

# Can't Pledge Allegiance Now No More

By Al Benson, Jr.



That old Southern ballad *I'm A Good Ol' Rebel* has a line in it that says "I can't take up my musket and fight 'em (the Yankees) now no more." In our day we might well amend that wording to say "I can't lift up my hand, and pledge allegiance (to the Yankee flag) now no more."

Over the years I have belonged to several conservative and patriotic groups. Almost inevitably, at meetings, rallies, speeches or whatever functions these groups put on, the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag was a must, often being recited even before some local pastor was able to offer a prayer asking God to bless the meeting. And everybody stood up and dutifully recited the pledge. It was a sign of your patriotic fervor, and I, in my rank ignorance during those early days, did it along with the rest.

However, as the years passed and I was, by God's providence, able to get to do some serious research pertaining to the War of Northern Aggression, I studied the subject of secession. I studied enough that I came to feel that secession was legal, was not treasonous, and the South was not wrong for having done it. Through all this I was led, over a decade ago now, to write a 26 page booklet on the subject, which has since become a part of my Homeschool History Series. I felt it was a timely and extremely important subject and still do, given the increasingly centralist drift of the federal government. It seems that George II has usurped just about everyone's power except God's, and he is probably working on that because someone in his administration has informed him that he has the authority to do it.

Many today, even many Southerners, look askance at secession, as though it were some sort of nefarious activity. Should they choose to go back and correctly read our history, (if they still have the ability to do so), they will discover that our Declaration of Independence was, in reality, a secession document, outlining all the reasons why the thirteen colonies were seceding from Great Britain. Should they read further, they will discover that, prior to 1860, the New England states threatened to secede three times, and once even sent delegates to Hartford, Connecticut to

seriously consider it. Of course you will probably not get that in your government school “history” book so you will have to search elsewhere. Secession, somehow, only became “treasonous” to the New England states when Southern states did it in 1860-61. At that time, Southern secession would not have served New England’s financial interests too well, and that may just have had something to do with the amount of “treason” involved.

Awhile after I had published my secession booklet someone talked to me about the pledge of allegiance, and as I ran the words to it over in my mind, that phrase “one nation indivisible” jumped out at me. All of a sudden, a little warning bell went off in the back of my mind. I thought “if that phrase about being indivisible is correct, then it would seem that secession had been all wrong.” However, having done enough research to grasp the truth that secession was and is today legal and justified, I could not bring myself to believe that this phrase in the pledge contained any degree of accuracy. At that point, I decided to find out a little more information about the pledge and who wrote it and why. My dad always told me I had a suspicious mind. Maybe he was right. At first it was pretty hard to come by much information. Books in the library of a nearby Christian school contained almost nothing, and the encyclopedias I came across had precious little. It seemed as if, at that time, the pledge was a closed subject, something “loyal” people didn’t need to know that much about—we were just supposed to mouth the words with no thought whatever. Providentially, at that time, a friend in Texas sent me some information about the pledge that I had never seen before. His information was just enough to encourage me to look further. Suffice it to say, there is a bit more information out there now than there was then.

Through various sources, and with some digging, I came up with the information that, in 1892, a socialist (that’s right, a socialist) named Francis Bellamy created the pledge of allegiance for a publication called Youth’s Companion. This was a national family magazine published in Boston, which was owned by two liberal businessmen, Daniel Ford and James Upham. In 1891 Upham got the bright idea of using the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ “discovery” of America for promotion and use of the flag in the country’s government schools. He, no doubt, felt this would be an excellent propaganda tool. It was, after all, just one generation after the War of Northern Aggression, and the Yankee government’s school system was still trying to instill in Southern children a sense of shame over what their fathers had fought for. In our day, they seem finally to have almost managed to attain that goal, but in 1892 they hadn’t quite made it yet, but they were working on it.

Francis Bellamy was a friend of magazine co-owner Daniel Ford. Bellamy was a Baptist minister and a “Christian socialist.” He was first cousin to the famous socialist Edward Bellamy. As a minister Francis had waxed eloquent about how good socialism was and how bad capitalism was. He once gave a speech called “Jesus the Socialist.” His socialism finally became so outrageous that he was eventually forced to resign from his Boston church. And, folks, when socialism gets outrageous in Boston, then it’s really bad!

The original version of the pledge was “I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands—one nation indivisible—with liberty and justice for all.” The part about “under God” wasn’t added until sometime in the 1950s, and the original pledge was given while you held your right hand stiffly upward—in the exact same manner as did the Hitler Youth in the

1930s. Awhile back, someone noted that they wanted to remove the “under God” part of the pledge and hundreds of thousands of unthinking and unknowing people rushed in to defend the pledge as a statement of patriotism. The man who said that the patriotism of the 20th century would be communism was proven right. Gullible Americans defending a socialist pledge—what a charade! The leftists must have been laughing up their sleeves for weeks!

In retrospect, it would appear, coming when it did, that the pledge of allegiance, with its “one nation indivisible” was little more than a parting shot of the first phase of “reconstruction.” It was designed to ensure that no Southern children attending government schools, would ever again entertain the notion of secession. Of course its proponents never would, or will, admit that.

Having learned all this, I had to conclude that, in good conscience, I could not recite this pledge “now no more.” The truth of the doctrine of secession and the fable of “one nation indivisible” just do not mix. It must be one way or the other. And, if the pledge is socialist in origin, like so much else we have to put up with today, then who really needs it?

If it is a socialist pledge, then it is really not patriotic, and you are not unpatriotic if you choose to refuse to say it. If the patriotism of the 20th and 21st centuries has indeed become communism, then the right of secession has become more crucial now than ever.

### **About the Author**

Al Benson Jr.'s columns are to be found on many online journals such as *Fireeater.Org*, *The Sierra Times*, and *The Patriotist*. Additionally, Mr. Benson is editor of the *Copperhead Chronicle* and author of the *Homeschool History Series*, a study of the War of Southern Independence. *The Copperhead Chronicle* is a quarterly newsletter written with a Christian, pro-Southern perspective.