

America: The Deceit About Being a ‘Republic’ versus a ‘Democracy’

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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One of my recent articles at several sites, [“Jimmy Carter Is Correct That the U.S. Is No Longer a Democracy”](#) generated many reader-comments (such as [here](#)) saying things like, “The US has always been a republic. There are no true democracies in the modern world.” This will be my response to all who expressed that view:

You miss the point that Carter made, and that I there documented to be true, which is no semantic issue (“democracy” versus “republic”), but which instead concerns the basic lie about what the United States of America really is now:

Is this a representative democracy, such as its Founders intended and such as it was famous and honored throughout the world for being, until at least around 1980? Or, is it instead a nation that’s ruled by a tiny elite, an aristocracy, which in this country consists of its [500 or so](#) billionaires, who buy the politicians whom ‘we’ ‘elect’?

Is the U.S. now, basically, a fraud? Is it a dictatorship, instead of a democracy? Is it some kind of aristocracy, which controls the government here?

That’s not a semantic issue, at all. America’s first political party was called the “Democratic Republican Party,” but could as well have been called the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, because those two terms are essentially synonymous in any nation that has a large population, in which the public elect representatives to represent them, instead of directly vote on the policies that the government is to pursue — to place into its law, and to enforce by its duly authorized police or otherwise, and to adjudicate by democratically appointed judges and/or juries.

The only democracies that can exist, except for tiny ones, are representative democracies: they are republics. Republics are the only type of democratic nations that exist, practically speaking.

Where, then, does the apparently common misconception that there is a difference between the two terms arise?

I shall here present a theory about that: This widespread misconception arises because the rulers in a dictatorship — i.e., in an elite-controlled or “aristocratic” government, as opposed to in a government that authentically *does* represent the public — can thereby fool many people into misconceiving what the real issue, the real problem, there is.

The real issue is whether the country is controlled by its aristocracy (a dictatorship), or instead by its public (its residents).

Let's be frank and honest: an aristocratically controlled government is a dictatorship, regardless of whether that "aristocracy" is in fascist Italy, or in Nazi Germany, or in Communist USSR, or in North Korea, or in the United States of America.

That's what Jimmy Carter was talking about, and it's what I was documenting to be true.

To varying and rather extraordinary degrees throughout earlier U.S. history, this nation really was a democracy; that is to say, a republic. But we're not actually like that any more (as I documented there).

If this problem is not faced — and honestly, not by means of semantic games and misdirections — then surely there will be not even a possibility to restore the democracy, the republic, the democratic republic, or whatever one prefers to call it, which our Founders had intended, and which lasted for around two centuries on these shores, and was widely admired and even (by some) envied throughout the world.

The aristocracy and its many fools might not want this enormous problem to be addressed, but Jimmy Carter clearly does. And so do I.

One of the ways to misdirect about this problem is to obsess about "good residents" ("citizens") versus "bad residents" ("aliens"), because that nationalistic way of viewing things enables the aristocracy to split the public against itself and thereby to maintain its own grip on power against, actually, that entire public. Nazi Germany did this.

Another way they misdirect it is to buy control over all of the political parties that stand a chance of dominating the government, and so to create basically a 'democratic' or 'republican' controlled government which, in any case, is actually controlled by that aristocracy, even if, perhaps, by a different faction within it. Even if a different faction within the aristocracy takes control, it's still the same dictatorship. Because the public is *not* in control.

There are many ways to deceive the public. There are many ways to rule the public. But all of them are aristocratic; all of them are elite — and typically monied-elite — dictatorships.

In a democracy (or republic) the government does not rule, the government represents. It represents honestly, because it doesn't need to do so by misdirection, by deceptions.

In an aristocracy (or dictatorship) the government does not represent — at least not honestly — because they don't want the people to see how their sausages are made.

Will a violent revolution be required to overthrow it? If so, then won't the likelihood be high that it will merely replace one group who rule by force, by a different group who rule by force? For example: isn't that what happened in the Russian Revolution and its aftermath?

Jimmy Carter challenged America to restore democracy. And he was right to do so. But can it be done? And, if so, then how?

It's the great issue in 2016. Because if it's not dealt with then, the dictatorship, the aristocracy that controls it, will become so deeply lodged that it won't be able to be dislodged without great violence. And the outcome of that would not solve the problem, at all. It would be hell. But avoiding that hell by means of accepting continuance of aristocratic control would also be hell, because aristocracy would then become even more deeply

entrenched.

America needs to deal with it, not postpone solving it.

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

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About the author:

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