

## From Cuban to American Socialism

# viewpoint

Americans like to point to a crucial difference between a free and a despotic country: that free countries allow their citizens to leave, while tyrannical regimes throw an iron curtain around their borders and refuse to let their people go. Communist countries fence their peoples in; America allows its citizens to leave. Thousands clamor to get out of Russia or Cuba or Vietnam, while no one rushes to apply for citizenship in these alleged examples of workers' paradise.

Fair enough, and a good point as far as it goes. But curiously, the yearning masses seeking freedom from Communist countries get an all too chilly reception when they seek freedom and prosperity by entering the Land of the Free. If there is not exactly an iron curtain keeping these freedom-seekers out, there is at best grudging assent and at worst severe restrictions upon these would-be immigrants. The pitiful and truly heroic Vietnamese boat people were scarcely welcomed with open arms in the United States; in fact, Hanoi was blamed for allowing an excessive and disorderly flow of refugees from its shores.

The same anomaly occurred last April, when the Cuban regime began to allow tens of thousands of freedom-seekers to leave Cuba and emigrate to the United States. Once again, instead of hailing this relaxation of the Cuban Curtain and welcoming the refugees, Castro was denounced for "dumping" undesirables, prisoners, and mental patients upon us, and the US government began to arrest private boat owners for conducting the Cubans to freedom. A strange welcome indeed!

The Cubans who were allowed into the United States, moreover, were not simply allowed to immigrate, get a job, and blend into the American population. Instead, they have been herded into literal concentration camps under military rule, where they must stay until mountains of red tape are processed and until someone can be induced to vouch for each immigrant. Only then are they allowed to leave. In the meanwhile, the Cubans are suffering under our own home-grown brand of socialism. They are subject to the brutal or uncaring rule of Army personnel, very few of whom can speak Spanish. One experienced federal public health official states that health facilities at the camp at Fort Indiantown Gap, in Pennsylvania,



**Murray N. Rothbard**

are the "worst I've ever seen." Mary Horst, an educator who worked all summer at Indiantown, reports that the majority of peaceful Cubans are incarcerated and put at the mercy of a minority of Cuban "mafia," who are allowed to rule the compounds. "It's become a concentration camp," she pointed out. "I hate to use that term, but that's what has evolved."

The Cubans have been particularly brutalized by the officers of the Federal Protective Service, the law enforcement agency delegated to police the Cuban camps. A federal health official charges that the FPS officers, few of whom speak Spanish, hate the Cubans and "will beat them, do anything, without reason."

The Cuban immigrants are not eligible for welfare and are generally willing to take any job that might come their way. But in order to get a job, to resume normal life, they have to be able to get out of the camps; and this, not enough have been able to do. There have been many suicide attempts among the 15,000 Cubans still incarcerated in the camps, but these have been brusquely dismissed by the American authorities as "attention-getting gestures." One wonders how the lordly camp officials and FPS officers would like it if the shoe were on the other foot, and they were the ones kept prisoner in the camps.

There have been riots in the camps, and much of the cause has been cultural, with the American authorities simply failing to understand Cuban mores. Thus, the Americans insisted on keeping the win-

dows barred, which prevented the Cubans from calling to each other from the windows. And, when the Cubans, who are night people, tried in frustration to cook chicken at night over a fire—the camp kitchen being closed early in the evening—they were busted for daring to have an open fire in the camp. In both cases, riots ensued.

It all boils down to this: In all the talk about freedom to leave or to enter, are we really interested in freedom, justice, and humanity, or are we only interested in scoring Brownie points in the Cold War game? If the former, we should not merely be content to condemn Russia or Cuba for not letting their people go; we should hail any occasion when some of their people *do* go, and we should welcome all of them to our shores with good fellowship and open arms. If we truly wish to be the land of the free, we must return to the traditional American policy before World War I of welcoming immigrants, of lifting our lamp by the golden door. America was built by immigrants, and we lost a good deal of our soul when the lamp nearly went out after World War I, and immigration was sharply restricted by a combination of racism and labor union restrictionism. Let us return to our own noble heritage and be the beacon-light of freedom once more.

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## LUCIFER'S LEXICON

by L. A. Rollins

cult, *n.* Any religious group whose members are considered fair game by Ted Patrick.

just war, *n.* Merely war.

legislate morality, *v.t.* Legislate.

propaganda, *n.* Communication; for example, this definition.

right-to-work law, *n.* A no-right-to-work-in-a-closed-shop law.

riot, *n.* A natural disaster necessitating federal relief.

# spotlight

## South African Individualist

By Patrick Cox

It is possible that in the past decade no country has moved further toward a libertarian society than South Africa has. Yes—South Africa. And much of the credit can be chalked up to a group of libertarians who have used almost clandestine techniques to achieve impressive ends. Leon Louw (low), a 32-year-old lawyer (jurist), a founder and the director of the Free Market Foundation, is at the center of the individualist conspiracy.

This Afrikaaner, descended from Dutch Louws who settled in Africa in 1654, says: "We work like the Fabian society. Historically, they have outwitted every capitalist, every free-marketeer, everywhere. Their weapons work, so we fight them with their own weapons. We infiltrate, we work behind the scenes, we reach opinion leaders. We disseminate literature, sometimes anonymously, sometimes with a suitable introduction through suitable channels. Our target market is the top people; we aim right at the top. We've taken the view that we can't reach the general public, and even if we could, it's not clear that it is the short-cut way to bring about real change. We've gone right at the cabinet ministers, at the popular leaders, the business leaders, the academic leaders, and the leading jurists."

There is a good deal of evidence to support the claim that such tactics are meeting with success. In the last three years, each successive South African budget has been a smaller percentage of the GNP there. Real tax rates have been reduced successively, and the country is moving away from all direct taxes. Foreign exchange has been completely deregulated, and central bank intervention has been decreased. The number of government departments has been cut from 44 to 18. Price and rent controls have been abolished, and transport laws are being phased out. Black trading restrictions have been removed, migration laws have been relaxed, segregationist public accommodation laws have been reduced significantly, and rights to property ownership are being extended to blacks. Economic deregulation has even helped the cheetah and other endangered species, which are on their way back following

denationalization of wildlife and parks. Louw points out that all this has been accomplished without overthrowing the government or running an election.

Nowhere in the world is the distinction between "right-wing" and "libertarian" so evident. Many South Africans are aware of Louw only as a crusader for civil and economic liberties for blacks, who make up 70 percent of South Africa's population. Conditions for blacks have been improving dramatically but "not fast enough," says Louw. "I'm an abolitionist. What's wrong is wrong. Freedom is the first principle. You cannot justify restrictions by saying there will be uncomfortable effects during the process of change."



Leon Louw

Black economist Walter Williams, who has visited South Africa extensively, says of Louw and the South African move toward a nonstatist society, "If you had to pick somebody on the continent that played a significant role, surely it would be Leon and the Free Market Foundation." The Foundation, says Williams, "is forcing people to view the problems of apartheid." Laughing, he points out that the American press reports that blacks aren't free in South Africa but ignores the fact that whites aren't either as long as the government regulates the telephone industry and controls economic activity. Louw is fighting for liberty for people, not blacks or whites.

An impressive measure of Louw's and the Free Market Foundation's influence is a list of its present friends and members. Since its inception in 1975 it has brought into the fold the head of the powerful

South African government-funded consumer union, who has resigned and, with Leon Louw, is forming a profit-making consumer organization because of his new philosophical objections to the use of tax money for his purposes. The most powerful labor union leader in South Africa has started working with Louw and the Foundation and has come out against racially segregated unions and closed shop laws (a barrier to black employment).

Two of the three recognized black leaders in South Africa are now participating in Foundation activities. The powerful Chief Buthelezi said a few years ago: "Free enterprise is the black's only hope." Dr. Motlana, the other black leader, who has been described as a socialist by the American press, is forming the Soweto Committee for Economic Freedom, which will be formed and financed entirely by blacks—"One of the most exciting developments in some time," Louw calmly understates in the Queen's English. "I have him reading Robert Nozick and Murray Rothbard." You get the impression that the third black leader would be coming around to libertarianism, too, if he could get out of prison long enough for Louw to talk to him.

Black business leaders, Jewish business leaders, politicians, civil servants, people from the entire spectrum of South African life, are involved in Foundation work and its publication, *The Free Market*. It's comparable, notes Louw, to having Ralph Nader, George Meaney, and David Rockefeller on REASON's list of contributing editors and arguing about the best way to get rid of the government.

Other Foundation publications include *Die Individualis*, Afrikaans for "The Individualist," an out-and-out libertarian newsletter, and Fred Macaskill's *In Search of Liberty*, the first South African book on libertarianism. Another book published under the auspices of the Foundation is Ad Wassenaar's *Assault on Private Enterprise*, a book that so enraged South African statists that, when it came out a few years ago, former Prime Minister John Vorster spent half an hour in parliament attacking Wassenaar and his ideas.

Louw's friends admit that he is in some danger. Professor J. A. Lombard, a founding member of the Foundation and the country's leading economist, has been the target of one unsuccessful bombing. The bombers could have been radical leftists or rightists, but Louw says his biggest enemies are not Marxists, who are rela-