have been running it since Elizabethan times? And it was easy to be mistress of the world when you were the only industrialized country in the world. But when you look in the rear view mirror, and you see the Germans and the Americans and even Russians industrializing, how do you keep your lead, and what happens if you can't?

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Them]

Episode 10. Lest We Forget.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the sun never set on the British Empire, although an American clergyman remarked that that was only because God didn't trust the British in the dark. They say that Rome wasn't built in a day, and an empire this big doesn't happen overnight.

Do you know what the first English colony was? Be careful this is a trick question. That's right, Ireland. Although I suppose the French might have a different answer. The first English king to claim to be King of Ireland was Henry VIII, although many before him were also calling themselves King of France. Where does this little kingdom of half an island get off claiming the crowns of all of its neighbors? The Irish, needless to say were never exactly thrilled with this arrangement, and that still holds true at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The English had a plan for pacifying Ireland; it involved seizing lands from Irish aristocrats who rebelled against the English crown, and handing them over to English aristocrats on the condition that they settle only English-speaking Protestants on their new lands. After the crowns of England and Scotland became united under King James I, it was decided that British settlements in Ireland would be divided 50/50 between English and Scots. The province of Ireland that gave England the most grief was Ulster. And so Ulster became the place where most British immigrants were settled. This will have, shall we say, consequences, in the twentieth century.

Back in Episode 3, I talked about the Spanish explorers trying to reach East Asia by sailing west from Spain. There were some British attempts to do the same thing, sailing west from Britain which never worked out because North America was in the way. But they gave the British some claims to territory on that continent. Although before they exploited those they picked up some valuable possessions in the Caribbean region while they were busy plundering the Spanish. Places like the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados, British Honduras, British Guiana. Slavery and sugar plantations made these places boom.

Religious turmoil at home created classes of British citizens open to the idea of moving some place where they could run their own communities without harassment. The Caribbean was a little sultry for English tastes, but North America was just the thing. The climate was similar to what they were used to, the land was rich and fertile, and no one lived there—except Native Americans. As I'm sure you know, several English colonies in North America were specifically created to provide sanctuary for religious minorities. Massachusetts for the Puritans, Maryland for the Catholics, Pennsylvania for the Quakers. Georgia began as a penal colony.

It was a bit of a setback for British imperial ambitions when the American Revolution led to most, though not all, of Britain's American colonies becoming independent. Some historians draw a line here between the First British Empire and the Second British Empire, because the British pressed on. They used Australia as their new penal colony. The British and Dutch had been competing with each other to muscle in on Portuguese trade around South Africa. There was the British East India Company, and the Dutch East India Company, and there were a few wars over that. When William of Orange became King of Britain a deal was struck, whereby the British would have the rights to India, and the Dutch would have the rights to the East Indies. By the beginning of the twentieth century the deal still holds, the Dutch still control much of the East Indies, and the British rule India.

Although it was the Portuguese who were the first Europeans to discover the Cape of Good Hope, it was the Dutch who ended up with control of the place and settling it. And if you want to know how that happened, go listen to the *When Diplomacy Fails* special on the Thirty Years War. The Cape of Good Hope made a convenient stop-over for ships traveling between Europe and the East Indies. Many of the Dutch in the Cape Colony, like the British in North America, found the land fertile and welcoming, and since no one else was using it—no one who matters,

anyway—they spread out and began farming. Over generations these Dutch farmers came to identify themselves as natives of Africa, and we know them today as *Afrikaners*, the Dutch word for Africans. Most of the black Africans in the Cape Colony ended up as slaves.

Britain seized the Cape Colony during the Napoleonic Wars, when the Netherlands became a French sister-republic. They set to work anglicizing their new possession. Many Afrikaners living in the Cape Colony reconciled themselves to British rule, but many others did not, particularly the stiff-necked independent farmers in the rural parts of the colony, who have come to be called Boers. *Boer* is the Dutch word for farmer.

Chafing under British rule, and incensed that when the British outlawed slavery, they would not pay them what they considered a fair price in compensation for their slaves, the Boers migrated northward to live outside of British rule. They fought bloody wars with the native Zulus and by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had established two inland states. The Transvaal, officially the South African Republic, and the Transorange, officially the Orange Free State. And these two nations were internationally recognized, even by the British, although with treaty arrangements that gave the British some say in the Boer foreign relations, as well as in their treatment of black Africans, an area which the British did not trust the Boers one bit.

The latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a scramble for territory in Africa. The British got it into their heads that it would be really cool to see an unbroken trail of pink running north and south across maps of Africa from Cairo to Cape Town. The French meanwhile got it into their heads about the same time that it would be really cool to see a trail of blue running east and west across Africa from Senegal to Somalia. Obviously only one of them could have their way, and that turned out to be the British, after a military confrontation with the French at Fashoda, in the Sudan in 1898.

You might recall from Episode 8 that this was pretty much at the height of the Dreyfus Affair. And there were those in France at the time who were ready to attribute the French Army's humiliation to the influence of Jews and the syndicate. The ill will between France and Britain lingered for some time. And this is something of a low point in Franco-British relations. But hey, having an empire is awesome, and you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs.

Britain's remaining North American colonies were federated into a self-governing Dominion within the empire, Canada, in 1867. You may recall from Episode 1 that the Commonwealth of Australia came into being as the Empire's second self-governing dominion in 1901. And New Zealand is going to achieve Dominion status in 1907. Because as you can see, Britain is committed to bringing modern ideals of freedom and self-determination to peoples all over the globe... as long as they're descended from Europeans.

(Freedom and self-determination are not recommended for use by Egyptians, South Asians, Black Africans, Chinese, or Malays, and double especially not recommended for the Irish. Side effects of colonialism may include famine, war taxation, conscription, and poverty. Ask your British doctor if freedom and self-determination are right for you. Employees of the British Empire and their families are not eligible for this offer. Freedom and self-determination are registered trademarks of the British Colonial Office, all rights reserved, void where prohibited by law.)

In South Africa, the British government envisioned a day where the Boer republics and its own South African colonies, The Cape Colony and the Natal, could be federated together into a multi-lingual self-governing Dominion within the Empire, just like Canada. British dominance of South Africa seemed assured in 1877 when the Republic of South Africa became embroiled in a war with the Zulu, and the British took advantage of the situation to annex it.

The government of the South African Republic under its wily president, Paul Kruger, swallowed their pride for the time being, since the British taking control of the Transvaal meant that it was now *their* job to defend Boers from the Zulus, which the British did, in a nasty war with the Zulu that lasted until 1879, and ended with the British destroying the independent Zulu kingdom, and incorporating its territory into the empire's South Africa holdings.

As the dust was settling from the Anglo-Zulu war, President Kruger stepped forward, cleared his throat, and announced that, you know, now that he had a chance to think it over, a unilateral annexation of his country seemed not entirely on the up-and-up. Seeing how Britain and the Transvaal had a treaty agreement going back to 1852, and one party unilaterally changing the terms of the treaty without the consent of the other party sounds just a teensy little bit illegal.

The Boers revolted. Some call this the First Anglo-Boer War. But that might be too grand a name for a conflict that was over in a matter of weeks. But undeniably there was a conflict. The Boers turned out to be much more formidable opponents than the British ever expected. There are reasons for that, but I don't want to get into that right now. We'll wait for the Second Anglo-Boer War, because, trust me, all the same reasons why the Boers are more formidable than the British ever expected apply just the same in that conflict.

The situation on the ground in the South African Republic was simply that the British soldiers on hand were too few to subdue the Boers. The government in London was faced with the choice of calling in reinforcements from other parts of the Empire and escalating the conflict dramatically, or giving in. They chose the latter, and agreed to a treaty restoring the Transvaal's semi-independence.

The British government at that time was a Liberal government. The big political argument in the 19th century in Britain, and in many other places, was Conservatives versus Liberals. Now I need to caution everybody here, we use these terms *liberal* and *conservative* in modern political parlance, and odds are that many of you listening think of yourselves as liberal, or conservative, or at least sympathetic to one or the other. You might feel tempted to root for your own side when talking about 19<sup>th</sup>-century political debates, but you need to be careful here because liberal and conservative do not mean the same thing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And our modern ideas of what constitute liberal versus conservative policy positions don't map especially well onto 19<sup>th</sup> century debates.

Liberals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were disciples of Adam Smith, advocates of the free market, political and economic liberty, universal suffrage, pacifism, and low taxes. There's almost nothing a liberal government hates more than spending money. In fact the only thing a liberal government hates more than spending money is spending money on the military, which liberals regard as money down the drain. And so the Liberal government of William Gladstone, who was Prime Minister at that time, pulled up a spreadsheet, ran a quick cost-benefit analysis, and came to the conclusion that peace was a bargain.

The disciples of Smith had been indifferent to the loss of the American colonies back in 1783; they argued that there would still be trade between Britain and America, and Britain could still reap a substantial profit from free trade with an independent USA, without all the bother and expense of controlling and governing it. The past hundred years had proved them right, and similarly, we don't have to be running the Boers' countries for them in order to make money off of them, do we? Or if you want to go really nuts, we could even try applying that same logic to Ireland.

19<sup>th</sup> century Irish people are no more reconciled to British rule than, well, Irish people in any other century. And home rule is the number one issue in Ireland at this time. Irish opinion is split between those who seek Irish control of domestic affairs within the framework of the Empire, say an Irish parliament to decide internal affairs with the Parliament in Westminster in charge of imperial and foreign affairs. Um, in other words an arrangement not terribly different than what Canada just got. Ireland had about 100 seats in the British Parliament and by 1880, 63 of those seats are held by the Irish Parliamentary Party, whose top policy priority is home rule for Ireland. The rest of the Irish are holding out for full independence. They're not standing for Parliament at all because they don't recognize Parliament's authority to make decisions on Irish affairs.

Now the Liberal Party is the natural ally of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and by 1885 Gladstone is on board with Irish home rule, and is trying to get a bill through Parliament. But not all Liberals are willing to put abstract liberal principles above loyalty to Queen and Empire. Gladstone's bill was defeated, and some Liberals left the party over the Irish question, and formed the breakaway Liberal Unionists. When the dust settled after back-to-back general

elections in 1885 and 1886, a coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists won a huge victory. This Conservative-Liberal Unionist alliance will hold a majority in the House of Commons for most of the next 20 years.

Gladstone was succeeded as Prime Minister by Lord Salisbury, Leader of the Conservative party. He will still be Prime Minister on January 1, 1901, when the history of the twentieth century actually begins, albeit with a three-year break in there when the Liberals briefly retake parliament. The Conservatives love them some Empire, and they aren't afraid to spend money to defend it. In particular, in 1889 the Salisbury government introduced and passed the Naval Defence Act, the largest peacetime expansion in the Royal Navy's history. The Naval Defence Act also formalized the standard that the Royal Navy would be at least equal in the combined strength of the next two naval powers in the world, which were then France and Russia, and do you know why?

[ over music: "Rule, Britannia!"]

Well, because when Britain first at heaven's command arose from out the azure main, this was the charter, the charter of the land...

Rule, Britannia. Britannia rule the waves. Britons never will be slaves.

Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil was born in 1830, second son of the Marquess of Salisbury. His father, a descendant of the Cecils who served as ministers under Queen Elizabeth and James I, owned large estates. His mother, Frances Gascoyne, was the daughter and granddaughter of members of the House of Commons and heir to substantial estates in her own right. The marriage meant that the Marquess got more land, Lady Francis got a title, and Lord Robert, as he would have been known at this stage of his life, got a hyphenated name. See kids, that's how you do it.

By all accounts he had a lonely and unhappy childhood. His academic record is indifferent. He attended Eton, but dropped out, reportedly because of bullying. He attended Oxford, where he was awarded a gentleman's fourth. After college, and perhaps because he had been in poor health, his father sent him abroad for two years. He spent time in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, where the sunnier climes seemed to do him good. Three months after his return to England he was elected to the House of Commons.

Now I'm going to stop here for a minute, because I want to call your attention to some of the features of Lord Robert's life that typify life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. On the face of it you might think that a 23-year-old man known to be lonely and outcast, with an embarrassing academic record, who's been out of the country for the past two years and just got back, would make a pretty poor choice as a candidate for Parliament. But not only did he win a seat in the Commons

on his first try, he won it without opposition. That's because Stamford, the borough he represented, was a "pocket borough." Stamford had a population of about 7,300 at the time, and about 500 of them were eligible to vote. And most or all of these were tenants of, or otherwise beholden to Lord Robert's father, the Marquess. And they understood what was required of them.

Stamford actually sent two members to the House of Commons at that time even though much larger cities, famously Manchester with a population of 60,000, got no individual parliamentary representation apart from their county at all. That's because at this time, the concept of each parliamentary constituency containing approximately the same number of people has not yet been embraced, even in principle. And parliamentary constituencies have been defined based on criteria that are now out of date by centuries. And if that isn't bad enough, when Lord Robert was first elected even secret ballots had not yet been introduced, nor was there any law against offering voters money or other favors in exchange for their votes. So Lord Robert had no trouble getting a seat in the Commons. In fact dad bought his little brother a seat too.

Lord Robert would serve in Parliament his entire adult life. First in the Commons, and later in the Lords, and would make a career of public service. And yet, he never once stood in a contested election. In fact, most parliamentary elections at this time were uncontested. As I said before, about a hundred, maybe as much as two hundred, families basically control the Government of the most powerful country on the planet. Most of those who sat in the House of Commons already knew each other from before they got there: from school, from university, from family reunions. For a member of the upper class to buy his son a seat in the House of Commons was normal and accepted and was considered a good way of grooming men for government service, and of course it ensured aristocratic control.

Lord Robert's father, the Marquess of Salisbury is a good example. As a peer, he held his seat in the House of Lords himself, as well as multiple seats in the House of Commons that were his to give to whomever he pleased. This was not at all unusual for the time, though it seems a far cry from what we would call democracy today. But it was *how it was done* and it was defended with the argument that this was the system that had made Britain the richest and most powerful country in the world.

Lord Robert married Georgina Alderson in 1857, and their marriage was a happy one by all accounts, although Dad didn't approve. Georgina Alderson was neither titled, nor wealthy, and so she didn't measure up to the Frances Gascoyne standard of suitable wife. Dad cut off Lord Robert's stipend.

Now, members of Parliament didn't receive a salary in those days. Let's face it, the last thing that most of these guys need is money. So Lord Robert supported himself and his family by writing magazine articles on politics, which is how most of the MPs who didn't have stipends

supported themselves in those days. But Lord Robert and his father eventually reconciled. Dad really had no choice after his eldest son, the Viscount Cranborne died in 1865 at the age of 43 single and childless. This left his next oldest brother, Lord Robert, the new Viscount Cranborne and the future Marquess of Salisbury.

The following year Cranborne got his first cabinet post, Secretary of State for India, but he resigned from the government the year after that in protest of the conservatives taking up electoral reform. Pressure for electoral reform, even universal suffrage was growing, which strengthened the Liberal Party. The Conservatives hoped that by putting through some more modest electoral reforms they could neutralize the Liberal advantage on the issue. But even this was too much for Cranborne, who would be a staunch opponent of expanding the right to vote for his entire political career.

The next year, Dad died and Viscount Cranborne became the new Marquess of Salisbury. His new title made him ineligible for the House of Commons but it granted him a seat in the House of Lords, where he would become Conservative party leader, and eventually Prime Minister. Lord Salisbury would be the last Prime Minister to come to the position from the House of Lords rather than the House of Commons.

He was known to blurt out intemperate remarks that got him in trouble, the sort of remark that we would call today a “gaffe,” but which at the time people came to call “Salisburys.” Once when a fellow lord was speaking in the House, Salisbury asked a colleague who he was, and when told he exclaimed loudly enough to be heard across the entire chamber, “I thought he was dead.” On another occasion, he dismissed Irish home rule by suggesting that the Irish were no more capable of self-rule than were the “Hottentots.” I’ll just make note in passing that the Khoikhoi people of southwest Africa do not like being called Hottentots, and I will leave you to decide whether they or the Irish were the more grievously insulted party. But the fact is there were no Khoikhoi in Parliament at this time, but there were lots of Irish, and they were not pleased.

Salisbury was also the last Prime Minister not to use Number 10 Downing Street as his residence. Late in his premiership he invited his nephew and ultimate successor Arthur Balfour to live in the place. You may recall me mentioning Arthur Balfour as Prime Minister in Episode 8. Salisbury’s sister, Lady Blanche Mary Harriet Gascoyne-Cecil had married James Maitland Balfour a Scottish businessman and Conservative MP, the grandson of the Earl of Lauderdale who has made a fortune in railroads, and two of their sons, Arthur and Gerald, now held seats in the Commons. Salisbury elevated his elder nephew into his cabinet early on, when Arthur was still in his 30s, and later would appoint Gerald as well.



And here I have to go off on a tangent for a minute, and mention the British colloquialism “Bob’s your uncle,” which is used to indicate an easy way to get to a happy conclusion, as in “Plug it in, turn it on, and Bob’s your uncle”. The American equivalent might be “there you go,” or “piece of cake.” Remember how Lord Salisbury’s given name is Robert? Some sources point to his nepotistic appointment of his young nephew to the cabinet as the origin of “Bob’s your uncle,” As in “It’s not too hard to get into the cabinet if Bob’s your uncle”. I love this suggestion, and I wish I could tell you that it’s true, but there’s a problem with it. The first known instance of “Bob’s your uncle” appearing in print doesn’t happen until 1937, about 50 years after the event it’s supposed to be commenting on. It just doesn’t seem plausible to me that there are no 19<sup>th</sup> century examples of the phrase if that’s its origin. Which is a shame because that’s a great story. But back to business.

In 1886, about the same time Lord Salisbury was putting his nephew in the Cabinet, gold was discovered at a location known as the Witwatersrand, White Water Ridge, about 40 miles south of Pretoria, the capital of the South African Republic. In no time, a boom town grew up on the site. This town came to be called Johannesburg, and it soon had a population of over 60,000, most of whom were British nationals, although there were immigrants from many other countries as well. The situation became alarming to the Boers, as Johannesburg now had a larger population than all the Boers in the Transvaal. And most of the money from gold mining was being made by foreigners, largely British, but also Dutch and Germans and Americans. So the South African Republic did what most countries would do in this situation, which was to impose new taxes on gold mining to ensure that some of that money stays home in South Africa.

Black Africans were not permitted to vote in the South African Republic. So this large population of foreigners was actually bigger than the white Boer population of the South African Republic, and they threatened to take over the country electorally if they were given the right to vote. So the government made it very difficult for these immigrants to claim South African citizenship. This policy of taxation without representation was resented in Johannesburg as any American could have predicted.

I’m gonna go off on another tangent here and take note of the fact that the period here from about 1875 to 1895 was a period of economic slowdown in many countries. Including in the United States, but even more so in Great Britain and France. Modern economists sometimes refer to this period as the Long Depression. Most of the world was on the gold standard at the time, and the problem with the gold standard is that it doesn’t give you the opportunity to exercise monetary policy to stimulate the economy when there’s a slowdown. Because of the technological and economic growth of the 19th century the supply of money, that is to say gold, did not keep up. So there was a period of deflation, which slowed down the economy. You may recall that back in Episode 4 I mentioned William Jennings Bryan’s acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1896, the still well-known Cross of Gold speech. Basically what Bryan was saying in that speech was that he wanted to see an expansionary monetary

policy to combat the long depression. In 1896 expansionary monetary policy meant going from a gold standard to a gold and silver standard, because the United States was producing large quantities of new silver. That didn't happen, but the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand in South Africa began to increase the world's supply of gold. The result was that the world went from a deflation to an inflation in the 1890s. This was just the economic stimulus that everyone was looking for for so long. While this came about 20 years after it should have, at least it provided some economic stimulus and the world economy began to get moving in a higher gear.

But the British weren't thinking about that. They were thinking about how nice it would be to incorporate these gold mines into the British Empire. In 1895 a group of British soldiers of fortune loosely coordinating with colonial officials in the Cape Colony entered the Republic of South Africa with the aim of slipping into Johannesburg, arming the foreign miners there, and overthrowing the government. But the Boers were one step ahead of them, and they were captured before they got there. This became an international incident that deeply embarrassed the British. They were forced to pay an indemnity, and prosecute the invaders. Although back home in Britain the press hailed them as heroes. This is because the British government and the British press have long been portraying these miners in Johannesburg as living lives hardly better than slavery. This was an exaggeration, and more than a little one. But it touched a nerve in Britain because, hey, Britons never will be slaves, right?

In one of his famously inept diplomatic moves Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany sent a telegram to the president of the South African Republic, Paul Kruger, congratulating him for preserving his country's independence without foreign assistance. This telegram, which has come to be known to history as the Kruger Telegram, was popular in Germany, whose people also had gold mining interests in the South African Republic, but it infuriated the British, who regarded this as a strictly British colonial dispute. Not to mention what that crack about foreign assistance meant, since it sure sounded like the Kaiser was hinting that foreign military assistance might indeed be available if needed in the future, and British relations with Germany got considerably colder.

You need to bear in mind that Germany owns Southwest Africa as a colony at this point in history, and that's not very far away from the Boer Republics. Germans, and the Dutch for that matter, felt an affinity for the Boers who were culturally similar and were generally rooting for them against the British.

Actually when you read the Kruger telegram today it doesn't sound all that provocative. But it's worth bearing in mind that German foreign policy during this period was also aiming for arranging some kind of alliance with Britain. So poking the British on this sore spot right now isn't the smartest move. And so for that reason, for his clumsy attempt to curry favor with Paul Kruger while simultaneously alienating the most powerful country in the world at a time when he's supposed to be arranging an alliance with it, I would like to award this week's Kaiser Wilhelm II award for making an ass out of yourself to \*ding\* Kaiser Wilhelm II. \*cheers\*

Anyway, getting back to the South African Republic. This incident of British soldiers of fortune invading the country has come to be called the Jameson Raid. It convinced many Boers that a war with Britain was coming. The two republics concluded a military alliance, which strangely enough, they had not done yet. And the indemnity money was spent modernizing their armed forces. The dispute festered for three more years. The Boers felt that whatever the British might say about the rights of the miners in Johannesburg, what they were really interested in was conquering them, and seizing the new found gold field. The fact that the British had previously seized the diamond mines around Kimberly in Cape Colony, an area which the Orange Free State had also laid claim to, gave credence to this idea.

The British for their part were outraged by the defiant attitude of these puny little Boer states, what they saw as unjust treatment of British subjects in the South African Republic, and also ongoing objections to the appalling treatment that black South Africans got in the republics. You can already see in the system of Boer control of the state guaranteed by racial oppression and restricted voting rights, the roots of conflicts that are going to plague South Africa for a century to come.

In 1896, Queen Victoria became the longest reigning monarch in British history, after outlasting her grandfather, King George III. (That's the King George III as in the American Revolution, and the Madness of.) In 1897 the Queen and her country celebrated her Diamond Jubilee. The celebrations focused on the empire. And the high point was a procession through the streets of London by soldiers from all across the empire. Rudyard Kipling submitted a poem for the occasion. Originally it was to be "White Man's Burden." But that one got put aside and was saved until 1899 when it was repurposed as an argument in favor of Philippine annexation, as I described in Episode 6. In its place, he offered the strangely pessimistic cautionary poem, "Recessional."

*Far-called, our navies melt away;*

*On dune and headland sinks the fire:*

*Lo, all our pomp of yesterday*

*Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!*

*Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,*

*Lest we forget—lest we forget!*

*If, drunk with sight of power, we loose  
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,  
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,  
Or lesser breeds without the Law—  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!*

In Britain, in the Cape Colony and among the goldbugs, the British financiers who controlled most of the gold mining, the sentiment grew that the Boer republics had to be annexed. In September 1899, after the latest round of talks broke down, Joseph Chamberlain, the British colonial secretary, sent the Republics an ultimatum. Full equality for British residents in the South African Republic, or else. To back up the threat, colonial troops were mobilized and stationed at the borders, in fine colonial tradition. The British even began to mobilize their standing army corps in Great Britain itself, and embarking it on ships to South Africa.

The Boers responded with a counter-ultimatum. Withdraw your troops within 48 hours, turn the ships around, or it will be war.

We'll have to stop there for today. If you like *The History of the Twentieth Century* why not visit us at the iTunes store, and leave a rating and review. That will help other people to find the podcast. People who hopefully will enjoy it as much as you do. And I hope you'll join me next week for *The History of the Twentieth Century* as we look at the outbreak of the second Anglo-Boer war and what it means for Britain, for South Africa, and for the world. That's next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. In some commonwealth countries, *Recessional* is sung today as a hymn, using the same tune as the Navy hymn, *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*. Lest we forget, lest we forget.

[music: Eternal Father, Strong to Save]