

# Helms for Peace

## Supporters of Peace

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World peace... sounds like a dream for the humanity. But is it attainable at all or will just remain an illusion forever? First of all let's answer the (ridiculous) question why peace is a good thing. If we look back in history we can see that civilizations can only flourish in state of peace. War has never brought any permanent good – only mass destruction and suffering for the sake of gaining resources or worse – feeding leaders' vanity and greed for greatness. Huge amount of resources are wasted for warfare instead of being invested in development of humanity, culture, technology, i.e. given for the common good.

In the last 50-60 years more inventions have been made than in the whole human history before that. How was this possible? The Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs gives an answer. People need their basic needs satisfied before they can engage themselves at higher realms of mind and spirit. Throughout most of human history people spent their time providing for the satisfaction of their physiological needs – food, water, sleep, etc. and the need for safety, without having so much time for high-minded activities. It is quite difficult to, let's say, reflect on Greek philosophy when your stomach is wanting its share. But with the advances of civilization it has been getting easier and easier to satisfy these basic needs. In this way humanity had more time for achievements in any other field of human endeavor. And when war comes, everything is thrown back...

It is clear that peace is a requirement for a good life. If we ask any person: “Do you want world peace?”, with almost 100% certainty we'll get a positive answer. Every “normal” person needs peace in order to live his life and be happy. (On high political level, where decisions are taken, it is not quite the same – the pursuit of power may yield different goals.) But what if we ask that “any person”: “What do you do for world peace?” Probably nothing. Most of the people still live “locally”, they haven't elevated to a global way of thinking and they care only about their limited surroundings. There are but other people who want to do something about the world but don't know what.

We can look to the problem of achieving world peace from two different perspectives. The first is the one of the individual. Peace begins with every one of us. Tolerance, positive attitude toward others, seeing what unites us and not emphasizing on the “technical” differences between people... Throughout our lives a lot of barriers have been imposed on and erected in our minds – religious, ethnic, cultural, political... It's up to us to overcome them. But we mostly need external assistance to help us see these barriers, because we may not even realize their existence. We cannot solve a problem we know nothing about or don't admit its existence.

Batuz has spent a huge part of his life carrying out exactly this mission – overcoming borders of any kind. In his art in the last more than 30 years we see variations of the same subject – visualizing the line, the border. Thus he helps us see the problem and cogitate on the matter. But mindful speculations are not enough. Batuz gives us a solution and even has applied it to society to show that it works. This solution is called “communication through art”. In our core essence we, humans, are the same – we all have that creative power. With this presumption Batuz has brought thousand of students to the monastery Altzella as a social experiment. He has directed this “human laboratory” for more than a decade. All these students, from all over the world, had no problems living peacefully together and creating works of art, regardless of their social, religious, political or ethnical background. The experiment was successful.

The exchange programs which bring people with various backgrounds together, like the one in Altzella, actually work for world peace. In our more and more globalized world intercultural competences are of essential importance. Most of the conflicts are caused by misunderstandings on cultural level – when we don't know and don't understand the Other. It's like fear of the dark. The darkness by itself is nothing to be feared of, but the fact that we don't know what lies within is fearful. Most of the people who have extreme nationalistic views actually have never got to know a foreigner. Through intercultural programs the “darkness” of our ignorance can be dissipated and one can see that the Other is also a human being and that what unites us is much bigger than what divides us. As a result inter-national friendships are made. And fighting against a friend is not the same as fighting against a faceless, soulless enemy.

The second perspective of looking to the problem of achieving peace is on political level, where major decisions are taken. Unfortunately nations cannot achieve genuine peace. It's against their nature. They are based on separation and world peace is based on unity. What can be done? We need a superordinate entity. And we do have it – the United Nations. We also have the peacekeeping forces which are meant to fight for global peace. Batuz' brilliant idea in his visionary text about the Global Army gives us important key points to think about. The Global Soldiers are there. They don't serve to any national interest, but fight for the world. And here Batuz draws our attention to a crucial point – we have the Global Army but we don't have the Global Population. The people who should support the Global Army in its efforts for global peace.

One of the main tasks of the association Helmets for Peace e.V., named after the tremendous work of art “Helmets for Peace”, which is a symbol for peace, is to raise awareness among people, to make them think on a global level. The association is working on a project to connect individuals, who are willing to support peace, with the soldiers of the peacekeeping missions of the United Nations. The civilians should show their adhesion and appreciation for what the Global Soldiers do through sending letters and small items as a sign of support. The items may be donated by any company and some of the big parcel service providers may become “carrier of peace”. The Global Soldiers might be unaware that they actually fight for world peace, being just lead by materialistic needs and motives, but the letters of support will make them realize their important role in achieving peace around the world. This project of Helmets for Peace e.V. should serve as an example and if it is successful might be brought to a much larger scale.

World peace, even unattainable in the near future, is a goal worth pursuing. The prosperity of the whole civilization depends on it. And last but not least, peace is a requirement for every individual to unfold his full potential.