

## Factions and Federal Power

### DOCUMENT 7.1 | JAMES MONROE, *Second Inaugural Address* 1821

James Monroe (1758–1831) was elected president as a Jeffersonian Republican. During Monroe's two terms, the opposing Federalist Party all but disappeared.

If we turn our attention, fellow-citizens, more immediately to the internal concerns of our country, and more especially to those on which its future welfare depends, we have every reason to anticipate the happiest results. It is now rather more than forty-four years since we declared our independence, and thirty-seven since it was acknowledged. The talents and virtues which were displayed in that great struggle were a sure presage of all that has since followed. A people who were able to surmount in their infant state such great perils would be more competent as they rose into manhood to repel any which they might meet in their progress. Their physical strength would be more adequate to foreign danger, and the practice of self-government, aided by the light of experience, could not fail to produce an effect equally salutary on all those questions connected with the internal organization. These favorable anticipations have been realized.

In our whole system, National and State, we have shunned all the defects which unceasingly preyed on the vitals and destroyed the ancient Republics. In them there were distinct orders, a nobility and a people, or the people governed in one assembly. Thus, in the one instance there was a perpetual conflict between the orders in society for the ascendancy, in which the victory of either terminated in the overthrow of the government and the ruin of the state; in the other, in which the people governed in a body, and whose dominions seldom exceeded the dimensions of a county in one of our States, a tumultuous and disorderly movement permitted only a transitory existence. In this great nation there is but one order, that of the people, whose power, by a peculiarly happy improvement of the representative principle, is transferred from them, without impairing in the slightest degree their sovereignty, to bodies of their own creation, and to persons elected by themselves, in the full extent necessary for all the purposes of free, enlightened, and efficient government. The whole system is elective, the complete sovereignty being in the people, and every officer in every department deriving his authority from and being responsible to them for his conduct.

Our career has corresponded with this great outline. Perfection in our organization could not have been expected in the outset either in the National or State Governments or in tracing the line between their respective powers. But no serious conflict has arisen, nor any contest but such as are managed by argument and by a fair appeal to the good sense of the people, and many of the defects which experience had clearly demonstrated in both Governments have been remedied. By steadily pursuing this course in this spirit there is every reason to believe that our system will soon attain the highest degree of perfection of which human institutions are capable, and that the movement in all its branches will exhibit such a degree of order and harmony as to command the admiration and respect of the civilized world.

James Monroe, "Second Inaugural Address," *The Writings of James Monroe*, vol. 6, ed. Stanislaus Murray Hamilton (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1902), 172–174.

### PRACTICING Historical Thinking

**Identify:** What, according to Monroe, will "command the admiration and respect of the civilized world"?

**Analyze:** According to Monroe, why did ancient republics fail, and why would America avoid this same fate?

**Evaluate:** How does Monroe's Second Inaugural Address signal a shift in the relationship between the federal government and states' rights from the arguments of the Kentucky Resolution (Doc. 5.19)?

## DOCUMENT 7.2

### JOHN C. CALHOUN, Address to the Southern States

1831

In this address, John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), former vice president and senator from South Carolina, argues that states can "nullify" (and therefore make void within their borders) federal laws that are deemed dangerous to a state's interest.

The great and leading principle is, that the General Government emanated from the people of the several states, forming distinct political communities, and acting in their separate and sovereign capacity, and not from all the people forming one aggregate political community; that the Constitution of the United States is, in fact, a compact, to which each state is a Party, . . . and that the several states, or parties, have the right to judge of its infractions; . . . be it called what it may—State-right, veto, nullification, or by any other name—I conceive to be the fundamental principle of our system, resting on facts as certain as our revolution itself.