

OF WRITERS - SOFIA

This forum I consider important and with far reaching significance for two main reasons.

First it continues and consolidates a beautiful internationalistic tradition which our friends, the Bulgarian writers, have started. This is the Third International Meeting of Writers convened in Sofia with the aim of making the presence of the creators of esthetic values more tangibly felt in the struggle for peace. And the creation of such a tradition amongst the writers with their well known influence on the minds and the hearts of the people is an essential supplement to the mass political struggle to halt the warmongers, ban the weapons of mass destruction, stop the nuclear arms race. The World Parliament for Peace, this mighty demonstration of the will of the broadest strata of the people of all continents, <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ has just concluded its business in this beautiful capital of Socialist Bulgaria, has given new dimensions to this struggle. It became clear that the nightmare of a nuclear holocaust set in motion great masses of people irrespective of political, ideological and religious affiliations. This crusade however needs the broadest possible support it can get and Art is and has always been a mighty weapon in the struggle for noble, humanitarian causes. Humanism is the Flesh and bone and blood of Art. And it is in this that I see the second significance of this Forum of writers.

A writer may ofcourse list himself as a fighter by signing a petition for disarmament but this is not enough. The real war threats that hang over the horizon demand from these "privileged" people, <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ know the "secret" of creating a "second world according to the laws of beauty" to face the big problems confronting humanity in a more direct, so to say, manner. This in no way does it mean placing demands impoverishing the imagination or limiting the artist's freedom to choose and work out <sup>his</sup> in his own unique way, ~~his~~ <sup>themes</sup> ~~themes. It's not life or the political movements that intrude into the artists' activity.~~

It's not life and its demands that intrude negatively into the creators' activity. The intrusions we should be afraid of are ~~the~~ other intrusions that tend to distort reality, destroy the communication lines between the writer and reality, push the writer <sup>into</sup> a false, illusory world. <sup>It's</sup> The intrusions that tie up the creator to the requirements of the establishment, of the vested interests, the intrusions that try hard through the Publishing Houses and the manipulation of the market to squeeze <sup>out</sup> real art and fascilitate what one could define as the creation of spiritual products according to the "laws of ugliness". I speak ofcourse about the intrusions the class, capitalist society puts in action in the direction of this most important social function-Art.

Our main concern at this Meeting should be in the direction of sharpening our sensitivity towards the grave problems of our time, the monstrous escalation of the war danger, <sup>emanating from</sup> ~~coming out of~~ the policy of the imperialist powers, with all that goes with this escalation in our everyday life-aggression, fascism, military coups, chauvinism, racism, inflation, poverty etc. etc.

Alexei Tolstol believed that in each writer should function at the same time three elements the thinker, the artist and the critic. The thinker, according to this eminent Russian writer, is active, he knows why, he sees the end. We think that in these crucial times of the last two decades of our century this "active" component of artistic creation should be elevated to the maximum. To throw one's self into a battle against the evils of life does not only need courage - this is not so difficult to acquire - it <sup>also</sup> needs the capability ~~to~~ of understanding the essence of developments.

Many things can be said here about the requirements of the Cultural Front, of the literary front in particular. Yet our Meeting would be lacking if we ~~don't~~ <sup>did not</sup> come ~~down~~ to some concrete ideas and conclusions.

First of all we strongly believe in the continuation of this tradition of the International Meetings of Writers and the feeling must be common that Sofia has the will and the capability of ensuring this. There are people in this city, in this country with rich imagination, talent and real dedication to the great humanitarian causes we all believe in. And this is a vital prerequisite for the successful <sup>of</sup> tasks of such dimensions.

I feel that the inauguration of some sort of Literary Prizes for Peace attached to these Meetings could help communicate their messages. The Fund of these Literary Prizes could be formed out of funds coming from different sources with the participation of the mass peace movements. Donations from Writers could be accepted too.

The idea put forward at the previous Meetings to elaborate on the publication of some sort of a Quarterly in different languages could be taken up by a group. There is no such proposal of course for the creation of an organisation or a leading body. What is needed is a tribune, a movement which will be continuously broadening and expanding engaging as far as possible and under different forms those who believe in the right and the duty of the writer to serve the noblest of all causes with all the means at his disposal.

In May 1981 Athens will become the seat of a World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace. This great event, which is sponsored by the World Peace Council and organised by an International Preparatory Committee can be a new meeting place of the writers. And what is more important the intermediate period to that Congress could be utilised to bring into this broad cultural movement more people on a national

and international scale.

I must say that in my country, Cyprus, there is already a mobilisation of cultural forces, this being the result of the tragic consequences left behind by the war unleashed against the island by Imperialism. Blood, occupation, the uprooting of the population and the hundreds of missing persons, the partition of the land and the curse of the people against the aggressors, the will to liberate the island all these objective and subjective factors transformed the main body of Art, mainly literature, to a trench of struggle and its creators to avanguard militants.

In the period immediately after the Second World War under the impact of the wounds fascism had left behind, scores of internationally famed writers, painters, composers, film makers etc. came out in the first ranks of the organised peace movements of their countries. An urgent call should go out from this forum stressing that the anticipation of a nuclear holocaust - which some centres <sup>are</sup> feverishly preparing - should be a sufficient argument for the creation of the greatest peace movement the world has ever known, having as one of its most active detachments the strata of the Writers.



# *ADDRESS OF GREETINGS*

*to the participants in  
the Third International  
Writers' Meeting*

*Sofia, September 29, 1980*

TO  
THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE  
THIRD INTERNATIONAL  
WRITERS' MEETING

*Ladies and gentlemen,  
Distinguished comrades,*

*I have the pleasure and the honour to bid you a most cordial welcome, on behalf of the State Council, the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and on my own behalf!*

*I believe that no one of you would object if the Third International Writers' Meeting in Sofia was devoted to a theme bearing on the writer's work. Yet the times are such that for the third time now you are holding your meeting under the noble motto 'Peace – the Hope of the Planet'.*

*Regrettably, this meeting of yours is taking place in a most alarming international situation, a situation when the breath of a nuclear holocaust can already be felt in the strategy, in the policy, in the acts of the enemies of peace and security in the world. After the victory of the peace forces in Helsinki, the peoples, in spite of the enormous relief they felt, were yet aware that the warmongers had not resigned themselves to their defeat. It was no mere chance that even then the peoples and governments of the peace-loving states raised the demand, sub-*

*sequently ever more persistently repeated, that political detente be supplemented with military detente. Recently, and particularly in the last twelve months, it has become absolutely clear: while the world was calling for an end to the arms race and for disarmament, the enemies of peaceful life had been preparing an arms build-up, an exacerbation of international tension, and the establishment of the first nuclear strike and the so-called limited nuclear war as an official military and political strategy.*

*I do not know why it is that in conversations with men of culture, the question of peace and war is usually associated with the fate of culture. The fate of culture — that most precious fruit of human civilization, concerns us all. But I think that we would be underestimating you as interlocuters and as people, were we to confine the question of peace and war to the threat posed to mankind's cultural treasures.*

*Is human culture threatened?*

*Yes, it is!*

*But today the threat is hanging over mankind itself, over the very existence of the planet which for millions of years floated deaf, sightless and dumb in the expanses of outer space, until it became the magnificent cradle of man and human civilization. People say that the inhabited planets are countless. That may well be — I do not know. But the earth — one of an infinite*

*number of planets — is the only one possible for us and even writers, authors of science fiction, ultimately bring their characters back to the earth again.*

*As you know, the World Parliament of the Peoples for Peace has just ended in Sofia. Most of you took part in its work and contributed to the decisions it took. It was generally recognized that mankind is threatened by a thermo-nuclear catastrophe as it has never been threatened before. And it is the common will to mobilize all — politicians and statesmen, parties, movements, religious and cultural circles, all people who do not want war, so that the whole of mankind may rise against the warmongers!*

*It is not my intention to flatter you. You writers, by yourselves, are not in a position to curb the forces of war. But neither are we politicians, heading such powerful organizations as are the states of the world, in a position to do this single-handed. The cause of peace — particularly in this fateful hour — can be saved only through the united efforts of the hundreds of millions of people. And it is here that you, the writers of mankind, have no equals, in your powers of influencing the human mind and soul.*

*I am confident that the Third International Writers' Meeting in Sofia will raise high its voice in defence of peace and its call will reverberate far and wide across the world.*

*I wholeheartedly wish you fruitful meetings and talks, a pleasant sojourn in this country, fresh major successes in your creative work!*

*Sofia*

*September 29, 1980*

**TODOR ZHIVKOV**

*First Secretary of the Central  
Committee of the Bulgarian  
Communist Party and President  
of the State Council of the  
People's Republic of Bulgaria*