

**Thomas Jefferson And
What Doomed 'Muricah From
The Get-Go To Covid Communism**

A close-up portrait of Thomas Jefferson, showing his face from the nose up. He has white hair and is wearing a dark coat over a white cravat. The background is dark and textured.

**the
Mike Church Show**

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...and metaphysical; and it was sensuous because it lived close to a natural scene of great variety and interest. Because it lived by images, not highly organized, it is true, as Dogma, but rather more loosely gathered from the past, the South was a profoundly traditional European community. The Southerners were incurable in their preference for Cato over the social conditions in which he historically lived. They looked at history as the concrete and temporal series—a series at all only because they required a straight line back into the past, for the series, such as it was, was very capricious, and could hardly boast of a natural logic. It could entertain the biblical mythology along with the Greek, and it could add to these a lively medievalism from the novels of Sir Walter Scott. They saw themselves as human beings living by a humane principle, from which they were unwilling to subtract the human so as to set the principle free to operate on an unlimited program of practicality. For that is what a principle is—the way things will work. But the Southerner, or more generally the die-hard agrarian, was not willing to let the principle proceed alone, uncontrolled; for all that he values in the working of principle is the capacity that he retains of enjoying the work it does. The old Southerners were highly critical of the kinds of work to be done. They planted no corn that they could not enjoy; they grew no cotton that did not directly contribute to the upkeep of a rich private life; and they knew no history for the sake of knowing it, but simply for the sake of contemplating it and seeing in it an image of themselves. And aware of the treachery of nature, as all agrarians are, they tended to like stories, very simple stories with a moral.

We have already considered some of the possible reasons why they broke down.

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They had a religious life, but it was not enough organized with a right mythology. In fact, their rational life was not powerfully united to the religious experience, as it was in mediaeval society, and they are a fine specimen of the tragic pitfall upon which the Western mind has always hovered. Lacking a rational system for the defense of their religious attitude and its base in a feudal society, they elaborated no rational system whatever, no full-grown philosophy; so that, when the post-bellum temptations of the devil, who is the exploiter of nature, confronted them, they had no defense. Since there is, in the Western mind, a radical division between the religious, the contemplative, the qualitative, on the one hand, and the scientific, the natural, the practical on the other, the scientific mind always plays havoc with the spiritual life when it is not powerfully enlisted in its cause; it cannot be permitted to operate alone.

It operated alone in Thomas Jefferson, and the form that it took in his mind may be reduced to a formula: The ends of man are sufficiently contained in his political destiny.

Now the political destiny of men is the way they work, and the ends they hope to achieve collectively by the operation of mechanical laws. It is not necessary to belabor this point, or to draw out the enormous varieties that such a theory may exhibit. It is sufficient to point out that the ante-bellum Southerners never profoundly believed it. It is highly illuminating to reflect that they acted as if they did. There was, of course, a good deal of dissent: the Virginia Constitutional Convention repudiated Jefferson in 1832. It was a first step; but the last step was so far off that it could not possibly have preceded 1861.

The modern Southerner inherits the Jeffersonian formula. This is only to say that he inherits a concrete and very unsatisfactory history. He can almost wish for his case the Northern contempt for his kind of history; he would like to believe that history is not a vast body of concrete fact to which he must be loyal, but only a source of mechanical formulas; for then he might hope to do what the Northern industrialist has just about succeeded in doing-making a society out of abstractions. The Southerner would conjure up some magic abstraction to spirit back to him his very concrete way of life. He would, in short, in his plight, apply the formula by his inheritance-that the ends of man may be established by political means.

The South would not have been defeated had it possessed a sufficient faith in its own kind of God. It would not have been defeated, in other words, had it been able to bring out a ~y of doctrine setting forth its true conviction that the of man require more for their realization ~ -than politics. The setback of the war was of itself a very trivial one.

We are very near an answer to our question-How may the Southerner take hold of his Tradition?

The answer is, by violence.

For this answer is inevitable. He cannot fall back upon his religion, simply because it was never articulated and organized for him; if he could do this, he would constitute himself a "borer from within," and might hope to effect a secular revolution in his favor. As we have said, economy is the secular image of religious conviction. His religious conviction is inchoate and unorganized; it never had the opportunity to be anything else.

Since he cannot bore from within, he has left the sole alternative of boring from without. This method is political, active, and, in the nature of the case, violent and revolutionary. Reaction is the most radical of programs; it aims at cutting away the overgrowth and getting back to the roots. A forward-looking radicalism is a contradiction; it aims at rearranging the foliage.

The Southerner is faced with the paradox: He must use an instrument, which is political, and so unrealistic and pretentious that he must believe in it, to re-establish a private, self-contained, and essentially spiritual life. I say that he must do this; but that remains to be seen.

