**Republic**

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*For the political ideology, see* [*Republicanism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republicanism)*. For other uses, see* [*Republic (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

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A **republic** is a [form of government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Form_of_government) in which the government is officially apportioned to the control of the people, or a significant portion of which, and where offices of state are subsequently directly or indirectly elected or appointed. In modern times, a common simplified definition of a republic is a government where the head of state is NOT a [monarch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarch). The word *republic* is derived from the [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) phrase [*res publica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Res_publica), which can be translated as "the public affair", and often used to describe a [state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_%28polity%29) using this form of government.

Both modern and ancient republics vary widely in their ideology and composition. In classical and medieval times the archetype of all republics was the [Roman Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Republic), which referred to Rome in between the period when it had kings, and the periods when it had emperors. The Italian medieval and [Renaissance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance) political tradition today referred to as "[civic humanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civic_humanism)" is sometimes considered to derive directly from Roman republicans such as [Sallust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sallust) and [Tacitus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacitus). However, Greek-influenced Roman authors, such as [Polybius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polybius) and [Cicero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero), sometimes also used the term as a translation for the Greek [*politeia*](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/politeia) which could mean regime generally, but could also be applied to certain specific types of regime which did not exactly correspond to that of the Roman Republic. An example of this is [Sparta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sparta), which had two kings but was not considered a normal monarchy as it also had [ephors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephor) representing the common people. Republics were not equated with classical democracies such as [Athens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athenian_democracy), but had a democratic aspect to them.

In modern republics such as the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) and [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), the executive is legitimized both by a [constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution) and by popular [suffrage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suffrage). [Montesquieu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montesquieu) included both [democracies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy), where all the people have a share in rule, and [aristocracies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristocracy) or [oligarchies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oligarchy), where only some of the people rule, as republican forms of government.

Most often a republic is a [sovereign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty) country, but there are also [subnational entities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subnational_entities) that are referred to as republics, or which have governments that are described as "republican" in nature. For instance, [Article IV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_Four_of_the_United_States_Constitution) of the [Constitution of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_United_States) "guarantee[s] to every State in this Union a Republican form of Government". The [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), although in reality a unitary state, was technically a confederation of sovereign [Soviet Socialist Republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Socialist_Republic).

**Origin of the term**

In [Medieval](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval) [Northern Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Italy), a number of city states had [commune](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_commune) or [signoria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signoria) based governments. In the late Middle Ages, writers, such as [Giovanni Villani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Villani), began thinking about the nature of these states and the differences from the more common monarchies. These early writers used terms such as *libertas populi*, a free people, to describe the states. The terminology changed in the 15th century as the renewed interest in the writings of [Ancient Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece) and [Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome) caused writers to prefer using classical terminology. To describe non-monarchial states writers, most importantly [Leonardo Bruni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_Bruni), adopted the Latin word [*res publica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Res_publica)*.*

While Bruni and [Machiavelli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machiavelli) used the term to describe the states of Northern Italy, which were not [monarchies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy), the term *res publica* has a set of interrelated meanings in the original Latin. The term can quite literally be translated as "public matter". It was most often used by Roman writers to refer to the state and government, even during the period of the [Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire). The [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) word [*commonwealth*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth) is a [calque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calque) (literal translation) of *res publica,* and its use in English is closer to how the Romans used the term *res publica.*

Today the term republic still most commonly means a system of government which derives its power from the people rather than from another basis, such as [heredity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heredity) or [divine right](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_right_of_kings). This remains the primary definition of republic in most contexts.

This bipartite division of government types differs from the classical sources, and also the earlier of Machiavelli's own works, which divided governments into three types: [monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy), [aristocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristocracy), and [democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy). As Machiavelli wrote, the distinction between an aristocracy ruled by a select elite and a democracy ruled by a council appointed by the people became cumbersome. By the time Machiavelli began work on [*The Prince*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Prince), he had decided to refer to both aristocracy and democracies as republics.

A further set of meanings for the term comes from the [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language) word [*politeia*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeia). [Cicero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero), among other Latin writers, translated *politeia* as *res publica* and it was in turn translated by Renaissance scholars as *republic.* The term *politeia* is today usually translated as *form of government*, *polity*, or *regime.* One continued use of this archaic translation is the title of [Plato](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato)'s major work on political science. In [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language) it was titled *Politeia* and in English is thus known as [*The Republic*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Republic_%28Plato%29). However, apart from the title, in modern translations of *The Republic*, alternative translations of *politeia* are also used.

In English the word first came to prominence during the [Protectorate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Protectorate) of [Oliver Cromwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Cromwell). While *commonwealth* was the most common term to call the new monarchless state, *republic* was also in common use.

**History**

Until modern times, the form of government for almost all states was monarchy. During the classical period, the [Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean) region was home to several states that are now known as the [classical republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_republic).

Several republics also developed during the [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages) in the merchant-dominated [city states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_states).

**Classical republics**

Main article: [classical republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_republic)

A map of the [Roman Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Republic).

The concept of the "republic" itself was not a meaningful concept in the classical world. There are a number of states of the [classical era](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_era) that are today called republics by convention. These include the [city states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City-state) of [ancient Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece) such as [Athens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens) and [Sparta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sparta) and the [Roman Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Republic). The structure and governance of these states was very different from that of any modern republic. There is a debate about whether the classical, medieval, and modern republics form a historical continuum. [JGA Pocock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JGA_Pocock) has played a central role, arguing that there is a distinct republican tradition that stretches from the classical world to the present. Other scholars disagree. Paul Rahe, for instance, argues that the classical republics had a form of government with few links to those in any modern country.

The political philosophy of the classical republics have had a central influence on republican thought throughout the subsequent centuries. A number of classical writers discussed forms of government alternative to monarchies and later writers have treated these as foundational works on the nature of republics. Philosophers and politicians advocating for republics, such as Machiavelli, [Montesquieu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montesquieu), [Adams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Adams), and [Madison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Madison), relied heavily on these sources.

[Aristotle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle)'s [*Politics*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_%28Aristotle%29) discusses various forms of government. One form Aristotle named [*politeia*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeia), which consisted of a mixture of the other forms. He argued that this was one of the ideal forms of government. [Polybius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polybius) expanded on many of these ideas, again focusing on the idea of [mixed government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixed_government). The most important Roman work in this tradition is [Cicero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero)'s [*De re publica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_re_publica).

Over time, the classical republics were either conquered by empires or became one themselves. Most of the Greek republics were annexed to the [Macedonian Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macedonian_Empire) of [Alexander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great). The Roman Republic expanded dramatically conquering the other states of the Mediterranean that could be considered republics, such as [Carthaginian Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carthaginian_Republic). The Roman Republic itself then became the [Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire).

**India**

[Vaishali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishali_%28ancient_city%29) was the [capital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_%28political%29) of [Vajjian Confederacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajji), believed to be the world's first republic.

In the early 20th century a number of [Indian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) scholars, most notably as [K.P. Jayaswal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K.P._Jayaswal), argued that a number of states in [ancient India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_India) had republican forms of government. There are no surviving [constitutions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution) or works of [political philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_philosophy) from this period in [Indian history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_history). The forms of government thus need to be deduced, mostly from the surviving [religious texts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_text). These texts do refer to a number of states having [*Gaṇa sangha*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ga%E1%B9%87a_sangha), or council-based, as opposed to monarchical governments.

A second form of evidence comes from [Greeks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeks) writing about India during the period of contact following the conquests of [Alexander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great). Greek writers about India such as [Megasthenes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megasthenes) and [Arrian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arrian) describe many of the states having republican governments akin to those of Greece. Beginning around 700 BC, republics developed in a band running along the [Indus Valley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_Valley) in the northwest and along the [Ganges Plain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganges_Plain) in the northeast. They were mainly small states, though some confederations of republics seem to have formed that covered large areas, such as [Vajjian Confederacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajji), which had [Vaishali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishali_%28ancient_city%29) as its capital around 600 BC.

As in Greece, the republican era came to an end in the 4th century with the rise of a monarchical empire. The [Maurya Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurya_Empire) conquered almost the entire subcontinent, ending the autonomy of the small republics. Some did remain republics under Mauryan [suzerainty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suzerainty), or returned to being republics after the fall of the empire. [Madra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madra), for instance, survived as a republic until the 4th century AD. The final end of republics in India came with the rise of the [Gupta Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gupta_Empire), and an associated philosophy of the divine nature of monarchy.

**Other ancient republics**

In the pre-modern period, republics are generally considered to have been a solely European phenomenon, and states in other parts of the world with similar governments are not generally referred to as republics. Some early states outside of Europe had governments that are sometimes today considered similar to republics. In the [ancient Near East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Near_East), a number of cities of the [Eastern Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Mediterranean) achieved collective rule. [Arwad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arwad) has been cited as one of the earliest known examples of a republic, in which the people, rather than a monarch, are described as sovereign. The [Israelite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelite) confederation of the era before the [United Monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Monarchy) has also been considered a type of republic. In [Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa) the [Axum Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axum_Empire) was organized as a confederation ruled similar to a royal republic. Similarly the [Igbo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo_people#Traditional_society) nation of what is now [Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_history).

**Icelandic Commonwealth**

The first European republic after the demise of the Roman Republic in 44-27 BC, was the [Icelandic Commonwealth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icelandic_Commonwealth), which also saw the establishment of the world's oldest existing parliament, the [Althing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Althing). The Icelandic Commonwealth was established in 930 AD by [refugees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refugee) from [Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway) who had fled the unification of that country under King [Harald Fairhair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harald_Fairhair). The Commonwealth consisted of a number of clans run by chieftains, and the Althing was a combination of parliament and supreme court where disputes appealed from lower courts were settled, laws were decided, and decisions of national importance were taken. One such example was the [Christianisation of Iceland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianisation_of_Iceland) in 1000, where the Althing decreed, in order to prevent an invasion, that all Icelanders must be baptized, and forbade celebration of pagan rituals. Contrary to most states, the Icelandic Commonwealth had no official leader.

In the early 13th century, the [Sturlung era](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sturlung_era), the Commonwealth began to suffer from long conflicts between warring clans. This, combined with pressure from the Norwegian king [Haakon IV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haakon_IV_of_Norway) for the Icelanders to re-join the Norwegian "family", led the Icelandic chieftains to accept Haakon IV as king by the signing of the *Gamli sáttmáli* ("[Old Covenant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Covenant_%28Iceland%29)") in 1262. This effectively brought the Commonwealth to an end. The Althing, however, is still Iceland's parliament, almost 800 years later.

**Mercantile republics**

[Giovan Battista Tiepolo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovan_Battista_Tiepolo), [*Neptune*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neptune_%28mythology%29) *offers the wealth of the sea to Venice*, 1748–50. This painting is an allegory of the power of the Republic of Venice.

In Europe new republics appeared in the late [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages) when a number of small states embraced republican systems of government. These were generally small, but wealthy, trading states, like the [Italian city-states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_city-states) and the [Hanseatic League](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanseatic_League), in which the merchant class had risen to prominence. Knud Haakonssen has noted that, by the [Renaissance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Renaissance), Europe was divided with those states controlled by a landed elite being monarchies and those controlled by a commercial elite being republics.

Across Europe a wealthy merchant class developed in the important trading cities. Despite their wealth they had little power in the [feudal system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feudalism) dominated by the rural land owners, and across Europe began to advocate for their own privileges and powers. The more centralized states, such as [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) and [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England), granted limited city charters.

In the more loosely governed [Holy Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire), 51 of the largest towns became [free imperial cities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_imperial_city). While still under the dominion of the [Holy Roman Emperor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Emperor) most power was held locally and many adopted republican forms of government. The same rights to imperial immediacy were secured by the major trading cities of [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland). The towns and villages of alpine [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland) had, courtesy of geography, also been largely excluded from central control. Unlike [Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) and [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), much of the rural area was thus not controlled by feudal barons, but by independent farmers who also used communal forms of government. When the [Habsburgs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habsburgs) tried to reassert control over the region both rural farmers and town merchants joined the rebellion. The [Swiss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_people) were victorious, and the [Swiss Confederacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_Confederacy) was proclaimed, and Switzerland has retained a republican form of government to the present.

Italy was the most densely populated area of Europe, and also one with the weakest central government. Many of the towns thus gained considerable independence and adopted [commune](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_commune) forms of government. Completely free of feudal control, the Italian city-states expanded, gaining control of the rural hinterland. The two most powerful were the [Republic of Venice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Venice) and its rival the [Republic of Genoa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Genoa). Each were large trading ports, and further expanded by using naval power to control large parts of the [Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean). It was in Italy that an ideology advocating for republics first developed. Writers such as [Bartholomew of Lucca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartholomew_of_Lucca), [Brunetto Latini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brunetto_Latini), [Marsilius of Padua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsilius_of_Padua), and [Leonardo Bruni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_Bruni) saw the medieval city-states as heirs to the legacy of Greece and Rome.

Two [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) cities with powerful merchant class — [Novgorod](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novgorod_Republic) and [Pskov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pskov_Republic) — also adopted republican forms of government in 12th and 13th centuries, respectively, which ended when the republics were conquered by [Moscow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscow) at the end 15th - beginning of 16th century.

The dominant form of government for these early republics was control by a limited council of elite [patricians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrician_%28ancient_Rome%29). In those areas that held elections, property qualifications or guild membership limited both who could vote and who could run. In many states no direct elections were held and council members were hereditary or appointed by the existing council. This left the great majority of the population without political power, and riots and revolts by the lower classes were common. The late Middle Ages saw more than 200 such risings in the towns of the Holy Roman Empire. Similar revolts occurred in Italy, notably the [Ciompi Revolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciompi_Revolt) in Florence.

**Protestant republics**

While the classical writers had been the primary ideological source for the republics of Italy, in Northern Europe, the [Protestant Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation) would be used as justification for establishing new republics. Most important was [Calvinist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinist) theology, which developed in the Swiss Confederacy, one of the largest and most powerful of the medieval republics. [John Calvin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Calvin) did not call for the abolition of monarchy, but he advanced the doctrine that the faithful had the right to overthrow irreligious monarchs. Calvinism also espoused a fierce [egalitarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egalitarianism) and an opposition to hierarchy. Advocacy for republics appeared in the writings of the [Huguenots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huguenots) during the [French Wars of Religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Wars_of_Religion).

Calvinism played an important role in the republican revolts in [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) and the [Netherlands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands). Like the city-states of Italy and the [Hanseatic League](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanseatic_League), both were important trading centers, with a large merchant class prospering from the trade with the New World. Large parts of the population of both areas also embraced Calvinism. The [Dutch Revolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Revolt), beginning in 1568, saw the [Dutch Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Republic) reject the rule of [Habsburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habsburg) [Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain) in a conflict that lasted until 1648.

In 1641 the [English Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Civil_War) began. Spearheaded by the [Puritans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puritans) and funded by the merchants of [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London), the revolt was a success, and [King Charles I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_I_of_England) was executed. In England [James Harrington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Harrington_%28author%29), [Algernon Sydney](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algernon_Sydney), and [John Milton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Milton) became some of the first writers to argue for rejecting monarchy and embracing a republican form of government. The [English Commonwealth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Commonwealth) was short lived, and the monarchy soon restored. The [Dutch Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Republic) continued in name until 1795, but by the mid-18th century the [stadholder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadholder) had become a *de facto* monarch. Calvinists were also some of the earliest settlers of the British and Dutch colonies of [North America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_America).

**Liberal republics**

**Liberal republics in early modern** [**Europe**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe)

An allegory of the Republic in Paris.

[Septinsular Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septinsular_Republic) flag from the early 1800s.

A revolutionary Republican hand-written bill from the Stockholm riots during the [Revolutions of 1848](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutions_of_1848), reading: "Dethrone [Oscar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_I_of_Sweden) he is not fit to be a king rather the Republic! The Reform! down with the Royal house, long live [Aftonbladet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aftonbladet)! death to the king / Republic the people. [Brunkeberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brunkeberg) this evening". The writer's identity is unknown.

Along with these initial republican revolts, [early modern Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_modern_Europe) also saw a great increase in monarchial power. The era of [absolute monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_monarchy) replaced the limited and decentralized monarchies that had existed in most of the Middle Ages. It also saw a reaction against the total control of the monarch as a series of writers created the ideology known as [liberalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism).

Most of these [Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) thinkers were far more interested in ideas of [constitutional monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) than in republics. The Cromwell regime had discredited republicanism, and most thinkers felt that republics ended in either [anarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchy) or [tyranny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dictatorship). Thus philosophers like [Voltaire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voltaire) opposed absolutism while at the same time being strongly pro-monarchy.

[Jean-Jacques Rousseau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau) and [Montesquieu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_de_Secondat%2C_baron_de_Montesquieu) praised republics, and looked on the city-states of Greece as a model. However, both also felt that a nation-state like France, with 20 million people, would be impossible to govern as a republic. Rousseau described his ideal political structure of small self-governing [communes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commune). Montesquieu felt that a city-state should ideally be a republic, but maintained that a limited monarchy was better suited to a large nation.

The [American Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution) began as a rejection only of the authority of [British parliament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_parliament) over the colonies, not of the monarchy. The failure of the British monarch to protect the colonies from what they considered the infringement of [their rights to representative government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rights_of_Englishmen), the monarch's branding of those requesting redress as traitors, and his support for sending combat troops to demonstrate authority resulted in widespread perception of the British monarchy as [tyrannical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyranny). With the [United States Declaration of Independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence) the leaders of the revolt firmly rejected the monarchy and embraced republicanism. The leaders of the revolution were well versed in the writings of the French liberal thinkers, and also in history of the classical republics. [John Adams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Adams) had notably written a book on republics throughout history. In addition, the widely distributed and popularly read-aloud tract [*Common Sense*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Sense), by [Thomas Paine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Paine), succinctly and eloquently laid out the case for republican ideals and independence to the larger public. The [Constitution of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_United_States) ratified in 1789 created a relatively strong [federal republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_republic) to replace the relatively weak [confederation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederation) under the first attempt at a national government with the [Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articles_of_Confederation_and_Perpetual_Union) ratified in 1783. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, called the [United States Bill of Rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Bill_of_Rights), guaranteed certain [natural rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_rights) fundamental to republican ideals that justified the Revolution.

The [French Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution) was also not republican at its outset. Only after the [Flight to Varennes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flight_to_Varennes) removed most of the remaining sympathy for the king was a republic declared and [Louis XVI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XVI_of_France) sent to the guillotine. The stunning success of France in the [French Revolutionary Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolutionary_Wars) saw republics spread by force of arms across much of Europe as a series of [client republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_client_republic) were set up across the continent. The rise of [Napoleon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon) saw the end of the [First French Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_French_Republic), and his eventual defeat allowed the victorious monarchies to put an end to many of the oldest republics on the continent, including [Venice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venice), [Genoa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genoa), and the Dutch.

Outside of Europe another group of republics was created as the [Napoleonic Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleonic_Wars) allowed the states of [Latin America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_America) to gain their independence. Liberal ideology had only a limited impact on these new republics. The main impetus was the local European descended [Creole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creole_class) population in conflict with the [Peninsulares](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peninsulares) governors sent from overseas. The majority of the population in most of Latin America was of either [African](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African) or [Amerindian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amerindian) decent, and the Creole elite had little interest in giving these groups power and broad-based [popular sovereignty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_sovereignty). [Simón Bolívar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sim%C3%B3n_Bol%C3%ADvar) was both the main instigator of the revolts and one of its most important theorists was sympathetic to liberal ideals, but felt that Latin America lacked the social cohesion for such a system to function and advocated autocracy as necessary.

In [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) this [autocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autocracy) briefly took the form of a monarchy in the [First Mexican Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Mexican_Empire). Due to the [Peninsular War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peninsular_War), the [Portuguese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal) court was relocated to [Brazil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil) in 1808. Brazil gained [independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence) as a [monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy) on September 7, 1822, and the [Empire of Brazil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_of_Brazil) lasted until 1889. In the other states various forms of autocratic republic existed until most were liberalized at the end of the 20th century.

The [Second French Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_French_Republic) was created in 1848, and the [Third French Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_French_Republic) in 1871. Spain briefly became the [First Spanish Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Spanish_Republic), but the monarchy was soon restored. By the start of the 20th century France and Switzerland remained the only republics in Europe. Before [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I), the Portuguese Republic, established by the revolution of October 5, 1910, was the first of the 20th century. This would encourage new republics in the aftermath of the war, when several of the largest European empires collapsed. The [German Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Empire), [Austro-Hungarian Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austro-Hungarian_Empire), [Russian Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Empire), and [Ottoman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) were then replaced by republics. New states gained independence during this turmoil, and many of these, such as [Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Republic), [Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Polish_Republic), [Finland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland) and [Czechoslovakia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czechoslovakia), chose republican forms of government. In 1931, the [Second Spanish Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Spanish_Republic) (1931–1939) turned into a [civil war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Civil_War) would be the prelude of [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II).

Republican ideas were spreading, especially in [Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia). The United States began to have considerable influence in [East Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Asia) in the later part of the 19th century, with [Protestant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant) missionaries playing a central role. The liberal and republican writers of the west also exerted influence. These combined with native [Confucian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucian) inspired political philosophy that had long argued that the populace had the right to reject unjust government that had lost the [Mandate of Heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandate_of_Heaven).

Two short lived republics were proclaimed in East Asia, the [Republic of Formosa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Formosa) and the [First Philippine Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Philippine_Republic). [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) had seen considerable [anti-Qing sentiment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Qing_sentiment), and a number of protest movements developed calling for [constitutional monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy). The most important leader of these efforts was [Sun Yat-sen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_Yat-sen), whose [Three Principles of the People](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Principles_of_the_People) combined American, European, and Chinese ideas. The [Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_China) was proclaimed on January 1, 1912.

**Decolonization**

A map of the Commonwealth republics

In the years following World War II, most of the remaining European colonies gained their independence, and most became republics. The two largest colonial powers were France and the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom). Republican France encouraged the establishment of republics in its former colonies. Great Britain attempted to follow the model it had for its earlier settler colonies of creating independent [commonwealth realms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_realm) still linked under the same monarchy. While most of the settler colonies and the smaller states of the [Caribbean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean) retained this system, it was rejected by the newly independent countries in Africa and Asia, which revised their constitutions and became republics.

Britain followed a different model in the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East); it installed local monarchies in several colonies and mandates including [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq), [Jordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan), [Kuwait](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait), [Bahrain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain), [Oman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oman), [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemen) and [Libya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libya). In subsequent decades revolutions and [coups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coup) overthrew a number of monarchs and installed republics. Several monarchies remain, and the Middle East is the only part of the world where several large states are ruled by monarchs with almost complete political control.

**Socialist republics**

*See also* [*People's Republic*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic)*,* [*Socialist state*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_state)

A poster that commemorates the permanent President of the Republic of China Yuan Shikai and the provisional President of the Republic

Among the monarchies that collapsed after the First World War was that of Russia. The [Russian Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Revolution_%281917%29) first saw the establishment of the [Russian Provisional Government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Provisional_Government) on the lines of a liberal republic, but this was overthrown by the [Bolsheviks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolsheviks) who went on to establish the [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_of_Soviet_Socialist_Republics), the first republics established under [Marxist-Leninist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxist-Leninist) ideology. Communism was wholly opposed to monarchy, and became an important element of many republican movements during the 20th century. The Russian Revolution spread into [Mongolia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongolia), and overthrew its theocratic monarchy in 1924. In the aftermath of the Second World War communist partisans gained control of [Yugoslavia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslavia) and [Albania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albania), ensuring that the states were reestablished as socialist republics rather than monarchies.

Communism also intermingled with other ideologies. It was embraced by many national liberation movements during [decolonization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decolonization). In Vietnam, communist republicans pushed aside the [Nguyễn Dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nguy%E1%BB%85n_Dynasty), and monarchies in neighboring [Laos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laos) and [Cambodia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodia) were overthrown by communist movements in the 1970s. [Arab socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_socialism) contributed to a series of revolts and coups that saw the monarchies of [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt), [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq), [Libya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libya), and [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemen) ousted. In Africa Marxist-Leninism and [African socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_socialism) led to the end of monarchy and the proclamation of republics in states such as [Burundi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burundi) and [Ethiopia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopia).

**Islamic republics**

Main article: [Islamic republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_republic)

[Islamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) political philosophy has a long history of opposition to absolute monarchy, notably in the work of [Al-Farabi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Farabi). [Sharia law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia_law) took precedence over the will of the ruler, and electing rulers by means of the [Shura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shura) was an important doctrine. While the early [caliphate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate) maintained the principles of an elected ruler, later states became hereditary or military dictatorships though many maintained some pretense of a consultative shura.

None of these states are typically referred to as republics. The current usage of republic in Muslim countries is borrowed from the western meaning, adopted into the language in the late 19th century. The 20th century saw republicanism become an important idea in much of the Middle East, as monarchies were removed in many states of the region. Some such as [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq) and [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) became [secular](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secular) republics. Some nations, such as [Indonesia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia) and [Azerbaijan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azerbaijan), began as secular. In [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran), the [1979 revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Revolution) overthrew the monarchy and created an [Islamic Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Republic) based the ideas of [Islamic democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_democracy).

**Head of state**

**Structure**

With no monarch, most modern republics use the title [president](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President) for the [head of state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_state). Originally used to refer to the presiding officer of a committee or governing body in Great Britain the usage was also applied to political leaders, including the leaders of some of the [Thirteen Colonies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteen_Colonies) (originally Virginia in 1608); in full, the "President of the Council." The first republic to adopt the title was the [United States of America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_of_America). Keeping its usage as the head of a committee the [President of the Continental Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_Continental_Congress) was the leader of the original congress. When the new constitution was written the title of [President of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States) was conferred on the head of the new [executive branch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_branch). Today almost all republics use the title president for the head of state.

If the head of state of a republic is also the [head of government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_government), this is called a [presidential system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidential_system). There are a number of forms of presidential government. A full-presidential system has a president with substantial authority and a central political role. In other states the legislature is dominant and the president's role is almost purely ceremonial and apolitical, such as in [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) and [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India).

These states are [parliamentary republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_republic) and operate similarly to [constitutional monarchies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) with [parliamentary systems](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_system) where the power of the monarch is also greatly circumscribed. In parliamentary systems the [head of government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_government), most often titled [prime minister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_minister), exercises the most real political power. [Semi-presidential systems](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi-presidential_system) have a president as an active head of state, but also have a [head of government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_government) with important powers.

The rules for appointing the president and the leader of the government, in some republics permit the appointment of a president and a prime minister who have opposing political convictions: in [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France), when the members of the ruling [cabinet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_%28government%29) and the president come from opposing political factions, this situation is called [cohabitation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohabitation_%28government%29).

In some countries, like [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland) and [San Marino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Marino), the head of state is not a single person but a committee (council) of several persons holding that office. The [Roman Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Republic) had two [consuls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consul), appointed for a year.

**Election**

In [liberal democracies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_democracies) presidents are elected, either directly by the people or indirectly by a parliament or council. Typically in presidential and semi-presidential systems the president is directly elected by the people, or is indirectly elected as done in the United States. In that country the president is officially elected by an electoral college, chosen by the States, all of which do so by direct election of the electors. The indirect election of the president through the electoral college conforms to the concept of republic as one with a system of indirect election. In the opinion of some, direct election confers [legitimacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legitimacy_%28political_science%29) upon the president and gives the office much of its political power. However, this concept of legitimacy differs from that expressed in the United States Constitution which established the legitimacy of the United States president as resulting from the signing of the Constitution by 9 states. The idea that direct election is required for legitimacy also contradicts the spirit of the [Great Compromise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connecticut_Compromise), whose actual result was manifest in the clause that provides voters in smaller states with slightly more representation in presidential selection than those in large states.

In states with a parliamentary system the president is usually elected by the parliament. This indirect election subordinates the president to the parliament, and also gives the president limited legitimacy and turns most presidential powers into [reserve powers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reserve_power) that can only be exercised under rare circumstance. There are exceptions where elected presidents have only ceremonial powers, such as in the [Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Ireland).

**Ambiguities**

The distinction between a republic and a monarchy is not always clear. The [constitutional monarchies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_monarchies) of the former British Empire and Western Europe today have almost all real political power vested in the elected representatives, with the monarchs only holding either theoretical powers, no powers or rarely used [reserve powers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reserve_power). Real legitimacy for political decisions comes from the elected representatives and is derived from the will of the people. While hereditary monarchies remain in place, political power is derived from the people as in a republic. These states are thus sometimes referred to as [crowned republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowned_republic).

Terms such as *liberal republic* are also used to describe all of the modern liberal democracies.

There are also self-proclaimed republics that act similarly to monarchies with absolute power vested in the leader and passed down from father to son. North Korea and Syria are two notable examples where a son has inherited political control. Neither of these states are officially monarchies. There is no constitutional requirement that power be passed down within one family, but it has occurred in practice.

There are also [elective monarchies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elective_monarchy) where ultimate power is vested in a monarch, but the monarch is chosen by some manner of election. A current example of such a state is [Malaysia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia) where the [Yang di-Pertuan Agong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yang_di-Pertuan_Agong) is elected every five years by the [Conference of Rulers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conference_of_Rulers) composed of the nine hereditary rulers of the [Malay states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malay_states). While rare today, elective monarchs were common in the past. The [Holy Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire) is an important example, where each new emperor was chosen by a group of electors. Islamic states also rarely employed [primogeniture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primogeniture) instead relying on various forms of election to choose a monarch's successor.

The [Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish%E2%80%93Lithuanian_Commonwealth) had an elective monarchy, with a wide suffrage of some 500,000 nobles. The system, known as the [Golden Liberty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Liberty), had developed as a method for powerful landowners to control the crown. The proponents of this system looked to classical examples, and the writings of the Italian Renaissance, and called their elective monarchy a [*rzeczpospolita*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rzeczpospolita), based on *res publica.*

**Types**

Main article: [List of republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_republics)

In the early 21st century, most states that are not monarchies label themselves as republics either in their official names or their constitutions. There are a few exceptions: the [Libyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libya) Arab [Jamahiriya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamahiriya), [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel), the [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) [Federation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federation), and [Hungary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungary). However Israel, Russia, Hungary and Libya would meet many definitions of the term *republic*.

There is a variety of republics which differ on how the head of state is chosen and how much power they have.

* [Parliamentary republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_republic) — a republic, like [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland), with an elected head of state, but where the head of state and head of government are kept separate with the Head of government retaining most executive powers, or a head of state akin to a head of government, elected by a Parliament.
* [Federal republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_republic) — a federal union of states or provinces with a republican form of government. Examples include [Argentina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argentina), [Austria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria), [Brazil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil), [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia), the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), and [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland).
* [Islamic Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Republic) — Countries like [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan), [Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan), [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) are republics governed in accordance with Islamic law.
* [Socialist republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_state) — Countries like [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) and [Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam) are meant to be governed for and by the people, but with no direct elections. The term *People's Republic* is used to differentiate themselves from the earlier republic of their countries before the people's revolution, like Republic of China and Republic of Korea.

**Sub-national republics**

In general being a republic also implies [sovereignty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty) as for the state to be ruled by the people it cannot be controlled by a foreign power. There are important exceptions to this, for example, Republics in the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) were member states which had to meet three criteria to be named republics:

1. be on the periphery of the Soviet Union so as to be able to take advantage of their theoretical right to secede;
2. be economically strong enough to be self-sufficient upon secession; and
3. be named after at least one million people of the ethnic group which should make up the majority population of said republic.

Republics were originally created by Stalinand continue to be created even today in Russia. Russia itself is not a republic but a federation. It is sometimes argued that the former [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) was also a supra-national republic, based on the claim that the member states were different [nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nations).

States of the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) are required, like the federal government, to be republican in form, with final authority resting with the people. This was required because the states were intended to create and enforce most domestic laws, with the exception of areas delegated to the federal government and prohibited to the states. The founding fathers of the country intended most domestic laws to be handled by the states, although, over time, the federal government has gained more and more influence over domestic law. Requiring the states to be a republic in form was seen as protecting the citizens' rights and preventing a state from becoming a dictatorship or monarchy, and reflected unwillingness on the part of the original 13 states (all independent republics) to unite with other states that were not republics. Additionally, this requirement ensured that only other republics could join the union.

In the example of the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), the original 13 British [colonies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonies) became [independent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_%28nation%29) states after the [American Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution), each having a republican form of [government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government). These independent states initially formed a loose [confederation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederation) called the United States and then later formed the current United States by ratifying the current [U.S. Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Constitution), creating a [union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_union) of [sovereign states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_states) with the union or [federal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_government_of_the_United_States) government also being a republic. Any state joining the union later was also required to be a republic.

**Other meanings**

**Political philosophy**

Main article: [Republicanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republicanism)

The term *republic* originated from the writers of the Renaissance as a descriptive term for states that were not monarchies. These writers, such as Machiavelli, also wrote important prescriptive works describing how such governments should function. These ideas of how a government and society should be structured is the basis for an ideology known as [classical republicanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_republicanism) or [civic humanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civic_humanism). This ideology is based on the Roman Republic and the city states of Ancient Greece and focuses on ideals such as [civic virtue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civic_virtue), [rule of law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_law), and [mixed government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixed_government).

This understanding of a republic as a distinct form of government from a [liberal democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_democracy) is one of the main theses of the Cambridge School of historical analysis. This grew out of the work of [J.G.A. Pocock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J.G.A._Pocock) who in 1975 argued that a series of scholars had expressed a consistent set of republican ideals. These writers included Machiavelli, [Milton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Milton), [Montesquieu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montesquieu), and the founders of the [United States of America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_of_America).

Pocock argued that this was an ideology with a history and principles distinct from [liberalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism). These ideas were embraced by a number of different writers [Quentin Skinner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quentin_Skinner), [Philip Pettit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Pettit) and [Cass Sunstein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cass_Sunstein). These subsequent writers have further explored the history of the idea, and also outlined how a modern republic should function.

**United States**

Main article: [Republicanism in the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republicanism_in_the_United_States)

A distinct set of definitions for the word *republic* evolved in the United States. In common parlance a republic is a state that does not practice [direct democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_democracy) but rather has a government indirectly controlled by the people. This understanding of the term was originally developed by [James Madison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Madison), and notably employed in [Federalist Paper No. 10](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federalist_No._10). This meaning was widely adopted early in the history of the United States, including in [Noah Webster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah_Webster)'s dictionary of 1828. It was a novel meaning to the term; representative democracy was not an idea mentioned by Machiavelli and did not exist in the classical republics.

The term *republic* does not appear in the [Declaration of Independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Independence_%28United_States%29), but does appear in Article IV of the Constitution which "guarantee[s] to every State in this Union a Republican form of Government." What exactly the writers of the constitution felt this should mean is uncertain. The [Supreme Court](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SCOTUS), in [*Luther v. Borden*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luther_v._Borden) (1849), declared that the definition of *republic* was a "political question" in which it would not intervene. In two later cases, it did establish a basic definition. In [*United States v. Cruikshank*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_v._Cruikshank) (1875), the court ruled that the "equal rights of citizens" were inherent to the idea of republic.

However, the term *republic* is not synonymous with the republican form. The republican form is defined as one in which the powers of sovereignty are vested in the people and are exercised by the people, either directly, or through representatives chosen by the people, to whom those powers are specially delegated. In re Duncan, 139 U.S. 449, 11 S.Ct. 573, 35 L.Ed. 219; Minor v. Happersett, 88 U.S. (21 Wall.) 162, 22 L.Ed. 627.

Beyond these basic definitions the word *republic* has a number of other connotations. W. Paul Adams observes that *republic* is most often used in the United States as a synonym for state or government, but with more positive connotations than either of those terms. Republicanism is often referred to as the founding ideology of the United States. Traditionally scholars believed this American republicanism was a derivation of the [liberal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism) ideologies of [John Locke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke) and others developed in Europe.

The political philosophy of republicanism initiated by Machiavelli was thought to have had little impact on the founders of the United States. In the 1960s and 1970s a revisionist school led by the likes of Bernard Bailyn began to argue that republicanism was just as or even more important than liberalism in the creation of the United States. This issue is still much disputed and scholars like Kramnick completely reject this view.

**See also**

* [List of republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_republics)
* [Republicanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republicanism)
* [Republicanism in the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republicanism_in_the_United_States)

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