



# Escapes From Clinton's America

*A Symposium.*

*One of history's commonplaces is that the progressive left exalts esoteric pleasures, like ferrets, Frisbee, and macrobiotic food, over basic ones—like dogs, football, and booze.*

*That makes us nervous. With a Clinton administration looming, The American Spectator asked some of its more bibulous contributors to suggest great bars of Reagan's reign that might serve as a redoubt of reason in Clinton's.*

## RICHARD BROOKHISER

The two bars I will visit most often during the Clinton years will be the same two I visited most often during the Carter-Reagan-Bush years, which are both around the corner from my Manhattan apartment: **Pete's Tavern** and **Tuesday's**. I recommend Pete's to those who are hungry rather than thirsty: they've had a good chef for a few years, and the bar is a zoo. Pete's has the added advantage of being the place where O. Henry wrote "The Gift of the Magi." Tuesday's is quieter, equally good for a burger or a beer.

Both bars will gain added pertinence after Inauguration Day, because they were once hangouts for hangers-on of Tammany Hall. Tammany's last wigwam, or headquarters, stands on Union Square Park, a block away, though it long since passed to other tenants (note the liberty cap on the pediment). Around the base of the flagpole in the park runs a bas-relief contrasting the wretched victims of tyranny with the happy beneficiaries of freedom (i.e., rule by Tammany Hall). I know of Pete's Tammany connection only through reading, but Tuesday's still has a picture of Al Smith on the wall. No pictures of the Tweed courthouse, or the horse farm Richard Croker bought with his ill-gotten gains. Tuesday's gives you *honest*

Tammany. The country should be so lucky.

*Richard Brookhiser is a senior editor of National Review and author of The Way of the WASP.*

## DAVID BROOKS

In Moscow everybody is a Reaganite; it's just a question of which branch. Some are Elliott Abrams-style anti-Communists, others Jack Kemp tax-cutters. When I walked into the hard currency bar **Night Flight** and saw forty young women displaying their wares in miniskirts and push-up bras, I said to myself, "Oh, this must be the libertarian wing."

Like everything else, the oldest profession is effectively legalized in Moscow. And just as Hayek would have predicted, the free market has imposed its own quality controls. The women at Night Flight are all beautiful and intelligent-looking, and all speak excellent English. The decor is American yuppie, with a dance floor in the back where cou-

ples can do their little disco dithyrambs. I sat on the balcony for a better view of the playing field. It was a good fifteen minutes before one of the young women sat down to tell me how handsome I was. She'd been to Tokyo and Rome "on business" and knew a lot about the headquarters of the American Express Corporation in New York. When it became clear that there'd be no sale from me, she made me buy her a drink anyway—tequila and Sprite. I told you these women had class.

The highballs come with long droopy straws sticking out of them. As the men browse around the room, holding their drinks in front of them, it looks as if they're using these flaccid tubes of plastic as divining rods. Four senior Japanese executives gathered four Russian women at their table, and spent the evening giggling to each other like teenagers. A large group of Italian men surrounded one woman and kept shouting at her that she was a "bella donna."

Night Flight provides a glimpse into Russia's woes. First, it illustrates the tremendous waste of human capital. These women should be selling real estate or running ad agencies. The next night I had dinner with a former Reaganite, Robert Kagan, who predicted that at some point Russians are going to rebel at the thought of their beautiful women selling themselves to Westerners. These could be the final days in Moscow when things Western have cachet. Bill Clinton had better hurry over.

*David Brooks is deputy editorial-page editor of the Wall Street Journal Europe.*

## RONALD E. BURR

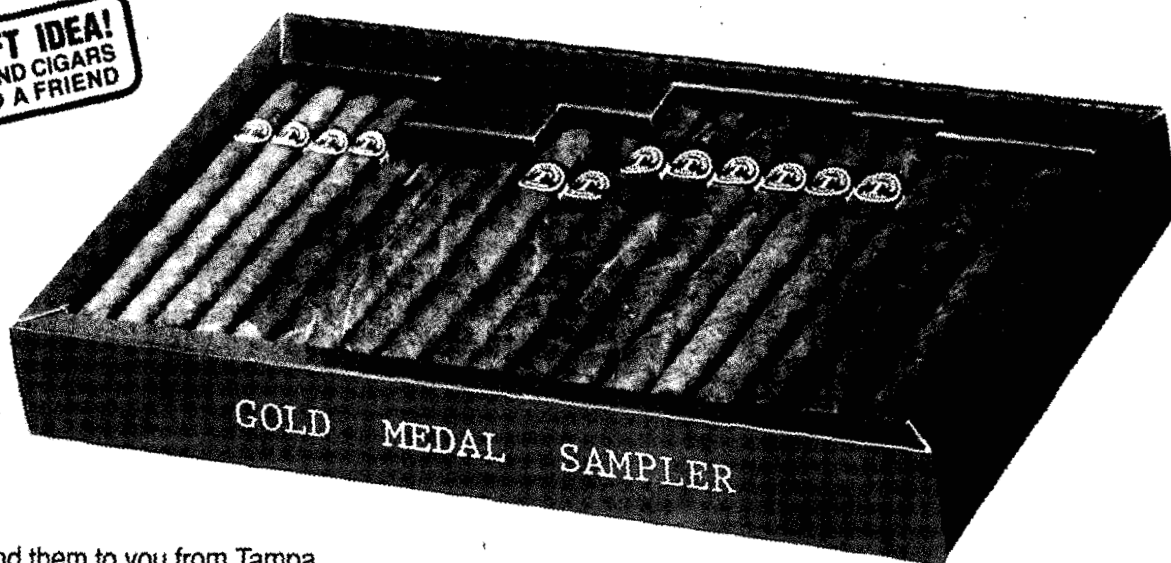
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heavy reliance on alcohol. It is the grease that keeps the gears moving.

When we moved the magazine from Bloomington to the Washington area during President Reagan's second term, we quickly established the **Keyhole Inn** as our new base. The bar was one of the friendliest in the area, since the place was dominated by drivers from the nearby Red Top taxi stand and soldiers from Fort Myer, who wore T-shirts embossed with a parachute and the motto, "Land softly, kill quietly." On the wall hung a laminated news report of Indiana University coach Bobby Knight throwing a chair across the basketball floor, indicating a respect for spontaneity and determination. The only disagreement amongst the customers was on whether our preemptive strike on the Soviet Union should be with nuclear or conventional weapons.

The Keyhole is gone now, another victim of our enemy, the State, which revoked their liquor license because they didn't sell enough food. Where to go now, under the Clinton Regime? How about the **Vienna Inn**? It is, as Bob Tyrrell would say, on the American side of the Beltway. Their chili dogs are the best in the land, and it's full of hard-working and hard-drinking patrons.

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*Ronald E. Burr is publisher of The American Spectator.*

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### CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Those who had the good fortune to grow up thirsty in Massachusetts will know of **Maddie's Sail Loft** in Marblehead. For one, it has the best clam chowder in New England—buttery and brothy, with a big pile of tender clams rearing up over the meniscus. For another, it serves sixteen-ounce "see-through" Bloody Marys, Cape Codders, and sea breezes. Don't be alarmed if you come to our town and notice that all the young men drink pink and yellow and lime-green juice drinks. It's just that vodka is the thirst quencher of choice in towns where people drink on their way to work. (Or back to work, I should say. It's not just for breakfast anymore.)

Which makes Maddie's political activism in the Reagan era all the more heroic. When the Soviets shot down KAL 007 in 1983, Maddie's boycotted Stolichnaya—its most profitable prod-

uct—and did not begin selling it again until after the Berlin Wall fell. By which time, of course, George Bush was in office and nobody could afford Stolichnaya anyway.

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*Christopher Caldwell is assistant managing editor of The American Spectator.*

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### ERICH EICHMAN

When Ronald Reagan was elected President twelve years ago, an acquaintance of mine, a filmmaker who had fled Nazi Europe in the 1930s, decided to leave New York, where he had lived for decades, and move to Paris. He was sure Reagan would start a nuclear war, making New York the target of retaliatory missiles. Thanks to the exchange rate, he lived sumptuously in Paris for several years. He now lives in Normandy. Although politically ridiculous, he is a happy man.

Will a Clinton presidency inspire thoughts of Parisian exile? Perhaps. The Carter presidency almost did: that soft voice, that Southern accent, those homilies about compassion and government programs. We are in for more of it.

In the late 1970s, in Bloomington, Indiana, when Carter was wallowing in "malaise," the *Spectator* crowd used to repair to **Le Petit Café**, just off Bloomington's courthouse square. I suppose going there constituted an "inner exile."

In a sea of university-town looniness, Le Petit Café was an island of sanity. The co-owner and presiding intelligence was Patrick Fiore, a Parisian who came to Bloomington in the early seventies to study music and never left. Visitors to the restaurant soon discovered the pleasure of Patrick's high spirits, Gallic cynicism, and Balzacian prejudices. Marina, his wife, was the genius in the kitchen. She would occasionally visit the dining room, bringing with her that special charm that French women are said to bring with them wherever they go. She was usually there to retrieve Patrick, who would be standing at someone's table making one last point about the Ottoman Empire.

Le Petit Café is still in business (308 W. Sixth Street), ready to receive refugees from Clinton's America. Patrick has expanded the restaurant. Following a nineteenth-century pattern, he long ago colonized the auto repair shop next door and brought the refinements of French civilization to a culturally backward plot of land.

But everything else remains the same: the French provincial fare is as perfectly prepared as ever, and the pleasure of the owners' company remains one of the last great reasons to be alive. Railroad tracks still run by the building; china-rattling trains do, too, occasionally, adding local color. The chairs for which the restaurant is justly famous are as comfortably welcoming as they always were.

The word "malaise" is rarely heard at Le Petit Café, and never mispronounced. If Clinton sends us into one—a malaise, I mean—the cure may be, again, French food and wine. I am hoping the trade war with France continues well past January, culminating in a severe retaliatory action against Normandy's privileged inhabitants.

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*Erich Eichman is an assistant features editor at the Wall Street Journal.*

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### TIM W. FERGUSON

I don't hang out at the **Mermaid** by the Hermosa pier, because there's too much smoke and too many Harley bikers. The nearby **Poopdeck** is more my style, with picture windows for observing the "bladers" rolling by. Also, **Fat Face Fenner's Falloon**, a few blocks down the beach drag. All are priced for an after-tax Clinton income.

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*Tim W. Ferguson, "Business World" columnist for the Wall Street Journal, lives in Hermosa Beach, California.*

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### GEORGE SIM JOHNSTON

It is election night in the **Fleet Street Pub** on East 45th Street in Manhattan. A group of diehards from the pro-life movement—what the Old Testament prophet meant by a *remnant*—has its eyes on the TV over the bar. They are witnessing an odd but recurring phenomenon. American voters are choosing off the wall a little-known Southern Democrat with wispy vocal chords. After Pennsylvania falls to Clinton, Patrick, the bar's owner and a good conservative Irishman, turns down the volume so that everyone can properly concentrate on his brew. There is a certain satisfaction in contemplating a political debacle over a pint of John Courage, with its slight undertaste of lime. Patrick has made the pub the unofficial drinking headquarters

of the local pro-life movement and so deserves a medal. While he is not pleased at the prospect of four years of Clinton, the election is not the main thing on Patrick's mind. Just the other day, the Ancient Order of Hibernians pulled its sponsorship of the local St. Patrick's Day parade because of City Hall's demand that the parade include gay and lesbian groups. Fifth Avenue, in other words, will not resonate with marching bands on March 17 because Mayor Dinkins will never, ever do anything to offend gay pressure groups. What would Tocqueville have made of the tyranny of certain minorities? The bartender draws another round of large ones, as the answer to this will involve lengthy elucidations.

*George Sim Johnston is a writer living in New York City.*

**WILLIAM MCGURN**

Although we in this last outpost of Empire no longer anxiously await the sighting of a mail ship on the horizon for news, it wasn't until the images of George Bush's concession speech flickered across the giant CNN screens in the Hong Kong Marriott that the inevitable sank in. The next day, the former president of the American Chamber of Commerce here, Mr. Bud Williams, a Vietnam vet and stand-up guy, was on the front page of the *South China Morning Post* saying that the Clinton victory made him "ashamed" of being American, and although my own feelings about Bill and Hillary run more to embarrassment, my sympathy was entirely with Bud, for in these dark days our consolations are few. The recent decision of the Anglican Synod to ordain women argues against religion, as does Notre Dame's loss to Stanford. Female companionship is out, too, at least for the moment, because though I have the most beautiful fiancée in all America she also ranks among the wisest in her refusal to cross the ocean until we have crossed the altar. That leaves drink, and Kipling.

In Hong Kong the former means FCC, or **Foreign Correspondents Club**. All the establishments in the Crown Colony fulfill the first requirement of a Clinton-era saloon: they fall thousands of miles outside the Zone of

Occupation, this notwithstanding regular port calls by the 7th Fleet. True enough, the FCC's clientele is almost entirely hacks, and in normal times this might cost it a star or two off the ratings. But these are not normal times, and as soon as the traditional idiocies underlining Democratic foreign policy become manifest in Asia the general disposition against all things American might for once steer members closer to the shores of wisdom. I daresay that some wit will soon hang a half-burnt

draft card right next to the Reuters plaque from the old Saigon bureau and the sad, old photos of the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy.

In short, the FCC makes a splendid vantage point from which to view the Clinton Administration, particularly in its avowed promises to bring us a kinder, gentler China and establish "fair" trade with Japan. And here is where even a nice, stiff what's-good-for-you goes down better with a little Kipling on the side:

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And the end of the fight is a tombstone  
white  
With the name of the late deceased,  
And the epitaph drear: "A Fool lies here  
who tried to hustle the East."

Cheers!

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*William McGurn is senior editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review.*

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## JOE MYSAK

I was never asked to join at the feast, but I will welcome the refugees from their bunkers in the White House and on the Hill to the place where I have enjoyed much good cheer during the past twelve years—the only real Wall Street Saloon, **Harry's** at Hanover Square.

These past twelve years have seen me remain Mencken-pure, even as these refugees trooped off to Washington to various posts in the administration, neat writing gigs in the White House, state dinners, rides on Air Force One, and the rest of it. They went, were bitten by the Washington lust, fattened at the trough, and now find themselves bounced. Some made it by connections, a few by talent, the heirs and heiresses bought their way in, and all now believe their sagacity essential to the affairs of state.

I actually sat next to such Turks at the **Old Ebbitt Grill** bar, across from the Treasury building, where I regularly repair after a visit to my Washington bureau. It was the eve of election day and they were sweating, their minds focused absolutely on the awful and ignominious hangman's noose that awaited them in the morning.

Come January 20, they will all bid their wistful adieu. Most will immediately seek the genteel welfare of foundation grants. A few will catch on at the think tanks, writing policy papers that nobody will read. Others will try their hand at syndicated columns, which will dry up and blow away. A few will go out and seek honest work. And a few will think to crash Wall Street.

I will spring for a round for these orphans at my usual stand, the long mahogany bar at Harry's, but only one for these silky frauds and freeloaders, the vast majority of whom rarely pull out their purses to pay for the beer they wish to cry in, and whose idea of a bartender's tip is fifty cents. I know. I have put down a few with these fellows.

They will have a long time to learn. Now these heroes enter the wilderness; now is their sere winter. Harry's can heal. As for me, I will hoist one of Danny's delicious martinis, maybe two, and ponder the irony of fate and the rage of friends.

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*Joe Mysak is editor and publisher of the Bond Buyer, and The American Spectator's chief saloon correspondent.*

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## WLADYSLAW PLESZCZYNSKI

On moving from Indiana to Inside the Beltway seven years ago, we settled in the Clarendon district of Arlington, more commonly called Little Saigon. We ate our first meals at the **Café Dalat** on Wilson Boulevard. Soon after, the **Queen Bee** opened a few doors down, and then the **Nam Viet**, which is around the corner on Hudson Street. All are excellent (always begin with an order of soft Vietnamese rolls, and there's plenty of "33" beer on hand), and the service—if handled by the women—never fails to be congenial and unaffectedly polite. Although I remember once seeing Sen. David Boren, the likable Oklahoma Democrat, picking up a takeout dinner at Café Dalat, you're not likely to run into a Clintonite at these establishments, since none is known to be owned or operated by former members of the Vietcong.

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*Wladyslaw Pleszczyński is managing editor of The American Spectator.*

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## DAVE SHIFLETT

Here in the nation's interior, the election of Bill Clinton has led to some grumbling among barroom regulars, many of whom see his excessive teetotaling as yet another character flaw. The official excuse—allergies—is highly suspect, perhaps because Bill's tongue is known to be cleft from tip to boot. Some say he's probably an ex-drunk; at the very least, it is odd having a dry in the White House.

Where will we go to escape Bill and the Rev. Ozone? To the places we know. One of the great ones along the Front Range of the Rockies is the **Deckers Resort**, where fly fishermen take a break from chasing rainbows in the South Platte River. The staff at this cozy canyon pub pours with a heavy hand and a light heart, yet fears are at flood

stage—and not only because fly-fishing in Arkansas got skunk-poor during Clinton's reign.

This is catch-and-release territory, but if the Clinton tax hikes and inflation get as bad as expected, the South Platte may be transformed into a food source. The suspicion today is that there won't be so much as a minnow left in the river by the fall of '94. Expect us to march on Washington soon thereafter.

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*Dave Shiflett is deputy editorial-page editor of the Rocky Mountain News in Denver, Colorado.*

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## JOHN SPRINGS

In London, I spent most of the eighties in pursuit of Kingsley Amis, whom I drew every month for *Harper's* and *Queen* as he himself pursued vodka martinis in various watering holes at the magazine's expense. For dry martinis near-perfect, try the **American Bar** at the Savoy.

The **Groucho Club** became a media-ridden meeting point in the Reagan/Thatcher years. Champagne was the drink of choice for types like playwright Keith Waterhouse and myself—and still is. Such was the euphoria that the corks were popping like the buttons on Robert Maxwell's waistband. Heady days.

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*John Springs is a London-based artist for The American Spectator.*

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## BARON VON KANNON

When Wlady asked me to contribute to this learned symposium, I was eager. The assignment was to write about "a great watering hole of the Reagan years which is still great." Several spots came to mind, but I now hesitate. For one, Ross Perot has said he plans to stay "involved." Should I reveal gathering spots of great conversation and ample drinks, where tongues will be loosened? For another, if word gets out of the location of sources of vast quantities of empty beer bottles, whiskey bottles, and even—fitting relicts of the Decade of Greed—Perrier and chardonnay bottles, can Al Gore's eco-police be far behind? Thanks for the honor, Wlady. But I'll decline.

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*Baron Von Kannon is senior vice president of the Heritage Foundation, and Kapellmeister of The American Spectator.*

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## Phoo, Menchú

by Stephen Schwartz

**T**he award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Guatemalan revolutionary advocate Rigoberta Menchú is a multiple score for political correctness, serving not only the obvious aims of Columbus-bashers and unemployed Sandinista groupies, but also those of certain highly placed European meddlers in Latin American affairs.

Menchú has been presented to the world as a human-rights activist, and the Norwegians have chosen to honor her as a symbol of "peace and reconciliation." In reality, she is a major figure in the campaign to impose on the elected, civilian government of Guatemala a political arrangement with the Communist guerrillas of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Rather than representing peace and reconciliation, Menchú stands for continued guerrilla struggle.

In effect, the Nobel committee has put itself on the side of the declining revolutionary left in Central America. Excited at the possibility of imposing a leftist outcome on the political development of a small and faraway country, the Norwegians wish to keep the momentum going, by granting their token indigenous American the most powerful form of moral support available to them. Indeed, last March, Oslo was the site for the first contacts between the legal government of Guatemala and the guerrillas, according to the Mexican news agency Notimex.

Menchú, to emphasize, does not support peace; she supports leftist violence. She does not even *accept* nonviolence as a means of protest. Some media noted, delicately, in the aftermath of her award, that she denies being an actual guerrilla, "but is uncritical of the rebels." As the *New York Times* put it, Menchú has "endorsed

insurrection . . . but says she has never belonged to any of the country's guerrilla groups."

In reality, although Menchú herself is unwilling openly to declare herself a Marxist, the narrative she dictated to ghostwriter Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*—which has become an element of the politically correct canon on campuses around the English-speaking world—reveals an immense pride in her contribution to "the revolution." (Burgos-Debray, not surprisingly, is the ex-wife of Régis Debray, onetime Che Guevara groupie and hagiographer, and fashionable gadfly of the French Socialist government.)

**I**n a manner reminiscent of Mao, Menchú divides Guatemalan women into four classes: "working-class women, peasant women, poor *ladino* women, and bourgeois women." Is this really the outlook of a typical Guatemalan Indian? Elsewhere, she embraces revolutionary sabotage, acclaiming the action of those who destroy sugar-harvesting machines:

Our idea is to put into practice the methods initiated by the masses when they evolved their "people's weapons": to be able to make Molotov cocktails.

*I, Rigoberta Menchú* is so transparent a work of propaganda for armed revolution, it is amazing that so few in the media commented on it following the award. Dinesh D'Souza, in *Illiberal Education* (1991), argued that vocabulary employed in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is not her own but a projection of the feminist and ultra-radical views held by the transcriber Burgos-Debray. Even C. Vann Woodward, like Régis Debray once a high priest of the left, scoffed at the idea that a transcription of an oral biography by an "unlettered woman"—to use Woodward's phrase—

should be received as a modern classic.

Burgos-Debray—a Venezuelan anthropologist who now directs the Institut Français in Seville, a haven for revisionist studies of the Columbus expedition—may be responsible for the strident intrusion of such First World feminist concerns as the repudiation of marriage, a real rarity among Central American women, Indian or not. That *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is a propaganda product created by Burgos-Debray for Menchú to sign is unarguable.

**I**n an interview in Mexico last July, Menchú insisted on placing all blame for the slow progress of government-URNG peace talks on "the government's hard-line stance." She also called for U.N. intervention, supported by diplomatic pressure, to force the elected government to accept the militarist-left URNG as an equal partner in negotiations. This demand conforms exactly to the guerrillas' line: URNG spokesman Hector Nuila says that "as long as it is not acknowledged that there is conflict in Guatemala, it will be impossible to find a negotiated solution to the situation in that country." The same spokesman said his organization would intensify its activities to force the government and the armed forces to negotiate.

Thus, the goal of the campaign by Menchú and her supporters is to legitimize an armed extremist minority acting against a legal, civilian government by transforming that terrorist effort into a "Guatemalan civil war." Menchú's cause is not that of peace and reconciliation, but of murder and subversion, as the Nordic snobs responsible for this ridiculous award know full well. Perhaps promoting violence in a distant country of which they know nothing will console them after the failure of radical ideas in their own part of the world. □

*Stephen Schwartz is author of A Strange Silence (ICS Press), an account of the election of Violeta Chamorro in 1990.*