

Charleston (S.C) Mercury Editorial
Against Black Confederate Troops,
13 January 1865

The wild talk prevalent in the official and the semi-official organs at Richmond grates harshly upon the ear of South Carolina. It is still more grievous to her to hear the same unmanly proposition from those in authority in the old State of Virginia. Side by side Carolina and Virginia have stood together against all comers for near two centuries -- the exemplars and authors of Southern civilization. Side by side it is our earnest hope they will stand to all time against the world. But we grieve to say there are counsels now brewing there that South Carolina cannot abet -- that she will not suffer to be consummated, so far as she is concerned in them.

There are men in Virginia, and there are men in South Carolina, who have supposed that there is jealousy existing between these States, in the race of fame and ambition. These men are small pettifoggers and petty creatures. There is no State in the Union that has the solid, calm respect for the merits of Virginia, that exists here in South Carolina. But we are not mouthers, or worshipers. We have no demonstrations to make. It is not our habit. We act. John C. Calhoun, the idol, the demi-god of South Carolina, could have made his most magnificent effort of genius before a Charleston audience, and the only response, at the climax of one of his grand syllogisms, would have been a slight, a very slight rapping on the floor. Men who worshiped him, found it not congenial to their natures to demonstrate. Calm and quiet approval is our habit -- our custom -- to all. We are sufficiently confident in our position -- sufficiently confident in our own intelligence -- in our conduct -- in our history, to be jealous of no State -- not even of Virginia. We are prepared to stand upon the basis of our record, with a satisfaction too complete to admit of envy towards any people. As equals, as dear friends, who have most confidence in each other from long experience and good deeds done, and good feeling, we meet Virginia in counsels of war or of peace. When Virginia wants a sword to assist in her defence, Carolina's will ever be the first unsheathed.

But, we are no followers.

In 1860 South Carolina seceded alone from the old union of States. Her people, in Convention assembled, invited the slaveholding States (none others) of the old Union to join her in erecting a separate Government of Slave States, for the protection of their common interests. All of the slave states, with the exception of Maryland and Kentucky, responded to her invitation. The Southern Confederacy of slave States was formed.

It was on account of encroachments upon the institution of slavery by the sectional majority of the old Union, that South Carolina seceded from that Union. It is not at this late day, after the loss of thirty thousand of her best and bravest men in battle, that she will suffer it to be bartered away; or ground between the upper and nether mill stones, by the madness of Congress, or the counsels of shallow men elsewhere.

By the compact we made with Virginia and the other States of this Confederacy, South Carolina will stand to the bitter end of destruction. By that compact she intends to stand or to fall. Neither Congress, nor certain make-shift men in Virginia, can force upon her their mad schemes of weakness and surrender. She stands upon her institutions -- and there she will fall in their defence. We want no Confederate Government without our institutions. And we will have none. Sink or swim, live or die, we stand by them, and are fighting for them this day. That is the ground of our fight -- it is well that all should understand this at once. Thousands and tens of thousands of the bravest men, and the best blood of this State, fighting in the ranks, have left their bones whitening on the bleak hills of Virginia in this cause. We are fighting for our system of civilization -- not for buncomb, or for Jeff Davis. We intend to fight for that, or nothing. We expect Virginia to stand beside us in that fight, as of old, as we have stood beside her in this war up to this time. But such talk coming from such a source is destructive to the cause. Let it cease at once, in God's name, and in behalf of our common cause! It is paralyzing [sic] to every man here to hear it. It throws a pall over the hearts of the soldiers of this State to hear it. The soldiers of South Carolina will not fight beside a nigger -- to talk of emancipation is to disband our army. We are free men, and we chose to fight for ourselves -- we want no slaves to fight for us. Skulkers, money lenders, money makers, and blood-suckers, alone will tolerate the idea. It is the man who wont [sic] fight himself, who wants his nigger to fight for him, and to take his place in the ranks. Put that man in the ranks. And do it at once. Control your

armies -- put men of capacity in command, re-establish confidence -- enforce thorough discipline -- and there will be found men enough, brave men enough, to defeat a dozen Sherman's [sic]. Falter and hack at the root of the Confederacy -- our institutions -- our civilization -- and you kill the cause as dead as a boiled crab.

The straight and narrow path of our deliverance is in the reform of our government, and the discipline of our armies. Will Virginia stand by us as of old in this rugged pathway? We will not fail her in the shadow of a hair. But South Carolina will fight upon no other platform, than that she laid down in 1860.

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SOURCE: Charleston *Mercury*, 13 January 1865, reprinted in Robert F. Durden, *The Gray and the Black: The Confederate Debate on Emancipation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), pages 231-233.