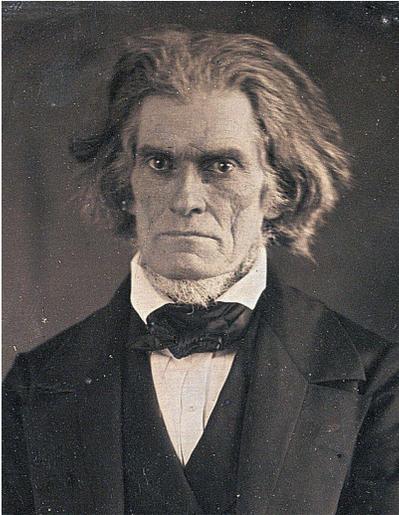


Jackson's approach to governing was tested by an issue that threatened to break up the United States. In **1828, Congress passed a law raising tariffs, or taxes, on imported goods such as cloth and glass.** The idea was to encourage the growth of manufacturing. Higher tariffs meant higher prices for imported factory goods. American manufacturers could then outsell their foreign competitors.

Northern states, full of new factories, favored the new tariff law. But southerners opposed tariffs for several reasons. Tariffs raised the prices they paid for factory goods. High tariffs also discouraged trade around nations, and planters in the South worried that tariffs would hurt cotton sales to other countries. In addition, **many southerners believed a law favoring one region - in this case, the North - was unconstitutional.**



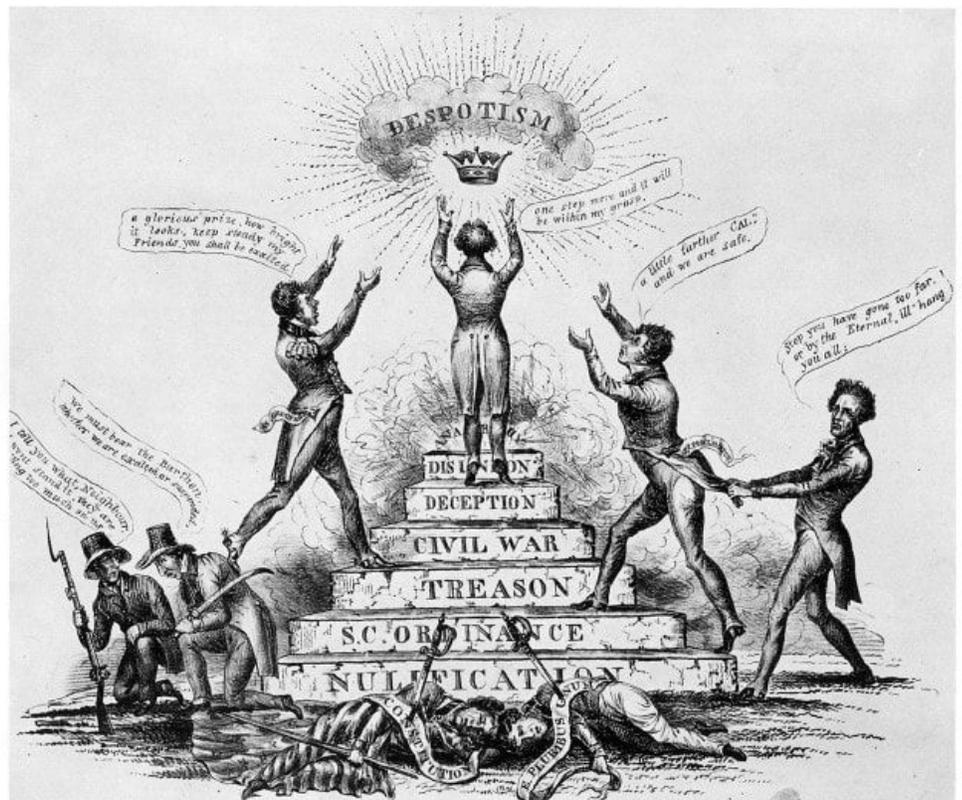
Based on this belief, **John C. Calhoun, Jackson's vice president called on southern states to declare the tariff "null and void," or illegal and not to be honored.**

Jackson understood southerners' concerns. In 1832, he signed a new law that lowered tariffs - but not enough to satisfy the most extreme supporters of states' rights in South Carolina. Led by Calhoun, they boldly proclaimed South Carolina's right to nullify, or reject, both the 1828 and 1832 tariff laws. Such an action was called nullification.

The constitutional issue of nullification had been raised by the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions 30 years before. But now South Carolinians took the idea of states' rights even further. **South Carolina threatened to secede, or leave the U.S., if the national government tried to enforce the tariff laws.**

Jackson was outraged. "If one drop of blood be shed there in defiance of the laws of the United States," he raged, "I will hang the first man of them I can get my hands on from the first tree I can find." **He called on Congress to pass the Force Bill, which allowed him to use the federal army to collect tariffs if needed.** At the same time, Congress passed a compromise bill that lowered tariffs further.

Faced with such firm opposition, **South Carolina backed down and the nullification crisis ended.** However, the tensions between the North and the South would increase in the years ahead. (SPOILER ALERT: The Civil War.)



An 1833 lithograph entered by Endicott & Sweet New York