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Andrew Jackson

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Democracy and the Monster Bank

Jackson's decision to destroy the Second Bank of the United States caught some of his own supporters by surprise. After enduring intense public opprobrium following the Panic of 1819, the Bank had recovered its reputation as a responsible financial institution thanks to the expert management of its new president, Nicholas Biddle. With its charter not due to expire until 1836, and with the "Corrupt Bargain" and the protective tariff dominating public discussion, the Bank was not an issue in the 1828 elections. Yet only a few weeks after his inauguration, Jackson was soliciting advice about how he could replace the existing Bank with a more benign institution. Near the close of his first annual message in December 1829, he cast doubt on the Bank charter's constitutionality and suggested that Biddle had failed to provide the country with a sound currency. By the late winter of 1830, Jackson's closest advisers understood his ultimate intentions: "It will come to this," Amos Kendall wrote to Francis Blair, "whoever is in favor of that Bank will be against Old Hickory."

To some observers, Jackson's attack on the Bank was but the latest example of his habitual lashing out against anyone or anything he thought had insulted his honor. During the 1828 campaign, Jackson received word that Bank branches in Kentucky and Louisiana were secretly funneling funds to the Adams campaign. The charges alone were sufficient, Jackson's critics presumed, to persuade the new president that the Bank was evil and had to be destroyed. The brilliant but hardly impartial French visitor Alexis de Tocqueville picked up the claims from his numerous anti-Jackson American friends, and duly reported them as fact in his masterpiece, *Democracy in America*. The vengeful president, Tocqueville wrote, deranged by personal pique, used the full weight of his office to "rouse the local passions and the blind democratic instincts of the country" against the Bank and Nicholas Biddle. Later historians unsympathetic to Jackson echoed Tocqueville's account.

Once again, Jackson's opponents misunderstood. Jackson certainly demonized the Bank and Biddle. The allegations about Bank branch interference in the 1828 campaign infuriated him. Eventually, his struggle with the Bank, like his struggle with Calhoun over nullification, became a war to defend his own reputation and honor. But, as he did with nullification, Jackson raised principled and considered objections to the Bank as an unconstitutional aberration and an affront to popular sovereignty. He believed that, contrary to the Framers' intentions, the Bank's charter concentrated extraordinary power in the hands of a small coterie of unelected private bankers—"a few Monied Capitalists," as he described them to one supporter. Effectively responsible only to its private shareholders, the Bank amounted to an independent fourth branch of government, exercising enormous leverage over the nation's economy while operating utterly free of democratic checks and balances. No matter how expertly its president and directors performed their jobs, the Bank was, according to Jackson, inherently parasitic and aristocratic. Having sworn an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, he thought it his duty to crush the monstrosity once and for all.

The Second Bank of the United States, headquartered in Philadelphia, was a privately owned institution with enormous public authority, of a kind unimaginable today. Under its congressional charter, the Bank served as the federal government's exclusive fiscal
agent, empowered to hold government deposits, make interstate transfers of federal funds, and handle federal payments or receipts, including taxes—all in exchange for an annual fee of $1.5 million. Formally linked to the government (which owned one-fifth of its stock and appointed five of its twenty-five directors), it could use public funds interest-free for its own purposes and was exempt from taxation by the states in which it had its twenty-five branch offices. Yet the Bank was essentially a private commercial bank, beholden directly to its directors and its stockholders, an elite group numbering four thousand. Like any other chartered bank, it had the power to issue its own notes and to conduct all other normal commercial bank functions. In 1830, it was responsible for between 15 and 20 percent of all the bank lending in the country, and had issued upwards of 40 percent of all the bank notes in circulation nationwide. Its capital of $35 million was more than twice as large as the total annual expenditure of the federal government. Between 1830 and 1832, the Bank expanded further, increasing its notes and loans by 60 percent and its deposits by 40 percent. By issuing orders either to constrict or to relax its branch offices’ demands on state and local banks, the Bank’s president and directors could regulate lending and currency values for the entire economy.*

These were tremendous powers, and the Bank’s president, Nicholas Biddle, appointed in 1823, wielded them skillfully. Under Biddle, unlike its previous presidents, the Bank was vigilant about its issuance of notes, holding a specie reserve of one-half the value of its notes issued at a time when other banks held, on average, only between one-tenth and one-quarter of their note values in specie. By keeping close tabs on financial developments around the country, Biddle transformed the Bank from a moderately profitable national branch-banking system into something more closely resembling a modern central bank. While it provided credit to worthy institutions and borrowers, the Bank restrained the kinds of breakneck speculation and excessive lending by state and local banks that had caused the Panic of 1819. By damping smaller institutions’ propensities to issue notes they could not back up in precious metal, Biddle helped provide American commerce with a reliable currency.

Biddle himself was an extraordinary figure. The son of a successful Philadelphia merchant and Federalist officeholder, he graduated Princeton in 1801 at age fifteen, then served in the diplomatic corps (working as James Monroe’s secretary at the ministry to Britain), practiced law, edited a literary journal, and won election to both houses of the Pennsylvania legislature—all before he began his career as a banker. Described by an English visitor as “the most perfect specimen of an American gentleman I have ever seen,” Biddle was no dilettante but an enormously accomplished and energetic man who seemed capable of mastering whatever vocation caught his interest. Banking was no exception.†

Yet if Biddle’s abilities were unquestionable, the Bank’s regained solidity and prominence paradoxically fed widespread misgivings about its anomalous power, and its abuses of that power, real and potential. Biddle had little regard for the mandated government involvement in the Bank’s operation, minimal though that involvement was. Biddle kept the government-appointed directors on his board completely in the dark about the Bank’s operations. He was contemptuous of the very idea of public oversight. Beyond the naming of its five directors, he insisted, “no officer of the Government, from the President downwards, has the least right, the least authority, the least pretense, for interference in the concerns of the bank.”

In these areas and others, Biddle’s self-regard, combined with a certain cynicism about democracy, turned into hubris. Biddle freely distributed handsome retainers and special loans to editors and elected officials, of both parties, to ensure their support, thereby reinforcing the impression that the Bank was corrupting

*Essentially, the Bank operated as a debtor to the state and local banks. When state notes were paid to the federal government, the notes would be deposited in the Bank. The Bank could then regulate credit depending on how quickly it presented those notes to the state banks for payment in precious metal (or specie).
the government. When questioned about the Bank's powers over the nation's finances, he rashly noted that "[t]here are very few banks which might not [be] destroyed" if the Bank wanted to do so—an accurate but highly impolitic statement. 6 Biddle seemed to demand gratitude for his handling of the Bank, utterly tone-deaf to those critics who thought he ought to conduct himself and his business more as a public servant than as heaven's gift to the Republic. He also seemed to assume that his successors at the Bank (unlike his predecessors) would be just as capable as he was.

Here lay the heart of the problem for Jackson and his allies. Biddle's haughty arrogance made him, in their eyes, a living symbol of aristocratic disdain for the people and their representatives. More important, the Jacksonians believed that a bank as powerful as the Bank and an office as powerful as Biddle's—unelected and unregulated—were intolerable in a democratic republic.

Jackson's campaign against the Bank initially advanced by fits and starts. In the early months of his presidency, Jackson appears to have wanted to replace the Bank with an institution for government deposit only, without any lending or other commercial functions. Advisers including Martin Van Buren's friend James A. Hamilton (ironically, the son of Alexander Hamilton, the man behind the original Bank of the United States) affirmed Jackson's political objections to the Bank, but cautioned him against acting too drastically, pointing out the need to find some alternative to the Bank that would restrain speculation and stabilize the currency. Jackson heeded the warnings. When the distracting Eaton affair, the split with Calhoun, and the fights over Indian removal and internal improvements came to the fore, Jackson pushed the Bank issue aside until he could give it his full attention. Following the cabinet shake-up in 1831, he returned to it, vowing that "the corrupting influence of the Bank" would now be "fearlessly met[tl]." But by the time Jackson joined the battle, the possibility of a compromise had arisen.

The key figure in proposing a truce was Jackson's new Treasury secretary, Louis McLane. Named as part of the cabinet reshuffling, McLane was, like Jackson, a self-made man, military veteran, and lawyer who had gone on to make a career for himself in politics, in McLane's case as a congressman and later senator from Delaware. But although he was personally loyal to Jackson, McLane was also friendly with Nicholas Biddle and he approved of the Bank's role in encouraging manufacturing and privately funded internal improvements. Reinforcing James Hamilton's earlier arguments to Jackson about the Bank's benefits, McLane hammered out a compromise between Biddle and the White House, whereby Jackson would accept the rechartering of a greatly restructured Bank. McLane shrewdly couched the deal as part of a comprehensive reform of the nation's finances that would at last eliminate the national debt, another of Jackson's chief priorities. Jackson, excited by the chance that he might at last balance the government's books, consented to back off, with the stipulation that the effort to recharter the Bank not begin until after the approaching presidential election in 1832. He announced his acquiescence in his third annual message in December 1831, noting his previous objections to the Bank but handing the matter over to the Congress to do as it saw fit. The administration's intense anti-Bank rumblings seemed to have ceased.

The compromise soon collapsed, however, a victim of McLane's overreaching and factional agitation by some of Jackson's supporters. After rushing to Philadelphia to inform Biddle of the happy agreement, McLane wrote his annual secretary's report, calling forthrightly (and unwisely) for a rechartering of the Bank as well as for enactment of a protective tariff. This was too much for the sterner anti-Bank men in Jackson's kitchen cabinet, above all Amos Kendall and Francis Blair. Using Blair's Washington-based Globe as their mouthpiece, the anti-Bank Jacksonians reprinted hostile reactions to McLane's report from other newspapers and attacked what they called a recrudescence of the hated "money power." McLane threatened to resign, then worked secretly to
arrange for Blair's dismissal as the Globe's editor. Jackson, who had reacted calmly if a bit defensively to the criticism of McLane's report, appeared willing to stand by his secretary and the compromise with Biddle until he got wind of the plot against Blair. For Jackson, McLane's machinations amounted to insubordination that bordered on treachery. Although still formally committed to compromise, Jackson's attachment to McLane faded.

Any chance of reaching an accord died in December 1831, when 150 National Republican delegates assembled in Baltimore (in only the second presidential nominating convention in American history) and named Henry Clay as their candidate. Placing their support firmly behind Biddle and the Bank, the delegates approved an address to the nation warning that if Jackson were reelected, "it may be considered certain that the bank will be abolished." Then, quietly, Clay, along with his allies Daniel Webster of Massachusetts and George McDuffie of South Carolina, prevailed upon Biddle to seek a congressional rechartering four years early—and in advance of the election. Biddle, recalling Jackson's demand that the Bank issue be kept out of the campaign, was wary at first, but the pro-Bank politicians were persuasive. The Bank was so popular, they told Biddle, that Jackson would not dare interfere with its rechartering; and were he to try, Clay would certainly beat him in the election and get the new charter approved. Biddle, convinced that he would be better off having the inevitable face-off with Jackson sooner rather than later, went along with the plan. In January, a rechartering bill came before both houses of Congress, proposing a curtailment of some of the Bank's powers (especially in holding real estate and establishing additional Bank branches), but leaving its main lines intact.

Another contentious political issue also faced the Senate: whether to approve Jackson's selection of his new favorite, Martin Van Buren, as minister to Britain. Using the upcoming election as leverage, Clay and Webster maneuvered the vote into a tie, permitting Van Buren's archenemy Vice President Calhoun (who, as the presiding officer of the Senate, cast all tie-breaking votes) to kill Van Buren's nomination. Having humiliated the president, the

National Republicans turned to passing the Bank bill. With Pennsylvania's House members lined up solidly behind the Bank, and with New York's large delegation badly divided, the outcome was foreordained. In early July, the Bank bill passed both houses by comfortable margins. Nicholas Biddle appeared inside the Capitol after the vote to bask in the applause of his supporters, then hosted a boisterous celebration party at his lodgings that lasted well into the night, "sufficiently loud," Attorney General Roger Taney later recalled, "to make sure it would reach the ears of the President." At midnight on the evening of July 8, Martin Van Buren rushed to the White House, having just returned from his aborted ministry in England. He found the president stretched out on a chaise longue, apparently beaten down by one of his chronic ailments. Reaching up to grasp Van Buren's hand, Jackson calmly but firmly intoned a curse: "The bank, Mr. Van Buren, is trying to kill me, but I will kill it." Work was nearly done on a presidential message to accompany Jackson's veto of the Bank bill—a document that would spark a political firestorm.

The Bank Veto Message—drafted chiefly by Amos Kendall, but with considerable help from Taney and others, including Jackson himself—was a powerful political call to arms. Jackson and his advisers clearly designed it to reach over the heads of Congress and build public support. Discrete sections reached out to the disparate elements in Jackson's coalition, each with different reasons for opposing the Bank. For eastern workingmen and western radicals, the message contained ripsnorting polemics against the "opulent" Bank as a tyrannical monopoly. To reassure more moderate Jacksonians, it acknowledged that, although the proposed new Bank charter was unconstitutional, the Bank was in many ways "useful to the people." Southerners drawn to Calhoun would, Jackson's advisers hoped, approve the message's assertions that the bill violated "the rights of the States" and "the liberties of the People." For patriotic Americans everywhere, there were the complaints, verging on demagoguery, about how foreigners, especially British investors, owned a
large portion of the Bank’s stock and siphoned off American prosperity.10

The message offered a manifesto of Jackson’s social and political philosophy as it had developed through the first years of his presidency. Jackson’s strict Jeffersonian reading of the Constitution led him to deny the Bank charter’s legitimacy on grounds similar to those Jefferson himself had taken in opposing Hamilton’s original Bank of the United States in 1791: Congress simply lacked the explicitly rendered powers to devise a national bank of this sort. Jackson also indicted the proposed charter for allowing a private institution to evade the authority of the governments of the states in which it operated. Against claims that the Supreme Court, under the aging Federalist Chief Justice John Marshall, had in 1819 decided, in the important case of McCulloch v. Maryland, that the Bank’s charter was constitutionally correct, Jackson countered that the executive had the duty as well as the authority to uphold the Constitution however it saw fit. In marked contrast to what has since become the reigning doctrine of judicial supremacy, Jackson believed that, as president, he had a responsibility to act upon his own interpretation of the Framers regardless of the courts, and to do so to the fullest extent permitted under the Constitution—in this case by vetoing the Bank bill.

The message’s concluding passages combined Jackson’s constitutional views with his larger democratic outlook. “It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes,” Jackson proclaimed:

Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth cannot be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and

the potent more powerful, the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics, and laborers—who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government.11

Unlike democratic liberals of later generations, Jackson abjured using the federal government to interfere with natural “distinctions in society,” or to promote an elusive “equality” of wealth, talent, or education. Yet in contrast to later laissez-faire conservatives, he did not seek to curtail federal power in order to liberate business from a corrupt, overweening government. Quite the opposite: he wanted to liberate democratic government from the corruptions of men and institutions of great property with political connections—the “rich and powerful” who sought to “bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes.” In Jackson’s view of America, improper activist government meant granting special privileges to unaccountable monied men on the make as well as to those already well established. Sound, restrained government meant ending those privileges and getting the wealthy off the backs of ordinary Americans, “the humble members of society.” As expressed in the Bank Veto Message, Jackson’s early-nineteenth-century democratic liberalism defies today’s vocabulary and categories.

The message’s economic formulations were more confused. Discounting Jackson’s own suggestions, the authors included no concrete suggestions about what kind of institution might replace the Bank—an omission that fed fears Jackson was clueless about sustaining the Bank’s valuable functions. In some passages the message lumped the Bank together with all commercial banks as “an interest separate from that of the people,” but in others it supported state bankers’ complaints that the Bank curbed too drastically their issuing of paper notes. Politics triumphed over logic and consistency: to uphold its views of the Constitution and democracy, and to assemble the strongest coalition possible against the Bank, the Bank Veto Message openly contradicted itself on matters of finance and the very banking system it was trying to end. The confusions could
stand up for only so long before Jackson would be forced to make
difficult choices about how he wanted to reform the country’s
economy after the Bank disappeared.

Despite its combination of insight, rhetorical brilliance, and
obfuscation, the veto message could not avoid alienating some portions
of the Jacksonian coalition that had been forged in 1828. Old-line ex-Federalists in New England, who backed Jackson chiefly out of
their abiding disgust at the Federalist apostate John Quincy Adams, were horrified. In New York City and other financial centers, where Jacksonians’ opinions about Biddle were divided, committees of self-described “original Jackson men” assailed the veto while clinging to the president’s name. One convert to Biddle’s
cause, the Manhattan editor James Watson Webb, went further,
denouncing the president as a doddering old soldier who had been
manipulated by “political gamblers, money changers [and] time-
serving politicians.”

These attacks were mild compared to those launched by the
National Republicans, now convinced they had pushed Jackson
into a fatal corner. Daniel Webster charged that the president
claimed despotic powers with the veto message, while he tried to
stir up class warfare, wantonly attacking the rich “for the purposes
of turning against them the prejudices and resentments of other
classes.” Clay asserted that an “electioneering motive” lay behind
Jackson’s blatant usurpation of judicial and congressional powers.
In Philadelphia, Nicholas Biddle thought the message broadcast the
anarchic spirit of the French Revolution, “such as Marat or Robespierre
might have issued to the mob.” The National Republicans’
revulsion was not sufficient to gain the two-thirds majorities in
Congress required to overturn Jackson’s veto. But now that Jackson
and Biddle had turned the Bank veto into the overriding issue in the
1832 presidential election, the opposition was confident of victory.

“Should Jackson veto it,” Clay announced during the original
debate over the Bank bill, “I will veto him!” Jackson’s vehemence
in the Bank Veto Message solidified Clay’s belief that Old Hickory
had finally gone too far, and that his dangerous days in the White
House would soon end.

The campaign of 1832 was enlivened by the presence of a new
Anti-Masonic Party, the first approximation to a third party in the
history of presidential politics. The party formed after an alleged
murder in western New York in 1826 led to charges of favoritism
and corruption among the Ancient Order of Free and Accepted
Masons, and spread quickly in New England and portions of Ohio
and Pennsylvania where large numbers of New Yorkers had
settled. Although churned up by populist suspicions of political
insiders and hidden conspiracies, the Anti-Masonic appeal was basi-
cally anti-Jackson, pitched against the new Jacksonian politicians
(notably Martin Van Buren) who appeared to have seized control
of the government. Hopes arose among National Republicans in
1831 that they might ally with the Anti-Masons against their com-
mon foe in the presidential race. Those hopes evaporated when the
National Republicans turned to their favorite, Henry Clay, a Grand
Master Mason who denounced the Anti-Masonic crusade. Instead,
the upstart Anti-Masons held the nation’s first national nominating
convention in Baltimore in September 1831, and selected the ex-
Federalist William Wirt of Virginia, former attorney general under
President Monroe, as their worthy standard bearer.

The Clay forces, after their Baltimore convention three months
later, decided to attack Jackson as a corrupt would-be monarch.
Over the summer of 1832, the Bank veto became the emblem of
everything the National Republicans despised about the presi-
dent. “The spirit of Jacksonism is JACOBINISM,” one Boston news-
paper exclaimed, “Its Alpha is ANARCHY and its Omega is
DESPOTISM.” Nicholas Biddle threw his enormous resources
directly into the campaign, arranging for the printing and distribu-
tion of thirty thousand copies of the Bank Veto Message—a docu-
ment, Biddle believed, that offered self-evident proof of Jackson’s
incompetence. Only when Biddle received word that many voters
actually approved of Jackson's address did he reverse course and start distributing copies of Daniel Webster's Senate speech denouncing the veto.

The Jacksonians held their own first national convention (also in Baltimore) in May 1832, chiefly to ratify Jackson's selection of Martin Van Buren as his running mate. The Jackson men then focused on the Bank issue in order to bash Clay as a sycophant of the money power. In select areas of the country—above all in the western New York and eastern Pennsylvania—the Bank issue played, as the National Republicans had expected, to Jackson's disadvantage. (Attacks by the Clay forces on Jackson's Indian removal policy also put the Jacksonians on the defensive in certain northern districts.) But for the most part, the Bank veto captured the voters' loyalties, with Jackson emerging an intrepid defender of the common man against privileged interests. "It is the final decision of the President," one group of supporters declared, "between the Aristocracy and the People." A North Carolinian framed the matter succinctly: "Who but General Jackson would have the courage to veto the bill rechartering the Bank of the United States, and who but General Jackson could have withstood the overwhelming influence of that corrupt Aristocracy?" Rarely has a single issue galvanized the voters in a presidential election as the Bank veto did in 1828. "The Veto issue is popular beyond my most sanguine expectations," Van Buren wrote. According to the hard-nosed, astute, and sometimes cynical Anti-Mason Thurlow Weed, the veto allowed the Jacksonians "to enlist the laboring classes against a 'monster bank' or 'moneyed aristocracy,'" thereby winning "ten electors against the bank for everyone that Mr. Webster's arguments and eloquence secured in favor of it."10

The presidential results were an enormous vindication for Jackson and a terrible defeat for Clay. Although the total number of voters increased by more than 100,000 over the figure in 1828, Clay actually received 35,000 fewer votes than John Quincy Adams had, a decline of nearly 7 percent. In the Electoral College tally, Jackson won 219 votes to Clay's 49 and broke the National Republicans' hammerlock on New England by carrying Maine and New Hampshire. In their bitterness, Clay's supporters, above all Nicholas Biddle, claimed that the Bank veto had had little or nothing to do with Jackson's landslide, and that his personal popularity alone carried the day. Yet during the campaign, both Jacksonians and National Republicans sounded as if the election was a referendum on the veto, and the Jacksonians got the better of the argument. "[T]he rich—the powerful—the men who grind the faces of the poor, and rob them of their earnings," the Vermont Patriot declared in a typical pro-Jackson campaign piece, were attacking the president "because he will not uphold corrupt monopolies—because he will not become suppliant to the Aristocracy of the land!"11 The themes of fraud and reform that in 1828 had focused on the "Corrupt Bargain" had now become fastened to the fight against Biddle's bank. Jackson reasonably interpreted his victory as a mandate to carry the fight forward.

The returns did not, however, lack disquieting news for the Jacksonians. In the congressional races, the pro-administration side ran poorly, reducing its House majority by thirteen seats compared to four years earlier. More ominously, in the Senate, the slim Jacksonian majority disappeared completely: at the next session, the opposition would hold a majority of eight. Compounding the problem was the Anti-Masons' strong turnout in the northeastern states, enough to give William Wirt 8 percent of the overall popular vote for president. Should the Anti-Masons and the National Republicans ever find a way to unite, the alliance could cause Jackson men enormous trouble in the North.

Of even greater immediate concern, though, were the results in the South, especially in John C. Calhoun's South Carolina. Outside Maryland and Clay's home state of Kentucky, the Jacksonians swept through the slaveholding states, much as they had in 1828. But in South Carolina, forces friendly to Calhoun in the state legislature (which still named the state's presidential electors) delivered the state's seven electoral votes to a breakaway state rights candidate,
Governor John Floyd of Virginia. In seven other southern states, dissenters ran a ticket with Jackson at its head but with the pro-Calhoun Virginian Philip Barbour substituted for Martin Van Buren. These little schisms did not affect the election's outcome. But they did have enormous implications that would lead, in the weeks immediately after the election, to a showdown even fiercer than the one caused by Jackson's veto of the Second Bank of the United States.

The Nullifiers' Uprising

While Jackson staked his presidency on the Bank veto, he tried to eliminate the protective tariff as an important campaign issue. His own view on the tariff had shifted. Once a moderate protectionist, Jackson had decided that the protectionists and anti-tariff men alike had greatly exaggerated the tariff's effects on national prosperity and growth. And in any event, reductions in federal spending were easing the government's reliance on tariff revenues. In 1832, the White House duly backed a downward revision of the abnormally high rates of the extant "tariff of abominations," cutting those rates, on average, by half. The proposal preserved a mild protectionism while bowing to southern demands for dramatic cuts—sufficient, the president hoped, to quiet the nullifiers and their theorist, John C. Calhoun, without offending his northern Jacksonians in pro-tariff states like Pennsylvania. Jackson appeared to have prevailed when, in July, the administration bill passed both houses of Congress by comfortable margins, gaining the support of a large majority of representatives from the slaveholding states in the House and a respectable southern minority in the Senate. But to South Carolinians, who staunchly opposed any tariff aimed at protection, the bill was an outrage that caused many to abandon all lingering faith in the federal government. Less than a month after Jackson had secured his reelection, a specially elected convention in Columbia declared the new tariff null and void inside the sovereign state of