LaRouche: On the Death Of Gail Billington

Lyndon LaRouche made these remarks about the death of Gail Billington, to a meeting of his close associates on Saturday, Sept. 1, 2012.

I have this sad news to announce: Gail Billington passed away this morning. And naturally, with us, in the circumstances of our organization and its history, it’s very difficult to respond to these kinds of events, because of old friends in combat over long years. This is not the kind of matter that lends itself to explanation. It’s something that we know, that we have experienced as an organization, and it’s very much with us, right now. The loss of a member, of an old member, one who conducted a brave struggle against a very evil kind of disease, is something which is very difficult for us, even for me, to speak about under these circumstances. The fact of it is obvious, and I can state the fact, but the sense of loss, is not something that can be easily explained away. . . .

What we as an organization are doing, is crucial for humanity. It is not something that we’re doing in competing for other people for relative importance. What we’re doing, and what I’m doing, is of unique importance to the human species at this time, when we’re under threat of thermonuclear war. And fortunately, and unfortunately, both, I’ve been enabled at various points in my lifetime, to intervene on this kind of issue.

We have sometimes succeeded. Sometimes we’ve almost succeeded, which is the worst of all. Because when you almost succeed in doing something for humanity that humanity needs, it’s not you that’s suffering. You’re feeling a kind of mixture of a sense of shame and failure: Why couldn’t we have done something to prevent this from happening? And it’s the same kind of emotion that intersects, for me and for others in this room who knew Gail: There’s that sense of loss; why did it have to happen? Why did it have to happen at this time? Why didn’t she get a chance to know that we’d accomplished something which we hope we will have accomplished?

It’s difficult. You can not really explain these matters. You can come to an understanding of them, and it never comes to an actual explanation. It can’t; it’s beyond that.

And I find it shaking, not in any other way, except the sense of her loss of life, when we were on the verge of trying to share life with her, as with others, in achievement and hope that she would experience that achievement of our efforts. And she’s been denied that, and that’s what makes the whole thing so difficult to try to begin to even explain. It’s an emotion that you can not begin to explain; it’s just one that hits you. . . .

Popular opinion has taken over, and popular opinion is stupidity. It comes in the form of ceasing to be concerned with the discovery of things which are just beyond your reach—insights, which are just beyond your reach—and making them familiar, and usable. Mankind has got to, at this time, change the self-conception of mankind. That’s really what we have to do. But this, the shock of having to face this, will force us to recognize that responsibility.

And it’s thoughts like that, that become very important to me when something happens, as happened with
In Memoriam

September 14, 2012

Gail today. You have to think in those terms: that you can not grasp efficiently the fact that she died the way she did—you can not grasp that. You put it aside, you come up with explanations, you do this kind of stuff—it doesn’t satisfy you at all! You have to find a deeper meaning to this whole process, a deeper meaning to the death of someone who was valuable. To encase something from that, as part of your vocabulary.

And then, they’re not dead. They’re not dead, because they live on, in the effect on you.

Dearest Mike and Gail,

You are so much more than a family to me! What could I say in words that could compare to Florestan’s aria! How profound is the faith of Beethoven’s Florestan. In the most desperate despair imaginable to man, he cries out from the depth of his soul, “God’s will is just!” Then, as in a prayer, he contemplates his dedication to truth, his humiliation, and his sweet consolation that his duty was done. And then—a sudden leap, a transformation—an angel appears!

What is an angel? An angel is the spirit of God coming to you in a real form, a physical result of deep spiritual contemplation of love of God, of truth, and of doing one’s duty—which I think must include the sacrifice of self and acceptance of earthly humiliation. The angel is the metaphor for the mind’s creative spark, born of true love of God and his divine justice.

Is there anything more physically powerful than Florestan’s outpouring of joy at the presence of his angel Leonora?

And is not the angel Leonora the physical embodiment of God’s perfect love, leading not only Florestan, but subsequently all the people to freedom—the heavenly realm—through her equal devotion to duty and her perfect love for Florestan?

She appears to him, not as he is thinking about her, or despairing of his fate, but in his deepest devotion to God.

So I think that our angels don’t come to us unless we truly love God’s justice more than our own selves! And your equal sacrifices are a beautiful example of that divine love. So I am very happy that you both are angels for each other!

You are both angels to me.

The Angel of Freedom

by Margaret Billington Greenspan

This letter, written by Mike Billington’s sister Margaret to her brother and his wife Gail on the eve of Mike’s return to prison in 1992, captures the spirit which Mike and Gail shared with their political associates, and which, as a couple, they represented for many people around the world.

Florestan is the hero in Beethoven’s opera “Fidelio,” which portrays his wife Leonora as she puts her life at risk to try to rescue her husband from an unjust, cruel imprisonment in a brutal dungeon, where he is now near death. In his aria, sung in a dark dungeon, he wrestles with despair, but, with a vision of his wife Leonora before him, then triumphantly asserts his faith that he has served God and justice. Soon afterward, Leonora appears to rescue him.

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 Courtesy of Michael Billington

Mike’s sister, Margaret Billington Greenspan, and Gail visit Mike in Nottoway prison, July 1995.