What were the key factors that made Thomas Jefferson move towards democracy rather than republicanism?

The project for democracy lies at the heart of Thomas Jefferson's political thought—an endeavour that is more vital and realisable today than it was 200 years ago. Many of Jefferson's critiques of US democracies are applicable in today's world, such as political hierarchies that allow unequal property ownership, the forms of authorities that maintain social order, internal tax fed to the navy and so on. This critique of the United States' democracy is a first step in demystifying the concept of democracy, removing at least some of the misconceptions and corruptions that have plagued it in today's world. Jefferson is in a unique position of authority for such a mission, as he not only played a key role in the founding of the United States, but he also sits atop the official national pantheon. As we know it, Jefferson strongly believed in a democratic US, but how much did Jefferson understand the meaning of democracy and what this would mean for American citizens? Jefferson is most famously known for writing the declaration of independence, the argument of Edmund Rudolph, who claimed that black slaves were not considered in the formulation of the Declaration of Independence's ideas because they were not constituent parts of society, was challenged by Jefferson's high ground for freedom. Jefferson, on the other hand, believed that black slaves had a right to freedom. But why did this not stop him at all from having such slaves. Was he really an ambassador for the fight of freedom for all, or was this just a facade? In this essay I will attempt to understand the key factors that erred Thomas Jefferson towards democracy rather than republicanism, even though he was a republican member.

"Jeffersonian Democracy" was named after its advocate, Thomas Jefferson. Jeffersonians, were the people of the democratic-republican party, in opposition to the federalist party of Alexander Hamilton, who were extremely committed to republicanism in the US, meaning opposition to aristocracy of any form. They opposed governmental corruption, insistence on virtue prioritising the yeoman farmers, planters and common folk. Historically, Jefferson has been named the "most democratic of the founding fathers." This form of leadership dominated American politics and government from the early 1800s until about 1824, two years before Jefferson passed away. The Jeffersonians proved much more popular and favoured by the common folk and farmers etc, which led to this dominance. Some factions embraced some positions more than others under the umbrella phrase "Jeffersonian democracy." Urbanization, industrial industries, and financial speculation, in Jefferson's opinion, would rob the ordinary man of his independence and economic freedom. The extension of the United States into the American west, according to Jefferson, would offer the

space and land required to establish an agrarian democracy. For this reason, Jefferson used his executive power to oversee the Louisiana Purchase. He believed it was critical for the country's economy to be built on agriculture and the work of independent farmers. The Jeffersonians had groups who questioned the fundamental meaning of their credo, despite being principled and holding fiercely held core principles. During the War of 1812, for example, it became clear that independent state militia groups were unfit to fight a real war against a big country. The new Secretary of War, Jeffersonian John C. Calhoun, urged that the Army be strengthened. He was able to have his way with the help of most of the Republicans in Congress. After Spain sold Florida to the United States, the "Old Republican" party, claiming to be committed to the Jeffersonian Principles of '98, battled him and reduced the size of the Army. It was difficult not to go to war in the face of Native American raids over the Florida border in the South and the question of impressment. Jefferson was adamant about not going to war with the British. Men who were eager to go to war and gain territory formed a group known as the war hawks. After getting Jefferson to go to war with Britain, Spain and Britain were able to claim Florida as well because they were allies. The reason for this was because he did not want to go to war with European nations, or at all, as I believe, but he caved in and went to war nonetheless due to pressure from war hawks. Jefferson was the most powerful figure in the early republic, driving the effort to strengthen the rights of the common people. Furthermore, his Declaration of Independence stated America's mission: "that all men are created equal." Despite this, unlike Washington, he lived his entire life as a slave owner, never releasing his slaves.

Despite the success and relevance of Jeffersonian Democracy, its big ambition was hampered by dark faults. First, his ambitions for incorporating technology into the home were dashed when he failed to recognise how poverty frequently pushed women and children to the fore of modern industrial tasks. Second, his ambitions for an agrarian republic did not allow for an equal place for Native Americans. Third, Jefferson's agrarian celebration overlooked the fact that slaves worked the richest farmland in the United States. Slavery was clearly incompatible with democratic principles. Slavery's place in the republic was explained by Jefferson because of African Americans' racial inferiority, which prevented them from becoming full and equal citizens. “It seems paradoxical that Thomas Jefferson, one of the enduring heroes of American democracy, should have been the owner of more than 180 slaves at the very time when he was proclaiming that all men were created equal and that they were “endowed by their creator” with the “unalienable rights” of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”.” Cohen, W. (1969). Throughout his adult life, Jefferson portrayed that he held the belief that slavery was immoral, and a huge injustice done to these people, but how could a person with such beliefs continue to have as

many as 180 slaves? Jefferson used the phrase “avarice and oppression” to describe the slaveholding interest, which is indeed a contradiction to his personal life. The fact that he had these personal slaves and use such phrases as these, questions why he erred towards the freedom and democracy of the slaves in the first place. What would he gain from fighting for the freedom, which he clearly did not believe in. Or was it the fact that in the late 18th century, his role as a slave owner was part of American culture and was nothing more than something that was entailed upon him. “Born into a slave system.” most Jefferson scholars would simply argue, “made the best of a bad situation” deeming he behaved as a “benevolent and indulgent master.” Cohen, W. (1969). Someone with such power, as Jefferson had, would not need to follow the social norms of slavery if he were advocating against and seemed simply resent it.

To conclude, despite the success and relevance of Jeffersonian Democracy, its big ambition was hampered by dark faults. Many crucial components of Jefferson's plan were realised thanks to his ideas inspiring a large political movement. First, his ambitions for incorporating technology into the home were dashed when he failed to recognise how poverty frequently pushed women and children to the fore of modern industrial tasks. Second, his ambitions for an agrarian republic did not allow for an equal place for Native Americans. This completely contradicts his words on freedom for all men. Third, Jefferson's agrarian celebration overlooked the fact that slaves worked the richest farmland in the United States. Slavery was clearly incompatible with democratic principles. Slavery's place in the republic was explained by Jefferson because of African Americans' racial inferiority, which prevented them from becoming full and equal citizens. The final judgement of Jeffersonian Democracy is based on a major inconsistency. Despite the success and relevance of Jeffersonian Democracy, its big ambition was hampered by dark faults. During his lifetime, Thomas Jefferson was suspected of having an affair with one of his slaves, Sally Hemings. Eston Heming, Heming's son, was discovered to be linked to Jefferson's family through DNA tests in 1998. Does this mean he had kept the slaves to work on his farm to hide the ongoing affair. Did the birth of his own son, out of wed lock, not change his perspective on the harsh reality of slaves or did this simply mean he had to hide the trace of this child by having the slaves continue their work on the farm. It is hard to understand his reasonings for saying many things but not following through with any actions, like many politicians of this day get caught up doing. One thing historians seem to pick up on is no matter what your thoughts were on controversial topics, the generations of today's world are more likely to follow through with their actions and not cower away from them, unlike the past.

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