

THE SUN SYMBOL IN FLAGS

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by

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Abstract

This Microsoft Power Point program based lecture in English, of 30 minutes duration, presents a concise history of the sun symbol in flags of any era and across the world with a panoply of little known images. The many flags with a sun symbol are an appropriate reverence to the congress host in the land of the rising sun.

Though nothing new will be unveiled, the lecture aims at providing an overlook on universal vexillology, focussed on old and new flags showing a sun symbol, by means of commented images taken from a variety of old flag books and original material in the library of the author. The review reaches from archaeological artefacts of pre-vexillological times to modern era flags. Religious emblems depicting the sun or symbols of the sun (like discs, rays or swastikas) as well as other celestial bodies were common in most great cultures of the ancient world, like Egypt, Babylon, the Celtic world, the Inca or the far east Asian empires. Greeks and Romans adopted this symbol, which later found its way into European heraldry and vexillology. The sun symbol was not profusely used in Europe though, being regarded mainly as a pagan religious symbol or as a symbol of sovereign power only. During the era of enlightenment the sun, being recognised as the most powerful natural phenomenon, was stripped from its ancient religious character.

The sun symbol shifted from representing deity and personal magnificence to represent collective hope and strength, wisdom, power and the bright future - this process starting at the very end of the 18th century and slowly declining at the end of the 20th century. The ideas of the French revolution were profusely symbolised by celestial icons, like the sun or sunrays, stars and rainbows, mostly in connection with other Masonic symbols. From those origins the sun symbol spread mainly to the Spanish colonies, where it was incorporated into the new nations' emblems. With the emergence of new political movements and states throughout the world (like left wing movements or the independence of colonies), the sun symbol was used more frequently in heraldry and flags. Celestial bodies, like stars, the sun and the moon, are the most represented symbols in flags.

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Since humanity can think of the sun has been recognised as the most important cosmic creational power, a source of warmth, light and life. Prehistoric rock carvings in Asia often show human figures with a sun wheel head surrounded by rays¹ [Fig. 1a], and carvings in Africa show bulls and rams with a disc on their heads. Many religions link the concept of a god in heaven with the sun. The cult of astral bodies² - sun, moon and the stars – seems to originate among Semitic peoples around the 3rd millennium B.C.. A Sumerian seal dating from ca. 2500 B.C. shows human worshippers before a seated divinity surrounded by a trinity of star, moon and sun³ [Fig. 1b]. Other seals from the same period depict the sun symbol either as a wheel or a disc or ball [Figs. 1c,d].

Many cultures regarded the sun as the all-seeing eye of god, the universal father: In ancient Egypt sun god Horus was the eye of father sun god Re. Later, Pharaoh Amenhotep IV introduced the monotheistic sun cult of *Amun-Re* during the 14th century B.C. [Fig. 2a]. An Egyptian stone carving from 1300 B.C. [Fig. 2b] depicts a sun disc with rays ending in hands, which offer the pharaoh couple the sign of life, symbolising the sun's divine offering of procreational power to the reigning couple. In all early cultures royalty was associated with the sun symbol.

Later cultures adopted the association of the sun with the all-seeing eye of god. In ancient Greece universal father god *Zeus* looked down to the humans through the sun and sent them his heroic young sun gods *Apollo* and *Helios*. Roman father god *Jupiter* looked down through his sun eye god *Sol*. The sun was the eye of Hindu god *Varoona*, of Nordic god *Odin* and even of *Allah*.

Medieval and renaissance christian iconography introduced the eye, sometimes within a triangle, to represent the divine omnipresence, i.e. trinity [Fig. 3a]. Since the 17th century the eye became the eye of providence and was often surrounded by sunrays or was represented as emerging from clouds [Fig. 3b].

Babylonians depicted the sun as a disc with rays, like in this plate with a cuneiform inscription dating from 900 B.C. [Fig. 4a]. The Irak republic of 1959 adopted a flag with the sun and star emblem to represent the Kurds [Fig. 4b]. The Kurdish national flag used both during the Mahabad republic of 1946 and in nowadays Iraq has a sun [Fig. 4c], and the flag of the Assyrian Universal Association [Fig. 4d] features both the Babylonian sun emblem and the Zoroastrian god Assur, who is represented as a winged bowman within the sun [Fig. 4e]. The Alawite state of Latakieh in then French Syria used from 1920 to 1936 a white flag with a yellow sun⁴ [Fig. 4f].

The connection between sun, religion and royalty was not only known in the ancient Eurasian world - the Aztecs revered the sun and the Inca traced their descent directly from the divine sun. The first Spanish chronicles dating from the late 16th century show imaginary arms of the Inca kings [Fig. 5a], where sun, moon and a star stand for the heavenly descent of the Inca and mountains represent their power on earth. A personal coat of arms with a sun and mountains has been attributed to the last Inca, Túpac Amaru, in 1572. [Fig. 5b]⁵.

Following Shinto belief, the Japanese emperors⁶ were direct descendents from Emperor Jimmu, himself a descendant of Sun Goddess Amaterasu-o-mi-kami^{7,8} [Fig. 5c]. This legend favoured the sun symbolism in flags, which is recorded as early as the 14th century⁹ [Figs. 5d-f].

Christians did no longer worship the sun, but they looked at the sun and moon as the two heavenly lights God had put on the firmament. Christians adopted many pagan emblems and gave them a new

¹ Hans Biedermann: *Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole*, Weltbild Verlag GmbH, Augsburg, ISBN 3-8289-4153-2.

² Hartmut Schmökel: *Ur, Assur und Babylon*, Grosse Kulturen der Frühzeit, Fretz & Wasmuth Verlag AG, Zürich, 1962

³ Martin Ellehauge: *The symbols of Islam*, in: *Heraldica*, No. 2, 1958, Copenhagen.

⁴ *Drawings of the Flags of all Nations*, Admiralty, by Authority, London, H.M.S.O., 1930.

⁵ Julio R. Villanueva Sotomayor: *Compendio histórico del Perú*, Asociación Editorial Bruño, Lima, 2005, ISBN 9972-1-0398-6.

⁶ Trevor Barnes: *Die grossen Religionen der Welt*, Ravensburger Buchverlag Otto Maier GmbH, 2002, ISBN 3-473-35830-4.

⁷ Sheila Bolton: *Some Aspects of Japanese Heraldry and Genealogy*, in: *The Coat of Arms*, Vol. VII, n° 51, July 1962, The Heraldry Society, London.

⁸ *Mythologie (Götter, Helden, Mythen)*, Herausgeber A. Cotterell, Parragon Books Ltd., Bath, ISBN 978-1-4075-3182-3.

⁹ Whitney Smith: *Flags through the Ages and across the World*, McGraw-Hill Book Co. (UK) Ltd., Maidenhead, 1975, ISBN 0-07-059093-1.

meaning. Jesus was compared to the sun, and christian iconography used the bright heavenly light profusely, for instance to glorify their saints, like in a 16th century colour drawing of a mosaic from the Triclinium in the Lateran, where Saint Peter is depicted with a golden gloriole¹⁰: He gives Charlemagne the imperial standard of the Franks, symbolising secular power, while Pope Leo III receives the pallium as his sign of spiritual power [Fig. 6].

Many church banners depict saints with a gloriole, like on the flags of catholic associations from the Lötschen valley in Switzerland [Figs. 7a-c] or like on Church banners from Brittany [Figs. 7d,e] and from Greece [Figs. 7f,g]. Saints with a gloriole were widely used on guild banners and military flags all over Europe. While in many countries the religious imagery on flags was progressively abandoned after the French revolution, some other, specially in eastern Europe - Serbia, Greece, or Russia - followed the tradition: In 1822 the first prince of independent Valachia, George Ghika IV, flew a white flag with religious figures and the sun and the moon¹¹ [Fig. 8]. The 1897 Saint George's colour of the Russian infantry regiment n° 119 has glorioles [Fig. 9a], and the Spanish navy ensign of 1945¹² shows a gloriole around the head of saint John's eagle [Fig. 9b].

Another Christian variation of the sun symbol is to represent sunrays only, usually shining behind the Holy Virgin, like in the famous Julius banner of Schwytz [Fig. 10], dated 1512¹³. The Virgin herself is mainly associated with the moon, which in many cultures is the female counterpart of the masculine sun. Therefore, the classical Marian iconography has the Holy Virgin standing on a moon sickle. A cavalry standard of the Bishop of Sion in Valais, also from the beginning of the 16th century, appeals for the protection of the Holy Virgin [Fig. 11].

Many military flags in Europe, mainly in Bavaria and in Austria, used the symbolism of Virgin Mary surrounded by sun rays since the 16th century¹⁴ [Fig. 12]. God himself used to be represented as a shining sun, sometimes the Hebraic inscription *Jehova* would be placed in the sun, and sometimes the characters *IHS* would be on the disc, *In Hoc Signo (Vinces)*. The all-seeing eye within sunrays, symbolising divine providence, was sometimes placed on military flags. Since 1821 the flag of the Greek island of Hydra has the all-seeing eye looking from within the sun down on the flag's other symbols [Fig. 13].

In 1810, the famous Virgin of Guadalupe church banners [Figs. 14a,b] led the early Mexican independence movement of the priest Miguel Hidalgo¹⁵. The Holy Virgin iconography includes stars as well, a symbolism known in Latin as *Stella Maris*¹⁶. So, Marian iconography includes all astral bodies.

Celtic and Nordic tribes represented the sun not only as a disc, but also as a wheel or a swastika, as can be seen on carved ceremonial stones in Sweden¹⁷ dating from 500 B.C. [Figs. 15a,b].

Before Nazi Germany shed a sinister connotation on the European swastika, the emblem was well known in Nordic countries, mostly as a decorative element, but rarely on flags. The presidential standard of Finland [Fig. 16a] includes a canton with a swastika order cross¹⁸ and a few merchant

¹⁰ *Krönungen: Könige in Aachen – Geschichte und Mythos*, herausgegeben von Mario Kemp, Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz, 2000, ISBN 3-8053-2617-3. From the Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5407, fol. 186.

¹¹ P. V. Nasturel: *Steagul stema Romana insemnele domnesci trofee*, Stabiliment de Arte Grafice Universala, Bucuresci, 1903.

¹² *Reglamento de Banderas, Insignias y Distintivos*, 1945, (Boletín Oficial del Estado del 12 de octubre de 1945).

¹³ Louis Mühlemann: *Armoiries et drapeaux de la Suisse*, Editions Bühler AG, Lengnau, 1991.

¹⁴ Ottfried Neubecker: *Fahnen und Flaggen, eine bunte Fibel*, L. Staackmann Verlag, Leipzig, 1939.

¹⁵ *Catálogo de la Colección de Banderas*, Museo Nacional de Historia INAH, Secretaría de Gobernación, México D. F., 1990, ISBN 968-805-536-0.

¹⁶ Claire Gibson: *Zeichen und Symbole*, Könenmann Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Köln, 2000, ISBN 3-8290-4008-3.

¹⁷ Eric Graf Oxenstierna: *Die Nordgermanen*, Grosse Kulturen der Frühzeit, Fretz & Wasmuth Verlag AG, Zürich, 1957.

¹⁸ *Die Welt im bunten Flaggenbild*, I Europa, Kosmos Sammelbilder, Memmingen, n. d., [nota: 1950].

marine house flags of mainly Nordic countries [Figs. 16b-e] showed swastikas too^{19,20,21}. During German occupation the Norwegian collaborationist government used the sun cross as an emblem [Fig. 16f].

In Asia the swastika symbol is generally depicted in an upright position. It symbolizes good luck and is specially widespread in India. The meaning of this Buddhist symbol has a different connotation than the original sun disc, but the influence of the geographically neighbouring Semitic origin is almost certain. The religious Jain community in India uses the swastika on their flag since 1975 [Fig. 17a], the merchant navy house flag of the Scindia Line²² in Bombay has a swastika [Fig. 17b], and a multitude of yellow and saffron triangular religious Hindu flags show swastikas [Fig. 17c].

The Chakra or wheel is a common symbol in Buddhism and stands for *dharma*, i.e. the natural gentle evolution of life, the higher truth, the reality of universe and the teachings of Buddha. It is found at the base of the Lion capital of Asoka [Fig. 17d] and figures on the India national flag [Fig. 17e]. Though there are ancient connections to the sun symbol, the chakra, which is widely found in Asian vexillology, does not represent the sun. The dharma chakra is the main element of the former flag of Sikkim for instance [Fig. 17f], and it is an important emblem as well in Thai Navy flags²³ since more than 100 years [Fig. 17g]. In Sri Lanka, president Jayewardene used it in his personal standard from 1978-1989 [Fig. 17h].

Swastika, sunwheel, sun cross and triskelion are all variations of the sun emblem [Fig. 18]: The *triskelion* was brought to the Isle of Man²⁴ by Celtic, Nordic tribes [Fig. 19]. We find it in Brittany - where it is known as *triskel* - in flags of celtic culture²⁵ [Fig. 20a,b] and in flags of political parties²⁶ [Fig. 20c]. In Sicily the *trinacria* or *triquetra* emblem has a winged head of Medusa denoting its ancient Greek past. It was used on flags during the Risorgimento²⁷ [Fig. 21a] and is used since 1990 on the red and yellow regional flag²⁸ [Fig. 21b].

The regional flag of Cantabria²⁹ in Spain [Fig. 22] features on its arms a celtic sun symbol, which is to be found in carved stones in Cantabria.

In 1923 count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, founder of the Paneuropean movement, designed his movement's flag, which was blue with a yellow sun disc defaced with a red cross [Fig. 23a]. The present European flag [Fig. 23b] with a harmonic, sun-like circle of yellow stars on blue ground, which had been adopted on 8 December 1955, cannot deny its similarity with Coudenhove's flag. Since 1973 the Pan-European movement has added the stars from the EU flag to their original movement's flag [Fig. 23c].

¹⁹ *Lloyd Reedereiflaggen der Welthandelsflotte*, Martin Brinkmann Aktiengesellschaft, Bremen, n. d. [nota: ca. 1930].

²⁰ J. L. Loughran: *A survey of mercantile houseflags & funnels*, Waine Research Publications, Wolverhampton, 1979, ISBN 0 905184 02 5.

²¹ *Flaggenbuch der deutschen Seeschifffahrt*, Bonner Fahnenfabrik, Bonn a. Rhein, 1925.

²² *Merchant Marine House Flags and Stack Insignia*, U.S. Navy Hydrographic Office, H.O. Pub. No. 100, 1961.

²³ *Flag regulations for the Kingdom of Siam*, printed by W. Drugulin, Leipzig, n. d. [nota: probably 1892].

²⁴ Graham Bartram: *British Flags & Emblems*, Flag Institute, Tuckwell Press, East Linton, 2004, ISBN 1-86232-297-X.

²⁵ D. Kervella & M. Bodlore-Penlaez: *Guide des drapeaux bretons et celtes*, Editions Yoran Embanner, Fouesnant, 2008, ISBN 978-2-916579-12-2.

²⁶ Philippe Rault: *Les drapeaux bretons des origines à nos jours*, Coop Breizh, Spézet, 2006, ISBN 2-84346-034-4.

²⁷ Luigi Rangoni-Machiavelli: *La Bandiera Tricolore e gli stati italiani del 1848-49*, estratto dalla Rassegna storica del Risorgimento, Anno I., Fasc. II., Casa Editrice S. Lapi, Città di Castello, 1914.

²⁸ Roberto Breschi: *Precursory Projects of the Regional Emblems in Italian Geopolitical Area*, in: *Colours of History, Flags and Banners in the World*, Proceedings of the XXII. International Vexillological Congress FlagBerlin 2007, Vol. I, German Vexillological Society, Berlin, 2009, ISBN 978-3-935131-04-9.

²⁹ *Banderas y Escudos de las Comunidades Autónomas*, Ministerio para las Administraciones Públicas, Secretaría General Técnica, Madrid, 1989, ISBN 84-87366-04-X.

Since 1996 the northern Italian *Padania* movement uses a white flag with a green sun wheel, the so called "sun of the Alps"³⁰ [Fig. 24a]. Such sun wheels can be found as a decorative motif all over Europe, as rosettes or "flowers of life", mainly in the Slavic and Hungarian area, in the southern Alpine region, but also in Spain [Figs. 24c,b].

Except for their religious connotation, most of the sun symbols, specially the sun disc, are rarely used though in early heraldry and vexillology, where such pagan symbols are almost ignored until the French revolution. Today we find celestial symbols – sun, moon and stars - much more often in heraldry than in vexillology. Nevertheless - if we count the flags having an armorial sun emblem - then today the sun emblem is the second most used symbol on national flags, after the star.

Rarely did European rulers adopt the sun symbol, though they liked to be compared to the splendour of the sun of course. During the 14th century King Richard II of England used a sun or multirayed star as his personal badge on banners and standards [Figs. 25a,b], and king Edward III of England chose a sun emerging from clouds as his badge³¹ [Figs. 25c,d]. Kings Charles VII and Louis XII of France carried the sun³² as their personal emblem in their standards^{33,34} [Figs. 26a-d]. The banner of John of Luxemburg³⁵, taken as a trophy by the Swiss in 1476 and kept today at the Berne Historical Museum, shows the sun emblem of the French Beaux dynasty, into which John had married [Fig. 27].

The Dukes of Milan from the Sforza family had the sun, which was their personal badge or *impresa*, on their standards. Some of their magnificent banners were captured by the Swiss during the Northern Italian War of 1512 and were later documented by Pierre Crolot in the Fribourg flag book of 1648³⁶. The standard of Gian Galeazzo Sforza shows a sun badge [Fig. 28]. Another captured Sforza standard has the badge of the pigeon with the flaming star (the *Radia Magna*) [Fig. 29a], and yet another flag shows the sun emblem of the Gonzaga family³⁷ from Mantua [Fig. 29b]. Today's Milano province has since 1998 a flag which reminds of a sun and moon *impresa* of the late 15th and early 16th centuries [Fig. 29c].

The sun of *Louis quatorze* is well known [Fig. 30a]. French cavalry standards of the sun king and his successor, Louis XV, proudly tell the enemy that the splendour of the king makes up even to several enemies at a time, *nec pluribus impar* [Fig. 30b]. Nevertheless, colours fell into the hands of the enemy, as we can see on Anna Beek's Dutch trophy chart of 1713, which is kept at the Royal Dutch War Museum in Delft [Fig. 31a]. The Army Museum in Paris has some 18th century French colours³⁸ with the sun emblem in its collections [Fig. 31b].

The former intimate enemy of Louis XIV, Frederic-William I of Prussia, let its eagle fly against the sun, of course, proudly stating that it would not fall back, *non soli cedit*. [Fig. 32].

Old maritime flag charts of the 17th and 18th centuries show only two sea flags featuring a sun: One is the flag of the Hanseatic town of Stralsund on the shores of the Baltic Sea [Fig. 33a], and the other is the ensign of the Scottish East India Company, which was formed in 1695 and by the time its handsome flag appeared on flag-charts had already gone bankrupt [Fig. 33b]. The old Stralsund sun

³⁰ Gilberto Oneto: *Croci, Draghi, Aquile e Leoni, simboli e bandiere dei popoli padano-alpini*, Roberto Chiaramonte Editore, Collegno (TO), 2005.

³¹ *Banners Standards and Badges from a Tudor manuscript in the College of Arms with an introduction by Lord Howard De Walden*. The De Walden Library, Bradbury, printed by Agnew & Co., London, 1904.

³² Gustave Desjardins: *Recherches sur les drapeaux français*, Paris V^e, A. Morel et C^{ie}, Editeurs, 1874.

³³ *La Chronologie du Drapeau Français à travers les âges*, Collection Liand, Paris, n. d., [nota: end of 19th c.].

³⁴ *Historische Fahnen*, Die Welt in Bildern, Album 8, n. pl., n. a., n. d. [nota: author Ottfried Neubecker, ca. 1930].

³⁵ Ottfried Neubecker: *Heraldik – ihr Ursprung, Sinn und Wert*, Wolfgang Krüger Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, ISBN 3-8105-1306-7.

³⁶ *Le livre des drapeaux de Fribourg (Fahnenbuch) de Pierre Crolot, 1648*. Publié par la Société d'Histoire du Canton de Fribourg, texte de Bernard de Vevey, Orell Füssli Arts Graphiques S.A., Zurich, Impr., 1943.

³⁷ Gastone Cambin: *Le Rotelle Milanesi*, edito dalla Società Svizzera di Araldica, Fribourg, 1987, ISBN 3-907992-101-4.

³⁸ Pierre Charrié: *Drapeaux et étendards du Roi*, Editions du Léopard d'Or, Paris, 1989, ISBN 2-86377-090-8.

has figured as a canton on the flag of the seamen's guild "Schiffer-Compagnie" of Stralsund since a century, the flag being flown even during the times of the GDR [Fig. 33c].

European state flags of the 17th and 18th centuries do not show any sun symbols, except the flag of the republic of Geneva, like the state flag of 1713, where the sun with a Jesus monogram is placed above the coat of arms [Fig. 34a]. The sun symbolises the Christian light illuminating a new life after the pagan darkness, "*Post tenebras lux*". The typically Swiss flame pattern makes the republic's emblem shine like a sun. An infantry battalion of the Republic of Geneva took part at the battle of Villmergen in 1732, its starry flag showing the republic's coat of arms within a sun [Fig. 34b].

At the end of the 18th century the civic battalion of the town of Sierre, in the Valais canton, carried a red flag covered with golden stars and with a golden sun in its centre³⁹ [Fig. 35a]. The stars on this flag symbolise the universe around its centre, the sun. There is no political connotation to the stars on this flag, as is on the Valais canton's flag, where a varying number of stars has been representing the component states of the valley republic since centuries - much before the United States of America invented the star as a symbol of the republican state. The sun appears too on an old civic flag of Sierre [Fig. 35b]. The actual civic flag of Sierre is based on its coat of arms, red with a golden sun [Fig. 35c].

The biblical "light of a new era leading out of the dark past" was taken up by enlightenment, which with Rousseau had a strong basis in Geneva, and which during the 18th century opened the path for a new chapter in human history. When French mathematician and philosopher Condorcet⁴⁰ wrote that "one day the sun would shine on free people only, who had no other master than the reason", then he used the perfect metaphore for the era of enlightenment – light. This light was not meant to be a divine gift but stood for the reason, which allowed humans to acquire knowledge and with it take their future in their own hands.

The allegoric painting⁴¹ by Jeaurat de Bertry, dated 1796, shows philosopher Rousseau [Fig. 36a], one of the fathers of enlightenment, who was actively involved, together with Montesquieu and Voltaire, in the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert, the main media to spread the new concept of scientific knowledge, of liberty and human rights in Europe. Here, the eye of truth shines like the sun. The eye of providence within the triangle is shining like the sun on the French declaration of human rights of 1789 [Fig. 36b].

The flags of the Helvetic half brigades of 1798⁴² show the revolutionary imagery of those times, the liberty tree, the Phrygian cap, the lictorian bundle, and the sun [Figs. 37a,b].

It was in the British North American colonies however, where the main goals of enlightenment – human rights, democracy, constitution - were first realised. On 4th of July 1776 the constitution of the 13 United States of America was signed. The Great Seal was adopted on 20 June 1782⁴³, and its obverse side shows the sun (named glory), surrounded by clouds and therein 13 stars - a new constellation [Fig. 38a]. The reverse side of the Great Seal shows masonic symbols: the eye of providence and the pyramid of equality [Fig. 38b]. The pyramid and the divine eye of providence figure on the US 1 dollar bill [Fig. 38c]. The painted state seal of 1785 above Washington's pew in St. Paul's chapel in New York City⁴⁴ has the 13 stars shining with mighty sunrays [Fig. 39]. The sunrays,

³⁹ Sabine Sille & Emil Dreyer: *Zwei Fahnen aus dem Museum Valeria in Sitten / Deux drapeaux du Musée Valeria*

de Sion, in: *Vexilla Helvetica*, 2000/01, Band IX, 32./33. Jahrgang, Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Fahnen- und Flaggenkunde / Société Suisse de Vexillologie, Zollikofen, 2004, ISSN 1424-5841.

⁴⁰ Dorinda Outram: *Aufbruch in die Moderne, die Epoche der Aufklärung*, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zürich, 2006, ISBN 13: 978-3-03823-261-2.

⁴¹ Jean Garrigues: *Images de la Révolution*, Du May-BDIC, Paris, 1988, ISBN 2-906450-28-6.

⁴² Günter Mattern: *Die Fahnen der Helvetischen Halbbrigaden 1798-1805 / Les drapeaux des demi-brigades helvétiques de 1798 à 1805*, in: *Vexilla Helvetica*, 1998/99, Band IX, 30./31. Jahrgang, Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Fahnen- und Flaggenkunde / Société Suisse de Vexillologie, Zollikofen, ISSN 1424-5841.

⁴³ Richard S. Patterson & Richardson Dougall: *The Eagle and the Shield*, Department of State, Washington, 1976, released 1978, stock number 044-000-01543-9.

⁴⁴ David Hackett Fischer: *Liberty and Freedom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, ISBN 0-19-516253-6.

which were incorporated into the U.S. military flags⁴⁵ in 1790 denote strength and pride [Fig. 40].

Sunrays are very similar to multipointed stars, which are also widely used to symbolise splendour and power, like in the Turkish sultan's standard⁴⁶ [Fig. 41a]. The modern Turkish presidential flag has retained a sun and stars⁴⁷, which remind of the Sultan's splendour [Fig. 41b], and the Turkish navy uses the sun-star emblem on its rank flags. The first flag adopted by the Swiss canton Ticino upon independence in 1797 had a white cross on red with surrounding white flames on red⁴⁸, giving the impression of sunrays [Fig. 41c].

The flag of the Royal Dragoon Guards at their headquarters in York [Fig. 42a] displays a *sun-star*. This type of a "sun-like shining star" is widely used as a police emblem and hence figures on many police flags⁴⁹ all over the world. The ensign of the armed forces of the Ministry of the Interior of the German Democratic Republic⁵⁰, which had been introduced on 1st February 1962, showed such a "sun-star" police emblem until the end of the GDR on 3 October 1990 [Fig. 42b].

As the first democratic republic of modern times the United States of America had an immense influence in Europe and South America. The first successful revolution against Spanish colonial rule in South America was that of Buenos Aires on 25 May 1810 [Fig. 43]. The coat of arms⁵¹ of the new state was introduced in 1813, it showed the revolutionary colours sky-blue and white (in accordance with the name of the area, Rio de la Plata = *River Plate*) and the emblems of the new era [Fig. 44]: The Jacobine or Phrygian cap, the hands of friendship and the liberty sun called sun of May. The sun stands for the light and the new life which overwhelmed the darkness of tyranny. Freemasonry⁵² was an important inspirator of the Argentinian revolution. Most patriots of Spanish America had found asylum in the USA and in France, many had served in the French revolutionary army, and most used to attend the South American masonic circles, which had been created in the French, English or American exile by Francisco Miranda, who was the spiritual father of the South American independence movements.

In 1817 the Argentine arms were placed on the flag of the Army of the Andes under General San Martín^{53,54} [Fig. 45]. The sun of May was officially placed in the white stripe of the Argentine national flag in 1818 and has remained there since⁵⁵. Most government flags and Navy ensigns use the typical Argentinian sun emblem with the face [Fig. 46], like shown on an official Navy publication of 1903⁵⁶. Of course, many Argentine provincial flags, most of them introduced recently, include the sun motif in their design⁵⁷ [Fig. 47]. Many town houses of Argentine cities host permanent public exhibitions of provincial flags. The flags of El Chaco, Santiago del Estero, Buenos Aires and Santa Cruz, among many others, are on display in the town house of Jujuy [Figs. 48a-d]. The flag of the Chaco province [Fig. 48a] was adopted on 29 October 2007, and has the full Argentina sun above a plough

⁴⁵ Edward W. Richardson: *Standards and Colors of the American Revolution*, The University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, ISBN 0-8122-7839-9.

⁴⁶ Kemal Özdemir: *Osmanlı Arması*, Dönence, Istanbul, 1997, ISBN 975-7054-01-1.

⁴⁷ *Album des Pavillons Nationaux et des Marques distinctives*, Service Hydrographique et Océanographique de la Marine (SHOM), Brest, 2000, ISBN 2-11-088247-6.

⁴⁸ Albert und Berty Bruckner: *Schweizer Fahnenbuch*, Zollikofer Verlag, St. Gallen, 1942.

⁴⁹ Michel R. Lupant: *Drapeaux et Insignes de Police dans le monde*, Centre Belgo-Européen d'Études des Drapeaux, Michel Lupant, Ottignies, juin 1993.

⁵⁰ *Gesetzesblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Teil II, 1962, Nr. 13, Berlin, den 12. März 1962. Herausgeber: Büro des Präsidiums des Ministerrats der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Berlin.

⁵¹ Ministerio del Interior: *Símbolos de la Nación Argentina*, Dirección Nacional del Registro Oficial, Buenos Aires, 1968.

⁵² W. Kirk MacNulty: *Die Freimaurer, das verborgene Wissen*, F. A. Herbig Verlagsbuchhandlung GmbH, München, 2006, ISBN 3-7766-2482-5.

⁵³ Hilario Velasco Quiroga: *La Bandera de los Andes*, Mendoza, 1943.

⁵⁴ Dardo Corvalán Mendilaharsu: *Los Símbolos Patrios, Bandera – Escudo - Himno Nacional*, Buenos Aires, Imprenta de la Universidad, 1944.

⁵⁵ Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación: *Símbolos Nacionales de la República Argentina*, Buenos Aires, 1981.

⁵⁶ *Manual de Embarcaciones*, n. a., Buenos Aires, 1903.

⁵⁷ Alberto Rubén Perazzo: *Nuestras Banderas, Vexilología Argentina*, Editorial Dunken, Buenos Aires, 2000, ISBN 987-518-546-9.

symbolising the agricultural background of this province, while the flag of the province of Santa Cruz [Fig. 48d] was adopted on 29 November 2000 and shows the Cerro Chaltén within a sunburst.

Since independence in 1811, the province on the east bank of the River Plate, Uruguay, used the same emblems as in Argentina, since both banks had belonged to the same Spanish Vice-Kingdom of the River Plate. On 18 December 1828 Uruguay became independent and adopted a flag of its own, retaining the sun of May. On 11 July 1830 Uruguay changed its national flag from nine to 4 blue stripes [Figs. 49a-c]. The neighbouring Argentine province of Entre Ríos had adopted an own flag with the sun in 1822⁵⁸ [Fig. 49a].

From Argentina the sun symbol spread to Peru, which was liberated in 1820 by the Argentinian Army and a Peruvian exile legion brought to the Peruvian coast by the Chilean fleet. General San Martín decreed the first national coat of arms and flag of Peru⁵⁹ on 21 October 1820 [Fig. 50a]. The scroll beneath the arms reads "The sun of Peru is born again". The sun stands as a symbol of liberty, of rebirth of the nation, hence a reminiscence too of the old Inca sun.

After San Martín had left Peru, the government of Torre-Tagle changed the national flag on 15 March 1822 [Figs. 50b,c], then again on 31 May 1822 [Fig. 50d]. European flag books had difficulties in keeping up with the rapid changes, and so most of them showed wrong South American flags, or incorrect flags, at the best [Fig. 50e]. The national flag of Peru had a red sun in the central white stripe, whereas the national standard (=military flag) bore the San Martín coat of arms instead of the red sun⁶⁰.

Following independence of Bolivia in 1825, civil war and a war with Great Colombia ensued. As a result a South-Peruvian state was established, adopting a national flag on 20 March 1836 [Fig. 51a], the North Peruvian state retained the Peruvian flag. Both states joined with Bolivia in a Peru-Bolivian Confederation on 28 October 1836. The Confederation adopted a red flag with the coat-of-arms of the three states [Fig. 51b]. Following war with Chile, the Confederation dissolved in January 1839 and both Peruvian states united again, while Bolivia remained independent.

Though neither Peru nor Bolivia have a sun in their national flags at the present, the sun appears in the presidential standard and Navy ensigns of Peru [Fig. 52a], as well as in the arms on the state flag of Bolivia [Fig. 52b]. The oldest still existing Peruvian shipping company "Compañía Peruana de Vapores y Dique de Callao" uses the sun emblem as well [Fig. 52c].

Francisco Miranda had attempted to liberate his homeland Venezuela in 1806, his ship "Leander" wore a blue flag⁶¹ with a sun and a red pennant [Fig. 53a]. During the failed uprising of Gual y España in 1811 a flag with a sun was used [Fig. 53b]. While the Venezuelan national flag has no sun, several Venezuelan state flags, most of them of recent adoption, use a sun emblem [Fig. 54].

The first independence flag of Greater Colombia was decreed in 1811 by the revolutionary Junta in Venezuela [Fig. 55d] and was a yellow, blue and red tricolour with a multicoloured canton showing a landscape with a crocodile and with a female noble savage sitting on the board of a canyon, holding a pike with the Phrygian cap in one hand and a laurel wreath in the other hand, looking at the sunrise in the horizon⁶². Depending on which author you read⁶³, the rendering of the arms is slightly different⁶⁴ [Figs. 55a-c]. The flag though did not persist since the Junta was defeated by the Spanish.

⁵⁸ Félix A. Chaparro: *La bandera de Artigas o de la Federación y las banderas provinciales del litoral*, Librería y Editorial Castellví S.A., Santa Fé (Argentina), 1951.

⁵⁹ M. Enrique Gamarra y Hernández: *Nobiliario de las Ciudades del Perú*, Ciudad de los Reyes (Lima), 1938.

⁶⁰ Gustavo Pons Muzzo: *Compendio de Historia del Perú*, Editorial Bruño, Lima, 1995.

⁶¹ Francisco Alejandro Vargas: *Estudio histórico sobre la bandera, el escudo y el himno de Venezuela*, a colour sheet, n. pl., n. d. .

⁶² Enrique Ortega Ricaurte: *Heráldica Nacional, Estudio Documental*, Publicaciones del Banco de la República, 1954.

⁶³ Aurelio Castrillon Muñoz: *Historial de las Banderas y Escudos nacionales*, Suplemento de la Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas, Sección Imprenta y Publicaciones de las Fuerzas Militares.

⁶⁴ Luis A. Bohórquez Casallas: *Símbolos Patrios Colombianos*, Colección Presidencia de la República, Volumen VI, Imprenta Nacional, Bogotá, 1980.

The flags of the rebel states on the Pacific coast of Spanish South America were painted in early 1822 by a Spanish Navy officer. This original document⁶⁵, which is kept in the Archives of the Spanish Navy, is shown here for the first time [Fig. 56]. Note the sun on the war ensign of Peru, it's the flag designed by San Martín. This plate is the only known contemporary document showing the white flag with 5 red stars of the ephemeral state of Trujillo, which declared independence under Marquis of Torre-Tagle on 29 December 1820 and shortly after joined Peru. However, the Trujillo flag needs to be confirmed by another source yet to be discovered.

In 1823, the Cuban freemasonic lodge *Suns and Rays of Bolivar* organised a conspiracy to establish the republic of Cubanacán⁶⁶ and adopted a red and blue flag with a golden sun [Fig. 57a]. The plot was discovered and three such flags were confiscated. The presidential flag of Cuba shows the national coat-of-arms, which was designed in exile in 1848 and adopted upon independence on 20 May 1902 [Fig. 57b]. The rising sun over the key island in the Gulf of Mexico symbolizes freedom and a bright future.

In 1821 the lands of the Vice-Kingdom of New Spain won their independence and in 1823 the United Provinces of Central America [Fig. 57d] separated from Mexico, adopting on 21 August 1823 a flag with the coat of arms showing the volcano landscape between Caribbean and Pacific Seas and a sun with liberty cap and a rainbow⁶⁷. This flag had been inspired by the Argentine ensign, which earlier had been flying on Argentine corsair ships spreading the spark of freedom fight along the Caribbean coast. As an example of the rich Central American flag history, the navy ensigns of Guatemala and of El Salvador, both with a sun on their coats of arms, are given as they appear on the U.S. Navy flag book of 1870 [Fig. 56c].

In Brazil, the ephemeral republic of Pernambuco adopted a flag with a sun⁶⁸ in April 1817, and on 23 February 1917 this flag was officially adopted as the federated state's flag [Fig. 58a]. The state of Ceará displays the sun on the arms in his state flag, which was adopted on 31 August 1967 [Fig. 58b], and on 1st January 1989 Tocantins, a state created the year before by separating it from Goiás, adopted a state flag with the sun in the centre [Fig. 58c].

Several state flags and war ensigns of Central and Southern America show a sun in the coat of arms, which usually is placed on such government flags. The famous French navy flag album of 1858 by Le Gras⁶⁹ shows the nowadays historic flags of Guatemala, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Bolivia with a sun, while the last French navy flag album issued 9 years ago shows the modern version of these flags [Fig. 59].

In South America, mainly in Argentina, Uruguay, Peru and Venezuela, many municipalities, counties or provinces, civic associations, yacht clubs and the like use flags with a sun emblem, either as a part of the flag design or as a part of the coat-of-arms superimposed on the flag. As an example the provincial flag of El Pichincha in Ecuador is shown [Fig. 60a]. This flag has to be altered now, because the canton Santo Domingo de los Tcháchilas separated from El Pichincha in November 2007 and became a province of its own, adopting a distinctive flag [Fig. 60b]. Instead of nine stars, the Pichincha flag now should have but 8 stars.

A distinctive flag for South America, the so-called "*bandera de la Raza*" (=flag of the race), was proposed by Angel Cambor⁷⁰ from Uruguay [Fig. 61] and first raised on 12 October 1933 in Montevideo. Later, the Panamerican Union adopted this flag as its own.

⁶⁵ Emil Dreyer: *Flags of dissident governments in South America in 1822*, in: *Flaggenmitteilungen*, n° 100, Liestal, 20.7.1984.

⁶⁶ Enrique Gay-Calbó: *La Bandera, el Escudo y el Himno*, Academia de la Historia de Cuba, La Habana, 1945.

⁶⁷ Maria Albertina Gálvez: *Emblemas Nacionales*, Editorial del Ejército, Guatemala, C.A., 1981.

⁶⁸ Clovis Ribeiro: *Brazões e Bandeiras do Brazil*, São Paulo Editora Lda., São Paulo, 1933.

⁶⁹ M. A. Le Gras: *Album des pavillons, guidons, flammes de toutes les puissances maritimes*, avec texte par M. A. Le Gras, publié sous le ministère de son excellence l'Amiral Hamelin, chromolith. Par Auguste Bry, Paris, 1858

⁷⁰ Angel Cambor: *La Bandera de la Raza*, Editorial Unión Hispanoamericana, Montevideo, 1935.

Some North American state flags show the sun emblem as well [Fig. 62]: That of New Mexico has the Anasazi or Pueblo sun emblem, the Colorado flag has the sun within the initial of the state name, and Arizona has sun rays emanating from a copper star, the symbol of the state's mining riches. The sun emblem on the handsome New Mexico flag can be found on rock paintings, which were made by the ancient native peoples of the area some 800 years ago [Fig. 63].

South Dakota calls itself "the sunshine state" [Fig. 64a]. The old Colorado state flag had only a little initial and sun [Fig. 64b] and Florida displays the state seal with a sun on its flag, which is reminiscent of the old Spanish white flag with the red Burgundian cross [Fig. 64c]. A few other states have a sun on the seals and coats of arms placed on their blue flags⁷¹ [Figs. 64d-g].

When the modern concept of citizenship and nation developed during the 19th century, many states in the New World began to use the sun symbol as a representation of hope into a bright future, of the light of liberty chasing away the darkness of slavery and oppression, of knowledge, of pursuit of happiness, and of selfconsciousness and power. The sun was placed dawning or shining on a natural landscape containing all the symbols of the state, of progress, of knowledge and wealth, i.e. stars, fasces, cornucopias, eagles, cannons, ships, trains, but also the inhabitants of the country, both humans and animals. As we will see later, this phenomenon will be continued by the socialist movements and communist states of the 20th century, where the sun gets an even more important part of the symbolic message.

Indian native nations and tribes of the USA and Canada adopted distinctive flags, some of them showing a sun emblem or a design reminding of the sun. Don Healy showed many native Indian flags during his outstanding 1995 unpublished Warsaw ICV lecture [Fig. 65] and then more of them during his Cape Town ICV lecture of 1997⁷² [Fig. 66]: Some of the native nations' flags show a tepee sun symbol, others have the sun cross emblem, which is regarded as a symbol of the earth as well, and which has been taken up by Sophie Rault in her impressive design of a native "healing flag". Don Healy and Peter Orenski⁷³, and Ted Kaye⁷⁴ have brought these amazing native Americans' flags to the attention of the vexillological world.

Since 20 June 1960 British Columbia has a flag with the sun setting in the Pacific, thus denoting the geographic location of this Canadian province [Fig. 67a] The flag is a banner of arms, the province's coat of arms⁷⁵ had been granted on 31 March 1906 [Fig. 67b].

Starting at the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century many overseas possessions and colonies of the British Empire - and later also independent states of the Commonwealth - were granted distinctive coats of arms, while the ships wore blue and red ensigns defaced with these colonial arms or badges. Some of these badges consisted of maritime scenes with ships, and a few of them also showed a distant rising sun on the horizon [Figs. 68a,b]. Naturally the sun was a part of the landscape and no special symbolism was given to the sun. Antigua was granted a distinctive flag⁷⁶ as an associated state of the Commonwealth on 16 February 1967 [Fig. 69], keeping the flag unchanged after independence on 1st November 1981.

In 1967 Anguilla adopted a handsome flag with three dolphins, which are arranged in a circular manner, thus forming a sun symbol [Fig. 70a]. On 3rd January 1958 Barbados, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, the Leeward and the Windward Islands had been united into the Federation of

⁷¹ Whitney Smith: *The Flag Book of the United States*, William Morrow & Company, Inc., New York, 1975, ISBN 0-688-07977-6.

⁷² Don Healy: *Design motifs in the flags of the native peoples of North America*, in: *Flags in South Africa and the World*, Proceedings of the XIII International Congress of Vexillology, Cape Town, Editor Peter Martinez, 1997.

⁷³ Donald T. Healy & Peter Orenski: *Native American Flags*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2003, ISBN 0-8061-3556-5.

⁷⁴ Edward B. Kaye: *American Indian Flags and the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial*, in: *Colours of History...*, Berlin, 2009, op. cit..

⁷⁵ *Flags, Badges, and Arms of the British Dominions beyond the Seas*, part II-Arms, London, printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office, by Darling and Son Ltd., 1910.

⁷⁶ *Flags of the Commonwealth*, prepared for British Information Services, by the Central Office of Information, London, printed in England for HMSO by Fleming & Humphreys Ltd., July 1967.

the West Indies. The state was granted a beautiful flag with an orange coloured sun on a wavy blue sea⁷⁷ [Fig. 70b]. The Federation dissolved on 31 May 1962. Though the Commonwealth of the Bahamas was granted on 7 December 1971 a coat of arms with a magnificent sunburst⁷⁸ [Fig. 70d], none of the flags in use at the Bahamas, which gained independence on 9 July 1973, shows a sun, except the flag of the Prime Minister [Fig. 70c]. The French Caribbean island of Martinique has an armorial flag with a sun too [Fig. 70d].

A few British African colonies were granted emblems with a sun too, but this time, the sun was meant to symbolize the superior British culture bringing light into dark and ignorant Africa. The presidential flag of Uganda bears the national coat of arms with a sun [Fig. 71a], which was the badge granted to the British East African Company in 1890. Since its establishment in 1894 the British East Africa Colony (now Uganda) had a flag defaced with the sun badge [Fig. 71b]. The president of Madagascar also flies his national flag with the superimposed country's coat of arms, which show a sun [Fig. 71c], while the president of socialist Mosambik has a red flag with the national coat of arms showing the sun [Fig. 71d].

Nyasaland was granted arms on 11 May 1914 [Fig. 72a], they were on the blue ensign of the colony as well [Fig. 72b]. Nyasaland and Rhodesia were united into a Federation in 1954, new arms with a yellow sun on a blue chief being adopted on 22 July of that year. The colonial blue ensign was defaced with these arms without the usual white disc [Fig. 72c]. Nyasaland became Malawi upon independence on 6 July 1964. Nyasaland and Malawi police flags are identical but for the crest, which in both cases shows the sun⁷⁹ [Figs. 72d,e].

The Federation broke apart in 1964, giving birth to Malawi, which adopted a national flag with the sun [Fig. 73a], but this time, the sun was to be red for the blood spilled in the struggle for liberty, and the background was to be the proud black of Africa. The ensigns and colours of the Malawi armed forces show the sun emblem as well [Figs. 73b-d]. FIAV president Michel Lupant took the pictures of these flags during one of his voyages and kindly made them available for this publication.

The three colours of the Malawi flag are the colours of the very influential black liberation movement of Marcus Garvey, explained by William Crampton⁸⁰ at the Melbourne ICV of 1989, and which had been adopted by the ruling party of Malawi. The same colours are to be found in the arms of the former Eastern region of present day Nigeria [Fig. 74a], which were granted on 1st October 1960, just before the independence of Nigeria. On 30 May 1967 the Eastern region seceded from Nigeria under the name of Republic of Biafra and adopted a flag with the Garvey colours and a rising sun [Fig. 74b]. After a terrible war Biafra ceased to exist in January 1970.

There are more flags in Africa with a sun emblem: During apartheid regime, the South African Bureau of Heraldry designed in 1972 a flag with a sun for the homeland Lebowa⁸¹ [Fig. 75a]. Zimbabwe's capital city Harare has a flag with sunrays [Fig. 75b], the Oromo Liberation Front⁸² in Ethiopia has a flag with a sun [Fig. 75c], the city flag of East London in South Africa has a rising sun [Fig. 75d] and independist flags of La Réunion⁸³ show a sun as well [Fig. 75e].

⁷⁷ H. Gresham Carr: *Flags of the World*, Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., London, revised edition 1961.

⁷⁸ Whitney Smith: *Bahamian symbols*, in: *The Flag Bulletin*, Vol XIV:2-3 (on cover), Vol. XV:2-3 (on impressum), March-June 1976, Winchester, Mass., illustrations by Alfred Znamierowski.

⁷⁹ Personal communication, images by kind permission of FOTW member Bruce Berry, Pinetown, Rep. of South Africa.

⁸⁰ William Crampton: *Marcus Garvey and the Rasta colours*, in: Report of the 13th International Congress of Vexillology, Melbourne, 1989, Flag Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1993.

⁸¹ Frederick Brownell: *Flags of the uniformed services in the former "Homelands" of South Africa*, in: *Flags from Sea to Sea*, The Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Vexillology, Victoria, B.C., Canada, July 1999, edited by Kevin Harrington, The Canadian Flag Association, Copyright 2001, ISBN 0-9689584-0-0.

⁸² John Edwards & Ralph G. C. Bartlett: *Flags of aspirant peoples*, Flag Society of Australia, 1994 (a flag chart).

⁸³ Alain Raullet: *A la Réunion, c'est confusion & dispersion*, in: Ar Banniel, Bulletin de la Société Bretonne de Vexillologie, n° 32, Beltaine 2008, Sant Brieg, ISSN 1274-5596.

In Angola a civil war raged until 2002, the flag of the defeated UNITA liberation movement had the Garvey colours and a red rising sun of hope [Fig. 76a]. On 23 November 1959 Niger introduced a national flag with the same colours as neighbouring Ivory Coast, but adding an orange coloured sun⁸⁴, which it kept upon independence on 3 August 1960 [Fig. 76b].

Rwanda introduced a new national flag with a sun of hope on 31 December 2001 to denote a new beginning after the 1994 genocide [Fig. 76c]. The South African Bureau of Heraldry followed British heraldic tradition, when it was charged of designing a coat of arms and a flag for an independent Namibia: On 21 March 1990 the national flag with a sun and the SWAPO party colours, which had been separated by a white fimbriation, was raised for the first time [Fig. 76d].

On 3 March 1968 king Hassan II of Morocco decreed arms and flags for his country's provinces⁸⁵. While the arms today have a slight popularity, the flags are almost never seen. All the flags are of a standard armorial pattern and have a "schwenkel" with the Moroccan national emblem. A couple of these rare provincial flags bear a sun as part of their heraldic design, like Tarfaya and Al-Hoceima [Figs. 76e,f].

Apart from Ethiopia, Liberia is since 1847 the oldest independent country in Africa. The national coat of arms shows the ship which brought the freed slaves back to Africa sailing to the sun lighted African coast. In 1965 several counties were given a county flag⁸⁶, other counties followed later. Four of those county flags show a sun: River Gee county, River Cess county, Nimba county and Grand Gedeh county [Figs. 77a-d].

Zaire used from 1971 to 1997 a green flag with the symbol of the ruling political party within a yellow sun disc [Fig. 78].

In old Europe the sun emblem was rarely used on flags until it started to appear on the red flags of social struggle during the last half of the 19th century. In Ireland⁸⁷ though, the independist Fenian movement had adopted already in the 1840ies the sunburst emblem [Fig. 79a], which became very popular. The outstanding book by G. A. Hayes-McCoy gives several examples of Irish flags with a sun motif [Figs. 79b-e]. The official colours of the Irish volunteers, introduced in 1914, had the sunburst emblem.

In Latvia, the first nationalist flags of March 1917 had a yellow sun⁸⁸ in the canton [Fig. 80a]. The sun was later incorporated into the coat-of-arms of independent Latvia and taken up again when the nation gained its freedom in 1990. The Latvian coat of arms figured on the ensign of the Latvian sailing association⁸⁹ until 1939 [Fig. 80b] and is present today on various government flags, for instance on that of the state president [Fig. 80c]. Many historic Latvian association flags display the sun emblem⁹⁰, so does the 1925 flag of the Latvian Association of Retired Soldiers [Fig. 81a], the flag of the Zakusala Charity Society of Riga of 1935 [Fig. 81b] and the flag of the Latvian Merchant Society of 1935 [Fig. 81c]. This last flag also has a decorative swastika embroidery.

⁸⁴ Christian Fogd Pedersen: *Moussault's lexicon van vlaggen en wapens*, Bussum, Moussault's uitgeverij BV, 1980, ISBN 90 226 1169 8.

⁸⁵ André G. Privé: *Moroccan provincial arms and flags*, in: Report of the Third International Congress of Vexillology, The Flag Bulletin, X:2-3, The Flag Research Center, Lexington, 1971.

⁸⁶ G. de Graaf: *Flags over Liberia*, in: Recueil du II^e Congrès International de Vexillologie, Zurich, 1967. Publié par la Société Suisse de Vexillologie, 1968.

⁸⁷ G. A. Hayes-McCoy: *A history of Irish flags from earliest times*, The Academy Press, Dublin, 1979, ISBN 0 906187 01 X.

⁸⁸ Talis Pumpurins: *Sarkanbaltsarkanās – Latvijas Karoga Krasas*, Cesu Vestures un makslas muzejs, 2000, ISBN 9984-9096-7-0.

⁸⁹ *Flaggenbuch* (Flg.B.), M.Dv.Nr.377, bearbeitet und herausgegeben vom Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine, abgeschlossen am 1. Dezember 1939, Berlin 1939, Druck und Verlag der Reichsdruckerei.

⁹⁰ Ilona Galvanovska & Makslinieks Alnis Mitris & Ilgvars Gradovskis: *Rīgas Vestures un Kugniecības Muzejs*, Liesma, 1990.

Greenland⁹¹, a self-governing territory of Denmark, adopted a handsome red and white sun disc flag on 21 June 1985 [Fig. 82]. The designer of the flag, Thue Christiansen, originally did not only speak of the sun but also of the landscape and the hunters.

During the civil war in Yugoslavia Makedonia declared independence on 15 September 1991 and raised a provisional flag with the star or sun of Vergina in the canton. The Vergina emblem figures on the golden coffin of king Philip II of Makedonia [Fig. 83a], who lived 382-336 B.C. and who was the father of Alexander the Great. The Greeks consider this emblem as theirs, and when Makedonia officially adopted a red flag with the yellow Vergina emblem on 21 August 1992 [Fig. 83b], a serious flag dispute with Greece ensued. Greece introduced a blue flag with the Vergina sun for its Makedonia region [Fig. 83c] and waged an economic war against its northern neighbour. Finally, Makedonia changed its national flag on 5 October 1995 [Fig. 83d], but retained the coat of arms, which had remained unchanged since communist times.

Since the second half of the 19th century European socialist and worker's political movements fought for their demands under the red flag, which usually bore inscriptions and worker's symbols in yellow⁹². The sun as a symbol of hope for a bright future was often used in such flags⁹³ [Figs. 84a-e]. The flag of a Basle butcher's union from 1911⁹⁴ shows an elaborate and playful embroidery of a typically Swiss mountain landscape with the sun and an inscription hoping for the fraternity of peoples and the victory of freedom [Fig. 85].

The 1925 standard of the worker's cycling club "Solidarity" from Basle⁹⁵ has the Soviet communist sun emblem on the obverse and an idyllic cycling scene with the "Solidarity" sun on the reverse [Fig. 86].

The Soviet Union state arms showed the rising sun of the proletarian's paradise [Fig. 87a], but the state flag had no sun. The only flag of a constituent republic within the former USSR having a sun emblem was the flag of Georgia, which had been introduced on 11 April 1951 [Fig. 87b]. Hammer and sickle in the blue canton of the red flag shine like a sun.

Several Soviet flags, specially military flags, included the Soviet Union arms⁹⁶. The Soviet navy ensign of 1923-1935 had a "sun with rays" design⁹⁷, and several other flags of the navy followed this pattern [Figs. 88a,b]. In 1935 the Soviet Union air force introduced a handsome sun flag [Fig. 88c].

The youth organisation flag of the German Democratic Republic⁹⁸, FDJ, had a yellow sun emblem on blue ground [Fig. 89a]. The national flag of Romania and its navy jack after WWII were defaced with the typical communist style coat of arms of a landscape with artifacts and a sun [Figs. 89b,c].

The Soviet republic of Tannu-Tuva, bordering Mongolia, was formally independent from 1921 to 1944 and had a red flag with the Soviet coat of arms with the sun. Interestingly, the coat of arms is superimposed on a chakra [Fig. 90], the flag thus uniting a religious and a politically anti-religious symbol.

After dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990 some of the now independent republics of the former union adopted new flags: After independence on 12 September 1990 Kyrgyzstan continued to use the old Soviet style flag, but on 3 March 1992 adopted a red flag with a yellow sun, wherein the outline of

⁹¹ Inge Kleivan: *The creation of Greenland's new national symbol: the flag*, in: Folk, Journal of the Danish Ethnographic Society, Vol. 30, Copenhagen, 1988.

⁹² Margareta Ståhl: *Vår enigehts fana – ett sekel fackliga fanor*, Landsorganisationen i Sverige, Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek, Arne Svensson Offset AB, 1998, ISBN 91-566-1547-7.

⁹³ *Un'altra Italia nelle bandiere dei lavoratori*, Museo Nazionale del Risorgimento, Torino, redazione: Centro Studi Piero Gobetti, Torino, 1980.

⁹⁴ In the collections of the History Museum of Basle, Switzerland. Photo by the author with kind permission. See also: Sabine Sille: *Flags of Professional Unions and Societies of the 19th Century in Basle* in: *Colours of History ...*, Berlin, 2009, op. cit..

⁹⁵ In the collections of the "Schweizer Sozialarchiv" in Zurich. Image with kind permission of the Swiss Social Archive.

⁹⁶ *Flagi Flota CCP*, n.a., Moscow, 1931.

⁹⁷ A. Basov: *Iztorija Boenno-Morskis Flagov*, ACT, Moscow, 2004. ISBN 5-17-022747-7.

⁹⁸ *Parteiauftrag: Ein neues Deutschland*, herausgegeben von Dieter Vorsteher, Koehler & Amelang, München, 1997, ISBN 3-7338-0212-8.

the roof of a local yurt is to be seen, while the Kyrgyz president's red standard shows the national coat of arms with the sun⁹⁹ [Fig. 91a]. Kazakhstan adopted a light blue national flag with a yellow sun on 4 June 1992, the flags of the Navy show the sun as well [Fig. 91b].

The republics and the administrative and ethnic regions within today Russia adopted flags of their own as well. Several of the ethnic entities, mainly in the east, adopted flags with a sun emblem [Fig. 92].

The emblem of a lion with the rising sun behind him is typical of Persia, where ancient rulers seem to have used this emblem since at least the 14th century¹⁰⁰. It is during the 16th century that the emblem definitely became the national emblem of Persia. The famous Le Gras flag album of 1858 shows two flags for Persia [Fig. 93a]; one, more elaborate, seems to have been used on the Caspian sea, while the other is titled as being "the only national flag which flies over the king's palace, on forts, in the army and the navy"¹⁰¹. The first image of a Persian flag is to be found in a coloured manuscript of French origin dated 1669-1670, which had been first published by Klaes Sierksma in 1966¹⁰² [Fig. 93b]. An official Persian navy flag album¹⁰³, not dated but probably issued shortly after WWII, shows the lion and sun emblem on the navy jack [Fig. 93c], as well as on several other ensigns and distinctive marks.

In old India there were several flags of Maharajah states with a sun. The state flag of Mewar was yellow with a white sun [Fig. 94a], the sun appears as a crest of the state coat of arms [Fig. 94b]. Emperor Akhbar (17th c.) seems to have used a red and yellow standard with a sun¹⁰⁴, in 1877 the state of Jaipur had a sun in its flag¹⁰⁵, as did the Maharajah of Rajpipla, the state of Indore and that of Gwalior [Figs. 95a-g]. The British ensign badges for the states of Kutch and Morvi had a sun, though that of Kutch could be regarded as a multipointed star as well. The "star of India" used by the British on the flag of the governor-general and on the India navy blue ensign¹⁰⁶ looks very much like a "sun-like shining star" [Figs. 95h,i]. The first independist flags of India had a sun emblem^{107,108} [Fig. 96a], so do the actual flags of the Mizoram [Fig. 96b] and Santal ethnic minorities¹⁰⁹ [Fig. 96c].

Many countries in Asia have a sun on their flags, for instance Nepal, Mongolia, Bangla Desh, Tibet, Laos, and also ethnic minorities like the Pashtoons, the Karen, the Tamils and the Taiwan provisional government [Figs. 97a-h].

⁹⁹ Colour picture in: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 14.12.2007.

¹⁰⁰ Whitney Smith: *5000 years of Persian military banners*, in: Report of the 13th International Congress of Vexillology, Melbourne, 1989, Flag Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1993.

¹⁰¹ M. A. Le Gras, op. cit.: «*I. Pavillon de Perse: Ce pavillon est arboré quelquefois par les bâtimets qui naviguent*

sur la mer Caspienne; il est un peu de fantaisie, comme tous les pavillons du royaume de Perse qui ne sont pas semblables au n° II». «*II. Pavillon du royaume de Perse: C'est le seul pavillon national du royaume de Perse; il est arboré sur le palais du ROI DE PERSE, sur les forts, porté par les armées et arboré à l'arrière de tous les bâtiments de guerre de la Perse.*»

¹⁰² *Flags of the World 1669-1670*, a seventeenth century manuscript, with commentary and historical annotations

by Kl. Sierksma, S. Emmering, Amsterdam, 1966.

¹⁰³ *Album des Drapeaux et des Enseignes*, Ministère de la Guerre, Marine Impériale, n. pl., n. d. .

¹⁰⁴ Lucien Philippe: *Les drapeaux de quelques principautés hindoues*, in: Recueil, IV Congrès International de Vexillologie, Turin, 24-27 juin 1971, C.I.S.V., en collaboration avec l'Accademia di San Marciano, Torino, 1975.

¹⁰⁵ Aldo Ziggio: *Vessillologia dell'India, paese principesco e feudale*, in: Rivista Marittima, supplemento all' n° 6, giugno 1998, Roma.

¹⁰⁶ *Drawings of the Flags of all Nations*, 1930, op. cit.

¹⁰⁷ *Our flag*, Publications division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, revised edition, August 1989 (Bhadra 1912).

¹⁰⁸ Kambhampati Sanjeeva Rao: *About the Genesis of the Indian National Flag*, in: Colours of History ..., Berlin, 2009, op. cit..

¹⁰⁹ Chrystian Kretowicz: image and commentary on FOTW website, 16 April 2009.

Though the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka are Buddhists they cherish a sun cult as well¹¹⁰, and many of their flags used during the times of the precolonial Kingdom of Kandy included the sun among other astral bodies [Figs. 98a-e].

During the late 19th century Filipinos strived for independence from Spain. In 1892 their leader, Dr. José Rizal, was deported into exile and as a consequence the secret society "Katipunan" (which means "society" in Tagal language) was established. Under the leadership of general Emilio Aguinaldo the Katipunan used various red flags with the Latin or Tagal character "K" [Fig. 99a], which stands both for "Katipunan" and for "Kalayaan" (=freedom), and started the fight for independence¹¹¹. The sun, the triangle or the number 3 for the characters - which stand for "Kataastaasan" (=most), Kagalanggalangang (=respectable) and Katipunan (=society) – are of a masonic origin. The red Katipunan flags later also had black or blue bands added, like on a captured Katipunan banner, which is in the Spanish Army Museum¹¹² [Fig. 99b]. The actual Philippine national flag was designed by Emilio Aguinaldo himself and first raised on 12 June 1898¹¹³ [Fig. 99c].

The most important element on the national flags of Oceania is the star, but there are sun flags too. The British Pacific colony of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands were granted a coat of arms on 1st May 1937 [Fig. 100a]. In 1975 the two island groups separated and on 12 July 1979 the Gilbert islands were granted independence under the name of Kiribati, adopting as their national flag the armorial banner of arms of the former colony¹¹⁴ [Fig. 100c].

The aborigine people of Australia use a sun flag, designed in 1971 by the aboriginal artist Harold Thomas [Fig. 100b], and there are some aboriginal tribes, which use flags with a sun emblem too (their flags are documented in the FOTW website). The Kanaky independentists of French New Caledonia have a yellow sun with a black rooftop spear in their flag, which was adopted in 1984 [Fig. 100b]. The flag of French Polynesia has a pirogue within sunrays on the red-white-red flag, which was in use at the Kingdom of Tahiti from 1829 to 1842¹¹⁵ [Fig. 100d]. The French Polynesia flag has been adopted on 23 November 1984¹¹⁶.

The yellow disc in the national flag of the republic of Belau is no sun, but a moon, and the Marshall Islands seems to have a sun in their flag, but instead it is a multipointed star, with 4 of the points being bigger than the others to represent the Christian cross [Fig. 100b].

The Australian dependencies Christmas Island, Lord Howe Island and Cocos Island fly flags with a yellow disc, which remind of a sun symbol, New Zealand dependency Chatham Island has half a sun as well and the U.S. dependency Palmyra Atoll has an unofficial sun flag too [Figs. 101a-d].

The Chinese national flag under the Manchoo dynasty showed since 1872 the dragon, a symbol of luck, snapping at the red sun¹¹⁷. The imperial Chinese merchant flag was square and had the blue dragon in a yellow sun disc within a red flag, or two dragons, if the ship belonged to more than one businessman¹¹⁸ [Fig 102a]. The private China Steam Navigation Company used a similar rectangular flag together with the national flag. In 1912 the republic of China was established, adopting a flag with 5 stripes of red, yellow, blue, white and black. On 8 October 1928 a new national flag with a sun, which had been designed by the father of republican China, Sun Yat-sen, was introduced [Fig. 102b].

¹¹⁰ Edith M. G. Fernando: *Lanka Flags, Unique Memorials of Heraldry*, published by the author, Colombo, 1980.

¹¹¹ José Luis de Frutos: *Banderas del Katipunan*, in: *Banderas*, Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Vexilología, n°

69, diciembre 1998, Madrid, ISSN 0213-0955.

¹¹² Museo del Ejército, Madrid: flag inv. N° 43235, picture with kind permission of the Spanish Army Museum.

¹¹³ Karl-Heinz Hesmer: *Flaggen und Wappen der Welt*, Chronik Verlag, Wissen Media Verlag GmbH, Gütersloh, 2008, ISBN 978-3-577-14537-4.

¹¹⁴ Alfred Znamierowski: *The World Encyclopedia of Flags*, first published in 1999 by Lorenz Books, New York, Anness Publishing Limited, 1999, ISBN 0-7548 0167 5.

¹¹⁵ J. Cottez: *Essai sur les pavillons océaniens, Ile Tahiti*, in: *Bulletin de la Société des Études Océaniques*, N° 90, tome VIII, N° 1, mars 1950, Papeete, Imprimerie du Gouvernement.

¹¹⁶ Le drapeau polynésien, EDICOM, Papeete, an official French government brochure, n.a., n. d..

¹¹⁷ William Crampton: *Flag*, Eyewitness Guides, Dorling Kindersley Limited, London, reprinted 1990, ISBN 0-86318-370-0.

¹¹⁸ *Flaggenbuch*, (Fla.B.), Berlin, 1905, Reichs-Marine-Amt, käuflich bei Moritz Ruhl, Leipzig.

The white sun on blue was the emblem of the People's National Party of Sun Yat-sen and was used as well as a jack for the Chinese navy. The standard of the president of the republic of China had been in use on the continent since 1928, and since 1949 the president of Taiwan continues to use the flag [Fig. 102c]. During Japanese occupation a collaborationist government was established in Nanking in 1940. This government slightly changed the usual Chinese national flag by adding a yellow streamer with a black inscription atop the flag. The navy of this government used an ensign with a white cross throughout the Chinese flag and the yellow streamer atop the ensign¹¹⁹ [Fig. 102d].

Last but not least, Japan has probably the most beautiful sun flag: The *hinomaru*, which means "disc of the sun", resumes its symbolism in a perfectly balanced, simple, yet elegant design¹²⁰. The U.S. Navy flag book of 1873¹²¹ shows the red imperial flag with a golden disc and various naval flags of Japan [Fig. 103a]. Japan had officially adopted its *hinomaru* only on 17 February 1870, but had it declared the exclusive flag of the nation already in 1854. The German flag book of 1912 by viceadmiral Siegel¹²² shows the correct design of the emperor's Chrysanthemum flag, but has slightly incorrect images for the historic flags of the shogun's government until beginning of the Meiji period in 1868 [Fig. 103b]. The flag with the *aoi-go-mon* (=the honourable mon of the three mallow leaves), is the personal flag of the shoguns since the third Minamoto dynasty to the Tokugawa period, which ended in 1868. A *kakemono* (=hanging picture) from the turning of the 19th to the 20th century shows the Japanese national flag¹²³ in the centre, and a collection of flags of coastal daimyos, which by 1889 had lost their privileges, around it [Fig. 104]. The characters beneath the *hinomaru* read, from top to bottom: *dai* (=great), *ni* (or *hi* = sun) and *hon* (rising), i.e. *dai-nihon* (=Great Japan). The *kakemono* has the shogun's flags as numbers 1 and 2. A couple of the other flags on the chart show sun emblems, like circle, disc, suncross, swastika.

This article has started with flags west of Japan and ends with flags east of Japan: The city of Denver¹²⁴ in Arizona adopted in 1928 a avantgardistically designed flag with a sun over mountains [Fig. 105]. Continuing to the east we come to Switzerland, where the town of Davos¹²⁵ had adopted in 1935 a very similar "sun over mountains" flag, but with a more heraldic sun design [Fig. 106].

There are of course many more civic and regional flags with a sun motif, in Switzerland [Fig. 107a] and all over the world [Fig. 107d], not to mention the uncountable flags of political parties [Figs. 107b,c], of sports clubs, yachting clubs, business companies [Fig. 107e], private associations, a.s.o. .

About the author:

Emil Dreyer was born in 1952 in Wettingen, Switzerland, his father being Swiss, his mother Spanish. He spent his childhood in Switzerland, his youth in Spain and returned to Switzerland for his studies in medicine at the University of Berne. Following postgraduate training in various hospitals for 9 years he settled in 1988 as a general practitioner in a suburb community near Berne. He is married and has three adult daughters.

¹¹⁹ *Flaggenbuch*, (Fla.B.), Berlin, 1939, op. cit., amendment 15 for page 36, issued 2 August 1941.

¹²⁰ Hiroyuki Soejima: *The Japanese Flag, "Hinomaru", and its origin*, in: Beiträge –Communications – Papers, 8th International Congress of Vexillology, Vienna, 25-29 June 1979. Editor: Franz Kaindl, Heeresgeschichtliches Museum.

¹²¹ *Flags of Maritime Nations*, from the most authentic sources. Prepared by the order of the Secretary of the Navy by the Bureau of Navigation, third edition, Washington, D.C., 1873.

¹²² R. Siegel, Vize-Admiral z.D.: *Die Flagge*, herausgegeben auf Veranlassung des Staatssekretärs des Reichs-Marine-Amtes, Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen) Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin, 1912.

¹²³ Hugo Gerhard Ströhl: *Flaggen ehemaliger Küsten-Daimyo*, in: Der Deutsche Herold, herausgegeben vom Verein Herold in Berlin, Nr. 8, XL, Berlin., August 1909.

¹²⁴ John M. Purcell: *United States municipal flags: an overview*, in: Report of the Third International Congress of Vexillology, The Flag Bulletin, X:2-3, Spring-Summer 1971, the Flag Research Center, Lexington, 1971.

¹²⁵ *Die Wappen der Kreise und Gemeinden von Graubünden*, bearbeitet von der Wappenkommission Graubünden, Text Dr. Rudolf Jenny, Kantonale Drucksachen- u. Materialzentrale Graubünden, Chur, 1953.

Interested in flags since childhood, Emil Dreyer has participated in many international FIAV congresses, where he has lectured in several of them, and has published irregularly in vexillological and heraldic periodicals since 1977. He is a corresponding or subscribing member of the most important vexillological associations of FIAV as well as of several heraldic associations. He is engaged in flag consulting throughout Switzerland and is co-author of the Swiss army flag regulations of 2008.

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