

‘Mrs. LaRouche, You Absolutely Must Do This’

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

The news of the brutal death of Professor Bondarevsky shocks and grieves me still. In an extraordinary way, his loss makes clear that human individuals are unique and irreplaceable; and even though this saying is always true, so much more huge is the gap in the ranks of his contemporaries, which *he* leaves behind. The Professor was a completely extraordinary personality, an intellectual of genius, with the lightning-like wit which is only ever the result of a life of mental hard work; and the lack of him makes Russia and the world a bit poorer.

I liked to call him, the Professor, “Bondi,” as we called him among ourselves. There was a fondness and sympathy which can only arise from a very great intellectual directness in relations with one another. I got to know him in 1991 when he visited us in Wiesbaden. Those were turbulent times; the Soviet Union was in the midst of breaking up; the first Gulf War was under way. I remember how an initial caution—at that time, association with Russian academicians was still absolutely not an everyday experience—gradually softened into an intellectual fascination over the conversation with him. Bondarevsky had an incredible historical knowledge, on strategic questions, the Non-Aligned Movement, the history of the Byzantine Empire, of India, and on, and on.



Committee to Save the Iraqi Children

In the period which followed, through a series of further visits—also on our part, to Moscow—and telephone conversations, it became a probability bordering on certainty that at some time during the conversation he would say: “In my humble opinion, dear Helga, you absolutely have to do this. And please give my advice to Mr. LaRouche, he absolutely must consider this, and think about that. It is *verrry* urgent, that you follow my advice.” And normally, his advice turned out to be extremely useful and insightful concerning all kinds of problems.

One of his “humble suggestions” to me was, in March 1991, the request that I absolutely should organize a Committee to Save the Iraqi Children: on the one side, to really help the Iraqi children in a humanitarian way, since they were the real victims of the war and the sanctions; but also, to awaken world public opinion about the reality of this war; namely, that there were real human victims—an idea, which was in danger of getting lost, if one only followed the almost virtual coverage of the “air sorties.” His idea seemed right to me, and so we carried out his proposal. Subsequently, the Committee brought altogether 60 tons of relief supplies to Iraq, and arranged medical treatment in Germany and the United States for 37 children, who could not have received it in Iraq.

A Friend of India

One point which very much bound us together was a common interest in India and love of Indian culture. In the following years it became clear how many Indian politicians and thinkers from the Nehru-Gandhi period knew Bondarevsky personally, and that they treasured him as a friend of India.

Bondarevsky was one of those individuals, after whose death, one is pained by the thought: “Ah, if only I had dis-



An early collaboration between Prof. Grigori Bondarevsky and Helga Zepp-LaRouche launched the Committee to Save the Children of Iraq, dying from the post-Desert Storm sanctions. This became an international effort of many organizations and individuals, which mobilized 60 tons of food and medical supplies (stretchers loaded in Stockholm, left) and brought injured Iraqi children to Europe or the United States (right) for treatment they could not otherwise get.

cussed this idea with him further; if I had gone into that with him again—now, it is too late.” Thus, he had offered to make his encyclopedic knowledge available, in order to join together the traditions of the thinkers in each culture, who had already earlier begun the dialogue of cultures. The deepening of this idea was interrupted, above all by the illness and death of his wife.

Perhaps a certain solace may lie in the idea of Bernhard Riemann, which he expressed in his writing on “Psychology and Metaphysics”; namely, that the thought-objects produced by the soul live on, even after death. A similar thought was expressed by Nicolaus of Cusa, who spoke of the idea that the soul creates the scientific conceptions of the world, so much so, that the one would not exist without the other; and as the principles of science are undying, so the soul has immortality through them.

Professor Bondarevsky was an inspiration for all who knew him, to act in such a way themselves, that his life’s work may live on.

Scholarly Wealth Robbed of Life

by Tatiana Shaumian

The following tribute to Professor Bondarevsky was published in the Indian newspaper The Pioneer on Aug. 17. We reprint it with the author’s permission. Dr. Tatiana Shaumian is the Director of the Center for Indian Studies, in Moscow.

One of Russia’s greatest scholars, winner of the Jawaharlal Nehru and the Padma Bhushan awards among many others, and a dear teacher and friend of mine, died last week. It is a matter of special pain, symbolizing much that’s wrong with post-Soviet Russia, that Grigori Bondarevsky, 83, was apparently murdered by a burglar who broke into his Moscow flat.

Bondarevsky was my tutor when I was doing my post-graduate work at the Institute of Oriental Studies in the early 1960s. He was already a famous scholar, head of the Institute’s Department of International Relations, and working on his huge study of the policy of imperial powers in the Persian Gulf (a subject of enduring interest).

I came to appreciate his powerful intuition and command of the grand sweep of events. It was the time of the Indo-Chinese border war and great tensions in South Asia. I wanted to study this, and Bondarevsky suggested I concentrate on the roots of the issue.

It was he who guided me to the Simla Conference of 1913-14, which led me to the study of Tibet, and that became the subject of my doctoral thesis as well as my lifelong fascination.

As a young man, Bondarevsky served in the Soviet special forces, and had been among the elite troops deployed to protect Josef Stalin during the Tehran Conference in 1943. He travelled widely in Central Asia, and knew the entire region very well. He was a familiar visitor to universities and archives in Britain, India, Iran, Afghanistan and the Gulf countries.

During the 1980s, he was deeply involved in the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as a political advisor. But it’s probably fair to say that his most abiding interest was South Asia and Indian affairs. He personally knew most Indian prime ministers, and was a personal close friend to all the Indian ambassadors to Moscow over the past half-century.

When I was his post-graduate student, despite the difference in our ages, he became a close friend to me and my family. I developed very tight, warm relations with him, his wife and family as well. It was a tremendous honor for me, many years later, that he asked me to sit on the review committee for his daughter’s doctoral thesis.

Bondarevsky had a fabulous library and personal archives and, unlike many avid collectors, he never refused to lend his books to friends and students. Personally, he possessed an encyclopedic knowledge and memory, and could usually direct you to the exact volume, chapter, and page where a particular information could be found. He was himself the author of 27 books and more than 300 articles, published in numerous countries.

A big part of his life’s work was devoted to India and its place in the world.

He was not an office-bound scholar. He was directly involved in events, often as an advisor to the Russian government, a member of the State Duma’s security commission and—as my son-in-law can testify—a rich source for journalists. In recent years, he turned his attention to Russia’s Chechnya crisis and the rise of Islamic militancy in Asia. He warned of the emergence of a new type of global terrorism, rooted in Islamic extremism, long before Sept. 11.

Bondarevsky lived for 62 years with his wife, best friend, and helper, Alexandra Arkadievna, and he was devastated when she died in April this year. At her funeral, a tearful Bondarevsky remarked that the two of them “had lived for 62 years as Romeo and Juliet.”

It is sad to think that such a man could die during a robbery of his flat. Bondarevsky was not a wealthy man. His treasure was in his knowledge and his vast library; not things that normally interest burglars.

He will be deeply, painfully missed.

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