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
South Carolina and vowed to secede from the Union should Jackson try to enforce the nullified law.

Tensions over state rights had led to talk of disunion since the Republic’s early years. In the political emergency that followed the enactment of the alien and sedition laws in 1798, Jefferson and Madison had drafted their Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, hoping to galvanize the state governments to interpose between the citizenry and a tyrannical Federalist government. New England Federalists’ protests over President Jefferson’s embargo and then the War of 1812 had culminated in the Hartford Convention and the region’s flirtation with secession and making its own peace with the British in 1814. None of these failed precursors augured well for South Carolina’s bid for nullification in 1832. But the state’s protests were tied to slaveholders’ fears over slavery’s future as well as over federal policies. The distressed South Carolinians believed, not unreasonably, that antislavery sentiment was abroad in the world, threatening what they considered their orderly, respectful, and Christian regime. The fight over the tariff was part of the planters’ larger struggle for self-preservation, and they engaged in it furiously. The South Carolinians also had before them a full treatise, the Exposition and Protest of 1828, which justified nullification and explained how it should proceed.

The semi-anonymous author of that treatise, Vice President Calhoun, would take a restrained position during the nullification crisis, standing up publicly for his doctrines but at the same time urging moderation among the nullifiers and remaining open to compromise. For President Jackson, however, nullification in any form was treason, and the movement had to be completely destroyed. And to Jackson, the root causes of the uprising were the dishonorable ambitions and philosophical claptrap of John C. Calhoun and his supporters.

Anticipating the worst, South Carolina’s most determined nullifiers, led by Governor James Hamilton, Jr., and Congressman George McDuffie, set to work mounting a resistance movement well before the revised tariff was enacted. Having already formed a States’ Rights and Free Trade Association, they redoubled their efforts (with Hamilton the chief organizer) over the winter of 1831–32, founding a new political party and holding two separate conventions, in Columbia and Charleston, that warned of dire consequences if Congress did not dismantle the protective tariff. There was, however, significant opposition to the nullifiers within South Carolina, from old-line Federalist conservatives who prized the ties of Union and rejected nullification as a radical innovation, as well as from up-country yeomen in the hilly northern counties (called “parishes”) who had long been suspicious of the low-country planters’ power. Confident that these Unionists were the stronger force and that his new tariff proposal would defuse discontent, President Jackson seemed unworried. “You may expect to hear from South Carolina a great noise . . .” he wrote to his old friend John Coffee in July, “but the good sense of the people will put it down.” Events would prove Jackson utterly mistaken.

In the years since Calhoun drafted the Exposition and Protest southern fears over slavery’s future had been intensifying. The rise of the cotton kingdom after 1800 had given southern slavery a new lease on life—but did so just at the point when northern states were embracing antislavery and completing the gradual emancipation of their own far smaller numbers of slaves. The debates between 1819 and 1821 over Missouri’s admission to the Union raised the fearsome specter of disunion, hardening both the northern antislavery view and the southern contention that slavery was a benevolent, even sacred institution. Then the discovery in 1822, in Charleston, of what appeared to local officials to be a conspiracy among free blacks and slaves following the leadership of an ex-slave carpenter, Denmark Vesey, raised alarms all across the South that northern antislavery talk might incite bloody slave insurrection.

Events during the early years of Jackson’s presidency further convinced slaveholders that their property and their way of life were besieged. Anxiety mounted in 1829 and 1830, when officials in Charleston and other southern seaports intercepted copies of an
incendiary pamphlet—written by a Boston-based free black, David Walker, and smuggled south—bidding the slaves to overthrow their masters. A few months later Walker suddenly died, in what looked to some like suspicious circumstances. A short time after that, a white Bostonian, William Lloyd Garrison, established a new radical newspaper, The Liberator, dedicated to bringing about slavery’s immediate demise. Just as ominously, antislavery advocates in the Virginia legislature forced a debate over a gradual emancipation plan early in 1832. Although the proposal failed, that the Virginians even discussed abandoning slavery shocked slaveholders in the Deep South, and especially in South Carolina. (Virginia, one disgusted South Carolinian remarked, had become “infested” with “Yankee influence.”) Threatened from without and within, slavery’s defenders began to see any effort by the federal government to enact policies they deemed unfavorable to the South as part of a larger antislavery design. This included the protective tariff, which one state rights’ party convention in South Carolina declared was intended to hasten “the abolition of slavery throughout the southern states.”

That South Carolina took the lead over slavery and the tariff is not surprising. Along with Georgia, the state had long produced the most articulate and outspoken champions of slavery. (By comparison, leaders from the border slaveholding states, notably Henry Clay of Kentucky, expressed more ambivalence about slavery’s alleged benevolence.) In no Deep South state did the slaveholders enjoy a more thorough command over political, social, and cultural life. Lacking an extensive up-country of yeoman farmers, South Carolina’s planters were spared the kinds of democratic challenges that roiled politics elsewhere in the region. Old-line low-country families and newer cotton-boom entrepreneurs from the interior forged a remarkably united elite that honored what its members regarded as valuable traditions—“the old things,” William Grayson, the Beaufort-born poet and congressman remarked, such as “old books, old friends, old and fixed relations between employer and employed.” South Carolina also contained the South’s largest pro-

portion of slaves relative to its total population, making its white population especially touchy about abolitionist agitation and possible slave rebellions. The Vesey affair, and then the appearance in Charleston of Walker’s pamphlet, had concentrated wonderfully the minds of white South Carolinians.

John C. Calhoun, the theorist of nullification, was the most powerful political leader in the state, and he fully shared in the apprehensions about the North’s ultimate intentions regarding slavery. Slaveholders, he wrote one close friend in 1830, might “in the end be forced to rebel, or submit.” Yet unlike Hamilton, McDuffie, and the more radical nullifiers, Calhoun, even after his break with Jackson, did not think the time was ripe for drastic action. The South would do better, he believed, to unite under his command, displace Jackson, and then build a national majority that would defeat Yankee despotism without taking the steps of interposition and nullification. Precipitate action—“in every way imprudent,” he observed—could ruin those plans by isolating South Carolina from the more moderate southern states. Yet throughout 1830 and 1831, Calhoun could see more radical sentiments building in his home state. Finally, under pressure from Governor Hamilton, he decided to write an open letter for publication from his plantation, Fort Hill, that, without endorsing those he privately called “the Carolina hotspurs,” defended nullification as a fully constitutional check on northern tyranny. For the first time, Calhoun publicly declared his attachment to the nullification idea. Rather than be left behind, he now joined the nullifier campaign in order to help give it direction as well as energy.

Nullifiers finally squared off against Unionists in the 1832 campaign for the state legislature. The fight was especially tense in the northernmost portions of the state as well as in Charleston (where local artisans along with old-line Federalists rejected the nullifiers, and where mobs from the opposing sides clashed in the streets). The nullifiers won 61 percent of the total vote, though, thanks to lopsided margins in the rural slaveholding districts, and under the state’s malapportioned system of representation, the nullifiers
gained the two-thirds majority in the legislature that, under the terms laid out by the *Exposition and Protest*, was required to call a special nullification convention. Called into special session by Governor Hamilton, the new legislature quickly approved the new convention, to be elected without delay. The Unionists, disappointed and divided, put up a minimal fight for convention seats. In full command of the convention's proceedings, the nullifier delegates approved, in late November, an ordinance of nullification, which would come into effect on February 1, 1833.

Jackson, forewarned by the South Carolina Unionist Joel Poinsett, had already taken precautions against the nullifiers, including ordering the federal forts in Charleston harbor to prepare for attacks and sending revenue cutters to the waters off the South Carolina coast to collect the tariff before merchant ships came close to shore. Several days after the nullification convention passed its ordinance, he delivered his annual message and included a proposal that looked like an effort at conciliation, even appeasement: expeditiously lowering the tariff to cover only what was necessary for federal revenue and national defense, provided that all sides in the dispute exercised "moderation and good sense." Although the message rejected what Jackson took to be the nullifiers' disunionist folly, the president seemed willing to accede to the South Carolinians' basic demand. But the message was deceptive. Having come to view the tariff rate levels as of marginal importance, Jackson was not sacrificing his policies or principles. Further, in calling for calm and reason, Jackson was setting himself up as the wise and flexible man in contrast to the South Carolina hotspurs. With soothing words, he would reinforce his old connections with southern officials and isolate the nullifiers. That done, however, he would then show the nullifiers no mercy—as he proved, only six days after the annual message, by releasing a special proclamation on December 10, 1832, that he hoped would destroy nullification forever.

The differences between the message and the proclamation have confused historians much as they did many of Jackson's opponents. ("One short week produced the message and the proclamation," a baffled Henry Clay wrote to a political ally, "the former ultra, on the side of State rights—and the latter ultra, on the side of Consolidation. How can they be reconciled?"") Some have argued that Secretary of State Edward Livingston, who drafted the proclamation, was its true author, thereby portraying Jackson as a captive of his diverse cabinet with no consistent beliefs of his own. Others blame an outburst of Jackson's hatred of John C. Calhoun for the proclamation's violent rhetoric. Kinder critics fault Jackson for contradicting himself in the second document, as part of a failed attempt to compensate for the apparent mildness of the first.

These interpretations are based on false presumptions, and they explain too much. Having Livingston draft the proclamation was perfectly in keeping with how Jackson's White House operated, as it was with the way presidents, before and since, have composed important statements. Jackson habitually turned to cabinet members and other advisers to write his important state papers, sometimes relying on his more nationalist allies, sometimes on more state rights-oriented men. Always, however, he was in charge, overseeing the process of composition, freely contributing his own ideas and prose, and allowing nothing to go out under his name that did not reflect his own thinking exactly. The nullification proclamation was no exception; indeed, Jackson probably worked harder and more directly on the proclamation than on any other official statement of his entire presidency. (Not only did he help write certain vital passages and endorse the final product; he sharply rebuked

*Alexander Hamilton, for example, was the coauthor of President George Washington's famous Farewell Address in 1796, and James Madison offered advice as well. In the modern era, the greatest addresses of Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan were largely written by speechwriters and aides, often, in Roosevelt's case, following protracted consultation with interested parties in which the president participated. Even Abraham Lincoln, perhaps the finest and most assured writer ever to serve as president, had advisers review his speeches from time to time. Yet in all cases, final credit, correctly, has gone to the presidents themselves—Jackson being a major exception.*
theory of the Union and undivided state sovereignty, as enunciated by Calhoun. These inventions, Jackson declared, were patently absurd, produced by “[m]etaphysical subtlety, in pursuit of an impractical theory.” The nation had not been created by a compact of sovereign states; in fact, the nation was older than both the Constitution and the states. Prior to independence, “we were known in our aggregate character as the United Colonies of America”; under the original Articles of Confederation, the states were subservient to the Congress in areas delegated to Congress; when framed and ratified “to form a more perfect union,” the Constitution became a new charter for an already existing nation. “The Constitution of the United States . . . forms a government, not a league,” Jackson concluded. With no preexisting undivided state sovereignty to fall back on, nullification was utterly illogical as well as illegitimate. Any state’s denial of the federal government’s designated powers was a denial of the Constitution that would lead, inevitably, to the Union’s dissolution—and thus, in Jackson’s view, to the failure of the American Revolution and its experiment in popular sovereignty.10

Above all, Jackson’s nullification proclamation, far from a defense of “consolidation” or “ultranationalism,” arose from Jackson’s belief in democracy and in the principle, as he had expressed it in his first annual message, “that the majority is to govern.” Strict construction of federal power was imperative lest a minority (like the owners, directors, and supporters of the Second Bank of the United States) bend the government toward advancing the minority’s interests. But no state—let alone “a bare majority of voters in any one state”—could be allowed to repudiate laws based on explicitly delegated powers and duly enacted by Congress and the president.10

Some of Jackson’s strongest and most prominent backers—to say nothing of the South Carolinians and their southern sympathizers—could not comprehend his reasoning, and saw the proclamation as unnecessarily harsh and at variance with old Jeffersonian principles. Ordinary Jacksonians were not so bewildered or offended. 

those in his coterie, including Blair and Kendall, who later attempted to mute the proclamation’s stark language.) Nor can Jackson’s loathing of Calhoun explain his loathing of nullification, built as it was on the nationalist principles he had held long before he broke with the vice president.

The fundamental misperception behind these erroneous interpretations is that the two documents actually conflicted. The common view is that Jackson, by taking a “low tariff” position in the message, was loudly endorsing southern state rights, whereas by blasting nullification, he was endorsing a nationalist—indeed, “ultranationalist”—reading of the Constitution. But Jackson saw the issues of the tariff and nullification as completely separate. According to Jackson’s strict reading of the Constitution, the tariff, subject to approval by the Congress, was always negotiable. Depending on which side could muster majorities in the House and Senate, tariff rates might rise one year and fall in another, in line with the normal pull and tug of a representative democracy. Nullification, however, was not negotiable; rather, it was an assault on the very foundations of the Union and democratic government. In the nullification proclamation, Jackson dissected the difference.

Jackson began by knocking down each of the South Carolinians’ constitutional arguments about the tariff. To the nullifiers’ claim that high tariff rates stemmed from an unconstitutional desire to protect manufacturing and not merely collect necessary revenues, Jackson replied that there was no such thing as unconstitutional motives, only unconstitutional acts. The nullifiers charged that the tariff operated unequally on different regions; Jackson pointed out that a perfect equality in any system of taxation was impossible and that, in any event, this hard fact offered no justification for states to nullify legislation over which the Framers had explicitly given Congress jurisdiction. The tariff, said the nullifiers, raised monies later appropriated to internal improvements projects that even Jackson deemed constitutionally dubious. But that objection, Jackson observed, was irrelevant to the point at issue, the tariff itself.

Jackson then took aim at the heart of the matter, the nullifiers’
Over the early winter of 1832–33, most of the legislatures in the non-slaveholding states (as well as Maryland) passed resolutions condemning nullification and affirming Jackson’s hard-line stance. In cities from New York to New Orleans, large public meetings acclaimed the president. In mountainous, yeoman-dominated eastern Tennessee, one old Jackson comrade, John Wyly, contended that Old Hickory would be able, inside of two weeks, to raise enough troops to mass them at the state border and “piss enough . . . to float the whole nullifying crew of South Carolina into the Atlantic.”

The southern slaveholder-dominated legislatures were more divided. The Georgia and Virginia legislatures contained powerful minorities that favored nullification. North Carolina lawmakers condemned nullification as lawless and subversive, but refused to support Jackson’s proclamation. Alabama called for a federal convention to take up the crisis. And Jackson’s belligerence deepened many southerners’ sympathies with South Carolina, as a lonely state facing a possible armed assault by federal troops. Yet though Jackson rattled his southern constituency, no southern state came to the nullifiers’ support. In his firmness, Jackson had forced the issue of nullification’s legality—and outside South Carolina, no state, even in the Deep South, was willing to contest him on that.

Jackson, seemingly unaffected by the proclamation’s critics, pushed on with his military preparations—determined to enforce the law however he could, and to ensure that, if the crisis should turn violent, the nullifiers would be the ones to fire the first shot. One week after the proclamation, he ordered Secretary of War Lewis Cass to ascertain how quickly men and munitions could be mobilized sufficient to “crush the monster in its cradle.” In South Carolina, Governor Hamilton resigned on December 13 to head the state’s newly enlarged armed forces, and the legislature then selected Calhoun’s friend the moderate nullifier Senator Robert Hayne as governor. The legislature also named Calhoun, who had resigned his lame-duck vice presidency effective December 28, to succeed Hayne in the Senate, then handed the state’s presidential electoral votes to Governor Floyd of Virginia. With the rhetoric escalating and soldiers drilling for combat, it appeared as if the federal government and South Carolina—and Jackson and Calhoun—were headed for their great showdown. But Jackson’s proclamation proved, in retrospect, a turning point. South Carolina was politically cut off—and very quietly, moderating influences began asserting themselves in Washington and Columbia.

The crisis played itself out over the first two months of 1833. Governor Hayne, trying to avoid an overly aggressive posture, ordered that the 25,000 volunteers who had rallied to the nullifiers’ cause train in their hometowns rather than gather at Charleston. Jackson, lowering his voice, asked Congress for specific powers to raise federal troops and state militias summarily should the South Carolinians forcibly seize federal property. In its content as well as its tone, Jackson’s message was firm and measured, but the nullifiers ripped into it as a tyrant’s provocation and labeled Jackson’s request for military support as the Force Bill. Calhoun, now back in the Senate, led the assault on Capitol Hill, calling Jackson’s request an imperial edict. Yet Calhoun, though confrontational in public, was playing his part behind the scenes to reach an accord with Clay and Webster, and to defuse the situation in Columbia. Calhoun would not stand down from Jackson, but he wanted to resolve the crisis peacefully.

At the end of January, with the South Carolina nullification ordinance due to take effect in one week, the state, in a tactical retreat, agreed to postpone the implementation until Congress had resolved the tariff issue. Calhoun pressed the more radical nullifier leaders to keep calm and avoid even considering secession “but in the last extremity.” He also urged Hayne and others to suspend the nullification ordinance for a year. Virginia sent a commissioner to Columbia to deliver copies of the legislature’s resolutions that criticized both nullification and Jackson, and offered to mediate the
dispute. The White House forwarded a new low-tariff bill to Congress, sponsored by one of Van Buren’s New York allies, as the basis for a compromise.

Neither Calhoun nor the National Republicans wanted to have anything to do with the administration’s latest tariff bill. They were convinced its enactment would look like a victory for their common enemy, President Jackson. So Calhoun, Clay, and Webster began hammering out their own compromise bill. Clay and Webster, insistent that northern protectionists would go no further than a gradual adjustment of tariff rates, got the better of the bargaining, and forced Calhoun to back down on every important point. The final draft of the compromise called for a small reduction of the 1832 rates, then a very gradual decline in tariff duties until 1842, when the rates would drop sharply to the levels sought by the nullifiers. To spite Jackson, Calhoun ended up agreeing to a bill that brought a measure of relief to angry southerners, but that amounted to considerably less than the end of supposedly unconstitutional protection—and less than Jackson had seemed to offer in his annual message in December 1832.

The Force Bill issue remained, and on this both Calhoun and Jackson were determined to make a stand. This time, however, Calhoun had to battle against northern National Republicans as well as Jackson, while Clay and his moderate border-state allies repaired to the sidelines. The highlight of the Force Bill struggle saw Calhoun pitted against Webster, in debates that drew packed crowds to the Senate gallery. But by the time the speeches ended, Congress’s approval of the Force Bill was all but assured, due to Jacksonian control of the House and the divisions between nullifiers and southern moderates in the Senate. And so, in somewhat clouded circumstances, the nullifiers quietly cut a deal whereby they would forswear their efforts to block the bill’s passage and Congress would assent to the compromise tariff. When both measures passed, Calhoun took the Senate floor and delivered one last eloquent (and irrelevant) denunciation of the Force Bill. Thereafter, he left Washington directly for Columbia, to make sure that the more radical nullifiers would see the light and acquiesce.

There was little chance that the South Carolinians would persist. As soon as Congress passed the compromise tariff, the main issue had been resolved, and what support the nullifiers had received from other parts of the South disappeared. The nullification convention duly reconvened and, on March 11, rescinded its ordinance. As a largely symbolic parting shot, the delegates approved a new ordinance that nullified the Force Bill. They had lost on almost everything of practical importance, but they would not surrender their honor.

“I have had a laborious task here,” Jackson wrote to one of his cousins in the spring, “but nullification is dead; and its actors and exciters will only be remembered by the people to be execrated for their wicked designs.” The president, having vindicated his own honor as well as the Union’s, overestimated his victory. In the South, even staunch Jacksonians admitted that, although nullification was impermissible, Jackson had overreacted and defended ideas that endangered state rights. “You can rest assured,” one anti-nullification, normally pro-Jackson Mississippian told a friend, “S.C. has our sympathies.” Many northern Jacksonians, although far more supportive of the president, still found his words and actions disquieting—at odds with Jeffersonian orthodoxy and unnecessarily antagonististic. Martin Van Buren, for one—concerned as ever about keeping the Jacksonian coalition intact and now anticipating his own eventual run for the presidency—could not get the New York legislature to unite in support of Jackson’s nullification proclamation, and he personally opposed the Force Bill. Other anti-nullifiers saw the outcome as ominous in the long run. “Nullification has done its work,” the South Carolina Unionist James Petigru wrote. “It has prepared the minds of men for a separation of the states—and when the question is moved again it will be distinctly union or disunion.”
Still, Jackson had good reason to feel victorious. With a mixture of angry threats and well-timed moderation, he had isolated the nullifiers and suppressed the immediate threat before him, without firing a single shot. Compared to his predecessor Adams's handling of challenges to federal authority, Jackson had acted with fortitude and cunning. Although he got no credit for the compromise tariff that was eventually enacted, he outmaneuvered the nullifiers, pushing Calhoun into a position from which he ended up negotiating away supposedly nonnegotiable demands. Of all the major parties to the controversy, only Jackson had sought to lower the tariff and pass the Force Bill—and he got his way on both measures.

There was, to be sure, a great deal more to the nullification crisis than was fully apparent in the public accusations and debates. As Calhoun suggested early on, the struggle arose from the growing alienation of southern slaveholders, whose "peculiar domestic institution" placed them in "opposite relation to the rest of the Union." As James Petigru understood, the Compromise of 1833 did not settle the underlying issues of slavery and Union any more than the Missouri Compromise had. Jackson and his supporters could not see these deeper causes, and instead blamed the crisis on Calhoun's and the nullifiers' personal ambitions, either to dislodge Jackson or to break up the Union and install themselves as potentates. The impulse behind nullification, the Jacksonian Globe asserted, was "a politician's, not a planter's." 13

If he misunderstood all that was at stake, though, Jackson presented a powerful and, for the moment, triumphant case about the central issue, the legitimacy of nullification. He thereby showed (contrary to the claims of many later historians) that protection of the democratic Republic, and not the protection of slavery, was his animating political principle. Devotion to the nation, the Constitution, and the will of the majority, Jackson declared, took precedence over allegiances to region, state, and locality. In defending that belief as he did, Jackson offended some of his own supporters, especially in the South, yet still squelched the nullifiers' uprising. He also established a crucial political and constitutional precedent.

In later decades, southern slaveholders, expanding beyond Calhoun's arguments, would push the idea of state rights in protection of slavery to the point of disunionism. In 1861, they would force a secession crisis, once again centered on Charleston harbor, far more severe than the confrontation over the tariff in 1832–33. And when that happened, Jackson's successor Abraham Lincoln would rely on Jackson's nullification proclamation and his uncompromising actions for political guidance and strategic lessons.

Less than two days after Congress passed the compromise that ended the nullification crisis, Jackson was sworn in for his second term as president. He could look back with great satisfaction on what he had accomplished thus far, especially during the previous twelve months: gaining personal command of his administration, securing his Indian removal bill, vetoing the charter of the Second Bank of the United States, thwarting nullification, replacing John C. Calhoun with his chosen favorite, Martin Van Buren—and, in his reelection campaign, crushing Henry Clay. Along the way, he had aroused the support of some constituencies and lost that of others, building and refining what would soon emerge as a coherent national party, the Democracy.

Yet Jackson still had powerful adversaries to face, and important issues to resolve. Despite his victory in the presidential campaign, Jackson would now have to deal with a Senate firmly in the control of the National Republicans—and led by the ever-resilient Henry Clay. The struggle with the Bank of the United States, with four years left to run on its charter, had hardly been settled. Although nullification had failed, neither the southern fears nor the northern antislavery agitation that inflamed them would cease simply because of the successful enactment of a tariff. "General Jackson," wrote John Quincy Adams's son Charles Francis, shortly after the second inaugural, "conquers every thing." 14 But the conqueror could not rest on his past successes amid the unruly commotions of his second term.