

mon l'histoire de chacun d'entre eux en particulier, mais les filiations naturelles, qui forment un arbre généalogique, dont les racines adventives plongent dans les domaines qui viennent s'ajouter à ceux qui nourrissent la base de l'arbre.

Nous ne pouvons pas dans ce résumé passer en revue les filiations en question. Bornons nous à deux remarques intéressantes de géographie vexillologie: dans la distribution des drapeaux les peuples maritimes semblent marquer une préférence nette pour la couleur bleue; d'autre part le vert n'apparaît que chez les peuples méridionaux et est absent dans le nord.

Le texte développé de cette conférence a été tiré part dans une brochure de 44 pages, qui contient:

- En guise de préface: la vexillologie est-elle une science ?
- Etat actuel des études vexillologiques;
- Une revue des familles naturelles des drapeaux à croix;
- Des appendices donnant des démonstrations statistiques des lois vexillologiques et des notes sur quelques questions connexes.

4.20 p.m.

Dr. Dr. W.H.J. Punt, Pretoria: A HISTORY OF THE FLAGS OF SOUTH AFRICA

dit is vir my 'n groot geseë en hierdie geleentheid to gebruik om hier, as verteenwoordiger van Suid-Afrika, U toe te spreek oor die onderwerp wat hier aan die orde is. Ek wil U hartlik bedank vir die ontvangs, die pragtige voorbereiding van die kongres asook U besondere verwelkoming waarin U gedagte en vertroue, dat ons kontak verder mag voortgaan, tot uitdrukking gekom het. In Suid-Afrika het ons twee amptelike tale, Afrikaans en Engels. Volgens vaste gebruik, sal ek derhalwe een van die twee tale moet besig. Vir hierdie geleentheid en die 16 geselskap sal ek my daarom van Engels wil bedien.

Ladies and gentlemen.

To understand the position of our historical flag - the background of the design - it is essential that we appreciate the history of South-Africa.

Before the year of 1500 the Portuguese discoverers, for the first time exploring our coasts in the direction of India, did visit the various "klips" and bays, but did not make a settlement, so that the introduction of their national colours was only at sea. At no time they made any form of permanent settlement on land, so that later historians and flag-designers could draw from those designs and make the statement, that these colours have been used on land in South-Africa. Before 1600 the Portuguese have settled on the Mosambique-coast, but had not brought their settlements to the South.

It was left to the Dutch ships from 1600 onwards to first bring the colours of the Netherlands, but more important still to bring settlers to South-Africa to establish a new nation. Already in 1600 and 1601, when this powerful organisation, later to be known as the Dutch East India Company (Vorenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; V.O.C.) - one of the worlds than biggest organisations - had established a post in the East, the flags of the Netherlands at sea became known to the inhabitants along our shores. Temporary settlements have been made at various times by sterned sailors, mostly of Dutch origin. But at no time had a "TREK" been arranged with the intention to claim the territory. Strange as it may seem in history the first flag to be raised in claim of the southern point of Africa, was a flag of England, raised by Fitzherbert and Shillinge in 1619 (10. James month). But King James disowned this claim at not being officially founded and the claim was withdrawn and the flag too. So once more South-Africa was an unknown land to be settled by the first who have to bid there welcome. In 1648 the first temporary base has been placed on the shores of Templebay, when a rich Dutch East-Indiamans ship was wrecked. They put a small fort and on that fort they raised the standard of Holland: red-white-blue. They did not raise the colours of the V.O.C. The V.O.C. six flags were used at sea and were the first to be seen in Templebay. But on shore, at the indication of posses-

sion, the Dutch raised their standard and their colours. So already in 1648 the first colours red-white-blue were used by a European settlement, however small their group may have been.

But this led to a far more important step four years later. In 1652 Johan van Riebeeck came to the Cape, and settled on the shores of Tablebay and established a settlement of approximately a hundred Europeans. He had the authority of the States-General of the Netherlands. And that is important, because here we have as what of Shillinge has been disowned by his King as being illegal. By the authority of the States-General of the Netherlands Van Riebeeck raised the standard of his country. Therefore, the first flag to be settled and established at the Cape was this the act of April 1652. And these colours, we will find, will be repeating themselves in all the flags of South-Africa of the 300 years later. And that is therefor the beginning of the design in today's South-Africa flag.

Now Van Riebeeck, when he had established himself on shore, brought in all the ideas in connection to the use and tradition of flags as known in Holland.

There is one most interesting fact, something that we are still divided on to a certain extent in South-Africa, and I'd like to offer this disagree in our college here: Did Van Riebeeck bring also with him the orange-white-blue, or did he only bring with him the red-white-blue? There remains one fact: he did have an orange-white-blue flag: he tells us about in his famous diary. But at no stage does he state: "I used this as an official flag"...

Therefore: did he bring it with him in the sentiment of being a strong supporter of the House of Orange and used it in that spirit? Or did he use it on the official days in connection with the history of Holland? Perhaps on some days to celebrate some person of the House of Orange's birthday? We do not know, but the fact remains that Van Riebeeck did use the orange-white-blue occasionally.

The permanent flag however on the seat of authority - the castle of Capetown - was red-white-blue. And I must point out to you that: when designing a flag later on,

the Dutch were very cautious of the use of flags, well acquainted with their traditions, the laws and regulations of the use of flags. And they would therefor never at any state have used a maritime flag on land as an indication of possession authority of the States-General of Holland.

And I am making the statement, because you know very well those books, e.g. of Gérard on the historical flags of South-Africa, always mentioning as such the individual flags of the various chambers of the V.O.C. And you will find old drawings of plans, or designs of the castle, our Castle, with a red-white-blue flag with the monogram V.O.C., on the Bastion. That is incorrect. I can hardly believe, that Dutch officers, naval men would have made such a mistake as to going use a Chambersflag as to show the authority of the States-General. That we must exclude as a rule as being wrong !

But they knew this flag exceedingly well at these various designs. Therefore they may have had them on shore in supply and in use of them as signal flags (e.g. a signal to indicate the arrival of a ship). This is a possibility, but not on the Castle.

So this flag, the national red-white-blue flag of Holland, remained the flag at the Cape. At various occasions, e.g. when new towns were founded, a new Drostij (as we call the seat of the Majesty in the new town) was opened the red-white-blue flag of Holland was used. Whenever military parades took place for training purposes or military action, red-white-blue was the flag, less the regimental standards.

When in 1795 the British for the first time occupied the Cape, they brought naturally the English flag of that period, the Jack.

The Dutch flag for a time disappeared, to reappear in 1802, when the Cape again became Dutch up to 1806. Then they introduced the "Batavian Flag". And here is another disagree in South-Africa: Which Batavian flag was this one ? Did they use the one in which they introduced in the corner the French sign of liberty ? Or did they not ? We have found no drawing or description as to what they used. But to my mind they simply used again the red-white-blue of Holland, because though the influence of

the French Revolution has brought new things and thoughts at that far distance it has not been so powerful that it would have destroyed the national aspirations as represented in the red-white-blue flag. Otherwise we can give you the assurance, that the settlers, far away from Capetown, never for one moment hesitated to hoist the red-white-blue in celebrating the Revolution; they certainly did not use the one with a design in the Dutch corner. So it is quite clear, that in no states there was an uncertainty as to the political implications of a flag, in which spiritually was reproduced the sentiments of the nation. And this has remained the most powerful factor in the designing of flags today in South-Africa: the national sentiment and aspirations.

In 1806, after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and the Treaty of Vienna the British came back and in 1815 the Cape became permanently a British colony. They immediately than introduced their flag, which by than had become the well-known Union Jack. All the Dutch flags of the period disappeared and were no longer used, excepted in those far-off places where the national sentiments still prevailed. But then they use it at local gatherings, though never with the idea or the implication that it is the symbol of a Dutch settlement. That had gone.

In 1836 there took place a great event in our country, a great event - I may say - even for the whole of Africa: the movement of the Dutch from the Cape north into the interior. This movement became known as the "Groot Trek", the Great Movement, of 10.000 Dutch speaking farmers from British areas into the interior, to establish their own independent states.

I think it is necessary here the fact of distance should be traced, so as to emphasize the importance of such movements. The distance in South-Africa from North to South is exactly 2400 kilometers, and the width is 2000 kilometers: that is one country ! So over this vast area - nearly the size of Western Europe - these groups had plenty of opportunity to establish their own states, their own republics. (In Europe during the Middle Ages one had numerous manorial and ducal states, we in South-

Africa specialised in independant republics...)). Now, in moving away from the Cape, what flag did they use ? They were not very flagconscious, but the tradition of the nation still lived. They spoke of themselves: "We are Dutchmen of Africa." And they used the red-white-blue flag !

So when they moved into the interior you will find every time again in their diaries and especially in their descriptions of meetings and gatherings: "De Vaderlandsche Vlag" (The flag of the Fatherland). And there is no doubt about this flag. I questioned some of these old men myself: "What did you mean by speaking of the Flag of the Fatherland ?". The term Fatherland had become already a bit confusing, because the old "Boer" of Transvaal often spoke of the Cape colony as being his Fatherland. But relate to the flagcolours there was no doubt: they said to me: "The flag was red-white-blue". In other words all those various groups from 1836 up to 1839 used the flag of Holland once brought to the Cape by Jan van Riebeeck.

And these groups under their various leaders, each selected a territory for himself. One group, under the leadership of general Andries Pretorius, went down to what is now known as Natal, at the area of Port Natal. They decided to have their own flags in this area and again the national sentiment was displayed. In redesigning the flag of Holland they found an original and new idea in arranging the wellknown colours. It is very cleverly done, a striking flag !

But what is of great importance is this: as far as we could claim this is the first flag ever designed in South-Africa, in 1839.

Here I can give you the history of this flag to a certain extent:

This flag, after it had been designed in cloth and in colour, was placed on top of a small box, containing the documents of the landcession by the Zuluchief to the Dutch farmers, a treaty mutually signed by the king and the representatives of our farmers. Attached was a letter to the King of Holland, asking him to accept this new territory under his jurisdiction and protection. The box was forwarded by the shipscaptain

Swellekamp to Amsterdam and further to the Hague. The flag and box went to the King's private possessions and for years and years it disappeared. In 1953 professor De Cock, working on behalf of the South-African archives, rediscovered the box in the Hague. And the documents were in it, and the flag was still attached to the top of it !

Since 1839 this flag remained flying over Natal for three years. But then the British took the colony, the settlement. And the flag of the "Voortrekkers" of Natal then was no longer used.

In the meantime another group of Voortrekkers had moved into the Transvaal. And here again we find something very striking: they introduced as a flag of their country...the red cross of Burgundy on a white field. What is so puzzling here is, they had the tradition of red-white-blue, of orange-white-blue, and of all these flags of the V.O.C. And they choosed a cross of Burgundy for their flag !

How can we explain this ? We do not know, but to my mind - after I have seen that magnificent album of De Gorter in Brussel, with the flags of the 80-years war - there is no doubt that some one of these Dutch "boers" (perhaps their schoolmaster, because they were very proud of their schoolmasters; learning has always been at great admiration of our people) had seen at a reproduction in some old books, that the old flag of the Netherlands at the time of the Spaniards had been that flag. The "Voortien banden van Ordonnantie" used that flag !

Can this have been the source of designing the Transvaal flag ? More research will have to be done before we can decide whether this is correct or not. I am not sure, but I think the indication is there. This flag was used by the group of Andries Hendrik Potgieter, another famous general. He was a conservant element of the Voortrekkers, one more indication that he would have drawn his information on a flag - the symbol of his nation - from the elements of the history of the Netherlands. Years later, in 1854, the Freestate, another state south of the Transvaal, had established an independant republic. And they had derived their flags and design

from the King of Holland directly. Because they had written to the King: "Please give us a flag and give us a coat of arms." Though the contact rebates, King William III send it, but (and this again is rather interesting) he placed on it the bugles of the House of Orange on the band. In South-Africa however this symbol was no longer known at the majority of the people, and they saw the horn representing their own wellknown "Kruit-hoorn", the powderhorn used at hunting...And the "boers" liked that ! They thought the king was a very thoughtful person and plying them a great compliment ! You will find that powderhorn, still referred to as a "Kruit-hoorn", on the coat of arms of Orange Freestate. And again the symbol was drawn from the history of the nation: it was Orange.

The Freestate retained its orange with the Dutch colours in the corner up to 1902. Then came back the Union Jack. Then, in later years, the republic of Transvaal - the South-African Republic as it was then known - was occupied by the British. They annexed the territory for a few years and they introduced again the British flag. But by then the Transvalers had designed their own flag, the famous "Vierkleur", a flag of 4 colours (one along the hoist, and three horizontal stripes) which still today is the best known flag in South-Africa. It is the flag of Holland + green, i.e. the flag of new Holland in Africa. The flag retained its importance up to 1902. And again the British annexed Transvaal.

I still have to point out to you, that during the years 1880 up to 1888 many of the territories in the interior of South-Africa decided to form independant states. So you will find many interesting flags designed in that period. But everyone of them made use of some form of the ancient flag of the Fatherland: "Die Vaderlandse Vlag hobbe we gebruik".

They thus held up the traditions up to 1925, when general Hertzog became Prime-Minister and said: "It is time that we introduced our own flag". So the orange-white-blue flag, with the three small flags in the middle on white, was adopted as a flag of South-Africa, to be flown with equal rights alongside the Union Jack. That position remained so until we became an independant



republic in 1960: one, independent sovereign state. Then it became imperative for our parliament to decide what would be the symbol of this new state. They had before them a choice: the Union Jack of the flag designed in the time of general Hertzog, approximately 35 years previously.

It is quite obvious to us, who are interested in flags, that there could be no difficulty in choice. Because the Union Jack was a symbol of the authority of England and the British Dominions. And becoming an independent state we naturally had to elect a flag which was not the same. Unanimously the Parliament decided therefore, that the flag which had been used since 1927 would had become immediatly the flag of the Republic of South-Africa, the orange-white-blue flag. That was laid down in a bill, praised before Parliament, adopted by it and it became a law in the same year.

And so you see, that in every movement of the nation going north or spreading over the territory they drew their information from the past, on historical grounds. And the flag today you see when going to South-Africa has in it the elements of the countries of North-west-Europe. It has the elements of Holland and France, but also the orange of southern France; it has within it the elements of the House of Orange drawn from the German territories on the Rhine; it has the elements of Great Britain. South-Africa therefor has a flag which has traditions stretching back to far into the 16th century Europe.

You may quite clearly understand that this must have been of some importance in our decisions. We will not ask to design a new flag, because everyone knows, how difficult this is; it is a tremendous task! It is not possible to satisfy all at the same time. You wished the man who designed the flag is mostly objective in his design, he tries very honestly to introduce a national element and inspiration. He may find a position.

I may just add for an example the man who wrote a letter to the Parliament. He suggested for a different type of flag and tried to introduce a new flag of gold and green. But you never heard of this again, because he selected the opposition party's colours... He had not considered

that there is a possibility his design being in use somewhere else !

We find our actual flag now is taking its place in South-African history; it has a definite appeal to the nation, it is making our people more flag-conscious. And therefore when we display our flag we realize it actually represents a period in our history. It draws from our sentiment of the past, our religious past and our national past.

All the other flags with their historical background have given a cultural contribution to the nation. It has been rich, our history ! But it has not deviated from the fact, that now we have a flag which represents the Republic of South-Africa.

In conclusion I wish to draw your attention to this. The flags we have spoken about are not exceedingly well known. And it is only since we have our College of Heralds, we are giving more attention to publish these flags. As far as I know South-Africa is the first state in that part of the world to have a college of heralds. I do not know whether there is a college north of the equator at Africa.

So if we are the only college of heralds in Africa you can realize that our designs and the application of them therefore must be of some importance, because on this vast continent we are designing new ideas; and the other independent states are doing the same. Therefore in future you will be well rewarded in the riches of the history of Africa, as a freight of the white men in the South, the Arabs in the North and the black men in the rest of Africa. So in Africa you will find a new generation developing his own flags. And you in Europe being so lucky in having such a great variety of beautiful flags, which appeal to the national and local sentiment, we in Africa are only at the beginning. But I trust that I have given you some idea of the historical backgrounds of all these new flags.