

PUBLIC LECTURE BY

COMRADE  
HARDIAL BAINS

ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
INTERNATIONALISTS IN IRELAND



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**HARDIAL BAINS**

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(Marxist-Leninist)

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COMRADE HARDIAL BAINS**

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Trinity College, December 9 1990

Comrades and Friends,

Coming to Dublin after twenty-five years, on this important occasion for the Irish Marxist-Leninists, during this period of the collapse of the revisionist regimes in Eastern Europe and the change of the map of Europe, raises the question which remains always in the forefront: *What have we achieved during these twenty-five years?*

Of course, when we met here on December 9, twenty-five years ago, in a very enthusiastic and vigorous atmosphere, talking about the impending revolution, our views were not so clear as today. And it couldn't have been otherwise, because history does not develop on the basis of the wishes of some individuals with ready made clear ideas. At the same time, it is the unfolding of history which is the basis of development of these ideas. Ideas, if they are consistent with the laws of the objective world and if applied dialectically, will effect changes. History has its own logic, and we all must submit to that logic. That logic of history asserted itself in 1965, and the Internationalists were organised. That idea, that feeling, the enthusiasm of that day was of such great energy and significance that its very momentum has brought us to this day, to

this celebration.

This great attraction, this force which presented itself to us in those heady days had a very objective character. At the same time, it had something subjective as well. In the objective sense, the founding of the Internationalists changed the situation here for the next three years and in the years to come. In the subjective sphere, in the sphere of consciousness, in terms of the development of theory, ideology and organisational forms and methods, the progress has indeed been not only dramatic but extremely challenging. We faced that challenge and emerged successful.

These views are not conclusions about the world of this or that individual, because history does not move in that way. History reflects the gravitations and tendencies of a particular period. And the tendency and gravitation of that period of 1965 was to assert the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, but by dealing with the conditions of our times, the conditions which presented themselves. The theory of dialectical and historical materialism was adopted to deal with these conditions.

The progressive movement which we represented at that time had something very fundamental within it, and giving it this or that name does not change its objective essence. There have been many philosophers, pedants and noted writers over the last twenty-five years who have written about this movement. Some have spoken with deep love, highlighting the positive features. Others have focussed on the negative, real or imagined, and expressed utter contempt. These latter were prepared to recognise anything except the existence of the theory of dialectical and historical materialism. Either they spew forth their hatred for it, or like various economists, they dismiss it in one or two sentences by saying that Marx was disproved a long time ago.

In spite of all the poison which can be heard against this theory of dialectical and historical materialism, there is a kind of veneration which exists in the whole of mankind, and they look at it with great respect. The respect for this theory, and for socialism and communism, has a natural place in the hearts and minds of all those who are discontented with the present situation. But what infused us on December 9, 1965 was more than this. Besides confidence and enthusiasm, we represented what was the most advanced thought of that period, the gravitation towards the solu-

tion of problems facing mankind. The phrases socialism and communism only came later. For some, they remained phrases, but never for us. In our estimation at that time as well as today, socialism and communism do not exist in books. If it were the case, then the problems would have been solved long ago. We were not those who believed that first comes the Word ( or you could just as well say education, or ideological clarity) and everything stems from that. If we had looked at theory in that way, then we would also have become mired in obscurantism, in dogmatic and fanatical thinking.

What we saw twenty-five years ago was a world filled with strife, and within this world we were not satisfied. This was the starting point of our work. Our dissatisfaction, our discontent with all the conditions existing at that time, later assumed a political, ideological and organisational character as we were to pursue our work. It is suggested that some individuals joined for personal reasons. Whether true or false, this is not the issue. The issue is that an organisation grew and developed, because this movement reflected the answer to that dissatisfaction and discontent. And all these political and ideological problems concentrated themselves and presented themselves as organisational matters. This is not to say that the problems of individuals did not arise as well. The transformation of the individual within a party or organisation is very essential, because our Party is not a mere conglomeration of individuals with old thinking. All of us are brought up in a society which is pervaded, spontaneously as well as through education, with bourgeois thinking, especially in the sphere of looking at the world. Thus the question of transformation of the individual's world outlook also assumes an important character.

The times of 1965 were inspiring times indeed. I remember walking along the cobblestones of Trinity College, surrounded by the earnest, ever so serious faces of the youth, reflecting their continuous and unending pre-occupation with change. Events and things assumed the kind of profundity which is characteristic only of the times pregnant with change. Now we can look back and see what kind of pregnancy that was: the opening up of the whole world to capitalist plunder on one hand, and the rise of the anti-imperialist revolution and the new communist movement on the other. Slowly and steadily, both spread everywhere, with the for-

mer achieving historical victory while the latter suffered a historical setback.

These developments did not come to a halt with the events of 1989-90, but they had already drawn clear lines for what was to come. A contradictory process which started in the 1960's gave rise to a contradictory process in the 1990's. In the sixties, those who claimed to be socialists, especially the Soviet Union, were against socialism, while today, those who say they are in favour of democracy are against democracy. Why did these contradictory processes assume this form and develop in this way? Because of the discontent of the masses. People were not satisfied with the situation then, and they are not satisfied with this democracy now. Thus, any one-sided victory of one trend or the other was impossible.

Is there a change today from that time? Yes. What has changed is that the working class has to produce its own leaders in each country who base themselves on their own efforts in their own conditions to carry out their activities. This is not to be mixed up with workerism. When we say that workers have to produce their leaders, we have in mind the broadest organisation of the working class. Communist organisations, on the other hand belong to all people, not just to the working class. The communist party exists as a section of the working class, but it doesn't have merely the working class in it. The working class has to reaffirm the truth that it can only emancipate itself. What this means today is that no matter how many liberators of various kind arise, like these Lech Walesas who speak in the name of the working class and so on, all of them will be negated when the working class asserts itself. There is a role for the Communist Party and a role for the organisations of the broadest section of the working class. Here we have in mind, besides other roles, the political role. The building of the Party and its strengthening cannot be carried out without the building and strengthening of organisations of youth, women, professionals etc. The building and strengthening of the organisations of the broadest section of the working class is essential as well and must be given first-rate importance if the working class is to play its historical role as the builder of socialism.

In the sphere of the objective condition in 1990, it is positive that the bipolarisation of the world has ended, that is the division



between Soviet and American blocs. It is also positive that the democratisation of international life has begun, and that military alliances and the arms race are no longer looked at in a positive fashion. There are grave dangers too, because while the subjective factor at this time is still very undeveloped, the U.S., Britain and others continue pushing for solutions of problems between states through force. What Saddam Hussein has done can only be condemned, but what the U.S. has done is equally condemnable. The use of the U.N. Security Council for the ends of the big powers is also condemnable. What is decisive to ensure that this positive process develops and comes to a conclusion is the activity of the working class, its leading role, the role of the enlightened and democratic forces. Our Party has analysed that the building of the broadest unity of the working class, starting with the industrial working class, is the most important task. Different parties of course set their tasks according to their own conditions in their countries.

What were the conditions when we began our work? It is only natural that different forces look at the significance of 1965 and the developments since that time in different ways. Of course, all our enemies want to look at the developments in an a-historical manner, by presenting the events out of the context of history, without regard to the times in which they unfolded, the conditions which prevailed, the significance they had at that time, and what was achieved within those conditions. To appreciate what really happened, we must briefly review the historical context into which the Internationalists were born and in which they carried their work.

The 1960's were a period of relative expansion of capitalism after a brief period of decline. It began in the 1962-66 period and carried on. Its temporary revival made the new affluence of this period possible. This expansion was based on three main factors : first, the Khrushchevite betrayal and the consequent opening up of Eastern Europe for investments by various capitalist countries; second the use of consumer credit and of the state as the instrument of creating money by incurring huge fiscal debts; and third, the intensified neo-colonial exploitation of the rest of the world.

In addition to the increased domination of Asia, Africa and Latin America, American capital in particular flooded into sever-



al advanced capitalist countries as well, paving the way for increased domination and interference in various spheres and the all-round encroachment on national sovereignty. In Canada, for example, foreign control of assets in the non-financial sector climbed steadily throughout the sixties, reaching a peak of 37% in 1971, with 28% in American hands. This period witnessed the biggest expansion in the history of Canada in various spheres, especially in education, culture, health care and so on. Capital flowed into other countries as well, including Britain, and the penetration of Ireland was just beginning. Hand in hand with American capital came cultural aggression on a broad scale against various peoples and countries. This aggression was to become one of the most significant points of discontent amongst the youth and people of these countries.

The result of all this temporary expansion was a general euphoria, a feeling that capitalism had become young again and invincible. This euphoria was based on a fleeting prosperity and the artificial creation of money through consumer credit and the use of various other mechanisms. Virtually the whole world was embroiled in the snares of this phenomenon of modern capitalist society, dominated by the U.S. at that time.

Despite all the talk of rejuvenation, however, capitalism did not regain its youth in the 1960's. On the contrary, it became more aggressive and parasitic. An arms race ensued of dimensions unknown in previous history, as well as open aggression against a series of countries. Even the economic successes did not last long. Already by 1973-74, the onset of crisis was undercutting the expansion, and capitalism never regained that pace of growth from that day to the present.

Nonetheless, the growth of this period led to an actual increase in the standard of living in the Anglo-American world, in various European countries, and in Japan, etc., which reached an unprecedented level in the 1980's. But right from the outset, this expansion was accompanied by popular discontent, especially among the youth. They did not consider the achievements of affluence and a high standard of living as the be-all and end-all, as more important than the aim of ending exploitation and imperialist domination. The standard of living, of course, was no minor matter; the issue is that we wanted these high standards on every

front. And this could only come about through revolution.

Another condition which played a crucial role in those days was the state of the International Communist Movement. Nikita Khrushchev had arisen in the Soviet Union and proclaimed the emergence of new conditions, a new ratio of forces between capitalism and socialism. His reply to these new conditions was to attack J.V. Stalin, and by doing so to call into question all the Marxist-Leninist teachings. He declared that U.S. imperialism had changed and could be negotiated with, at the very time when it was showing its most rapacious and ugly features, while peaceful competition would demonstrate the superiority of socialism within the foreseeable future. We rejected and condemned Khrushchevite revisionism at that time and have done so ever since.

Besides Khrushchevism, Maoism also came into being, presenting itself as anti-revisionist, as the greatest fighter against Khrushchev revisionism and other revisionists. There were other trends in the international communist movement also. But the most harmful feature in the international communist movement was the pressure that the people should not deal with their own conditions in their own countries, that there was some grand communism and some grand communist somewhere, in China or elsewhere, and that the work which we did ourselves had no meaning or consequence whatsoever. In other words, there was a very big pressure that we should abandon the important work carried out, especially here during the 1965-67 period, and that we should borrow instead various alien ideas, ideas emerging from this conception that there was a communist movement "out there" somewhere, that this communist movement was glorious, but that we were just some inconsequential people.

Twenty five years have passed since those times. Those who were pushing and imposing these conceptions on us, including the need for "recognition" by someone other than our own working class and people have long since departed. Many of them have disappeared entirely from the political scene. A few of them try to resurrect some conceptions and ideas which history itself has rejected, that is, to carry out debates and ideological struggle up in the air, without paying attention to the concrete conditions of this time or any other time. As for those who carry out gossips and

slanders on a personal basis, they need not be mentioned at all. But let us look at what happened to these great Marxist-Leninists, that is of China and of the Soviet Union.

There is a very curious parallel between 1990 and 1960. At that time, which was a period of crisis in various countries, there was a great deal of enthusiasm and propaganda about what is called destalinisation. It was being advertised on the world scale that the Soviet Union and its satellites were carrying out destalinisation quite well, and everybody was very satisfied, but that Albania was dragging its feet. Thirty years later, they are telling us that all these regimes were still Stalinist – they don't even mention all this hard work of destalinisation – while Albania is still dragging its feet!

Stalinism is being presented in the narrowest sense as an ideology and practice of coercion, of genocide, of violence against the people, and unbridled dictatorship. The Internationalists during, before or after 1965 never accepted such Stalinism. As our practice has shown in the past, and at the present time, democratic centralism, arriving at decisions through vigorous discussion, and listening to everyone's opinions, has remained the characteristic of our Parties. We ourselves have never committed any violence against anyone, nor do we preach such violence. On the contrary, there has been violence committed against us for over twenty-five years, besides character assassination and other attacks of various kinds.

In case those democrats who attack Stalinism have forgotten recent history, let me remind them from this rostrum that from 1960 to 1990, if all the world is taken together, several million communists were massacred. Everyone knows what the fascist regime in Indonesia did to the Indonesian communists. Everybody knows what Pinochet did to the Chilean communists and democratic forces. Everybody knows what various African dictators did to the progressive and democratic forces in Africa. And one can give examples of coercion and all-round pressure and violence in all the countries which claim themselves to be democratic. Even today in such "civilised" countries as Britain and Ireland, we are looked at as criminals. This is a period where they are talking about the democratisation of international life. How is it that fruits of this democracy are not available to us?

I have not come here to defend the kind of Stalinism which they talk about. I am here to point out to you that the basic reason that the Eastern European regimes fell last year was they were not interested in dealing with the problems of the working class and people of these countries. They had become parrots of great philosophers of other countries, and they carried on repeating phrases and copying various experiences, while at the same time coming under the pressure of imperialism.

One of the accusations levelled against these countries is that they had become heavily indebted. This accusation is made by the same ones who called those countries socialist. How is it that the banks of the so-called Western world were giving money to socialism all those years? Was it just out of love for socialism? With a small country called Albania, they are not interested even in having equally and mutually beneficial trade, not to speak of investing to help Albania rejuvenate its economy. But in various other countries billions of dollars were spent.

The answer to this paradox is that all that communism is sham communism. It was communism in name only, and it couldn't survive. It doesn't matter where such communism is put forward to the masses, it will remain counterfeit, it will be rejected by the people, and it will have no place whatsoever in the lives of the working class and broad masses of the people. It may carry on as a sideline, but only to the extent that the bourgeoisie has a use for it.

Today, for example, the Communist Party of Britain, which is split into many parts, still receives headlines from time to time. Lately it is said that they are going to change their name, because they don't like the name "communist". There is a purpose, an ideological motive in keeping such organisations alive. At the same time, our Parties, no matter how much work we carry out and what progress we make, will receive no mention, whatsoever. The tactics used in the 1920's against the old communists are being used against us. They want people to laugh at these revisionists, to say "these are communists whom nobody follows, nobody understands", and to smear us by implication. In other words, they do not want to deal with communism of the present time. The old communism of the past, or the year 1965, was easier for them to handle, because that communism had the Western spirit, if you

want to use that word. It was as mesmerised by the glitter of capitalism as any other gullible person. It actually set a program for itself, to create a capitalist kind of society in those countries. It preached the commonness between Christianity and communism, it set the Western democracy as a standard and tried to present itself according to these standards. The Helsinki "Final Act" of 1975 was a very good example, where all these "socialist" countries of Eastern Europe got together and applauded all the prejudices of the capitalist countries.

This old communism, which was turned into a phrase everywhere, had forgotten that as the old productive force comes close to departing from the scene of history, it leaves behind what is best in it. And the only thing which the capitalist mode of production has brought forth and will leave behind is the technical-scientific revolution. The revisionists did not understand that the technical-scientific revolution does not end the exploitation of man by man. It does not eliminate the tendency whereby the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. It does not change in any way the basic and fundamental contradictions. At the same time, it creates something new, and that new has to be recognised. This new is the subjective preparation for socialism, and the rise of the new class whose destiny it is to bring it about.

The negative consequences of turning our theory into a phrase and dogma was that views which were applicable and necessary at certain times were no longer applicable in the same form to our conditions, but the revisionists applied them in that form anyway. For example, the thesis of Lenin that Marxism has to be brought to the working class from outside, was an extremely detrimental and injurious thesis within the new conditions after the Second World War in the advanced capitalist countries. Such views exaggerated the role of the revolutionary and Marxist intellectual while downplaying the role of the working class. These views replaced the genuine working class movement with the "labour movement" in the hands of the labour aristocracy in order to ensure the continuation of the capitalist system. Lenin worked in conditions where workers were illiterate, where they lived and worked at the beginning of the century in conditions far different from those of the working class in the sixties and after. Today's worker is an educated worker, educated in the sense of being able

to read and write and know some arithmetic, and who has accumulated far more experience than his or her predecessors. Within these conditions, there is another thesis of Lenin, if one wishes to speak this way, which should have been vigorously applied. That is the thesis that the working class must emancipate itself. In other words, it was the duty of all the communists, of all the Marxist-Leninists, to analyse various real phenomena, raise problems which present themselves and draw the appropriate conclusions from them.

As I mentioned before, one of the continuous phenomena since the sixties until the present time, which is in a way dissipating itself today, is the rise in the standard of living of the broad masses of the people. In Canada, for instance, the disposable income of the working class rose steadily until about 1978, since which the real income has remained relatively constant or fallen in some years. But if you compare the home of a worker in 1990 with one of the 1960's, a radical transformation has taken place. Besides this, there is a broad stratum in the Canadian society, anywhere from 12 to 20% of the people which is poor. Less than one per cent can be characterised as rich, while the vast majority are in between. The question arises, what pressure does the fact that 12-20% are poor exercise on the rest? When the number of poor increases, it doesn't do so merely because of natural reproduction. It increases because of the constant pressure on all the others to be pushed into the ranks of the poor. In other words, there is a widespread insecurity amongst the broad masses of the people. This produces feelings of discontent, which have to be channeled and should have been channeled to raise the question : In whose interest is it that his insecurity for all of us continues to exist? Who is responsible for this tendency of the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer? Who is responsible for this tendency of one sector of the economy booming while another falls, whereby 30,000 new jobs are created, while 100,000 disappear? What happens to the people within this mechanism, which is common to all of the capitalist countries?

The revisionists never addressed these vital questions within the conditions of this period. They were content to parrot Marx, Engels, and Lenin and they became very terrified of Stalin, so they stopped using his name. The actual analysis of the conditions



did not matter to them.

When we sum up the overall developments since 1965 to the present time, then we have to come to the conclusion that the old communism is dead, and it is very good that it died. If something is not historically useful, it will rot and die off, while something which is useful will always remain vibrant. Its youth will express itself in every way, even though the laws of society and nature continue to apply. But something which is new does not lose its fervour. Our theory of dialectical and historical materialism is new, and far from dying off, it is becoming even more necessary in order to deal with the conditions of our time. We arose in the 1960's, as part of this new force on the basis of actual analysis of the situation. This analysis has now further matured, in a manner of speaking, over the period of twenty-five years. If in 1965 or in 1968, the problems of culture became the most important problem, then in the 1990's the problems of economy, politics and culture have assumed the first position. The times are crying out for a revolutionary solution to the problems of the natural and social environment.

There were some individuals who dismissed the Internationalists as a serious ideological and political force, saying that all the Internationalists were just petty bourgeois and they were just talking about things for the purposes of illuminism. Many times we were accused of being existentialists and other things as well. This was the dogmatic rendering of the forces which were emerging at that time. This issue, however, was not only what were the initial features of the new force, but more importantly, what did it become? What is it now, and what was it during this period of a quarter of a century? What changes did it go through?

In 1965, the discontent of the youth took the specific form, first and foremost, of opposition to imperialism. It took two years of work from 1965 to 1967 for this consciousness to take shape. After the founding of the Internationalists in 1965, the second most important change took place in October 1966, when the questions concerning organisation were taken up. The decision was taken that a disciplined organisation would be established. When we deal with the questions of organisation, and I am speaking in a very broad way, then really we are talking about which theory we



are going to follow, which motivation we should have, which class we are going to favour. Organisational forms are not independent of such factors, but are dependent on them. The character of a form will be determined by the motives and the ability of those who have created it.

There are not a few who are willing to have some general progressive opinions while opposing organisation tooth and nail. And there are not a few who recognise organisation only in the formal sense, but are not willing to accept it on a day to day basis and to develop the various form of struggle consistent with the objective developments in a dialectical fashion. Organisation is not a question of only formal recognition. Organisation really is the self-expression of that social force which wants to assert itself in the present circumstances. And it is not merely a question of form, of rules and regulations. It is really a question of theory, outlook and motivation, and the aim for which the organisation is created. In 1966, there were various people who said that they agreed with us, but they wouldn't join the organisation. Later on, this was turned into an accusation against us, that if you have an organisation which is disciplined, which is based on democratic centralism, then you are sectarian. We have similar kinds of individuals and similar accusations today too.

In those days, our theory and our principles came under broad attack by those who called themselves "anti-revisionist". We fought to defend this theory, and this fight was crucial for the development of our movement. But today it is said that even our theory has failed. The task now, as in the past, is to show the working class and broad masses of the people that our theory is alive and well. And we can do so only by dealing with the major problems of our time, the questions relating both to society and nature, as we did at that time. The international communist movement which we strove to defend is not lost. There has been a setback, but there is a positive experience as well. Our enemies have succeeded in liquidating "communism" in Eastern Europe. But this does not mean that the problems have also disappeared with it.

Here I would like to emphasise that we did not begin in the 1960's with a ready-made theory or a general line, nor did we have a ready-made program of action. We had to develop the general line through revolutionary action, and in the course of that we

had to develop our action programs. We learned how to do various things. Defence of theory and of our principles emerged as one of the most important questions of the period, and we performed quite well on that front.

It was the defence of our theory and principles which taught us how to organise the Party and imbued us with the unshakable conviction that the founding and building of the Party are absolutely necessary to prepare the subjective conditions for revolution. The defence of our theory and principles meant that all our work had to spring from our own conditions. In this respect, struggle against conservative opinion and old set ways of life, especially on the question of organising the youth, assumed decisive importance. The youth, like the workers, could not be organised by lecturing to them, by remaining aloof from their lives. The values which we promoted had to be developed out of their real-life conditions, always keeping in mind our strategic aims.

Twenty-five years later, the issue is the same but the form is different. While in those days of economic expansion cultural questions appeared as the key, today it is the economic questions. During those days, we needed theory to deal with the problems of culture and politics in order to achieve our aims, and the situation has not changed very much in this respect. We need our theory to deal with the economic problems and our politics to achieve our short-term and long-term aims. We need organisation both of the communists and the broad sections of workers, youth, women, etc. We need to have the social forces organised to create a new society through revolution so as to be capable of dealing with the problems of economy and culture, in other words, of the social and natural environment.

The form in which ideological struggle is waged has also changed. Today, we use our theory, our way of looking at the world, to deal with problems on both the national and international plane. The question is not just of elaborating the general line, but of actually bringing about the political unity of the masses through action. As in the past, when progress was connected with the defence of our theory, so too is the case today. But this defence, at the present time as in the past, can only be carried out through application. Whether to remain smug and feeling quite comfortable about knowing something, or to be at the forefront

of various changes – this was and remains the line of demarcation. It is not a matter merely of re-asserting the truth of Karl Marx's philosophy that "the point, however, is to change it". It is a matter of paying attention to the concrete conditions, to the solution of the short-term and long term problems of our time.

One of the characteristic things about the Internationalists was that their views originated from their struggle, and not in any narrow sense. These views were quite alien to dogmatism, and they constituted that vital force which could continue for a quarter of a century. Today's communism derives its inspiration from the work of Karl Marx and the Marxists of the nineteenth century, from the work of Bolsheviks, of Lenin and Stalin and all the others of the twentieth century, from those who actually waged the class struggle and dealt with the conditions of their countries. Inspired by them, we should deal with the conditions of our own countries.

In 1990, as in the sixties, the condition of the younger generation is the same as that of everyone else, but their very youthfulness leads them to question that condition. Where can the concerned youth go? Towards the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system? No, that is the source of their discontent in the first place. Thus, they have to gravitate towards the new and to throw in their lot with the working class. The dissatisfaction felt by the youth is deep, and it carries on for life. Thus, the precise form this discontent takes is the starting point of the development of their consciousness. In the same way, the objective conditions of the workers spontaneously leads to the deepening and broadening of their consciousness.

The form which consciousness has taken today is not the same form as existed in 1965. Today, for example, there are millions of youth who are preoccupied with questions of the environment. They worry about the problem of poverty. They raise the questions of peace, disarmament and various other questions. Why do they do so? Because they are mistaken? Because they do not want to follow what we did in 1965? Far from it. Because as capitalism reaches further and further its end, besides leaving behind what is best, it shows all the worst which it can do to the masses as well. In addition to the creation of poverty, just see what it is doing to the environment. Just see how the questions of peace and disarmament are being dealt with. From the early sixties on, an unprece-

mented arms race took place, financed by trillions of dollars and rubles. Should this not have its echo and response in the consciousness of the masses, especially in the consciousness of the younger generation?

As we deal with the questions of both nature and society, we see that today's youth is far more excited and clear about various questions of democracy than those who paid lip service to it. Take for example, the current developments in Eastern Europe. According to some, these developments are all negative. According to us, they are positive in the sense that they put the question of democracy at the forefront. Today we can tackle these problems. We can see the positive phenomena, the end of the Cold War as they call it, the signing of various treaties pledging not to solve their disputes through war and so on. These are positive things. At the same time, when it comes to the situation in the Gulf region, do the same people say they will deal with it peacefully, without going to war? Or are various threats issued against other countries which do not agree with what these governments preach? In other words, the question of democracy, the question of poverty, such questions have become the most important questions of our time, and they have entered into the consciousness of the youth. We should deal with them by being in the forefront of the struggle.

Our Party believes that those who throw values at the youth, who lecture and moralise at them, don't understand what the youth are facing. We as the youth of the 1960's built everything out of our conditions. In a steadfast manner, without the use of any formulas, we created a political, ideological and organisational situation for ourselves, and a political program. Should the youth of today not be assisted to do the same thing? Comrades and friends, if any lesson is to be learned from this work, then the lesson is that we must not be conservative in looking at the youth, because youth naturally are going to decide which way the world is going to go. Any political force which does not take into consideration the attitude of the youth is bound to fail. The same is true for problems of workers and women, or for the national question in various Western countries as well as the East, the Soviet Union and so on. These questions cannot be solved by merely expounding some correct views. And no force can be helped by preaching

some principles at it, by insisting from the sidelines that it reject everything which is evil and embrace everything which is good. We can only assist if we begin from the advanced consciousness of the workers, youth, women, etc., about contemporary developments and build their organisations by taking that as a starting point. The work of the Party must not be merged with nor incidental to this important work.

After twenty-five years, we are once again in a situation where the consciousness of the working people is developing on several important questions. These questions, as I mentioned, involve not only the problems of peace and disarmament, the environment, etc., but also the quality of life, of relations between people, and the attitude towards the poor. There is a similarity between the consciousness of 1965 and the present period. It is a form of class consciousness in its undeveloped form which needs to be developed, in the same fashion as the questions relating to culture had assumed such a great significance twenty-five years ago. After everything is said and done, it is the working class and its allies which are to be organised. The basis of any problem has to exist objectively, and it is this objective world which we must theorise about. The central thing in dealing with the problems of culture in the sixties was theory, just as today the central thing in dealing with all the problems is the same. The battles of the sixties were not fought in vain, and those achievements which guided us through the sixties, seventies and eighties are guiding us now. Nothing has changed which could convince anyone that the ideals for which we fought are now lost, or that our theory has been proven wrong, or that theory can be defended without its application.

At the same time, the situation has changed. This is why the creation of the subjective conditions for revolution can only be assured by working out our theory on the basis of dealing with real problems as they exist at this time. Of course, it is not possible to begin from some *a priori* notions. It was not possible in the 1960's, and it is not possible today either. We must begin with the analysis of the new situation, nationally as well as internationally, and set our tasks consistent with the times.

Let me give an example from the work of our Party. In 1985, we analysed that various indications on the world scale, as well as

nationally, were pointing to an imminent change of vast proportions, in which nothing would remain the same and no force would be able to continue acting in the old way. Of course, when we announced our conclusions, some people said that this was just another of those things which we repeat from time to time. Five years later, no one can deny that our analysis was correct. But for us, in terms of our organisation, the impending changes meant we must respond to the changed conditions. We saw the necessity of building a movement for enlightenment and for the mass press. We had to smash the isolation imposed on us by the capitalists and the media by waging the class struggle. We put forward the thesis that there is a necessity for a movement for enlightenment, a movement for Renaissance, but with a much deeper and broader content and at a more profound level than at the time of the bourgeois democratic revolution; a movement not based on it, but actually bringing forward what was best from that period.

If anyone wants to understand the events of the 1960's, they should look carefully into what I am saying: *We brought forth what was best from the past into the sixties.* And in the 1990's we are doing the same, but on a much deeper and broader scale. Of course, there are difficulties, we are not very wealthy people, we do not have enthusiastic support from those who have financial means and so on, and for us it is a very big and difficult task. But in certain places, the views of the Party reach tens of thousands of people on a regular basis. In those areas, it is no exaggeration to say that this work enjoys general sympathy and support from all the enlightened people, all the people involved in the cultural field, in environmental questions, in the field of education, generally speaking all those who are concerned about the society. We have taken up the task to create these institutions where the broadest masses of the people can actually come forward and work for them. And this work is being carried with the same audacity which was the hallmark of the Internationalists, only at a much higher level.

Anyone who wants to learn something from 1965 should learn this much, that there were these people who had confidence, who dared to speak their minds and organise, and who were fearless in this respect. They were not afraid that somebody might come



along and say that "your ideas are wrong". They never suffered from any feeling that they must first cultivate these ideas, make them as correct as possible, and only then take them to the masses. Their watchword was revolutionary action, based on analysing the prevailing conditions, and imbued with the partisanship of doing what was necessary to move the society forward.

The year 1965 was a very important year in my life because, among other things, I came to know the Irish people at first hand. I came to know the Irish working class and the struggles which they waged. For us Canadians, the Irish people hold a great significance. The Irish constitute the vast majority of the first industrial workers in Canada, and today too, they play a very important role. Thus, to see the situation first hand and to sympathise with the Irish people's struggles without any reservation whatsoever was the source of great confidence and happiness. Twenty-five years later, my opinion on this matter has not changed.

When I say we supported their struggle, and continue to do so, without any reservation, I draw a contrast with those who gave it "critical support". To wage an armed struggle is not a simple matter. There are problems which arise and mistakes which are made. But to carry forward this patriotic struggle has great significance for the world. The British have historically divided many countries. Yet, they made a lot of noise for the re-unification of East and West Germany and shed a lot of crocodile tears. But what about Ireland, which is still divided? The Irish people, by carrying on their struggle, are not recognising this division which is being imposed by imperialism. If, in 1965, we had not supported the Irish people's struggle in this fashion, we would not have achieved anything. For the first time in Trinity College, it was we who sponsored and pushed forward various Irish things. Those who criticise the patriotic movement or the armed struggle from various angles are making a very serious mistake. In my opinion, if you want to criticise them, join them. It is by joining that you can correct them, not by sitting on the sidelines.

Our Party also had had its share of critics. Right from the sixties, we never listened to any idle criticism from those who stood on the side. Do you want the right to criticise? Then either join, or there are civilised ways to voice your criticism. Criticism is not a matter of proclaiming that "these are my views, and that is that".



Those who carry on in this way will divide the people under any pretext.

Our Party says that it is ideologically united. But it is ideologically united only because it pushes forward its political aims and discusses its ideology and the analysis of the situation all the time. Within this framework, it has to listen to the views of everyone all the time and not permit divisions over these views. There is no shortage of pretexts in this world under which division can take place. One can divide on the basis of nationality, language, religion, colour, etc. To this, our revisionists and opportunist critics have added: dividing on the basis of ideology. Had we not rejected such criticism, our work would never have got off the ground, and more importantly, the people's cause would have been damaged and suffered setbacks.

Comrades and friends, we organised the Internationalists in Vancouver in March 1963. It is now twenty-seven years from the time when the Internationalists were established. Today, two generations - the generation of the Internationalists, and the generation to which they gave birth - have to coordinate their activities. This coordination can be realised only by pushing forward what was best from the past. Our enemies, all of our critics, want to push what is worst. Were there mistakes in the 1960's? Yes quite a few of them. What did we do with these mistakes? Did we enshrine them? Did we put up temples and start worshipping them? Or did we correct them, rectify them? As far as our Party is concerned, we rectified these mistakes.

Thus, there were mistakes in the 1960's, as a result of the bourgeois pressure and as a result of our own inexperience. It is interesting that in several cases, the very individuals who manifested these negative tendencies were the same ones who later on tried to use them to create splits. Our response, as I pointed out, was neither to ignore our mistakes and claim that we were so great nor to enshrine them. Instead, when we gathered in 1988 to celebrate twenty-five years of the Internationalists in Canada, the issue for us was to realise and enshrine that enthusiasm and fervour which has brought us this far, and which will carry us for many years to come. Hence, when we look back at 1965, we look back as Marxist-Leninists of 1990, not as some confused elements of 1965 (as there is pressure on us to do) nor of any other year. We draw

out what was best in that period and carry it forward.

In conclusion, comrades and friends, I would like to express my deepest feeling of gratitude and appreciation to the Irish Party, first, for having founded and built their Party, and second, for inviting me to return here today. The spirit of the work which was started in Canada in 1963 was brought to Ireland and planted here in 1965. This is a sure sign of the profound internationalism of all those involved in those events. It shows how all of us, coming together from different backgrounds and different stages of development, gravitated towards the same aim. And beyond that, there is a lesson for us, in that what happened in Ireland had its own unique character. It should be analysed by deriving from it what was best.

Our comrades in Canada, all the members and sympathisers, are imbued with the spirit of love for the Irish Party. We do not look at the Irish Party from any critical angle. In the same way, we cherish great love and enthusiasm for the other Marxist-Leninist Parties.

In my view, when all is said and done, what 1965 signified was proletarian internationalism. Only this can be the banner of any society which is to have a future. Any society, no matter what it calls itself, if it is not proletarian internationalist, will degenerate, will become chauvinist and reactionary. As Parties of our countries, we are independent of one another. But this independence is not one of indifference or of chauvinist disregard. Our independence from one another means that we fight on our front, while you fight on yours, and together, we share experiences, we sympathise with and support each other.

In this spirit, I consider it a great honour for our Party at this very crucial time of its development that the Irish Party has invited us and organised this public lecture. On a personal note, I am thrilled to be here. I think this is the first time I've actually set foot in Trinity College since 1968.

Thankyou very much.

*(Applause and standing ovation)*

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# TRINITY

*Past, present and future* — This is the idea which struck me as I got out of the car and saw the familiar faces which greeted me at the front gate of Trinity College.

I was setting foot in Trinity after more than twenty years. I had left Ireland on May 1, 1968, and if my memory serves me, I had returned three times since, twice in 1978 and again in June 1984. But this was the first time back on the soil of Trinity College itself, after all this time.

It was raining, a sort of fine mist dancing in front of your face and gently landing on it. Sometimes it gave the definite impression that it was raining, while other times it was just there, a demeanor of Dublin when the sun just sits back and the clouds hang and the rain holds back. All this, just to remind me that I had been here some twenty years ago. I couldn't think of anything but the weather, as the reality of coming back to Trinity was far more exciting than I had thought it would be.

Here I was, standing, my hand emerging from the past, stretched out quite consciously to clasp the present. One handshake after another. I couldn't believe it was all there: the quadrangle, the clock-tower, the hall with the Book of Kells on the right, and the faculty club on the left with the newly-constructed Buttery jutting out the side. And these familiar faces from different periods. There was at least one from 1965. She introduced herself, giving both her married name and her maiden name just to ensure that I hadn't forgotten about her after so many years. But I had not forgotten. I remembered both names, but especially her face. The same face, looking always as if on the verge of a smile. A bit aged by time, but still the same face. I am quite sure that my politics and the politics of some of the people I met that day were not the same. But this was not the important thing.

What was important was that they were there — not in the past, but in the present. What they would be in the future I do not know.

Seeing the past assuming the airs of the present so suddenly, without any warning, and seeing the present turning into the past with such a speed, and all at once the future becoming the reality of the present... I think we forget that the present is the continuation of the past and the beginning of the future. The delicate departure of the past from the present, and the subtle continuation of the present into the future. There is an inseparable relationship between the three, but at the same time, the boundaries seem so finely demarcated, so clearly defined. Past, present and future — the trinity. It came to me in such precise terms on December 9 1990 as I stepped out of the car parked by the front gate.

I taught at Trinity College in Dublin for a very brief period of time as part of enhancing my understanding and ability in my chosen field of science. I was very young, relatively speaking less than half my present age. Everyone I met there was younger, a whole host of students. Some of them became my ideological and political fellow-travellers, some for quite long, some only for a short while. But what I remember about them, this emotion coming from the past and melting into the present, is something which I consider very precious. We were not satisfied with the present of 1965. Young and full of confidence, we wanted to create a new world through revolution. Even though we did not believe it would happen overnight, we saw the urgency of doing our work to bring it about.

The year 1990 is the future of that present which could now justifiably be called the past. As I took my second step, I felt as if I had slipped back into that past. Trinity College contained something for me, something of personal emotional value but there was an objective basis for it. The fact that I came to Trinity in 1965 remains an objective fact. Another fact is that I met all these individuals and we got together in November, 1965 to form a discussion group. It is an objective fact too that the first discussion, to which all interested were invited, was held on December 9 1965. It is these objective facts, and many more, part of the positive and negative experience, which were in my mind, but I had no inkling

that all this would come forth in such sharp relief when I was asked to deliver a public lecture on the significance of this day. What happened when I took that first step into Trinity College was an experience of this past of such dimensions that I could not have imagined before.

Facts and thoughts, past and present, fine drops of rain and the mist, the cobblestones — a march towards the future. When I entered the hall to deliver the lecture, it seemed as if it was already finished. There is no need for a lecture. If I could just give an extremely tight embrace to the past, sit down and have a chat with all those who had come to hear... this would be more than I could think of then.

Before my arrival, I had been very curious to know what those who would attend the public lecture would want me to say. I had more time to think this over when the plane I was on had a pre-takeoff accident. The next scheduled flight was three hours later, and it was late arriving and departing. This meant I would be late for the public lecture. What would they want to know? The thought persisted, even though I had already made my notes and written the substantial part of the lecture. Once I enter the hall, I won't have to worry about this any longer. I will have no choice but to speak. This was the only thought which kept me from lapsing entirely into the past and just disappearing into it. No present? An impossibility. No future? An impossibility again, but the lines have to be drawn somewhere. And the lines cannot be drawn on the basis of the past alone. It requires the present and the future as well.

My past in Trinity was an open book. There was nothing under the table. My convictions — my ideology, my politics, and my overall aim — were known to all. It was this which attracted others. When I arrived in Dublin, I knew absolutely no one at Trinity. At that time, the fall days could go on for a long time without meeting anyone I could relate to. It was not so pleasant to be alone sitting on the antique chair, staring at the formidable walls of the guest house with a book from the library firmly set on my lap between my hands. Then, a chance meeting with someone at the cinema. This meeting ended my visits to the cinema. There was no longer any reason to go there with the same intensity or anywhere near it. I had another chance meeting, this time in the

"digs". This was the end of my stay in the digs. This is how I came to know the people together with whom I would shape a part of the prime of my life.

The relations that were struck, which began with chance meetings and were of a social character, were soon to become ideological and political, and even organisational in nature. Twenty-two years later, confronted with Trinity anew, I had to wonder about the character of my relationship with Trinity, not to speak of the people of Ireland, whom I came to admire, whose struggle for the unification of their land and the end of British domination I worked for, and where I supported the working class in its struggle for socialism.

This is the past confronting the present in order to let the future in. Or is it the other way around? I think it is both. It is the past and the future confronting the present, like the guns of the *Aurora* demanding that what is best in the past should be brought forward into the future and what is worst should become a thing of the past — the demand which the future makes of the present. The present, in turn, demands of the future that what is best must not remain a thing of the past, otherwise the present will be devoid of a future. The future must assume the character of this past, but strictly in accordance with the needs of the present. With all the tussle going on of past and present versus future, and of the present with all the demands of the past and the future, what is an individual supposed to do? This is what I was confronted with when I took the first step out of the car and clasped the first hand. I had no choice. I could not go back. I had to deliver a public lecture. I came face to face with reality — the reality of the past, the present, and the future.

Of course, 1990 is not 1965. But it is not enough to just keep this obvious fact in mind, it is also a matter of appreciating that the present of 1990 is putting pressure on 1965 — a period when all the mistakes were made. Is it the case that as we look back from the present to the 1965 of the past, we can see one mistake piled on top of another, where the correctness of the present, be it 1990 or 1989 or 1979 or 1969, or all the years in between, is measured against the mistakes of the past? I am quite sure that a past may appear correct if we look at it with the eyes of that period, and it may seem wrong if viewed from the angle of the present. But the



present comes forth not just as an angle, but as a reality too. The darkness of 1965 is only the reminder of the womb in which the Internationalists were born. This organisation continued in the form of the Party, founded in July of 1970, and its glow can be seen on the faces of those who came to attend the public lecture of December 9, 1990. This is reality too, far more powerful than all the lamentations of the waverers and turncoats about the past. What was and what was not, and what should and should not have been, was clearly a thing which those who were brimming with enthusiasm for their ideological, political and organisational legacy could have discarded like trash. On the contrary, the twenty-five years have brought to the fore the positive and the negative in their true colours, and this differentiation will go on. December 9, 1965 shall remain the historical milestone from which we will continue to draw our inspiration, on the one hand, and continue to express what was then embryonic and now exists in full-blown form, on the other. The present will never lose track of its past, nor will it detach itself from the future.

That day, December 9, 1990 while I was putting the final touches on my notes for the public lecture, I was quite conscious that I would need the eyes of the past as well as of the present and future, and all the eyes of every fraction of time past and of the distance between the past and present of all those fractions. How can one fix one's eyes on all this, when the past, present, and future and all the distances between them and the fractions thereof, taken as a whole, do not stand still? What comes into being must pass away, and it must leave behind its mark. The front gate of Trinity College, the fence, the cobblestones, and all the faces — are these the eyes I need? These surely are not the marks that history has left behind. Can I touch and feel these eyes? Will the past and the future show themselves in their brilliance in the present?

Our theory tells us that knowledge about nature and society is only relative, but does this mean that such knowledge is not possible? Or that any knowledge which is relative is the mistake of the past and the wisdom of hindsight? Is the dialectic of living so feeble that every step becomes a nightmare for the next, and life comes to an end? No, the very spirit of December 9, 1990 was the testimony that what came into being twenty-five years ago has con-



tinued to live. The relative has consummated itself in the absolute of fact. The absolute lives too. If it does not, then the dialectic will be up in the air. It will not be real and full of life. Is there an absolute somewhere where we can see it? Yes, it is there — in the relative. Yes, the eyes are relative too, animate and inanimate, past, present, and future. This realisation made the work of drafting my lecture easier. I could write it down now in the form of a guideline, just for myself — I am going to look at 1965 with the eyes of 1990 and with the needs and desires of 1990. On this basis, I will draw the conclusions for my lecture. I am going to bring out what was best in that period, and in order to do so, I will stick to the facts. The coming to Trinity, the chance meetings and the conscious decisions... One thing following another, a momentum set in the Ireland of 1965, which was on the verge of further awakening of its national and social consciousness, on one hand, and ready for further penetration of foreign capital, on the other.

Ireland of the first part of the sixties was a quiet place. The only rumble was of the thousands of young feet rushing madly to Dun Laoghaire, the point where the ferries leave for Britain. A tragedy for Ireland, but still a fact. These days filled with the silence of yesterday ended with the blasts of explosives at Lord Nelson's statue at the head of O'Connell Street. It was carried out meticulously and with precision in the early morning, around 4:00 a.m., if I remember correctly. I was woken by that blast, and from then began the period of free-for-all and confusion. Within this confusion there arose, from time to time, clarity. Our discussion groups were such a clarity. This is a fact, too. The rise of the national consciousness for the re-unification of Ireland in the form of another struggle, the rise again of the gunfire and action of the patriot, is another clarity which still overwhelms every kind of confusion. There is also the clarity of social class consciousness. The Party which came out of all these clarities works to ensure that such clarity remains, that it deepens and broadens. But I, as a foreigner, could not speak of this or that view of this or that Party. I could only give our Party's views. Naturally, our Party must speak of the past as well. It must deliberate. Thus, I decided that not only would I look at the past with the eyes of 1990, but more specifically and importantly, with the eyes of the Party of 1990.

As I walked across the quadrangle towards the Lecture Hall, I

encountered a person whom I had met in 1982. She reminded me of this, but I could not remember her face. She looked agitated, and complained that the organisers would not allow her and her friend into the meeting. I did not know the reasons, and I came to know only later that there had been some disturbance about the matter. "Why not, you come with me, if you want to hear me speak. And bring your friend along too." I said some such thing and kept on walking towards the meeting hall along with friends and members of our delegation.

I gave my lecture and then sat down to have discussion with a group of people. In the course of all this, I had completely forgotten about the incident in the quadrangle. Besides, another person from 1965 had come to see me, and it was quite a thrill indeed to see a face from that period. I had not seen her for over twenty-two years. I was exchanging information with her about her work, her child, my family and so on, when someone said: "Do you know what they said, the individuals you let in?" "What?" My curiosity was aroused, "That the Canadian Party and what you say are right, and the Irish Party is wrong."

"What?" I could not believe it. Their aim in coming to the meeting was to bad-mouth the Irish Party? But why? Are there not enough splits and divisions already? Do we need more? Why such a comparison? Why not join in to build the Party and then criticise from within as I had said generally in my speech? I was engrossed in my thoughts and couldn't hear what the others were saying for a while. My mind went back to the first disturbance at the end of the summer of 1967, and the conflicts afterwards — the gossips, the character assassination, and so on. But now, in 1990 still? Are there really individuals around who want to bring forth the worst from that period? Are there those who will not look at 1965 through the eyes of that period, nor through the eyes of 1990, but through their own desires? Evil motives, I told myself, and wished that this person would pay more attention to the fate of the people of Ireland than worry about such comparisons. Each Party works in its own conditions. Those who have progressive motives should cherish their own Party and must not compare it with others in this manner. See what happened to the old movement, I was still thinking. They did not have heads of their own. They did not love their own people enough to build up

their own parties on the basis of their own efforts. And if they could not love their own people enough, then they could not love anyone else either.

I came out of my reverie and back into the discussion. It went on a while longer until the order came that we had to vacate the Junior Common Room. Our time was up.

On the way to Dublin, the pilot had announced that it was "bitterly cold — +3 or 4 Celsius". My companion and I shared a good laugh. Coming from Canada, we couldn't take anything warmer than -10 very seriously, and to consider above-zero temperature to be "bitterly cold" was a real joke for us. But after the public lecture, standing for just a few seconds in the rain while waiting to be picked up, I felt my teeth begin to chatter. I had never experienced such cold before, even though the temperature was still above zero. The past could not help and the present was not so pleasant, as I waited for the future. The driver came and we got in. He turned on the car heater. The hot blast from the blower calmed my jaw as we drove around Trinity, the Moyne Institute, the new buildings and the surrounding streets, and the pub O'Neills which we used to frequent. I was not at ease. I had visited Trinity and was preparing to leave the next morning. On thinking it over, I felt a kind of relief and satisfaction. Like the first time in 1965, so again twenty-five years later. I had not thought the visit would be special. I thought it would just be one of those lectures about the past, without any other significance. Relief and satisfaction followed this special experience which made me fall in love with all the best that was that time from 1965 onwards. It was refreshing to be back.

During the dinner and afterwards, we did not discuss Irish politics very much. We went from one thing to another, but nothing specific. In fact, I had not talked about Irish politics in my lecture either. In any case, that was not supposed to be the topic of discussion. The Aer Lingus flight next morning was packed. I struck up a conversation with a fellow passenger, and we discussed politics. This person had gone to university in 1968 and it seemed to me that he knew quite well what those times meant for the Irish people. Any discussion about Ireland naturally raises the question of emigration, which apparently is again getting worse, as well as the foreign companies, the northern campaign, and to a certain

extent the general well being of the people. While exchanging opinions on this aspect and the other, I recalled with a lot of feeling and pride that what makes a movement is far more than discussion on this or that issue. It is really a question of direction, the orientation that comes from putting the fundamental questions on the agenda and dealing with them. One such question is of the past, the present, and the future, and how we look at them. Here I was in Ireland, twenty-five years after, and all the issues had remained basically the same, while the consciousness and organisation to deal with them is increasing. I saw this consciousness in exchanges with the Irish Party comrades and also in discussions with some Party sympathisers.

What happened in 1965 was clearly the result of our discontent with the existing conditions, and besides agitating for the immediate demands, we were concerned about the past and the future. We needed a complete outlook coming out of these conditions, both national and international, to carry us forward. Along with outlook, there also developed culture consistent with it, the modesty and confidence, the striving for unity and the strengthening of organisation. We have gone on in Canada this way for twenty-seven years. In the course of this period, some went for this path and some for another, but what was decisive was that thread which linked the past and the future with the present, that striving for an outlook, for an organization, for a new world. It is this red thread which I saw when I came back to Trinity. Coming to Trinity, or going into the present from the past and future, or the opposite, whatever the case may be, we are on the verge of another 1965, another period of consciousness and organisation, another period when all those who are discontented with the present situation will push forward on the basis of the best the past has brought forth in order to secure still better for the future.

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