

**Walter Heinrich**  
***The Hour of the Pelican***

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**Walter  
Heinrich**  
***Die Stunde des  
Pelikans***

*Die Lebensgeschichte des  
Maximilian Kolbe*

*Roman · Diogenes*

Biographies, Contemporary Literature  
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Praise

*The Hour of the Pelican*

»There are times when neither speech nor writing suffice to make the inevitable truth understood. In those times, the actions and the suffering of saints must create a new alphabet to unveil the secret of truth again. Our present is such a point in time.« – Michael Baumgarten / Walter Nigg: Great Saints

»Walter Heinrich convincingly recreates an episode of contemporary history in the form of a novel.« – Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich

»Flowingly narrated and worked up informatively, the harrowing this courageous Franciscan's life story has lost nothing of its timeliness.« – Christine Paul Eger / Der Sonntag, Augsburg

»Walter Heinrich writes without an overly emotional voice, and he doesn't go easy on his readers.« – Andreas Malessa / Deutschlandradio Kultur, Berlin

Auschwitz, 1941. After one prisoner has managed to escape, ten randomly chosen inmates are sentenced to death by starvation in the ›Hungerbunker‹. A man then steps forward and asks the camp commandant to exchange him for one of the doomed inmates. Who is this man? And what induces him to give his life for a man he doesn't even know? This man is Polish Franciscan monk Maximilian Kolbe (1894–1941). With his life marred by tuberculosis from young adulthood, he established, against many odds, a Catholic magazine with a circulation of millions of copies and founded Europe's largest monastery, Niepokalanów. There he gave refuge to Jews and other victims of persecution under the Nazi occupation and as a result ended up in the dungeons of the Gestapo and the camp hell of Auschwitz. In his novel ›The Hour of the Pelican‹, Walter Heinrich traces the life and death of Maximilian Kolbe. With great empathy – and his life-affirming esprit which again and again manifests itself in the book – he narrates the life of a man who stands by his belief and his ideals, to the last extremity.

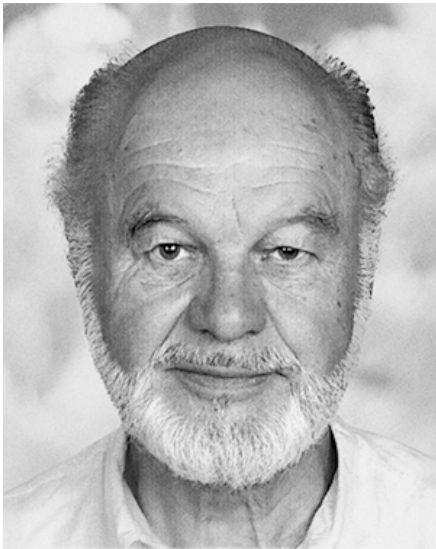


Photo: Privat

Walter Heinrich (1934 – 2021) was born in Teplice (now Czech Republic). Following his graduation in mechanical engineering, he studied performing arts at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. He worked as an actor, dramatic advisor and stage director for the theatre for many years and wrote for radio and television. In 1984, the feature film *Das Wagnis des Arnold Janssen*, written and directed by Walter Heinrich, was released in cinemas. Walter Heinrich had originally intended to make a film about the life of Maximilian Kolbe as well – but the project turned into a novel which was first published, under the pseudonym of Henri Walter, in 1987. Walter Heinrich died in 2021.