


## Chapter 116 -- Calhoun Again Tries To Rally The South Against Threats To Slavery

	<p><b>Dates:</b> 1838</p>	<p><b>Sections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calhoun Warns Against The “Deluded Madmen” Abolitionists</li> </ul>
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Time: January 10, 1838

### Calhoun Warns Against The “Deluded Madmen” Abolitionists



Isaac and Rosa, Slave Children of New Orleans

Southerners intent on protecting and expanding their wealth in slavery find little reassurance in the events of 1837.

The abolitionists have found a martyr in the death of Elijah Lovejoy; Anti-Slavery Society chapters proliferate across the North; John Quincy Adams continues his moral crusade in the U.S. House; outspoken critics like Joshua Giddings and Thaddeus Stevens echo the same themes in the state legislatures of Ohio and Pennsylvania; and the South’s historical control over the levers of power in Washington continue to erode.

John Calhoun again takes it upon himself to shake his fellow Southerners out of their complacency on the slavery issue, and warn the North of the dangers to follow if the central government tries to impose unconstitutional strictures on the institution.

His speech of February 6, 1837 tries to make the case that “slavery as a positive good” for all Americans, but this fails to dampen the opposition. Even with the Northerner Van Buren in the White House, most Southern politicians still believe that further compromises, like the 1820 Missouri solution, will prevail as needed.

Calhoun is not convinced of this, and eleven months from his prior address, on January 10, 1838, he tries again to make his case.

At one time the South regarded slavery as a “moral and political evil” – but time and events have now shown the folly of that assessment.

*Many in the South once believed that it was a moral and political evil; that folly and delusion are gone; we see it now in its true light, and regard it as the most safe and stable basis for free institutions in the world.*

The “two races, from different parts of the globe” were united in the South in nearly equal numbers by “a mysterious Providence” – and the result has been to the benefit of both.

*Experience has shown that the existing relation between them secured the peace and happiness of both. Each has improved; the inferior greatly; so much so, that it has attained a degree of civilization never before attained by the black race in any age or country. Under no other relation (than slavery) could they coexist together.*

He goes on to paint an idyllic picture of plantations as “little communities” living in balance and harmony, under the hand of a beneficent master.

*Every plantation is a little community, with the master at its head, who concentrates in himself the united interests; of capital and labor, of which he is the common representative. These small communities aggregated make the State in all, whose action, labor, and capital is equally represented and perfectly harmonized.*

This is unlike the North, where the equilibrium between capital and labor has been disturbed by constant aggression.

*In this tendency to conflict in the North between labor and capital, which is constantly on the increase, the weight of the South has and will ever be found on the Conservative side; against the aggression of one or the other side, which ever may tend to disturb the equilibrium of our political system.*

The institution of slavery has served both races well, and it has served the South and the entire Union well. It should be left undisturbed.

*This is our natural position, the salutary influence of which has thus far preserved, and will long continue to preserve, our free institutions, if we should be left undisturbed.*

“Deluded madmen” must not be allowed to tear it down.

*Such are the institutions which these deluded madmen are stirring heaven and earth to destroy, and which we are called on to defend by the highest and most solemn obligations that can be imposed on us as men and patriots.*