

CHAPTER 9: JACKSONIAN AMERICA

3. How did Calhoun and South Carolina justify and explain the theory of nullification. On what points did Jackson and Webster oppose this theory?

I) Background of Nullification crisis

- A) South Carolina wanted to nullify the Tariff of 1828, also known as the “Tariff of Abominations”, a high tax on manufactured goods such as textiles, and ban collection of duties within the state. Jackson, however, maintained that nullification was treason and those who implemented it were traitors
- B) Jackson strengthened forts in SC and sent revenue ships to Charleston. Passed Force Act→In 1833, Jackson proposed a bill that would send the military to make sure acts of Congress are followed.
- C) Civil war was averted when Henry Clay created a compromise which would lower the Tariff (appeased SC), while also banning nullification (appeased Jackson).
- D) Both were passed, but before the compromise went into effect, SC nullified the Force act.

II) Explanation and Justification for Nullification**A) Explanation**

- 1) Calhoun felt that b/c gov’t was created by states, the states- not the courts or Congress- should decide whether or not laws were constitutional.
- 2) If states feel that a law is unconstitutional, then they should be able to hold a convention and declare the law void in the state.
- 3) South Carolina Exposition and Protest doc stated→ Tariff of 1828 was unconstitutional b/c it favored manufacturing over agriculture and commerce. Ability to tariff should only be used to generate revenue not protect American manufacturers. State or states should be able to hold a convention to veto a federal law.

B) Justification

- 1) Ideas of Madison and Jefferson and VA and KY Resolutions→States should be able to decide if laws are or aren’t constitutional.
- 2) Tenth amendment→Any rights not specifically given to the Nat’l Gov’t are left for the states to decide- ability to tax not officially stated.

III) Points of opposition**A) Webster-Hayne debate**

- 1) At this debate, originally supposed to be about the restriction of land sales in the west, Daniel Webster steered his opponent, Robert Hayne, into an argument about nullification.
- 2) Webster stressed nationalism and his feeling that if nullification went into effect, the nation could be destroyed if a state had the power to nullify federal laws. Since he appeared to be pushing the cause of nationalism, he caused himself to look like someone intent on unification of the United States, while he caused Hayne to appear to want to divide the nation.
- 3) Webster ends up winning through his argument of nationalism.

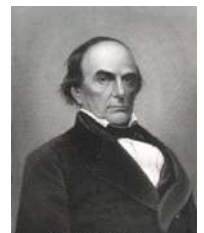
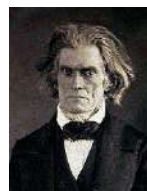
B) Jackson

- 1) Jackson felt that to be able to nullify laws is treason, and anyone pushing it was a traitor.
- 2) He made his views clear at a dinner commemorating Thomas Jefferson’s birthday. There, in a toast he said, “The Union-it must be preserved”.
 - (a) Quote shows that states shouldn’t have as much power as the national gov’t→No Nullification.

Conclusion: The Nullification Crisis of 1832 pitted the President of the United States, Andrew Jackson, and a senator and skilled orator, Daniel Webster, against the Vice President, John C. Calhoun, and the state government of South Carolina. Calhoun and South Carolina wanted to nullify the Tariff of Abominations. He had anonymously written a document in which he stated the reasons why the state should be able to do so. Both Jackson and Webster were vehemently opposed to anything of the sort. Both sides eventually reached a point where they were willing to go to war, but in the end, compromise was reached. Underneath this argument about nullification, a fight over states’ rights brewed. Although the compromise solved the crisis at hand, the fight over the rights of states has never been solved, and is still going on to this very day.

Some info provided by

<http://www.apstudynotes.org/us-history/topics/nullification-crisis/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Carolina_Exposition_and_Protest



Daniel Webster

Portraits of Calhoun (left)
and Jackson (right).