**TOP 20 pro-freedom films you must see**

**GATTACA 1997**

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> **THIS FUTURISTIC SCI-FI THRILLER IS A GLIMPSE INTO A WORLD WHERE YOUR GENETIC MAKEUP DETERMINES YOUR PROSPECTS FOR EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL STATUS, LOVE AND LONGEVITY.**

The plot surrounds the efforts of Vincent, played by Ethan Hawke, a naturally conceived human, to become an astronaut on the first manned mission to Saturn. To overcome his perceived genetic inferiority (brought about by not being genetically engineered), Vincent assumes the persona of a ‘borrowed ladder’ (commits genetic fraud) to sidestep the system and achieve his dream. The film explores the collapse of personal privacy, the community-wide retreat of free will and the social consequences of wide-spread genetic discrimination (which is presently legal in a variety of disciplines).

Gattaca is a great story about the power of human freedom and its ability to overcome all obstacles. Most importantly, it advocates the supreme potential of the human spirit when it is unbound by government and society. Highly recommended for those who enjoy a ‘man v the system’ struggle.  

**Asher Judah**

**THE WAY BACK 2010**

> **THIS MOVIE IS ON THE LIST FOR ONE REASON AND ONE REASON ALONE – YOU CAN’T HAVE A TOP 20 PRO-FREEDOM MOVIE LIST WITHOUT AT LEAST ONE HARSH CRITIQUE OF THE USSR.**

Though historical, The Way Back is not based on a true story. It depicts the lives of mostly Polish political prisoners in a Siberian gulag and their dramatic escape and subsequent epic hike to freedom in India.

Only the first quarter of this film actually depicts life in the gulag, but what it shows is extremely depressing and frightening. Men quickly go blind from lack of nutritious food. Others die after being worked to death in coal mines or out in the snow with barely sufficient clothing. Lawlessness, crime and violence are rife in the gulag, as is disease.

The rest of the movie—lots of long walking through desert, snow and mountains—serves to underscore just how bad life was in the gulags. No sane person would subject themselves by being captured and her pamphlets, which became the opportunity to reassert her views. Scholl faces a show trial at the hand of the accusatory national President of Germany during the latter days of the Third Reich, Scholl denies her involvement, before her interrogator to escape her sentence she declines on the basis of her principles, ensuring almost certain sentence she declines on the basis of her interrogator's, before that unless they were fleeing oppressive government.

Most surprisingly, the film outlines that even when gifted an opportunity by her interrogator to escape her sentence she declines on the basis of her principles, ensuring almost certain execution as a martyr. Eventually Scholl faces a show trial at the hand of the accusatory national President of the People’s Court where she uses the opportunity to reassert her views. Her memory lives on through her pamphlets, which became the basis for those who wish to remain free.

**James Paterson**

**SOPHIE SCHOLL 2005**

> **RECOUNTING THE DRAMATIC TALE OF THE INTERROGATION AND SHOW TRIAL OF DISSIDENT TEENAGER AGAINST HITLER’S REGIME IN 1943, THIS DRAMATIC FILM COVERS HER FINAL DAYS BEFORE HER EXECUTION.**

As a significant figure in the White Rose movement that sought to undermine the Third Reich, Scholl and her brother are captured after distributing anti-Nazi pamphlets on their university campus in Munich. After initially being captured she denies her involvement, before confessing her anti-Nazi sentiments and that she’s ‘proud of it’.

Narrating the intellectual sparring between Scholl and her interrogator as she defends her belief in ‘the idea’ of ‘free thinking federalism, Scholl presents as a liberal who opposes oppressive government.

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**James Paterson**
ELECTION 1999

MADE BY MTV, ELECTION HAS A LITTLE LESS SWEARING AND A LITTLE MORE THOUGHTFUL POLITICAL SATIRE THAN WHAT YOU WOULD EXPECT FROM THE MAKERS OF JERSEY SHORE, THE REAL WORLD AND 16 & PREGNANT.

However those die-hard MTV fans (we assume most IPA Review readers are) need not be discouraged. Election features frequent sex scandals and some pretty gratuitous language. Released in 1999, Election somehow managed to foresee the Florida recount episode of that 2000 US election. This is the story of a high school presidential election, gutting an overarching politicalonen played by Reese Witherspoon against a likeable and popular athlete played by Chris Klein. Election manages to confine a typical US presidential contest to a small student body. Voter apathy is endemic; the candidate who joins the coalition to remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

But while it makes the case for foreign intervention, it does not do so totally blinkered to the costs and failures that often come with it. The US Army, like all branches of government, is shown to be sometimes incompetent, disorganised and poorly led. Three Kings is important because it reminds those who support freedom of why we do, but also reminds us of the limits of government. If we are awake to government’s capacity to make huge blunders in domestic policy, we should also not forget that they have the capacity to make them on the international stage too.

James Paterson

THREE KINGS
1999

UNUSUALLY FOR A HOLLYWOOD PORTRAYAL OF CONFLICT—ONE STARRING GEORGE CLOONEY NO LESS—THREE KINGS DOES NOT SEEK TO DOWNPLAY THE EVILS OF A TOTALITARIAN REGIME.

Set during the 1990-1991 Gulf War, Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi dictatorship is portrayed exactly as it was—tyrannical, abusive of its citizens and aggressive towards its neighbours. In doing so it demonstrates why so many countries (and the United Nations) joined the coalition to remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

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James Paterson

TUCKER: THE MAN AND HIS DREAM 1988

IN 1948, A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR CALLED PRESTON TUCKER INVENTS A CAR, THE CAR—THE TUCKER SEDAN—is PACKED FULL OF INNOVATIONS.

Its engine was in the rear, and was rear-wheel drive. It had three headlights, one of which followed the direction of the tires. It had a rollbar and seatbelts and the windshield would pop out in a crash, rather than shatter.

But Tucker is naive. The Big Three car companies—Ford, GM, and Chrysler—don’t want to see any more competitive pressure put on the industry. Based on a true story and remarkably accurate, Tucker: The Man and His Dream is a story of politically connected automotive interests using the regulatory system to stymie an entrepreneur at every opportunity. Tucker wanted to make a car. But he ends up in court, fighting off charges brought by political enemies that he never intended to make the cars in the first place. As he says in a stirring defence of free enterprise: ‘If Benjamin Franklin were alive today, he’d be thrown in jail for sailing a kite without a license.’

His ambitions were eventually frustrated. But Tucker is a stirring portrait of an entrepreneur who has to face the challenges of innovation and ambition on one side, and the dead hand of regulation and politics on the other.

Chris Berg

BRAZIL 1985

FOR FREEDOM LOVERS, BRAZIL’S MAIN ATTRACTION IS THE GRIM PICTURE IT PAINTS OF AN OVERLY BUREAUCRATISED AND OVERLY POWERFUL STATE. IN THE PROCESS, BRAZIL CAPTURES TWO KEY THINGS.

First, that the omnipotent state is as much a danger through incompetence as anything else, highlighted when a mix up with names sees the wrong citizen arrested as a suspected terrorist. Second, such a state can be populated by seemingly normal people rather than the overtly sinister, exemplified by a particularly jovial chief torturer.

Yet, Brasil also has enough other messages to appeal to a diverse range of people across the political spectrum—becoming a political cult film. For instance, with its barren post-industrial landscape and ubiquitous machines, it has been interpreted as an attack on industrialisation. Co-written and directed by Terry Gilliam, Brazil’s mix of science fiction and black comedy genres seems eccentric at times but, at its core, the film contains a powerful anti-statist message which is rare enough in the history of cinema to demand attention.

Richard Allopp

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE 1971

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE IS NOT NATURALLY SEEN AS A FREE MARKET FILM. BUT THREADED THROUGHOUT IT’S HOLIER THAN THOU PORTRAYAL OF YOUTH GANGS AND POLITICAL JUSTICE, IT IS A DEEPLY UNSYMPATHETIC VISION OF SOCIALIST BRITAIN.

A Clockwork Orange is, at its core, about the breakdown and corruption of the welfare state. The protagonist, Alex, lives in an unending public housing estate in perpetual decay: ‘Municipal Flat Block 18A, Linear North.’ The prisons are being cleared out to make way for ‘political prisoners.’ Writers are described as ‘subversives.’

Certainly, Britain is a democracy: Alex finds himself dead in the centre of political controversy when he is the subject of a new rehabilitation program. But it is well down the road to serfdom. A Clockwork Orange is a vision of the mid-century socialist welfare state’s creeping totalitarianism. As the director Stanley Kubrick said after the film’s release, ‘any attempt to create social institutions on a false view of the nature of man is probably doomed to failure.’ This is something that Friedrich Hayek would certainly agree with.

Chris Berg

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Cover Story

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The 5 worst films

1. AMERICAN BEAUTY 1999

Despite enjoying historically unparalleled wealth and freedom, the American middle class is actually deeply depressed.

2. THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT 1995

The only thing standing in the way of US presidential power is environmental regulation. In the absence of them we have saddled an environmental lobbyist.

3. IN TIME 2011

Uses the old Marxist trick of portraying feudalism and pretending it is capitalism.

4. AVATAR 2009

Humans have exhausted their planet of natural resources, and now they’re roasting the galaxy to look for native people to oppress and to lay waste to their fragile habitats.

5. THE 1138 1075

It looks at first like a standard rip-off of DRE, but George Lucas’ first movie somehow manages to blame consumer capitalism for Stalinist dystopias.
V FOR VENDETTA
2005

V FOR VENDETTA IS ABOUT THE EROSION OF FREEDOM. THE STORY TAKES PLACE AFTER FREEDOMS HAVE BEEN ERODED, AND THE STRUGGLE OF ONE MAN, PURPORTEDLY AN ANARCHIST KNOWN ONLY AS V, TO RESTORE FREEDOM.

Wearing a Guy Fawkes mask, V blows up Westminster Palace on November 5. That is the plot. The story is about ordinary people, how they came to be where they are, and how they respond to V.

The main feature to watch out for is V’s televised speech where he states, “I do, like many of you, appreciate the comforts of every day routine, the security of the familiar, the tranquillity of repetition.”

V is an Oakeshottian conservative. But he has noticed that there is “something terribly wrong” with the nation. Rather than blame foreigners or quislings as the totalitarian government does, V places the blame elsewhere, “if you’re looking for the guilty, you need only look into a mirror.”

The movie is a morality play about the growth of the power of the state and the lawlessness that follows. It tells of a society where the ‘truncheon may be used in lieu of conversation’ and the only choice individuals have is to submit. Two very ordinary people, Evey Hammond and Eric Finch, each make different choices.

The great irony of the story is that V, a man who likes conversation and the power of words, engages in extreme violence to achieve his goals. The moral of the story is different; ordinary people choose to remain silent.

The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer 1970

HAS THERE EVER BEEN A MORE CYNICAL MOVIE ABOUT POLITICS? MICHAEL RIMMER – PLAYED WITHOUT A HINT OF HUMANITY BY PETER COOK – IS THE ULTIMATE CAREER POLITICIAN. AND A MANIPULATIVE ONE.

Rimmer appears out of nowhere at an advertising firm, pretending to do a time-and-motion study. He quickly takes over the company. Now apparently a ‘polling expert’, he moves into politics—from advisor, to MP and to prime minister. He falsifies election results, commits murder, and stage-manages public opinion.

His trump card is polling. Rimmer pioneers a perverse system of participatory democracy. British voters are asked their opinion on everything before the government takes action. Everything is a referendum. Sick of being inundated with letters and requests for comment, eventually the British people vote to give Rimmer absolute power.

The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer was funded by the journalist Sinclair Davidson. The ‘speech’ is given in a televised speech where the main character states, “I do, like many of you, appreciate the comforts of every day routine, the security of the familiar, the tranquillity of repetition.”

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Covering the Life Crusade of William Wilberforce, Amazing Grace is a Dramatic Narrative of the Quest of One Man and His Allies to End Slavery.

The film charts Wilberforce’s early conversion as an aristocrat and parliamentarian against the African slave trade, his parliamentary efforts to build an anti-slavery movement, the backlash he received because of the economic consequences of Emancipation during war, and finally, his eventual victory.

In particular the film outlines the stuff opposition Wilberforce and his allies faced from industries who enjoyed the commercial benefits of forced labour, particularly sugar. Importantly the film portrays the threat to free people and their liberty that occurs when big business interests and government collude.

Wilberforce’s crusade against the theft of the property rights of slaves is one of the most significant achievements in social progress driven by liberal principles and the belief in personal freedoms, property rights and self-determination.

While at times slow, the film demonstrates Wilberforce’s obsessive crusade against the abuse of government power to determine the lives of individuals, and that only unceasing efforts to curtail government excess will be successful.

Chris Berg

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Chris Berg
ATLAS SHRUGGED PART 1 2011

FOR A MOVIE BASED ON A BOOK THAT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED 50 YEARS AGO, ATLAS SHRUGGED PART 1 (OF 3) IS WORRIINGLY CONTEMPORARY.

Ayn Rand’s story of growing government interference, populist policy designed to punish successful enterprise and the shifting of the political context to the left is as relevant today as it was when the book was first released.

Atlas Shrugged Part 1 touches on many ideas that seem to be creeping ever more forcefully into government economic planning. Some companies, industries and people are seen as too successful or too big. And what better way to ‘equalise’ opportunity than to add another tax, or add another layer of rules or regulation? It’s not hard to see obvious comparisons with a Minerals Resource Rent Tax, or a carbon dioxide tax designed to penalise Australia’s most profitable industry.

Although Atlas Shrugged Part 1 tells a compelling story about the importance of risk, creative destruction and entrepreneurialism in enriching lives and economies, perhaps this story was best left alone in the original novel. Because let’s face it, while I’m as much for limited government as the next man, the book just didn’t make the transition well to the silver screen. And I fear we won’t see too many Greens or Labor supporters learning the errors of their ways after watching it.

Alistair Berg

THE LOST CITY

THE LOST CITY IS THE MOST POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE CRITIQUE OF COMMUNISM EVER TO MAKE IT INTO FILM. SO IT’S NO SURPRISE THAT IT WAS SAVAGED BY LEFT-WING FILM CRITICS AND SHUNNED IN HOLLYWOOD.

The film stars (and is directed by) Andy Garcia, who portrays a nightclub owner in Havana during the 1959 revolution led by Fidel Castro. Garcia, the son of Cuban exiles, is a leading critic of the Castro regime today, but importantly does not lionise the Batista regime it replaced, which was also corrupt and tyrannical.

Unlike the many hagiographies to Che Guevara produced by Hollywood, this one portrays him accurately: as an insane mass murderer. One scene, in the infamous La Cabana prison, shows Guevara summarily executing political prisoners. The film also shows the absurd but sad side of communism, in a scene where union officials enter the nightclub owned by Garcia’s character to demand that his musicians cease playing. Garcia refuses, and so his nightclub is shut by the infamous La Cabana prison, shows Guevara summarily executing political prisoners.

The film also manages to convey some salient lessons. One is left wondering how much of the aviation industry’s early innovations would’ve been possible with today’s health and safety regulatory regulations.

However, The Aviator’s most compelling warning comes in the form of the threat placed on Hughes’ empire, and very credibility, by a corrupt collaboration of big business and big government—an all too often ugly mutation of capitalism.

But Hughes—the innovator, the idealist, the individual—ends up winning. And we’re glad he does.

Peter Gregory

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

WITH COUNTLESS STUDIES, ACADEMICS, BOOKS AND MOVIES ARGUING THAT SOCIAL MOBILITY IN AMERICA IS A MYTH AND THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE IT IF YOU ARE POOR, AND PARTICULARLY IF YOU ARE BLACK, THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IS A TIMELY AND MUCH NEEDED DEFENCE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.

Starrring Will Smith and depicting the true story of the life of stockbroker and entrepreneur Chris Gardner, the film demonstrates that merit still matters in America.

Gardner prevails with highly emotive and powerfully positive story of merit, this movie has done more to demonstrate the capacity of capitalism to fight poverty than any policy paper ever could.

James Paterson

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Thatcher came to power. an energy that wasn’t to unleash the commercial energy shopkeepers. Pimlico had to secede areas now wealthy entrepreneurs and starve the residents of Pimlico, not the is the British government that tried to London returns to normal: regulated through diplomatic efforts and the stringing a fence around the area, responses by closing the borders, wonderland. The British government during the Second World War comes entrepreneurism of the British people still imposing from the war. that Pimlico isn’t part of England from the Stuart era, that proves that Duchy of Burgundy, is unearthed. artwork, that had been buried in the Pimlico, yielding a startling discovery: Second World War suddenly IT IS PROBABLY THE ONLY MOVIE OVER-REGULATION, AL THOUGH BEST MOVIE EVER MADE ABOUT PASSPORT TO PIMLICO THE PIMLICO STORY RESOLVES ITSELF PASSES TO ONE ENEMY IN THE SOCIETY’S TALL POPPIES. The Incredibles is a family of superheroes forced into hiding by the government after the rest of the population begins to resent the ‘supers’ and their heroic exploits. Despite the supers’ considerable contribution to society, they find themselves spurned. But when an old enemy resurfaces, they are roused out of hiding to defeat the threat and save the lives of the people who shun them. The villain has no superpowers of his own. Driven by envy, he attempts to replicate their powers for his own use. However, his real aim is later revealed: he wishes to mass-market artificial superpowers to the wider population. Then, he quips, ‘when everyone is super, no one will be’. A more blatant cinematic rebuke of redistributionism would be hard to find. If it’s immoral to redistribute talent, it should also be wrong to redistribute wealth, which is a reflection of talent. One of the film’s key lessons—that ordinary people need high achievers in their society, even if they resent their talent—is practically Randian. The film doesn’t lament the unequal distribution of powers. Instead, it lauds exceptionalism and argues that exceptional people should be free to live exceptional lives. In doing so, The Incredibles is a full colour and animated condemnation of socialism—for a very young audience, goo sent to intimidate them into leaving the family property is as good an advertisement as any for the right to self-defence. Australia’s relative freedom and fair legal system is portrayed as a bulwark for individual freedom against government excess. And whilst his query, ‘what is it with wogs and cash?’ may well see him dragged before court himself these days, Daryl’s effort to save his Lebanese neighbour’s home as well as his own is authentic cross-cultural co-operation that is one million miles from multiculturalism—by-government-edict. But most significantly of all, the matter is settled when the family’s lawyer accuses the government of being utilitarian and gets to the heart of the thing, ‘competing rights cannot be weighed one against the other’. The Castle is special because it’s ours. Although it is sadly unique in being an Australian film that avidly expounds the virtues of individual freedom, it has got under our skin in a way that perhaps only Crocodile Dundee could rival (think of famous quotes like ‘the vibe’, ‘how’s the serenity?’ and ‘tell him he’s dreaming’). It is profoundly telling that a film that strikes such a blow for freedom should be so adored by Australians. As the best (and perhaps only) Australian movie to robustly defend private property, The Castle is our number one pro-freedom film. Peter Gregory