

The Good Times and the Bad Times in 1993

LEST 1993 gets written off as another bad year, the good news should be set down first for a change: 1993 was the year the Israelis shook hands with the Palestinians, the year peace and democracy came to Cambodia and held, the year 21 parties signed up for democracy in South Africa, and the year a glimmer of a break showed in the political deadlock in Northern Ireland.

The bad news was that the dying went on all year in Angola, Bosnia, Somalia and in parts of the former Soviet Union and that the post-Cold War world continued to be disordered and incoherent, with little sign of any encouraging new leadership yet emerging.

A cold douche came at the year's end when elections for a new Russian Parliament threw up a frightening new maverick, a right-wing politician called Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

A signpost to the future came on November 19 when Bill Clinton, 10 months into his presidency of the United States, sat with President Jiang Zemin of China and other leaders of 15 Asian and Pacific countries and began to draw a new economic map for the world.

Only hours before, Clinton had pushed through Congress, against expectations, ratification of Nafta — the North American Free Trade Agreement — joining the US, Canada and Mexico into the world's largest trading bloc. With the birth of the Single Market in Europe on January 1 and then of the European Union under the Maastricht Treaty in November, other trade groupings were shaping up, such as the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) and the Association of Caribbean States.

And, over all this, loomed a new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) agreed by 117 countries in Geneva on December 15 after seven years of talking. The 5,000-page document spelled out the most ambitious trade liberalisation treaty in history.

Not surprisingly, many of the poorer countries wondered what was in it for them. For some, the answer was: not much. Africa, already politically marginalised, looked like becoming more than ever economically marginalised as well. Its own grandiose plans for a common market embracing all its countries had a target date of 2020 and were simply on paper.

The greatest hope for Africa lay in what happened on November 17 in Johannesburg, when nearly two years of talking ended in the signing of a draft interim constitution that would end apartheid and lead to the first one-person-one-vote in South African history.

A Transitional Executive Council (TEC) set up in December brought blacks into positions of power in South Africa for the first time, leading to elections in 1994. It was the last act of a year that had seen relentless violence, the assassination of Chris Hani, charismatic key figure in the struggle, and the death of Nelson Mandela's lifelong friend and president of the African National Congress, Oliver Tambo.

The implications for the rest of Africa of the development of a peaceful and prosperous South Africa were huge. The continent had been dogged by the conflict and the isolation of the country that had flowed from apartheid. Now the way was being opened for the most highly industrialised economy in Africa to eventually become the continent's powerhouse.

That was not for tomorrow, or even the day after tomorrow, and for the immediate future the prospect of peaceful change in South Africa would rest on a knife-edge.

For now, the global focus was increasingly on Asia and particularly the East and Southeast. Until the beginning of the Nineties, Europe had long been seen as the central point of global political and economic action. The end of the Cold War, combined with recession, had changed all that. Growth had almost stopped in Europe. The biggest economy, Germany, was finding its eastern half difficult to digest.

Rising conflict with the ethnic minorities there, but also in France, was causing growing unease. Italy was riven by corruption and scandals that reached to those who had been the highest in the land. Unemployment was everywhere, in Spain reaching beyond 20 per cent. The closer the ties between the 12 members of what was now called the European Union became on paper, the greater seemed to be the uncertainty and even dissension. None was more mixed up than Britain, where a weak Prime Minister

spent much of his time keeping followers aboard the European wagon. By the year's end, even Germany's resolve for a more unified Europe had begun to falter.

It came as something of a shock, nonetheless, when the Americans started saying, as they did in October, that their priorities no longer lay across the Atlantic but over the Pacific — to China and that growing band of countries that were being labelled the Tiger economies.

In March, the Chinese reconfirmed their intention to move further into a market economy. Never short of ideas for coining phrases that cover a change of policy, amendments to the preamble to the constitution said China remained in the "primary stage of socialism" in which quasi-capitalist and foreign-invested firms flourished alongside state enterprises in the interests of economic growth.

They had already come a long way down the road to capitalism. The economic growth of some of the coastal provinces of China, admittedly coming from a low base, was sometimes a staggering 20 per cent. Much of it was generated by Hong Kong, the booming British colony which at year's end was only three-and-a-half years from being handed back to China.

Hong Kong was increasingly central to developments in East Asia. For the entire year, its government and the British were locked in round after round of talks in Beijing to ensure that modest moves towards democracy which the Governor, Chris Patten, wants to put in place in 1994 and 1995, are maintained by the Chinese after the handover in mid-1997. Britain wanted to ensure what became known as the "through train," which meant that councillors elected in 1995 would sit for their full four-year term, straddling the transition of sovereignty. After the 17th round in November, the Chinese were still not aboard the train. The talks deadlocked and Patten went ahead to implement part of his programme.

Hong Kong hung on every rumour of the condition of the 89-year-old Deng Xiaoping, who was now said to be in poor health. People likened the situation to the last days of Mao and inevitably speculated about a power struggle. The presence of Jiang Zemin in Seattle and his talks with Clinton seemed to indicate his own domestic strength and the West took comfort from the decisions, to continue down the market road. China was steadily ditching communism but in a quite different and so far more orderly way than the Soviet Union.

Everywhere, as the world moved into the middle of the Nineties, the retreat from socialism proceeded apace. India was now becoming a favourite for international investment as the government of Narasimha Rao eased regulations and began to make the rupee fully convertible. Western economic commentators began to talk about the awakening of a sleeping giant and "an economy that is beginning to take second place only to China as the world's most exciting."

Coca-Cola was a symbol of change. A deal with the India's biggest soft drinks business, Parle Exports, came 16 years after Coca-Cola had abandoned India because of exchange regulations. The Americanisation of the globe seemed unstoppable as people everywhere ate more and more hamburgers and fried chicken washed down with more and more American fizzy drink.

Wherever you looked in 1993 the pattern was similar: the relentless drive towards the market economy seemed to indicate a growing and alarming uniformity of thinking and standardisation of lifestyles. Whichever way governments tilted politically their economic formula was roughly the same. It remained difficult to believe that socialism in one form or another would not eventually return as an alternative, but for the time being nothing else was on offer.

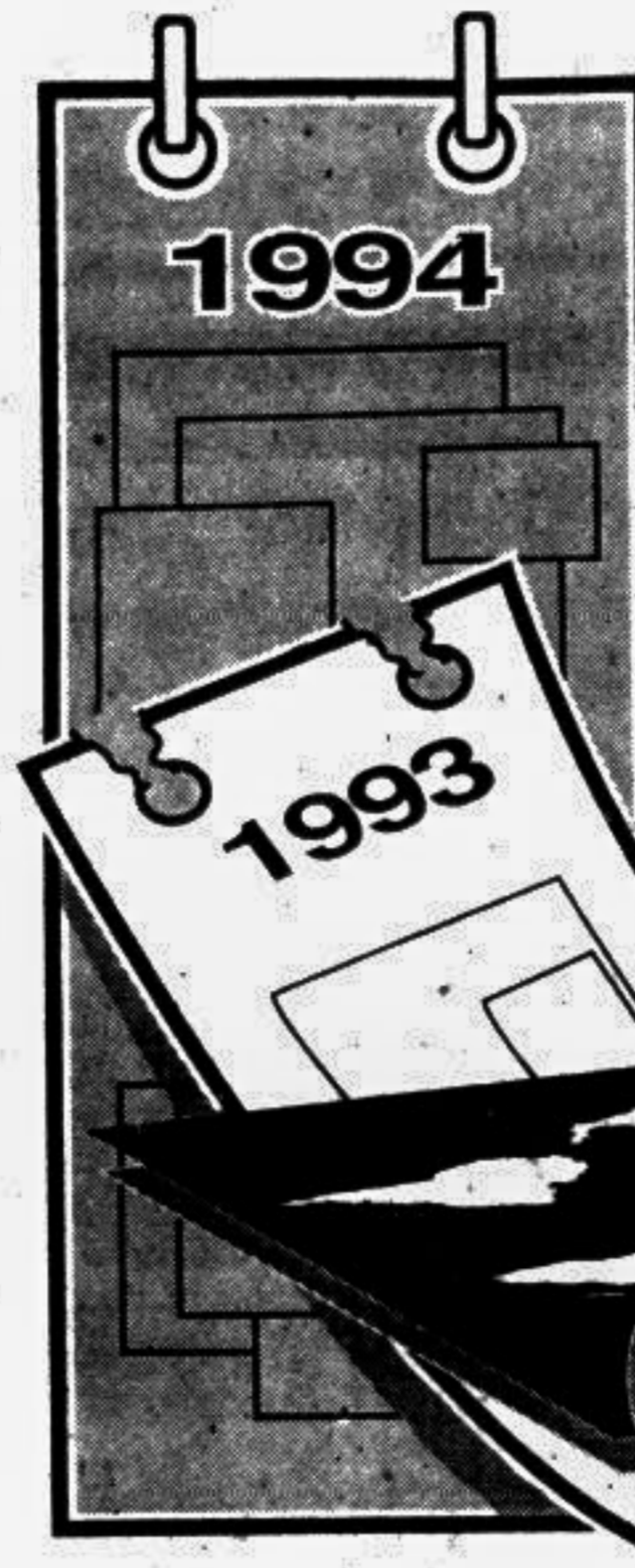
For the poor countries — and for the poor in rich countries — the outlook was increasingly bleak. The theory of the market was that the wealth would trickle down to the less fortunate, against that was the fact that ever more cut-throat competition and materialistic instincts increasingly sidelined the poor. Homeless people were now sleeping out in larger numbers in the frosty streets of the larger European capitals — a sight almost unknown in the Sixties and Seventies — while governments curbed rather than enhanced the benefits of a

welfare state.

It was an unfocused year, 1993. The world was still trying to come to terms with what had happened at the end of the Eighties. The ramifications of the collapse of communism, the reunification of Germany, the break-up of the Soviet Union into separate states, the legacy of a single superpower — all this was still working its way through. And this at a time when, paradoxically, the supposed victors of the ideological struggle found their own system floundering in a tunnel of recession that still had no light at the end of it.

In a year in which the top political faces remained almost unchanged, Bill Clinton was a refreshing new figure in the White House. His arrival in January was not accompanied by the razmatazz of Kennedy's arrival in 1960, but there was the sense that in bringing to an end the 12 Reagan-Bush years, the arrival of a president who had not even been born when World War Two ended, must mark a new era.

His wide all-American smile and youthful informality was a welcome antidote to the mostly grey men leading elsewhere. The political pundits did not give him much of a honeymoon. They were soon deciding he was going to be a failure. He was, they said, a ditherer and inexperienced and drove everyone mad because he never turned up for any appointment on time — a habit that might seem engraving in a world tyrannized by the clock and the computer.



Gemini's review of the year

- Nafta • Keating • Waco •
- Burundi • Abacha •
- Jurassic Park • Bhutto •
- Chretien • Jackson •
- Buckingham Palace •
- Jiang Zemin • Ireland •
- Cambodia • Gatt •
- Jericho • Aided •
- Srebrenica •

Derek Ingram writes from London

An early test for Clinton domestically came six weeks into the new presidency when a raid was launched on the headquarters of a sect that had been amassing weapons and explosives at Waco, Texas. Agents from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau were repulsed and a siege followed throughout March. After 51 days Attorney-

hammad Mahathir of Malaysia, one of the Tiger economies with a growth rate of nearly nine per cent, boycotted Seattle because he felt the Americans were trying to dominate the region. Mahathir had become the 1990s voice of the developing world. He reflected growing unease about the post-Cold War world, especially among the middle-

they were not so keen to pay for it. Then there was the Security Council situation, with its fixed permanent members unchanged since 1945 and the veto giving them absolute control. Japan and Germany wanted to break the monopoly of the US, Russia, Britain, France and China, and so did the developing world. India, Brazil and Indonesia had at least equal claims to a place at the top table.

Meantime, the UN record was spotty. The unlikely success in Cambodia was cheering. Against all predictions, UN-supervised elections in May were carried out peacefully with 20 parties and a 90 per cent turnout. The result was narrow and weeks of political maneuvering followed. Veteran master shuffler Prince Sihanouk brokered a power-sharing agreement.

An administration co-headed by Sihanouk's son and former government leader Hun Sen took over and in September Sihanouk was crowned King. The much-feared Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot failed to intervene in any of the electoral stages and was eventually invited to join the government, but its forces in the northern border areas remained a threat and Sihanouk soon had second thoughts and backtracked on the offer.

At the end of the year, UN forces began to withdraw. One action in Phnom Penh raised a few eyebrows: the first act of MPs in the new Parliament was to raise their own salaries.

Seizure of the mosque by militants had created potentially dangerous tensions for all of India.

Outside Europe and the former Soviet Union it was Africa which remained the most turbulent continent. A sort of peace had come to Mozambique after many hiccups and a destitute people began to pull themselves together as the government and the Renamo rebels prepared for elections now expected in 1994.

The horror remained in Angola where full-scale civil war raged again for most of the year. UN attempts at peace talks between Jonas Savimbi's Unita and the Luanda government repeatedly failed while Savimbi took over two-thirds of the country from a government that had scaled down its forces for peace.

When Clinton switched US backing to Luanda and recognised the dos Santos government, a counterattack began to roll back the Unita forces. In the bitter fighting 300,000 were said to have died and the suffering was indescribable as medical attention became almost non-existent. As a discarded plaything of the superpowers, Angola was Africa's worst victim of the Seventies and Eighties. It had been at war for nearly 30 years.

Civil war between North and South went on in the Sudan and sporadically in Liberia from where it spilled into Sierra Leone. In Burundi, democracy came for a few weeks and then died when newly elected president Melchior Ndadaye was assassinated and Hutu-Tutsi violence once again sent hundreds of thousands fleeing into neighbouring Rwanda.

Elsewhere in Africa, the movement towards multipartyism continued. Lesotho's military rulers went back to barracks and in fair elections veteran politician Ntsu Mokhehle won every seat in the new parliament — not quite what anyone had wanted. In Ghana, where the opposition parties had boycotted the presidential elections, military leader Jerry Rawlings remained in power now as a legally elected civilian president. In Seychelles, President Albert Rene transformed his country into a multiparty state and won the election in July.

Multipartyism had now also come to several francophone countries, such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Madagascar and Gabon. Ethiopia was settling down after years of turmoil and was quick to recognise the new state of Eritrea when it was born on May 24. Eritreans had voted overwhelmingly for independence in a referendum a month earlier.

Next door, while all eyes were on the suffering and conflict in a relatively small area of southern Somalia the break-away north (at one time British Somaliland), which had declared independence in 1991 as the "Somaliland Republic," continued on its way peacefully, unrecognised by the rest of the world.

Despite many efforts to move Zaire to multiparty government, President Mobutu Sese Seko retained power in a chaotic country with hundreds of parties and a prime minister Etienne Tshisekedi, running a rival government. The situation in Malawi, however, with its equally long-running President, Kamuzu Banda, was changing.

Public agitation and Banda's senility led to a referendum in which the people voted for multipartyism. Banda underwent an operation, was no longer to be known as Life President and an election was scheduled for 1994. Violence came in December when the army clashed with Banda's Young Pioneer Corps.

Nigeria was the biggest disappointment in Africa. The year 1993 had been signalled by the long-awaited handover to civilian rule. The complicated process that began in 1989 when President Ibrahim Babangida allowed political parties and led to National Assembly and Senate elections in 1992, culminated in presidential elections in June. Businessman Moshood Abiola seemed to be in the lead when Babangida annulled the poll. After weeks of turmoil Babangida stepped down and handed over to the unelected Chief Ernest Shonekan who promised elections for February 1994.

Then on November 17 another soldier, General Sani Abacha took over, scrapping all the democratic structures that had been erected over four years. Nigeria was back to square one. For democrats in Africa the development was

doubly disappointing. November 17 was the very same day the 21 parties had signed the accord in South Africa that would for the first time lead to democracy there and the end of apartheid — a cause Nigerian governments had long supported in international forums.

If in Africa the politicians were trying to gain credibility, in much of the world they seemed to be losing it. In Italy, most of the big names of the last 20 years were in disgrace as layers after layer of the political onion revealed webs of corruption at the top. A welling up of indignation among the ordinary people forced into the open week by week a trail of misdemeanours. Big political names like Andreotti and Craxi and major industrialists were all embroiled. A huge clean-up began as even the Mafia was for the first time forced into retreat. In local elections in November and December, the parties which had held power since World War Two were swept aside as voters turned to extremes — the former communists on the left and the neo-fascists on the right.

In Japan, too, the old guard politicians — one of whom, former Premier Kakui Tanaka, died in December — were pushed aside. After 38 years in power the Liberal Democratic Party lost office in August and was replaced by a seven-party coalition led by Morihiro Hosokawa. The break with the past was almost total. Only one minister in the new cabinet had ever held office before. Hosokawa had an informal, populist style.

On the 48th anniversary of the war he did not visit the shrine commemorating Japan's war dead, but went instead to a ceremony attended by the Emperor and expressed condolences to victims of the war and their relatives "in neighbouring countries in Asia and those around the world." Hosokawa had taken over a troubled Japan that, in contrast to most of Asia, was now in serious recession. The industrial giant of the post-war world had been stopped in its tracks.

Disillusion with politicians showed up, too, in Canada and New Zealand. Brian Mulroney resigned as prime minister of Canada and a woman, Kim Campbell, took over. Her reign was short. In four months she and her Conservative Party were consigned almost to oblivion. It won only two seats and in came the Liberals with Jean Chretien as Prime Minister.

In New Zealand, the voters gave National Party Prime Minister Jim Bolger just one vote majority. The political fallout was substantial. A halt was called to tough economic reforms that were reducing benefits in the world's first welfare state and finance minister, Ruth Richardson was dropped. After the election Labour opposition leader Mike Moore was pushed out too. Helen Clark took over from him. In a referendum held alongside the election, New Zealanders dropped the first-past-the-post voting system for proportional representation.

The ruling Labour Party in Australia did better when it went to the polls in March. Against expectations, controversial Paul Keating improved his party's position and won for it a fifth consecutive victory. One of his election promises was to make Australia a republic by the year 2001. Australians, he said, could not be "masters of our own destiny" until the link with the British monarch was severed. Later in the year, he stayed with Queen Elizabeth in Scotland and told her of his plans.

In Britain, political reputations were also at a low ebb. Europe was again the hot issue. John Major spent the first half of the year battling with opponents in his own party of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union he had signed in December 1991. In March, the government was defeated in the House of Commons and weeks of parliamentary time were taken up on Maastricht until MPs agreed to ratify on July 23. Always sniping from the sidelines was his predecessor, Lady Thatcher, whose book launched in October in a blaze of publicity spared almost none of her erstwhile cabinet colleagues. For weeks she blazed forth on TV and in the newspapers of half the world defending her years as prime minister. Her book signing appearances were so prolific, the wags said, unsigned copies of her memoirs would become real collector's items.

Major's stock plummeted in the opinion polls along with most political leaders in Europe and elsewhere. In Spain, the (continued on page 10)

So that was 1993

Peace? Nobel Prizewinners Mandela and De Klerk

World Human Rights Conference in Geneva

India chooses market forces

Peace? Gaza pact Arafat and Rabin

Peace? Irish detente Major and Reynolds

Yeltsin storms Parliament

- Notes**
- Another year of... Recession in the West
 - Aids Attacks on Kurds
 - International Year of the World's Indigenous People
 - July, Storms hit U.S. 200 die.
 - Sept. 23. Australia beats China to Olympics.
 - Sept. 30. Thousands die in India quake.
 - Oct. Fire sweeps California.

Clinton picked a conservative team for his government with grey figures like Warren Christopher as Secretary of State and Les Aspin as Defence Secretary. Within days he blundered domestically by making his first reform, the lifting of restrictions on homosexuals joining the armed services. The military hierarchy, nervous of a Vietnam draft-dodger as their commander, soon forced his retreat. And on the war in Bosnia Clinton kept threatening force and then pulled away.

Attacks on US troops in the United Nations force in Somalia (an involvement started by Bush) landed him with the blame for botched attempts to kill or capture clan leader (warlord to some) General Mohammed Aided. Later, when Clinton tried to re-install Father Jean Bernard Anstide in Haiti, he had to pull back there too. And when Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin shook hands at the signing of the peace agreement in the White House, Clinton could not claim much credit because the agreement had been forged in Norway after months of secret negotiation there.

In a year that began with the signing in Moscow on January 3 of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) under which Russia and the US would dismantle two-thirds of their strategic nuclear warheads, an old ghost came back to haunt the US. North Korea.

On March 12 its government announced withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty following a decision by the International Atomic Energy Agency to impose special inspection needs. Despite threats of sanctions and appeal for reconsideration of the decision North Korea stood firm. Inspection teams were impeded and Clinton warned of the seriousness of the Korean moves.

General Janet Reno ordered the complex to be assaulted. Cult leader David Koresh and 70 of his followers died as the buildings went up in flames. Clinton defended Reno's action and ordered an inquiry.

It had not been a happy start, yet Clinton ended the year strongly. He had embarked on some of the biggest social reforms in the US since the days of Franklin Roosevelt, aiming to bring for the first time a proper medical social service to the mass of the people. He had put

ranking and poorer countries. Many felt that too often the United Nations was being used to further US interests. In New York, US arm-twisting led to too much US influence on Security Council and General Assembly decisions while in the field the dominance of US expertise and equipment often meant UN operations were in fact US operations. The US was finding the UN a useful cover to pursue its own policies.

The UN had come into its own since the end of the Cold

South and Southeast Asia, by contrast with the former Soviet Union and Europe, continued to enjoy greater peace and stability than at any time this century. Rebel movements were still active in some areas, most notably in Burma and most seriously in northern Sri Lanka, where the fight with the Tamil separatists ebbed and flowed more fiercely than ever and the assassination first of opposition leader Lalith Athulthumudali and then of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, heightened the tension. The Prime Minister, Dingiri Wijetunge, became President.

Pakistan began the year in crisis when prime minister Nawaz Sharif was first dismissed by the aged President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and then restored briefly by the courts. Civil unrest followed, with opposition leader Benazir Bhutto leading demonstrations that finally forced a new election. Khan and Sharif resigned and a technocrat, Moeen Qureshi, a former World Bank Vice President, ran a caretaker government.

The election, carried out under the strict eye of the army, was adjudged the country's first fair one for many years, but a tight result led to much maneuvering with the minor parties before Bhutto finally took over. Bhutto consolidated her position when a political ally was elected president and the country seemed set for greater stability than had seemed possible at the beginning of the year.

There was even new hope for peace in Kashmir when Bhutto began talking about renewing the dialogue with India, whose Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, seemed ready to consider reconciliation after the army siege of one India's most holy sites, the Hazratbal mosque in Kashmir had ended peacefully

his able wife Hillary in charge of the operation — a novel White House team. He got through Congress a law curbing the ownership of guns by individuals. And having taken on Congress on ratification of Nafta with Canada and Mexico — and won — he turned to the Far East and Pacific Rim at the APEC summit in Seattle.

Not everyone was comfortable about the US return to the Far East. Prime Minister Mo

War's services had never been more in demand. By the end of 1993, it was involved all over the world trying to solve crisis diplomatically or in military and peacekeeping operations. It was now trying to do the job it had been set up for in 1945, but which the Cold War had prevented. Trouble was, the UN was now grossly oversubscribed.

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Buzzwords of '93

European Union

Ethnicity

WARLORDS

Transparency

Level playing field

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