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agtersy van die omslag.  
The table of contents of the present issue of "Pretoriana" is on the reverse side  
of the cover.

**Op die omslag/On the cover:**

Tekening van Hannes Meiring van die eerste sinagoge van die Joodse gemeente  
te Pretoria aan Paul Krugerstraat, tans nasionale monument. Die gemeente  
herdenk in 1996 sy honderdjarige bestaan.

Drawing by Hannes Meiring of the first synagogue of the Jewish congregation  
at Pretoria on Paul Kruger Street, now a national monument. The congregation  
celebrates in 1996 its centenary.

Uit/From: Hannes Meiring, "Pretoria 125", Human and Rousseau,  
Kaapstad/Cape Town, 1981

**"THE IRON ROAD TO THE SEA":  
THE PRETORIA - MAPUTO RAILWAY, 1895-1995**

by Robert C. de Jong

**Introduction**

In 1890 the first railway line north of the Vaal River, between Johannesburg and Boksburg, was opened for traffic. Two years later the first railway connection between a port - Cape Town - and the Witwatersrand was established. But the year 1895 was of even greater significance. In this year the railway between Pretoria and Maputo was inaugurated.<sup>1)</sup> The opening of a third railway link with a port, Durban, later during the same year, was somewhat overshadowed by this event.<sup>2)</sup>

Right from the start the Pretoria-Maputo railway proved its importance for both South Africa and Mozambique, and during the past century this importance has been underlined many times.

In this paper I will deal with the following aspects of the Pretoria-Maputo railway line:

- (1) Historical background
- (2) History of construction
- (3) Important events since 1895
- (4) The importance of railway history

**(1) Historical background**

The ideal of a railway link with a port in non-British territory runs like a golden thread through the history of the Transvaal Boer Republic. The Voortrekkers, and after 1852 leaders such as M.W. Pretorius made various attempts to establish such a link with the east coast. The terminus of such a link would be the port of Lourenço Marques, capital of the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. Not only would a railway to this port be the shortest and most direct, but also would it ensure that at least part of the imports and exports of the republic would fall outside British control. This would not be the case should the Transvaal become totally dependent on harbours such as Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

The ideal gained momentum when President Thomas Burgers came back from a visit to Europe in 1875, where he had placed large orders with German and Belgian firms for rails, sleepers, trucks, engines and similar materials. Much of this was indeed delivered to Maputo, but the Transvaal lacked the money to

pay for it all. Besides, in 1877 the country came under British rule. As a result nothing came from Burgers' ambitious railway plans. The materials rusted away at Maputo, and were eventually cut up for scrap or used for other purposes.

After the Transvaal had regained its dependence in 1881, interest in building the railway to Maputo was rekindled. One of the leading figures in this regard was President Paul Kruger, and even today this fact is widely acknowledged. When Kruger visited the Netherlands in 1884 as part of a European tour, he held talks with prominent industrialists and railway engineers about the feasibility of constructing his coveted "Eastern Line". In the meantime an American, Colonel Edward McMurdo, gained an important advantage in December 1884, when he obtained a concession - sole right - from the Portuguese government to build and work a railway from Maputo to the Transvaal border.

In the Netherlands a provisional agreement between Kruger and a committee of financiers was signed in April 1884. In terms of this agreement, the committee would obtain a concession for the construction and operating of a railway across Transvaal territory to the Mozambique border. This concession would enable the Transvaal Boer republic to withstand railway pressure from the British coastal colonies. From Natal and the Cape Colony the railway lines began creeping towards the interior of South Africa with its diamonds and gold. Soon after Kimberley was reached by rail in 1885, gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886 and Johannesburg became the new target for the advancing colonial railways.

After the discovery of gold the Transvaal's financial situation started improving, but still the successful completion of the Mozambican part of the railway was holding the key to the construction of the Transvaal railway. After McMurdo ran into problems of obtaining enough money to complete his line, the Portuguese government had to step in and take over construction work temporarily. Another positive development was the founding of the *Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij* (NZASM) in Amsterdam on 21 June 1887, with Dutch and German capital.

Kruger was determined that a railway from Maputo should reach the Witwatersrand first, but the merchants and politicians of the coastal colonies were just as determined to win this race. Thus, when Cecil Rhodes became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony in 1890, the scene was already set for a struggle between the republican north and the colonial south.

## (2) History of construction

The Pretoria-Maputo railway stretched across two states. The part between Pretoria and the border with Mozambique was known as the Eastern Line, while the line between the border and Maputo normally was referred to as the Portuguese or the Mozambican railway.

The route for these two connecting railway systems was surveyed by Joachim Machado in the years 1882-1884. At that stage Machado was still a major in the Portuguese army corps of engineers. Later he became governor of Mozambique (1896-1900). This route was accepted by the Portuguese and Transvaal governments. However, it was an outsider, the American Edward McMurdo, who succeeded in obtaining a concession from the Portuguese government to build and work the railway between Maputo and the Transvaal border near Komatipoort.

For this purpose McMurdo floated a company, but lack of capital was the reason that construction work could not begin immediately. Only by March 1887 the chief contractor, Sir Thomas Tancred, could put the first spade in the ground. The building of the railway took place at a tremendous pace, and already by October the same year the line, 80 km in length, was considered to be completed. Two months later it was officially taken into use.

The consequence of this hasty construction soon became apparent when embankments and bridges started showing signs of wear because of faulty workmanship. A bigger problem raised its head when it turned out that the railway in fact ended some nine kilometre short of the Transvaal border. McMurdo's company had exhausted its capital and could not complete the remaining 9 km. The matter was not yet solved when he died suddenly. The Portuguese government cancelled the concession and established a new company, the CFLM (Caminho de Ferro de Lourenço Marques).

This company took over the assets and liabilities of McMurdo's insolvent undertaking in June 1889. The most urgent matter was obviously the completion of the railway to the border, and a new contractor was found, Ernest Sawyer, to undertake this work. Simultaneously the CFLM had to carry out many repairs along the existing line. A few months later the first train with construction materials from Maputo reached the real border with the Transvaal. This meant that the NZASM could finally start work on the line west of the border.

Towards the end of 1887 the first NZASM surveying team began making detailed surveys of the route from the border. However, it was mid-summer, and

malaria brought this activity temporarily to a standstill.<sup>3)</sup> Only by autumn 1888 a new team ventured into the Lowveld again. It would take until the end of 1889 for real construction work to begin. The NZASM's management was unsure whether local South African contractors would be willing to undertake work in a notoriously unhealthy part of the country. Instead they decided to employ a Dutch company, Van Hattum & Co., to build the first hundred kilometre west of the border.

In May 1890 Van Hattum started with the first major construction work, the large bridge across the Komati River, a few kilometre west of the border. The contractor Sawyer had already completed the short section between the border and the eastern bridgehead. A year later the first train steamed across the completed bridge. The line reached Hectorspruit Station in October 1891, and in June 1892 the first train entered Nelspruit.

In the meantime the NZASM had become involved in another railway project in the Transvaal, the Rand Tram between Johannesburg and Boksburg. This short railway, built to transport coal from a mine at Boksburg to the Johannesburg gold mines, was taken into use without much ado in March 1890. A year later it was extended to Springs in the east and Krugersdorp in the west.

The positive experience with the construction of the Rand Tram, which was in the hands of local contractors, led the NZASM to cancelling the troublesome contract with Van Hattum. Henceforth only South African firms were employed, which were much better acquainted with local conditions.

The Colonial railways were creeping closer and closer to the Witwatersrand. In 1890 the extension of the Cape railway system from Noupoot via Colesberg to Bloemfontein was opened for traffic. The following year the Natal main line reached Charlestown, not far from the Transvaal border.

It seemed that the Colonial railways would, after all, reach the Witwatersrand first. Another blow to the Eastern Line was struck when the news came in 1890 that, because of a financial crisis in Europe, the NZASM could obtain no further loans at a reasonable rate of interest. Although there was no money, construction work was not suspended however. Towards the end of 1891 the situation had become so bad that chief engineer Verwey of the NZASM in desperation approached the Cape government for help. In December 1891 the NZASM entered into an agreement with James Sivewright, Minister of Public Works in Rhodes's cabinet. In terms of this agreement the Cape government would lend the NZASM the necessary funds to fulfil its most

pressing needs. The Transvaal government would also be enabled to obtain a large government loan in Europe to complete the Eastern Line. One of the conditions was that the Cape Government Railways would be allowed to build an extension of its system from Bloemfontein to the Witwatersrand and to monopolise railway traffic to the Rand until the completion of the Eastern Line.

The ink on the Sivewright document was scarcely dry when construction work to complete the first railway between the coast and the Rand commenced. In September 1892 the line from the Free State via Vereeniging to Elandsfontein (today Germiston) was opened for traffic. On 1 January 1893 the extension from Elandsfontein to Pretoria was taken into use.

The fact that a Colonial railway was the first one to reach the Transvaal was a blow to the prestige of the Transvaal government and the NZASM. On the other hand, however, this circumstance provided the NZASM with the necessary capital to build the Eastern Line through one of the most difficult stretches, the escarpment. In June 1892 the railhead had reached Alkmaar Station, and towards the end of this year a rack railway section (including a tunnel 200 m long) in the mountainous landscape of the Eland River Valley was under construction. Work teams under supervision of mining engineers began boring from both ends of the tunnel during October. In June 1894 Waterval Boven Station, west of the tunnel, was opened for traffic.

The completion of the Cape railway system to Pretoria implied that construction materials could now also be transported to the western part of the Pretoria-Maputo railway stretching from Pretoria to the east. Shortly thereafter contractors started work on the western sections. The relatively even Highveld landscape and its mild climate favoured more rapid construction work. On 20 October 1894 tracklaying teams from the east and the west met near Balmoral station. On 2 November President Kruger fastened a last rail screw near Brugspruit Station, thereby symbolically completing the Eastern Line. Because of health risks the festive inauguration was postponed until winter the following year (1895), but it would take until November 1895 before the line was fully operational.

### (3) Important events since 1895

It did not take long before the first changes and improvements were effected due to the increase in passenger and goods transport. Already before 1900 some of the original corrugated iron buildings had to be replaced by more permanent buildings of stone or brick. Station yards had to be enlarged, more

houses for employees had to be built, and more private branch lines were constructed as the number of factories and mines along the line increased.

After the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899 the NZASM's staff and rolling stock were commandeered by the Transvaal government to aid the Boer war effort. The NZASM transported commandos' wounded, weapons, ammunition, animals, it repaired Boer artillery and bridges which had been damaged by the British in the territories occupied by the Boers, and finally staff of the company took a part in destroying bridges, engines and trucks when the tide of the war had turned against the Boers.<sup>4)</sup>

After the British occupation of Pretoria on 5 June 1900 the NZASM's material was taken over by the Imperial Military Railways. In October 1908 the NZASM was finally liquidated. Meanwhile in 1902 its railway system had gone over in the hands of the Central South African Railways (CSAR) after the end of the war. In 1910 at Union the CSAR became part of the new South African Railways and Harbours (SAR&H) administration, a state business enterprise that henceforth would build and work all the railways in the Union of South Africa. Thus, the legacy of the NZASM was inherited by the SAR&H and its successors, the South African Transport Services and Spoornet.

Apart from decreasing and interrupted traffic, Mozambique was little affected by the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). While the war raged on, Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner, was anxious to get things back to normal. The most urgent requirement for economic recovery was, of course, to re-open the mines. Labour was necessary for this. Milner opened negotiations with the Portuguese to solve the labour shortage swiftly. The Portuguese, well aware of Milner's predicament and realising that their "most favoured nation" status with the old Transvaal was gone, grasped the opportunity and told Milner that recruiting could continue as before, on condition that the prewar preference given to Mozambique regarding railway rates and customs duties should be guaranteed anew. Milner had very little option and in December 1901 the historic "Modus Vivendi" was signed. The significance of this agreement was that it reaffirmed the relations between Transvaal and Mozambique. It confirmed what Kruger knew all along, namely that Maputo was geographically the natural port for the Transvaal. The Modus Vivendi was succeeded by the Mozambique convention in 1909, and this was later followed by other treaties.

When Milner signed the Modus Vivendi he hoped that early federation of South Africa would soften its effects by eliminating commercial rivalry



through a unified railway system. All lines and ports would share the income from the Maputo line and harbour, and also the costs of preferential treatment. Unification of the four colonies became a reality on 31 May 1910, not only as a means of stopping the 25 year old railway and customs rivalry, but also because of other factors such as the vexed racial problem and the need to once again stabilise the country.

The *Modus Vivendi* and its successors paved the way for the organised recruitment of mine labourers from Mozambique. This was mainly in the hands of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association Ltd (WNLA), which erected compounds at Maputo and Ressano Garcia Station.

For South Africa, more specifically for the Transvaal, the advantage of all these conventions was cheaper imports through Maputo, an assured labour supply, and savings on customs duties on many imported products. However, the costs incurred outstripped these gains, and by the 1940s the SAR actually lost some £295 000 per year. The SAR and the Union government did not attempt to extricate themselves from these conventions, because Mozambique needed the money, South Africa needed the labour, and both countries needed the tourists.

All this changed drastically in the 1970s. Portugal's abandonment of Mozambique and the events that followed had tremendous repercussions on the Pretoria-Maputo railway. The frantic efforts of the SAR, Mozambicans, merchants and politicians to pick up the pieces amounted to a real scramble. Seldom, if ever before, had so many people under the stresses of war and instability worked so hard to keep a railway and port operating. The eventual success can be ascribed to two main factors: the long and friendly relationship between the railway officials of the two countries, as well as the economic interdependence of South Africa and Mozambique.

When the Frelimo government took over on 25 June 1976, an atmosphere of almost undeclared war descended on the two states because of their respective and seemingly irreconcilable ideologies. The railway officials had the unenviable task of putting it to their governments that transportation knows no boundaries and that the show had to go on. It is significant that after Mozambique's independence the SAR was the only South African state organisation that had representation in Maputo.

Through skilful railway diplomacy, on 26 February 1979, four years after Mozambican independence, the old bones of contention, guaranteed traffic, was finally laid to rest when the South African and Mozambican railway



administration signed a business agreement to regulate a straightforward commercial relationship. The rule of the *Modus Vivendi* after almost 78 years was over.

(4) The importance of railway history

The history of the Pretoria-Maputo railway as a case study of railway history contains a number of valuable learning points.

(a) Political importance

Railways link parts of a country and also connect various states. The Pretoria-Maputo railway clearly was not only built for economic purposes, but there were also political motives behind it, namely the desire of the Kruger government to have the shortest possible railway link with the coast without British interference. Also, the building of railways promotes economic growth which, in turn, aids in increasing and stabilising a ruling government's political power base. Another political aspect is that in history railways do not always unite nations, but can also be used as a mechanism to divide people. An example is the railway line which divides Mabopane from Soshanguve.

There are a few instances in history where railway coaches were the scene for political deliberations and the signing of armistice, peace and other accords.<sup>5)</sup>

(b) Economic importance

When looking at statistics, the Pretoria-Maputo railway clearly was an instrument that promoted economic development and stimulated economic growth, not only with regard to the Witwatersrand and Maputo, but also the rural and urban areas between these two termini. Such statistics are of immense value in measuring economic growth. They are one of the products of a railway administration which, as a highly organised institution, boosted economic development of underdeveloped areas, which previously had only been served in terms of infrastructure by animal-drawn road transport, a form of business of which few records are available.

The history of the Pretoria-Maputo railway provides some insight into labour relations. The construction of the line necessitated a large number

of mostly unskilled workers. Many of them were recruited through dubious means by agents, such as the notorious Abel Erasmus.<sup>6)</sup> The completion of the line demanded a high toll in human life. The combination of immense heat and malaria in the lowveld led to a relatively high death rate among white and black workers. Inexperience with the work and the pressure in meeting deadlines also endangered human life. Once completed, the railway needed a large number of permanent staff, such as engine drivers, firemen, signallers, inspectors, platelayers, ticket controllers, messengers, telegraphists, station masters, general workers, etc. Of all these people records had to be kept. Most railway organisations are state-run or semi-state, and are thus required to keep meticulous records, which represent a gold-mine of information on working conditions.

(c) Importance for tourism

The Pretoria-Maputo railway increased the mobility of people, and for many years it was the main form of transport for holiday-makers to and from Mozambique. During the 1930s the SAR operated "Round in Nine Days" tours, and part of the fun was a ride on a railcar to explore the sights of Mozambique. The so-called Selati railway had its southern terminus at Komatipoort, and this line was of immense importance in opening up the fledgling Kruger National Park for tourism. Today, rail safaris, especially if they are steam-hauled, are an important but as yet underdeveloped part of the tourism industry. The Pretoria-Maputo railway, and many other scenic railway lines in Southern Africa, have a tourism potential which has not been fully exploited. Even disused railway lines can play a role in the tourism business, for example by utilising the old rail-beds, bridges and tunnels for the development of walking, horseriding and biking trails.

(d) Social importance

As said before, railways increase the mobility of people, with the resulting positive and also negative consequences. Existing and planned railways are an integral part of urban planning, often dividing urban areas into almost isolated cells. Often they create boundaries between areas with perceived differences in living standards and morals. Today, unfortunately, the seedier parts of metropolitan areas lie in the vicinity of

railway emplacements - a contrast to the days when the coming of railways meant an elevation of an area's status.

(e) Military importance

The Pretoria-Maputo railway was used for transporting combatants and material over long distances. It demonstrated the extreme importance of railways in military history. In many wars railways are the fastest and most efficient means of transporting large numbers of people as well as large quantities of military hardware. As shown during the "race for the Rhine bridges" during World War Two, railway structures are vital in crossing natural obstacles such as rivers. Many battles were and are fought along railway lines, in the case of the Pretoria-Maputo line at Donkerhoek and Dalmanutha.<sup>7)</sup> Railways can also be turned into fortified barriers to keep an enemy at bay, as demonstrated by the erection of numerous blockhouses and other fortified posts along the Pretoria-Maputo railway and many other lines in South Africa.

(f) Technical importance

Railways often must traverse difficult terrain, and the Pretoria-Maputo line was no exception. Those often provides an opportunity for creative and innovative engineering, as demonstrated by the rack railway between Waterval Boven and Onder, and the ingeniously designed tunnel there. During World War I, when there was a shortage of steel, the SAR pioneered the construction of large concrete bridges.

(g) Artistic importance

Many larger railway stations are works of art in themselves, for example the Middelburg station building. The largest ones often were and are adorned by the works of known and lesser known artists, such as the paintings created by Pierneef for the "new" Johannesburg station of the early 1930s. Railways have inspired countless artists to produce paintings (such as those created by David Hall-Green and David Shepherd), photographs, books (for example John Coetzee's "Die weg na die see"), poetry, plays, and motion pictures ("Murder on the Orient Express").

(h) Other important aspects

In this respect mention can be made briefly of religious importance (on one hand the polemic that often preceded the introduction of Sunday trains, on the other hand the use of churches on wheels, an example of

which is displayed in the National Railway Museum of Zimbabwe, in Bulawayo). Furthermore, railways sometimes are used in bringing medical services to rural areas (for example the "eye train") and extending humanitarian aid to refugee camps.

### Conclusion

In looking at the future of the Pretoria-Maputo railway, and for that matter other systems in Southern Africa, three factors should be borne in mind:

- (1) A railway disturbs the natural environment far less than a highway or an air-transport system. It also produces less pollutants per unit of transportation performed than either highway or air transportation. These factors should become more significant as society increasingly concerns itself with the need to preserve the environment and to reduce air, water and noise pollution.
- (2) A railway is far more efficient in its use of fuel than are either highway or air transportation. It is probably that future concern over the best use of these resources will produce more emphasis on rail transportation.
- (3) While much public money has gone into technological research on the newer forms of transportation and into constructing facilities for them, relatively little has been spent to improve railway technology. Thus, even the most advanced of today's railway plants and services, with few exceptions, do not represent anything like the best that is possible from the railway.

What clearly illustrates the history of the Pretoria-Maputo railway and the port of Maputo is the fact that all the people of Southern Africa are interconnected with one another. It took the building of a railway to demonstrate this truth. The significance of this railway is that it, once again, makes us realise the role of railways in the lives of people.

When the history of our times comes to be written, the role of the railwaymen in again bringing peace and stability will be prominent. Future generations will learn of engineers braving dangers to repair bridges and track, rescuing trains, averting accidents, installing signals, and of labourers struggling to save a port. That which all the pioneers achieved in the century old history of the Pretoria-

Maputo line is today our legacy. What is expected of us, the inheritors, is to remember our benefactors and to treasure and utilise this gift.

#### References of the editor

- 1) See also the article by C. de Jong, "The quest for a route to the sea and the opening of the Delagoa Bay railway line, now 100 years ago", in "Pretoriana", no. 107, p.68-78.
- 2) See the prestigious centenary book, appearing a 100 years after the founding of the NZASM in 1887, by Robert C. de Jong, G.M. van der Waal and D.H. Heydenrych, "NZASM 100", published by Christo van Rensburg, Pretoria, 1988, Chapter 5, "The South Eastern line", p.177-197. The junctioning of the two tracts of the South Eastern line from the south and the north was celebrated on 10 October 1895 close to Greylingstad. See C. de Jong, "Die spoorwegverlede herleef", in "Pretoriana", no 90, November 1986, p.74-76.
- 3) The cause of this delay was the death of the Dutch engineers G.H. van der Meulen en J.E. van Tjizendijk in 1887 and 88, due to malaria fever in the Lowveld of Transvaal, and the illness of other surveying personnel of the NZASM.
- 4) The military successes of the Boers and their occupation of British territory in South Africa were largely over after the surrender of General P.A. Cronjé and his army at Paardeberg on 27 February 1900 and the retreat of General Louis Botha from the Tugela front and subsequent relief of Ladysmith on the same date. Then the Long Retreat of the Boer commandos from Kimberley, Colesberg and Ladysmith via Bloemfontein and Pretoria started. It ended at Komatipoort at the terminus of the Eastern Line on 1 September 1900.
- 5) Robert C. de Jong here refers to the meeting of President Paul Kruger and the Cape Governor and British High Commissioner Sir Henry Loch in a passenger coach on the railway bridge over the Border Spruit between Transvaal and Natal on 10 December 1894. The borderline ran across the bridge and the coach and they stayed each in his own territory with the border line between them. They met to conclude the second Swaziland Convention. See R.C. de Jong, G.M. van der Waal and D.H. Heydenrych, "NZASM 100", loc. cit., p.193, 195.

- 6) The author seems to imply that Field Cornet and Native Commissioner in Eastern Transvaal Abel Erasmus, 1845-1921, sent forced of statutory black labourers to work on the Eastern line. Erasmus' biographer, A.P. van der Merwe, gives a more favourable impression of Abel Erasmus in his article in "Dictionary of South African Biography", volume 3, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria 1977, p.275. He states: "Maintaining law and order with tact and firmness, he further formulated a sound policy through which trust and sympathy between Whites and Non-Whites developed ... With his aid 3000 idle Blacks were obtained to help with the building of the Delagoa Bay railway." The contractors paid the Blacks wages. Indeed, would the Blacks be ill-treated then they would run away.
- 8) During the Anglo-Boer War a bridge on the Eastern line was blown up by a British patrol under Captain Steincker in June 1900 and a train was derailed thereby. Under the Long Retreat of the Boers they fought pitched battles on the Eastern line at Donkerhoek on 11 and 12 June 1900 and at Dalmanutha or Berg-en-Dal on 25-27 August 1900, the last battle of the regular war. During the ensuing guerilla war General Louis Botha and Ben Viljoen launched a massive night attack at seven stations on the Eastern line on 7 January 1901; the attacks were repulsed.
- 9) The NZASM railway bridge over the Olifants River is a national monument like the station building at Middelburg, the tunnel between Waterval Boven and Waterval Onder and the seven arches railway bridge, now out of use.
- 10) John Coetzee, "Die ysterpad na die see", Tafelberg Uitgewers 1987, 105 pp., youth novel on the construction of the Eastern line, reviewed by C. de Jong in "Pretoriana" no. 93, April 1988, p.20-21.



## A FESTA DOS 100 ANOS - DIE FEES VAN 100 JAAR

deur Robert C. de Jong

### 'n Eeu van belangstelling

Daar is min spoorlyne in Suider-Afrika wat aangaande publisiteit vergelykbaar is met die verbinding tussen Pretoria en Maputo, voorheen Lourenço Marques genoem. Die publisiteit gaan terug na die jare 1887-1895, die tydperk waarin die spoorlyn aangelê is. Twee spoorwegmaatskappye was daarvoor verantwoordelik, naamlik die Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij (NZASM) en die Caminho de Ferro de Lourenço Marques (CFLM). Eersgenoemde het die Transvaalse deel van die lyn tussen Pretoria en Delagoabaai, dit is die lyn tussen Pretoria en die grens van Mosambiek, aangelê en geëksploiteer. Laasgenoemde het die trajek tussen die hawestad Lourenço Marques (nou Maputo) aan Delagoabaai en die grens van Mosambiek beheer. In Julie 1895 is die gehele spoorweg met feesgedruis amptelik vir verkeer oopgestel.

'n Eeu later, in 1995, is die lyn nog altyd in bedryf. Die Suid-Afrikaanse en Mosambiekse spoorwegbedrywe was van mening dat die jubileum nie onopgemerk mog bly nie en het op 'n groot skaal 'n verskeidenheid van feestelikhede georganiseer.

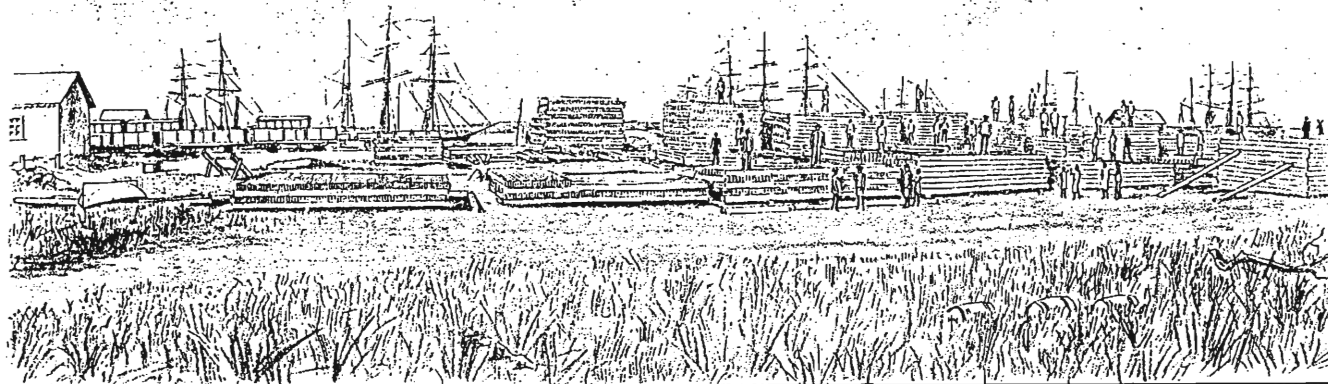
### Die spoorwegfeeste van 1895

Hoewel die gereëde treindiens reeds op 1 Januarie 1895 begin het, het die feestelikhede eers in Julie van dié jaar plaasgevind. Die redes hiervoor was hoofsaaklik die klimaat. Julie is 'n wintermaand en bygevolg is die temperatuur en vogtigheid aan die kus en in die Laeveld oos van die Platorand in Transvaal draagliker en is die gevaar van malariakoors en ander siektes minder as in die ander maande.

Ter geleentheid van die feeste het in Pretoria tussen die stasie en Kerkplein op verskeie plekke erepoorte, versier met vlâe, wimpels, spreuke en wapenskilde, verrys. Die markhal is omgetower in 'n feessaal, kompleet met gedrapeerde gordyne, vlâe en enorme muurskilderinge met allegoriese, historiese en topografiese onderwerpe. Die kunstenaars was Frans Oerder en Anton van Wouw, later belangrike persone in die Suid-Afrikaanse skilder- en beeldhoukuns.

Ook Lourenço Marques was in feesgewaad. Duitsland, Groot-Brittanje, Portugal en Nederland was deur marineskepe verteenwoordig as erkenning van die internasionale betekenis van die Delagoabaai-spoorlyn. Die Nederlandse vlag

# WILCKEN & ACKERMANN,



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## FORWARDING, LANDING, SHIPPING. Lourenco Marques.

Reklametekening van die verskepingsbedryf Wilcken & Ackermann van die hawe van Lourenco Marques in 1895; dit stel blykbaar die timmerhoutloskaai voor.

Uit: Leo Weinthal, "The Delagoa Bay - Pretoria Railway, The Press Gedenk-Boek uitgegeven ter geleghenheid der feestelike opening van 'n Delagoabaai-Pretoria spoorweg, Julie 1895", Pretoria 1895

is getoon deur die pantserdekskip 'Koningin Wilhelmina der Nederlanden'.

In Pretoria het die feeste drie dae geduur en begin met die ontvangs van gaste uit die Oranje-Vrystaat, Natal en die Kaapkolonie op die stasie op Maandag, 8 Julie 1895. Smiddags het die gaste uit Mosambiek aangekom. Onder hulle was Joaquin Machado, goewerneur van Mosambiek, en offisiere van marineskepe in die Delagoabaai. Onmiddellik na aankoms het op die perron die amptelike opening van die spoorlyn plaasgevind met president Kruger as hoofspreker. Hierna het die gaste vertrek na die feessaal, waar die landdros van Pretoria hulle namens die stad verwelkom het. Saans is die Raadsaal aan Kerkplein met spreiligte verlig. Die dag is afgesluit met 'n musiekuitvoering in die feestelik verligte Burgerspark.

Die volgende dag (9 Julie) is aan die ongeveer 400 gaste 'n banket in die feessaal aangebied. Daarna is weer musiek in die Burgerspark gespeel; 'n skemeronthaal in die feessaal en vuurwerk op die aangrensende markplein het gevolg.

Op die derde en laaste dag (10 Julie) het die gaste die Staatsmunt aan Kerkplein besoek en kon hulle kyk na perdewedrenne in die westelike deel van Pretoria.

Na hierdie feestelikhede in Pretoria het president Kruger, vergesel deur talle parlamentslede en regerings-funksionarisse, per trein na Lourenço Marques gereis om ook daar die amptelike feestelikhede by te woon. 'n Hoogtepunt was sy besoek aan die Duitse oorlogskip 'Condor' waar hy 'n persoonlike telegram met gelukwense van keiser Wilhelm ontvang.

Om aan die feestelikhede 'n nasionale karakter te gee en die spoorlyn aan inwoners van Transvaal bekend te stel is aan ieder burger wat hom aanmeld, in die maande van Junie tot en met September 1895 toegestaan om 'n rit na Lourenço Marques en terug op staatskoste te onderneem. Hiervan is veel gebruik gemaak.

Van die openingsfeeste in 1895 het nie slegs koerantartikels en tientalle foto's nie, maar ook andere herinneringe bewaar gebly. Die NZASM het 'n geïllustreerde gedenkboek, ryk versier deur die bekende argitek H.P. Berlage met die destyds gewilde Jugendstil of art-nouveau-styl, gepubliseer. Die boek handel oor die konsessie vir die aanleg van die spoorweg, oor die NZASM, die aanleg en eksplorasie van die lyn. Dit is vir die historikus nog steeds van betekenis. Stasiehoofde, masjinite en ander hoë beampes het elk 'n silwersakhorlosie ontvang wat vervaardig is deur Berchschmid en is gelewer deur Henri Julien te Amsterdam. Die NZASM het by die Koninklijke Munt te Utrecht 50 silwer- en

'n groter aantal bronsgedenkpennings bestel. Vooraanstaande persone wat by die aanleg van die Delagoabaailyn betrokke was, het 'n silwerpenning ontvang. Die bronspennings was bestem vir die hoëre NZASM-personeel. Die pennings had 'n middellyn van 44 mm en was ontwerp deur J.P.M. Menger, hoofgraveur by die Koninklijke Munt tot 1904. 'n Ander gedenkpenning, ook van silwer, is geslaan in Transvaal en aangebied aan die gaste wat aan die banket deelgeneem het. Hierdie penning is ook uitgereik aan blanke skool-kindere in Pretoria.

### Die spoorwegfeeste in 1995

Reeds teen die einde van 1994 het SpoorNet en die CFM (Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique), onderskeidelik die Suid-Afrikaanse en Mosambiekse staatspoorweë met die voorbereiding van die feeste begin. Dit is duidelik dat die feeste van 1895 as voorbeeld gedien het, want daar is opvallend baie ooreenkomste.

Dit lê voor die hand dat daar ook verskille was. So was dit Maputo en nie Pretoria nie wat as sentrum vir die feeste gekies is. In teenstelling tot 1895 het die gaste sowat alle bevolkingsgroepe en tale van Suid-Afrika verteenwoordig. Verder het die belangstelling nie alleen die blanke spoorwegpersoneel van die NZASM en CFLM betref nie, hulde is ook gebring aan die duisende swart werkers wat in die afgelope eeu 'n aandeel in die aanleg en eksploitasie gehad het.

Die aktiwiteite het reeds begin Junie 1995 aangevang met die aankoms van 'n eskader skepe van die Suid-Afrikaanse marine in Maputo wat bestaan het uit twee aanvalsvaartuie, 'n onderseeboot en 'n bevoorradingskip. Terselfdertyd het kunstenaars van Transvaalse en Vrystaatse organisasies vir uitvoerende kunste met 'n kort toernee rond Maputo begin. Die toernee het bestaan uit 'n reeks ballet- en verhoogvoorstellings en musiekuitvoerings. Die kunsorganisasies het hiertoe hul "teatertrucks" gebruik; dit is ou meubelwaens wat tot 'n verplaasbare verhoog vir teater, dans en musiek verbou is.

### Die gedenkrit van 1995

Vrydagmôre, 7 Julie vertrek vanuit die hoofstasie in Pretoria die Union Express, 'n luukse "safiratrein" met motortraksie. Die trein was saamgestel uit rytuie ouer as 50 jaar - die oudste rytuig was van 1896! Dit is 'n besondere trein wat gereëld ritte na verskillende bestemmings in Suid-Afrika en Zimbabwe onderneem. Die skrywer van die onderhawige bydrae was saam met sy eggenote lid van die groep van 70 spesiaal genooides wat die gedenkrit meegemaak het. Die eindbestemming was Maputo. Die gedenkrit is onderbreek in die dorp