

Is the United States collapsing like the Roman Republic?

I am sorry, but yes, the collapse of the American Republic is upon us; the Rubicon is crossed.

The US was designed by the founding fathers to be a more modern and lasting (they hoped) Roman Republic. Thus, from our government to society, we are the modern Roman Republic.

The basis of *Western Law* is Roman law, and you could follow a Roman Court case like an episode of *Suits*. Trials, lawyers, defendants, evidence, oratory, and elected/appointed judges. Concepts like a constitution- Indeed, all of Republicanism- come from Rome. This whole thing is where we elect representatives to serve us in the government. The electoral college was not invented by the founders of the USA- it was invented by the Romans, who used 2 different electoral college-like systems depending on the election. The Office of the President and Vice President, the veto, the filibuster, term limits, campaigning for office, political donors, elected Judges- the goes on for a long time The Romans also had a Supreme Court of sorts, though it was less powerful and based around religion. We share the same holidays- Giving gifts to loved ones, caroling, decorations with lights, family feasts at the end of December- that is Saturnalia or Christmas (though the Romans did candles in bags). Our RELIGION (Christianity) was first spread through Europe by the Romans The Romans loved sports. They loved having a few too many, watching *the game*, and rooting for their favorites. Our Calendar is Roman or darn close. Even the names of the months line up, though the Romans had 10 months, and that meant no January or February. They had Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Junius, Quintilis, Sextilis, September, October, November, and December It also runs WAY deeper than this surface-level stuff. I will get into that, though, don't worry. I had like 20 more bullet points off the top of my head, but it was too long.

Notice how there are a lot of similarities, but it's never perfect. We have 12 months, they had 10. We watch Football, the Romans watched Gladiators and Chariot Races. It's not a 1 to 1 replica, it's like the first movie in the newest Star Wars Trilogy- the *Force Awakens*. It's not EXACTLY like *Star Wars: A New Hope* but it is darn close.

1 The Poor Masses of Rome: Wealth Inequality and Lack of Opportunity

Rome started as a town of migrants- or so they thought (from Troy specifically). They grew through rapid migration, allowing any and all to come to Rome and become citizens. The town became a city, and then the city became a regional power. As it expanded, land was given to Roman citizens, creating a strong middle class of land-owning farmers.

Then, Rome entered a period of rapid expansion first through Italy, then into Spain, Greece, and North Africa. This growth brought in lots of wealth as Rome went from a regional power to a superpower (by those standards). This influx of land did not benefit the now much larger Roman population. Instead, the massive influx of slaves led to a few men owning entire regions and running massive slave estates. The “middle-class farmer” could not compete, and most were forced to sell their lands cheaply and move to Rome in search of work. The spoils of conquest and Empire were not being shared and instead hoarded by the few who went from rich to stupidly rich.

Seriously, in the early Republic, *rich* meant having a nice stone house in Rome with a few slaves. By the days of Caesar, *rich* meant having a slave for every door in your house whose only job was that door.

Hundreds of thousands of Romans flocked to the cities looking for work as the economy shifted rapidly. The rich got way richer, and everyone else got a bit poorer.

Two up-and-coming young politicians named Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus noticed this and harnessed the anger of the common citizen to achieve political power. They would attempt to pass land reform bills and even break some serious taboos to do so. In the end, they were killed, and the situation changed little for the common man.

This was almost unheard of in Rome. Political violence was not allowed at all. No weapons were allowed near the Senate, and most politicians had their homes open to the public all day. Now 2 Tribunes of the Plebians, the most powerful office that the Plebians (common people) controlled, had been killed. Violence was in the political playbook.

Politically, a lot had changed here in the 130–120s BC. No longer were politicians just politicians- now 2 factions had been defined. You had the Populists (Populares), who wanted land reform and more power for the common folk, and you had the Conservatives (called Optimates), who favored

tradition and the status quo.

Additionally, in their quest to pass land reform, the Gracchi broke the rules. Tiberius Gracchus introduced legislation, and when it failed, he used the veto power that the Tribunes of the Plebeians had to shut down the government. In the past, this was meant as a guardrail and a “nuclear option,” and he had used it to push an agenda.

Suddenly, Rome had political parties (and wealthy donors), violence was a tool to be used “when needed”, and the rules could bend more than anyone expected.

2 Populares vs Optimate: Political Factionalism and Political Violence

Only a few years after the last Gracchi brother was killed, a Populist named Marius would be elected Tribune of the Plebs (119 BC).

By 107 BC, he was a famous General, and Rome was under threat of invasion. Typically, Consuls served 1 term in office and only 1 term (which lasted a year). However, Marius was hard at work reforming the Roman military into the professional, paid military we know them for. In short, he was preparing Rome for the coming military invasions and thus was elected Consul 6 times in a row. The situation was too dire to change leadership, and the new deal Marius was putting together was popular. When this invasion came the Romans won in stunning fashion as well.

Marius’s 6th term got him stuck in controversy, and he left Rome in a state of disgrace. Then he would suddenly return and make himself Consul out of the blue, which kicked off a Civil War between Marius and his old mentee Sulla, who was a Conservative. In reality, it was a war between the Populists and Conservatives.

There had been conflict before, but going forward, each faction’s main goal was to obstruct the other.

Sulla won, and in 81 BC, he was made “Dictator for the Making of Laws and for the Settling of the Constitution” for life. He would spend a few years making the elite more powerful and the common people less powerful. This would include a Stalin-style purge of major voters and supporters of Marius.

On the losing side was a very young man- the nephew by marriage of Marius- named Julius Caesar.

3 Milo and Clodius: Political Violence

In 63 BC, we get the Catilinarian conspiracy. Lucius Sergius Catilina was an up-and-coming Populist who had run up against 2 other Consuls who were both conservative. Remember how Sulla did those Stalin-style purges? Well, many of those involved were Conservative Senators and politicians, so it left them all *tainted*. So they turned to the relatively unknown man with a decent career named Cicero. Their other candidate, named Gaius Hybrida, was one of Sulla's Military Tribunes and thus was VERY tainted.

Lucius Sergius Catilina thought he was a shoo-in. He was the leader of the Populists, was well-liked, and the conservatives were running a relatively unknown moderate, and one of Sulla's own Tribunes.

Lucius Sergius Catilina did not come in 1st place or 2nd place- he outright lost. It was a humiliation, and the Conservatives were over the moon with joy.

Rather than accept defeat, try again next year, or lead the Populist wing of the Senate, he tried to amass a rather large Army of voters, veterans, militia, and Gauls and overthrow the 2 Consuls who had won.

The conspiracy was stopped, and those involved were executed. Funny enough, a young man named Julius Caesar, who had reentered politics, argued to spare Catilina and almost convinced everyone but lost the debate in the end.

None of this engendered trust in the government or the electoral process. It only helped further normalize political violence on both sides. Indeed, from here it got worse.

Even during this conspiracy, there was a guy named Clodius whom I should write a whole post about. However, for brevity, I will leave it at him basically hiring a small army of thugs to attack Senators, voters, and politicians. This included targeting Cicero.

He also tried to dress as a woman to sneak into a women-only party hosted by Caesar's wife and seduce her. This caused a Conservative politician named Milo to raise his own little band of troublemakers and do the same. Political violence, when it was done against the Gracchi, had been nearly unheard of. Now they were fighting miniature battles in the street.

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4 Caesar's Consulship: Breaking the Limits of a Republic

Caesar had witnessed what Sulla and Marius had done, he knew what the Gracchi brothers had done, and he thought, why not me?.

So when Caesar was elected Consul (Roman President) in 59 BC and his grand land reform bill was vetoed, he ignored the veto. When the Senate tried to filibuster Caesar's bill, he skipped the Senate vote.

Consuls had a set of powers called Imperium, which made them immune to legal prosecution. This, among other loopholes, made Caesar a far more powerful Consul than Rome had seen before.

Caesar saw what Marius and Sulla did and thought, "Why not me?" This is how politics work. Once something is done- like a court being ignored or a law being broken- it becomes the standard.

Others took notice, and we will see that play out soon enough.

5 Pompey's Election: Faith in the System

In 55 BC, Pompey pulled a fast one. Pompey Magnus was a great general of times past, and in 55 BC, he was still an ally to Caesar (though this would change in a few years). It's hard to be concise, so if you want clarification, let me know.

On the last day of the year, the Consuls would step down and go about whatever they were planning to do next. One of their jobs was to oversee the elections for the next set of Consuls. When I say Consul, this President but a bit more powerful.

Pompey wanted to win with Crassus and pulled some crazy stuff because "if Caesar can do it, why can't I?" First, he got Clodius (that Clodius) and his mob to cause violence so that the elections would be delayed. It worked, the Consuls delayed the elections, and then stepped down on the last day of the year BEFORE the new Consuls had been elected.

So then elections were held when things calmed down, and there were no Consuls to oversee the election of Pompey and his ally Crassus. So Pompey wins (as was expected) and then was expected to oversee the next round of elections happening in 1 hour. He assumed office right away because, remember, there were no active Consuls.

During the next round of elections for Praetor (think judge and general), it looked like the leader of the Conservatives, Cato, would win. Pompey stopped the entire election because he saw bad omens. He then had armed thugs he paid work over the crowd and did the election good; this time, Cato did not win.

A few years later, in 53 BC, Pompey had become more anti-Caesar. As elections were held behind the 2 Consuls were being bribed IN THE OPEN to ensure they won, and they were just doing what Pompey did 2 years prior.

This further weakened faith in the electoral process. Term limits and laws overseeing corruption are there for a reason. When you mess with them, you mess with the foundations of Republicanism.

6 The Populares and Caesar: A Political Party Built for 1 Man

As Caesar is doing is conquering the dynamics change. Before, there were 2 broad political factions, but that had changed. The Populists were now just the *Caesar Party*. Their political goals when in power were to support Caesar. At the same time, the Conservatives became the *Never Caesar Party*.

The result of this was the famous Civil War between Caesar and the *Caesarions* and the Roman Senate, a war Caesar won. After winning, Caesar, of course, became dictator for a 10-year term because *if Sulla can do it, why can't I?*

Caesar was assassinated, as we all know. This then led to another 2 Civil Wars, with a 3rd Civil War in there related to the other 2.

7 Lack of Faith: Why Protect This System?

Imagine what the Romans went through here. A Civil War, Stalin-style purges, a coup, violence in the streets, another few Civil Wars, election interference, public bribery to undermine elections.

What happens when people see this? Do you think they want things to stay the same? What is stopping them from burning it down or handing off their freedoms for stability and safety?

This was the problem. When Caesar became Dictator, nobody cared. When his heir Octavian became Emperor, people were overjoyed. The hyper-patriotic Romans, obsessed with Liberty and how their system was the best on earth, willingly handed it over to an Emperor.

8 Does any of this sound familiar?

The default human state is not egalitarianism and love- it's authoritarianism. Ancient China, the Steppes of Northern Asia, the Island of Japan, the Empires of Persia, the Empires and Kingdoms of Europe, the Empires and Tribes of North and South America. On every continent for all of our 12,000 years of civilization, we have always had authoritarian systems where a King, Chief, Emperor, or Priest has total control. This is the simplest "default" organizational system we use.

A Democracy or Republic is fragile because it deals with people and votes and the complexity of uncertainty. It is a restrained form of government, and creating a functional government that keeps sociopathic leaders from ruling as they want to is difficult.

This is why the Founding Fathers looked to the Roman Republic when creating the United States. They took the concepts that worked, tweaked a few things, modernized some stuff, and boom- the current government we live by today.

Funny enough, the Roman Republic was established almost the same way. They fought and won a Civil War, forever ousting Kings and setting up a Republic in its place. The *backbone* of the economy was slavery and agriculture and it steadily grew through migration. Also, the Romans were a mix of Latin, Greek, and lots of other cultures, but were strongly Greek. Just like how the US is strongly English despite influences from all over the world from migrants. Now I just covered basically the entire Roman Republic in a single post so glossing was done- if you'd like clarification or if you disagree, let me know. Do keep in mind this is not an academic paper, and yes, I simplified some stuff. It is hard to cover Clodius in a paragraph. Yes, I said Civil War. The *American Revolution* was really a Civil War- more in comments.

The point is that there is a clear pattern. Wealth inequality, political instability, political factionalism, political violence, loss of faith in the electoral system, loss of faith in all systems- these are things that enabled Caesar to

topple the Republic.

The Romans LOVED their Republic, and wise Emperors pretended it was still around. Yes, Caesar was able to start an outright *me vs you* Civil War because he (not Rome) paid the troops, and thus they were loyal to him. I don't expect US Marines to clash with US Army Rangers in the Carolinas. Remember how I said this isn't going to be exact- timeline included.

However, by looking at a prior similar civilization and its own collapse into authoritarianism, we can see the issues that caused it and see if they exist with us today- and they 100% do.

I am not saying that the USA is going to implode. The US is nearly impossible to invade thanks to the Oceans and has more oil, timber, metal, and farmland than anywhere else. I am saying that those *rights* and this whole experiment with a government *of the people* are ending. Correction, it has ended we are just waiting to see the fallout.