

# [On europe in the mid twentieth century. as](https://assignbuster.com/on-europe-in-the-mid-twentieth-century-as/)

On June 28, 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand took place. This was thelittle match that ignited the bond fire of the First World War. As J. BowyerBell put it, “ The assassinationat Sarajevo was certainly the crucial precedent of the European war that itsconspirators had sought, but was not the historical cause … The assassinationacted as a lever, prying the various powers into predictable paths.” Tocomprehend and understand World War One as a whole and how this “ little match” acted as a lever, we need to understand what happened before the assassinationof Archduke Ferdinand. During 1914, Europe was on the verge of transformation. Germany, Britain, France and Austria-Hungary were fighting over influence, control and land.

TheOttoman Empire was only a silhouette of its former self-while Russia wasgaining more power and influence. Likewise, smaller nations were strugglingtowards independence to fulfill their aspiration of becoming a sovereign state. The aftermathof the Great War was massive and affected almost every person on earth. New nationssaw the light of day, four powerful empires came to a halt, and the unpredictablegrowth of an astonishing number of social and political movements, such asnationalism, changed the world’s political scene forever.  Just interms of technology, the Great War changed the world on a massive scale neverseen before. Planes and cars had existed prior to the Great War, but by 1918, “ we see tanks, diesel fuel, bombers, fighters, and large planes ready to be converted into the first airliners.” Thetragedies were massive. “ Althoughcompletely accurate records are impossible, the war caused close to 40 millioncasualties – killed and wounded – including nearly 10 million dead soldiers ina world whose population was only a quarter of what it is today.

” Be that as it may, why begin World War One? Why proceed with astandout amongst the most dangerous events in world history?  There hadcertainly been enough talk about a European war during the early parts of thetwentieth century. Most often, it was spoken about as a must, fueled by seas ofrevolutionary ideas, protests, labor instability, and above all, intensenationalism, which together came to control the course of Europe in the midtwentieth century. As mentionedpreviously, cultural hatred and nationalism was something that was happeningall over Europe, specifically in the Balkans.

In 1908, ruler Franz Josef had officially seized Bosnia and Herzegovina. This takeover fueled anti-austrian hatred all over the Balkans, includingSerbia. This also gave Austria a strategic base that could be used for militaryoperations against Serbia.  After the1905 and 1911 Moroccan crisis, Italy saw Ottoman land being outwardly handedout and decided to go to war. The war lasted about a month and Italy successfullyseized Libya. The Balkanstates, seeing how easily the Ottoman Empire could be defeated, formed analliance and attacked in the First Balkan War. Countries like Greece, Serbiaand Bulgaria, with Russian support, formed the “ Balkan League” and together, successfully drove out the Ottomans entirely for the first time in 600 years.

However, within a month after the first war, Bulgaria, unhappy with the splitterritories, decided to attack Serbia. After the collapse of the Balkan Leagueand Russia’s crystal clear pro-Serbian stance in the second Balkan war, Russiawas left with Serbia as its only ally.  Both Germanyand Austria were worried by Serbia’s growth and development in both size andpower. Since the majority of German-speaking people viewed Serbia as a threat, Austria was prepared and eager to put its foot down and stop Slavic patriotismand Serbian growth overall.

Similarly, after loosing a war to japan and beingunable to stop the Bosnian takeover in 1908, the Czar of Russia was alsoprepared to put his foot down. The major sides were playing off one against theother and in the center, a match that was prepared to be ignited. And thenFranz Ferdinand went to Sarajevo.