

On europe in the mid
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On June 28, 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand took place. This was the little match that ignited the bonfire of the First World War. As J. Bowyer Bell put it, "The assassination at Sarajevo was certainly the crucial precedent of the European war that its conspirators had sought, but was not the historical cause ... The assassination acted as a lever, prying the various powers into predictable paths." To comprehend 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 assassination of Archduke Ferdinand. During 1914, Europe was on the verge of transformation. Germany, Britain, France and Austria-Hungary were fighting over influence, control and land. The Ottoman Empire was only a silhouette of its former self while Russia was gaining more power and influence. Likewise, smaller nations were struggling towards independence to fulfill their aspiration of becoming a sovereign state. The aftermath of the Great War was massive and affected almost every person on earth. New nations saw the light of day, four powerful empires came to a halt, and the unpredictable growth of an astonishing number of social and political movements, such as nationalism, changed the world's political scene forever. Just in terms of technology, the Great War changed the world on a massive scale never seen 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." The tragedies were massive. "Although completely accurate records are impossible, the war caused close to 40 million casualties - killed and wounded - including nearly 10 million dead soldiers in a 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 a stand-out amongst the most dangerous events in world history? There had certainly been enough talk about a European war during the early parts of the twentieth century. Most often, it was spoken about as a must, fueled by seas of revolutionary ideas, protests, labor instability, and above all, intense nationalism, which together came to control the course of Europe in the mid-twentieth century. As mentioned previously, cultural hatred and nationalism was something that was happening all 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, including Serbia. This also gave Austria a strategic base that could be used for military operations against Serbia. After the 1905 and 1911 Moroccan crisis, Italy saw Ottoman land being outwardly handed out and decided to go to war. The war lasted about a month and Italy successfully seized Libya. The Balkan states, seeing how easily the Ottoman Empire could be defeated, formed an alliance and attacked in the First Balkan War. Countries like Greece, Serbia and 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 split territories, decided to attack Serbia. After the collapse of the Balkan League and Russia’s crystal clear pro-Serbian stance in the second Balkan war, Russia was left with Serbia as its only ally. Both Germany and Austria were worried by Serbia’s growth and development in both size and power.

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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 patriotism and Serbian growth overall.

Similarly, after losing a war to Japan and being unable to stop the Bosnian takeover in 1908, the Czar of Russia was also prepared to put his foot down. The major sides were playing off one against the other and in the center, a match that was prepared to be ignited. And then Franz Ferdinand went to Sarajevo.