

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR COMRADE HARDIAL BAINS

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More than 550 people filled the hall at the Palais de Congres in Hull, Quebec where, on August 30, 1997 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) held a solemn memorial service for their dearly beloved leader, Comrade Hardial Bains, First Secretary of the Central Committee and National leader of the Party since its founding in March 1970. They came from all over Canada, from Britain, Ireland, Australia, India, the United States and several other countries to pay homage to this great personality and communist leader. The participation of so many comrades, friends and fellow-travellers spoke volumes about the qualities of this man who touched the lives of so many, from his earliest childhood days to the saddest day when, on August 24, 1997, he drew his last breath.

Old friends and new and many, many fellow-travellers joined the members of the Party's Central Committee, the representatives of the Party organisations from across the country and Comrade Bains family in bidding Comrade Bains farewell. Besides his life-long companion, Sandra, and his six children, brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews and nieces and their families, those in attendance included many from his childhood days in India, from his early years at the University of British Columbia and from his years as a teacher in Ireland. Along with his Party comrades and many friends representing each period of his life and struggle, many colleagues attended from political, academic and cultural fields, as did workers, women and representatives of some of the most vulnerable sections of Canadian society. The large number of youth who came to pay their deepest respects to Comrade Bains speaks for itself of his love for the youth and his dedication to their cause. Fraternal Parties from India, Britain, Ireland and the United States also came to pay final tribute to their dearest comrade and friend, Comrade Bains.

The ceremony started shortly after 3:00 pm. as the casket was brought into the hall led by the red Party flag, inscribed with the words: Historic Initiative, in honour of the work Comrade Bains has developed to transform CPC(M-L) into a mass communist party by the turn of the century and take Canada into the 21st century on a new basis. The tribune at the front of the hall was adorned with the baskets of flowers and wreaths sent by individuals and organisations from across the country and around the world. The portrait of Comrade Bains was flanked by the six flags of the Party, one for each Congress which has marked its development under the leadership of Comrade Bains. When the casket was placed at the front of the hall, a young pioneer laid a single crimson rose on the blood red flag of revolution and communism which draped the casket.

The ceremony was initiated by a representative of the Central Committee who informed Comrade Bains of the presence of his comrades, relatives and friends who had come from far and wide to pay their last respects. He read excerpts from some of the hundreds of messages of condolence received by the Central Committee on this sad occasion. His Excellency Bienvenido Garcia, Cuban Ambassador to Canada presented the message from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. The tributes were concluded by a representative of the Party youth. The Tribute of the Youth was

addressed to Comrade Bains, who dedicated his greatest energies to the struggle of the youth for a better world.

The tributes were followed by a violin and piano instrumental medley performed by young musicians: Advance Fighting Youth of the World; Here's the Rose, Now Dance; The Party is the Most Precious Thing and We Sing for the Future. One of Comrade Bains favourite patriotic Punjabi songs and the Irish revolutionary song Revolution's Dawn Is Breaking, were followed by some of Comrade Bains favourite Urdu couplets. The Urdu poem: March On! and the Sonnet to the Memory of Comrade Hardial Bains, both written for the occasion, were then presented. The Eulogy, Oh Comrade, Dear Comrade, Our Beloved Comrade, was spoken by Comrade Karen Naylor on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party.

All of Comrade Bains comrades, relatives, colleagues and friends then stood for a moment of silence, soon to be enveloped by the strains of the music of The Internationale. While the majority of those present raised their fists to salute their beloved comrade and friend as he lay before them for the last time, everyone present expressed their respects and profound appreciation for the contributions of Comrade Bains to the cause of the proletarians and oppressed peoples of all lands for freedom from want and exploitation, and to their own lives which he touched in so many ways.

As the service ended, everyone present walked past the casket one last time, paying their personal farewell.

A private cremation took place on September 3.

By decision of the Central Committee of the Party and the family of Comrade Hardial Bains, his ashes will be scattered to the four winds over Canada and India, with a final resting place in Mahilpur, Punjab which nurtured him and gave him to us. A memorial will be placed in Ottawa at a later date, to honour his memory forever, along with the memories of Comrade David Hemingway, Comrade Dave Danielson, Comrade Tom Boylan, Comrade Anne Boylan, and other Party comrades whose memories and contributions are cherished by all progressive and democratic Canadians and their friends throughout the world.