

The Confederate leaders are portrayed as a band of competing opportunists led by South Carolina's governor Francis Pickens (far left). The artist criticizes the January 1861 secession of five states from the lower South, following the lead of South Carolina, which had formally declared its independence a month before. Armed with a whip and a pistol, Pickens sits on the back of a young slave, pronouncing, "South Carolina claims to be file leader and general whipper in of the new Confederacy, a special edict! Obey and tremble!" Pickens's tyranny is met by expressions of self-interest from the other confederates.