

Review Of 88

Our look back over 1988 takes a thematic form, to capture some of the moments and movements of particular significance during the past year, and, in some cases, to look ahead to prospects for 1989. To begin with, *Marxism Today* asked a selection of familiar faces to search their own personal recollections of '88 and tell us about a person or an event of which held special meaning for them



• The only people who influence my life, in any deep sense, are my husband and children. I'm at a stage in my life when I pretty much decide the course it should take. I generally find the inspiration I need within myself. I have, I must add, been inspired this year by political figures, such as Jesse Jackson, who has struggled to give dignity and meaning to the aspirations of minorities in America; and by Benazir Bhutto, a fellow Asian woman, who, in spite of the discouraging barriers that were put in her way, has managed to hold doggedly on and seems to be achieving what she has long striven for. **Madhur Jaffrey** (actress, author and tv presenter)



• This year, for the first time, I took part in the celebrations for Diwali Day, the Hindu Festival of Lights. This is a very significant spiritual festival, an opportunity for Hindus to reaffirm inner beliefs and values. It is

also an extremely warm family event. I found it very enjoyable to be welcomed into the Hindu community and to join in celebrations taking place in the same spirit, here in Britain, in India and in many other parts of the world. For me personally Diwali illustrated yet again how much Britain benefits from the enormous richness of the various cultures and traditions of its citizens.

John Major MP (Chief Secretary to the Treasury)



The event and the personality of '88 combined for me on the occasion of my visit in September to the 20th National Conference of Black Lawyers of the USA in Washington DC.

At that conference I had the privilege of meeting with and listening to someone I had always thought of as a friend: Professor Julius Chambers, Director-Counsel of the Legal Aid Defense Fund, which was born of the NAACP's civil rights struggles. Julius' former clients have included Martin Luther King, the Little Rock Seven case, and Muhammad Ali's anti-Vietnam legal battles.

Julius Chambers was transformed for me in this latest meeting. Living and moving around with him, and watching the way he directs a

nationwide civil rights struggle through the courts, drew for me and my Asian-born wife immediate parallels with the simple and effective lifestyle of the late Mahatma Gandhi. It was as though the cloak of my longstanding friendship had inhibited a clear perception that this is a very great man indeed!

Rudy Narayan (barrister)

• When Sheila and I flew to Zimbabwe in March, we expected - bearing in mind the grisly part the British play and have played in Africa - to encounter if not hostility, a certain coolness. We found exactly the reverse.

From nights listening to stupendous music in clubs and hotels where we were usually the only white customers, we returned to our room awestruck by the generosity of the Zimbabweans. There is, I know, what amounts to a need among some Europeans to find good in countries we have looted and I think I understand the dangers inherent in this need. But nine months later and aware that Zimbabwe still has many problems to overcome, we both derive as much consolation from the optimism and



commitment to building a fair society we found there, as we do from the candour of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, contrasting these qualities with a shortage of them at home.

John Peel (disc jockey)



• The flood and famine in Sudan had a special painful significance for me. This time, there was no centralised government organisation with direct responsibility for relieving the misery of the populace, no Band Aid, no bullshit, just the silent agony of the labouring poor and their children. No bitter testimony of the necessity of socialism for emergent nations could be demanded.

Yet whenever the capitalist press refers to Ethiopia it explains the Ethiopian famine as a result of the collectivisation of Ethiopian agriculture, which never happened. Faced with a famine which could not conceivably be blamed on marxist policy, we do not hear speculation that corruption and colonialism might be the cause. We are not told how many die every day, although the inland roads are littered with corpses. The people of Sudan suffer and we are silent.

Germaine Greer (author and broadcaster)



• 'The horror of it', as Mr Kurtz said. It's been a bad year. I've just seen a big headline in American *Time* magazine; Thatcher Announces: 'Marxism's Had It!' (*Marxism Today* readers be warned.) This was the year the 'faux-posh' accent seems to have taken over the new British upper classes. It was also the year I saw Dan Quayle on American tv. If this is the future, I don't think it's going to work.
Angela Carter (writer)



For a few brief moments I thought that 1988 was to be the year that Nelson Mandela was finally released. It looks as if that event - and further progress towards a free South Africa - will have to await 1989.

But 1988 was a turning point nonetheless. The Tory March budget will, in later years, be seen as the beginning of a decisive shift in British politics. The chancellor looked at the needs of the British people - pensioners, low-income families, mothers on child benefit - and decided that the priority had to be Britain's richest 1%. The result was that in March the top 1% received more than 30% of budget spoils. The top 5% received

50%.

Mr Lawson's budget; where Tory greed was appeased, even at the expense of economic necessity, marks the beginning of the end for Mrs Thatcher's brand of Conservatism. It is now for Labour to seize the opportunities to dominate the politics of the 90s.

Gordon Brown MP (Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury)



• The two events of greatest significance for me in 1988 were not in fact to do with the health service. First, the openness and courage of Gorbachev's initiatives which herald a new era in Soviet politics. The end of polarisation in international politics opens the door to immense opportunities for tackling poverty and ill-health throughout the world.

Second, Mrs Thatcher's speech on the environment. Whatever the cynics may say, the genie is out of the bottle on green issues and can never be put back.

However, I cannot ignore the health service. Two reforms have gone through which will have far-reaching significance: the introduction of a clinical career structure for nurses and the reforming of nurse education. They affect one in 20 working women and they overturn some of the worst institutional exploitation of women in the UK.

Trevor Clay (General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing)



A Quiz in Time...

Test your memory and lateral thinking on *MT*'s own brain-teaser, compiled by Julian Turner

Who said:

- 1 'Ours is a friendship that I treasure very much... It's just a wonderful relationship?'
'Anybody who enjoys being in the House of Commons probably needs psychiatric care'?
- 2 'Dinosaurs were the most successful animals in the history of evolution'?
- 3 'Why use the name of a criminal to raise these funds? They didn't do that for Ethiopia'?
- 4 'The temptation is not to have sex, but to get married, make love to your wife and have children like an ordinary man'?
- 5 'I arrived as a child, now I go back as an adult'?

Identify:

- 7 'The essential backcloth to all contemporary political debate'
the Australian who beat another Australian, three Britons and an Indian
- 8 the Sunday that also became a Wednesday
- 10 Belinda and Gilbert
- 11 MDMA
- 12 Alexandra Birynkova

Name the person or people who:

- 13 moved from 1 to 4 and W12 to W1?
after carrying on for years, finally stopped messing about?
- 14 wasn't entirely frank about his underwear?
- 15 'Jackson is a poet, Cuomo is a poet...! Who did Richard Nixon describe as a word processor?
was talking about revolution? And who didn't want to talk about it?
- 17 got matey with Intourist?
- 18

How did:

- 19 26 become 28 by way of 29?
- 20 this week drag on for months?
- 21 babies end up in the Lions' Den?
Edward Heath (5.4%) and Gerry Adams (0%) come bottom of the league?
- 22 the alchemist turn one man's silver into gold?
- 23 eight years and eight months mark a 20th century record in January?
- 24

Which stories from *The Sun* began...

- 25 Lotsa Lovely Lolly
- 26 World War III
- 27 Fry And Die Or Jump And Try
- 28 Freddie Starr Ate Our Party
- 29 Eau No
- 30 Sorry

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