

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Petra Karin Kelly was born in Günzburg, Bavaria, then in West Germany, on November 27, 1947. She attended the Englisches Institut, a Catholic girls boarding school, until 1960, when she went to Columbus, Georgia, with her mother and stepfather, U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel John E. Kelly. In Georgia she became involved in civil rights activities helping black children in special projects, while simultaneously learning English. She attended high school in Hampton, Virginia where she had a weekly radio program on current issues.

In 1966 she entered the School of International Service at American University in Washington, D.C.; majored in political science, international relations, and world politics; and graduated cum laude with a B.A. in 1970. She won a Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship and served as a teaching assistant for one year. She was active in student government and foreign student affairs at American University and initiated its first International Week in 1966, which has become an annual tradition. As a student--active in the antiwar, civil rights, antinuclear, and feminist movements--she worked as a volunteer for Senator Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 presidential campaign, founding Students for Kennedy in Washington. After Kennedy's assassination she worked as a volunteer in the office of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, helping his electoral campaign, becoming his friend and the recipient of many letters on political subjects and requests for advice on European questions. She recalls, "After supporting

the civil rights and anti-war movements in Georgia, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., I became very much a nonviolent activist after 1968."

Her half-sister Grace Patricia Kelly died from eye-cancer at age ten in 1970. In 1974 Petra Kelly founded with her grandmother the Grace P. Kelly Association for the Support of Cancer Research for Children in Nuremberg. This is a European-wide citizen action group which studies the connection between children's cancer and environmental causes, especially from the nuclear industry. It helps to provide psychosocial care in children's cancer wards in Germany and elsewhere. She continues to head this association. She, Gert Bastian, and Kunigunde Birle, her eighty-six year old grandmother, do all the work, unassisted and without pay. She also launched a continuing project to establish a model psychosocial children's health care center, the Children's Planet, to care for children with chronic life-threatening illnesses. She has sponsored a formerly orphaned Tibetan foster-daughter, Nima, adopting her in 1973. Nima is now married and has two children.

In 1971 Petra Kelly received an M.A. degree in political science from the University of Amsterdam (European Institute) for a thesis on European integration. From 1972 to 1983 she served as a European civil servant on the staff of the European Community's Economic and Social Committee in Brussels, working on a wide range of issues covering European politics, labor, women, social problems, environment, health and consumer affairs. She took one year's unpaid leave in 1982-83 in order to campaign full-time for the Green Party. In one year she held over 450 meetings and lectures to get Greens elected to the German national Bundestag. Her role as European civil servant continues, although she is now on temporary leave once again.

About the Author

In 1972 she became active in the West German Federal Association of Citizens for Environmental Protection and was elected to its executive board in 1979, responsible for international ecological contacts. In 1972 she joined the Social Democratic Party headed by Chancellor Willy Brandt, resigning in 1979 to protest the defense and energy policies of Brandt's successor Helmut Schmidt. In 1978-79 Petra Kelly was one of the spokespersons of the BBU, the umbrella organization of the German ecological citizen action groups. In November 1980 she and Gert Bastian initiated the Krefelder Appell against the stationing of Pershing II and Cruise missiles. They collected over five million signatures. She also was a co-initiator of the Bertrand Russell Campaign for a Nuclear-Free Europe.

In 1979 Petra Kelly helped to found the new nonviolent ecological Green Party (Die Grünen), a party she had been dreaming of creating since 1976. Other founders were Lukas Beckmann, Joseph Beuys, Gerda Degen, Rudi Dutschke, Milan Horacek, Halo Saibold, Roland Vogt, and about twenty-five more from the ecological action movement, the SPD, the Free International University (FIU), and other groups. She became chairperson and speaker of the Party's eleven-member executive board in 1980-82, becoming the first German female head of a political party. She headed the Green national list of candidates in elections to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in July 1979, gaining 3.2 percent of the vote--short of the 5 percent necessary for representation. After modest Green Party advances in local and state elections in 1980-82, she was among twenty-seven Greens elected to the 498-member national Bundestag on March 6, 1983, when 2,164,988 Germans voted for the Green Party list, comprising 5.2 percent of the total. In 1987 the Greens received 8.4 percent, allowing her to serve in the Bundestag for a second

Nonviolence Speaks to Power

term until the national elections of December 2, 1990, when the West German Greens failed to gain the 5 percent required for parliamentary representation. The East German Greens and citizen action movement did receive over 5 percent, enabling eight people from East Germany to enter the Bundestag. She plans to run in 1994 for the Bundestag or for the European Parliament.

From March 1983 to April 1984, she served as one of the three political spokespersons of the Bundestag Group of the Greens. From March 1983 to December 1990 she served two terms as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Bundestag. From April 1985 to 1987 she was a member of the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU) of the Council of Europe and of the Bundestag Subcommittee on Disarmament, focusing on human rights, disarmament, neutrality, and foreign policy. During her second term in the Bundestag she served on the Subcommittee for Europe. During 1989-90 she was national chairperson of the German Association for Social Defence working on non-military defense and security alternatives.

Among extraparliamentary actions, in February 1983, together with Green MP colleague retired Major General Gert Bastian, she organized an international "war crimes tribunal" at Nuremberg to indict the possession of nuclear and mass destructive weapons by five countries--led by the U.S.A and the USSR and followed by Britain, China, and France--as "a crime of immense proportions." This was a major national political event involving fifty speakers and two thousand people. In May 1983, together with four other Greens, she staged an antinuclear, pro-human rights, antiwar demonstration in East Berlin where she was arrested. This was followed in November by a similar demonstration in Moscow. In September 1983 she participated in a three-day

About the Author

blockade of the U.S. military base at Mutlangen and Bitburg and later on at many other military bases. Petra K. Kelly and Gert Bastian were sentenced by German courts and paid very high fines in several cases for their nonviolent actions at U.S. and other military bases. They have also protested in the U.S., Australia, and the GDR. In June 1984, with other Green MP's she organized an international expert hearing on social defence as a nonviolent security alternative for Germany going beyond NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In 1985, together with Gert Bastian, she organized in Bonn the Forum Reconciliation (The Other America) with six hundred participants. With Gert Bastian and other Green MP's she also occupied for forty-eight hours the German Embassy in Pretoria to protest German economic ties with South Africa.

In April 1989, with Gert Bastian, she organized the first international hearing on Tibet and human rights. It was held in Bonn's Parliamentary House and brought together more than forty experts with six hundred other participants. This was followed by similar hearings in other countries. In 1987, 1989, and 1990 she introduced parliamentary resolutions condemning Chinese human rights and martial law violations in Tibet that were unanimously passed by the Bundestag in October 1990.

In private life since 1991 she has been greatly in demand as a speaker and activist, receiving two hundred to three hundred letters each week. In January 1992 she began to moderate a weekly television program on global environmental issues. She has written books on children's cancer, on Green politics, on Tibet and China, on Hiroshima and Guernica, and on Green issues together with Gert Bastian, whom she celebrates as her soulmate.

Nonviolence Speaks to Power

Among honors Petra K. Kelly has received are the Swedish Parliament's Right Livelihood Award (known as the Alternative Nobel Prize, endowed by Jakob von Uexkull), in 1982; and the peace prize of the U.S. group Women Strike for Peace in 1983. Unofficially she has been called the "Jeanne d'Arc of the Peace Movement." Recently the *Sunday Times* of London placed her among the one thousand most influential personalities of the twentieth century.

[Editor's note by G. Paige (2001): Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian belatedly were found dead of gunshot wounds in their Bonn house on October 19, 1992. The police concluded that Bastian had killed her and then committed suicide on October 1. An interpretation of the circumstances and Bastian's motivation can be found in Sara Parkin, *The Life and Death of Petra Kelly* (London: Pandora, 1994).

Petra, who was eager to see her book *Nonviolence Speaks to Power*, apparently never saw it, although 10 copies were air mailed to her upon its publication in late September 1992. Also sent at that time were 100 copies that she wanted to distribute personally to colleagues in Europe, in addition to many copies mailed from Hawai'i to a list she provided of friends in the United States and other parts of the world. Her death was a shocking loss to all who knew her. In this book Petra Kelly courageously continues to speak].