

Vaughn Meiss, both a Propertarian and a scientist, had of course been the first person the Confederates had contacted, and it was his duplicate of their machine that had exploded, blowing Win into the alternate universe.

After a period of dazed recuperation, Win learns from the Confederates that the killers he was after are a coalition of US Security Police (SecPol) and a Confederate group called the Hamiltonians who hope to bring back the state and secure power for themselves by pulling atomic weapons through the Broach and taking over. The Confederate scientists and security agents, which include a dolphin philosopher and a chimpanzee cop, must help Win, his anarchist counterpart (also Edward Bear), a 136-year-old, gun-toting wild-woman, and the standard beautiful "girl" (there's even sex in this book, folks), defeat the combined forces of evil and statism. Which they do. But not before the Continental Congress is convened for the first time in thirty years and Win goes through many culture shocks: working with gorillas, chimpanzees and dolphins who communicate through voice converters and are full citizens; using the many competing phone systems that actually fall all over themselves trying to be helpful; riding a mile-long blimp (the luxury liner of the age) and an express rocket-shuttle that shoots urgently needed persons and materials through a thousand mile tunnel; and seeing the beautiful Confederate version of Colorado—with clean air and exquisite parks covering underground, non-polluting industries.

There is one thing that really bothers Win Bear—and this reader—about this anarchist society. Every man, woman, and child of all the intelligent species carries a weapon. In an

emotional (and guilt-ridden) moment, Win yells the following to his friends: "Everybody in this safe, stable, oh-so-humane society carries a *handgun*, prepared to kill at the drop of a hat! What the hell are you all afraid of? How come such well-adjusted people cling so hysterically to their perverted phallic symbols?"

And in a passionate answer, his lady-love counters: "Armed people are *free*. No state can control those who have the machinery and the will to resist, no mob can take their liberty and property. And no 220-pound thug can threaten the well-being or dignity of a 110-pound woman who has two pounds of iron to even things out.

"People who object to weapons aren't abolishing violence, they're begging for rule by brute force, when the biggest, strongest animals among men were always automatically 'right.' Guns ended that, and social democracy is a hollow farce without an armed populace to make it work."

But one wonders. Is the gunslinger scenario the only alternative to the police-state? Is a world without government "protection" necessarily a jungle? Does *freedom* make handguns a necessity? In fiction, at least, those who pack guns end up using them.

The book answers one question very nicely: How does an anarchist society survive attacks by other, less free, societies? The Hamiltonians and SecPol are foiled by a combination of brains, bravery, and sheer good luck. But what if the luck had gone to the other side? Win Bear has a theory: "I think now that they would have lost anyway. Most Confederates would have taken to the hills, fought for centuries if necessary, rather than surrender to tyranny. And no one in this crazy-quilt of a country has the authority to surrender. Nobody."

Victoria Varga is Production Manager of LR.

On View

God willing

DAVID BRUDNOY

GOD WORKS HIS WONDERS (or Her wonders, if that's the way things are) in mysterious ways. Over the years He (or She) guided the hand of the sainted Cecil B. DeMille to profitable partings of the waters and divvying up of the dough, slid the venerable Bing Crosby into collar and cassock as smoothly as one fits a hand into a tailored glove, and made of beloved Barry Fitzgerald His (or Her) *beau ideal* on this too mortal globe. In short, God has had not only a vested interest, but also until very recently something of a veto, in matters of religion in the movies. From burning bushes (*The Ten Commandments*) to cumulonimbus clouds (*In Search of Historic Jesus*) God has been portrayed as a natural force with a baritone voice, and both before the great Technicolor biblical epics of our youth and after, as a Force not to fool around with. God speaks; Hollywood listens.

Violence on screen bothers do-gooders but doesn't upset super-moralists, while sex on screen means nothing to the former but drives the latter to frothing. Religion, on the other hand, is charged with a frightful energy, and *everybody* hovers, ready to pounce, if some film steps without the magic circle of the permitted. *Elmer Gantry* may make a mockery of God's highest calling, but he must pay, and pay terribly, for his sin, since convention requires that clergymen generally be portrayed as devout, that holy folks be seen as better than profane folks, and that matters of the spirit be presented more

(shall we say, redundantly) spiritually, than matters of the flesh. Cinematic history is fairly clear in this regard and the viewer knows the routine by now.

The mainstream film in recent years has been successfully challenged in the allegiance of filmgoers by movies that deviate from such norms, but in America and in most other countries the area least tampered with by the experimentalists is the one which concerns us here. When *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Exorcist* began the contemporary craze for the occult on screen, the Devil first got equal if not equally favorable exposure, and these have been followed by *The Omen* and *Damien: Omen II* and *The Heretic: Exorcist II* and a seemingly endless stream of other glossy, gory films that threaten never to exhaust the movie-going public's willingness to be manipulated by schlock. Old Scratch even turns up as *The Car* and—speaking of movies starring James Brolin who is best known for practicing medicine on a motorcycle in "Marcus Welby, M.D."—as a house in *The Amityville Horror*. Lucifer is everywhere doing dirt; God, fortunately, is everywhere, too, picking up the pieces.

The film version of Jay Anson's phenomenally successful book never once produces the spine-tingles on screen that the novel gave its readers. Nor did *The Amityville Horror* succeed as a money-making movie. But it offers Rod Steiger another chance to overact deliciously, as a Catholic priest whom the malevolent power(s) in the haunted house see fit to crush. And as the most conventional religiously-oriented film of 1979, if it doesn't allow the might of Christianity to triumph over the malignancy in that mansion, it at least allows the Christians to escape.



AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

Margot Kidder and James Brolin in *The Amityville Horror*, a "near-perfect manifestation of what is acceptable in religious films."

Amityville, for all that it doesn't deliver the chills (much less the promised thrills) nonetheless plays by the rules of our day: Evil is all around us; God surrounds us; go with God.

I begin with *The Amityville Horror* not only because it is having a new birth right now in drive-ins across the land, but also because it represents a near-perfect manifestation of what is acceptable in religiously oriented films in our day. We are a generation of doubters which nevertheless pays fat lip-service to the expected pieties. Our popular arts, foremost among them television and the movies, only very occasionally (*Nasty Habits*; "Saturday Night Live") deviate ever so slightly from a very narrow range of acceptable images.

Within the last two months three films have used religion as their central focus, each failing disastrously as art if not at the box office. *Guyana: Cult of the Damned* is a quickie cheapie telling of the Jim Jones-

People's Temple story, notable mainly for its infinitesimal changes in the names of the principals (the Reverend Jim Jones becomes the Reverend Jim Johnson, Congressman Leo Ryan becomes Congressman Lee O'Brien, and so forth) and for its successful pandering to the people's taste for gore and pomposity, while throwing in just the slightest snatch of nudity for good measure. The incident is so easily brought to mind, those 913 poison-drinking souls so vivid in their body bags, the arrogance and perversity of the cult's leader so useful to the authoritarians and psychoquacks as a weapon against deviant groups: *Guyana* had its audience before it was made. The sort of movie fan who will put up with narrative lines like "It was a big night for death," and "Was there a message on their lips?" and "Were they trying to tell us something with their last convulsive breaths?" will find bearable the grainy color, post-dubbed dialogue, wooden perfor-



UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Stuart Whitman as the Rev. Jim Johnson in *Guyana: Cult of the Damned*, a "tedious spinning out of a tale we all know by heart."

mances by near-has-beens (Yvonne deCarlo, Gene Barry, Stuart Whitman, Joseph Cotten, Bradford Dillman), and an excruciatingly tedious spinning out of a tale we all know by heart. The point of this film is exposure of the masses to a simple moral lesson: do not tamper with the word of God. It boils down to that.

The Runner Stumbles is much more sophisticated, a major studio production peopled with screen favorites, yet it preaches the same down-home faith. Sister Rita (Kathleen Quinlan) comes to work at the isolated parish school run by Father Rivard (Dick Van Dyke), in the process alienating the old nuns, teaching the devoted housekeeper (Maureen Stapleton) to read, lying to the Monsignor (Ray Bolger), and trying to do good works for the loony villager (Tammy Grimes). But Love rears its ugly head and comes between our priest and nun and their vows, and within moments after their first kiss our lovely nun is dead and our handsomely greying priest is in jail, with only a local lawyer (Beau Bridges) to defend him. The movie is based on a 1977 Broadway play, which in turn derived from an episode that shocked Solona, Michigan, in 1915. Placing the film in the 1920s permits the story to take on some shock value which updating it to our own time, when priests and nuns are with some regularity leaving their orders to marry, would have denied it. Moreover, *The Runner Stumbles* is anchored safely in the past, thus inviting us not to be put off by its allegedly sacrilegious theme.

In fact, the film isn't sacrilegious in the least. It moves with the speed of the coming Ice Age to its resolution, flashing back from jail in scene one to a lethargic spinning out of its quite sanctimonious conclusion. We learn that chastity is



Kathleen Quinlan and Dick Van Dyke as a nun and priest that fall in love in *The Runner Stumbles*.

nicer than carnality, that the Lord uses strange agents to enforce the Divine will, that however gentle our lead characters may be, there is no future for those who diverge from churchly truths. Those who may elect to miss the movie ought to be informed that Father Rivard didn't kill Sister Rita. Never mind; Sister's dead, Father's miserable, the beat goes on. *The Runner Stumbles* fails for several reasons. Van Dyke's work is surprisingly stilted: there is no passion in his Rivard, only attitude—positions, not emotions. And the movie, in trying to have it both ways—in trying to both shock and soothe the audience—manages to have it neither way: we are left with nothing, neither a plausible tale of forbidden love nor a triumphant validation of the common wisdom, though, to be sure, we are left with the vague feeling that you don't mess with God.

And finally, from Sunn Classic Pictures, the cinema arm of the Schick razor

people, of close shaves and right-wing political fame, comes its latest four-waller: *In Search of Historic Jesus*. Every biblical epic of the past succeeded in paying due homage to the holy books while failing, without exception, to create a cast of characters that wholly met our expectations. Everybody "knows" what Jesus is supposed to look and sound like, and Moses, and other stars of God's repertory company; nobody, not even DeMille, could quite satisfy everybody's preconceptions. But the formula has been patented, and variations on the theme are not allowed. (For an example of how little leeway is granted in God-flicks, try to catch *Sebastiane*, which was made in Latin and which reduced the story of the saint's martyrdom to a case of not so closet homosexuality on the part of his persecutors. The movie is more a curiosity piece than an example of the higher reaches of cinema art, but it is better than its paucity of

bookings would indicate. I expect that *Sebastiane* wouldn't go over very well in Dubuque.)

No, you don't play around with the Gospels or with the most important and most gratifying Biblical tales, however bloody and even sado-masochistic they may be. You do it straight, even if you give God lines nowhere found in the Gospels, even if you borrow, perhaps to the point of stealing, camera angles from an Italian God-flick by Pasolini, even if you use the same plaster cave both for Lazarus's spring back to life and for Jesus's resurrection, even if, as in *In Search of Historic Jesus*, you aspire no higher than the dramatic level of a parochial school senior pageant. For the Word's the thing, and those who believe will believe despite the crumminess of the movie, while those who don't believe are damned, anyhow, so....

Sunn Classic Pictures produces one of these now-it-can-be-proved travesties every year, rents a

POLITICAL PIE FOR ALL!

MULTI-OPTION COMPETITION WITHOUT FRAGMENTATION

Structural Reform—Ballots by Richard A Morin could be the most important political book you'll ever read. The author focuses on contradictions usually overlooked by political analysts, and proposes a fundamental change that transcends ideologies. The reform concept is simple, yet implementation would have profound political repercussions.

Morin argues that the current ballot system (rather than money, special-interests and declining faith) is largely responsible for apathy, issue-avoidance, fragmentation, destructive infighting, and two-party dominance.

At issue is the cornerstone of current democratic systems—the primitive ballot formula of *One Man = One Vote*. The system drives stakes right into the political heart of our society, divides the electorate, induces polarities that can be manipulated, alienates voters and grants inordinate power to single-interest groups. It may have been a giant step out of authoritarianism and monarchism, but in a modern, complex, 20th-century democracy it fails miserably.

Under the current system, competition can be counterproductive. The "spoiler" role has grown out of the reality that the political pie cannot be shared—it can only be chopped up. Thus, competition can lead to a loss of majority rule.

- In 1968, Richard Nixon was elected president with only 43.5% of the vote (Humphrey got 43%; Wallace, 13.5%).

The current system can create "artificial" majorities, which can alienate real majorities and drive people away from the voting booth.

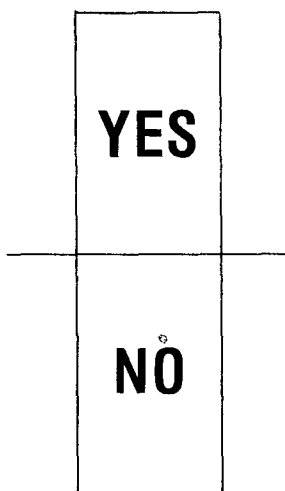
- In 1977, five candidates representing the first choices of 61% of the voters in New York City's Democratic mayoral primary were thrown out. Koch and Cuomo (who polled 20% and 19 % respectively) were then given the exclusive right to compete in a comparative runoff.

The current system functions to stifle healthy political debate of issues.

- Because an ally (and not the opposition on issues) is more likely to tap into a candidate's support base, competition with a close ally is more threatening than that with a challenger having opposite views. When fields are crowded, it often becomes a strategic necessity to avoid issues and throw mud at friends.

Structural Reform—Ballots presents a functional analysis of voting methods and the political consequences. Under the present system, a vote for one candidate is, in effect, a vote against each and every other contender. In reality, a voter may support more than one candidate. Plurality and runoff voting, and proposed preference systems, cannot fully measure voter support, do not make accurate candidate comparisons, and often mix support with comparative non-support. Political scientists who insist the problems of fragmentation and loss of majority are insurmountable are wrong—the problems stem from the data system, not from competition.

PURE DATA



Political thinkers have made a gross error by focusing on voters (first choices or relative preferences) rather than on candidates (support or opposition). If the purpose of an election is to identify the candidate with the greatest political support, the ballot system *must* take a measure of support. Statistically, monitoring support is one of the simplest operations possible, and it eliminates all problems resulting from multiple options.

Morin demonstrates conclusively that binary voting (Direct Approval) is the only correct approach to balloting for political candidates. Direct Approval requires a new ballot formula—*One Person = One Vote (YES or NO) per Candidate Option*. In effect, the system would keep the entire electorate assembled for a separate show of hands for or against each contender.

The binary system is the only data sampling method that would treat each candidate as an independent variable, would directly record political support for candidates, and would allow accurate candidate comparisons. In terms of democratic and scientific validity, the methodological case for Direct Approval is *absolute*—and the implications of that fact are staggering.

But validity is not the only reason why Libertarians, progressives, idealists and thinkers of all persuasions should know about Direct Approval. The binary system would:

- Open doors for Third Parties and Independents while avoiding European-style splintering
- End the "spoiler" role that keeps support for alternatives to artificially low levels
- Change the nature of political competition from something divisive into something healthy and productive
- Accelerate the advent of political equality for women
- Guarantee election of any constituency's most wanted political option
- Help solidify a political center in every election.
- Make leading candidates immune to "stop" movements
- Improve the quality of political debate
- Eliminate the need for runoff elections
- Reduce in-fighting and issue-avoidance
- Prevent manipulations of election outcome
- Reduce apathy

Direct approval would allow each candidate in a party primary, and each party in a general election, to stand on equal footing for the first time in history. Each would stand as an independent option, and each would be evaluated by the entire electorate. The system would record support overlap for similar options. No option would tap into another's support base, and no votes would be wasted.

- How many Democrat and Republican voters may have identified with the views of Roger MacBride or Eugene McCarthy in 1976, but voted for Carter or Ford in the belief that an alternative vote would be wasted? We don't know. With direct approval we would know.

Many world leaders agree that democracy is in serious trouble due to an inability to cope with serious problems that require unity. Binary voting would revolutionize democracy. It would expand our options, preserve majority rule, and unleash the democratic potential of our pluralistic society while enhancing cohesion. If you care about salvaging participatory democracy and protecting citizen control over government, if you want to understand the role of ballots and how the system affects candidate behavior and voter attitudes, you can't afford to pass up *Structural Reform—Ballots*.

DIRECT APPROVAL INTEGRATES VOTERS WITH CANDIDATES

CANDIDATES—

VOTERS—

RESULT—

Current System



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(Loss of Majority)

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SCHICK SUNN CLASSIC PRODUCTIONS

A scene from *In Search of Historic Jesus*, a film that "tampers more with the Bible than Monty Python's *Life of Brian*."

thousand movie houses for a couple of weeks (that's why they're called four-wallers), saturates the tube with ads that imply, almost to the edge of asserting that no doubt need remain, that whatever the picture in question is in search of has been found, and sucks in patsies by the millions. The pattern is identical in all these Sunn routines: the narrator (Brad Crandall), bearded, solid, bespectacled, imposing in his book-lined study, sets us up for an exciting leap into historical investigation. He takes us, now in shirt-sleeves, open collar, a John Lindsay clone, on location. He introduces us to scientists who wash away our heretical doubts, and he shows us the actors in their polyester robes and paste jewels, performing their ancient tasks and awaiting a miracle or two to jazz up the day. This *In Search* even borrows its first few "historical" moments from its earlier *In Search of Noah's Ark* (1977), saving production costs, subtly hyping its

own previous product, and lending a little tangential biblical lesson to the Jesus search. (From here, Sunn Classic can either go back to every book of the Bible in search of Moses and Daniel and such, or, and this would be nice, into the final mystery itself: "In Search of God: Proof Positive." We shall see.)

In Search of Historic Jesus has so little to recommend it that it will be ignored by most of the national critics, omitted from December's worst of '80 lists, and consigned by the siblinghood of film reviewers to the ash can of the beneath-mentionable. Which is precisely the mistake high-brow criticism often makes, ignoring movies loved by The People if those movies cannot be tolerated by anyone a step or two above just subnormal in intelligence. For the reviewers and the chic, *Jesus* is camp, at best. For educated theologians it is another cross to bear. For students of the Bible, it is an atrocity, yanking epi-

sodes willy-nilly from the Gospels and from God-knows-where-else and gluing them into the same film. Mary, Jesus's mother, has been made-up by somebody in love with mascara and blusher: she looks like Elizabeth Taylor stumping for her senator husband. St. Peter appears just to have stepped out of the pages of "Gentleman's Quarterly," save only for his robes; this Peter clearly works out each afternoon, brushes with Ultra-Brite, has his hair styled on the East Side, follows Jimmy Carter's cue in smiling continuously, and flexes whenever possible. Jesus (John Rubinstein, Arthur's son), vanquishes a tiger with his David Carradine kung-fu glower, walks a bit wobbly on water (boards, just barely perceived by the viewer), performs his miracles aided by white glowing light and stop-action photography, and seems only to come alive, paradoxically, when he's being hideously killed. The crucifixion scene validates the opinion that ul-

tra-conservatives like their movies sexless but full of sadism.

"It was three days later, when the greatest miracle of all took place," the narrator intones. You got it. Gone is the "in search," on with the "found." At which point we are whipped across the globe to pre-Columbian America, or early Columbian America, to be more exact, for a peek at Indian statuary bearing faces resembling John Rubinstein's and a quick listen to a fast rap about native tales of a white prophet who came, long ago, bearing good tidings and doing tricks. And then—then the centerpiece of this excursion into ground-level religiosity: the mystery of the sacred shroud of Turin.

The shroud is a piece of cloth, long venerated by the Church (this after it was first branded, by the same Church, a forgery), long puzzled over by scientists unable to prove that it wasn't the very cloth in which Jesus was wrapped after his crucifixion. Be-

cause the shroud is manifestly *not* a recent forgery and seems unlikely to be an old forgery, either—it bears, as seen with sophisticated instruments of analysis, a clear imprint of the body of a man of Judea crucified as Jews were then crucified, and other attendant marks supporting various lines in the Gospels—it may well turn out to be not only the last garment of a crucified Hebrew of that time but of Jesus Christ.

For Christians the shroud provides the one piece of scientifically exciting evidence to buttress their belief that the Gospels tell truly of the last earthly experiences of their Lord. Jeffrey Hart, senior editor of *National Review*, has championed and written intelligently (and convincingly) of the cloth for years, and other conservative (as well as religious) journals have followed *NR* in reporting every latest development in the continuing saga of the

shroud. So faithfully has the shroud's story been told that *In Search of Historic Jesus* has absolutely nothing new to tell. Except that it can tell the now well-known story of the shroud with dramatizations of some episodes in its history. Out comes another bit of previously used film, this a flood (not *the* flood, just your average everyday deluge of a city by water), out come the plaster walls and cardboard castles and crepe costumes and paste jewels, out comes Brad Crandall with his life-sized photographs, his most sonorous declarations, and his very best see-I-told-you-it's-all-true stare. And there we have it: Jesus, the historic Jesus, has been found. All the lesser tricks of the cinema have marched through the movie to bolster its makers' case. If, in the cause of Film Serving God the Sunn Classic people have not scrupled at interjecting fabricated words and actions into their "his-

toric" recreations of Jesus's life, if they have not worried about dragging out something called the Aquarian Gospel (which we learn was "written in 1907") as more "evidence" to aid us in our search, if they have not hesitated to tamper more with the Bible than Monty Python did in that brilliant satire, *Life of Brian* — a movie much maligned, particularly by traditionalists who never bothered to see it, a movie which, when the next Monty Python film appears, will be discussed here at length—if, in short, the people who patched together this appalling hodgepodge have not resisted *any* temptation to fudge, to fabricate, to twist, it isn't surprising that its one bit of almost believable "evidence," the shroud of Turin, comes in this movie to seem as bogus as the rest of the film.

Ironically, then, *In Search of Historic Jesus* does grave disservice to the

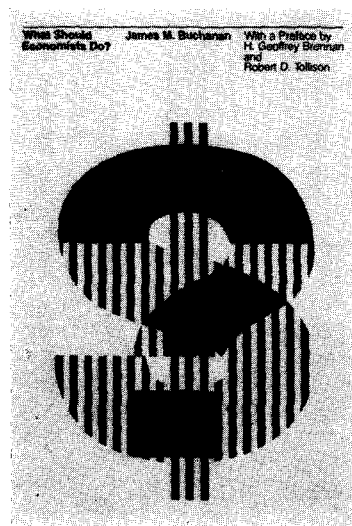
belief it supposedly was made to champion. It cannot but nauseate anybody whose level of belief is at all above the most primitive, it cannot convince anyone who stands agnostic to that belief, it alienates those it might attract. With one exception to those cannots: it can and will and does, as the rest of these Sunn Classics movies can and will and do, gratify that large if not majority chunk of American public that feels left behind by the *real* movies, that feels out of sorts owing to the values portrayed in the movies the rest of us like, that wants to snuggle up to a good dogma and lay their minds to rest. □

LR's film critic reviews also for WNAC-TV (CBS) and WHDH-AM in Boston; he hosts "The David Brudnoy Show," New England's leading radio talk program, on WHDH; and he writes a thrice-weekly newspaper column.

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SPEAKERS: Karl Hess, Robert Anton Wilson, John Matonis, John Pugsley, Neil Schulman, Arthur B. Laffer, John Hospers, Carl Nicolai.
DEBATERS: Lowell Ponte vs. a Marxist, George Smith vs. a Conservative and Samuel Konkin vs. a Libertarian Party leader [Manuel Klausner].

Also, "A Tribute to Robert LeFevre" Banquet on April 19 [Sat., starting at 6:30 pm.] at the Holiday Inn, 7000 Beach Blvd., Buena Park [near Cypress College].

TICKETS: Students (before April 12) \$10, (at door) \$15; Non-Students (before April 12) \$20, (at door) \$25. **One day tickets:** Students (before April 12) \$7.50, (at door) \$10; Non-Students (before April 12) \$15, (at door) \$20. **Tickets for banquet** are \$12 each, reservations must be made before 12 noon, April 17.

Student scholarships are available. Literature tables go for \$30 [in adv. before April 12] \$40 at door. Airport entry—either L.A. or Orange County Airport. Near-by hotels include Buena Park Convention Center Hotel [7675 Crescent Ave., Buena Park], toll free [800] 421-2048, and Holiday Inn [7000 beach Blvd., Buena Park], toll free [800] 238-8000. Reservations for conference or LeFevre's Banquet [714] 535-5798 or [714] 962-6491. Make checks payable to Future of Freedom Conference. For tax-deductible tickets, make checks payable to Society for Libertarian Life [tax-deductible groups from Cal State Univ., Fullerton]. **SPONSORS:** Cypress College Libertarian Club, Society for Libertarian Life [SLL], California Libertarian Alliance [CLA] and the Libertarian Supper Club of Orange County. **WRITE TO:** Future of Freedom, P.O. Box 4, Fullerton, CA 92632. **TICKETS WILL BE HELD AT THE DOOR.**

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Left to Right: Murray Rothbard, Israel Kirzner, Earl Ravenal, Roy Childs, and Leonard Liggio.

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