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Karl Marx THE NORTH AMERICAN CIVIL WAR⁴⁵

London, October 20, 1861

For months the leading weekly and daily papers of the London press have been reiterating the same litany on the American Civil War. While they insult the free states of the North, they anxiously defend themselves against the suspicion of sympathising with the slave states of the South. In fact, they continually write two articles: one article, in which they attack the North, and another article, in which they excuse their attacks on the North. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse*.

In essence the extenuating arguments read: The war between the North and South is a tariff war. The war is, further, not for any principle, does not touch the question of slavery and in fact turns on Northern lust for sovereignty. Finally, even if justice is on the side of the North, does it not remain a vain endeavour to want to subjugate eight million Anglo-Saxons by force! Would not separation of the South release the North from all connection with Negro slavery and ensure for it, with its twenty million inhabitants and its vast territory, a higher, hitherto scarcely dreamt-of, development? Accordingly, must not the North welcome secession as a happy event, instead of wanting to overrule it by a bloody and futile civil war?

Point by point we will probe the plea of the English press.

The war between North and South—so runs the first excuse—is a mere tariff war, a war between a protectionist system and a free trade system, and Britain naturally stands on the side of free trade. Shall the slave-owner enjoy the fruits of slave labour in their entirety or shall he be cheated of a portion of these by the protectionists of the North? That is the question which is at issue in this war. It was reserved for *The Times* to make this brilliant

discovery. *The Economist*, *The Examiner*, *The Saturday Review* and *tutti quanti*^a expounded the theme further.^b It is characteristic of this discovery that it was made, not in Charleston, but in London. Naturally, in America everyone knew that from 1846 to 1861 a free trade system prevailed, and that Representative Morrill carried his protectionist tariff through Congress only in 1861,⁴⁶ after the rebellion had already broken out. Secession, therefore, did not take place because the Morrill tariff had gone through Congress, but, at most, the Morrill tariff went through Congress because secession had taken place. When South Carolina had its first attack of secession in 1831,⁴⁷ the protectionist tariff of 1828 served it, to be sure, as a pretext, but only as a pretext, as is known from a statement of General Jackson.^c This time, however, the old pretext has in fact not been repeated. In the Secession Congress at Montgomery⁴⁸ all reference to the tariff question was avoided, because the cultivation of sugar in Louisiana, one of the most influential Southern states, depends entirely on protection.

But, the London press pleads further, the war of the United States is nothing but a war for the forcible maintenance of the Union. The Yankees cannot make up their minds to strike fifteen stars from their standard.⁴⁹ They want to cut a colossal figure on the world stage. Yes, it would be different if the war was waged for the abolition of slavery! The question of slavery, however, as *The Saturday Review* categorically declares among other things, has absolutely nothing to do with this war.

It is above all to be remembered that the war did not originate with the North, but with the South. The North finds itself on the defensive. For months it had quietly looked on while the secessionists appropriated the Union's forts, arsenals, shipyards, customs houses, pay offices, ships and supplies of arms, insulted its flag and took prisoner bodies of its troops. Finally the secessionists resolved to force the Union government out of its passive attitude by a blatant act of war, and *solely for this reason* proceeded to the bombardment of Fort Sumter near Charleston. On April 11 (1861) their General Beauregard had learnt in a

^a All such.—*Ed.*

^b Marx means the articles "Few have pretended to give...", *The Times*, No. 24033, September 9, 1861, leading article; "American Complaints against England", *The Economist*, No. 942, September 14, 1861; "Mrs. Stowe on the American War", *The Examiner*, No. 2798, September 14, 1861; "Mrs. Beecher Stowe's Wounded Feelings", *The Saturday Review*, No. 307, September 14, 1861.—*Ed.*

^c President Jackson's proclamation against the Nullification Ordinance of South Carolina, December 11, 1832 (see Note 24).—*Ed.*

meeting with Major Anderson, the commander of Fort Sumter, that the fort was only supplied with provisions for three days more and accordingly must be peacefully surrendered after this period. In order to forestall this peaceful surrender, the secessionists opened the bombardment early on the following morning (April 12), which brought about the fall of the fort in a few hours. News of this had hardly been telegraphed to Montgomery, the seat of the Secession Congress, when War Minister Walker publicly declared in the name of the new Confederacy: "No man can say where *the war opened today* will end."^a At the same time he prophesied "that before the first of May the flag of the Southern Confederacy will wave from the dome of the old Capitol in Washington and within a short time perhaps also from the Faneuil Hall in Boston".⁵⁰ Only now ensued the proclamation in which Lincoln called for 75,000 men to defend the Union.^b The bombardment of Fort Sumter cut off the only possible constitutional way out, namely the convocation of a general convention of the American people, as Lincoln had proposed in his inaugural address.^c For Lincoln there now remained only the choice of fleeing from Washington, evacuating Maryland and Delaware and surrendering Kentucky, Missouri and Virginia, or of answering war with war.

The question of the principle of the American Civil War is answered by the battle slogan with which the South broke the peace. Stephens, the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, declared in the Secession Congress that what essentially distinguished the Constitution newly hatched at Montgomery from the Constitution of the Washingtons and Jeffersons was that now for the first time slavery was recognised as an institution good in itself, and as the foundation of the whole state edifice, whereas the revolutionary fathers, men steeped in the prejudices of the eighteenth century, had treated slavery as an evil imported from England and to be eliminated in the course of time.^d Another matador of the South, Mr. Spratt, cried out: "For us it is a question of founding a great slave republic."^e If, therefore, it was

^a Quoted in the report "How the War News Is Received", *New-York Daily Tribune*, No. 6231, April 15, 1861.—*Ed.*

^b A. Lincoln, *A Proclamation* [April 15, 1861], *New-York Daily Tribune*, same issue.—*Ed.*

^c A. Lincoln, "The Inaugural Address" [March 4, 1861], *New-York Daily Tribune*, No. 6196, March 5, 1861.—*Ed.*

^d Stephens's speech in Savannah on March 21, 1861.—*Ed.*

^e Marx gives the English words "a great slave republic" in brackets after the German equivalent.—*Ed.*

indeed only in defence of the Union that the North drew the sword, had not the South already declared that the continuance of slavery was no longer compatible with the continuance of the Union?

Just as the bombardment of Fort Sumter gave the signal for the opening of the war, the election victory of the *Republican* Party of the North, the election of Lincoln as President, gave the signal for secession. On November 6, 1860, Lincoln was elected. On November 8, 1860, a message telegraphed from South Carolina said: "Secession is regarded here as a settled thing"^a; on November 10 the legislature of Georgia occupied itself with secession plans, and on November 13 a special session of the legislature of Mississippi was convened to consider secession. But Lincoln's election was itself only the result of a split in the *Democratic* camp. During the election struggle the Democrats of the North concentrated their votes on *Douglas*, the Democrats of the South concentrated their votes on *Breckinridge*, and to this splitting of the Democratic votes the Republican Party owed its victory. Whence came, on the one hand, the preponderance of the *Republican* Party in the North? Whence, on the other, the disunion *within* the *Democratic* Party, whose members, North and South, had operated in conjunction for more than half a century?

Under the presidency of Buchanan the sway that the South had gradually usurped over the Union through its alliance with the Northern Democrats attained its zenith. The last Continental Congress of 1787 and the first Constitutional Congress of 1789-90 had legally excluded slavery from all Territories of the republic northwest of the Ohio.^b (Territories, as is known, is the name given to the colonies lying within the United States itself which have not yet attained the level of population constitutionally prescribed for the formation of autonomous states.⁵¹) The so-called Missouri Compromise (1820), in consequence of which Missouri became one of the States of the Union as a slave state, excluded slavery from every remaining Territory north of 36°30' latitude and west of the Missouri.⁵² By this compromise the area of slavery was advanced several degrees of longitude, whilst, on the other hand, a geographical boundary-line to its future spread

^a Quoted in the report "Columbia, S. C. Thursday, Nov. 8, 1860", *New-York Daily Tribune*, No. 6098, November 9, 1860.—*Ed.*

^b *An Ordinance for the government of the territory of the United States, north-west of the River Ohio*, adopted by the 1787 Congress, and *An Act to provide for the government of the territory north-west of the River Ohio*, adopted by the 1789-90 Congress.—*Ed.*

seemed quite definitely drawn. This geographical barrier, in its turn, was thrown down in 1854 by the so-called Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the initiator of which was St[ephen] A. Douglas, then leader of the Northern Democrats. The Bill, which passed both Houses of Congress, repealed the Missouri Compromise, placed slavery and freedom on the same footing, commanded the Union government to treat them both with equal indifference and left it to the sovereignty of the people, that is, the majority of the settlers, to decide whether or not slavery was to be introduced in a Territory. Thus, for the first time in the history of the United States, every geographical and legal limit to the extension of slavery in the Territories was removed. Under this new legislation the hitherto free Territory of New Mexico, a Territory five times as large as the State of New York, was transformed into a slave Territory, and the area^a of slavery was extended from the border of the Mexican Republic to 38° north latitude. In 1859 New Mexico received a slave code that vies with the statute-books of Texas and Alabama in barbarity. Nevertheless, as the census of 1860 proves,^b among some 100,000 inhabitants New Mexico does not count even half a hundred slaves. It had therefore sufficed for the South to send some adventurers with a few slaves over the border, and then with the help of the central government in Washington and of its officials and contractors in New Mexico to drum together a sham popular representation to impose slavery and with it the rule of the slaveholders on the Territory.

However, this convenient method did not prove applicable in other Territories. The South accordingly went a step further and appealed from Congress to the Supreme Court of the United States. This Court, which numbers nine judges, five of whom belong to the South, had long been the most willing tool of the slaveholders. It decided in 1857, in the notorious Dred Scott case,⁵³ that every American citizen possesses the right to take with him into any Territory any property recognised by the Constitution.^c The Constitution, it maintained, recognises slaves as property and obliges the Union government to protect this property. Consequently, on the basis of the Constitution, slaves could be forced to labour in the Territories by their owners, and

^a Marx uses the English word.—*Ed.*

^b Its data were cited in a report date-lined "New York, March 26", *The Times*, No. 23903, April 10, 1861.—*Ed.*

^c The ruling of the US Supreme Court on the Dred Scott case was quoted in the article "The Dred Scott Case Decided", *New-York Daily Tribune*, No. 4955, March 7, 1857.—*Ed.*

so every individual slaveholder was entitled to introduce slavery into hitherto free Territories against the will of the majority of the settlers. The right to exclude slavery was taken from the Territorial legislatures and the duty to protect pioneers of the slave system was imposed on Congress and the Union government.

If the Missouri Compromise of 1820 had extended the geographical boundary-line of slavery in the Territories, if the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 had erased every geographical boundary-line and set up a political barrier instead, the will of the majority of the settlers, now the Supreme Court of the United States, by its decision of 1857, tore down even this political barrier and transformed all the Territories of the republic, present and future, from nurseries of free states into nurseries of slavery.

At the same time, under Buchanan's government the severer law on the surrendering of fugitive slaves enacted in 1850 was ruthlessly carried out in the states of the North.⁵⁴ To play the part of slave-catchers for the Southern slaveholders appeared to be the constitutional calling of the North. On the other hand, in order to hinder as far as possible the colonisation of the Territories by free settlers, the slaveholders' party frustrated all the so-called free-soil^a measures, i. e., measures which were to secure for the settlers a definite amount of uncultivated state land free of charge.⁵⁵

In the foreign, as in the domestic, policy of the United States, the interests of the slaveholders served as the guiding star: Buchanan had in fact obtained the office of President through the issue of the Ostend Manifesto, in which the acquisition of Cuba, whether by purchase or by force of arms, was proclaimed as the great task of national policy.⁵⁶ Under his government northern Mexico was already divided among American land speculators, who impatiently awaited the signal to fall on Chihuahua, Coahuila and Sonora.⁵⁷ The unceasing piratical expeditions of the filibusters against the states of Central America were directed no less from the White House at Washington. In the closest connection with this foreign policy, whose manifest purpose was conquest of new territory for the spread of slavery and of the slaveholders' rule, stood the *reopening of the slave trade*,⁵⁸ secretly supported by the Union government. St[ephen] A. Douglas himself declared in the American Senate on August 20, 1859: During the last year more Negroes have been imported from Africa than ever before in any single year, even at the time when the slave trade was still legal.

^a Marx uses the English term.—Ed.

The number of slaves imported in the last year totalled fifteen thousand.^a

Armed spreading of slavery abroad was the avowed aim of national policy; the Union had in fact become the slave of the 300,000 slaveholders who held sway over the South. A series of compromises, which the South owed to its alliance with the Northern Democrats, had led to this result. On this alliance all the attempts, periodically repeated since 1817, to resist the ever increasing encroachments of the slaveholders had hitherto come to grief. At length there came a turning point.

For hardly had the Kansas-Nebraska Bill gone through, which wiped out the geographical boundary-line of slavery and made its introduction into new Territories subject to the will of the majority of the settlers, when armed emissaries of the slaveholders, border rabble from Missouri and Arkansas, with bowie-knife in one hand and revolver in the other, fell upon Kansas and sought by the most unheard-of atrocities to dislodge its settlers from the Territory colonised by them. These raids were supported by the central government in Washington. Hence a tremendous reaction. Throughout the North, but particularly in the Northwest,⁵⁹ a relief organisation was formed to support Kansas with men, arms and money.⁶⁰ Out of this relief organisation arose the *Republican Party*, which therefore owes its origin to the struggle for Kansas. After the attempt to transform Kansas into a *slave Territory* by force of arms had failed, the South sought to achieve the same result by political intrigues. Buchanan's government, in particular, exerted its utmost efforts to have Kansas included in the States of the Union as a *slave state* with a slave constitution imposed on it.^b Hence renewed struggle, this time mainly conducted in Congress at Washington. Even St[eph]en A. Douglas, the chief of the Northern Democrats, now (1857-58) entered the lists against the government and his allies of the South, because imposition of a slave constitution could have been contrary to the principle of sovereignty of the settlers passed in the Nebraska Bill of 1854. Douglas, Senator for Illinois, a Northwestern state, would naturally have lost all his influence if he had wanted to concede to the South the right to steal by force of arms or through acts of Congress Territories colonised by the North. As the struggle for

^a Douglas's statement, made at a reception in Washington on August 19, 1859, was reported in the article "Douglas Sure of the South", *New-York Daily Tribune*, No. 5720, August 23, 1859.—*Ed.*

^b Its basic provisions were set forth in the article "The Great Swindle", *New-York Daily Tribune*, No. 5171, November 16, 1857.—*Ed.*

Kansas, therefore, called the *Republican Party* into being, it at the same time occasioned the first *split within the Democratic Party* itself.

The Republican Party put forward its first platform for the presidential election in 1856. Although its candidate, John Frémont, was not victorious, the huge number of votes cast for him at any rate proved the rapid growth of the Party, particularly in the Northwest. At their second National Convention for the presidential elections (May 17, 1860), the Republicans again put forward their platform of 1856, only enriched by some additions.^a Its principal contents were the following: Not a foot of fresh territory is further conceded to slavery. The filibustering policy abroad must cease. The reopening of the slave trade is stigmatised. Finally, free-soil^b laws are to be enacted for the furtherance of free colonisation.

The vitally important point in this platform was that not a foot of fresh terrain was conceded to slavery; rather it was to remain once and for all confined within the boundaries of the states where it already legally existed. Slavery was thus to be formally interned; but continual expansion of territory and continual spread of slavery beyond its old limits is a law of life for the slave states of the Union.

The cultivation of the southern export articles, cotton, tobacco, sugar, etc., carried on by slaves, is only remunerative as long as it is conducted with large gangs of slaves, on a mass scale and on wide expanses of a naturally fertile soil, which requires only simple labour. Intensive cultivation, which depends less on fertility of the soil than on investment of capital, intelligence and energy of labour, is contrary to the nature of slavery. Hence the rapid transformation of states like Maryland and Virginia, which formerly employed slaves in the production of export articles, into states which raise slaves to export them into the deep South. Even in South Carolina, where the slaves form four-sevenths of the population, the cultivation of cotton has been almost completely stationary for years due to the exhaustion of the soil. Indeed, by force of circumstances South Carolina has already been transformed in part into a slave-raising state, since it already sells slaves to the sum of four million dollars yearly to the states of the extreme South and Southwest. As soon as this point is reached, the acquisition of new Territories becomes necessary, so that one section of the slaveholders with their slaves may occupy new fertile

^a Both platforms were cited in the article "The Platform", *New-York Daily Tribune*, No. 5950, May 19, 1860.—*Ed.*

^b Marx uses the English term.—*Ed.*

lands and that a new market for slave-raising, therefore for the sale of slaves, may be created for the remaining section. It is, for example, indubitable that without the acquisition of Louisiana, Missouri and Arkansas by the United States, slavery in Virginia and Maryland would have become extinct long ago. In the Secessionist Congress at Montgomery, Senator Toombs, one of the spokesmen of the South, strikingly formulated the economic law that commands the constant expansion of the territory of slavery.

"In fifteen years," said he, "without a great increase in slave territory, either the slaves must be permitted to flee from the whites, or the whites must flee from the slaves."

As is known, the representation of the individual states in the Congress House of Representatives depends on the size of their respective populations. As the populations of the free states grow far more quickly than those of the slave states, the number of Northern Representatives was bound to outstrip that of the Southern very rapidly. The real seat of the political power of the South is accordingly transferred more and more to the American Senate, where every state, whether its population is great or small, is represented by two Senators. In order to assert its influence in the Senate and, through the Senate, its hegemony over the United States, the South therefore required a continual formation of new slave states. This, however, was only possible through conquest of foreign lands, as in the case of Texas, or through the transformation of the Territories belonging to the United States first into slave Territories and later into slave states, as in the case of Missouri, Arkansas, etc. *John Calhoun*, whom the slaveholders admire as their statesman *par excellence*, stated as early as February 19, 1847, in the Senate, that the Senate alone placed a balance of power in the hands of the South, that extension of the slave territory was necessary to preserve this equilibrium between South and North in the Senate, and that the attempts of the South at the creation of new slave states by force were accordingly justified.

Finally, the number of actual slaveholders in the South of the Union does not amount to more than 300,000, a narrow oligarchy that is confronted with many millions of so-called poor whites,^a whose numbers have been constantly growing through concentration of landed property and whose condition is only to be compared with that of the Roman plebeians in the period of

^a Marx gives the English words "poor whites" in parenthesis after their German equivalent.—*Ed.*

Rome's extreme decline. Only by acquisition and the prospect of acquisition of new Territories, as well as by filibustering expeditions, is it possible to square the interests of these "poor whites" with those of the slaveholders, to give their restless thirst for action a harmless direction and to tame them with the prospect of one day becoming slaveholders themselves.

A strict confinement of slavery within its old terrain, therefore, was bound according to economic law to lead to its gradual extinction, in the political sphere to annihilate the hegemony that the slave states exercised through the Senate, and finally to expose the slaveholding oligarchy within its own states to threatening perils from the "poor whites". In accordance with the principle that any further extension of slave Territories was to be prohibited by law, the Republicans therefore attacked the rule of the slaveholders at its root. The Republican election victory was accordingly bound to lead to open struggle between North and South. And this election victory, as already mentioned, was itself conditioned by the split in the Democratic camp.

The Kansas struggle had already caused a split between the slaveholders' party and the Democrats of the North allied to it. With the presidential election of 1860, the same strife now broke out again in a more general form. The Democrats of the North, with Douglas as their candidate, made the introduction of slavery into Territories dependent on the will of the majority of the settlers. The slaveholders' party, with Breckinridge as their candidate, maintained that the Constitution of the United States, as the Supreme Court had also declared,^a brought slavery legally in its train; in and of itself slavery was already legal in all Territories and required no special naturalisation. Whilst, therefore, the Republicans prohibited any extension of slave Territories, the Southern party laid claim to all Territories of the republic as legally warranted domains. What they had attempted by way of example with regard to Kansas, to force slavery on a Territory through the central government against the will of the settlers themselves, they now set up as law for all the Territories of the Union. Such a concession lay beyond the power of the *Democratic* leaders and would only have occasioned the desertion of their army to the Republican camp. On the other hand, Douglas's "settlers' sovereignty" could not satisfy the slaveholders' party. What it wanted to effect had to be effected within the next four years under the new President, could only be effected by the

^a In its ruling on the Dred Scott case.—*Ed.*

resources of the central government and brooked no further delay. It did not escape the slaveholders that a new power had arisen, the *Northwest*, whose population, having almost doubled between 1850 and 1860, was already pretty well equal to the white population of the slave states—a power that was not inclined either by tradition, temperament or mode of life to let itself be dragged from compromise to compromise in the manner of the old Northeastern states. The Union was still of value to the South only so far as it handed over Federal power to it as a means of carrying out the slave policy. If not, then it was better to make the break now than to look on at the development of the Republican Party and the upsurge of the Northwest for another four years and begin the struggle under more unfavourable conditions. The slaveholders' party therefore played *va banque!* When the Democrats of the North declined to go on playing the part of the “poor whites” of the South, the South secured Lincoln's victory by splitting the vote, and then took this victory as a pretext for drawing the sword from the scabbard.

The whole movement was and is based, as one sees, on the *slave question*. Not in the sense of whether the slaves within the existing slave states should be emancipated outright or not, but whether the 20 million free men of the North should submit any longer to an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders; whether the vast Territories of the republic should be nurseries for free states or for slavery; finally, whether the national policy of the Union should take armed spreading of slavery in Mexico, Central and South America as its device.

In another article we will probe the assertion of the London press that the North must sanction secession as the most favourable and only possible solution of the conflict.

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- ⁴ In July 1860 a pamphlet entitled *MacMahon, King of the Irish* appeared in France, where an anti-British campaign was in full swing. The pamphlet urged the Irish to end British rule and set up the French Marshal MacMahon, a descendant of Irish emigrants, as King of Ireland. Engels is probably referring to this pamphlet. p. 3
- ⁵ The three preceding stages of the Danish-Prussian war of 1848-50 were: the period from the outbreak of hostilities on March 23, 1848 to the truce of August 26, 1848; the period from this truce to that of July 10, 1849, and finally the period from the second truce to the signing of the peace treaty in Berlin on July 2, 1850. p. 3
- ⁶ This refers to the "liberal" course proclaimed by William, Prince of Prussia (King of Prussia from 1861), in October 1858 when he assumed the regency. Actually, not one of the reforms expected by the bourgeoisie was carried out. William's policy aimed at consolidating the Prussian monarchy and Junkerdom. p. 5
- ⁷ At *Magenta* and *Solferino* the decisive battles of the 1859 Austro-Italo-French war were fought on June 4 and June 24 respectively. The Austrians were defeated on both occasions. p. 6
- ⁸ On September 9, 1861 *The Times* (No. 24033) published a letter by the US Abolitionist writer Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lord Shaftesbury, the English philanthropist politician, urging Britons to give moral support to the North. p. 7
- ⁹ The US Republican Party was formed in the north-eastern States in 1854 by a broad coalition of industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, farmers, workers and handicraftsmen in opposition to the Democratic Party. Its establishment reflected the antagonistic contradictions between the capitalism developing in the North and the system of slave labour prevalent in the South. The Republican Party, controlled by the Northern bourgeoisie, advocated the restriction of slavery to the Southern States, the free settlement of the Western Territories, and protectionist tariffs to stimulate the development of national industry. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate, was elected US President. He polled 1,866,352 votes as against 1,375,157 votes obtained by S. A. Douglas, the Democratic candidate (see Note 13). p. 8
- ¹⁰ This refers to the *Constitution of the Confederate States of America*, adopted in Montgomery, Alabama, on March 11, 1861 at a congress of the seven secessionist states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas). The full text of the Constitution appeared in the *New-York Daily Tribune*, No. 6206, March 16, 1861. p. 8
- ¹¹ *The Constitution, as formed for the United States, by the Federal Convention, held at Philadelphia, in the year 1787...* consolidated the rule of the bourgeoisie and planters in the form of a federal bourgeois republic. p. 8
- ¹² The *Crittenden compromise*, a project for the peaceful settlement of the North-South conflict, was submitted by Kentucky Senator Crittenden to the US Congress on December 18, 1860. It envisaged six amendments to the US Constitution calling, in particular, for a ban on slavery in states north of the 36°30' boundary line fixed by the Missouri Compromise (see Note 14) and the legalisation of slavery south of that line. The project denied the Congress the right to abolish or alter the slave system in the Southern States. A special

Senate committee rejected the Crittenden compromise on December 22, 1860.
p. 9

- ¹³ In the mid-1850s, following the adoption of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill (see Note 15), the US Democratic Party (founded in 1828) split up into two factions, Northern and Southern. Basically, both favoured the preservation and spread of slavery, but the Northern faction took a more flexible stand, declaring that the issue should be submitted to the US Supreme Court. The Southern faction urged the right of the Territories to make their own decisions on the matter, and pressed for the free importation of slaves into the Territories. The most reactionary among the Southern Democrats prepared the ground for the rebellion and the establishment of the separatist slaveholding Confederacy.
p. 9
- ¹⁴ The *Missouri Compromise*, embodied in the Act to Authorise the People of the Missouri Territory to Form a Constitution and State Government, was reached in 1820, after a period of bitter struggle waged in the US Congress and throughout the country between the supporters and opponents of slavery. The Missouri agreement laid down a boundary between the free and slaveholding states, outlawing slavery north of the 36°30' N line. The agreement was superseded by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, adopted by the US Congress in 1854 (see Note 15).
p. 10
- ¹⁵ The *Kansas-Nebraska Bill* (An Act to Organise the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas), passed by the US Congress in May 1854 after a fierce debate, granted the white population of Kansas and Nebraska, which were being admitted to the Union, the right to permit or prohibit slavery within their boundaries. The Bill abolished the frontier line laid down by the Missouri Compromise between the free and slaveholding states (see Note 14) and allowed every state to introduce slavery, regardless of geographical position. The adoption of the Bill gave rise to an armed struggle in Kansas between the supporters and opponents of slavery (see Note 18).
p. 10
- ¹⁶ This refers to a memorandum drawn up in October 1854 at the Belgian resort of Ostend by the US Minister to London Buchanan jointly with US diplomatic representatives in France and Spain. It recommended the US government to purchase or seize the island of Cuba, then in Spanish possession, with a view to extending slavery to it. It was not until March 1855 that the memorandum became public knowledge, causing indignation in the United States and abroad.
p. 10
- ¹⁷ The Black slave Dred Scott had lived for four years in the non-slave States of Illinois and Wisconsin. In 1848 he brought a lawsuit, claiming freedom. In 1857 it was turned down by the US Supreme Court. The ruling implied that a slave remained the property of his master even in the free States—an example of the slaveholders' efforts to have slavery legalised throughout the country.
p. 10
- ¹⁸ Marx means the armed struggle in Kansas (1854-56) between the supporters and opponents of slavery sparked off by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill (see Note 15). Despite the successes of the anti-slavery forces, Kansas fell under the sway of the pro-slavery faction, supported by the Federal government. However, the majority of the population continued the struggle and secured the admission of Kansas to the Union as a free state in 1861.
p. 10

¹⁴ On July 21, 1861 the Union army was defeated by the Confederate forces on the Bull Run river near Manassas, Virginia, in the first major battle of the US Civil War.

On August 10, 1861, the Union army, defeated at Wilson's Creek, was forced to abandon the town of Springfield, Missouri. p. 30

¹⁵ This is Marx's first contribution to the Viennese liberal daily, *Die Presse*. Max Friedländer, an associate editor of *Die Presse* from 1856, was previously publisher of the bourgeois-democratic *Neue Oder-Zeitung* in Breslau, to which Marx contributed in 1855 as its London correspondent. In 1859 Friedländer invited Marx to write for *Die Presse*, a welcome opening to Marx, as his collaboration with the *New-York Daily Tribune* (see Note 1) was diminishing and he badly needed another source of income. Apart from that, owing to its anti-Bonapartist stance, *Die Presse* had a fairly large readership (30,000 subscribers) which gave Marx a good opportunity for the propagation of his views in Germany and Austria. However, it was not until September 1861 that he agreed to contribute, having first made sure that in the domestic sphere the paper opposed the government of Anton von Schmerling (a Liberal) as well as the reactionary forces (see Marx's letters to Engels of 28 September and 30 October 1861 in Vol. 41 of this edition).

Marx's articles for *Die Presse*, most of which were printed with the editorial subheading "From Our London Correspondent", dealt with key issues of the foreign and home policy of Britain, France and the United States and with the condition of the working class and the democratic movement in these countries. In his articles on military matters Marx, as a rule, drew on material supplied by Engels. He contributed to *Die Presse* for somewhat over a year, during which the paper published 52 articles signed by Marx (two of these were written jointly with Engels, and one by Engels). Many of Marx's articles and reports for *Die Presse* were not published. This was the main reason why, in late 1862, he stopped contributing to the paper.

Marx presumably drafted the two articles "The North American Civil War" and "The Civil War in the United States" as early as June or July 1861, after receiving Friedländer's second request for contributions. In writing the articles Marx made use of data Engels sent him in a letter of June 12, 1861 (see Vol. 41 of this edition). The text of the articles was finalised on October 20. An introductory editorial note to the first article read: "The war, of which the great North American Republic has been the seat for more than half a year, already begins to react on Europe. France, which loses a market for her commodities through these troubles, and Britain, whose industry is threatened with partial ruin through stagnation in the export of cotton from the slave states, follow the development of the Civil War in the United States with feverish intensity. Though until recently Europe and, indeed, the Americans themselves still hoped for a peaceful solution, the war is assuming ever greater dimensions, spreading further and further over the vast territories of North America and, the longer it lasts, threatening this part of the world, too, with a crisis. It will first seize and shake Britain and France, and the panic on the British and French markets will in like manner react on the rest of the European markets. Apart from the historical aspect, we have, therefore, a very positive interest in getting our bearings with regard to the causes, the significance and the import of the transatlantic events. We have received from London a first communication on the North American Civil War from one of the leading German journalists, who knows Anglo-American relations from long years of observation. As events on the other side of the ocean develop, we

- shall be in a position to present communications, deriving from the same competent pen, which will outline the salient features of the war."
- Marx's later articles for *Die Presse* were much shorter than "The North American Civil War" and "The Civil War in the United States". Following Friedländer's letter of October 25, 1861 asking Marx to send shorter articles, more suitable for a newspaper, his contributions did not, as a rule, exceed four handwritten pages. p. 32
- ⁴⁶ See Note 23. p. 33
- ⁴⁷ Marx means the 1831 campaign to prepare the Nullification in South Carolina, carried through in 1832 by US Vice-President John Caldwell Calhoun, an ideologist of slavery (see also Note 24). p. 33
- ⁴⁸ See Note 10. p. 33
- ⁴⁹ This refers to the fifteen slave states which, according to the plans of the secessionists, were to make up the Southern Confederacy. Initially the Confederacy included seven states: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas. Later they were joined by Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee. The remaining four—Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware—declared themselves neutral. p. 33
- ⁵⁰ *Faneuil Hall* was donated to the city of Boston in 1742 by the merchant P. Faneuil. During the War of Independence (1775-83) patriotic meetings were held in the building, earning it the name of "the cradle of American liberty". p. 34
- ⁵¹ The first *Continental Congress*, an assembly of representatives of Britain's thirteen North American colonies, was convened in September 1774. The second, convoked in May 1775, effectively was America's government until 1787.
- A 1787 Congressional Ordinance stipulated that sections (Territories) of the Northwest area ceded by Virginia to the Union would be admitted to the Union as full-fledged states once their population had reached 60,000. All the US states except the original thirteen and Vermont, Kentucky, Maine, Texas, California and West Virginia initially had the status of Territories. p. 35
- ⁵² For the *Missouri Compromise* see Note 14. p. 35
- ⁵³ See Note 17. p. 36
- ⁵⁴ Under the *Fugitive Slave Act*, passed by the US Congress in 1850 as a supplement to the 1793 law on the surrender of fugitive slaves, a slaveholder's evidence under oath, given to a competent official, was enough to establish his title to a runaway slave and for the latter's restitution, without a legal investigation, to his master. Every US common court of justice had special commissioners appointed for the express purpose of capturing slaves. A commissioner refusing to issue a warrant of arrest was liable to a \$1,000 fine, and one responsible for a slave's escape had to pay his cost. Infringement of the Act was punishable by a \$1,000 fine, six months' imprisonment and the payment of a \$1,000 compensation for every fugitive. The Act caused a rise of the Abolitionist movement and became practically unenforceable even before the Civil War. It was repealed in 1864. p. 37
- ⁵⁵ This refers to the *free homestead* demand which became the motto of the mass anti-slavery Free Soil Party, formed in 1848 in connection with the struggle over the status of the lands seized from Mexico. The Free Soil Party later

merged with the Republican Party (see Note 9). The Free Soilers' demand was "no more slave states and no more slave territory". The Free Homestead Bill was first put to the vote in Congress in 1852, passed the House, but was rejected by the Senate. A Bill providing for the allotment of land to settlers at a moderate price (25 cents an acre) was at last adopted by Congress in 1860, but vetoed by President Buchanan. It was only after the secession of the Southern states (see Note 2) and the Republicans' victory in the 1862 election that the Homestead Act was passed. p. 37

⁵⁶ On the *Ostend Manifesto* see Note 16. p. 37

⁵⁷ *Chihuahua, Coahuila* and *Sonora*—Northern states of Mexico that bordered on the USA. p. 37

⁵⁸ The import of slaves into the United States was banned under the 1787 US Constitution and Acts of Congress passed in 1808 and 1820. p. 37

⁵⁹ This refers to the "Old Northwest", i.e. the Northwest Territory formed by Congress in 1787 (the area north of the Ohio and west of the Mississippi). It embraced the area of what later became the states of Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and part of Minnesota. p. 38

⁶⁰ Marx means the emigrant aid companies and societies formed, with the participation of the Free Soilers (see Note 55), in several Northern states in 1854 and 1855 to promote the settlement of Kansas by free small farmers, and prevent the spread of slavery to new US Territories. They raised funds and recruited settlers, giving them financial aid and otherwise helping them start farms in Kansas. They also sent arms to keep at bay "border ruffians" from Missouri and the South.

The aid movement attained maximum scope in the summer of 1856 in connection with the intensified armed struggle in Kansas (see Note 18). In July of that year the National Kansas Committee was formed at a congress in Buffalo. The aid societies' practical activity, limited as it was, exerted a strong influence on national public opinion and contributed to the consolidation of the forces that formed the Republican Party (see Note 9). It was not until January 1861 that Kansas was granted the status of a free state. p. 38

⁶¹ This article was prefaced in *Die Presse* with the following editorial note: "We have received another report from our London correspondent on the events in North America which presents the motives behind the policy of the secessionist South in an entirely new light. But let our reporter speak for himself."

Actually, however, as can be seen from Marx's letter to Engels of October 30, 1861 (present edition, Vol. 41), Marx sent the article to Vienna together with his previous one, "The North American Civil War" (see Note 45).

This article was first published in English in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, New York, 1937, London, 1937, pp. 71-83. p. 43

⁶² This refers to the cessation, in 1837, of Great Britain's personal union with the Kingdom (originally, Duchy) of Hanover. Established in 1714, the union was dissolved because Victoria, who succeeded William IV on the British throne, was not eligible to the throne of Hanover as a woman. p. 43

⁶³ Germans accounted for 20 per cent of the white population in Texas in 1850. Most of them were political refugees who had been forced to leave Germany after the defeat of the 1848-49 revolution in Europe (they were called