



PEACE TRAIL BONN



**Netzwerk Friedenskooperative (Network of the German Peace Movement) /
Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e. V. (Women's Network for Peace)**

Acknowledgement

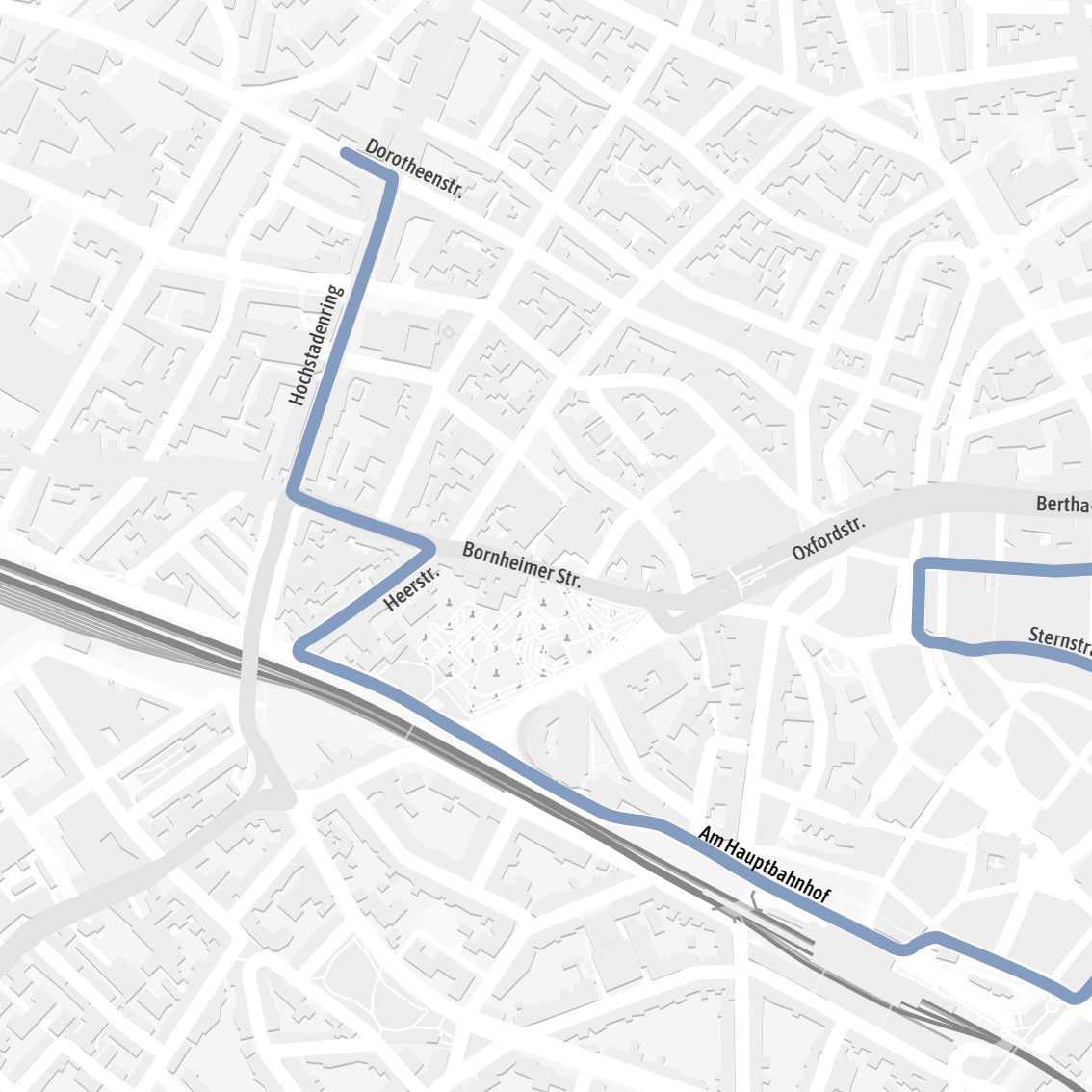
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Dorotheenstr.

Hochstadtenring

Heerstr.

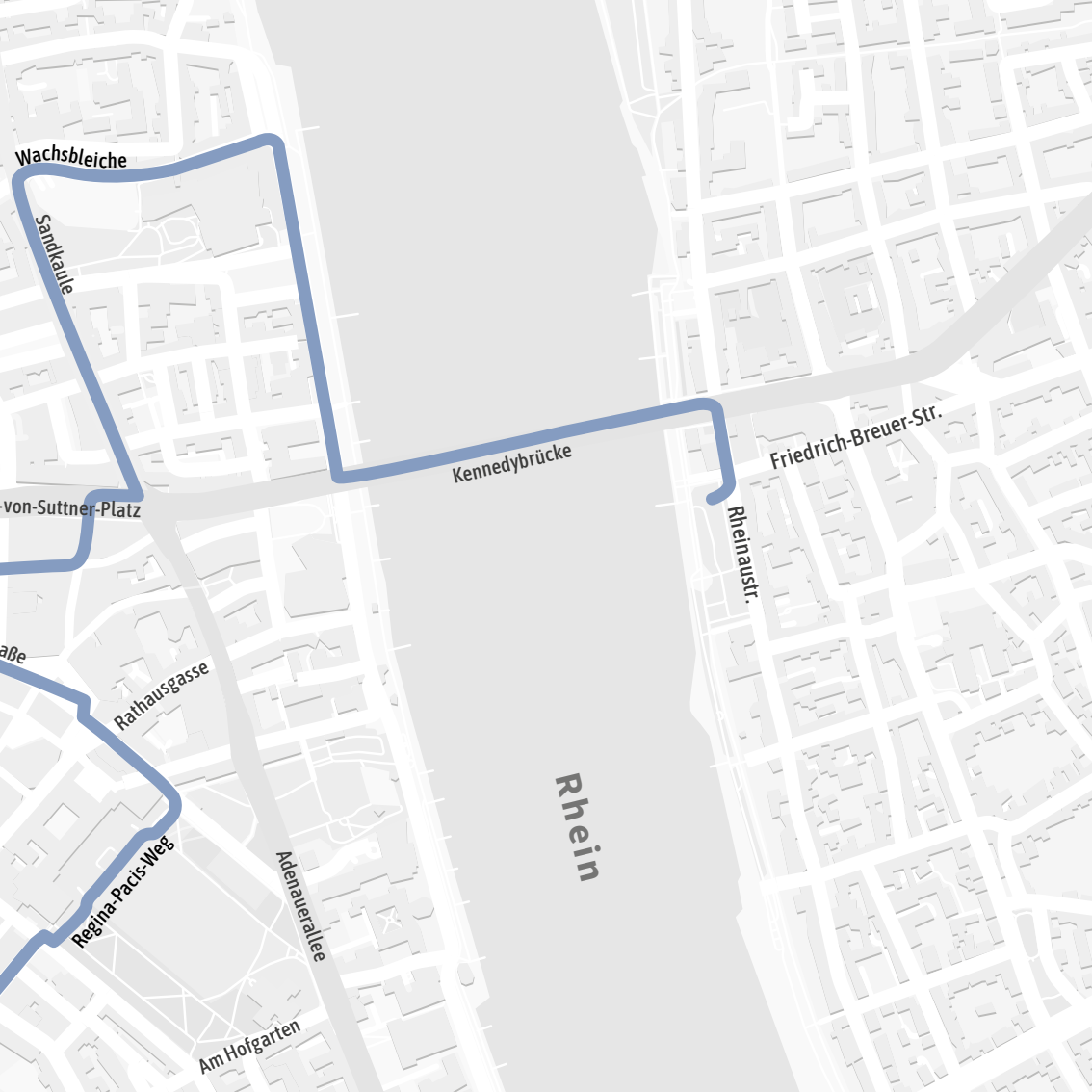
Bornheimer Str.

Oxfordstr.

Bertha

Sternstr.

Am Hauptbahnhof



Wachsbleiche

Sandkaule

von-Suttner-Platz

Rathausgasse

Regina-Pacis-Weg

Adenauerallee

Am Hofgarten

Kennedybrücke

Rhein

Rheinaustr.

Friedrich-Breuer-Str.

DEAR CITIZENS OF BONN, DEAR GUESTS OF OUR CITY,

Do you know who Klara Marie Faßbinder was? Or do you know why numerous celebrities came to demonstrate in the Hofgarten in the 1980s? Or what the University of Bonn has to do with peace? Or perhaps which square in Bonn is named after a Nobel Peace Prize laureate? In our city, there are many places of peace to discover and connections of significant historical figures to learn about, many of whom were committed to human rights. Nonetheless, most of these people, places, and connections remain unknown.

Our Culture of Remembrance in public spaces – much like our entire historiography – is characterised by a patriarchal perspective. It commemorates wars and so-called “war heroes” but forgets the contributions of peace. Monuments are predominantly erected for men, thereby often rendering the historical achievements of women invisible.

The Peace Trail Bonn invites you to make discoveries: monuments, buildings, and places that you may already know – but whose history of peace is almost forgotten. Stories of people, who were advocates for peace and who you may have heard of before – but perhaps you were not aware of their connections to our city.



With the Peace Trail, we want to contribute to closing this gap. At a total of eleven stations, you will explore a snippet of the history of peace in Bonn. You will learn about significant people and their biographies, get to know places from new perspectives, and discover connections between various places. You can adjust the Peace Trail to your needs and interests and either follow the suggested route or combine individual stations as you wish.

With this project, we also want to encourage people to continue their own search for traces of peace history in other places and to find people and stories that can serve as role models and inspiration for us today.

The Peace Trail Bonn was developed by the *Netzwerk Friedenskooperative* in cooperation with the *Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e. V.* and with financial support from the *Bertha-von-Suttner-Foundation of the German Peace Society – United War Resisters*. The English version was made possible with financial support from the *Foundation for International Dialogue of the Savings Bank in Bonn*.

We hope you enjoy (re)discovering the city of Bonn!



🏠 Rhine promenade Beuel · Rheinaustr. / Corner of Friedrich-Breuer-Str. · 53225 Bonn
🚌 Bus and tram stop Konrad-Adenauer-Platz

HIROSHIMA – MEMORIAL

The Hiroshima-Memorial was erected in memory of the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, on the 6th of August 1945. It is located on the bank of the Rhine in Beuel, near the Kennedy Bridge, and was opened in 2011 by the *Peace Initiative Beuel* along with other groups and individuals. It replaced and upgraded the more inconspicuous memorial stone which stood at the same location from 1985.

On the 6th of August 1945 at 8 a.m., 15 minutes and 17 seconds local time, the first US atomic bomb called “*Little Boy*” was dropped over Hiroshima from an altitude of 9,467 metres. The bomb exploded 599 metres above the Aioi Bridge in the city centre.

Three days later, on the 9th of August 1945 at 11 a.m. and 2 minutes local time, another atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Due to its shape, this bomb was called “*Fat Man*”.

A total of around 110,000 people died immediately and over 100,000 more died by the end of 1945 as a result of nuclear radiation poisoning. The survivors – known as *hibakusha* – are still suffering the long-term effects to this day.

These two bombings are the only uses of nuclear weapons in a war to date.

All around the world people are committed to ensuring that they remain the last. But even in 2024, there are still around 12,500 nuclear weapons in the world, 3,800 of which are immediately operational. A glimpse of hope on the way to a world free of nuclear weapons is the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*.

This treaty was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2017 and came into force on the 22nd of January 2021. So far 93 states have signed this treaty (as of January 2024). Hibakusha Setsuko Thurlow powerfully voiced the hope for a world without nuclear weapons when she accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (ICAN) in 2017: “To all in this hall and all listening around the world, I repeat those words that I heard called to me in the ruins of Hiroshima: ‘Don’t give up! Keep pushing! See the light? Crawl towards it’.”

The memorial in Beuel is intended to serve as a constant reminder to the people of Bonn to stand up for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. Since 1986, every year on the 6th of August, the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima are remembered.

Next station:

🚶 16-minute walk over the Kennedy Bridge to the Beethovenhalle



“Peace to all peoples.
Abolish nuclear weapons worldwide.”

Inscription on the memorial

Additionally, on Hiroshima Remembrance Day in August 2020, the city of Bonn signalled a commitment to peace at Bonn’s Rheinaue near the Japanese garden: The seed of the Muku tree planted there comes from trees from the so-called Hiroshima death zone and was entrusted to Bonn by the *Mayors for Peace* network (→ **Old Town Hall**).



🏠 Wachsbleiche 16 · 53111 Bonn
🚌 Bus and tram stop Wilhelmsplatz / Bus stop Stiftsplatz

PETRA KELLY – BEETHOVENHALLE

Petra Kelly (1947 – 1992) was a politician, avowed pacifist, feminist, and a symbolic figure of the peace movement. She was a co-founder of the German party *Die Grünen* (The Greens) and lived in the north of Bonn in the Tannenbusch district until her death. The funeral service to mark her death took place here in the Beethovenhalle in 1992.

Petra Kelly (néé Petra Karin Lehmann) was born in Günzburg (Bavaria) in 1947 and was mostly raised by her grandmother Kunigunde Birle. Her grandmother was one of her closest confidants and supported Kelly in both her political and personal endeavours.

After Petra's father left the family when she was only seven years old, her mother met John Kelly, a United States Army officer stationed in Germany. The two married in 1959 and the family moved to the USA in the same year, where Petra Kelly's political involvement later began. While studying Political Science in Washington D.C., she became actively engaged in the Civil Rights Movement. After her studies, she moved to Europe, worked in Brussels, and campaigned for

peace, human rights, equal rights, and ecological preservation, among others. Through her commitment to peace, Petra Kelly met her future partner Gert Bastian, a former major general, at a panel discussion in 1980. Together, Kelly and Bastian were regarded as symbolic figures of the German peace movement. At one of the large peace demonstrations in Bonn's Hofgarten (→ **Hofgarten**) in 1981, Kelly gave a speech against nuclear weapons and nuclear armament. In this speech, she called for the resignation of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who was in favour of stationing nuclear weapons in Germany. For her many years of commitment to peace, she was awarded the *Right Livelihood Award*, also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize.

Her commitment also included supporting the citizens' movement in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Parts of the movement joined the West German Greens after reunification. This gave rise to today's *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* party (*Alliance 90/The Greens*). The party and Petra Kelly entered the *Bundestag* (German Federal Parliament) in 1982 – her political peak. Furthermore, Petra Kelly sought to draw attention to sexism within the so-called “men's republic”.

Kelly spent the last years of her life more quietly, as she was not re-elected at the 1990 party conference. Her life came to a violent and tragic end in October 1992 when she was only 44 years old. Gert Bastian shot Petra Kelly as she slept next to him and then proceeded to take his own life. The funeral service took place on the 31st of October 1992 with mourners from all around the world in the Beethovenhalle in Bonn. The *Tagesthemen*, one of Germany's main daily television news magazines, announced: “Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian are dead. And suddenly, the whole of Bonn – no, the whole of Germany – is shaken.”

Next station:

🚶 10-minute walk via Welschnonnenstr. to Bertha-von-Suttner-Steile



**“Start where you are,
don't wait for better circumstances.
They will come automatically
the moment you start.**

Petra Kelly

In 1989, together with peace researcher Theodor Ebert and others, Kelly founded the *Bund für Soziale Verteidigung e. V.* (*Federation of Social Defense*), which still exists today, and was also its founding board member.

BERTHA-VON-SUTTNER-PLATZ

Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz (Bertha-von-Suttner-Square) bears the name of the first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Bertha von Suttner (1843 – 1914) was a writer, pacifist, and one of the best-known representatives of the peace movement.

Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz is a traffic junction that separates Bonn's city centre from the old town. The street and railway line have existed for over 100 years but were completely destroyed during World War II. As a sign of the desire for peace, the square was given its

current name in August 1949 after controversial discussions in the Bonn City Council.

Bertha von Suttner (née Kinsky) was born in Prague in 1843 and came from a military aristocratic family. She grew up in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and applied to work as a



secretary for Alfred Nobel – the beginning of a long friendship that led the Swedish dynamite inventor to establish the Nobel Peace Prize many years later. In 1876 she married Arthur von Suttner.

The anti-war novel and bestseller *“Lay Down Your Arms!”* was von Suttner’s breakthrough as an author in 1889. The fame she gained as a result paved the way for her further commitment to and engagement with peace politics and peace issues. As the only woman and non-governmental representative, she took part in the opening of the first Hague Peace Conference in

The Hague in 1899 (→ **University of Bonn**) and travelled through Europe and North America in the following years to give lectures. In 1892, together with Alfred H. Fried, she founded the *German Peace Society*, which is still active today as the *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft – Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen* (*German Peace Society – United War Resisters*). There is also a local group in Bonn. In 1905, von Suttner was the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. She died in Vienna in 1914, shortly before World War I. As she lay on her death bed, Bertha von Suttner spoke her last words: “Lay down



“Vengeance! And always repeated vengeance! It would never suggest itself to any reasonable man to wash out ink spots with ink and oil stains with oil, it is only blood which has always to be washed out with new blood!”

Bertha von Suttner

Bertha von Suttner is also connected to Bonn in a very personal way: The well-known cabaret artist Margie Kinsky, co-founder of the cabaret theatre *Die Springmaus* in the Bonn-Endenich district and long-time citizen of Bonn, is a great-grandniece of the Nobel Peace Prize winner.



your arms! Say it to many, many.”

On the corner of Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz/ Sandkaule, a stainless-steel stele by Finnish artist Sirpa Masalin commemorates the Nobel Peace Prize winner. The stele was erected in 2013 on the initiative of the *Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e. V.* It is the first memorial dedicated to Bertha von Suttner in a public space in Germany and is part of the peace project “KANSA”. Kansa is Finnish and means “the people”: it refers to a multitude of KANSA figures worldwide located in public places, all made by Sirpa Masalin.

In 2019, to mark the 70th anniversary of the square’s naming, the *Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e. V.*, together with the *Netzwerk Friedenskooperative*, initiated a project to remember and celebrate von Suttner’s legacy: the “Bertha-Bahn” – a tram with a portrait and quotes from Bertha von Suttner – has since travelled through Bonn as line 61/62 and also stops at Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz.

Next station:



7-minute walk via Wenzelgasse and Friedrichstr. to Friedensplatz

FRIEDENSPLATZ

Friedensplatz (Peace Square) is located in the heart of Bonn's city centre. Its location makes it a popular meeting place and venue for peace rallies.

In 1899, the square was still used as a cattle market outside the city wall. While Germany was a colonial power, the so-called “*Völkerschauen*” (human zoos/colonial exhibitions) – racist displays of people from the former German colonies – took place on what was then

called Friedrichsplatz. After 1922, in the wake of World War I, it was given the name Friedensplatz. However, in 1933, it was renamed Adolf-Hitler-Platz as a propaganda tool. In 1945, on the order of the Allies, it was renamed “Friedensplatz”.



“ Having peace –
that is the reason of love;
but to establish peace is the objective of
organising wisdom.

Thomas Aquinas –
Quote at the labyrinth fountain on
Friedensplatz (own translation)

In the 1980s, the Friedensplatz became the scene of a highly political debate: In the autumn of 1989, marking the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Poland by the German Reich, the *Bonn Peace Plenum* – an alliance of Bonn’s peace organisations and initiatives at the time – wanted to shed light on World War II waged by Germany. Therefore, sculptor Mehmet Aksoy designed the memorial for the *Unknown Deserter* in 1985: a two-metre-high block of marble with an opening carved out in the shape of a human silhouette. The memorial commemorates all the *Wehrmacht* (unified armed forces of Nazi Germany) soldiers who deserted during World War II, thereby rebelling against the Nazi dictatorship. These people were often sentenced to death for their decisions. For decades – even after the end of the war – they were widely defamed as “cowards” and labelled “traitors”.



There was fierce opposition to the erection of the memorial, with conservative politicians and citizens seeing it as a mockery of the *Bundeswehr* (German armed forces). In the end, the unveiling of the memorial on Bonn’s Friedensplatz was only permitted for two hours on the 1st of September 1989. The memorial was then permanently placed on *Platz der Einheit* (Unity Square) in Bonn’s twin city of Potsdam.

While little research has been done on deserters from Bonn, it is known that there were at least 24 deserters from the city, but the exact number is probably much higher. While eleven of this group managed to defect to the Allied forces, thirteen were not able to escape persecution by the *Wehrmacht* and were arrested. During their imprisonment, ten deserters from Bonn were sentenced to death by military courts while still in the war zone. Only four escaped certain death through pardon or escape.

One of these Bonn deserters was Helmut Hengstler, born on the 21st of November 1911 in Bonn. He was a plumber and came from a social democratic family. In the early 1930s, the family moved to an estate in the Tannenbusch district in Bonn to what is now Berta-Lungstras-Straße. Hengstler was arrested in 1936 for his contacts with communist resistance circles and sentenced to prison for

“conspiracy to commit high treason”. He served his sentence in Aschendorfer Moor concentration camp and Siegburg prison. Although he was considered “politically unreliable”, he was drafted into the *Wehrmacht* in 1941. At the end of 1942, he attempted to desert to the south of France.

The divisional court with jurisdiction over his unit sentenced him to death on 12 January 1943 for “desertion”. The sentence was carried out on the 25th of January 1943 in Le Barcarès in France. A *Stolperstein* (lit. stumbling stone – a small cobblestone-sized memorial commemorating individual Nazi-victims) in his memory can be found at Berta-Lungstras-Straße 35. It was only placed there in 2020 on the initiative of the “School without Racism – School with Courage” working group at Bertolt Brecht Comprehensive School.

Next station:



3-minute walk along Sternstr. to house number 37



JOHANNA ELBERSKIRCHEN

Johanna Elberskirchen (1864 – 1943) is regarded as one of the most radical feminist voices of her time. As a publicist, women’s suffrage activist, sexual reformer, and medical practitioner, she leaves behind a significant legacy. She was a strong advocate for women’s, gay, and lesbian rights.

Johanna Carolina Elberskirchen was born in Bonn’s Sternstraße in 1864. She spent part of her childhood and youth in Bonn. She studied medicine and law in Switzerland, as women were not allowed to study at university in Prussia before 1908. Elberskirchen was an important feminist publicist and physician who campaigned on a variety of key feminist issues, such as the rights of women, and the rights of gay and lesbian people. She was also vocal on the issue of worker’s rights. She published her first texts under the pseudonym “Hans Carolan”, but soon used her real name. The work of Elberskirchen includes over ten books, around thirty essays, and numerous articles, open letters, and political appeals in newspapers. By doing this, she fought for women’s suffrage.

Additionally, she acted as a mediator between social democracy and the bourgeois women’s movement as well as between the women’s and gay rights movements. Elberskirchen was not intimidated by misogynist attacks or political intrigues.

In 1911, the first International Women’s Day was proclaimed with great success in Denmark, Switzerland, and Austria, as well as in Germany. In well-attended meetings, advocates demanded women’s suffrage while issuing warnings against militarism and war. Johanna Elberskirchen also actively participated in these events as a speaker in Cologne. At the beginning of 1913, Elberskirchen, as chairwoman of the *Deutscher Reichsverein für Frauenstimmrecht*

(*German Association for Women's Suffrage*), which she also founded, called for a large women's peace demonstration in Bonn. Prominent local women's rights organisations were invited, but only the members of the *Reichsverein* attended the event on the 21st of February 1913. Elberskirchen's attempt to establish a broad peace alliance in Bonn perhaps also failed because, as an advocate of universal and equal suffrage, she wanted to establish the idea of peace as a political issue for all women's organisations – at a time when the women's suffrage movement was largely divided over the issue of “suffrage for all vs. suffrage for middle-class women only”.

Due to her fearless commitment to women's rights and her dedication to peace and justice, Johanna Elberskirchen became an inspiring figure in the history of the women's movement in Germany. During the Nazi regime, Elberskirchen's book “*Love Among the Third Sex*” (1904) was banned. She practised as a naturopath in Rüdersdorf near Berlin, where she lived with her partner Hildegard Moniac until her death.

“ [...] they [the leaders of the nation and culture] presume that if they build warships, cannons, guns, canals [...], if they erect high walls and pursue protectionism, and other policies, and keep out all free international views and fresh air, – then they think they are pursuing grand policies and serving the fatherland – actually we think they are serving themselves and their interests, or those of a small party [...]

Johanna Elberskirchen (own translation)

The memorial plaque at her birthplace in Bonn was put in place in 2005 on the initiative of Barbara Stein and Ingeborg Boxhammer, and was inaugurated in April 2006 with the support of Christiane Leidinger in cooperation with the SPD (*German Social Democratic Party*) city councillor Erika Coché.

Next stop:



3-minute walk along Sternstr. via the market square to the Old Town Hall



🏠 Markt 2 · 53111 Bonn

🚌 Bus stop Markt

OLD TOWN HALL

The historic Old Town Hall (Altes Rathaus) is located on Bonn's Marktplatz (Market Square). Here, in the course of its history, the city has welcomed several heads of states as well as people from the worlds of science, sport, art and politics – including famous peace figures. Today, the square in front of the building is regularly used as a place of action by the peace movement and other political movements.

The impressive rococo building was built between 1737 and 1738 under Elector Clemens August I. During the Nazi era on the 10th of May 1933, many books were burned by the Nazis on the square in front of the building. The intended outcome was to destroy ideas, that did not fit the worldview of National Socialism. The burning mainly affected texts that were considered Jewish, left-wing, and liberal. These included works with clear pacifist content such as *“Im Westen nichts Neues”* (*“All Quiet on the Western Front”*) by Erich Maria Remarque and *“Die Waffen nieder!”* (*“Lay Down Your Arms!”*) by Bertha von Suttner (→ **Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz**). In front of the steps of the town hall, the spines of selected burnt books can be found

in the ground, including Bertha von Suttner's work. This memorial by artists Andreas Knitz and Horst Hoheisel was inaugurated in 2013 to mark the 80th anniversary of the book burning.

In 1944, “the best sitting room”, or “gute Stube”, as the people of Bonn call the building, was destroyed down to its outer walls in an air raid. It was rebuilt in the post-war years, and until 1978, it continued to serve as the town hall. When Bonn was the federal capital city of Germany, numerous guests were received here who signed the city's Golden Book. Among them was Nelson Mandela, who visited Bonn in 1990, just four months after he was released from prison in South Africa, and expressed his



gratitude for the support he received from Germany. The Dalai Lama, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, was also received here for the first time in 1982.

The Old Town Hall and the market square in front of it are still important locations for peace and politics in Bonn. Vigils, demonstrations, and other public actions regularly take place here.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

Nelson Mandela

The *Bonn Peace Days* also have numerous points of contact with this station.



The tradition of the *Bonn Peace Days* was established in 2006 by peace groups from the Bonn area. Since then, the series of events has taken place every year around the *International Day of Peace* as proclaimed by the United Nations in 2001 on the 21st of September.

Moreover, the city itself also expresses its commitment to peace at the Old Town Hall: every year on the 8th of July, for example, it takes part in the *Mayors for Peace* Flag Day. This organisation was founded in 1982 by Mayor Takeshi Arakai of Hiroshima (→ **Hiroshima Memorial**). It appeals to the responsibility of mayors regarding the safety and lives of their citizens and emphasises the danger posed by nuclear weapons for cities in particular. More than 8,000 cities and municipalities worldwide now belong to the *Mayors for Peace* network, including more than 800 in Germany alone. The city of Bonn has been a member since 2006.

Next stop:

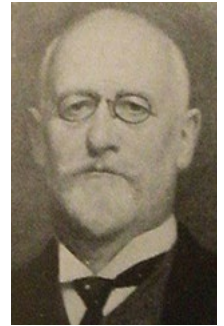
🚶 3-minute walk via Am Hof to the University of Bonn

UNIVERSITY OF BONN

The Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn was founded on the 18th of October 1818. It was named after Friedrich Wilhelm III, then King of Prussia. People well-known for their engagement in the peace movement and their role in peace research learnt and taught here, including Philipp Zorn and Klara Marie Faßbinder (→ Klara Marie Faßbinder – GGS Karlschule).

Although the University of Bonn has never offered its own peace studies programme, it still has numerous links to peace research. For example, the *Centre for Historical Peace Research* and the *Bonn Center for Reconciliation Studies* are based here. In 1905, international law expert Philipp Zorn founded the Constitutional Law Society, from which the *Institute for Public International Law* emerged, which still exists today.

Philipp Zorn lived in Bonn's Weststadt district for a long time, taught as a professor at the University of Bonn and was its rector from 1910 to 1911. As a military expert and naval repre-



“The peace movement is actually today a powerful tidal wave, that has gripped the life of nations. The pacifist movement will not come to a standstill.

Philipp Zorn



sentative, he was primarily associated with his military background and was initially less known for pacifist ideas. However, his attitude towards peace changed fundamentally at the first Hague Peace Conference in 1899. Here, for the first time, the states agreed by treaty on the goal of abolishing war as a means of politics. Zorn was one of the delegates for the German Empire at the two Hague Conferences in 1899 and 1907.

Zorn was notably involved in the Arbitration Commission, which was the forerunner of the *International Court of Justice*. In discussions, he convinced other politicians of the idea of arbitration tribunals and thus became an avowed pacifist himself. At the first Hague Conference, he also met Bertha von Suttner (**→ Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz**), who later won the Nobel Peace Prize. As a scientist and professor at the University of Bonn, following the Hague Conferences, he campaigned for peace politics and thus contributed to the scientific legitimisation of pacifism.

The international law expert and pacifist Hans Wehberg also studied at the University of Bonn under Professor Zorn. He later became editor

of the *Friedens-Warte* (*Journal of International Peace and Organisation*) – the oldest German language peace journal that still exists today – and was on the board of the *German Peace Society*.

Important peace research has also been conducted in Bonn outside of the realm of the University: The *Arbeitsstelle Friedensforschung Bonn* (*Bonn Peace Research Centre*), which was active here from 1984 to 2007, and the founding of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung* (*German Association for Peace and Conflict Studies*) in 1968. The latter is still a key player in the German peace scene today.

Despite the University of Bonn's significant contributions to peace research, its dark history must not be forgotten: During the Nazi regime, the university was also subjected to enforced conformity and was henceforth under the political influence of the Nazi Party (NSDAP). Many members of the teaching staff also subscribed to National Socialist ideology, while numerous others were persecuted for their origin, religion or political convictions and had to leave the university.

Next stop:

 3-minute walk to the Hofgarten (at the rear of the main university building)



🏠 Hofgarten · 53113 Bonn
🚊 Tram stop Universität/Markt

HOFGARTEN

The Hofgarten was created in the 18th century as a baroque park in front of the Electoral Palace. Together with the palace, it became the property of the newly founded University of Bonn in 1818. During Bonn's time as the seat of the federal government (1949 – 1999), the city was often the target of civil protest rallies and the Hofgarten was one of the most important meeting places. The large demonstrations of the peace movement in the 1980s are legendary.

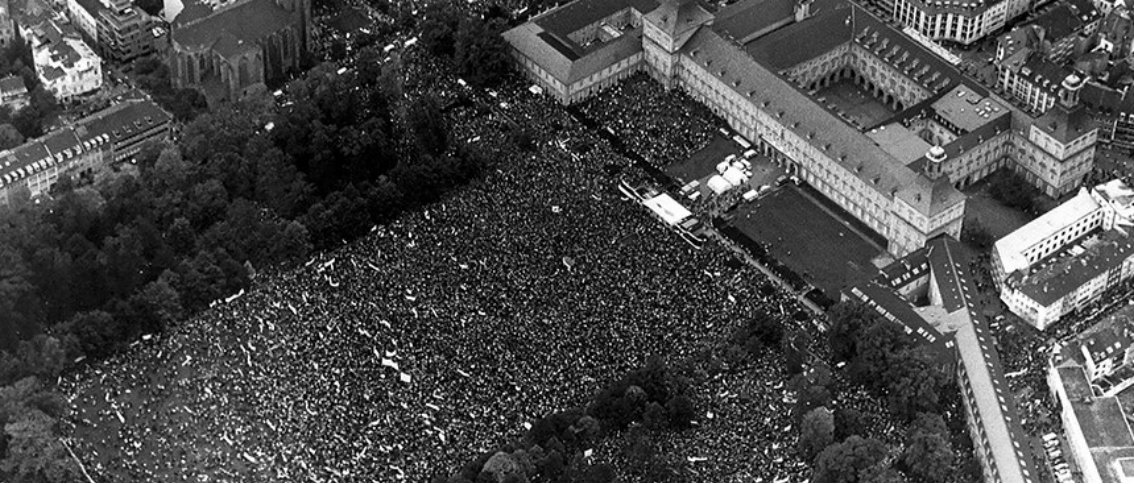
On the 10th of October 1981, more than 300,000 people gathered in the Hofgarten. Together, they protested against the so-called NATO Double-Track Decision and the corresponding deployment of US nuclear missiles in Germany.

“ We cannot allow the human race to become the victim of an arms race. Our struggle is your struggle. And your movement is our movement. I therefore ask you today, never to give up.

Coretta Scott King at the 1981 demonstration

The demonstration was called for by a broad alliance of more than 1,000 church and political groups, trade unions, initiatives, associations, and organisations. People responded to the call “Acting together against the nuclear threat!” issued by *Aktion Sühnezeichen/Friedensdienste* and *Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden*.

The following year, on the occasion of the NATO summit conference, demonstrations took place on the Beuel side of the Rhine with more than 500,000 participants, before once again returning to the Hofgarten in 1983 with around half a million people. Among the celebrity speakers at the demonstrations were Petra Kelly (→ **Petra Kelly – Beethovenhalle**), writer Heinrich Böll



and Coretta Scott King, a civil rights activist and widow of Martin Luther King Junior.

The mass demonstrations in Bonn's Hofgarten went down in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany primarily because of their peacefulness. Despite the highly emotive nature of the topic at the time, the participants maintained a peaceful demeanour thus disproving the concerns of the critics who had warned of possible riots and violence in advance.

Even today, the Hofgarten still serves as a venue for political rallies. The *Fridays for Future* movement for example uses the Hofgarten as its starting point for their climate strikes. The annual Bonn schools' peace run also takes place here as part of the *Bonn Peace Days* (→ Old Town Hall).

Next stop:

 7-minute walk via Kaiserplatz and Maximilianstr. to Bonn Central Station



BUNKER AT BONN CENTRAL STATION

Bonn's central railway station was converted into a civil defence bunker during the Cold War. The facility was designed for 4,500 people who could have found shelter here in the event of an attack. Remains of the bunker can still be found today, partly underneath the underground railway, behind a door in the tunnel between platform 1 and platform 3.

In the 1970s the German government, in cooperation, with the city of Bonn planned the facility and completed it in 1979. The reasoning behind this was the threat of an armed conflict between the powers in East and West and the fear of a nuclear attack. The original plan was to use the entire underground station as an air raid shelter. 3,000 people were to be accommodated on tightly packed platforms and partly in small adjoining rooms. The trains would have had to enter the station empty at first so that additional people could have been accommodated in the carriages. In total, up to 4,500 people could have found shelter here – a mere fraction of Bonn's population at the time. The tunnel would have been closed by eight thick swinging gates. At the location, supplies

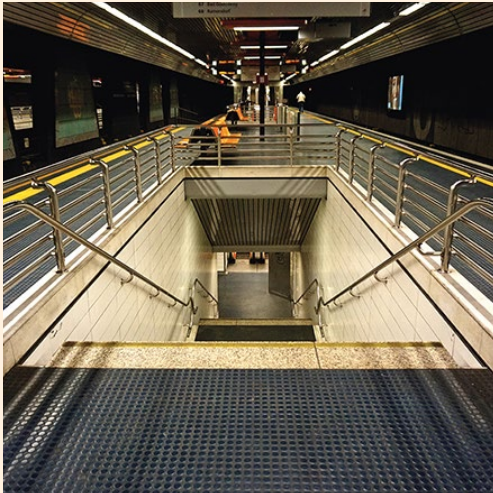
had already been stockpiled to provide for people. The facility would not have been able to withstand direct bomb hits, but would have provided protection against pressure waves, radioactivity, biological and chemical substances, fire and falling debris. Fortunately, the bunker never had to be used, as there was

“I want to say, and this is very important: at the end we lucked out. It was luck that prevented nuclear war. We came that close to nuclear war at the end. [...] And that danger exists today.

Robert McNamara,
Former US Secretary of Defence

never an attack on Germany during the Cold War. In 2013, the bunker was decommissioned and returned to the city of Bonn.

Another former bunker is located below the Friedensplatz (→ **Friedensplatz**), in the underground car park.



Probably the most famous bunker in Germany was built between 1962 and 1971 in Ahrweiler near Bonn. It is known as the “Government Bunker”, but bears the official name “Alternative Accommodation of the Constitutional Organs of the Federal Republic of Germany in a Period of Crisis and Wartime” and is now a documentation centre containing information on the period of the East-West conflict. The supposedly nuclear bomb-proof bunker was the most secret building in the Federal Republic of Germany and is now a memorial to the Cold War. Its preservation as a memorial was made possible thanks to the local heritage association “Alt-Ahrweiler”.

Next stop:

🚶 11-minute walk via Rabinstr. to the Oscar-Romero-House



🏠 Heerstr. 205 · 53111 Bonn
🚌 Bus stop HeerstraÙe or tram stop Bonn West

OSCAR-ROMERO-HOUSE

The Oscar-Romero-House looks back on an eventful history. During the era of National Socialism, the building was used by the *Schutzstaffel (SS)* (lit. Protection Squadron). The house was later named after Oscar Romero (1917 – 1980), the Archbishop of San Salvador, who was murdered in 1980.

After its construction in 1869, the building was used as a prison until 1930. Between 1930 and 1945, the building was used by the SS for torture and interrogations. In July 1933, communist Josef Messinger was tortured here so severely that he died of his injuries shortly after. In June 2003, a *Stolperstein* (lit. stumbling stone – a small cobblestone-sized memorial commemorating individual Nazi-victims) was put in place in front of his former home in the street “Am Finkenberg 1” on the initiative of the *Förderkreis Oscar-Romero-Haus e. V.* The cellar, where the crimes occurred, is still part of the house today and information boards are situated inside as a reminder of the history intertwined with the location.

After the end of the war, the building passed into municipal hands and served as temporary accommodation for various administrative organisations. In the 1970s, the dilapidated building was supposed to be demolished. This was prevented by Martin Huthmann, priest of the Catholic student parish. He renovated the house with members of his congregation and bought it with the help of generous donations. When the house was purchased in 1983, it was given its current name.

Oscar Romero’s commitment to the oppressed, poor, and disenfranchised, for which he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978 and 1979, led to his assassination in 1980 at the hands of the Salvadoran military dictatorship.



The assassination was followed by a civil war in El Salvador, which was only ended by peace agreements in 1992.

Today, the Oscar-Romero-House houses the offices of the *Informationsstelle Lateinamerika (ila)* (Latin America Information Centre), the *Rosa Luxemburg Library* and a helpdesk for the organisation *MediNetz e. V.* In the past, it has also repeatedly provided space for political groups whose views contradicted that of the societal majority. In the 1980s the peace movement, for example, coordinated their work from there and also during the Gulf War. The large demonstrations in the Hofgarten were also planned here (→ **Hofgarten**).

The house does not have permanent opening hours, however, the premises can be accessed upon request and there are regular events when the house is open to the public.

Next stop:

🚶 10-minute walk via Hochstadering to GGS Karlschule



“No soldier is obliged to obey an order contrary to the law of God.
No one has to obey an immoral law.
It is high time you obeyed your consciences rather than sinful orders!

Oscar Romero



🏠 Dorotheenstr. 126 · 53111 Bonn
🚌 Bus stop Sachsenweg

KLARA MARIE FASSBINDER – GGS KARLSCHULE

Klara Marie Faßbinder (1890 – 1974) was a professor at the Pedagogical Academy in Bonn and helped to establish the *West German Women's Peace Movement*. During her time as a professor, the academy was housed in what is now the *GGS Karlschule* (Community Primary School). Faßbinder was one of the most important activists of the women's peace movement.

Klara Marie Faßbinder was born in Trier in 1890 and grew up in a Catholic family loyal to the emperor. In 1896, the family moved to Brühl near Bonn, where her father worked as a teacher. In keeping with this family tradition, the young woman decided to become a teacher herself. At the time, this was one of the few opportunities for a woman to gain an academic education. From 1913, she studied German, French, history, and philosophy at the University of Bonn (**→ University of Bonn**) in order to become a teacher.

When World War I began with Austria-Hun-

gary's declaration of war on Serbia, she considered it her patriotic duty to serve her country by teaching soldiers at the front. Her lectures helped to raise the morale of soldiers. Nevertheless, during this time her view of the world began to crumble. She became convinced that soldiers were risking their lives for a pointless and inhumane war. Her language skills allowed her to act as a translator between the German occupiers and the French population. These personal encounters with the local people also changed her perspective on war. Subsequently, she committed herself to pacifism.



**“Be vigilant! Be critical!
Show civil courage!”**

Slogan of the WFFB

After the war, Faßbinder gained a doctorate in philosophy in Bonn. During the Weimar Republic, her experiences in World War I led her to campaign for reconciliation with France. For this endeavour, she moved to the Saarland in 1920 which was occupied by France at the time. For her dedication to reconciliation, she was banned from teaching at public schools during the Nazi era. She returned to Bonn in 1939 and worked as a private teacher and then, following the end of World War II, as a professor

of history at the Pedagogical Academy. In 1950 she publicly spoke out against the rearmament programme by the first German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. In 1952, she helped to establish the *West German Women's Peace Movement – Westdeutsche Frauenfriedensbewegung* (WFFB) referring to Bertha von Suttner (**→ Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz**). As a result of a defamation campaign, she was once again banned from her profession in 1953 and was forced to retire early.

Together with the journalists Ingeborg Küster and Elly Steinman, she published the WFFB magazine *Frau und Frieden (Woman and Peace)* from 1952 to 1974. For her translation of the works of the French writer Paul Claudel and her commitment to peace, she was to receive the French medal *Les Palmes académiques (Order of Academic Palms)*. However, the handing over of the award was prevented by then Federal President Heinrich Lübke, as the German government was opposed to her pacifist views. She was finally awarded the medal three years later and was buried with it upon her request.

In honour of Klara Marie Faßbinder, the Bonn Peace Plenum published the monthly peace paper *Friedensklärchen* from the 1980s to 1990s. Copies can still be found in private households in Bonn and the Archive of the German Women's Movement in Kassel.



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