

I beg the english speaking people ~~to excuse my english~~ it is not
my mother tongue

Dear friends,
please excuse my english, it is not my mother tongue. ~~I got a lot of~~

When I received the invitation for this meeting, I felt nostalgic. I went through some old publications, of the previous Meetings of writers that took place in this hospitable city during the 70ies and the 80ies and I was privileged to have attended. The memories were sweet and bitter. It seemed to me that that period was extremely far away into the past, into the Cold War. The Motto of those Meetings was: "Peace, the Hope of the Planet." People were then suspicious but at the same time were curious to meet with people on the other side. Those Meetings were a real chance for contacts. Don't forget that so many things that bring us near were not invented yet, like the internet or the mobile telephone. ☺

When I look now at the photos in those old publications the memories are sweet and bitter as well. Faces that were young and beautiful are not young and beautiful any more. Persons that were full of life are not existing any more. Friends were forgotten, words have vanished. And yet...

Yet, those meetings had a healing effect that warms me up till this moment. It was the first time in my life that I was given the opportunity to meet so many great writers at the same time, in the same room, to hear their voice, to exchange jokes with them, to ask them to write a few words in a small album. Those autographs, by the way, are now some of the most precious objects in our home.

Oh, those friendships that were created during the intervals of the discussions. Friendships that continued afterwards, ^{inside or} ~~outside this room,~~ outside this town and this country. I don't intend to stuff you with words. ^{***} Instead, please allow me to remember some of the so many names. Names of people who became my dear friends during and after those unforgettable meetings. People whose priceless words are dancing all around us, people whose faces are among us now, as they were then.

*** thoughts words have ^{tremendous} power.

0 Perhaps even the organisers of those meetings ~~can~~ ^{do} not realise how important those meetings were then. People with different political ideas came ~~here~~ to meet in a small country, because this small country knew how to create the atmosphere of trust and friendship.

05.1.00

Yes, I see out there Gianni Rodari, who as a fairwell is drawing for me a boy carrying a balloon ^{and on the balloon two} ~~with the~~ words: "Ciao Elli". Ataul Behramoglu is singing a lamented Amane song. Nikiforos Vrettakos is worrying about his ~~area~~ baby trees in his village that are being thirsty. Azis Nesin is offering us the picture of the House for the orphans he had built in Turkey and ^{he} signs ^{it} with a caricature of his face on a little dog's body. ✓ Robert Andre is planning yet another meeting of literary critics, Andrei Voznesenski is asking Yeftushenko where he bought his extravagant jacket, Kolyo Sevof, the sailor, is dreaming of the big stars of Famagusta. Leda Mileva is ready to solve another problem ^{of the translators,} with her irresistible smile. William Saroyan is hiding a bottle of vodka in his pocket for later. Georgi Giakarof is writing a ^{love} poem on the dinner tissue. John Cheever is desperate for a cup of real coffee. Adrian Mitchel is drawing little elephants under his signature. * And Liubomir Levtchef has again opened his home to host his numerous friends with slivova and bulgarian ^{musket wine} ~~wine~~ till the small hours.

I am deeply grateful to you, dear bulgarian colleagues, for letting me again be a part of this Meeting. Your Country, in spite of the so many problems has not lost the spirit of the friendship and hospitality. I would like to assure you that Bulgaria will always have a special place in our heart, my husband's Panos Peonides and myself. We have been following the recent adventures of your country with great compassion and we are sure that sooner or later all your major or minor problems will be solved. And we are looking forward to welcoming you in the big European Family.

* Rafael Alberti ^{with the snowwhite hair} in his bright blue shirt is blossoming like a flower
✓ Elazabeta Bagriana and Dora Gabe are ~~the most~~ ~~popular~~ competing each other who is the most popular ~~in Bulgaria~~ and the most graceful

Bagriana 2005