

# John c. calhoun and the problem with southern nationalism assignment



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Calhoun, too much involvement from the government, and disagreements over slavery created such disunion that the nation descended into utter chaos. The so-called “ Era of Good Feelings” was, in fact, a misnomer – not only was it not a time of good feelings, but it was actually a period of great disunion. Federal power had been expanding ever since George Washington was voted first President of the United States in 1789.

Since then, the Whiskey Rebellion was quelled with force in 1794, Jefferson had gone against the Constitution by buying the Louisiana territory in 1803, and the judiciary branch “ extended its authority over the province of state courts, again reducing the power of the states. ” (insert citation here) Tariffs issued by the federal government, too, had been expanding and angering the South – starting back again in the year Washington stepped into office when the very first Tariff Act was passed. The Tariff Act of 1789 raised revenue through tariffs on imported goods.

Then, the Tariff of 1816, the United States tariff structure changed from revenue producing to protectionist. Following this, the Tariff of Abominations prompted angry southerners to protest, going as far as to publish a pamphlet called The South Carolina Exposition. This pamphlet candidly suggested that the states nullify the tariff. Soon after, Congress’s new Tariff of 1832 rekindled the fire that was southern nationalism, taking another step along the road of the Nullification Crisis. More federal involvement came with the Force Bill, passed by Congress in 1833.

Known among Carolinians as the “ Bloody Bill,” this document “ authorized the president to use the army and navy, if necessary, to collect federal tariff

duties. ” (insert citation here) Different opinions regarding the concept of slavery also aided in the widening of the gap between the north and south. The congressional debate on the Missouri compromise planted a seed of anxiety within the heart of southerners regarding possible federal involvement with slavery, as the southerners began to feel restrained by federal interference - if the government could abolish slavery in the North, what was stopping them from abolishment in the South?

Furthermore, an aborted slave rebellion in Charleston followed closely in 1822 led by a man named Denmark Vesel had southerners on the edge of their seats, ready to be set off by the slightest interference by the federal government on their much needed slaves. Increasing southern nationalism, in addition to these causes was a catalyst leading to a civil war. Southerners united under their South Carolinian hero John C. Calhoun as nullifiers, or “ nullifiers. ” These people were attempting to stop the overprotective tariffs, with the principle that the recent tariffs were unjust and unconstitutional.

They also wore palmetto ribbons on their hats to mark their loyalty to the “ Palmetto State. ” Nationalism was so strong among the south that the delegates from South Carolina went as far as to declare the Tariff of 1 832 null and void within South Carolina. In addition, they said they would withdraw South Carolina out of the union if Washington attempted to collect the taxes forcefully. This would lead to President Andrew Jackson retaliating in just that way - forcefully.