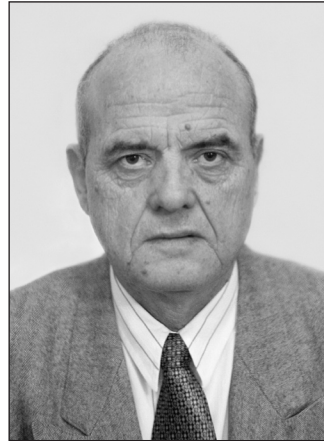


## **IVAN STANKULOV (1944-2007), A MAN AMONG MEN**



Ignacio Sánchez Mejías was one of the greatest Spanish bullfighter. When he died on 13 August 1934 in Madrid after a goring (cornada), he was memorialized by Miguel Hernández, Rafael Alberti and other famous poets, the best of these works was that by Federico García Lorca's *Llanto por la muerte de Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* (Weeping for the Death of Ignacio Sánchez Mejías).

Ivan Stoyanov Stankulov was one of the greatest Bulgarian forensic medicine doctor. He died on 26 August 2007 in Varna after severe heart attack. The following is our *Llanto por la muerte de Ivan Stoyanov Stankulov*. Further, it will be a big mystery of "presence in absence".

For the first time I met with Ivan in the autumn of 1962 in Varna – he (18) was in first year, I (22) in third year of our study at Medical University. Since then we used to study, work and drink together.

However, man always has his last time – a shared thought, a read poem, a drunk glass of wine... Or, a last *in vivo* meeting with God – Ivan strictly followed the sacral message of Signora Rosaria from Amantea in Calabria, Southern Italia: "Man who is drinking wine is closer to God", as she gave this torch to her grandson, our common colleague-friend Luigi Aloe.

In their pursuit of happiness, people share much in common. Here is a message of Zorba the Greek: "How simple a thing is happiness: a glass of wine, a roast chestnut, a wretched little brazier, the sound of the sea. All that is required to feel that here and now is happiness in a simple heart."

Among us, his friends of student years, Ivan has been patented Zorba's philosophy. He knew by heart long pieces of *Zorba the Greek* – with an in-dept emotion he reported them during our common liquid round table discussions. Ivan began each of his performance with Zorba's thought: „Boss, a person needs a little madness, or else he never dares cut the rope and be free."

Many of our common memories may now become epitaphs for Ivan. One such is that of Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957): „I hope for nothing. I fear nothing. I am free." Of course, also appropriate are those two chairs at the grave of Jack Daniel, Tennessee's master of whisky and *dolce vita* – for ladies who remember him. And now forever Ivan Stankulov.

Most importantly, people meeting Ivan and Aghelina will say: "These are grandchildren of Dr Ivan Stankulov!" This could be the best cure for his nostalgia for life.

**George N. Chaldakov and friends**