Lend Lease Episode 8 - Social Rights vs Individual Rights

- https://www.thenation.com/article/bernie-sanders-american-exceptionalism/
Calling for a 21st-century bill of economic rights, one modeled on Franklin Roosevelt's 1944 proposal for a Second Bill of Rights, Sanders said, "We are proud that our Constitution guarantees freedom," but now "we must take the next step forward and guarantee every man, woman, and child in our country basic economic rights—the right to quality health care, the right to as much education as one needs to succeed in our society, the right to a good job that pays a living wage, the right to affordable housing, the right to a secure retirement, and the right to live in a clean environment."
"Democracy, political as well as social and economic," wrote Hernán Santa Cruz, the Chilean UN delegate who in the 1940s helped Eleanor Roosevelt draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "comprises, in my mind, an inseparable whole." Individual rights need social rights because, as FDR liked to say, succinctly, "necessitous men are not free."
In contrast, many in the United States pit these two kinds of rights against each other, understanding them to be fundamentally antagonistic. Conservatives take it as bedrock truth that the pursuit of social rights will destroy individual rights. There are many different elements to what is called American exceptionalism, but for many on the right, an individual-rights exclusivism, defined in opposition to social rights, is that ideology's foundation.
In 1828 [Jackson] was elected the seventh president of the United States, leading a movement that defended slavery with an increasingly extreme commitment to the ideal of minimal government, as historian Manisha Sinha shows in The Counterrevolution of Slavery. The federal government, Jackson said at the height of Indian removal, as chattel slavery was expanding at a rapid pace, should be run with "primitive simplicity and purity" and "limited to a general superintending power," prohibited from passing laws restricting "human liberty" and used only to "enforce human rights"—rights that he understood to include the one to own other human beings as property.
The signature program of Reconstruction, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, was the closest this country came in the 1800s to such a transformation in consciousness. Just before his assassination in 1865, Abraham Lincoln signed the bill establishing the bureau as a branch of the War Department. With thousands of agents across the South and hundreds of offices, the agency distributed basic necessities, including food, medicine, and clothing. It also founded thousands of schools, colleges, and hospitals, resettled refugees (white and black), administered confiscated properties, passed and enforced ad hoc laws, regulated labor relations and minimum wages, and levied taxes.
But the triumphant backlash to the bureau and to Reconstruction more broadly empowered a new, postbellum generation of race hustlers. Chief among them was Lincoln's successor Andrew Johnson, who updated all the old Jacksonian tropes to intensify demonization of the federal bureaucracy, associating all social problems—corruption, dependency, poverty, unemployment, and crime—with black skin. He sharpened the Jacksonian opposition of free men fighting federal "enslavement,"

describing the Freedmen's Bureau as an "agency to keep the negro in idleness" and create a culture of dependency through the "lavish issuance of rations."

During the Great Depression, New Dealers started to hitch the adjective "social" to any word it would stick to: Progressive educators started a journal called The Social Frontier. "Non-social individualism," one sociologist wrote, is "detrimental to our further progress; non-social should therefore give place to social individualism." Henry Wallace, Roosevelt's agriculture secretary, who would go on to serve as his vice president, said in 1934, "New frontiers beckon with meaningful adventure…. We must invent, build, and put to work new social machinery." And of course there was a social surplus to be distributed by the social republic as a social wage, through programs like Social Security. "We are each and all of us, whether we like it or not, parts of a social civilization," FDR told a Little Rock, Arkansas, audience. "To subdue the social wilderness," Wallace said, one needs "not a new continent but a new state of heart."

One fight, involving Puerto Rico, a possession of the United States since 1898, is especially illustrative of the hold that individual-rights exclusivism had on US politics. The island's residents were considered citizens by the 1950s, but its status remained unclear. Some residents fought for independence, while others wanted to keep a relationship with the United States, either as a quasi-autonomous commonwealth or through admittance into the Union as a state. Wherever one might stand on that question, a vast majority of Puerto Ricans wanted social democracy: In 1952 residents voted overwhelmingly to approve a new Constitution that recognized "the right of every person to obtain work" and the right of "social protection in the event of unemployment, sickness, old age, or disability." But since the island was a US possession, Washington had veto rights over its Constitution.

Upon seeing a draft of the charter, Republicans and Southern Democrats—the same congressional alliance that opposed civil rights—acted as if they had just read a proposal to resurrect the Freedmen's Bureau. "This is evil and will ultimately render null and void other protections granted to individuals," said one House member; "if we approve this, it will be one of the greatest blows ever struck against the freedom of men. It means the citizens will be wards of the government." Indiana Representative Charles Halleck said it was "as different from our Bill of Rights as day from night." The line separating foreign and domestic policy may have been indistinct, but with Puerto Rico it was especially murky. Halleck feared that inclusion of social rights guarantees in the charter of a neocolonial possession could bind the nation as a whole to its promises. Summoned to appear before Congress, the document's drafters were asked if they believed the inclusion of social rights in their text imposed "any possible obligation upon the United States of America to provide any of these benefits." Puerto Rico's representatives hedged. The idea, they said, was to create a set of cultural expectations that no one in a free society should starve or go without work or die from lack of health care. But such expectations were the last thing those legislators wanted to create. Congress eventually approved the charter, but not before stripping out all references to social rights.

William Clark, a deputy secretary of state for Reagan, [worked] to return the concept of human rights to its purer "American" understanding, pared down to align with individual rights. Richard Allen, Reagan's national security adviser, agreed, [saying that] "the notion of economic and social rights is a dilution and distortion of the original meaning of human rights." The only universal rights, Allen said, were to "life, liberty, property." Not to health care, education, or housing.

Like "freedom," the idea of "individual rights" could be deployed both as universal appeal (on behalf of people trampled by tyranny) and as racist dog whistle. It is impossible to extricate individual rights—to possess and to bear arms and to call on the power of the state to protect those rights—from the bloody history that gave rise to those rights, from the entitlements that settlers and slavers wrested from people of color as they moved across the land. "Individual rights," as Mississippi Representative Trent Lott [let slip] in 1984, "are things that Jefferson Davis and his people believed in."

Individual-rights absolutism is the flywheel that keeps all the cruel constituencies of the modern right spinning, uniting the various wings—fringe and what's called mainstream—of the Republican Party, joining Ayn Rand libertarians, free market wonks, climate change denialists, Second Amendment fundamentalists, nativists (especially since most Latin American migrants come from countries with strong social rights traditions), corporate Prometheans, misogynists, and of course, white supremacists. Break that wheel, and you break the movement.

- The wartime and futurecasted postwar social rights
    - 1942 Beveridge Report (UK) on Social Security and Allied Services: "A revolutionary moment in the world's history is a time for revolutions, not for patching." - freedom from Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness
    - 1944 FDR Second Bill of Rights (US)
    - 1945 UN Charter
    - https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0964663915617860d?journalCode=slsa
    - T.H. Marshall's Social Citizenship ("Citizenship and Social Class," 1949 http://www.jura.uni-bielefeld.de/lehrstuehle/davy/wustldata/1950_Marshall_Citzenship_and_Social_Class_OCR.pdf) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T.H._Marshall%27s_Social_Citizenship
    - The contemporary opposition: Hayek's 1944 Road to Serfdom https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Road_to_Serfdom
- UN High Commission on Human Rights definition of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: *Economic, social and cultural rights include the rights to adequate food, to adequate housing, to education, to health, to social security, to take part in cultural life, to water and sanitation, and to work.* https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/ESCRIndex.aspx
- European Commission's European Pillar of Social Rights https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en (20 rights specifically, in 3 categories of Equal opportunities and access to the labour market, Fair working conditions, Social protection

and inclusion):
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)