

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 294

“The Year of the Three Kings”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

Madeleine Slade, the daughter of a Royal Navy admiral, became a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. She moved to his ashram in 1925, where she became known as Mirabehn. In September 1934, she met with Winston Churchill in England to discuss India.

Churchill was pleased to meet her and they exchanged their views. Afterward, one remark of Churchill’s always stuck in her mind. “I believe in truth,” he had said. It stuck with her, she said, because it sounded exactly like something the Mahatma would say.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 294. The Year of the Three Kings.

Following the 1931 general election, the National Government in Britain, though preoccupied with economic concerns, pushed forward on the question of revising and reforming the government of India. The 1919 Government of India Act had called for review in ten years, that is, 1929. We already talked about the Simon Commission and the Round Table Conferences. Those meetings had taken place, but no decision had yet been taken.

In 1933, the National Government presented a white paper on India, which led to the formation of a parliamentary committee to draft a new Government of India bill. This process took a further year and a half, during which there was much debate between the Government and its own backbench Tories in the House of Commons, led by Winston Churchill, whose role in British politics these days was almost entirely defined by trenchant opposition to the Government for not taking a strong enough stand against the Nazis in Germany and trenchant opposition to the Government for not taking a strong enough stand against the nationalists in India.

Finally, in January 1935, a new Government of India bill was introduced. It was a behemoth; in fact, it would be the longest and most complicated bill Parliament ever passed until the Greater

London Authority Act of 1999. Parliament would spend six months of drawn-out and often tedious debate on the details of the bill, but the outline remained intact.

It dangled before the nationalists the prospect of Dominion status for an all-India federation that would include British India and the princely states, though not Burma. In 1935, with the Statute of Westminster in place, Dominion status was virtually a promise of independence. Eventually.

At the provincial level, the system of diarchy that was put in place in 1919 would be eliminated. All provincial functions would be carried out by provincial ministers answerable to elected provincial legislatures. This came with one big exception, though: provincial governors would still be appointed in Britain. These provincial governors would be expected to follow the recommendations of the provincial ministers in most cases, but would have the power to overrule them when the peace and safety of the province was endangered. That exception was necessary to get support for the bill in Westminster, but it offended Indian nationalists with its implicit threat that British officials would simply veto any Indian government action they disapproved of.

On the national level, there would be a federal legislature elected by Indian voters. About one-sixth of the adult population would be eligible to vote, which represented a substantial increase over the status quo. Within British India, the Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communities would each elect their own representatives. The princely states would have their own representation in the legislature. Those representatives could be appointed by the ruler; there was no requirement for elections in the princely states.

There would still be a British viceroy, who would retain control over the army and the police and would have the power to impose taxes to pay for them. Otherwise, the federal government would be controlled by Indians.

The provincial part of the bill would go into effect upon passage. The federal part would come into effect once half the princely states consented, weighing their consents by population.

The essence of the plan was to allow some measure of democracy while still maintaining British control over the things that mattered most to the British. The princely states would get greater representation in the federal legislature than their population warranted and princes would be under no obligation to democratize. This was done to secure the support of the princes and also to give them enough power in the federal legislature to hold the Congress in check. Nevertheless, the princes, suspicious that any involvement with a democratic government would lead to pressure on them to hold elections within their own states, never gave their consent and the federal part of the Act never came into being.

The Indian National Congress also opposed the plan. They saw perfectly well how the plan was devised to favor religious and regional parties at the expense of a national movement like the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that the British, who liked to present themselves as a force for democratization and modernism, had allied themselves with the autocratic princes, the

most retrograde political force in India, and against the elected representatives of the people. With regard to the powers the British reserved for themselves, Nehru compared the plan to a machine that had strong brakes but no engine.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah of the Muslim League called it “thoroughly rotten, fundamentally bad, and unacceptable.” Separate electoral constituencies for Muslims had been a longstanding demand of the Muslim League, but in the decade of the 1930s, Jinnah’s thinking had changed, as it did among Indian Muslims generally. Separate constituencies guaranteed Muslims would hold seats in the legislatures, but it also guaranteed they would never hold a majority. Muslims could expect to be ruled by Hindus forever.

Over at the Indian National Congress, they still claimed to represent all Indians of all religions and there were still a number of prominent Muslims in the Congress, but the Hindu flavor of the organization was undeniable. It didn’t help any that Mohandas Gandhi, the undisputed leader of the Congress and the most famous Indian in the world, had also become the Mahatma, the Great Soul, a figure of reverence, virtually a living saint, among Hindus. There was something decidedly un-Muslim about that kind of devotion.

Within the Muslim League, discussion was already taking place over the possibility of a separate nation for Indian Muslims, made up of India’s predominantly Muslim northwestern provinces and Muslim Bengal. Such a nation, if it ever came into being, would represent Muslims ruling Muslims and would instantly become the world’s largest Muslim nation. In 1933, a Muslim Indian law student at Cambridge named Choudhry Rahmat Ali coined a name for this hypothetical state: Pakistan. In Urdu or Persian it meant, “the land of the pure.” It also served as a sort of acronym, combining the names of India’s Muslim provinces: P for the Punjab, A for Afghania, the northwest frontier, K for Kashmir, S for Sind, and TAN representing Baluchistan.

In the end, the bill passed Parliament by a wide margin. The Labour Party voted against it on the grounds that it did not go far enough, and despite Winston Churchill’s best effort, he was not able to drum up enough Tory opposition to defeat the bill.

Lord Linlithgow would become the next Viceroy in 1936 and would devote the following three years to an effort to win over enough of the princes to bring the federal portion of the Act into effect. He was unable to persuade them. And in 1939—

But that is a topic for a future episode.

[music: Elgar, *The Crown of India*]

May 1935 marked the Silver Jubilee celebration for the British King George V. This was the first occasion on which a British monarch celebrated a silver jubilee. The concept of a jubilee comes from Jewish Scripture, where the Book of Leviticus dictates that every fifty years—or maybe 49 years, depending on which rabbi you listen to—slaves would be freed, debts forgiven, and all

real estate returned to its original owners. Understandably, this was seen as a time of celebration. In 19th century Christian Europe, royal jubilees were seen as 50-year events, what we would now call golden jubilees. Queen Victoria had no silver jubilee in 1862; she probably wouldn't have wanted one, since she had lost her beloved husband, Prince Albert, just a few months earlier. She did celebrate her Golden Jubilee in 1887 with a grand banquet attended by dozens of European royals. Her grandson, Kaiser Wilhelm II, celebrated his "silver jubilee" a year earlier, in 1886. This appears to be the first instance of a silver jubilee celebration.

King George's father, Edward VII, did not reign 25 years, so George's own 1935 Silver Jubilee celebration represented the first ever for a British monarch. This time, the King's Jubilee, May 6, was declared a bank holiday and celebrated across the United Kingdom. The King himself attended a thanksgiving service at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. That evening, he addressed the nation on a radio broadcast. Eight days later, Buckingham Palace hosted an intimate ball for the King's two thousand closest friends. There were celebrations and good wishes offered across the nation, across the Empire, and across the world. Canada issued a special purple \$25 banknote for the occasion, the only \$25 bill ever issued in Canada. In Penzance, they opened a Jubilee swimming pool, and a special dish was created for the occasion: Jubilee chicken, dressed with mayonnaise and curry powder.

It seems even the King himself was taken aback by this outpouring of affection. He is supposed to have said, "I cannot understand it; after all I am only a very ordinary sort of fellow."

By this time, alas, the King, now 69 years old, was in poor health. Perhaps the British public sensed it. Also in poor health was his prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald, who was 68. MacDonald complained of loss of memory and his public utterances tended to ramble into incoherence. For Britain to be governed by old men when the young and vigorous Adolf Hitler was openly rearming Germany in violation of the Treaty of Versailles caused alarm among some, including, no surprise here, Winston Churchill.

MacDonald and the King apparently had a close relationship. They were almost the same age and likely had similar outlooks on the world, despite their backgrounds being about as different as you could imagine. MacDonald wanted to be prime minister during the Silver Jubilee, and so he made an agreement with Conservative Party leader Stanley Baldwin that he would step down afterward. On June 7, MacDonald resigned and for the third and final time, Stanley Baldwin moved into Number Ten and shortly afterward called a general election, which was held in November 1935.

The circumstances facing Britain in 1935 were quite different from what the National Government faced in 1931. The economy was on the mend. Chancellor of the Exchequer Neville Chamberlain had had to introduce unpopular budget cuts in his first years, due to the economic crisis and British war debt. By 1935, thanks to the strengthening economy and the end of the gold standard, the budget was back in surplus and Chamberlain had the opportunity to restore

some of what had been taken away. Unfortunately, hopes that the new Democratic President of the United States, Franklin Roosevelt, might look more favorably on debt relief than his Republican predecessors had had been dashed, but even so, the government's fiscal position was stronger than it had been in years.

On the other hand, 1935 was also the year that the German rearmament program became public. The British Cabinet had been forced to increase spending on the RAF, the Royal Air Force, and the years to come would likely see additional increases in spending for national defense. Chamberlain wanted Baldwin and the Government to make British rearmament part of the campaign, lest the government be accused later of deceiving the public about British defense needs, but Baldwin was reluctant to do this. You'll recall the Oxford debate and the Peace Ballot we talked about in episode 284. British pacifism had already cost the government seats in by-elections and Labour was openly pacifist and likely to pounce on any talk of rearmament, so Baldwin was not of a mind to make rearmament a major topic of the election campaign. Not when it was likely to cost seats. Baldwin would later be much criticized for this timid approach to rearmament. Winston Churchill will later call it "putting party before country." Baldwin's defenders argue that he pushed rearmament as much as he could, given the public mood. On the hustings, he pledged to modernize British defenses, while also promising the Government would not begin any major arms buildup.

The Conservative Party was the backbone of the National Government, but the coalition also included the splinter Liberal National Party, led by Sir John Simon, and National Labour, led by Ramsay MacDonald. Opposing the Government were the main Liberal Party, now led by Herbert Samuels, and the main Labour Party. Labour had been led by George Lansbury, a radical socialist who had praised the Bolsheviks but also preached a stubborn Christian pacifism. Lansbury had the thankless job of leading the small Parliamentary Labour Party in opposition to the National Government and his own former colleague, Ramsay MacDonald. October 1935 was the month Italy invaded Ethiopia. At the Labour Party conference in Brighton that same month, Lansbury stuck to his pacifist guns—so to speak—and discovered that the Italian invasion of Ethiopia had shifted the mood of his Party considerably. Labour members wanted at least trade sanctions against Italy. And so, the 76-year-old Lansbury resigned as Party leader.

He was succeeded by his 53-year-old deputy, Clement Atlee, whom we've met before. Atlee's leadership was seen as temporary, and of course going into an election just weeks after assuming leadership is far from ideal, but under Atlee, Labour gained 102 seats, nearly tripling the paltry 52 seats it had been left with after the 1931 election. It seemed the damage done by the split in the Party and the expulsion of Ramsay MacDonald had been undone, and there was much rejoicing among Labourites.

The National Government coalition lost 125 seats, most of them Tories. Even so, the Government coalition retained 429 seats, more than two-thirds of the House. In what must have been a crushing blow, Ramsay MacDonald lost his own seat to a Labour challenger. He would be

restored to the House of Commons in a by-election two months later, but his health continued to deteriorate, and he passed away in November 1937, at the age of 71.

The once-dominant Liberal Party lost 11 of the 32 seats it held in the old Parliament, including that of its Leader, Herbert Samuel. Samuel would be ennobled and take a seat in the House of Lords; he would be succeeded as Liberal Party Leader by his deputy, Archibald Sinclair.

On Christmas 1935, King George delivered a Royal Christmas speech over the radio. The BBC had approached the King years earlier about giving such a speech to help inaugurate its new Empire Service. The King had resisted the idea at first, expressing his doubts that anyone would want to listen to the King at Christmastime, but the BBC eventually persuaded him to give it a go on Christmas 1932. That speech was well received, and became the first of an annual tradition. British monarchs have broadcast Christmas speeches to the people of Britain and the Empire, and later the Commonwealth, ever since, first on radio and later on television, with just two exceptions. The popularity of these radio addresses might have had something to do with the outpouring of affection during the King's Silver Jubilee.

Alas, this would be the King's last Christmas speech. He fell ill in January 1936, and passed away on the twentieth day of that month, at the age of 70. The German composer Paul Hindemith—whose music was condemned as “degenerate” by the Nazis in his home country—was in London at the time, preparing for a performance of his viola concerto *Der Schwanendreher* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, directed by Adrian Boult, scheduled to be broadcast the following evening. The concert was cancelled upon news of the King's death, leaving the BBC to ponder what sort of music to play in its place. Hindemith sat down in a BBC office and over the course of six hours composed a piece of music for viola and string orchestra, *Trauermusik*, which means “Mourning Music.” It was performed live on the BBC that evening, with Boult conducting and Hindemith as soloist. The piece includes a quotation from a famous old German chorale, well known both in Germany and in the English-speaking world, where the tune is often referred to as “Old One Hundredth.”

[music: “Old One Hundredth.”]

King George V lay in state in Westminster Hall the night before his funeral. In a remarkable and unprecedented display of affection, the King's four surviving sons held an all-night vigil, an event remembered as the Vigil of the Princes. Nothing like it would be seen again for the rest of the century.

The King had fathered six children altogether: one daughter, Princess Mary, and five sons. One of those sons, Prince John, had epilepsy and had died of a seizure in 1919 at the age of 13. That left four princes: Edward of Wales, Albert, Duke of York, Henry, Duke of Gloucester, and George, Duke of Kent, who were at the time of their father's death 41, 40, 35, and 33, respectively, and these were the four princes who held that long-remembered vigil.

The Prince of Wales, as heir apparent, became King Edward VIII upon the death of his father. By that time, he had already cemented his reputation as something of a royal bad boy. He disdained protocol, and often even common manners, and loved to party. He attended the Royal Naval College and Oxford University, though he did not earn a degree.

He enlisted in the Army when the Great War broke out, although Lord Kitchener refused to assign him to the front, on the grounds that the risk the enemy might take the heir apparent prisoner was unacceptable. In 1917, while he was on leave in Paris, he began a relationship with an older, married woman. He broke it off after a year, but this proved to be just the first of a series of relationships with married women that ran through the 1920s and into the 1930s. At the death of his father, he was still unmarried himself.

The biography of his next younger brother, Albert, begins similarly. Albert also attended the Royal Naval College, only he stayed in the Navy and served there during the war. He served as a turret officer aboard the dreadnought battleship HMS *Collingwood* during the Battle of Jutland, episode 123. After the war, he studied at Cambridge for a year.

Albert followed in his big brother's footsteps when he fell for a married Australian socialite in 1920. In this case, though, his father offered him the title Duke of York in exchange for ending the affair, and Albert took the deal. Soon afterward, he renewed his acquaintance with a childhood friend, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. In 1921, he proposed. She turned him down. He tried again in 1922, and she turned him down again. The third time, she gave in and agreed to marry him, and they were wed in 1923. The couple would have two daughters, Elizabeth, born in 1926, and Margaret, born in 1930.

It was a bit unorthodox for royalty to marry the daughter of a mere earl; it was seen at the time as evidence of the more modern and liberal spirit of the twentieth century. On the other hand, getting married and settling down was what was expected from a prince, as opposed to, you know, chasing cougars. On the plus side, both princes took an interest in the well-being of the British working classes and took royal tours poking around coal mines, factories, rail yards, and other such places that were previously unaccustomed to greeting members of the Royal Family, and the two became advocates, to a degree, of the poor and unfortunate. In these public appearances, Prince Albert was at a considerable disadvantage, due to a stammer that made his public speeches awkward and uncomfortable, both for him and for his audience.

The prince was troubled enough by his stammer to engage the services of an Australian-born actor turned elocution teacher turned speech therapist named Lionel Logue, who taught the prince techniques to manage the condition. By the early 1930s, Albert was able to deliver a reasonably smooth speech, although he continued to consult with Logue on occasion, especially before a major public appearance.

Prince Edward maintained a cavalier attitude toward his royal duties and even toward the Crown itself. In 1929, *Time* magazine published a profile of the royals. It described how adorable the

then-three-year-old Princess Elizabeth was when she announced herself as “Lilybet, the p’incess.” The article also noted rumors that Edward was contemplating renouncing his succession rights in favor of his brother Albert and was fond of addressing the elder Elizabeth—Albert’s wife, Edward’s sister-in-law—as “Queen Elizabeth.” *Time* noted that “it must be a trifle nerve-wracking” to be addressed as a queen by someone who has it in their power to make you one.

In 1934, Prince Edward began a relationship with the latest in his string of married women. This one was a 37-year-old American named Wallis Simpson. Born to a prominent family in Baltimore, Wallis was already on her second husband, American-born British businessman Ernest Simpson, after having divorced her first, a US Navy officer. Soon Edward and Wallis were traveling together, mostly on his money, and sleeping together, though the prince denied the relationship to his parents. He also lavished expensive gifts on her.

This relationship lasted for two years and through the death of the King. Now Edward was King, and he wasn’t particularly restrained about appearing in public with Wallis Simpson. Wallis, for her part, filed for divorce and began telling her friends that she would soon be Queen of England.

The Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police had been shadowing the couple for years. They reported that Wallis Simpson had Nazi sympathies, which appears to have been untrue, and that she had the Prince of Wales, and later the King, wrapped around her little finger, which was absolutely true.

The evidence for Wallis Simpson as a Nazi sympathizer was thin; the evidence that the King was a Nazi sympathizer is stronger. The King was known to have had strong racist views. When Ethiopian Emperor-in-exile Haile Selassie came to Britain in 1936, King Edward did not invite him to the palace, and he opposed British sanctions against Italy over its invasion of Ethiopia.

The British press maintained a discreet silence about the affair between the King and Wallis Simpson, but the foreign press and the press in Canada were less discreet. In the United States, the prospect of an American marrying the British King was perceived as an exciting possibility. But the news soon began to leak back into Britain informally, and the British public couldn’t help but notice moments such as the time when King Edward cancelled his scheduled appearance at the dedication of a new wing of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, officially because he was still in mourning for the death of his father, although in fact he stood up the dedication ceremony to spend time with Wallis.

The British Government of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin needed neither Mrs. Simpson’s private remarks nor Special Branch nor the foreign press to tell them the King was contemplating marrying her as soon as her divorce from her second husband was finalized. The signs were obvious. After snubbing the Ethiopian Emperor, the King forewent the usual summer vacation at Balmoral Castle in Scotland in favor of a holiday in the Eastern Mediterranean, accompanied by

Mrs. Simpson. Again, the foreign press gave that vacation trip intense coverage, while the British press pretended they hadn't noticed.

Edward's antics, first as Prince of Wales and then as King had already alienated the Royal Family and the ministers of the National Government. Wallis was seen as a grasping woman, pursuing Edward for his money, and having an unhealthy degree of influence over him. The idea of a British King marrying an American was hard to take for many British elites. But the key problem was that Wallis Simpson would be twice divorced and that alone made her, in their minds, unfit to be Queen.

This may be difficult to understand for people in our time, but you have to remember that in the 1930s divorce was highly unusual. It was considered a moral failing and generally regarded as scandalous. Most churches, including most Protestant churches and definitely including the Church of England, viewed marriage as a lifelong commitment. They would not perform weddings nor recognize marriages in cases where one of the couple had living ex-spouses; the Church viewed this as adultery. It was an especially sticky problem since the King is officially the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. The Archbishop of Canterbury was particularly insistent that marrying a divorced person was inconsistent with the King's role as head of the church.

Within the Cabinet, sentiment solidified that Wallis Simpson simply could not become Queen. Stanley Baldwin approached the King on the matter and told him bluntly that the British public would oppose the marriage and that if he went ahead with it against ministerial advice, that would be a grave constitutional violation and the entire Cabinet would be forced to resign. To Baldwin's surprise, the King replied that if the Government opposed his marrying Wallis, then he was prepared to renounce the Crown. Baldwin had not considered this possibility; his goal had been to block the marriage, not to depose the King. Baldwin backed down at this point and offered to take the matter back to Cabinet for further discussion.

If the King absolutely insisted on marrying Wallis Simpson, that left three options. Option one: Wallis becomes Queen. Option two: the marriage be made morganatic. That is, they would be married as private persons, but Wallis would not become Queen and any children they might have would be excluded from the succession. Morganatic marriages were sometimes agreed to among European royals, as in the case of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, as we saw in episode 74, but they were unprecedented in Britain. The third option would be for Edward to abdicate, in which case he would afterward be free to do as he pleased.

A further complication was that under the Statute of Westminster, any abdication or change to the succession had to be approved by the governments of the Dominions. We're down to five Dominions now, since Newfoundland gave up Dominion status. The sentiment among the governments of the Dominions, where the press had been reporting freely on the affair between Edward and Wallis and the public reaction was mostly negative, was that abdication was the only

acceptable option. The Prime Minister of New Zealand expressed a willingness to go along with whatever solution they came up with in Westminster, but the other Dominions, led by Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King, were adamant.

In Parliament, the leaders of the opposition Labour Party, Clement Atlee, and the Liberal Party, Sir Archbald Sinclair, also agreed that only abdication was acceptable. Winston Churchill, as usual, bucked the Government and pushed for option two, the morganatic marriage. Churchill also advised slowing down the process in the hope that the relationship between Edward and Wallis might end on its own.

But Baldwin was not of a mind to wait. On December 3, the King and his prime minister held an uncomfortable meeting, in which Baldwin pushed for abdication. The King proposed he be permitted to speak to the nation over the BBC and plead his case for option two. Baldwin refused to consent to such a speech, as it amounted to the King trying to go over the heads of his own Government and appeal directly to the public, another contravention of British constitutional custom.

Baldwin left the meeting convinced that King simply did not respect the traditional limits to Crown authority. He must have been very relieved two days later, when the King finally agreed to abdicate.

On December 10, 1936, Edward signed his abdication notices. They were witnessed by his three younger brothers. The following day, Parliament approved the abdication. The Parliament of Australia, which was in session at the time, also approved the abdication. In Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand, where the parliaments were not in session, the cabinets of those nations approved. These approvals were subsequently ratified by the parliaments of Canada and South Africa.

In the Irish Free State, the parliament's response was to amend the constitution of Ireland to eliminate all references to the British monarch. The following year, a new constitution renamed the state simply "Ireland," created the ceremonial office of President of Ireland, and generally gave the appearance of converting Ireland into a republic, although the constitution did not officially declare it so. From 1937 to 1949, whether or not the British monarch was also the sovereign in Ireland was a bit ambiguous. The new King never visited Ireland during that period, and Ireland did not participate in the British Commonwealth. So the abdication of Edward VIII has to be regarded at least as an important milestone in the evolution of Ireland into a republic, if not the actual moment the transition was complete. For the next twelve years, it would be a matter of interpretation.

On December 11, Edward spoke to the nation over the BBC. He was introduced to the public as "His Royal Highness Prince Edward." He gave a moderate speech—Winston Churchill had a hand in drafting it—in which he explained his decision to abdicate with the famous words: "I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties

as King as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love.” He noted that his future wife had tried to talk him out of abdicating, but he believed it would be best for all concerned and expressed confidence in his brother’s ability to take his place.

Prince Albert took the regnal name George VI, as an expression of continuity with the reign of his father. The new King’s first official act was to resolve the ambiguity around his elder brother’s status by conferring upon him the title Duke of Windsor and the style Royal Highness.

Edward left the country after his abdication and never lived in Britain again. He married Wallis Simpson in France in June 1937, after her divorce was final, and that was where they settled. She would become Duchess of Windsor, but was denied the style Royal Highness, which she took as a snub.

The British government declined to put the Duke and Duchess of Windsor on the Civil List, meaning they got no money from the government, but George VI paid them an allowance personally. The new King also had to buy Balmoral Castle and Sandringham House from the Duke, as they had become his personal property, so the Duke and Duchess had plenty of money; don’t feel sorry for them.

Not that they didn’t feel sorry for themselves. Edward repeatedly implored the King to send him more money, requests the King refused. George VI had his formal coronation at Westminster Abbey in May of 1937. Unlike his father and grandfather, he would not enjoy a Durbar in Delhi to celebrate his accession to the title Emperor of India. Given the nationalist sentiment in that country, it seemed likely such an event would spark protests, even violence.

Relations between the Duke of Windsor and the Royal Family were strained for a long time afterward. In 1937, the Duke and Duchess visited Germany, over the objections of the British Government, where they hobnobbed with Adolf Hitler and gave Nazi salutes. The visit got much attention in the German press and led Hitler to lament that relations with Britain would have been so much better had Edward remained King.

And despite concerns that Wallis Simpson was manipulating Edward, or primarily interested in his money, their marriage lasted until Edward’s death in 1972.

The doubts about Wallis Simpson’s sincerity and Edward’s fitness to reign as King were largely shoved to one side after the abdication, which was romantically depicted as a man giving up rule over the greatest empire the world had ever seen for the hand of the woman he loved. The Duchess of Windsor was more pragmatic. Shortly before her own death in 1986, she remarked, “You have no idea how hard it is to live out a great romance.”

The abdication crisis damaged the image of the monarchy in Britain. Labour Party MP George Hardie, the brother of Keir Hardie, whom we have already met, remarked that Edward VIII did more to advance the cause of republicanism than fifty years of political campaigning had. And

George VI would find during his reign that his biggest challenge was to restore public confidence in the monarchy.

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd especially like to thank Erik for his kind donation, and thank you to Joe for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Erik and Joe help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone. They also keep Mrs. History of the Twentieth Century happy, and when she's happy, I'm happy, 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 and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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If I sound like Sylvester the Cat in today's podcast, that's because of the sound of air passing through the space where I used to have an eyetooth, but it had to go. With luck, this will be the last episode in which I sound like this, but you'll have to wait for the next episode to find out for sure. Speaking of which...

Next week is a bye week for the podcast, but I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time, here on *The History of the Twentieth Century*. I'll be back from the Worldcon and ready to continue our march toward war, as we get caught up on recent developments in Spain and find out what happens when the bottle is uncorked. That's in two weeks' time, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. Following the death of King George VI in 1952, his wife Queen Elizabeth wrote to Lionel Logue, the King's speech therapist, and told him "I know better than anyone just how much you helped the King, not only with his speech, but through that his whole life and his outlook on life. I shall always be deeply grateful to you for all you did for him."

Lionel Logue died in 1953, at the age of 73.

In 2010, a British historical drama, *The King's Speech*, a film about the relationship between Logue and King George, was released. It was written by David Seidler and directed by Tom Hooper, starring Australian actor Geoffrey Rush as Logue. After English actors Paul Bettany and Hugh Grant both turned down the role, the part of King George was played by English actor Colin Firth.

The King's Speech was praised for his historical accuracy and its honest portrayal of the challenge of managing a stutter. The Logue family allowed access to Logue's original notes, some of which were incorporated into the final film, most memorably the exchange following the climactic speech that gives the film its title, when Logue tells the King, "You still stammered on the W," and the King replies, "I had to throw in a few so they would know it was me."

The King's Speech received twelve Academy Award nominations, and won four: Best Original Screenplay for Seidler, Best Director for Hooper, Best Actor for Firth, and Best Picture. It was nominated for 14 BAFTA awards and won seven: Best Original Screenplay, Best Music, Best Supporting Actress to Helena Bonham Carter, who played Queen Elizabeth, Best Supporting Actor to Rush, Best Actor to Firth, Best Film, and Outstanding British Film.

[music: Closing Theme]