

Today

Terry Coleman at the Gare d'Orsay Page 25

The art of inflation Page 29

The crushing of Crusader Page 33

Tomorrow

The ultimate present for the bristling Young Executive. The computers that sold British Gas. And Derek Malcolm on the crocodile that cleaned up in the States

News in brief

12 die in food riots

A CURFEW was imposed in Zambia's copper belt, where 12 people have died in two days of food riots. Page 8.

Navy promise

THE Defence Secretary, Mr George Younger, promised that the Royal Navy would keep its amphibious capability in the long term, including replacement or refurbishment of the assault ships Fearless and Intrepid. Page 2.

Paisley ejected

THE Reverend Ian Paisley was ordered out of the European Parliament after shouting down Mrs Thatcher during a speech in which the Prime Minister attacked critics of Britain's presidency of the EEC. Page 3 and Page 6.

Child abuse rises

CHILD abuse cases involving serious or fatal injuries have increased after eight years of decline, said the NSPCC. Page 3.

Nurses' pay crisis

NURSES should be treated as well as the police to solve a recruitment crisis in the NHS, which would mean a pay rise of up to 30 per cent, union leaders said. Page 4.

Market moves

FOUND up 0050 to \$1,4215; FT index up 8.9 to 1284.4; Dow Jones down 13.36 to 1916.90; Markets, page 30.



Herod's applied for an injunction. I guess the verses about the failure to tell him where the Messiah was born reflect badly on his security services.

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The weather

DRY with sunny spells. Details, back page.

Thatcher may do deal on MI5 case papers

From Richard Norton-Taylor in Sydney
The Government is expected today to offer to the MI5 trial defence the contents of confidential documents which reveal how far it acquiesced in books about the intelligence services.

If Mr Malcolm Turnbull, lawyer for Mr Peter Wright, the former MI5 officer who wants to publish his memoirs, agrees to the deal the Government will drop its appeal against the trial judge's order that the documents must be handed to the defence.

The deal is believed to be supported by the Government's Australian lawyers as well as Sir Robert Armstrong, the Cabinet Secretary. Without this exercise in damage limitation Sir Robert may be recalled to the New South Wales Supreme Court.

Mr Wright told a press conference yesterday that the Government wanted to suppress his memoirs due to embarrassment because it would be seen to have told a "whole load of lies."

He had earlier been released by the judge after making his silly to prosecute me, says Fincher, page 2; Leader comment, page 12

last appearance in court, when he was briefly cross-examined by Mr Theo Simos QC, for the Government.

Mr Wright told journalists: "Successful governments have not been honest with the British public about what's been going on."

Hitting back at criticism from Tory MPs and ministers, including Mr Norman Tebbit, he said that to claim that he was undermining the security service and selling out his friends was "absolute rubbish."

There was nothing in his book, he said, that would damage them in any way. He had repeatedly made it clear to the Government that if, in its



Peter Wright: 'load of Government lies'

view, there was anything damaging in his memoirs he would take it out.

"What I want and what I have been trying to get for many years is a judicial or parliamentary inquiry into the whole business of Soviet penetration of MI5. Thatcher, in particular, refused to consider this," Mr Wright said.

She had referred matters to the Security Commission, but that, he said, was an organisation for checking, vetting and locks and keys. It had nothing to do with the problem he was talking about.

Mr Wright said that he would like to return to Britain but if he did so he had been told he would be arrested and put in prison. It is absolutely outrageous," he said, adding that he was "extremely annoyed with Britain." He had done more for his country than most people, and his record during the war and since was unique.

Asked about Tory MPs' criticism, he replied: "Quite clearly, they have no idea what I have done for Britain." Asked if it was wrong to suggest — as he had done in his affidavit to the court on Monday — that the British establishment had been penetrated on a mass by the Russians, he replied: "No." Asked if he was undermining MI5 by suggesting that it was still penetrated, he said: "It is up to

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Reagan will not intervene over deadlock • Former security aides under investigation

Key arms witnesses refuse to testify

From Alex Brummer in Washington

Congressional efforts to uncover the details of the Iran-Contra scandal were stymied yesterday when key national security figures refused to testify, as the White House rejected calls for President Reagan to intervene personally to break the deadlock.

In a series of tense scenes played out on live television, the public looked on as the former National Security Adviser, Admiral John Poindexter, and his aide, Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver North, became the first serving military officers in US history to

US reassures Europeans over Iranagate damage and Shadowy general key to Contra links, page 6; Leader comment, page 12; People, back page

take the Fifth Amendment to protect themselves from self-incrimination. In closed-door hearings in the Senate, general Richard Secord, identified by the Secretary of State, Mr George Shultz, as a key middleman in the hostage release efforts, also took the amendment.

It was disclosed yesterday that the FBI has told Swiss authorities that Colonel North and General Secord are under criminal investigations in connection with two Swiss bank accounts allegedly used to funnel profits from the Iranian arms sales to the Contras and other groups. The FBI has reportedly said that it is inquiring into allegations of attempted fraud.

Colonel North, resident in a highly decorated Marine uniform, told congressional interrogators: "I don't think there is another person in America who wants to tell his story as much as I do." But, when pressed to do so by Mr Lee Hamilton of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Colonel North said: "On the advice of counsel I respectfully and regrettably decline to answer the question based" on my constitutional rights.

Colonel North looked suitably chastened during the hearing, but seemed pleased when conservative congressmen admired his medals and praised him as a national hero. Similarly, his boss, Admiral Poindexter, attired in a dark business suit, protested that he

wanted to co-operate, but also took the Fifth Amendment. "If I insist on my testimony... I will have to decline on advice of counsel because of my constitutional rights under the Fifth Amendment," the admiral said. Mr Hamilton said that a quick check with the Library of Congress had revealed that it was the first time that an active admiral had taken such a step.

In an effort to break the deadlock in the Congressional investigations, President Reagan has been urged by two senior Republicans, Senator Paul Laxalt, his old friend, and the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senator David Durenburger, to debrief his two former aides himself and pass on the information to Congress in the spirit of the co-operation he has promised.

Last night, the conservative Republican, Senator Orrin Hatch, a strong supporter of President Reagan, urged that Colonel North and Admiral Poindexter be granted immunity from prosecution so that their role in the affair could become fully known and the scandal put to rest.

Officials said yesterday that the President was rejecting the request to intervene for fear that he would be acting as judge and jury in the case. Mr Reagan has said several times that he is determined to get to the bottom of the case but aides fear that he would look impotent if the two former security aides refused to co-operate. There is also a possibility that he may inadvertently be told of criminal wrongdoing.

Senator Laxalt and others have urged him to take such a step and present his findings to the public in a broadcast. But the White House seemed very much on the defensive yesterday. The press spokesmen said that the President varied on sworn testimony by the former National Security Adviser, Mr Robert McFarlane, that President Reagan had known of an August, 1985, arms shipment to Iran via Israel, at the time when several months later the Attorney-General, Mr Edwin Meese, has stated.

Mr Speakes said that the President was reviewing the documents and refreshing his memory, but that an inquiry among White House officials showed there was no record of Mr Reagan having been told in

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Lt-Col. Oliver North (above) is sworn in before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and (below) Vice-Admiral John Poindexter (right) confers with his attorney, Richard Beckler, during yesterday's hearing.



Europe's 'breakthrough' in fight against terror

By Malcolm Dean

European interior ministers have reached agreement on the individuals, organisations and states which pose the main threat of terrorism to Europe.

Mr Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, described the meeting in London yesterday as a breakthrough. "We have moved from an exchange of raw intelligence material to an agreed analysis, which will provide a tool not just for the police and security agencies, but also the European foreign ministers who have to consider their political reaction," he said.

He would not identify the main terrorist threats for security reasons. Of the 12 member states represented at the meeting, only Greece refused to adopt the analysis, because it did not want individual states named in the secret report.

Asked whether Greece could become a back door through which terrorists could gain access to Europe, Mr Hurd said that the Greeks accepted the threat posed by terrorists but had reservations about the actual analysis in the report.

He said officials would continue to work together on three separate fronts: harmonising frontier controls, including stricter passport checks; more co-ordination between drug liaison officers; and a continued assessment of the terrorist threat.

Officials will discuss the latest report with US intelligence agencies, but Mr Hurd would not be drawn by American reporters yesterday on whether the supply of US arms to Iran had improved security.

The ministers also endorsed a proposal to improve co-operation at international football matches. Each state will nominate a permanent correspondent to serve as a contact for the police forces of other member states to help in drawing up the policing plans for

Thatcher attacks critics, page 6

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Ballyregan Bob record

BALLYREGAN BOB last night established himself as the greatest greyhound ever by winning a world record-breaking 32 consecutive races. In the 9.19 race at Hove he beat his rivals by 94 lengths at odds of 5-1 on to surpass the seven-year-old record of an American dog, Joe Dump.

In Australia meanwhile, England's cricketers beat Victoria in Melbourne for the first time in 24 years. Led by James Whitaker, who scored 48, England made the 184 needed at a run a minute for the loss of five wickets with 17 balls to spare. The bad news for England though, was that Ian Botham's chances of playing in Friday's third Test in Adelaide are "very slim" due to his damaged right muscle.

In Fremantle, Britain's hopes of qualifying for the semi-finals of the America's Cup challenger series all but disappeared when White Crusader was beaten by America II.

Reports, pages 32 and 33

Steel attacks plans for Lobby secrecy pledges

By John Carvel, Political Correspondent

Proposals that parliamentary lobby journalists should be made to sign secrecy pledges before attending unattributable briefings by the Prime Minister's press secretary were condemned last night by the Liberal leader, Mr David Steel.

He called on the editors of ITN and BBC television news to assert their independence by requesting their staffs to boycott the procedure.

Mr Steel said he was surprised and disappointed that the lobby committee of inquiry into its practices had resulted in "support for a system which has lost all credibility."

The committee recommended on Monday that lobby journalists should sign undertakings that they would not disclose that remarks by the Prime Minister's press secretary, Mr Bernard Ingham, had emanated from No. 10 Downing Street.

This invitation to sign the pledge is a complete anachronism," Mr Steel said. "Mr Ingham's attempts to manipulate

the media from behind the scenes have become the subject of such detailed revelations that they are now quite transparent. It is difficult to see how it will be possible to re-establish the convention of secrecy."

Mr Steel said: "It is asking a great deal of political journalists to expect them to perform to a system of national deception which provides them with a few additional tidbits of inside information at some cost to their professional independence."

A strong lead has been given by the Independent and the Guardian on the press side, and on our side by myself and David Owen, in moving away from the system of unattributable mass briefings — though we accept that journalists will still wish to have information 'off the record' on an individual basis.

I shall be writing to the editor of ITN and BBC television news to suggest that they request their staff not to sign any pledges and thus assert their independence of the Government information machine.

Curb credit, banks told

By Peter Rodgers, City Editor

The Bank of England yesterday gave a pre-Christmas warning to banks and finance companies not to push credit and charge card lending too hard because many borrowers may be unable to repay.

This follows previous warnings to rein back on profligate mortgage lending.

Mr Brian Quinn, the chief banking supervisor, told the banks that it was in their best interests to "temper lending" before loan arrears got so large that the Bank of England had to step in.

"There are certain signs of growing distress among borrowers who have overstretched themselves, attracted by the greater availability of credit and easier terms," he said.

The Bank is concerned that checking methods do not show up the full extent of individual borrowers' commitments to credit and charge cards, which Mr Quinn said was a "partly invisible layer of commitment."

Takeover warning, Page 28

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Tories fire on Labour defence plans

By John Carvel, Political Correspondent
Conservatives mounted a carefully orchestrated assault on Labour's non-nuclear defence policy yesterday on the eve of its launch by Mr Neil Kinnock.

In New York the Tory party chairman, Mr Norman Tebbit, claimed that Mr Kinnock's policies would wreck Nato. "While Mr Kinnock says firmly that he is in favour of British membership of Nato his policies would seem to make that membership impossible," he said.

In the Commons the leader of the house, Mr John Biffen, said that Labour's abandonment of the defence tradition of Aneurin Bevan would decisively benefit the Tories at the forthcoming general election.

Behind him, as he deputised for Mrs Thatcher at Prime Minister's question time, Conservative MP Fred a salvo of criticism at Mr Kinnock's statement on defence in the United States last week.

The Prime Minister in a TV interview after her address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, accused Mr

Tebbit attacks Kinnock, and cartoon, back page

Kinnock of breaking with the defence policies of all previous Labour prime ministers.

She contrasted Labour criticism of the Government's handling of the security services with the past Conservative behaviour while in opposition.

"We trusted Merlyn Rees when he was Home Secretary. We went in to support him in the lobby when his own left-wing voted against him. There are certain levels of responsibility whether you are in Government or in opposition which you expect people never to play party politics with — we did not," she said.

The Conservative tactic was designed to create the maximum fear for Mr Kinnock as he launches Labour's defence policy. His presentation at a press conference in London today is designed to explain to the electorate how the policy would work after a Labour general election victory.

Mr Kinnock is expected to make it clear that a decision to cancel the Trident programme and recall Polaris submarines would be taken immediately on Labour gaining office. Other moves — involving a request to the United States to remove its nuclear weapons and an effort to redefine Nato's strategy — would depend on discussions with the US and other Nato powers. Mr Kinnock is not putting a time limit on those discussions.

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How Mr Gorbachev ventured abroad but went nowhere

THIS is the time of year when Mikhail Gorbachev's mind turns to the question of the speech he will give to the Soviet people on New Year's Eve, which is one of the few Russian holidays that does not require a parade in Red Square. It is an altogether different kind of event, the post-revolutionary and un-religious version of Christmas.

It involves Christmas trees, special shop window displays, children's parties in the Kremlin, and at the big toy store Detaki Mir, you can book a visit to your home by Dedushka Moroz or Grandfather Frost.

He looks like Santa Claus, and he carries a sack with presents for children, he sings and dances and goes "Ho-ho-ho." The later in the day he makes his call, the more you realise that his attendant snow maiden is there to hold Grandpa Frost upright after the inevitable seasonal tots of vodka have been pressed upon him in every home.

There is even a healthy dash of commercialism about the festival. The shops sell special gift-wrapped New Year presents, and hundreds

of millions of Happy New Year cards are printed to clog the mails. The forests around Moscow are patrolled by volunteer guards to stop private tree-cutting in the Christmas tree business.

Last year, in the euphoria after the Geneva summit, there was even a mood of peace on earth and goodwill to all men, as Reagan and Gorbachev exchanged New Year greetings on one another's TV networks. This year, we are unlikely to be so lucky.

For all of the effort Mr Gorbachev has put into foreign policy, he has woefully little to show for it. The Star Wars project goes on, the Salt-2 arms control agreement is dead, the AMB treaty has one foot on the scaffold, and Britain and France seem set on a dramatic enhancement of their nuclear forces.

In spite of his personal visits to Britain and France, and the regular essays in the Soviet press on the theme of "Europe—our common home", Mr Gorbachev cannot claim that the gloom over Soviet-US relations is in any way compensated by a thaw on the European front. Indeed, relations with West

COMMENTARY Martin Walker



Germany are at one of their lowest points for years, with Moscow cancelling virtually all government-level meetings and visits after Chancellor Kohl's gaffe that compared Gorbachev to Dr Goebbels. But with all the polls pointing to another Kohl victory in next month's German elections, Moscow just has to lump it.

Mr Gorbachev badly needs a diplomatic success, which probably explains the flurry of activity on the Asian front we have seen this year. But here, too, there have been disappointments. His trip to India was presented to the folk back at home by the Soviet media as a triumph, with TV prime time and column inches of the kind usually reserved for a superpower summit.

And yet the Soviet leader did not get the agreement he

wanted — the Indian endorsement of the cornerstone of Moscow's new policy of an all-Asian security conference, an eastern version of the European and Atlantic process that goes by the generic name of the Helsinki Treaty.

Nor have we yet seen the breakthrough Mr Gorbachev seeks in his relations with China. Sino-Soviet trade flourishes and government-to-government contacts are regular and polite. But there

is still little sign of the restoration of party-to-party links between the world's two largest and most powerful Communist parties.

There has been a somewhat blithe assumption in Moscow that next November's election will be paying their respects in Red Square. Mr Gorbachev's seminal speech at Vladivostok last July, in which he spelt out his new Asian policy, was aimed at clearing away the main obstacles that could still stop the Chinese party from coming.

China has defined three obstacles to better relations: the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan; the presence of Moscow's Vietnamese ally in Kampuchea, and the Soviet troop build-up on the Mongolian and Manchurian frontiers.

In his Vladivostok speech, Mr Gorbachev announced the withdrawal of some 8,000 troops from Afghanistan, and troop reduction in Mongolia. He also suggested re-drawing the Sino-Soviet border along the central channel of the Amur River, which would transfer to China some of the islands now occupied by Russian troops, and which were

the scene of the border clashes of the late 1960s.

On Kampuchea, however, he had nothing new to say, beyond the usual platitudes about the need for better Sino-Vietnamese relations. This may change next week, when Gorbachev's deputy, Mr Yegor Ligachev, goes to Hanoi for the Vietnamese party congress. There is little hope of any real change in Vietnam's role in Kampuchea, and most Hanoi-watchers predict the party congress will deal mainly with internal matters and cautious economic reforms.

And even if Kampuchea were to be settled through some form of coalition government and Vietnamese troop withdrawal, that would not automatically open the way to better relations between Moscow and Peking. While Mr Gorbachev was preparing his trip to India, there came a sudden and ominous reminder of just how many unexploded bombs remain on the Sino-Soviet border.

In the short term, we may one day come to call it the War of the Sung Succession. In the long term, it could be the War of Korean Re-

unification.

What ever the South Korean ministry of defence may have announced, Kim Il Sung of North Korea did not die last month. But some kind of crisis evidently occurred in Pyongyang shortly after the venerable leader returned from Moscow with the promise of MIG-23 jets, SAM-missiles, and T-80 tanks. He did not, however, get Moscow's backing for his plan to pass on the leadership to his son.

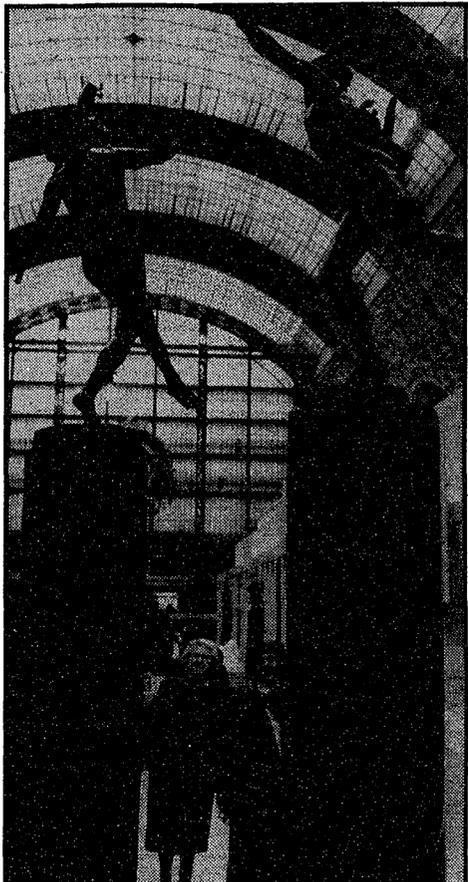
Kim Il Sung consolidated his power in North Korea in the late 1950s by purging both the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking factions in his party, and by subsequently playing off each of his super-power neighbours against one another. The result has been a long stability which is now beginning to look not only fragile, but dangerous for all the neighbours. The Stalinist time-war in which North Korea has been locked for a generation is unlikely long to survive Kim Il Sung himself.

The obvious solution would be for Moscow and Peking to agree on a compromise succession to Kim Il Sung, to pledge non-interfer-

ence, and not to allow North Korea to become a contentious issue between them. Moscow's latest arms deals have hardly helped that process. And even if it worked, it would simply delay the real problem that South Korea has almost twice the population, very much more wealth than the north, and a political instability problem of its own.

From the Kremlin window, the world must appear a rather dangerous place as Mr Gorbachev watches them haul in the huge fir tree that will be the centre-piece of the New Year festivities in St George's Hall. His Vladivostok speech has evoked little response in Asia. His Reykjavik concessions have been spurned by the Americans, even the French and Germans and the Brits have recoiled in alarm at his suggestion of taking all the missiles out of Europe.

His only consolation is that the White House window is probably even gloomier this Christmas season, as the lame-duck President watches the ravaging of his administration, and suffers the endless revenge of the ayatollahs.



C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la gare... Pictures by Martin Argles

RICHARD BOSTON pays tribute to Henry Reed, who died on Monday

Always a good Reed

"OF COURSE, we've all dreamed of solving the cat-rat; but it's needed Hilda to take the first practical steps towards making them a reality... She's drawn up a list of well-known singers who she thinks would benefit from treatment. It's only a question of getting them to agree."

So says someone or other in Henry Reed's radio drama, *The Private Life of Hilda Tablet*. Another line from the same play: "The sooner the tea's out of the way, the sooner we can get on with the gin, eh?" If memory serves (which it probably doesn't) those words were spoken by Derek Guyler, playing the part of General Gland, who said in the play, *Not A Drum Was Heard: the War Memoirs of General Gland*. It was, I think, a good war, one of the best there have so far been. I've often advanced the view that it was a war deserving of better generalship than it received on either side.

Dame Hilda and General Gland were just two of the characters who lived and moved and had their being in the two plays of Henry Reed, from a *Very Great Man Indeed* onwards. The BBC's Third Programme of the post-war years had a reputation for arid and joyless intellectualism—"Don't talk to donkeys," was the phrase. The truth was quite different. The Third Programme was consistently exciting and entertaining in music and drama and talks, from Benjamin Britten to Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* to Stephen Potter's *Lifemanship* and Henry Reed's plays.

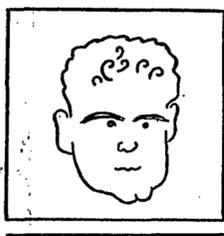
These plays were as witty as anything by Oscar Wilde, and the cast of characters is rivalled in our times only by those of *Beauchamp's Boy* by the Way column and *Osbert Lancaster's Pocket Cartoons*. One of Henry Reed's characters was a "superbly played" man (superbly played by Hugh Burden) who was trying to write the biography of the very great man indeed (whose identity has temporarily slipped my mind). The name of Herbert Reed is also that of his creator, and indeed Henry Reed was forever being confused with the art critic Herbert Read. It is hard to imagine two people more different than the solemn Herbert Read and the humorous Henry Reed, which made the joke even better.

In fact, there were many Henry Reeds. There was the one who wrote a series of radio plays which used the medium as imaginatively and as enjoyably as it has ever been used. There was Henry Reed, the comic poet, who wrote *Chard Whitlow*, the brilliant parody of T. S. Eliot's *Burnt Norton*. There was the Henry Reed who wrote *Judging Distances* and *The Naming of Parts*, two of the most memorable poems to have emerged from the second world war. There was the Henry Reed who translated Balzac and Natalia Ginzburg, the Henry Reed who wrote a radio dramatisation of *Moby Dick* (performed with a cast which included Ralph Richardson, Cyril Cusack, and Bernard Miles).

His output was not great, but more of what he wrote will be remembered than that of many other writers who were far more prolific. He had the reputation of being something of a recluse. I have long relished the story of his cancelling a lunch engagement on the grounds that he was not hungry.

It would be going too far to say that he was a *Very Great Man Indeed*, but he was a *Very Good Man Indeed*, and provided a sophisticated entertainment, and some deft and thoughtful poetry, for a couple of generations.

The platform of the century



Terry Coleman

THE new French Museum of the 19th Century opened its doors to the Parisian public yesterday with only four police riot vans hanging around outside, and only a handful of young men giving away leaflets saying that culture was being betrayed.

French protesters tend to be literate than their English counterparts, so the abuse was well phrased. The Minister for Culture was a stranger — strangling, to be precise, 28 theatres, snuffing out music, starving the

dance, cancelling orders for statues, and generally incompetent.

This was a let-down. For days Paris has been promised a little revolution. Students and others have smashed shops and burned cars. One student has been killed. The glorious days of 1968 have been recalled. The Left Bank has resounded to incessant police sirens. I have observed that the usual CRS convoy consists of 11 vans and buses. So to see only four was, as I say, a let-down.

But the new museum at the Gare d'Orsay has been opened. It is what the Republic calls one of its great state projects for Paris, to enable the French better to understand the times in which they live.

It is a museum in a disused railway station, and a museum on a most magnificent site, standing on the Left Bank, directly overlooking the Seine and the Tuileries Gardens, with the Louvre to the right as you look out. The Louvre is another project of the state, and its courtyard is now being torn up to make way for a vast glass pyramid.

You could say the Musée-

d'Orsay had its first beginnings in revolution. During the Paris Commune of 1871 the Palais d'Orsay, which had stood on the site, was burned down. So, when the Orleans Railway Company wanted to build a station for the Universal Exhibition of 1900, there was a vacant lot. The station was designed to be a cross between a Roman temple and one of the great Roman baths, all done in the style of Art Nouveau. And though it was for electric trains, and height was no longer necessary to dissipate the smoke and steam of the engines, the Gare d'Orsay was given the high cast-iron arches of the classic railway cathedrals.

After 1939 the trains stopped. The place was used to house prisoners of war. Later Orson Welles filmed his version of Kafka's trial there. Then it was due to be pulled down, but three successive Presidents of the Republic — Pompidou, Giscard, and Mitterrand — saw that it was preserved to become instead a temple to the 19th century. Inside, there are 2,300 paintings, 1,500 pieces of sculpture, and about 1,500 other objects.

Though it was Pompidou's idea, they say Madame Giscard conceived the details in a dream.

It is magnificent, but it is strange. It is about the size of Marblebone station. Around the sides and on the upper levels are the paintings — familiar masterpieces everywhere. Manet's *Dejeuner sur l'herbe*, more Renoirs and Monets than you ever saw — but there is no point in a catalogue of names. Interesting though that when you see them in such quantity, and so relentlessly, it is Toulouse-Lautrec who is the funniest. Then there is the lovely calmness of Bonnard.

It does occur to me that I ought not to condemn too hastily the celebrated novelists and members of the *Académie Française* who over the past week have been writing exalted and meaningless rubbish in the newspapers, talking about the ceaseless interlocking of the circle and the square in the museum, and the sacred symbolism of the earth and sky, and so on. Then there are the architectural plans and models. French architecture did not fall to bits as English archi-

tecture did in that period. And it was grand. A model of the new Paris Opera of 1875 shows the auditorium occupying not one tenth of the whole building. Then the furniture — and never, surely, was there a more degraded century. The hideous pieces are redeemed only by the bentwood chairs of the Thonet brothers, who in one year made 1.8 million in their five factories. But why so many examples? A fair proportion of this annual 1.8 million is on show, which is ironic since there is hardly a seat for the visitor to perch on throughout the whole of the vast museum.

The 19th century was a period of great invention and great works, but there is very little here to show it. My eye went to one painting of a train rounding a bend — but it was by Lionel Walden and called *Les docks de Cardiff*. The English eye goes to the Anglo-Saxon things. With hundreds to choose from, I found myself looking closely at a Sisley, and a portrait by the American Thomas Eakins, and at Whistler's *Mother*.

But as you enter the museum, and walk as it were

along the nave of the station, you see none of these things. You see, under the Art Nouveau decoration of the ironwork, the stark lines, pastel colours, and slabs of stone chosen for chic purposes by the Italian woman architect of the museum. And then, among all this austerity, a proper riot of sculpture.

Lots of Rodin of course. He has been seen lately in London and nothing more needs to be said about him, except that his Gates of Hell is a wonder. But what I did not expect, and what quite dominates the central hall and for that matter a gallery or two, are the many figures of women either frolicking after a few drinks (generally called *Bacchantes*), or about to offer themselves to their lovers.

This is no doubt a longing fantasy, or a happy reality, for men of any kind, but no body of men can so diligently have pursued this image as the French sculptors of the mid-19th century. It doesn't matter whether the piece is described by the artist as a woman stung by a serpent, or as an illustration of a few lines of Andre Chenier, or whatever. What you have is

a woman presenting abundant hips, arching her back, and letting her head fall back in abandon. There is also an Eve after the Fall, looking very worried.

Above all this is the great gilded clock of the station. All this promise presenting itself under the clock will stay in my mind. Very French. Very 19th century. Perhaps it takes an Anglo-Saxon to see it that way, and perhaps I have got it all wrong. I do, however, say in my defence that the largest canvas to be seen from the nave is entitled *Romans in Decadence*. And decadence is what France was in from much of the century.

The Musée d'Orsay takes its period as beginning in 1948 and ending in 1914. God save us. At first, France barely recovered from the Napoleonic Wars, then suffering the revolution of 1848, then the extravagances of the Second Empire, then the crushing defeat by Prussia in 1870, and then the Commune of 1871; then recovering itself only in order to prepare for the cataclysm of 1914. Not, all in all, the best of times. Not France's century.

They may not want revolution, but they had a surer grasp of public mood. CAMPBELL PAGE reports from Paris

The lesson from the classrooms for Mr Chirac

A UNIVERSITY lecturer observed yesterday that no one stays apolitical for very long once they have experienced a charge by French riot police.

After Mr Chirac's surrender to student movements, the young have discovered their political strength. In a few weeks, a movement dismissed as divided in its aims and manipulated by outsiders, has stopped the government in its tracks. As it struggles to save its university reform Bill, the government began to understand

that it was no longer a question of isolating the extremists and steering a half-hearted majority back to their docile ways.

The organising committee of the student movement is urging the four million young people between 18 and 25 to make sure that they registered as voters in time for the 1988 presidential elections when Mr Chirac's ambitions will be put to the test. Reports from all over France to the Interior Ministry show that most people supported the students. The government realised that many of the parents of the young activists had voted it in to power only nine months ago.

It would be absurd to suggest that the young now have the strength to veto any government measure which dis-

pleases them. But it is true that the new nationality code, which makes the acquisition of French citizenship harder, will not look like such a bright idea when it is discussed in parliament soon.

In deciding to reform the universities, the government strayed on to sacred ground: the belief that universities embody a republican tradition of open access and egalitarianism. The process of selection in the school baccalaureat and the elitist grande écoles such as the Polytechnique, high unemployment, and the competition for jobs among graduates, only reinforced the passion for non-selective university entrance.

The university issue crystallised a growing feeling of discontent among young

people. Most of them were unborn or only a few years old in the stirring days of 1968. They become marginally aware of politics as adolescents when an optimistic Left came to power in 1981. They experienced the final unexciting stage of socialism under a government which used "modernisation" as its catchword.

Perhaps they realised that "modernisation" was an upbeat word for often disruptive change in a shrinking job market. They seemed to reserve their enthusiasm for the anti-racist movement SOS-Racisme, and for the campaign by the comedian Coluche to feed the hungry. They were unprepared for the return of the Right and a government with a strict ideological programme and a

taste for the politics of exclusion. The government seems to create categories of undesirables and then to pick them off.

Young people suffered from a more assertive police force, and widespread identity checks. The authorities hunted illegal immigrants and expelled them — as in the notorious case of the plane chartered for 101 Mallans — drug addicts were to be locked up for their own good, private enterprise was to build prisons, and the nationality code was to be tightened.

The young, as it turns out, are often more mature than their ideological elders. They are tolerant in a realistic way, they take a certain set of values and day-to-day decencies for granted.

A recent poll in the *Nouvel Observateur* shows that racism and famine in the Third World worry them the most. Among government measures, the most unpopular is unemployment reforms, followed by a roughly equal response against the expulsion of immigrants, easier redundancies, the elimination of the wealth tax, and the treatment of drug addicts.

Unemployment is their biggest concern and their favourite person is the outspoken pop star Renaud, who leaves the Pope and Lech Walesa in the shade.

Obviously, they are not all rosy-cheeked philosophers and their judgment is not automatically sound. But they are a sharp reminder that society as a whole — not

just the conspicuous young — has in many ways moved beyond the blueprints which a political elite persist in using.

The university lecturer, Mr Andre Comte-Sponville, wrote in the newspaper, *Libération*, yesterday that as a student banner had declared, 1986 was better than 1968. "We had Utopia without morality. They have morality without Utopia."

In their protests against university reform, young people were never rebels against education itself. They wanted to earn their diplomas and degrees, and give themselves the best possible chance of finding a job in a world which was clearly imperfect but was unlikely to be improved by revolution.