

Chapter 86 - Calhoun Again Tries To Rally The South Against The Regional Threats He Sees

Time: The 1830's

Sources Of Growing Concerns In The South

During the 1830's the consistent Northern hostility toward activists like Lovejoy and Garrison shows that the South has no reason to fear a formal move to abolish slavery where it currently exists.

But still astute men like Calhoun see dangers for the future on the horizon – especially as they relate to the South's goal of expanding slavery into new territories. These signals of Northern resistance include:

- The constitutions of new states from Ohio through Illinois opposing black residency;
- Segregation, race riots and attempts to rid cities of their black populations;
- House passage of the 1819 Tallmadge Amendment to ban slavery in Missouri;
- Morality concerns about slavery arising out of the Second Great Awakening;
- The appearance of Garrison's inflammatory newspaper *The Liberator*;
- Formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society;
- JQ Adams refusal to discontinue reading anti-slavery petitions in Congress;
- Attacks on slavery in state legislature (Giddings in Ohio; Stevens in Pennsylvania).

Then there are the Census results which show the population – and hence the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House – consistently shifting to the North and the Free States. What if the House succeeds again in trying to block expansion? What if this can't be overturned in the Senate or by a pro-Southern president?

On top of this, Calhoun senses an almost visceral animosity building between the two regions.

They are constantly at odds over economic policies affecting the South's agriculture needs versus the North's industrialization. The tariff nullification attempt is one example, and it has left many feeling that the South is ready to trample on federal law in order to have their own way. In turn, more Southerners are expressing out loud that the North is intentionally out to damage their economy out of spite toward their "more refined, almost aristocratic" culture and lifestyles.

Calhoun is frustrated that so many of the South's political leaders do not share his sense of urgency over acting on the dangers.

Roughly a year after his "Slavery Is A Positive Good" speech, he again rises in the Senate to rally the opposition.

Time: January 10, 1838

Calhoun Warns Against The “Deluded Madmen” Abolitionists

He begins with a refrain of his prior message – that time and events have shown that instead of being a “moral and political evil,” slavery has served the nation, and the blacks, well.

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.