



MARCH-APRIL 2006

#224



THE FLAG BULLETIN

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF VEXILLOLOGY

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March-April 2006

No. 224

Volume XLV, No. 2

*The Flag Bulletin is officially recognized
by the International Federation of Vexillological Associations
for the publication of scholarly articles relating to vexillology*

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Color artwork for this issue by Terri Malgieri

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Postmaster: Send address changes to THE FLAG BULLETIN, Box 580, Winchester, Mass. 01890-0880 U.S.A.
THE FLAG BULLETIN (ISSN 0015-3370) is published bimonthly; the annual subscription rate is \$68.00.
Periodicals postage paid at Winchester.

www.flagresearchcenter.com

THE PROTO-NATIONAL PAPAL FLAG

by Rev. William M. Becker, STD

Three unique papal flags of the same basic design have recently been discovered in private collections. The flags date from the late 19th to early 20th century; each is a yellow-white vertical bicolor with the papal tiara-keys emblem placed along the median of the two stripes.



Fig. 1: PAPAL STATES WAR/FORT FLAG, 1870

Although no legal authorization for this flag is known to the author, it appears to have served on land as a semi-official, proto-national papal flag. While not the only papal flag in use, it apparently enjoyed a privileged status. It flew at some Papal States forts from at least 1866. After the fall of papal Rome in 1870, it apparently flew at the Vatican and elsewhere in Italy until the creation of the Vatican City State in 1929 — an era known as the Roman Question period. In 1929 it was replaced by the current Vatican flag.

This proto-national papal flag is also attested in various artistic and print sources of the era. To the author's knowledge it has never been documented in vexillological works until the present article, which is supplemented with *errata* for his previous monograph on 19th-century Papal States flags.¹

The first flag specimen belongs to a Roman nobleman, Prince Sforza Ruspoli, who is descended from the former papal aristocracy. He claims it was the war/fort flag (*bandiera di fortezza*) that flew from fortifications at the Porta Pia on 20 September 1870, when papal Rome surrendered to that army of the Kingdom of Italy which first breached the city walls there. The flag was presumably hoisted from a stationary flagpole on or near the city gate (Figs. 1 and 2).²



**Fig. 2: PAPAL STATES
WAR/FORT FLAG
(REVERSE DETAIL), 1870**

Its yellow stripe seems slightly narrower than the white, thus shifting the central emblem hoistward. The tiara is embroidered in white, with color highlights along its crowns, and both keys are embroidered in golden-yellow and bound together by a red cincture. The flag seems to show evidence of damage, possibly from the cannon barrage that typified the battle at that gate and other sites along the walls of Rome. After 1870 the flag was preserved by the Ruspoli family and gained notoriety in the Italian press in 2000 when it was displayed by devotees of Pope Pius IX at a vigil prior to his beatification.³

The second flag specimen belongs to an American vexillologist, Ben Zaricor, and is part of the Zaricor Flag Collection. It is a yellow-white silk bicolor of the same basic design, with the tiara-keys emblem appliquéd in yellow and framed by a wreath of the same color. Both stripes, however, are equal in width; five yellow ties are attached to the hoist (**Fig. 3**). The emblem appears only on the obverse of the flag; the reverse is a plain bicolor. It is not clear whether this flag dates from before or after the fall of papal Rome in 1870, since it was first acquired by a museum in 1912.⁴

The third flag specimen is held by the author and probably dates from the latter part of the Roman Question period. It is an evenly divided yellow-white vertical bicolor made of wool, with the tiara-keys emblem embroidered along the median of the stripes. One key is rendered in gold, the other in silver (**front cover**). The emblem is partially visible on the reverse of the flag. Five yellow ties are attached to the hoist. It once belonged to an Italian cardinal who served in Rome in decades past (**Fig. 4**).⁵

When did the proto-national papal flag originate? The earliest likely attestation known to the author is December

**Fig. 3: PROTO-NATIONAL PAPAL FLAG,
ROMAN QUESTION PERIOD**



**Fig. 4: PROTO-NATIONAL PAPAL FLAG,
ROMAN QUESTION PERIOD**

1866, when a journalist reported on the departure of French troops from Castel Sant' Angelo fortress in Rome: "the French tri-color was hauled down ... and the Papal flag, white and yellow, with the cross [*sic*] keys, unfurled in its stead."⁶ However, a simpler flag was struck at the same fortress on 21 September 1870 — a plain yellow-white vertical bicolor with no emblem.⁷

In tandem the two flag designs attest that yellow-white war/fort flags were used shortly before the Papal States fell in 1870. This is a new discovery, since neither flag design is attested as a war/fort flag in papal legal directives or contemporary vexillological sources,⁸ although the plain bicolor served as a civil flag and an infantry color.⁹ Moreover, the difference between the two designs is curious, since one carries the emblem along the median of the stripes and the other has none.

Absent legal authorization, it appears that the new, yellow-white war/fort flags were semi-official national flags — i.e., lacking official authorization but popularly recognized as embodying the papacy's accepted emblem and/or colors. Their rise may have been catalyzed by several factors — the newly-formed Kingdom of Italy, proclaimed on 17 March 1861 and the attendant reduction of the Papal States to the region around Rome (Latium), the need for a papal counterpart-flag to Italy's official tricolor, and the adoption of a plain yellow-white papal infantry color in 1862 (described *infra*).

At sea Papal States vessels flew various yellow-white vertical bicolors from 1825 to 1870. These included the civil ensign — featuring the tiara-keys emblem on the white stripe — which was resurrected as the state flag of Vatican City in 1929.¹⁰ On land it is curious that the proto-national papal

flag presently under review instead showed the emblem along the flag's median — i.e. its geometric center. Perhaps this was done to counter-imitate the contemporary Italian tricolor, which likewise bore in the center the state emblem — the shield of the House of Savoy.

During the Roman Question period, several other sources also attest to the proto-national papal flag. These include artwork, photographs, and post-cards. An 1887 painting (**back cover**) at the Vatican Historical Museum shows a wounded Papal Zouave holding a yellow-white vertical bicolor with the tiara-keys emblem (in golden yellow) along the median of the stripes.¹¹ Previously the author wondered whether the Zouaves used this color instead of the standard issue papal infantry color of the period, viz., a plain vertical yellow-white bicolor.¹² That the latter is the case is attested by contemporary sources and modern military historians.¹³

An actual flag belonging to Papal Zouaves veterans, held by the Musée de la Civilisation in Quebec City, also corresponds to the design of the proto-national papal flag — at least on its reverse side. Dating from at least 1899, its reverse consists of yellow-white stripes divided vertically, with the tiara-keys emblem along the median of the two equal stripes.¹⁴ The flag is one of several belonging to French-Canadian Papal Zouaves, mostly veterans.¹⁵

An undated, black-and-white photograph of a prestigious Catholic school in Brescia, Italy — presumably from the Roman Question period, ca. 1915 — shows the proto-national papal flag flying above the entrance. Indeed the flag corresponds quite precisely to the one in the author's collections, and may be the same flag or one made by the same flag-maker.¹⁶

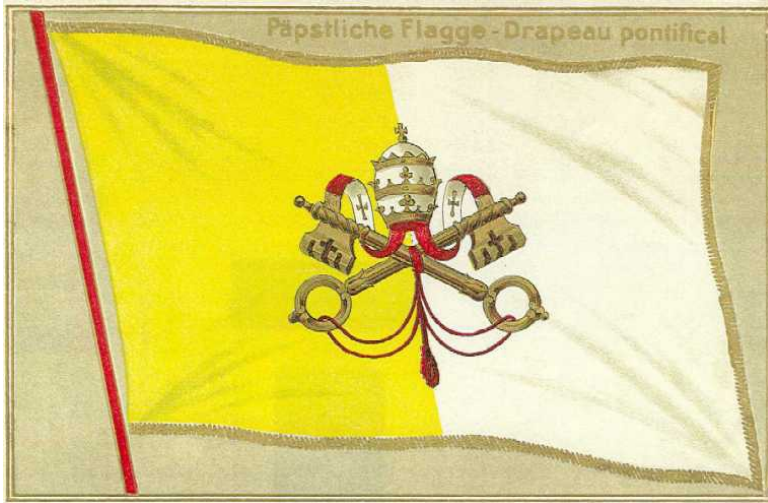
Two commercial postcards from this era also show the proto-national papal flag. One was published as part of a 1906-1919 series in Zurich. It illustrates the “Papal Flag” as an oblong, yellow-white vertical bicolor divided evenly and with the tiara-keys emblem placed in the very center, with both keys in gold (**Fig. 5**).¹⁷ The other, a black-and-white photo-postcard from ca. 1910-1920, shows a large vertical bicolor (presumably yellow-white) flying from a Vatican courtyard for the swearing-in of Palatine Guard recruits. The flag appears to have an emblem along the median of the two stripes – presumably the tiara-keys emblem.¹⁸

Journalists and travelers to the Vatican report a yellow-white flag in official use during the Roman Question period¹⁹ – presumably the proto-national papal flag described herein. It was occasionally seen in Rome even after the adoption of the state flag of Vatican City in 1929. Examples include its appearance in two class photographs of pontifical American seminarians (1930 and 1931) and in an Italian encyclopedia (1938). The author previously regarded its appearance as an anomaly, but it now appears to be a brief reiteration of a deliberate flag design.²⁰

Other sources report a papal flag in use at sea when vessels carried papal dignitaries during the Roman Question period.²¹ Presumably it was not the proto-national papal flag, but rather the former Papal States civil ensign, which was advertised by many flag-makers and various vexillological sources as the pontifical civil ensign.²²

Some historical background will set the scene for the period under scrutiny. Pan-Italian uprisings in the Papal States erupted in 1831, 1848-1849, and 1859-1860. In the latter the pope’s Austrian protectors withdrew and most of his lands fell to the Kingdom of Sardinia, the standard-bearer of the

**Fig. 5: PROTO-NATIONAL PAPAL FLAG,
POSTCARD CIRCA 1906/1919**



Risorgimento whose headquarters were in Piedmont. Northern papal cities fell in 1859, while Ancona fell in 1860 after the decisive battle at Castelfidardo. Thereafter papal territory was reduced to Rome and the surrounding region of Latium defended by French troops.

Piedmont formed the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 under Victor Emmanuel II, uniting the whole peninsula except Venice, which joined in 1866, San Marino, and Rome, which remained under the pope. A power struggle emerged between Italian moderates and republicans like Giuseppe Garibaldi, who tried to seize Rome in 1867. He was defeated at Mentana by Franco-Papal forces, including the Papal Zouaves. However, in 1870 Italian forces seized Rome after the French withdrew to fight Prussia.

Subsequently the popes sequestered themselves in the Vatican until the “Roman Question” – i.e. the question of shared sovereignty over Rome – was resolved by the Lateran Accords on 11 February 1929. After their ratification the Vatican City State constitution was published on 8 June 1929, in which the civil ensign of the defunct Papal States was adopted as the state flag. Thereupon the proto-national papal flag described herein departed from the scene.

NOTES

1. See Rev. William M. Becker, “Papal States Flags: 1800-1870,” *The Flag Bulletin*, no. 213. The monograph was formally presented to Pope John Paul II at the Vatican in December 2004. ERRATA – See p. 176 as noted. On p. 172 “GREGORY” should read “GREGORIO.” On p. 175 the caption for Fig. 18 should read “1862-1870.” On p. 177, change 1863 to 1847. On p. 184-185, Fig. 21 is the flag of the Pontifical Carabineers under Leo XII, not the dragoons. On p. 184 change “Pope Leo XII” to “the reigning pope.” On p. 195 at the end of note 52, replace Citarelli with Stefano Ales, *Insegne militari preunitarie Italiane* (Rome: Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell’Esercito, 2001), p. 86, 382-383 (pl. 106). On p. 195, note 54, after pl. 70 add “and p. 155.” On p. 196, note 63, change “1866” to “1867.” On p. 200 add to the Illustration Sources “Wise: #21, pl. 55, no. 332.” On p. 201, change the relevant entry to “Bouquet, M.” On p. 201, the title of the article in *Annuaire* is “Drapeaux Pontificaux.” On p. 202 and NOTES *passim*, change “Machiavelli” to “Rangoni-Machiavelli.” ADDENDA – The flag in Fig. A is 117 x 126 cm (46 x 49”). The flag in Fig. B from the Capitoline Museum collections in Rome is 176 cm square (69.3” square). The flag in Fig. 20 from the Capitoline Museum Collections in Rome is 90 x 190 cm (35.4 x 74.8”).

2. Prince Sforza Ruspoli, e-mail and photos to author, 22 November 2004. The field is composed of five breadths of cloth whose seams are disposed vertically (i.e. parallel to the hoist). Assuming the breadths are the standard 18” apiece, the flag’s estimated size is ca. 1.2 x 2.2 m (ca. 4 x 7.5’).

3. Cf. Arcangelo Paglialunga, "Torna la bandiera del Papa Re," *Giornale di Brescia*, 2 September 2000, online at <<http://www.giornaledibrescia.it>>. "Aristocrazia nera, guardie nobili e la bandiera di Porta Pia alla veglia in ricordo di Pio IX," *L'Unione Sarda*, 3 September 2000, online at <<http://www.unionesarda.it>>. "Pio IX e Giovanni XXIII, beatificati in mezzo alle polemiche," *La Nazione.it*, online at <<http://lanazione.quotidiano.net>>. "Vota Lillio. Te lo dicono Francobaldo e Claudio," *Il Barbiere della Sera*, online at <<http://www.ilbarbieredellaser.com>>.

4. Cf. online at <www.flagcollection.com>. The flag (no. 222) is identified as a "Pontifical States military color" and is 42" x 60" (107 x 152 cm). The web archive states that the De Young Museum in San Francisco acquired it in 1912 from William P. Burke, and the Zaricor collection acquired it in 1997.

5. The flag was advertised in 2007 as belonging to an unidentified cardinal who had served in Rome in decades past and whose ecclesiastical goods were being disposed of by his grand-nephew. It measures 56 x 55" (142 x 140 cm).

6. "The Pope and His Probable Future," *New York Times*, 17 December 1866, p. 4 (online archive). The article reports the handover ceremony as taking place December 10, but other sources suggest December 11. In any case, the French returned in 1867.

7. Becker, p. 178. The flag is preserved at the Museo Vaticano Storico, no. 30615, 250 x 270 cm (98.4 x 106.3"). Each stripe is composed of three vertical breadths sewn together.

8. M.A. LeGras, *Album des Pavillons* (Paris: Département de la Marine, 1858), pl. 22, no. 3, shows the Papal States war/fort flag with a white field charged with the pope's personal arms surmounted by the tiara and keys. The central emblem is shifted slightly hoistward, as is also the case with the Ruspoli war/fort flag.

9. Becker, p. 174-179.

10. Becker, p. 166-170.

11. Becker, p. 174: Marius Richard, *La fedeltà di Francia alla cattedra di Pietro*, painting, 1887.

12. Becker, pp. 173-174.

13. Baron Athanase Charles Marie de Charette de la Contrie, *Souvenir du régiment des zouaves pontificaux: Rome, 1860-1870; France, 1870-1871. Notes et récits*. (Patay, ca. 1871), unnumbered lithograph by F. Appel, Paris. Camillo Viviani, *L'esercito pontificio in alta uniforme negli ultimi anni prima del 1870* (Bergamo: Ist. Ital. D'Arti Grafiche, 1918; multi-lingual), plates 8 & 9: two watercolors show the plain bicolor being carried by both the zouaves and a line-infantry regiment. Attilio Vigevano, *La fine dell'esercito pontificio* (Rome: Stabilimento Poligrafico per l'Amministrazione della Guerra, 1920), pl. 1. Lorenzo Innocenti, *Per il Papa Re* (Perugia: Esperia, 2004), p. 43. *Ibid.*, e-mail to author, 8 December 2004. Massimo Brandani, P. Crociani, and Massimo Fiorentino, *L'esercito pontificio da Castelfidardo a Porta Pia, 1860-1870: uniformi, equipaggiamento, armanento* (Milano: Intergest, 1976), p. 90. Stefano Ales, *Insegne militari preunitarie Italiane* (Rome: Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, 2001), p. 89. Becker, p. 174, and 195, n. 61

14. Collection number 1994.8517; the obverse of the flag bears a shield with a beaver and maple leaves. It belonged to the veterans association known as the "Union Allet" founded in 1899 and later known as the "Zouaves pontificaux candiens."

15. Cf. "Collection des zouaves pontificaux de Québec," online at <http://www.mcq.org/objets/fichier_collections/p131.htm>. Flag images and a collection summary provided courtesy of Pauline Grégoire, Documentation Technician, e-mails to author, 22 February 2005 and 28 April 2005. Only one of the twenty-seven flags dates from before the fall of Rome and it was created in Montreal in 1868 for Canadian recruits. Its obverse is white with the tiara-keys emblem and local inscriptions, while its reverse bears Canadian emblems. The flag measures 82 x 104 cm. (32" x 41"). The remaining papal flags were produced for Zouave veterans after their return to Canada. Ten replicate the Vatican City flag design and were probably created after 1929.

16. Collegio Cesare Arici, attended by Pope Paul VI as a boy from 1903-1914. It is pictured in William E. Barrett, *Shepherd of Mankind: A Biography of Pope Paul VI* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), p. 96b.

17. "Päpstliche Flagge – Drapeau pontifical," illustrated postcard, H. Guggenheim & Co., Zurich, no. 10489. Flag Research Center archives. Antique post-card retailers document the series at Ebay.com.

18. "ROMA – Vaticano – Giuramento della Guardia Palatina," photo-postcard, STA, no. 8430. Author's archives.

19. Jerome Hart, *Argonaut Letters* (San Francisco: Payot, Upham & Co., 1901), p. 189. "Soundings by Mussolini," *Time*, 13 February 1928, online archive at <www.time.com>. Other accounts in the *New York Times* mention a papal flag in use at the Vatican without describing its colors: "Prince Rospigliosi Dead: Papal Flag at Half-Staff for Commander of the Noble Guard" (7 June 1915, p. 11); "Greet Pope on Name Day" (13 May 1924, p. 2); "Pope Pius 67 Years Old" (1 June 1924, p. E1); "Pope 72 Years Old Today" (31 May 1929, p. 13).

20. Cf. Becker, p. 200, n. 100. Pontifical North American College, Rome, Library, class photos, 1930 and 1931. "Bandiera," *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, vol. 6 (Rome: Istituto Giovanni Treccani, 1938), pl. 2.

21. From the *New York Times*: "The Papal Ambassadors [sic]," 1 August 1875, p. 12; "Pope Says Glory Will Shine Here," 30 November 1911, p. 6; "Papal Flag to Fly First Time at Sea [sic]: Nuncio Going from Argentina to Belgium Charters a Ship and Carries Papal Colors," 13 June 1916, p. 11. "Liner to Fly Papal Flag: Germans Promise Protection to Archbishop on Way to Rome," 17 July 1917, p. 4.

22. Becker, p. 187-189.

THE ORIGINS OF THE U.S. FLAG PLEDGE

by Paul J. Upham

This paper presents the history of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag from its creation in 1892. Mark Twain satirized that era in his dystopian work, *The Gilded Age*.¹ Like other eras characterizing growth spurts in American history, that era (roughly 1877-1900) saw (in this case) a boom in transportation, notably the expansion of the railroads, and, in communications — the telegraph and the telephone. Chronic controversy centered on the question of what should be the basis for the nation's currency — gold, silver, or credit. That dispute was highlighted by the depressions of 1873 and 1893 and was at the root of the Greenback and Populist parties. The clash culminated in the presidential election of 1896.

The country's attention was focused on increasing immigration from southern and eastern Europe; on imperialism, which bloomed late in the era; on business incorporations which facilitated powerful oligarchies; on industrialization undertaken on a massive scale; and on inventions which were rapidly and commercially implemented across the land.

It was an age

...indulgent of commercial speculation, social ostentation and political prevarication, but... indifferent to the special needs of immigrants and Indians and intolerant of black Americans, labor unions, and political dissidents...²

Intellectually, economic and social Darwinism was the leitmotif and some opinion leaders embraced an organic theory of national life derived from Hegelian concepts. The detritus of the Civil War, which a generation earlier had split the Union, continued to fester in peoples' minds and emotions. In education, the trend toward compulsory public schooling faced an emerging rival in the parochial system founded by Roman Catholic immigrants. Around 1892 the United States economy became the world's largest and the Anglo-Saxon Race was heralded as the highest form of human development.

YOUTH'S COMPANION

The writing and promotion of the Pledge of Allegiance to the US flag can be directly attributed to the management of the *Youth's Companion* magazine. The men responsible for the Pledge of Allegiance were Francis Bellamy (**Fig. 1, p. 57**) and James B. Upham (**Fig. 3, p. 65**), staff members at the *Companion* under the guidance of Daniel Ford, the owner and publisher.

From its founding in 1827, its readership had grown to a circulation of 475,000 in 1892. It was one of the most respected and influential publications in the country. As a 19th century forerunner of the *Reader's Digest*, it was a mix of serials, short stories, celebrity articles, anecdotes, puzzles, and a children's page.

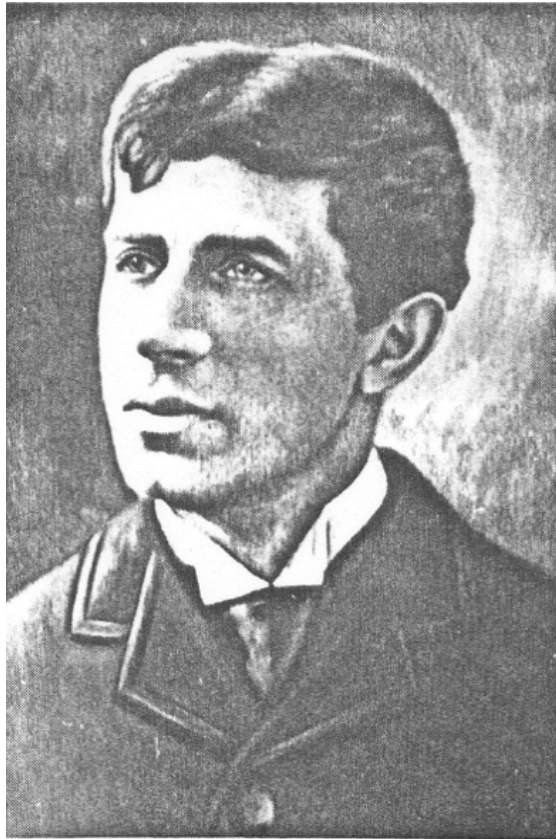
Puritanical by current standards, editorial policies excluded mention of sex or crime. The *Companion* would not accept ads for liquor, tobacco products, perfume, or ladies' lingerie. During the hundred-year life of the *Companion*, it featured such noted authors as William Cullen Bryant, Willa

Cather, Emily Dickinson, Bret Harte, Winston Churchill, William Dean Howells, Jack London, Lincoln Steffens, Thomas Huxley, O. Henry, and Mark Twain. Innovative in its advertising function, the *Companion* set up a copy department as a service to its customers and was the first magazine to use photographic illustrations. It published the first color ad in an American periodical. The *Companion* advanced and perfected the concept of using premiums as a direct marketing method for promoting various products.

Francis Bellamy, first cousin to the well-known Edward Bellamy, author of *Looking Backward*, was descended from six generations of Baptist ministers. He was born in Mount Morris, New York, in 1855. After his father died when he was eight, he moved to Rome, New York, where he was raised by his mother. He graduated from Rome schools in 1872 and the University of Rochester in 1876. At the Rochester Theological Seminary he studied for the Baptist ministry and completed his studies in 1880. He began his ministry in Little Falls, New York, in June 1881, marrying Hattie Benton of Newark, New York.

In 1885 Bellamy became minister of the Dearborn Street Church in Boston and demonstrated a special concern for the poor in his congregation. Under his leadership the congregation grew and his church was enlarged. Bellamy actively campaigned for temperance and prohibition. He supported Edward Bellamy's Nationalist movement by his membership and speeches in favor of the Society of Christian Socialists. The Society believed in the universal brotherhood of man and in man's social responsibility toward the disadvantaged. In these activities he attracted attention and gained the admiration of Daniel Ford, who attended Bellamy's church and was impressed by Bellamy's

Fig. 1: FRANCIS BELLAMY



sermons. When Bellamy's activism on behalf of the Society incurred the displeasure of the church elders, resulting in a reduction in his operating funds, he resigned and began working for Ford, who placed him under Upham's direction.³

Daniel Ford was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1822. His parents had been English emigres to the United States. Like Francis Bellamy, Daniel's father died when he

was a child, leaving his mother with six children and meager resources. He attended common school and was afterward self-taught by constant reading and practice in writing. While still a boy, he was apprenticed in the printer's trade, first as a compositor and then as a bookkeeper at the *Watchman and Reflector*, a weekly Baptist journal published in Boston. At age 22, he partnered with J. W. Omstead and bought a share of the journal.

In 1857 Ford Omstead and Company bought the *Youth's Companion*. Ford had married Sarah Upham of Melrose, Massachusetts. She was the sister of the Reverend James Upham, the father of James Bailey Upham. Ford was a generous benefactor to religious enterprises associated with Baptist charities and Christian social programs. He contributed to the Ruggles Street Church located in the Roxbury factory district of Boston. He gave about fifty thousand dollars a year to Francis Bellamy's church and bequeathed over two million dollars to the Baptist Church associations of New England.⁴

Like the writer of this article, James Bailey Upham was a descendant of John Upham who arrived in Massachusetts in 1630. The family had intimate connections with American history into the twentieth century.⁵ James Bailey Upham was born in New Hampshire in 1845 and moved as a boy to Fairfax, Vermont, where his father taught the classics and was president of the school board. In 1865 the Reverend Upham moved to Boston and became the editor of *The Watchman*, which had been managed by his brother-in-law, Daniel Ford. James B. Upham served in a local home guard unit and received some military training. After the Civil War, he went to Detroit and was employed by a bookseller and publisher. He married Mary Hartshorn in 1876, moving to

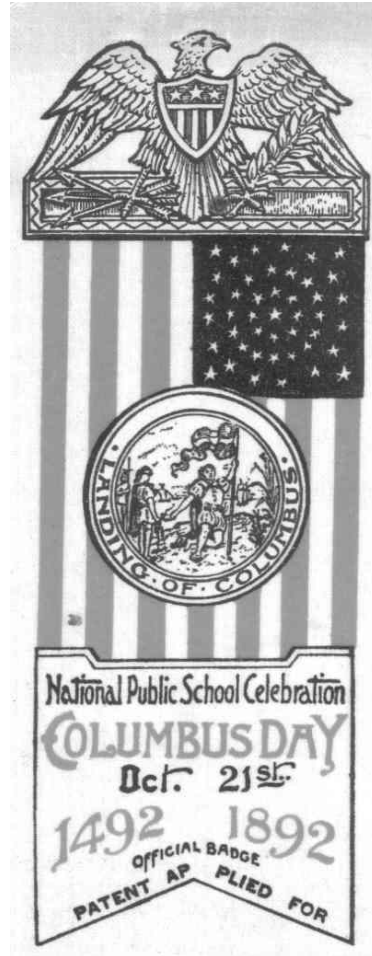
Malden, Massachusetts, in 1880. After a partnership with his brother-in-law William Hartshorn, he sold his interest and joined his uncle as a senior manager at *The Youth's Companion* in Boston.

Upham was an active member of the Masons, who encouraged mutual assistance among adherents and fostered humanitarian works for education and hospitals. The Masons strongly advocated public schools; they asserted that there was an essential link between schools and freedom, which required free nonsectarian educational establishments to promote "Americanism."

THE NPSC

The specific occasion that lead to the writing of the Pledge of Allegiance was the preparation for the quadricentennial anniversary of Christopher Columbus' landing in the Americas. With the approval of Daniel Ford,

Fig 2: 1892 COLUMBUS DAY RIBBON



James B. Upham led the promotion of the National Public School Celebration (NPSC) in many ways. He polled the *Companion's* young readers as to their level of interest in the NPSC. Their response was positive. He interested the nation's leading educational newspapers in the cause of raising US flags above public schools. W. T. Harris, the US Commissioner of Education, sought to increase the teaching of patriotic themes in the curricula. The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago included a Youth's World Congress which endorsed the NPSC. At the annual meeting of the Super-intendents of Education of the National Education Association in the summer of 1892, they strongly backed the NPSC plan developed by Upham, which was a program of patriotic exercises. (It can be argued that this was the first national advertising and public relations campaign in the United States.)

Francis Bellamy prepared mass mailings of press releases and circulars. One sent to the American Press Association appeared in about 4,000 local newspapers. The *Companion* urged its readers to ask their teachers and school boards to honor the NPSC and to organize grass root committees. State Superintendents of Education were asked to contact local school superintendents and teachers. The Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, General John Palmer, endorsed the NPSC and their posts were mailed news releases. Through his Lyceum League of America, Upham succeeded in buying flags for nearly every public school house in the nation.

Politicos at every level were encouraged to make statements. Theodore Roosevelt, then a member of the US Civil Service Commission, said

...The Common School and Flag stand for the arch-typical of American civilization... so it is eminently fitting that the Common School and the Flag should stand together on Columbus Day.⁶

With the help of Republican Representative Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, Grover Cleveland, the once and future president convinced President Harrison to issue a proclamation on 21 July 1892 honoring Columbus Day. The proclamation states in part, "...Let the National Flag float over every school house in the country..."

Based upon the biographies of Bellamy, Ford, and Upham, it is a reasonable assumption that they, like many of their contemporaries, were influenced by an amalgam of American patriotism, social Christianity, business, and educational philosophy. Other factors which contributed to the creation and promotion of the Pledge included the genesis and growth of many patriotic organizations in the 1870s and 1880s; an explosion of immigration, which rekindled nativist fears concerning their loyalty; the growth of Roman Catholic schools, which were repugnant to many Americans; urbanization, which facilitated the formation of labor unions, entities then associated with foreign, disloyal, and dissident elements; and the emergence of a hubristic nationalism sanctifying America's power, its achievements, and messianic mission. From the stewing of such ingredients did the doctrine of Manifest Destiny evolve. A year after the Pledge, in 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner, at the Columbian Exposition, presented his thesis stating that the end of the American frontier had arrived.

THE PLEDGE'S AUTHOR

As to the author of the original Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, the only primary source is the first-person account Francis Bellamy wrote. While Upham attempted many draft versions of the pledge and Bellamy worked on other aspects of the NPSC, each urged the others to write a pledge. Belatedly, one evening in mid-August 1892, Upham forced the issue. To quote Bellamy: "...He [Upham] said I would have to do the thing if it was done at all. We agreed to stay together that evening until I could formulate a clear idea and work out the wording... While dining at the Thorndyke Hotel Upham and I discussed the ideas to be included... When we got back to the office, I was strongly stirred... shut myself in my room, asking my friend [Upham] to wait until I called. The strain of the next two hours has always remained a distinct memory. I shall never forget those arduous hours spent upon the small composition... And so, with my pencil moving haltingly over the pages, I created the twenty-three word oath which was to become a creed for American schools... Together we had solved the problem of the Salute. Upham's determination, inspiration and persistence had pressured me into writing it."⁷

The original words were: I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands — one Nation indivisible — with liberty and justice for all. Bellamy and Upham had considered including the word *equality* in the Pledge, but neither agreed with the concept. It should be noted that Upham never claimed authorship of the Pledge. It was Daniel Ford who decided to print the Pledge anonymously, in accordance with the *Companion* policy, saying that Bellamy

acted as chairman of the executive committee and as their representative.

The Pledge was first used publicly in New York City, which sponsored a three-day celebration from 10-12 October 1892. During the 1880s, a city auditor, J. Blach, had introduced a Columbus Day program to the schools. The 1892 events included a parade of 35,000 school children up Fifth Avenue with over 500,000 spectators. One million people watched a naval pageant on the Hudson River with ships from Europe and South America. At Central Park, two million gathered, including immigrants who had little connection with the public schools, but were proud of their Italian and Hispanic heritage.

Over time, the use of the Pledge gained more official and organizational support. The National Education Association (on an uncertain date, probably 1903) recommended the daily use of the Pledge in the classroom. The Women's Relief Corps, auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, incorporated it into their adult patriotic program in 1894. In 1897, the president of the Southern California Sons of the American Revolution, who was also a community board of education member, successfully led a drive to pass a local regulation requiring that all pupils salute the flag with the Pledge.

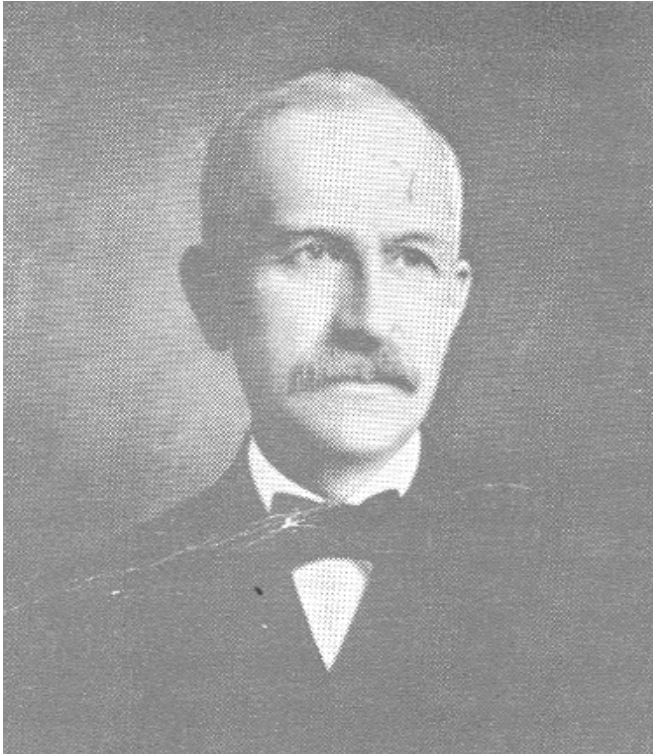
New York State was the first to require the flag salute, in a resolution passed in 1898 coincident with the United States declaration of war against Spain. Rhode Island followed suit in 1901, Arizona (then a territory) in 1903, and Kansas in 1907. The state flag pledge movement — calling on every state and territory to require every school to have recitations of the flag pledge — grew through World War I and into the 1920s until every state complied.

In 1898 the American Flag Association, composed of dozens of American patriotic societies such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, was formed. In 1939, after decades of lobbying, the Association convinced Congress to make the Pledge a part of the nation's U.S. flag ceremony protocol. The Flag Code was adopted in a joint Congressional resolution in June 1942. On 20 June 1985 President Reagan signed Public Law 99-54, recognizing the annual National Pause for the Pledge of Allegiance as part of National Flag Day activities.⁸

The original Pledge language has been changed three times. The word "to" was inserted before "the Republic" by *The Youth's Companion* for grammatical precision. The second change resulted from a National Flag Conference held in Washington in June 1923. The words "my flag" were replaced by "the flag of the United States of America." This change originated from the concern of some that immigrants might believe they were pledging allegiance to their former nation's flag. Here is a clear connection to the nativist fears of the nineteenth century, arising during another period of immigration.

In the early 1950s, the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternity and social action organization, began promoting the idea of adding the words "under God" to the Pledge. In the context of a cold war against atheistic and Communistic Russia, the negotiated settlement of a hot war in Korea, Mao's victory in China in 1948, and a super-power nuclear arms race, the change had great national appeal. Following a Congressional resolution, President Eisenhower signed into law the addition of the two words, noting that they appear in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.⁹ During the same period,

Fig. 3: JAMES B. UPHAM



1953-1956, the national motto was also changed from *E Pluribus Unum* to *In God We Trust*. The latter phrase was made mandatory on all US currency. One can only speculate about the possibility of future changes to the wording of the Pledge.

PLEDGE AUTHORSHIP

While various controversies have arisen over the Pledge, the most serious disagreement over the authorship pitted the

family and friends of Francis Bellamy against those of James B. Upham despite the fact that during their lifetimes, they were the best of friends. In 1910, five years after Upham's death, Bellamy wrote to Seth Mendell, then editor of the *Youth's Companion*, asking him to acknowledge publicly his writing of the Pledge. Mendell declined, replying that he recalled the writing as a team effort under Upham's leadership. Mendell reminded Bellamy of the *Companion's* policy of writer's anonymity.

As the Pledge became public property by common recitation in the schools, Bellamy, at the urging of his family, began a public campaign to establish authorship. In 1920, at a gathering of patriotic groups in New York City, he read a speech titled, "The Pledge of Allegiance: How I Came To Write It." In 1923, he wrote an article for the *Elks Magazine* called, "A Twenty-Three Word National Creed: How the Most Widely Known Patriotic Formula in America Came Into Existence." On 7 June 1923, the *Companion* radio broadcast said that the Pledge had been written by Upham and his associates at the publication and not solely by Bellamy. Bellamy wrote again to the *Companion* which again declined to credit him, citing Mendell's 1920 letter.¹⁰

In three affidavits, filed with the County of New York in 1923, Bellamy detailed his claim to the authorship. These affidavits included statements of friends and former associates. After retiring to Tampa, Florida, he continued his campaign, speaking before civic groups and fraternal orders. In the *Tampa Tribune* in 1929 he is quoted as objecting to Congresswoman Ruth Bryan Owen's attempt to include in the Pledge an oath to obey the Twenty-first Amendment to the Constitution, which authorized Prohibition. Upham's daughter, Bertha Upham Proctor, read the article and wrote the *Tribune*

protesting Bellamy's claim and arguing that her father was the true author.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and, in particular, the City of Malden, took the side of the Upham supporters. In 1917, the librarian of Malden inquired of the *Youth's Companion* as to whether Upham was the author of the Pledge. The *Companion* said that he was and in December 1917 published an account of the writing of the Pledge with Upham's picture. It later issued a brochure for the nation's public libraries, describing how Upham had written the Pledge, including statements by former staff members of the magazine.¹¹ In 1942 Governor Saltenstahl of Massachusetts dedicated a memorial plaque honoring Upham during a celebration in Malden. As a United States Senator in 1945, Saltenstahl placed an item in the *Congressional Record* stating that Upham was the author. In 1956 the *Malden Evening News* ran a series of articles written by Archie Birtwell supporting Upham as the author.

Ironically, after their deaths, both Bellamy and Upham factions were championed by female educators, Margarett Miller and Louise Harris, respectively. Miller had worked in the Portsmouth, Virginia, public school system for over twenty years and was dismayed to learn in 1936 that the author of the Pledge was "uncertain." After six years of research, she concluded that Bellamy was the author and she published two books on the subject.¹²

During the 1960s, Louise Harris of Providence, Rhode Island, defended Upham as the author. Harris was a specialist on C. A. Stephens, a popular writer for the *Companion* who gave her collection on Stephens to the Brown University Library.¹³ She also published a book on the topic, "The Flag Over The Schoolhouse." While Miller's and Harris's

works are serious investigations of the circumstantial and anecdotal information available, it is very difficult to reach a definitive conclusion about the Pledge's writer based upon the evidence presented. Questionable assumptions, rhetoric, and ad hominem arguments were sometimes used to bridge syllogistic gaps.¹⁴

Since the writing of the Pledge in 1892 there have been two formal inquiries as to its true author. In 1939 the United States Flag Association appointed a committee of three university professors "...in the interest of historical accuracy and certainty..." They were Bernard Mayo, professor of American history, Georgetown University; Charles C. Tansil, professor of American history, Fordham University; and W. Reed West, professor of political science, George Washington University. Their report stated that they had come to the unanimous conclusion that the "...credit for the authorship of the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag belongs entirely to Mr. Francis Bellamy of Rome New York..."¹⁵ In their decision, it is clear that the committee gave substantial weight to Bellamy's service as a minister and to the cogency and credibility of Bellamy's 1923 affidavits.

In 1957 at the request of Congressman Kenneth Keating of New York, the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress completed a study of the authorship of the Pledge. The study, headed by John T. Rodgers of the Library's History and Government division, noted that the 1939 Flag Association report was based on a seven hour review, and that the *Americana*, *Britannica*, and *World Almanac* had all expressed reservations about the report's findings. Nevertheless, the Library study, which was thorough, also concluded that Bellamy was the author.¹⁶ Basing its findings on "...the law of inherent probability...the preponderance

of the evidence...convinced them Bellamy was an honest man..."¹⁷ In both the Flag Association and Library of Congress reports, the Bellamy claim is viewed as the authoritative established fact and the Upham claim as the challenger. Most sources today record Bellamy as the author.

Speculation presents two other hypotheses. Since it was eighteen years between the writing of the Pledge and Bellamy's finest assertion (1892-1910) and an additional thirteen years before the affidavits were submitted, his recollection may have been dimmed. At the risk of historical inaccuracy, the Pledge should perhaps be viewed as a joint creation, based on the mutual dialogue between Bellamy and Upham during the time of its genesis.

THE PLEDGE IN COURT

In two related US Supreme Court cases, the Pledge of Allegiance as recited in the public school classrooms has been adjudicated. In *Minersville School District et al v. Gobitis et al*, decided 30 June 1940, the Court upheld a local Pennsylvania school district in its enforcement of a state regulation requiring that pupils salute the national flag while reciting the Pledge. The Gobitis family were Jehovah Witnesses who believed that such a gesture of respect for the flag violated their religion, citing Chapter 20 of the Book of Exodus. In the majority opinion, Justice Frankfurter stated:

The ultimate foundation of a free society is the binding tie of cohesive sentiment. Such a sentiment is fostered by all those agencies of the mind and spirit which may serve to gather up the traditions of a people, transmit them

from generation to generation, and thereby create the continuity of a treasured common life which constitutes a civilization. We live by symbols. The flag is the symbol of our national unity, transcending all internal differences, however large, within the framework of the Constitution. This Court has had occasion to say that the flag is the symbol of the Nation's power, the emblem of freedom in its truest, best sense.¹⁸

Three years later, in *West Virginia Board of Education et al v. Barnette et al*, the Court reversed itself, specifically overruling the *Gobitis* decision with Justice Jackson delivering the majority opinion. He wrote a point-by-point rebuttal to Frankfurter's opinion in *Gobitis*, stating

There is no doubt that, in connection with the pledge, the flag salute is a form of utterance... The use of an emblem or flag is a short cut from mind to mind. Causes and nations, political parties, lodges and ecclesiastical groups seek to knit the loyalty of their followings to a flag or banner, a color or design.

Jackson concluded that a compulsory flag salute and pledge violates the First Amendment to the Constitution, saying

...no official high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.¹⁹

In his dissenting opinion, Justice Frankfurter remained consistent with his *Gobitis* opinion, advocating judicial restraint regarding state flag pledge regulations and referring to the controversial issue of prayer and Bible-reading in the public schools. While the *Barnette* case remains the controlling precedent at the Federal level, it is not without its occasional challenges by uninformed or change-minded local school boards.

In more recent political history, the flag and the Pledge were highlighted in the prosecution of Abbie Hoffman under the revised Flag Law of 1968, which was aimed squarely at the Vietnam War protesters of that period. Scot Guenter's book *The American Flag, 1777-1924* is a revealing cultural analysis of flag pledge issues throughout American history.²⁰

NOTES

1. Mark Twain, *The Gilded Age* (New York, 1977), as quoted in *America in the Gilded Age*, by Sean D. Cashman (New York University Press NY, 1988).

2. H. W. Brands, *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s* (St. Martin's Press NY, 1995).

3. Margarett S. Miller, *Twenty-Three Words* (Print Craft Press, Portsmouth VA, 1976).

4. Margarett S. Miller, *I Pledge Allegiance* (Christopher Press: Boston MA, 1947).

5. Marc Friedlander and Robert V. Sparks, Editors, "Papers Relating to the Quincy, Wendell, Holmes and Upham Families," (Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts, 1977). Included in this collection is correspondence between Richard Upham-Thomas Paine, Charles Upham-William Channing, and Horace Mann, Galeb Upham-Samuel Adams, George Ellis's eulogy of Charles Upham, letters from Edward Everett and William Channing, the diaries of Mary A. Upham, and etc.

6. John W. Baer, *The Pledge of Allegiance-A Centennial History, 1892-1992* (John W. Baer, Annapolis MD 1992).
7. Louise Harris, *The Flag Over the Schoolhouse* (Brown University, Providence RI 1971).
8. National Flag Day Foundation Inc., "Annual National Pause for the Pledge of Allegiance," (Baltimore MD, 1996).
9. Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America* (Simon & Schuster NY, 1992).
10. *The Youth Companion* (University of Michigan Micro-film Archives: Ann Arbor MI 1827-1927).
11. Margarette S. Miller, *Twenty-Three Words* (Print Craft Press: Portsmouth VA, 1976).
12. Margarette S. Miller, *I Pledge Allegiance* (Christopher Press: Boston MA, 1947).
13. Louise Harris, *Old Glory-Long May She Wave* (Brown University: Providence RI, 1981).
14. *Ibid.*
15. United States Flag Association, *Authorship of the Pledge to the Flag* (Washington DC, 1939).
16. Proceedings of the 85th Congress, "Authorship of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: A Report," (Congressional Record, Appendix V, Summary Portion of the Library of Congress Study, August 8, 1957).
17. *Ibid.*
18. Minersville School District, Board of Education of Minersville School District et al. v. Barnette et al. 319 US 624.
19. West Virginia State Board of Education et al. v. Barnette et al. 319 US 624.
20. Scot M. Guenter, *The American Flag* (Fairleigh Dickinson Press: Rutherford NJ, 1990).

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40 YEARS AGO ©1966

SYMBOLS IN SPACE

by Whitney Smith

Man has now taken the first tentative steps towards a conquest of space: he has traveled in orbit around the Earth and has sent rockets into orbit around the Sun as well as near the Moon, Mars, and Venus. In this venture man's culture has been an important factor, both in terms of motivation and in the concrete forms of technology embodied in the space vehicles. And since symbols play an important part in civilization here on our home planet, man has from the very first carried these symbols with him into space.

Although the United States has done much of the space exploration, it is the Soviet Union which has made the most emphasis on the symbolic aspects of its work. There is much of interest here for the vexillologist – just as there has always been in the development of new uses of symbols of state, e.g. the national flag, the air force roundel, etc. At this



**PRAVDA,
14 SEPTEMBER 1959**

point it is impossible to see what will happen in the future as man reaches the Moon and other planets, establishes exploration bases, and possible colonies. But a review of the history of flags and other symbols in space will give certain clues.

The first important symbol in space was the "pennant" (*vympel* in Russian)

carried aboard the Lunik I which was intended to land on the Moon, but went into orbit around the Sun instead. The Russian word for pennant normally indicates the same object designated by the English word – a long tapering piece of cloth used as a flag. In subsequent publications, however, the Soviet press made it clear that this “pennant” was a thin strip of metal with *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* embossed on one side and *January + 1959 + January* and the Soviet coat of arms on the other side. The Lunik itself was spherical and composed of pentagonal metal pieces bearing either the Soviet arms and CCCP (the Cyrillic abbreviation for USSR) or the date of launching.

The failure of Lunik I to reach the Moon was compensated for by the direct hit of that body by Lunik II on 13 September 1959 and the first placement by men of an object onto another celestial body. Again the Lunik bore the same pentagonal metal pieces on the outside and the thin metal pennant inside.



**PRAVDA, 13 SEPTEMBER
1959; THE FLAG BEARS THE
SOVIET COAT OF ARMS**

The confusion over the meaning of *vympel* in this unusual context led to a widespread confusion. Some in the Western world thought an actual Soviet flag had been planted on the Moon. Even artists in Soviet newspapers, who were told the pennant bore the coat of arms and date of launch, produced several erroneous designs. The illustration on the previous page, for example, shows the state flag of the USSR with *USSR – September 1959* written on it, while the version on this page has a banner bearing the coat of arms but no inscription.

The recent dramatic Soviet achievement of a softlanding on the Moon was highlighted in Moscow newspapers (in contrast to Western papers which had reproductions of the photographs transmitted by the Luna 9 station) by pictures of the pennants carried by the rocket. The pentagonal piece has the arms on one side and *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – January 1966* on the other. The other pennant is remarkable in several respects. Unlike its Lunik predecessors it is red with the designs in raised pattern of the metal color used in the manufacture of the pennant. Also it is not rectangular in shape, but rather triangular like a real (cloth) pennant. On the obverse is the name of the country and the coat of arms; on the reverse a schematic drawing of the Earth, Moon, and Luna 9 trajectory.

Despite the appearance of large pictures of these emblems in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, cartoonists in this instance again showed various forms of actual flags. The cartoon by Efimov in *Izvestiya* of 5 February has a robot sitting on the moon and talking (by telephone!) to the Kremlin; the robot holds a regular USSR flag in his hand. A postage stamp in honor of the event also has a flag with the arms in the center planted on the Moon.



THE PENNANT FROM LUNA 9

On 1 March 1966 the Soviet Union scored another victory when its Venus 3 space probe became the first man-made object to land on another planet. The rocket bore a plaque containing the Soviet coat of arms. One may expect similar emblems to be carried on all future important travels in space.

Do such symbols have any significance? What, if anything, can be said about their influence on the development of vexillology? To answer the second, easier question first, it would seem possible to draw one very important moral: the essential aspect of a flag is not its appearance or material but its function, namely to represent or symbolize something else with conciseness. The flag thus is not just a pole with ribbons attached signifying the port-of-origin of a ship (as in ancient Egypt), nor a silken cloth with heraldic emblems representing a nobleman (as in the Middle Ages), nor a tricolor piece of paper on a stick to express nationalist fervor at a parade (as in our own era), nor an embossed strip of metal sent to another planet; the flag is all of these *functions* and others as well. To deny this is to show historical blindness and to force artificial divisions and terms onto the subject. Perhaps these new uses of flags will help to remind us that vexillology, like heraldry and sphragistics, is only part of the wider subject of graphic symbolism. The very nature of space exploration and of other planets (e.g. lack of air, variations in radiation and gravity, weight limitations of rockets, etc.) will lead to more and more unusual forms of flags or “paravexilloids” (almost-flags). We might, for example, find astronauts “flying” their national flags by forming the designs on the ground with colored powders or by projecting them through lasers or by inflating metallic flags. There will probably also be more emblems worn on uniforms or on space

vehicles, a development presaged by the present use of flags and similar emblems on air planes.

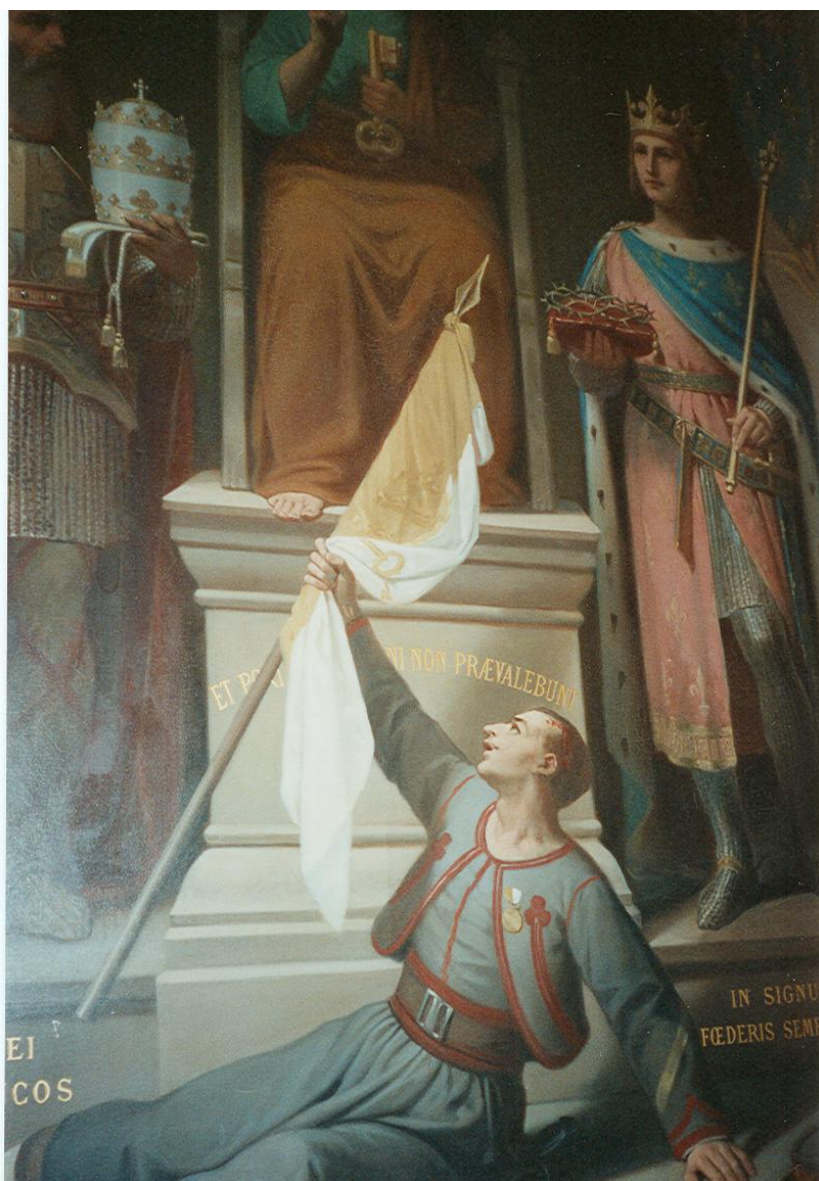
The other question, whether such symbols have any importance, can best be answered by a review of the uses of flags throughout history. It will be noticed immediately that the appearance of a flag at a historic event is rarely arbitrary. In the Middle Ages it was common for a king or other feudal lord to give a special banner to a vassal in a ceremony confirming the contract of vassal-age. Wars, e.g. by the Mongols and Arabs, were officially proclaimed by the raising of a banner. Conversely, the fall or capture of the flag in a battle was as disastrous as the death of the commander of the army. In short flags have been held to be necessary adjuncts to human adventure in all ages, rather than mere decoration or signs of personal vanity as might first be imagined. The purposes for which they have been used of course vary: at times the flag or other graphic symbol is a token to help recall an event, at times it is employed to inspire and exhort men, at times its presence denotes the social status and official rank of the individual displaying it.

The Soviet symbols in space call upon long-established traditions. When the first European explorers cautiously set forth to discover the unknown (to them) lands in Asia, Africa, and the New World, each advance was marked by the hoisting of a flag or (especially in the case of the Portuguese and French) by the erection of a pillar bearing the arms of the king. Such pillars served as landmarks of the farthest point reached by previous travellers, but more importantly they served to publicize and prove the great achievements made by a particular nation. They also became the basis for later claims to actual sovereignty over the territory in ques-

tion. The pennants on the Moon and Venus have parallel functions in our own time. Even if they are never actually sighted again by man, they will be recorded as the first marks of human culture beyond this planet – and reminders that it was the Soviet Union which placed them there. Whether in fact they will further be used as bases for claims to sovereignty is yet to be seen; but it is interesting to note that the United States Department of State has already issued an official rejection of any such claim which might be made, if unsubstantiated by further exploration and by colonization.



SOVIET UNION COAT OF ARMS



Front cover: **PROTO-NATIONAL PAPAL FLAG (DETAIL),
ROMAN QUESTION PERIOD**

Back cover: **PAPAL ZOUAVE COMMEMORATIVE PAINTING, 1887**