

JACKSON'S PRESIDENCY: ANALYZING A POLITICAL CARTOON

Look at the political cartoon below, and read the background information.



Andrew Jackson was the seventh president of the United States. He served two terms in office from 1829 to 1837. Jackson considered himself a champion of the “common man.” This 1832 cartoon, created by an unknown artist, was a response to President Jackson’s controversial veto of a bill supporting the Bank of the United States. Jackson defended his veto by claiming the U.S. Bank was making businessmen rich instead of serving the interests of the common people. Jackson also argued that creating a national bank was “unauthorized by the Constitution.” When the country experienced an economic crisis in 1837, many critics blamed Jackson’s dismantling of the national bank. Opponents criticized Jackson’s crusade against the bank as an abuse of power and mockingly called him “King Andrew.”

Now answer the questions below to help you analyze the cartoon.

1. Who is the man in the cartoon supposed to be?

The man in the cartoon is President Andrew Jackson.

2. What is he wearing?

Jackson is wearing a king’s crown, robe, and slippers.

3. Why does the cartoon include the text “Born to Command” and “King Andrew the First”?

These phrases underscore the message that Jackson is acting more like a king than a president.

4. Why did the cartoonist include him holding a “VETO” paper in his left hand?

The “VETO” paper probably refers to Jackson’s veto of the national bank. The cartoonist might be suggesting that Jackson’s veto made him more king-like.

5. What is the man’s right foot stepping on? What could the significance of this be?

His right foot is stepping on the Constitution of the United States. The cartoonist might be suggesting that Jackson is trying to ignore the Constitution’s limits on executive power.

6. Do you think the cartoonist supported Andrew Jackson’s presidency? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.