



The Global Legacy of Cuba's *Estrella Solitaria* (Lone Star Flag)

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Figure 1. An artistic rendering of the Estrella Solitaria (Lone Star) flag. Source: Country Flags, "Cuba Flag Pictures," flagcountries.blogspot.ca (accessed 9 October 2017).

They say that a good idea goes far and in the world of politics that is certainly true. They also say that imitation is the highest form of flattery. Both sayings can be applied easily to Cuba's national standard, the so-called *Estrella solitaria* or "Lone Star" flag.



Figure 2. Another view of the Estrella Solitaria (Lone Star) flag. Source: Madden (user name), commons.wikimedia.org (accessed 9 October 2017).

Designed in 1849 and composed of three blue stripes on a white field with a white, five-pointed star on a red equilateral triangle at the hoist, the simple flag of Cuba has become much more than a visible symbol for the island nation. Modern states and would-be nations around the globe have imitated

the elegant design of this flag such that it has come to represent the ideals of democratic revolution and self-determination against the forces of monarchy, colonialism, and imperialism.

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean and for over four hundred years it was one of the Spanish empire's most precious and strategic colonies in the Americas. Somehow the island missed the wave of independence that swept across Latin America, starting in 1810. For decades, Cuba's native sons and daughters watched with a mixture of yearning and disappointment as one colonial territory after another freed itself through armed struggle from Spanish rule.

Meanwhile, Spain clung to Cuba with increased repression as if its imperial honor rested on holding onto that precious piece of real estate in the new world. The erstwhile Historian of the City of Havana Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring noted that the ceremonial lowering of the American Old Glory and raising of the Cuban Lone Star flag over Havana's El Morro castle on 20 May 1902 did not so much signal the end of the American occupation of Cuba after the Spanish-American War as it symbolized the definitive collapse of Spain's global empire.¹

The Cuban flag was created as part of a failed effort to free the island from Spanish dominion in 1849.² Narciso López (1797–1851), the Venezuelan-born adventurer and revolutionary, designed the flag while in exile in New York City.³ One version of the origin story states that the image of the flag came to López in a dream while he was napping in a city park; another argues that he literally saw it in the heavens over the city one evening.⁴ By all accounts, López immediately had the exiled Cuban poet Miguel Teurbe Tolón (1820–1857) draw it up.⁵ Teurbe Tolón's wife Emilia (1828–1902) sewed it together—"Betsy Ross" style.⁶ There is a colorful anecdote about Emilia in



Figure 3. Narciso López (1797–1851), designer of the Estrella Solitaria. Source: Latin American Studies, "Narciso López (Oct. 29, 1797–Sept. 1, 1851)." www.latinamericanstudies.org (accessed 9 October 2017).

March 1850 secreting the original flag while the Spanish authorities searched the revolutionary's home.⁷ All the while, during the interrogation, the flag was hidden in a cushion in her parlor.

López and 600 filibusters invaded the island from New Orleans later that spring. They carried that flag into battle on 19 May and it flew over the freed city of Cárdenas for a few hours. The filibuster ultimately failed and López returned to Key West. A year later, he launched a second attempt to liberate the island, but the Spaniards captured him this time and put him to death. The Venezuelan's devotion to the cause of Cuban independence and his design of that flag on its behalf were his ultimate legacy.⁸



Figure 4. The Cuban flag that flew over the city of Cárdenas in 1850. Source: Cubadebate, "Bandera cubana que ondeó en Cárdenas en 1850." www.cubadebate.cu (accessed 10 October 2017).

The flag's general design and colors no doubt derived from the Stars and Stripes of the American Old Glory (1777). Indeed, López was in the states to secure funds and recruit support for the Cuban insurrection. His American backers included members of the U.S. government, particularly politicians from the slave-owning South who were all too eager to annex the nearby island through filibustering and other means. The three blue stripes on a white field of López's design represented the three military departments of the Spanish colony, much as the 13 stripes of the American flag represented the original British colonies in America.



Figure 5. The United States flag in use from 1837 to 1845. Source: Jacobulus (user name), commons.wikimedia.org (accessed 10 October 2017).



Figure 6. The French Tricolor flag. Source: Anomie (user name), commons.wikimedia.org (accessed 10 October 2017).

The red, white, and blue colors were inspired by both the American flag and the French Tricolor (1789). By 1849 a number of states, including Chile, Costa Rica, and Texas had adopted the revolutionary colors. Avelino Couceiro has eloquently argued that beyond representing the concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the three colors of the triad of the American, French, and Cuban flags “meant the repudiation of all kinds of exploitation and majority rule by a minority whose power was based on false pedestals of blood, money, or divine influence.”⁹

For López and his filibusters, the white color of the star and stripes represented the purity of revolutionary ideals while the red field of the chevron stood for the blood of the martyrs in the struggle against monarchy. According to his secretary Cirilo Villaverde, López declared that the red symbolized the “union of all Cubans,” most likely in the context of revolutionary struggle and death in battle. Villaverde himself referred to it as a “field of blood” and Roig de Leuchsenring later called it a triangle of “blood and fire.”¹⁰

López most certainly drew upon Masonic sources for the novel design of the red chevron with a five-pointed star.¹¹ According to Antonio Rafael de la Cova, the equilateral triangle on the rectangular field resembled a Masonic Master’s apron, albeit on its side.¹² Evidence shows that López rejected Masonic symbols such as the all-seeing eye typically located in the apron’s triangular flap in favor of a lone star. The design bears striking resemblance to a number of Masonic aprons from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with a five-pointed star on the flap.¹³



Figure 7. A Masonic Order Master Mason apron. Source: Amazon, “Masonic Master Mason Apron for the Freemason.” www.amazon.com (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 8. An eighteenth-century lambskin “Washington and Lafayette” Mason apron. Source: Francmasón Colección, “Mandil ‘Washington & Lafayette.’” www.francmasoncoleccion.es (accessed 11 October 2017).

López himself credited the lone star of the Texas flag as the inspiration for the *Estrella solitaria*. The Texas star, derived from equally compelling Masonic origins, symbolized independence and sovereignty. The latter association seems ironic given López's collusion with American annexationists. There is little doubt that Freemasonry played a significant role in both the design of the Cuban flag as well as the sponsorship of its revolution.¹⁴



Figure 9. *The Texas state flag.* Source: Boston Public Library, "Greetings from the Lone Star State." www.flickr.com (accessed 11 October 2017).

Cubans waited over a half century for López's revolutionary flag to become the ensign of an independent republic. Although Cubans ostensibly won their freedom in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the revolutionary flag did not replace the Stars and Stripes of the American occupation until the establishment of the first republic on 20 May 1902 when the *Estrella solitaria* was hoisted over the fortification of the Castillo de los Tres Reyes del Morro at the mouth of Havana harbor.



Figure 10. *Lowering the American flag at the Castillo de los Tres Reyes del Morro, Havana, on 20 May 1902.* Source: Latin American Studies, "Havana, Cuba, 1902." www.latinamericanstudies.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 11. Raising the Cuban flag on the Governor General's palace at noon on 20 May 1902. Unknown author, commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).

Figure 12. The Spanish and American flags on a late-nineteenth-century cigar box. El Lagartón Verde blog, lagarto1949.wordpress.com (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 13. A pamphlet depicting the Cuban and United States flags. Source: Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, University of Montana.

The Flags of Puerto Rico and the Philippines

By the time Cuba achieved independence, its revolutionary flag had already inspired those of two other sister colonies seeking independence from Spanish rule, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In 1895, 59 Puerto Rican exiles affiliated with the Cuban Revolutionary Party replaced their own design, the so-called *Grito de Lares* flag of 1868, with one that reversed the colors of the Cuban flag.¹⁵ On 22 December 1895 Francisco Gonzalo Marín (1863–1897), the so-called “Pachín,” presented the new design to an assembly at New York City’s Chimney Corner Hall where it was unanimously adopted by his countrymen.¹⁶ Marín was the unquestioned designer according to a letter written from Jamaica by Juan de Mata Terreforte of the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Committee to Domingo Collazo of the Club Borínquen.¹⁷



Figure 14. The flag of Puerto Rico from 1895 to 1952. Source: *Adventuro98* (user name), *commons.wikipedia.org* (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 15. The flag of the Philippines. Source: *Darwogon0801* (user name), *commons.wikipedia.org* (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 16. Francisco Gonzalo Marín. Source: *Totemkin* (user name), *commons.wikipedia.org* (accessed 11 October 2017).

However, the story of Puerto Rico’s flag is neither without controversy nor charm. An even older account states that the flag was conceived by Antonio Vélez Alvarado (1864–1948) and assembled by New York merchant Domingo Peraza in 1892.¹⁸ The Puerto Rican flag’s inverted colors resulted from Alvarado’s staring at the Cuban flag for too long and then looking at a

blank wall. Why the flag did not result in the colors blue, black, and gold is anyone's guess.

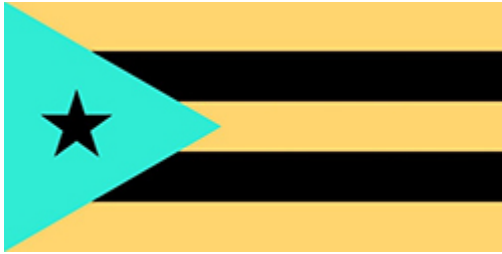


Figure 17. A blue, black, and gold Puerto Rican flag. Source: Josh Taira, Taira Design.

Vélez Alvarado revealed the flag with the inverted colors at a dinner party hosted by Micaela Dalmau de Carreras. According to this alternate narrative, the design featuring a light blue triangle was approved at that gathering by none other than José Martí (1853–1895), the central figure of Cuba's revolutionary struggle and its eventual *pater patriae*.

The Puerto Rican flag has also been ascribed to a third individual, the exiled Puerto Rican writer Lola Rodríguez de Tío (1843–1924).¹⁹ Rodríguez de Tío was in Cuba in 1887 and 1899 and was also affiliated with Martí. Later, in 1910, she became one of the founders of the Cuban Academy of Arts and Letters. It was Tío, in fact, who wrote the famous verse: “Cuba y Puerto rico son de un pájaro las dos alas”²⁰ in *Mi Libro de Cuba* (1893), a line often misattributed to Martí. Though unsubstantiated, ascribing the flag to Rodríguez de Tío had great currency in Puerto Rico and abroad during the first half of the twentieth century, perhaps because of her affinity for both Cuba and Martí.

Since the Puerto Rican flag's inventor is in doubt, it has subsequently generated competing Betsy Ross figures. In addition to Peraza, it has also been attributed to Maria Manuela “Mima” Besosa, the daughter of Manuel Besosa, one of members of the Puerto Rican section of the Cuban Revolutionary Party. What is not in doubt is that the Puerto Rican flag's origins lie in the Cuban flag and the odd reversal of colors that continues to confuse many today.

The U.S. government outlawed the Puerto Rican flag from 1898 to 1952. It was officially adopted on 25 July 1952 and in theory is not to be flown except in the company of the U.S. flag. In spite of the many controversies related to its origins and its problematic use as a national standard, the flag of the American commonwealth is a much beloved symbol of Puerto Rican nationalism, frustrated as it may be.

In 1897, Philippine revolutionary Emilio Aguinaldo (1869–1964) designed the *Tatlong Bituin at Isang Araw* or “Three Stars and a Sun” flag for Spain’s far-flung Asian colony in imitation of the Cuban flag.²¹ Aguinaldo, the self-declared dictator who became the first president of the independent Philippine Republic, designed a white triangle at the hoist with a sun and three stars on a field of two stripes in scarlet and royal blue. While the red, white, and blue colors were an explicit reference to the American flag, his compositional formula derived from the Cuban flag.²²



Figure 18. Philippine revolutionary and politician Emilio Aguinaldo. Source: All Wide Wallpapers, www.allwidewallpapers.com (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 19. The flag of the Philippines. Source: Darwogon0801 (user name), commons.wikimedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).

The flag differed from its Cuban prototype in two significant ways. The sun motif in the triangle was linked to the so-called *Sol de Mayo* or “Sun of May” iconography of the Latin American republics of Argentina, Peru, and Uruguay. The second difference was the use of two stripes instead of three. In a novel use, the red and blue stripes are inverted during times of war.

The triangle-and-two-stripes formula of Aguinaldo’s flag was replicated later by disparate nations and aspiring democratic states. In 1918, in the aftermath of World War I, Jaroslav Kursá (1875–1950) of the Czechoslovakian Ministry of the Interior designed a similar flag for the fledgling European nation. Czechoslovakia adopted it in 1920 and later, at the end of the Cold War and after its amicable breakup with Slovakia, the Czech Republic retained it as its national emblem.²³

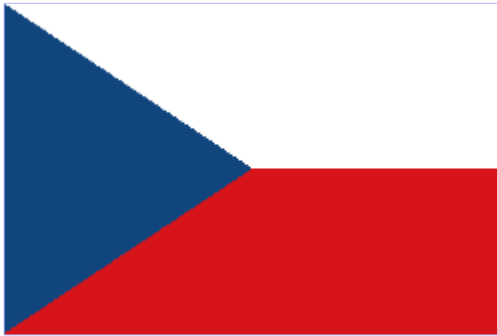


Figure 20. The Czechoslovakian flag of 1920. Source: Alkari (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 21. A plaque dedicated to Jaroslav Kursá. Source: Blovice Info Blog, Tajemství vzniku naší státní vlajky, www.blovice.info (accessed 11 October 2017).

Djibouti's flag, created in 1972 and adopted in 1977, was based on the flag of the League for African Independence which had a white star on a red triangle much like the Cuban flag.²⁴ Two Malaysian island states adopted similar designs: Sarawak's *Trisakti* from 1973 to 1988 and Sabah's flag from 1982 to 1988.²⁵ Sint Maarten's flag, designed by Roselle Richardson (b. 1966) in 1985, is the most recent of the triangle-and-two-stripes group.²⁶ A number of municipalities and regions around the world have taken up the formula. Thomas Arcenaux, for example, designed a similar flag for the Acadiana or Cajun region of the state of Louisiana in 1965 and the state legislature officially adopted it in 1974.



Figure 22. The flag of Djibouti. Source: Zscout370 (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 23. The Sarawak flag from 1973 to 1988. Source: Alkari (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 24. The Sabah flag from 1982 to 1988. Source: Alkari (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 25. The flag of the Acadiana region of Louisiana. Source: Lexicon (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 26. The flag of Sint Maarten.

The Flag of Catalan Independence

Catalonia was the third Spanish territory to be inspired by the Cuban as well as Puerto Rican flags in its ongoing struggle for independence from Spain.²⁷ Designed and adopted in Cuba by like-minded separatists, the celebrated “Blue Flag” or *Senyera blava*, as it is called in Catalonia, has a white star on a blue triangle at the hoist, overlaid on the four red stripes on a yellow field of the historic flag of the kingdoms of Aragon and Catalonia. The flag is also known as the *Estelada blava*, “Starry Blue Flag,” or simply the *Estelada*, “Starry One.”

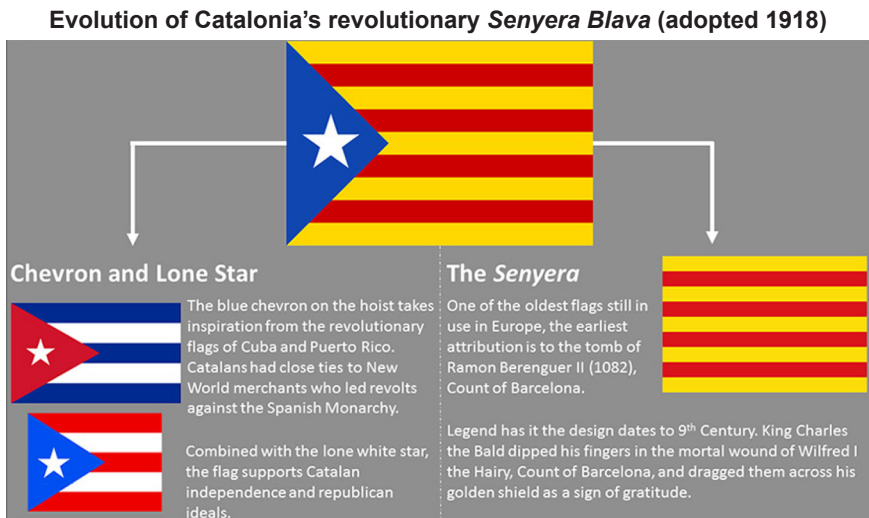


Figure 27. Infographic on the Catalanian flag. Based on the source: *tpa_bcn* (user name), *Www.reddit.com* (accessed 11 October 2017).

The design of this revolutionary flag is evidence of the common struggle against the central government in Madrid at the turn of the last century and of the strong cultural ties between Catalonia and Cuba, many of whose citizens are of Catalan extraction. Catalonians not only fought and died in the Cuban War of Independence, but also helped fund it.

Although generally attributed to Catalan separatist Vincenç Albert Ballester i Camps²⁸ (1872–1938) of the Pro-Catalonia Committee in 1918 and formally adopted by the exiled Catalan Republic’s Assemblée Constituent in Havana in 1928,²⁹ the design is, in fact, much older. Catalan exiles used it while fighting in Santiago de Cuba during the War of Independence. Ballester, who was on the island in 1898 during the Spanish American War, based his design on the Cuban flag. The *Blava* first appeared in print in 1906 in the Centro Catalanista de Santiago de Cuba’s publication *Fora Grillons!* and then

reappeared in 1918 in Ballester's publication *l'Intransigent* and in 1920 in *La Nova Catalunya* in Cuba.



Figure 28. A photograph of Vincenc Albert Ballester i Camps. Source: Grupo Li Po blog, "Las Raíces venezolanas de la Estelada." grupolipo.blogspot.ca (accessed 11 October 2017).

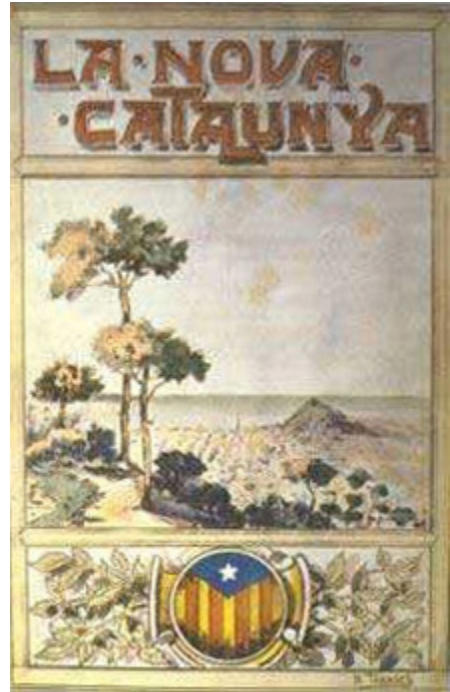


Figure 29. The symbol of Catalonia on the cover of *La Nova Catalunya*. Source: *L'estelada, una bandera de combat* blog, webs.racocatala.cat (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 30. A Catalanian stamp. Source: Etziba Baluxto blog, blocs.mesvilaweb.cat (accessed 11 October 2017).

The *Senyera blava* was outlawed in Spain for much of the twentieth century during the 1939–1978 dictatorship of General Francisco Franco. Catalonia is an autonomous community within Spain, but the flag still has

no official status. Yet this immensely popular flag is seen frequently waving at political rallies, street demonstrations, and sporting events and hanging from balconies throughout Catalonia, Valencia, and other Catalan-speaking and pro-independence parts of the country. In May 2016 the Spanish government banned the display of the flag at sporting events; according to spokesperson Concepción Dancausa, “Sport in general and football in particular should not be converted into a theater for political confrontation.”³⁰ David Rowe of



Figure 31. The red Estelada or La Grogga. Source: SMP (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figures 32, 33, and 34. Blue, black, and green variations of the Estelada. Source: Pàgina de les estelades, www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/4398 (accessed 11 October 2017 via archive.org).

Western Sydney University retorted, “they not only mix, but are married with children.” The courts reversed the government’s decision to ban it just ahead of the encounter between Barcelona and Seville’s soccer teams in the Copa del Rey held at Madrid’s Estadio Calderón. Should Catalonia achieve actual independence, this flag will most certainly become its national standard.

A second version of the *Estelada* known as *La Gropa* or “Red Flag” has a red star on a yellow chevron. It is unclear the Front Nacional de Catalunya or the Esquerra Catalana del Treballadors created it, but it has been in wide circulation among worker groups and Socialist, Communist, and other Marxist-leaning separatists since 1968.³¹ A number of *esteladas* have been adopted by splinter groups including a yellow star on a red chevron and various combinations of blue, black, and green stars on white and red triangles. Since the early 1970s, *esteladas* have been adopted by separatist movements throughout Spain including Andalusia, Asturias, the Canary Islands, and Galicia.

The Pan-Arab Flags

The design of the Cuban flag may have precipitated another important set of imitations in the wake of the First World War, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of new nation states in the Arab world. By most accounts, British diplomat Sir Mark Sykes (1879–1919) invented the Flag of



Figure 35. The Flag of Arab Revolt of 1916. Source: Fry1989 (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 36. Sir Mark Sykes in 1918. Source: Rotational-commonswiki (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).

Arab Revolt in 1916³² with a design that is similar to that of the Cuban flag, three horizontal stripes and a triangle at the hoist, but lacking the white star of the prototype.

Keeping the red triangle, Sykes's design replaced the blue and white alternating stripes of the Cuban flag with the colors black, green, and white representing the principal dynasties of the historic Islamic caliphates; the white stripe at the bottom stood for the Umayyads, the black at the top for the Abbasids, and the green in the middle for the Fatimids. The red triangle at the hoist represented the Hashemite dynasty. Other sources have argued that the choice of colors came from the words of fourteenth-century Iraqi poet Safi Al-Din Al-Hilli, "White are our acts, black our battles, green our fields, and red our swords."³³



Figure 37. The flag of Jordan. Source: SiBr4 (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 38. The flag of Sudan. Source: SKopp (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 39. The flag of Palestine. Source: EclecticArkie (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



Figure 40. A group photograph of the Young Arab Society's members at a resort outside of Damascus, Syria. Source: Al Ameer son (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).

Figure 41. The flag of the Young Arab Society. Source: Omar-toons (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 11 October 2017).



The descendants of Sykes's Flag of Arab Revolt include the national standards of: Syria (1920 and 1958), Jordan (1928), Egypt (1952), Kuwait (1961), Iraq (1963), Oman (1970), Sudan (1970), the United Arab Emirates (1971), and Yemen (1990) as well as the flags of the partially recognized Palestine (1964), the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic or Western Sahara (1976), and Somaliland (1991). Of the former national standards, the flags of Jordan, Sudan, and Palestine are closest to Sykes's design.

The Flag of Arab Revolt poses an interesting set of scholarly problems. The first is the obvious question of origin. Although most credible sources credit Sykes with its invention, there are indications that a Pan-Arab flag was discussed as early as 1909 in Istanbul's Literary Club and among Paris's Arabiyyah Al-Fatat or Young Arab Society in 1911. In a meeting in Beirut in March 1914, Al-Fatat adopted a tri-colored flag with green, white, and black stripes representing the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Fatimid caliphates; this design by Egyptian Islamist writer Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib (1886–1969) may be the ultimate source for Sykes's flag and its followers.

Direct ties between Sykes's design and the Cuban flag are as yet undocumented. However, it is worth noting that Cuba was an ally of the United Kingdom and the Entente in the First World War. If Sykes sought an inspiring model to represent the aspirations of the Arab Revolt in opposition to the Ottoman Empire, he would have found a natural candidate in Cuba's revolutionary flag. Whether intentionally or serendipitously, by adding a red triangle to Muhibb al-Din's design, Sykes created a flag that looks very much like Cuba's and was in keeping with the latter's revolutionary spirit.

Ironically, most of the modern nation states that emerged from the fragments of the Ottoman Empire, whether kingdoms or republics, and based their flags on Sykes's Flag of Arab Revolt refuse to give credit to a member of the British Empire and its colonial hierarchy for its origins. They invariably credit the Hashemite Arab Sharif Hussein bin Ali (1853/54–1931), once Sharif and Emir of Mecca and later King of Hejaz and Caliph, as its creator even though there is solid documentary evidence that he took up Sykes's design in 1917.³⁴

The Latest Wave

In the first half of the twentieth century, the design of the Cuban flag had been so successful in evoking democratic revolution, anti-imperialism, and anti-colonialism that the Marxist rebels who overthrew the dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1958 felt no need to alter it. Cuba's flag survived after the island government allied itself with the Soviet Union and established a communist state in the Western Hemisphere—even as many members of the Soviet Bloc in the post-Second World War period changed their national standards to reflect the powerful influence of communist ideology and culture.³⁵ The original message of the Cuban flag was intact since the mid-nineteenth century. Fidel Castro's regime, in fact, argued that its revolution was the fulfilment of the promises of the War of Independence and Martí's vision for a truly independent republic. Castro's movement sees itself as the legitimate heir of the original symbolism of the Cuban flag.

The third and most recent wave of imitations of the Cuban flag has coincided with global decolonization and the emergence of new nation states starting in the early 1970s: Sudan (1970), the Bahamas (1973), Comoros Islands (1975), East Timor (1975), Zimbabwe (1980), and Mozambique (1983). The latest flag to join this trend is the South Sudanese flag, adopted by the world's youngest nation in 2005. Even Frederick Gordon Brownell's dynamic design for the South African flag of 1994 bears echoes of the Cuban flag's composition.³⁶ These young nations, mostly African and Asian, were born primarily



Figure 42. The flag of Sudan. Source: Vzb83 (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 12 October 2017).



Figure 43. The flag of the Bahamas. Source: TFerenczy (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 12 October 2017).



Figure 44. The flag of the Comoros Islands. Source: SKopp (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 12 October 2017).



Figure 45. The flag of East Timor. Source: SKopp (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 12 October 2017).



Figure 46. The flag of Zimbabwe. Source: Madden (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 12 October 2017).



Figure 47. The flag of Mozambique. Source: Nightstallion (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 12 October 2017).



Figure 48. The flag of South Sudan. Source: Achim1999 (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 12 October 2017).



Figure 49. The flag of South Africa. Source: SiBr4 (user name), commons.wikipedia.org (accessed 12 October 2017).

of post-colonial wars and independence movements during the Cold War. By the 1970s, communist Cuba was perceived as a leader in the third world, especially within the Non-Aligned Movement, and it greatly influenced, if not directly supported, these revolutions.

In the family tree of national standards, Cuba's flag and its descendants, initially nurtured by the impetus toward democracy and self-determination and more recently by leftist ideology, represents a robust branch and one that demonstrably continues to flourish.



This paper was first presented at the 50th Annual Meeting of NAVA in San José, California, in October 2016, where the author was presented the Captain William Driver Award for the year's best contribution to vexillological scholarship.

End Notes

1. Roig de Leuchsenring, *Banderas Oficiales y Revolucionarias de Cuba*, 55.
2. The most thorough recent account of the origins of the flag is Avelino Víctor Couceiro Rodríguez, "The Cuban Flag . . . The Original." Couceiro based much of his paper on Roig de Leuchsenring who, in turn, based his history on the account recorded in 1873 by Cirilo Villaverde, Narciso López's personal secretary.
3. López lived at 39 Howard Street. Chaffin, *Fatal Glory*, 22.
4. The latter idea is not so far-fetched. In 1861, the Hudson River landscape painter Frederic Edwin Church created "Our Banner in the Sky," a scene in which the clouds and emerging stars coalesce at dusk to form the American Stars and Stripes. Frederic Edwin Church, *Our Banner in the Sky*, 1861, oil on paper, 7 1/2 x 11 1/4," Hudson, New York: Olana State Historic Site, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
5. Roig de Leuchsenring discussed rival revolutionary flags at length in *Banderas Oficiales* and Couceiro Rodríguez outlined the erroneous attribution of the flag by the New York newspaper *La Revolución de Cuba* on 8 February 1873 to Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros "El Lugareño." Couceiro Rodríguez, "The Cuban Flag . . . The Original," 122.
6. Charles A. Brockaway incorrectly attributed it to Emilia Casanova de Villaverde, wife of Cirilo Villaverde in "Masonic Symbolism in Cuba's Flag," 216. For more recent information about Emilia Teurbe Tolón, see "Cuban Patriot Emilia Teurbe Tolón's Remains Found in Madrid," *Repeating Islands*, 25 April 2010.

7. This was one of three silk copies of the flag that Emilia sewed up. The story of the hidden flag was recounted by Edwin Teurbe Tolón in *Carteles*, 3 April 1949, cited in Gay-Calbó, “El Centenario de la Bandera Cubana (1849–1949),” Appendix II, 29.
8. Although not recognized officially until 11 April 1869 by the Cámara Constituyente de Guáimaro, López’s flag was carried into battle during uprisings in 1851, 1854, and 1868. After 1869 and throughout the thirty-year-long War of Independence, the flag was the unifying symbol of the Cuban insurrection.
9. Couceiro Rodriguez, “The Cuban Flag . . . The Original,” 121.
10. Gay-Balbó, “El Centenario de la Bandera Cubana (1849–1949),” 8–9.
11. See Broackaway above as well as Anderson, “Miscellanea: History of the Cuban Flag,” 449–52. Brockaway’s short piece is riddled with inaccuracies.
12. De la Cova, “Filibusters and Freemasons,” 105.
13. “Master Mason Aprons,” Library and Museum of Freemasonry.
14. De la Cova, “Filibusters and Freemasons.”
15. “The Flag of Puerto Rico,” United States District Court, District of Puerto Rico. See also “Grito de Lares,” *Enciclopedia de Puerto Rico*.
16. “Vida, pasión y muerte de Francisco Gonzalo Marín [Pachín],” nireblog.com.
17. Mata was Vice President of the Puerto Rican section of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in New York City.
18. Ovidio Dávila Dávila supports the attribution to Vélez Alvarado in “Antonio Vélez Alvarado: amigo y colaborador consecuente de Martí y Betances.” Dávila based his arguments on earlier works: “La Bandera Puertorriqueña,” *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, 1 and 8; “La Bandera de Puerto Rico,” *El Imparcial*, 6; and José Enamorado Cuesta, “La Bandera Puertorriqueña y su historia, hecha por su creador,” *El Mundo*. Alvarado has also been accepted as the creator outside of Puerto Rico; see Juan J. Castillo, “La Bandera de Puerto Rico,” *Bohemia*, 125 and 127.
19. “Lola Rodríguez de Tió,” *The World of 1898: The Spanish American War*.
20. “Cuba and Puerto Rico are two wings of the same bird.”
21. Emilio Aguinaldo, *Acta de la Proclamación de la Independencia del Pueblo Filipino*.
22. The official shade of blue has been controversial for much of the twentieth century and has alternated between the original blue of the Cuban flag and the darker blue of the American flag which flew over the islands during the American occupation. For the latest reversal see “Republic Act No. 8491,” *Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines*.
23. “The National Flag,” *Government of the Czech Republic*.
24. “Flag of Djibouti,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*.
25. “Sarawak Flags (1841–2008),” *Sarawakiana*.

26. "Flag," *Museum of Sint Maarten*.
27. Crexell i Playà, *Origen de la bandera independentista*. See also "La història, *L'estelada, una bandera de combat*. See also Anton Pihl, "A Quick Guide to Catalan Flags," antonphil.wordpress.com/2017/10/17/a-quick-guide-to-catalan-flags/.
28. "Vicenç Albert Ballester i Camps," *Grup Enciclopèdia Catalana*.
29. "La Constitució de l'Havana, 1928," *Catalunya 1714*.
30. An odd declaration when considering the history of the modern Olympics. Tobias Buck, "Catalan flag dispute reflects the quandary for sport," *Financial Times Weekend*, 21–22 May 2016.
31. "Estelada catalana," *Cyclopaedia.net*.
32. The Pan-Arab flag may have originated as early as 1909 in Istanbul's Literary Club or in 1911 in Paris's Young Arab Society.
33. Muhsin Al-Musawi, *Reading Iraq: Culture and Power in Conflict* (London: I. B. Tauris 2006), 63.
34. Joshua Teitelbaum, *The Rise and Fall of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Hijaz* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2001), *passim*.
35. The Castro regime added the revolutionary flag of the 26th of July Movement as a secondary standard to the national iconography. That banner, with black and red stripes overlaid with "M-26-7" in white, is now exclusively identified with the Marxist revolution. In 1955, Fidel Castro and 82 Cuban exiles in Mexico created the banner to commemorate the failed attack on the Moncada Barracks of 26 July 1953, the presumed start of the revolution.
36. Guyana's "Golden Arrowhead" flag, designed by Whitney Smith, Jr., in 1960, might also be included as an echo. I do not include it here as its specific meaning at the time of its design was decidedly less ideological than other post-colonial flags.

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