

*Ofizia Bayyapin*

The great Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis <sup>once</sup> asked his Cretan grandfather to give him his blessing.

-May you do whatever you can, his grandfather wished him.

Kazantzakis was not satisfied.

-That is a common blessing, grandfather, he said. I want a Cretan blessing. Then, the great writer tells us, the old man looked away into the horizon where thunder echoed from the surrounding mountains and turned to Kazantzakis, saying:

-Then may you do that which you cannot do.

Dear ~~commander~~, *colleagues*

It seems that it isn't enough to only do what we can in order to maintain life on this planet. At least this is what events show since the first meeting of writers in Sophia. In two words as the people of Cyprus say:

-Every yester-year, the better.

What remains, then, is for us to try to do that, which appears that we cannot do. Because if we don't put our full strength against the weight of the forces of destruction, there can be no doubt that merely one nuclear bomb weighs as much as all the living writers in the world and their books. And a hand-full of nuclear bombs, alas in the fateful hour, will wipe away from the face of the earth even the dead writers and their books: from Homer to Milton, from Dante to Omar Kayyam, from Pushkin to Whitman.

We must therefore strive for that which appears impossible. We must become judges, denouncers and executioners in the face of the forces of evil. We must become orators, merchants and publicisers for Peace. We must enter the places which have been regarded as diminishing for artists. And we must speak of matters which we may consider commonplace, or passé. In reality, there are no words more commonplace, tiresome and surpassed than the word War and the word Peace. There are no words which have been so impoverished in their use not only by writers but by all sorts of people; ordinary simple folk and intellectuals alike. From schoolchildren to archbishops, field-marshalls and heads of state. From democrats to fascists. And we, people of the word,

who are so careful that our use of them is original and bright ,are called upon to use these words again,or at least meanings which resemble <sup>them.</sup> ~~the~~,since these are our only weapons in the struggle against annihilation.Many of us find this difficult and believe me I am amongst them.Many of us say,that's enough,we have said it all,we have said it again,we have done what we can.But Kazantzakis' old grandfather has left us a heritage:Do that which you cannot.

If ,with this thought,with this promise,we leave this superb hospitable city,Sophia,for our homes,I have the impression that we shall oppose and resist the threat of a nuclear holocaust.Each one of us <sup>will do so</sup>,as individuals but also as a unity ,like one large world-wide family,which thirsts to impart to the coming generations all that enthralled and bewitched us and our parents:Homer,Dante, Omar Kayyam,Pushkin,Milton and others.

Permit me,before closing,to express my admiration and thanks to little Bulgaria which has made these gatherings into a continuing world mobilisation of writers,for peace,and which has truly done that which was impossible.

Oct. 1984.