



Terrorist: Gavrilo Princip, the Assassin Who Ignited World War I

Henrik Rehr (Illustrations)

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"I am not a criminal, because I destroyed that which was evil. I think that I'm good."--Gavrilo Princip, October 23, 1914.

This much we know: On June 28, 1914, a young man stood on a street corner in Sarajevo, aimed a pistol into a stalled car carrying Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, and pulled the trigger. Within a few minutes, the archduke was dead, and Europe would not know peace again for five years. More than 16 million people would die in the fighting that came to be known as World War I.

Little else is known about the young man named Gavrilo Princip. How could a poor student from a tiny Serbian village turn the wheel of history and alter the face of a continent for generations? Henrik Rehr's dark and riveting graphic novel fills the gaps in the historical record and imagines in insightful detail the events that led a boy from Obljaj to become one of history's most significant terrorist.

Terrorist: Gavrilo Princip, the Assassin Who Ignited World War I Details

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From Reader Review Terrorist: Gavrilo Princip, the Assassin Who Ignited World War I for online ebook

Jenny says

I wish history was taught to students through graphic novels like this. I gained a lot of information about what triggered World War I that I had never learned in any history class I took. I never realized that things were so tense in Europe before World War I. People felt oppressed and many were afraid to voice their opinions. A group of young Serbs who loved their people and felt oppressed thought they were doing the right thing and that it would help Serbs in the long run, but the war took out over a quarter of the Serbian population. It helps to see things through other people's perspective, even when they are perceived as the enemy.

Philip says

If you could go back in time and kill Hitler, would you?

I've often wondered that when dealing with speculative time-travel executions, why do we always focus on Hitler, and never Gavrilo Princip?

Again: highly speculative. Highly flawed reasoning here. But if killing Hitler avoids the Holocaust, and WWII - would killing Princip avoid WWI, and therefore also the Holocaust and WWII?

Maybe you agree with what Otto Von Bismarck's 1878 statement, "Europe today is a powder keg, and the leaders are like men smoking in an arsenal... A single spark will set off an explosion that will consume us all... I can't tell you when that explosion will occur, but I can tell you where... Some damned foolish thing in the Balkans will set it off."

Maybe you're saying killing Princip wouldn't stop the arrival of The Great War - because the people wanted it. Europe was ripe for it. There was no stopping it.

But couldn't we say the same thing for killing Hitler?

Henrik Rehr's graphic novel is superb. It captures a piece of history many are unfamiliar with. I bet the average educated person would know the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand II set into motion the opening moves of WWI - pieces which had been assembled for quite some time. But I don't believe many would know who Gavrilo Princip was, or why he committed the act.

Sure, Rehr's graphic novel is historical fiction. He adds dialogue and takes some liberties. But (for some reason) I didn't know that there were footprints and a commemorative plaque in Sarajevo *celebrating* this spark.

(The inscription here essentially reads, "In this place on 28 June in the year 1914, Gavrilo Princip's gunshot

expressed a national protest against tyranny and the centuries-old aspiration of our people for freedom.")

The title, "Terrorist," too is interesting. The book was written by a Danish author/artist who moved to New York - and witnessed the 9-11 attacks. But Princip's action *was* that of a terrorist, no? And it's a good reminder that terrorism isn't new, and we can only address the problems of terrorism if we address the causes, rather than the effects.

Sure, there are plenty of reasons against killing Hitler. Take for instance, this fairly convincing piece. (The best argument against is that we're pitting the *chance* to avoid the Holocaust against the surety of winning the war in the end... i.e. what if Germany wins if Hitler dies?)

Here's what I would do: I'd go back in time and talk to Princip. We'd get back in my time machine, and I'd take him to shortly after WWI - and show him all the destruction. 1.3 Million Serbs killed...

Then, we'll go to shortly after WWII. Maybe I can change his mind? Maybe he'll be the biggest advocate of world peace we will have ever known.

It's not that I want to go back in time to kill Princip. It's just that I'm surprised nobody ever asks.

Mark Allard-Will says

This is certainly one of the harder Books I've reviewed and not only for its subject, but also for my opinion of it; that being mixed and confused.

A biographical account of the life behind the infamous Gavrilo Princip and his motivations for the assassination of Franz Ferdinand is a big ask, and whilst it largely delivers, it does so with constantly shifting sympathies; something that becomes very grating in the latter half of the Book.

So, if I dislike it so, why have I rated it four stars? Well, whilst there are substantial gaps in the recorded history of Princip's life, the Book makes a stunningly well-educated guess as to the filler of these gaps; so much so that it's absolutely seamless. Rehr has clearly researched every inch of material available on Princip and it shows.

The Artwork is stunning with its dark, heavily saturated charcoal appearance. Page layout is largely easy to manoeuvre and whilst character identification is mostly fast and simple, there are a couple instances where we see similar characters with similar moustaches and similar facial shapes in similar positioning in the same "talking head" sequence of panels. Rehr is clearly not scared of the time and dedication required for big, expansive landscape backgrounds and the results are beautiful.

A worthwhile read, but be prepared for some moralistic flip-flopping.

Ethan Holman says

The book I read is called Terrorist, I think the book genre is action and adventure. The author of Terrorist is Henrick Rehr. The book Terrorist was a good book in my opinion. The characters in this book show a lot of

patriotism to the country (Serbia). The main character in this book is Gavrilo Princip, as you can tell from the title of the book. The book is about Gavrilo and a few other Serbians wanting to assassinate The Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The reason for them to assassinate the Archduke is because the Austrians have taken over Serbia. The Serbians feel that they need to do their civic duty by killing him. They planned how they would pull off the assassination and got the supplies they needed to do it. Each one of the members were given a pack of cyanide (this is a poison that will kill you almost instantly). If one of the members were to kill or attempt to kill the Archduke they were to eat the cyanide packets. In the book the cyanide packets didn't work (I believe it's because there wasn't enough) so the ones that attempted to kill the Archduke were captured(including Gavrilo) by Austrian soldiers. In the book Gavrilo had given up on killing the Archduke because the others had attempted and failed and the Archduke got away. The men who attempted to kill the Archduke threw a grenade at the wrong car driving by. Gavrilo went to a nearby cafe and had thought he had failed his country. The Archduke felt that he needed to go to the hospital to honor the men that died for him. So while Gavrilo was sitting in the cafe having a self pity party, the Archduke car was coming down the road. Gavrilo heard all the commotion outside so he stepped out of the cafe and to his surprise the Archduke's car was right in front of him. So he pulled the pistol he had in his coat out and shot the Archduke and his wife as they drove past. After he fired off his gun he took the cyanide, but like the others it didn't work and he was tackled by a guard. The Archduke's wife died almost instantly and The Archduke died in a hospital shortly after. To honor Gavrilos bravery and the Archduke, the Serbians built an concrete slab where Gavrilo stood to shoot the Archduke. In the end Gavrilo spent the rest of his life in a cell at the Terezin prison camp. On the wall of his cell he wrote a poem " Our ghosts will walk through Vienna and roam the palace frightening the lords." In conclusion this is a good book and I would recommend it if you like action and adventure. Many may think that what Gavrilo did was bad and I would have too if I hadn't read this book. After reading this book I now realize that what he did was for a cause that he dearly believed would help his people become free from the Austrians.

Barbara says

This fascinating graphic novel account of the events that led to WWI shines the spotlight on Gavrilo Princip, the man who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie on the streets of Sarajevo. Although the author spends a great deal of time focusing on that particular day, June 28, 1914, he also explores the early days of both victim and assassin. When the young Serb leaves his village to study in the city, he is filled with ambition and excited about his future as well as proud of his heritage. But that positive attitude quickly changes when he ends up rooming with a landlady and not his older brother. For reasons not explained, he does poorly in school but falls in with a group of philosophers and revolutionaries. As conditions worsen, he gets caught up in the assassination plot. All of those involved were determined to die in their attempt. Most astonishing of all is that the first attempt on the archduke's life fails, and that Princip happens to be at the right place at the right time when his target passes by, offering him a chance to get things right. There are no heroes here, and readers like me who only received a one- or two-line description of the assassination from history texts will be a lot more informed about the men behind the plot and their motivations after reading this book. This account provides food for thought and an exploration of what might bring someone to take the life of a political figure and what might lead someone to an act of terrorism. Poverty, bigotry, oppression, desperation, illness, and a desire to act on behalf of one's cultural group all play a part in motivating the assassination. For those insights alone, it is worth reading and reading again. It's also worth reading to explore whether the actions of one man can change history. Arguably, other events might have eventually led to WWI, but the fact of the matter is that this one caused a whole line of political dominoes to fall. I was mesmerized by this account of a little-explored part of history and by the emotionally

stunning illustrations used in the story. As I reached the concluding pages and read about Princip's death in 1918 weighing 88 pounds, I couldn't help but feel sorrow for a life lost.

Howell Murray says

An interesting and fairly detailed historical novel about the assassination that set off World War I. The drawings are very dark and intensely cross-hatched, giving the story the look of a hundred years ago and a world where thunderclouds were gathering. At first it was a little difficult to follow, but I grew to enjoy as I read more. It's about the foolishness of young men, the evils of imperialism and how conquered people can grow twisted in their understandable resentment. And it asks the question, are assassination or terrorism ever justified?

David Schaafsma says

The publisher catalogues this as fiction, and author Rehr agrees, as for this story he invents scenes and dialogue, based on what he knows from the factual history. There's some mistakes in it, too, factual errors, but what history text doesn't have some, and what biography of a WWI doesn't have some invention or speculation in it! This is really a project of historical fiction by the Danish author of 24 graphic novels who now lives in NYC, where he researched for this book at the NY Public Library, but it seems to be faithful to the facts and spirit of Princip's life and at least hints at the complexities leading to WWI, the Great War.

Okay, I'm not a historian. My angle on it, besides history courses, is informed by a lot of texts, films, fiction, history, some of them read recently, some of them graphic novels, (see below) some of them by Jacques Tardi, but you know, this is roughly the hundred year anniversary of the war, so there's a lot of books still coming out about it. John Reed's *The Days That Shook the World* was highly influential in my early "commie" days in helping me see the basis of the war in a Marxist vein. See the award-winning film made by and starring Hollywood leftie pretty boy Warren Beatty, which is a bio of journalist and historian Reed and a version of some of the events of the war scene through Reed's Marxist perspective. I still recall Beatty, as Reed, standing up and answering a question in a public meeting about why WWI was being fought. He said, simply, "profit."

Princip hardly makes a showing in Reed's version of the events. Sure, he was an anarchist--now recharacterized by the fashionable word terrorist--who assassinated Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, but he was just one individual, part of an anarchist group The Black Hand, that set off events that most people think would have happened eventually, anyway. Some folks wanted the war to be fought, anyway, for their own reasons based in power and profit. The killing was just an excuse to declare war, and Rehr admits this is true, but unlike Marx, whose theory of historical inevitability precludes an idea of individual actors having that much to do with the march of history, Rehr says he isn't so sure.

I also, as a pacifist, and based on my research on--among other authors--the Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams, of Chicago's Hull House and Women's International League for Peace and as Freedom fame, am pretty convinced the war to end all wars that killed 15 million human beings did not have to be fought. Addams was vilified for taking on Roosevelt and the international community in order to try and stop the war, and though once was the most loved woman in America, was almost the most hated as she was suddenly defiled in the press as anti-patriotic. Read *Peace and Bread in Time of War*, written while stinging

from that hatred, and you'll see a different view of that war than gets told in US history books. And I think Terrorist confirms that this assassination by Princip Terrorist functions as just one moment in a series of complex geopolitical relations that almost no one completely understands. I think of it as a kind of comics historical prequel to Joe Sacco's Safe Area Goradze. Both are quick studies of the political complexities of that region in the early twentieth and late twentieth century, the Bosnian war and genocide.

As a story, I liked getting to know the working class Princip and the Anarchist group he joined, and his girlfriend, too. Those stories humanize him. We also get to know the Archduke, though Rehr is less sympathetic about him. The artwork, done in pen and ink, is accomplished, detailed, with some varied layouts and some worlds pages that I admired, but it's also pretty dark, sometimes too dark, and some of the characters are hard to distinguish from each other at times, especially as he has them age over the years. But on the whole it's a very ambitious project and a pretty impressive effort to meet that ambition. I think this is a good entree into the war especially for younger or first time readers. I liked it quite a bit.

You want to read about WWI? Read Tardi's recent graphic novels, Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms, Solzhenitzyn's 1914, Remarque's All Quiet on The Western Front, Pat Barker's Regeneration Trilogy, the poetry of Sassoon and Owens, and from above, Reed, and Addams's Peace and Bread in Time of War and this book. I defer to my historian friends for the best histories to read.

Alvaro Soffia says

Novela gráfica que aborda la vida del hombre que detonó la Primera Guerra Mundial, mediante el atentado al archiduque Francisco Fernando de Austria-Hungría. Considerado un terrorista por occidente (Austria y EEUU a la cabeza), es un héroe para los serbio-bosnios. Al punto que en el lugar donde perpetró el magnicidio había una placa que rezaba así: «Desde este lugar, el 28 de junio de 1914, Gavrilo Princip expresó con su disparo la protesta popular contra la tiranía y la centenaria aspiración de nuestro pueblo por la libertad.»

El libro relata sus orígenes campesinos, su vida en la ciudad (donde fue enviado a estudiar a cargo de su hermano) que lo va llevando a darse cuenta de la injusticia cometida contra su pueblo. Allí, ciertas amistades lo fueron llevando a la radicalización, llegando a integrar la "Mano Negra". Al menos así nos lo cuentan. El amor también está presente, pero nada es más importante para Gavrilo que la lucha por la libertad de su pueblo, nada... ni su propia vida.

Dibujado en 1 tinta y con gran trabajo de achurados, está bien editado aunque el papel couché era innecesario.

Michael Duane Robbins says

Little is known of the fanatic who set the world in flames. This graphic novel paints the journey of a young Serb's descent into one act of assassination that changed everything. It bounces between Princip and Archduke Ferdinand who was evidently clueless of the world outside his happy family.
Highly rec.

Lars K Jensen says

Et meget spændende emne, der fik mig til at droppe den bog, jeg ellers havde tænkt mig at læse bagefter og i stedet hørte 1914: The Year the World Ended af Paul Ham ned fra reolen.

Historien er velfortalt, og der er godt pace og suspense, de rigtige steder.

Jeg er dog enig med Anetq (se hendes anmeldelse) i, at stregen til tider er lidt problematisk. Det hele er meget mørkt og illustreret på en måde, der gør det svært at skelne personerne fra hinanden, og der mister bogen lidt for mig - og en stjerne her på Goodreads.

Men derudover er det bare med at få den læst. Det er en spændende personorienteret fortælling om mordet, der fik først krudttønden på Balkan til at eksplodere og derefter den på tværs af Europas alliance.

Gobeit says

Thoughtfully done, and very well illustrated, I definitely recommend this book. Almost earned a five star review for giving me a new perspective on a vague part of history, but for three things: an obvious date typo, a totally unnecessary casual c-bomb in the text (otherwise this book doesn't have sex or swearing! come on, author and editors! this is clearly educational in tone! know your school-based audience!) and, most significantly, because I would have liked the author to cite his sources for such historically accurate historical fiction.

Georgina Koutrouditou says

Εξαιρετικ? ενδιαφ?ρουσα τεχνικ? σχεδ?ου.

Οι εναλλαγ?ς γκρ?ζου-μα?ρου δ?νουν τον κατ?λληλο τ?νο για να ερμηνε?σουμε την εποχ? πριν το ξ?σπασμα του Α.Π.Π.

Sarah Buchanan says

I read this book with the hope that it would bolster my limited knowledge of the assassination that triggered World War I; in this, the book came through for me. Some of the illustrations, particularly those in the final pages, are quite moving in their depictions of the tragic results the war brought to so many. Other illustrations were less successful; in the scenes featuring multiple characters, the figures tend to look the same, which I found confusing. There is at least one typo, and also one factual error regarding a date of death (where was the fact checker?).

I recognize that it is no small task to create a coherent through-line for this many threaded story, given that

Gavrilo Princip did not act alone; firmer editorial oversight, though, could have resulted in a tighter presentation.

Derek Royal says

An impressive book, categorized as "fiction" by the publisher, that makes a better history lesson than regular history books. Rehr admits that he takes liberties with this subject matter -- specifically, the conversations and everyday lives of Princip and his colleagues -- but even that is structured around the scaffolding of historical record. If any wants to learn about not only the history of the years leading up to WW I, or if someone wants more education on the ethnic conflicts that gave rise to European violence and destruction up to this very day, then Rehr's *Terrorist* is book to turn to. For readers fascinated with Joe Sacco's *Safe Area Gorazde*, this reads as almost a necessary prequel.

Edward Sullivan says

A fictionalized graphic biography of Gavrilo Princip, who killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand and sparked World War I. Following the Serbian nationalist's long journey toward the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, Rehr creates a penetrating portrait of what drives people to become terrorists. Stark, powerful, and fascinating.
