

**CONVERGENCE AND UNIFICATION: THE NATIONAL
FLAG OF SOUTH AFRICA (1994) IN
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an analysis of the history of the new South African flag of 1994. It presents an overview account of the South African flag legacy from the early colonial period through to the first national flag of the Union of South Africa in 1928. Its main concern however is the process which culminated in the raising of a new national flag on 27 April 1994. It shows how the flag issue was integral to the negotiations aimed at addressing South Africa's political future and it is within this context that it sets out the steps taken to address the matter. It also recounts how the process initially floundered before the current design - which has become one of the primary graphic symbols of identification for the new South Africa and its people - finally came into being. Despite the initial reaction to the design, it unpacks the extent to which the flag has been embraced by the South African population at large which has far exceeded expectation. Apart from its visual success, the flag is symbolic of the convergence and unification which is inextricably linked to the freedom and democracy which the new political dispensation encapsulated.

Keywords: convergence; flag; identity; nation-building; national flag; South Africa; symbolism; unification; vexillology.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Note: These abbreviations and acronyms are relevant to the period covered by this thesis.

ANC	African National Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
ASF	Afrikaanse Studentefederasie
AU	African Union
AVU	Afrikaner Volksunie
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BDF	Bophuthatswana Defence Force
BOP	Bophuthatswana
BWB	Boere Weerstandsbeweging
CA	Constituent Assembly / Constitutional Assembly
CBM	Consultative Business Movement
CDF	Ciskei Defence Force
CMB	Constitution-making Body
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COM	Campaign for Open Media
CONTRALESA	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
COPE	Congress of the People
COSAG	Concerned South African Group
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CP	Conservative Party of South Africa
CPS	Centre for Policy Studies
DA	Democratic Alliance
DMC	Daily Management Committee [Codesa]
DoV	Dictionary of Vexillology
DP	Democratic Party
EPG	Eminent Persons Group
FIAV	<i>Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques</i> (International Federation of Vexillological Associations)
FIDA	Federal Independent Democratic Alliance

FOTW	Flags of the World (website)
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICV	International Congress of Vexillology
ID	Independent Democrats
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
JMCC	Joint Military Command Council
KP	Konserwatiewe Party van Suid-Afrika
LP	Labour Party
MC	Management Council [Codesa]
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
MP	Member of Parliament
MPNP	Multi-Party Negotiating Process
NA	National Assembly
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NE	National Executive
NEC	National Executive Committee [of the African National Congress]
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NIS	National Intelligence Service
NP	National Party
NPA	National Peace Accord
NPC	National Peace Committee
NPP	National People's Party
NPS	National Peace Secretariat
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PF	Patriotic Front
PWV	Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging [later the Province of Gauteng]
RN	Royal Navy
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SACOB	South African Chamber of Business
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force [1957 - 1994]

SAG	South African Government
SANDF	South African National Defence Force [since 1994]
SAP	South African Police [1911 - 1995]
SAPS	South African Police Service [since 1995]
SAVA	Southern African Vexillological Association
SGT	Self-Governing Territory
TBVC	Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei
TC	Technical Committee
TEC	Transitional Executive Council
TGOR	Transitional Government of Reconciliation
TIC	Transvaal Indian Congress
UDF	Union Defence Force(s) (1912 - 1957)
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDM	United Democratic Movement
VF+	Vryheidsfront Plus [Freedom Front Plus]
WG	[Codesa] Working Group

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION: FLYING FLAGS

1.1 Flag history as a genre

Flags have long attracted human interest. However, it is only in the past half-century that the multi-faceted discipline of vexillology¹ – which is the scientific study of the history, symbolism and usage of flags and an interest in flags in general² – has developed into a serious independent field of study. The use of flags as a means of human communication is of considerable antiquity and modern flag histories build extensively on the written legacy of the past. Flags are indeed a universal characteristic of human civilization and the history of flags forms an integral part of the history of society. With the general exception of preliterate societies and certain nomadic peoples, it would seem that virtually every culture has taken into use flags of some kind.³

It is the intention of this thesis to address the origin of flags; to consider their characteristics and uses; and to sketch the evolution of flag literature against a multi-disciplinary academic background. This serves as a prelude to an overview of the historical background to South Africa's early flags. The essence of the thesis, namely the process by which the South African flag, adopted in 1994, came into being is addressed in greater detail. Since then this flag, which has been embraced by the public at large, has become the country's premier graphic symbol of national identity.

Although it is generally accepted by many vexillologists that hieroglyphics from the pre-dynastic period (before 3000 BC) show the use of flag-like objects known as vexilloids, which were worn by marine vessels at that time, indications are that flags attached along one edge to a vertical pole had been in use in China by the sixth century BC. In his treatise on strategy, tactics and logistics, known as *The art of war*, the Chinese general and military theorist Sun-tzu wrote that “In battle all appears to be turmoil and confusion, but the flags and

¹ *Oxford English dictionary*, XIX (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2nd ed, 1989), p 586; This word is derived from the Latin vexillum (a flag suspended from a cross-bar affixed to an ornamented staff), which was carried by cavalry units of Roman Legions. Whitney Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world* (McGraw-Hill, Maidenhead, 1975), pp 34-35; William Crampton, *Eyewitness guides: Flag* (Dorling Kindersley, London, 1989), pp 8-10.

² Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, pp 30 ff.

³ Specific technical terms are used to describe the various types and shapes of flags and their component parts. Useful glossaries and technical illustrations will be found in a number of flag and heraldic publications.

banners have prescribed arrangements; the sounds of the cymbals fixed rules.”⁴ Indications are that it was from trade with China that flags of cloth were introduced to the Western world by the Arabs.⁵ The use of totems, emblems and later flags as a means of identification and as a rallying point, was by no means a new concept. In the Old Testament Book of Numbers, 1:52, one finds, for example, God’s instruction to Moses that the “Israelites will pitch their tents, each tribal host in its proper camp and under its own standard.” In chapter 2:2, we find that these standards were identified “by the emblems of his father’s family.”⁶ The tribes of Israel were thus to be mustered and grouped into familial companies, with the clearly visible rallying point of each being the distinctive standard bearing the emblem of the tribe and extended family to which the person belonged. In modern-day usage the term “standard” is customarily used as a generic term for a variety of types of flags, but in its now largely obsolete usage, the word applied equally to a pole set in the ground, to the top of which was attached a distinctive emblem, which served as a rallying point.⁷

In his book *The imaginary institution of society*, Cornelius Castoriadis, Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes et Sciences Sociales in Paris and a world-renown figure in contemporary thought, describes a national flag as “a symbol with a rational function, a sign of recognition and for rallying round, which becomes what one can and must die for, and what sends shivers down the spine of the patriots as they watch the military parade pass by.”⁸

These sentiments are shared by Anthony Smith, Professor of Ethnicity and Nationalism at the European Institute of the London School of Economics, who writes:

It matters little that to outsiders the difference between many flags appear minimal ...What counts is the potency of the meanings conveyed by such signs to the members of the nation. The panoply of national symbols ... serves to express, represent and reinforce the boundary definition of the

⁴ Cited in Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, p 7.

⁵ Crampton, *Eyewitness guides: Flag*, p 8.

⁶ This wording is from the *Revised English Bible* (Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, first South African edition, Cape Town, 1989), p 110. Almost every translation of these passages gives a slightly different wording.

⁷ In this biblical context the word “standard” is thus most probably used in an obsolete poetic rather than in a modern and strictly technical flag sense.

⁸ C. Castoriadis (tr. Kathleen Blamey), *The imaginary institution of society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987), p 131.

nation and to unite the members.⁹

Nationalism relies on the willingness of people to define themselves as a distinct group and the national flag of a country thus reflects the supremacy of the national ideal.¹⁰ However, in addition to their potential to act as unifying symbols, it must also be borne in mind that the emotional component in the use of flags can also foster conflict. The social anthropologist Professor Raymond Firth points out that while a national flag is, on the one hand, a potent “living symbol of the country” it can equally “be used as a concrete instrument of protest against those interests or against conduct related to them.”¹¹

Castoriadis points out that an icon is a symbolic object, namely a symbol which has a rational function.¹² In his best-selling novel, *Icon*, the author Frederick Forsyth takes this view one step further and writes that all nations need something, some person or symbol, to which they can cleave and which can give a disparate mass of varied people a sense of identity and thus of unity.¹³

The study of flags, which has blossomed in the past half-century, is now undoubtedly interdisciplinary and the present study is being undertaken against a background of the growing body of literature on flags; nations and nationalism; symbols and symbolism; identity and identification. Historians long dominated the field, but they have more recently been joined by those in other disciplines of the human sciences such as political scientists, psychologists, social anthropologists, sociologists and other academics. Particular attention will be paid to those whose work has come closest to the subject under review.¹⁴

The study, design, manufacture, technical aspects and use of flags, in fact, extends far beyond the humanities. In his keynote address delivered at the opening of the XVII International

⁹ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: theory, ideology, history* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2001), p 8. An indication of the range of the panoply of national symbols is addressed by Crampton in his doctoral thesis, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity.” PhD thesis, Manchester University, 1994, pp 53-57.

¹⁰ Whitney Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, pp 36, 37, 54-56.

¹¹ Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private*, pp 346-347, 355; Pal Kolsto, “National symbols as signs of unity and division,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29 (4), 4 July 2006, pp 676-701. See also Zdzislaw Mach, *Symbols, conflict and identity: essays in political anthropology* (State University of New York, Albany, 1993).

¹² Castoriadis, *The imaginary institution of society*, p 131.

¹³ F. Forsyth, *Icon* (Corgi Books, London, 1996), p 256.

¹⁴ Among these are the works of Karl Deutsch, Murray Edelman, Raymond Firth, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Elie Kedourie, Hugh Seton-Watson, Anthony Smith, Sasha Weitman and Wilbur Zelinsky.

Congress of Vexillology in Cape Town on 10 August 1997, Lionel Mtshali the South African Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology made the point that:

Painting flags is an art; using them is an important facet of any group or nation's culture; designing them and drawing up their specifications is a science; while their manufacture, the recording and disseminating of information relative to flags falls squarely into the field of technology.¹⁵

While the latter aspect is relevant to the broader field of vexillology, this study will focus on the history and issues of identity, symbolism and nation within the South African context.

1.2 Defining flags

Writing of the Canadian national flag which was taken into use on 15 February 1965, Historian George Stanley comments as follows:

A flag may be defined as a piece of bunting or other pliable material which serves as a means of identification or as a signal but a flag is more than a means of identification. It is the embodiment of what a country stands for: it is the symbol of the ethos or spirit of a people its hopes, its aspirations, its will to live and its determination to play its role in history. A flag speaks for the people. It silently calls on all men and women to the service of the land in which they live. It inspires sacrifice, loyalty and devotion.¹⁶

The parameters of any academic study need to be defined. In a study such as this, one of the first questions which must be asked is: "What is a national flag?" In order to set this study in perspective it is thus necessary, first and foremost, to seek definitions as to what is meant by a "national flag." This is easier said than done, since there are various interpretations of what is

¹⁵ P. Martinez (ed.), *Flags in South Africa and the world*, the Proceedings of the XVII International Congress of Vexillology, Cape Town, 10 – 15 August 1997 (Southern African Vexillological Association, Pinetown, 1999), p x.

¹⁶ This adapted quotation from George F.G Stanley's, *The story of Canada's flag: a historical sketch* (Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1965), is cited in Rick Archbold, *I stand for Canada: the story of the Maple Leaf flag* (Macfarlane Walter and Ross, Toronto, 2002), p 177. For the online copy of Stanley's book, see <http://people.stfx.ca/lstanley/Flagbook/Chapter1.htm>.

understood by the term “national flag,” and what its functions are. In its most widely used form, *The Oxford English dictionary* defines a “flag” as being: “A piece of cloth or stuff (usually bunting), varying in size, colour, and device, but most frequently oblong or square, attached by one edge to a staff or halyard, used as a standard, ensign or signal, and also for decoration or display.”¹⁷

This dictionary describes a “nation” as being:

An extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language, or history as to form a distinct race or people, usually organized as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory, [but in an explanatory comment goes on to add that]: In early examples the racial idea is usually stronger than the political; in recent use the notion of political unity and independence is more prominent.¹⁸

Following on this changing meaning of the word “nation,” the word “national” is defined as being: “Of or belonging to a (or the) nation; affecting, or shared by, the nation as a whole.”¹⁹ In its simplest form, a national flag is thus a (or the) flag belonging to the whole nation, or State.

These carefully worded dictionary definitions of what comprises a nation indicate that there has been a gradual change of meaning and emphasis, which obviously also has a bearing on the concept of nationalism, but in practice the situation is rather more complex. Indeed, one of the central difficulties in the study of “nations” and “nationalism” has been the inability of academics to find adequate and agreed definitions for these two key concepts.²⁰ Whereas the concept of “patriotism” – love of the fatherland – is of greater antiquity, the modern nation and its attendant nationalism only dates from the American and French Revolutions. In consequence, as Karl Deutsch, a Professor of Political Science at Yale University remarks in

¹⁷ *Oxford English dictionary*, V (1989), p 989.

¹⁸ *Oxford English dictionary*, X (1989), pp 231, 232.

¹⁹ *Oxford English dictionary*, X (1989), p 232.

²⁰ John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (an Oxford Readers publication: Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994) pp 3-4. This book comprises 49 essays by, or extracts from the work of leading scholars in this field; in *National identity* (Penguin, London, 1991), Anthony Smith remarks that “At best the idea of a nation has appeared sketchy and elusive, at worst absurd and contradictory” (p 7). See also M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Sage, London, 2004), especially pp 39-43.

his introduction to *Nation-building*, the era of nations and nationalism covers but a short span in recorded history.²¹

Academic Anthony Smith has in recent years paid particular attention to the study of this field and effectively consolidated the diverse contributions of many fellow academics.²² In the introduction to his book entitled *National identity*, in which he addresses both the positive as well as the pernicious aspects of national allegiances, Smith comments “that we cannot understand nations and nationalism simply as an ideology or a form of politics but must treat them as a cultural phenomenon as well.” He further observes that “[w]e cannot begin to understand the power and appeal of nationalism as a political force without grounding our analysis on a wider perspective whose focus is national identity treated as a collective cultural phenomenon.”²³

Smith indicates further that there are divergent interpretations as to what comprises a nation. Among them the Western model which views nations as cultural communities united by common historical memories, myths, symbols and traditions; the Eastern European view that a nation was essentially a community of common descent; and then the deliberate invention of nations and the idea of national identity, within the framework of an over-arching African identity, such as has happened in Africa, especially since the mid-twentieth century. He also points out that in the wider context a nation needs to provide its citizens with a repertoire of shared values, symbols and traditions.²⁴ In his chapter on nationalism and cultural identity, Smith comments that in many ways national symbols, such as flags and anthems, are among the most powerful and durable aspects of nationalism. He claims “they embody its basic concepts, making them visible and distinct for each member, communicating the tenets of an abstract ideology in palpable, concrete terms that evoke instant emotional responses from all strata of the community.”²⁵ This idea of an over-arching symbolic national identity may well be the ideal, but in an ever-changing world, these concepts are not necessarily static. As Sally Peberdy has stressed:

²¹ Karl Deutsch, “Nation-building and national development: some issues for political research,” in Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (eds.), *Nation-building* (Atherton Press, New York, 1966), p 1.

²² Anthony Smith’s publications in this field are dealt with more fully in the following chapter.

²³ Anthony Smith, *National identity*, p vii.

²⁴ Anthony Smith, *National identity*, pp 11, 16, 101.

²⁵ Anthony Smith, *National identity*, p 77.

The invocation of a shared common, if divided (and even divisive), history echoes both Anderson and Chatterjee's discussion of the continuities among the past, present and future in the creation of nationalisms and national identities in colonial and post-colonial states.²⁶

In the introduction to his chapter on the flags of Africa, in *Flags of the world*, Kent Alexander writes as follows:

When the people of the new African nations began the task of designing their flags, they turned their eyes towards Ethiopia, a country that, until the invasion of Italian troops in 1936, had remained free of colonization. Ethiopia was admired for its resistance to the Italians, and the green, yellow, and red colours of its flag were adopted first by the nation of Ghana, and later, by many other countries that wanted the world to recognize that not only were they independent African nations, but that they yearned for an Africa controlled by Africans as well.²⁷

This quotation in turn, poses the question: what is an African? The answer is by no means clear-cut. *The Shorter Oxford English dictionary* defines "African" as "belonging to or characteristic of, or a native or inhabitant of Africa. Hence Africanism."²⁸ Following on this definition, Pan-African means "of or pertaining to all persons of African birth or descent."²⁹

The continental land mass of Africa is well-defined and its surrounding islands, which are from a political perspective also deemed to be part of Africa, are members of the African Union. However mass migrations over the centuries have ensured that the populations of these "African" states, rather than nations, are seldom homogeneous. As Richard Dowden

²⁶ Sally Peberdy, *Selecting immigrants: national identity and South Africa's immigration policies, 1910-2008*. (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2009), p 165. In footnote 141 to this page, Peberdy refers to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Verso, London and New York, 1991); and two publications by P. Chatterjee, namely *Nationalist thought and a colonial world: a derivative discourse?* (Zed Books, London, 1986); and *The nation and its fragments: colonial and post-colonial histories* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993).

²⁷ Kent Alexander, *Flags of the world* (Michael Friedman Publishing Group, New York, 1992), p 23.

²⁸ William Little, H.W. Fowler and J. Coulson (rev. by C.T. Onions), *The Shorter Oxford English dictionary* (third edition, revised with addenda, Vol I, A-M, Clarendon Press, Oxford, reprinted with corrections, 1968), p 33.

²⁹ Little et al, *The Shorter Oxford English dictionary* (Vol II, N-Z), p 1421.

puts it bluntly, “there is more human genetic diversity in Africa than in the rest of the human race combined.”³⁰ In the case of north Africa, from Morocco to Egypt, the population is primarily of Arab and mixed Mediterranean ancestry, while the ethnic origins of the Berbers of the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria) and that of the Touaregs of the Sahara, lie in the Caucasus. As Dowden has also remarked, few North Africans really regard themselves as African.³¹

The enormous Sahara desert has long served as a natural barrier separating north Africa from sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of Africa’s people live south of the Sahara where the primary physical characteristics of the population is their “blackness” which was to give rise to the concept of Negritude.³² Quoting from the preface to the Afro-American writer Julio Finn’s book *Voices of Negritude*, Guy Arnold writes: On the cultural level, Negritude vaunts the inimitability of Black civilization; on the human level, it proclaims the innate dignity and beauty of the race – the right of Black peoples proudly to cast their shadows in the sunlight.³³

One of the complexities of African identity is the perception held by many African nationalists and pan-Africans, and increasingly so in South Africa, that to be a true African one must be Black. With the passage of time ideological perceptions of this nature tend to translate into reality in the minds of their proponents, to the exclusion of other points of view.³⁴

Adding to this complexity, the racial composition of South Africa’s population is arguably more diverse than that of most other African countries. The preamble to the South African Constitution of 1996 declares that: “We, the people of South Africa, ... Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.”³⁵ Hence the idea of the “rainbow people of God,” or the “rainbow nation.”³⁶

³⁰ Richard Dowden, *Africa: altered states, ordinary miracles* (Portobello Books, London 2009), p 9.

³¹ Dowden, *Africa*, p 9. This is in the context of being “Black” Africans.

³² Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa* (Macmillan Education, Oxford, 2nd ed., 1995), p 360.

³³ Julio Finn, *Voices of Negritude* (Quartet Books, 1998), preface, cited in Guy Arnold, *Africa a modern history* (Atlantic Books, London, 2005), p 57.

³⁴ Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, *Afrikaner Afrikaan: anekdotes en analise* (Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 1999), bl 61-62.

³⁵ B34A – 1996: *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996: as adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 8 May 1996, p 3.

³⁶ John Allen, *Rabble-rouser for peace: the authorized biography of Desmond Tutu* (Rider Books, London, 2006), pp 391-392.

This all-embracing vision of an African – and South African – identity embodied into the preamble to South Africa’s “supreme law of the land” was encapsulated into then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki’s “I am an African” address to the National Assembly when the Constitution was adopted.³⁷ These sentiments were typical of Nelson Mandela’s conciliatory presidency, but somewhat at variance with Mbeki’s personal views. Andrew Feinstein and Mbeki’s biographer, Mark Gevisser both point to this “strange dualism.”³⁸

Two years after the adoption of the 1996 Constitution, nearly five hundred delegates gathered in Johannesburg to deliberate at an historic conference on the theme of the African renaissance. At the opening plenary session the Keynote speaker was Thabo Mbeki.³⁹ One of the early speakers was Kwesi Kwaa Prah, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society in Cape Town. In the opening pages of his thought provoking paper entitled “African Renaissance or warlordism?” Prah touched on the question: “Who are the Africans?” These he felt are people whose origins, cultures and history derive from the African continent. While recognising that African identity “is not a closed phenomenon cast in stone,” he makes the following point:

The fact that most South Africans or people of African historical and cultural descent are black is only one characteristic, a bonus which generalises and typifies Africans. In the absence of a strong unifying religion or single language, colour has become an easy, visible and most fortunate identifying attribute of most people who regard themselves as African. Colour is Africa’s blessing in disguise.⁴⁰

Likewise Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, academic and former politician, has pointed to the growing tendency in South Africa to equate African with “Black,” but warns that “Black” is no longer simply a descriptive term, but one which is increasingly taking on an emotionally-charged ideological meaning.⁴¹ In terms of South Africa’s Broad Based Black Economic

³⁷ For the essence of this address, See M.W. Makgoba (ed) *African Renaissance: the new struggle* (Mafube / Tafelberg, Sandton and Cape Town, 1999), pp ix-x; and Andrew Feinstein’s, *After the Party: a personal and political journey inside the ANC* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg and Cape Town, 2nd ed, 2007), pp 61-63.

³⁸ Mark Gevisser, *Thabo Mbeki: the dream deferred* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 2007) p 656; Feinstein, *After the Party*, p 63,

³⁹ Makgoba, *African Renaissance*, pp i, xiii-xxi.

⁴⁰ Makgoba, *African Renaissance*, pp 37-41. The quotation is from p 41.

⁴¹ Slabbert, *Afrikaner Afrikaan*, pp 61-62.

Empowerment policies,⁴² which aim at uplifting the “previously disadvantaged” sections of the population, the term “Black people” includes Africans, Coloureds and Asians. Ironically as Slabbert points out, in Africa a person can be African but not Black and in South Africa they can be Black without being African. Such are the vagaries of social engineering and one of the dilemmas facing African identity.⁴³

In another publication by Anthony Smith, entitled *Nationalism and modernism*, he explores the essential argument of the major theoretical interpretations of nationalism and has produced an extensive survey of the diverse theories in this field. This work provides useful comment on and comparisons of the major research paradigms dealing with the dynamics of nations and nationalism. There is, as he states, “little sign of any theoretical convergence in the field, let alone a unified theory or agreed paradigm. The study of nations and nationalism is rent by deep schisms.”⁴⁴ Among the problems identified by Smith are the failure of those engaged in research in the various disciplines to reach consensus in the delimitations of the field; the notorious terminological difficulties which have arisen as a result; the failure to reach even preliminary agreement on the definition of key concepts; and the lack of agreement about the fundamental theoretical objectives.⁴⁵

In the introduction to *Nationalism and modernism*, Smith remarks that: “A single red line traverses the history of the modern world from the fall of the Bastille to the fall of the Berlin Wall. ... The name of that red line is nationalism, and its story is the central thread binding, and dividing, the peoples of the modern world.”⁴⁶ He identifies three major issues which have dominated the theory of nations and nationalism, namely: ethical and philosophical – the role of the nation in human affairs; anthropological and political – social definitions of the nation; and historical and sociological – the place of the nation in the history of humanity.⁴⁷

Of the various academic approaches which have been taken in the study of nationalism, Smith draws attention, inter alia, to the following five: the socio-cultural approach associated

⁴² The evolution of these policies is addressed by Gevisser, in *Thabo Mbeki: the dream deferred*.

⁴³ Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, *The other side of history: an anecdotal reflection on political transition in South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg and Cape Town, 2006), pp 138, 160-162.

⁴⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and modernism: a critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (Routledge, London and New York, 1998), p 225.

⁴⁵ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, p 221.

⁴⁶ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, p 1.

⁴⁷ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, p 8.

with the later views of Ernest Gellner; the socio-economic models of Michael Hechter and Tom Nairn; the political versions of the theorists like John Breuilly, Anthony Giddens, Charles Tilly; and the ideological versions of Elie Kedourie. Smith also points out that in the development of “modernism,” the writings of Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson can be regarded as Marxian varieties of classic modernism.⁴⁸ It is relevant to the theoretical background of this thesis to set out briefly who some of the leading writers are⁴⁹ and to give an indication of their publications which are of relevance to the study of nations and nationalism.

Gellner, Professor of Philosophy and Sociology at the London School of Economics and then William Wyse Professor of Social Anthropology at Cambridge University, is recognised as one of the most wide-ranging and influential scholars in the social sciences. In his earlier work *Thought and change*, Gellner argued that nationalism is the inevitable product of modernization, which requires literate cultures to create homogenous societies.⁵⁰ In his later 1993 publication, *Nations and nationalism*, Gellner explored the transition to literate ‘high’ culture in industrial society.⁵¹

Hechter, who made his mark as Professor of Sociology at the University of Arizona, addressed the social conditions of ‘ethnic persistence’ and change in modern Western Europe in his book *Internal colonialism*.⁵² He subsequently moved on to the study of ethnic nationalism and secession movements, in which cultural and economic conditions form the basis for rational political strategies.

Nairn was formerly an editor of the socialist journal, the *New Left Review*. His work on neo-nationalism has contributed to the debate on national identity in general and also points to the Marxist failure to come to grips with the ‘national question.’⁵³ A case in point is the disintegration in the early 1990s of the former Soviet Union and the consequent creation out

⁴⁸ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, p 5.

⁴⁹ The thumbnail sketches which follow are taken primarily from the biographical notes in Hutchinson and Smith, *Nationalism*, pp 362-368.

⁵⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Thought and change* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1964).

⁵¹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1983).

⁵² Michael Hechter, *Internal colonialism; the Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536-1966* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975).

⁵³ Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: crisis and neo-nationalism* (New Left Books, London, 1977).

of its satellite states of a plethora of new nations, each with its distinctive national flag.⁵⁴

Breuilly, then a reader (and later Professor) of History at the University of Manchester, saw nationalism as a political strategy and a pseudo-solution to the alienation caused by the rift between the modern state and society and the consequent loss of community. Indeed, he declares quite bluntly that “nationalism is not about identity, unity, authenticity, dignity, the homeland or anything else, save political power, that is, the political goals in the modern state.” Breuilly concludes that “Nationalism is simply an instrument for achieving political goals ...”⁵⁵ The later work of Giddens, Professor of Sociology at Cambridge University, and one of the most distinguished writers in the field, stresses the “global nature” of modernity and the key role of the self-monitoring nation-state.⁵⁶ The primary focus of Charles Tilley, Professor of History at the New School for Social Research in New York, was the formation of national states in Europe. He was considered to be one of the most eminent historians of his generation and pioneered the use of quantitative sociological techniques in history.⁵⁷

Elie Kedourie, who was Professor of Government at the London School of Economics was critical of the role of nationalism and its causes and operations in Europe, Asia and Africa.⁵⁸ For him nationalism is a purely secular and modern, as well as an invented, ideology.

Eric Hobsbawm, a distinguished historian of nineteenth-century Europe, published extensively and was later Emeritus Professor of Modern History at Birbeck College, University of London. In *The invention of tradition*, Hobsbawm, his co-editor Terence Ranger and their associates see the nation as a way of holding together societies threatened by mass mobilization. This theme which Hobsbawm continued in *Nations and nationalism*, also addresses ethno-linguistic nationalisms.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ In many instances these flags represent the graphic reincarnation of a national identity from the pre-Soviet era.

⁵⁵ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the state* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2nd ed. 1993), p 2. Breuilly was one of William Crampton’s mentors when the latter was reading for his PhD thesis, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” at Manchester University in the early 1990s.

⁵⁶ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of modernity* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991).

⁵⁷ Charles Tilley (ed.), *The formation of national states in Western Europe* (Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1975).

⁵⁸ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Hutchinson, London, 1960); and Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1971).

⁵⁹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990).

It is Benedict Anderson, Professor of International Relations at Cornell University, who in his major work on nationalism, *Imagined communities*, advanced the view of the nation as an “imagined community” – a product of the human imagination. He also paid considerable attention to the cultural sources of nationalism.⁶⁰

There are those who feel strongly that it is ethno-linguistic and territorial links that define a nation, with Walker Connor, for example, arguing that a nation is, in essence, “a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related,” and that for this reason “it is the largest group that can command a person’s loyalty because of felt kinship ties.”⁶¹ To academics such as Connor, the idea of “nation-building” in a multi-cultural state with a complex population composition, is essentially a foreign concept. Clearly then, nationalism can be both civic and ethnic and both versions can be either benign or virulent.

As Anthony Smith points out, “Nationalism’s overriding concern with unity and homogeneity inevitably breeds an exclusive and narrow love of the nation.”⁶² Referring to the aftermath of the horrors of World War II, Smith poses the question as to “Who could possibly embrace any version of nationalism ... Was this not the poisoned seed-bed of fascism and Nazism?” He then quotes John Dunn’s doom-laden words: “Nationalism is the starkest political shame of the twentieth century, the deepest, most intractable and yet most unanticipated blot on the political history of the world since the year 1900.”⁶³ One could argue that nationalism often reflects a political mind-set which is brought to the fore by the incorporation of the word “national” into the name of a political organisation. It should be remembered that the Nazis were members of the National Socialist Party in Germany.

Related to the above, and in the wider African context, there is also another dimension of nationalism that cannot be overlooked, namely Pan-Africanism. Rupert Emerson stresses that this feeling of the unity of all Africans is a belief which is passionately held by many African leaders. In this regard he quoted from the work of Julius Nyerere, who contended that African

⁶⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (2nd ed, Verso, London, 1991).

⁶¹ W. Connor, *Ethno-nationalism: the quest for understanding* (Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1994), p 202.

⁶² Anthony D. Smith, *The nation in history: historiographical debates about ethnicity and nationalism* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000), p. 17.

⁶³ John Dunn, *Western political theory in the face of the future* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978), p 55. Cited in Anthony Smith, *The nation in history*, p 15.

nationalism differed from nationalism in Europe and warned the African youth that “the African national state is an instrument for the unification of the African continent, and not for dividing Africa, that African nationalism is meaningless, is dangerous, is anachronistic, if it is not at the same time Pan-Africanism.”⁶⁴

The era of Western liberalisation in the 1960s, with the accelerated decolonization of Africa, also saw the widespread adoption of the model and ideal of “nation building,” which in the words of Anthony Smith: “marks the classic expression of what [he] termed the modernist paradigm of nationalism.”⁶⁵ He points out that the theorists of nation-building have found in the process of decolonization of Asia and Africa numerous examples of the efforts of nationalist leaders to create cohesive territorial state “nations” out of heterogeneous ethnic populations.⁶⁶ Giddens believes that what distinguishes the nation-state from other political forms, and nationalism from other kinds of group identity, is the rise of stable administrations over a well-defined territory.⁶⁷ Because of their often multi-ethnic composition, it can be argued that many of the new “nation-states” have, to a greater or lesser extent, had to be consciously and deliberately “built,” and appropriate national symbols devised, so as to project at least a veneer of unity. Such is the case in many African countries – including South Africa.

Despite the problems attendant upon trying to determine the parameters of the major paradigms regarding nations and nationalism, Anthony Smith has identified five discernable approaches. Each of these have to a greater or lesser extent generated research contributions which have advanced the understanding of the dynamics of these concepts. Since these paradigms are theoretical constructs which mean little to persons outside the academic fraternity, Smith incorporated into his conclusion a useful synopsis on each and listed their main proponents, as set out below.⁶⁸

The first is the “primordialists” attempt to understand the passion and self-sacrifice characteristic of nations and nationalism by deriving them from ‘primordial’ attributes of

⁶⁴ Julius Nyerere, “Africa’s place in the world,” in *Symposium on Africa* (Wellesley College, 1960), p 149. Cited in Emerson, “Nation-building in Africa,” in Deutsch and Foltz (eds.), *Nation-building*, pp 102-3.

⁶⁵ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, pp 18, 20.

⁶⁶ See the essays in Deutsch and Foltz (eds.), *Nation-building*.

⁶⁷ A. Giddens, *The nation-state and violence* (Polity Press, Cambridge), p 121.

⁶⁸ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, pp 223-225.

basic social and cultural phenomena. These include attributes like language, religion, territory, and especially kinship, as well as the “intimate links between ethnicity and kinship, and ethnicity and territory which can generate powerful sentiments of collective belonging.”⁶⁹

In the second approach termed “perennialism” there are attempts to grasp the role of nations and nationalism as long-term components of historical development. They tend to derive modern “nations” from fundamental ethnic ties, rather than from the process of modernization and emphasise the power of “myths of origin” in rousing popular support for nationalism.⁷⁰ As Smith remarks, it was Walker Connor who first drew attention to the ethnically plural nature of ninety per cent of the world’s states. As he points out, all nationalisms strive for the unity of the nation, but not all of them conceive such unity in terms of ethnic purity or cultural homogeneity. He concludes that: “It is this variability in the nature of the ... concept of the nation that makes it so difficult to apply a single theory globally.”⁷¹

In terms of the third approach, namely “ethno-symbolism” there is an attempt to uncover the symbolic legacy of ethnic identities for particular “nations.” Its proponents strive to show how modern nationalisms and nations rediscover and reinterpret the symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions of their ethno-histories, as they face the problems of modernity.⁷²

The “modernist” approach on the other hand seeks to derive both nations and nationalism from the novel process of modernization.⁷³ This approach emphasises how states, nations and nationalism, and notably their elites, have mobilized and united populations in novel ways to cope with modern conditions and modern political imperatives.⁷⁴ In *Nations and nationalism*, Gellner makes the point that “nations, as a natural, God-given way of classifying men ... are

⁶⁹ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, p 223. Among the principal proponents of this paradigm are Clifford Geertz and Pierre van der Berghe.

⁷⁰ In this regard Smith makes reference to the work of John Armstrong, Joshua Fishman, Hugh Seton-Watson, and in respect of ethnicity, Walker Connor and Donald Horowitz.

⁷¹ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, p 231.

⁷² The ethno-symbolic approach is addressed in the work of John Armstrong, John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith himself.

⁷³ As a general rule of thumb the “modern” period is considered to span the two centuries from about 1750 to 1950.

⁷⁴ Among the academics who have paid particular attention to nations and nationalism in this period are Benedict Anderson, Paul Brass, John Breuilly, Ernest Gellner, Anthony Giddens, Michael Hechter, Eric Hobsbawm, Michael Mann, Charles Tilley; and Miroslav Hroch and Tom Nairn who have further developed the insights and wide-ranging analyses of Gellner and Elie Kedourie.

a myth.”⁷⁵ For Kedourie, nationalism is a purely secular and modern, as well as invented, ideology.⁷⁶ It is of this period that Castoriades remarks that “instituted political forms were called into question; new ones, entailing radical breaks with the past, were created.”⁷⁷

Finally, in the “postmodern” analyses the fragmentation of contemporary national identities are highlighted. Postmodernists suggest the advent of a new “post-national” order of identity politics and global culture that can be seen as continuations of components of the modernist paradigm. The “post-modern” period, which is a confusing concept, extends from about the middle of the twentieth century until the present time. It has witnessed the creation and dissolution of many new nations and international bodies.⁷⁸ Remarking on the absurdity of the term “postmodern,” Castoriadis comments that the label postmodernism does not and cannot define or characterize the present period, but very adequately expresses it.⁷⁹

In the same way that it has been necessary to look at the meaning of the words “nation” and “nationalism,” so also is it essential in the context of this study to consider the meaning of the words “symbol” and “symbolism.” The *Oxford English dictionary* describes a “symbol” as:

Something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestion, or by some accidental or conventional relation); *esp.* a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality, or condition; a representative or typical figure, sign or token ...⁸⁰

Following on this definition, the word “symbolism” is defined as:

The practice of representing things by symbols, or of giving a symbolic character to objects and acts; the systematic use of symbols; hence, symbols

⁷⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1993), pp 48-49.

⁷⁶ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*, p 231.

⁷⁷ Cornelius Castoriadis (ed. and tr. by David Ames Curtiss), *World in fragments: writings on politics, society, psychoanalysis, and the imagination* (Stanford, California, 1997), p 37.

⁷⁸ Among those whose work has addressed nationhood in this period are Homi Bhaba, M. Billig, Rogers Brubaker, Partha Chatterjee, George Mosse and Philip Schlesinger.

⁷⁹ Castoriadis, *World in fragments*, pp 32-36.

⁸⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary*, XVII (1989), p 451.

collectively or generally.⁸¹

Castoriadis makes the valid point that symbolism can be neither neutral nor totally adequate, because it cannot draw its signs from just anywhere, nor can it take just any signs whatever.⁸² Nothing enables us to determine in advance just where the boundary of symbolism lies or the point at which the symbolic overlaps with the functional. Neither can we establish once and for all the general degree of symbolism which varies from culture to culture nor the factors which determine the intensity with which a particular aspect of life will be invested with symbolism.⁸³ As in the case of the new political dispensation in South Africa, a new society will develop a new institutional symbolism, and these imaginary characteristics of the nation prove more solid than any other reality. Furthermore, the self-image which a society creates for itself includes the choice of the objects which, for it, have meaning and value.⁸⁴

Norden Hartman, who served as State Herald of South Africa from 1964 to 1982, warned his staff of the dangers of attributing symbolic meaning to heraldic and related designs. He explained that while one could certainly provide logical reasons to a client as to why a particular combination of design, colour selection and other elements had been chosen, attributing symbolic meaning to such a design held many dangers. Symbolism appeals to the emotions but is devoid of logic. As such, it provides a shaky foundation on which to build. It was akin, Hartman explained, to walking into a minefield blindfolded, because a symbolic meaning which might be entirely acceptable to one person could, for cultural or various other valid reasons, be anathema to someone else. One thus had to weigh up the component elements of a design and play devil's advocate with the possible implications, before making a final pronouncement. Whereas a doctor can bury his mistakes, a herald's mistakes are enshrined in the registers in perpetuity.⁸⁵

Falling outside the general parameters of the definitions of symbolism, but nevertheless very real in the national flag context, is the tendency on the part of some people, which has been

⁸¹ *Oxford English dictionary*, XVII (1989), p 453.

⁸² Castoriadis, *The imaginary institution of society*, p 121.

⁸³ Castoriadis, *The imaginary institution of society*, p 124.

⁸⁴ Castoriadis, *The imaginary institution of society*, pp 128-149; See also Karen A Cerulo, "Symbols and the world system," *Sociological Forum*, 8 (2), 1993, pp 243-267.

⁸⁵ Similar advice was given to Brownell by Olof Eriksson, one of Finland's leading heraldic designers and artists when he was visited in Helsinki during 1979, while on a study tour of overseas heraldic and related institutions and specialists.

mentioned above, to ascribe symbolic meaning to colours in general, and more specifically to the colours incorporated into flags. Colours are a natural phenomenon and can have no intrinsic meaning. No universal symbolism can thus be attached to any of the colours incorporated into a national flag. In his discussion of the moral significance of flag colours, Raymond Firth remarks as follows:

Running all through discussion of the symbolism of national flags is the vague but persistent theme that not only the design but also the colours of the particular flag of a country may have more than an accidental significance. It is often held that irrespective of the circumstances of their selection to compose the national flag they represent objects or qualities of significance to the nation, or to mankind more generally.⁸⁶

The often far-fetched symbolism of colour which has developed over the centuries, is addressed in some detail by the Spanish writer J.E. Cirlot, who believed that the meanings attributed to colours are one of the most universal of all types of symbolism and have been “consciously used in the liturgy, in heraldry, alchemy, art and literature. There are a great many considerations bearing upon the meaning of colour.”⁸⁷ In essence, Cirlot identifies two groups of colours, the first of which embraces the warm ‘advancing’ colours, corresponding to the process of assimilation, activity and intensity, namely red, orange and yellow and, by extension white, while the second are the ‘retreating’ colours, corresponding to the process of dissimulation, passivity and debilitation, namely blue, indigo, violet and, by extension, black. Green being an intermediate, transitional colour spans the gap between the two groups.⁸⁸ The supposed correspondence of colours to the respective functions or symbolism which have been attributed to them would seem to have at least some of its origins in mediaeval intellectual affectations. It varies with different cultures and groups, and also among individuals. There is thus no consistency in this symbolism. As Cirlot remarks, while symbolic impressions found in the mind may be merely fortuitous, some writers have seen fit to link the seven colours⁸⁹ to precious stones, the seven notes on the musical scale, to the “seven faculties of the soul, to the seven virtues (from a positive point of view), to the seven

⁸⁶ Firth, *Symbols: public and private*, p 350.

⁸⁷ Cirlot, J.E. (translated from the Spanish by Jack Sage), *A dictionary of symbols* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1962), pp 50-57.

⁸⁸ Cirlot, *A dictionary of symbols*, p 50.

⁸⁹ Namely red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

vices (from a negative point of view), to the geometric forms, the days of the week and the seven [then known] planets.”⁹⁰ The absurdity of such a tabulation, which is taken from Sir John Ferne’s *The glory of generositie* (1586), and the attendant symbolic meanings attributed to the colours, is recorded for the modern reader by the English heralds Thomas Woodcock and John Robinson.⁹¹

Whereas some of the symbolism attributed by a number of countries to their flag colours is mundane and of a fairly obvious descriptive nature, such as green for agriculture and blue for the sky, others are abstract. In a number of the newer national flags, the symbolic meaning is seen in terms of the use of a specific combination of design and colours. An example which immediately springs to mind is the way in which the flag of the United States of America influenced that of Liberia, which was set up as a haven for freed slaves, many of whose ancestors had been taken from West Africa. In the sub-Saharan African context, one cannot but think of the many national flags which incorporate the Pan-African colours of green, yellow and red, derived from the Ethiopian flag, with or without the further addition of black. In North Africa, in contrast, it is the Pan-Arab colours of green, white, black and red, dating from the second decade of the twentieth century, which predominate.⁹² While Firth points to a common thread running through many of these colour symbolisms, he reminds the reader that “there is no clear predictive value to be seen in the use of any particular colour.”⁹³ He also emphasises that the arbitrary nature of the symbolism attributed to flag colours is demonstrated even more clearly when one considers that there is usually no official interpretation of colour meaning in the case of long-standing national flags. Colour symbolism is thus clearly a subjective, and one might argue, an unfounded matter.

The symbolism of nationalism shows a remarkable degree of similarity across the world, in that it is distinguished by its all-embracing object, the nation, “but equally by the tangibility and vividness of its characteristic signs.”⁹⁴ As far as national flags are concerned, the differences between many of them may appear – and are indeed – minimal. But as Anthony

⁹⁰ Cirlot, *A dictionary of symbols*, pp 50-51.

⁹¹ Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *The Oxford guide to heraldry* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988, reprinted with corrections, 1989), p 54.

⁹² William Crampton, *The world of flags: a pictorial history* (Studio Editions, London, rev. ed. 1992), pp 135-136.

⁹³ Firth, *Symbols: Public and private*, p 351.

⁹⁴ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism*, p 7.

Smith explains: “What counts is the potency of the meanings conveyed by such signs to the members of the nation. The panoply of national symbols only serves to express, represent and reinforce the boundary definition of the nation and to unite the members inside through the common imagery of shared memories, myths and values.”⁹⁵

Hobsbawm argued that nations owe much to “invented traditions” and that the study of these invented traditions “is highly relevant to that comparatively recent innovation, the ‘nation’, with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest. All these rest on exercises in social engineering and are often deliberate and always innovative ...” The invented traditions to which Hobsbawm refers, he sees as “socio-political constructs forged, even fabricated, by cultural engineers, who design symbols, mythologies, rituals, and histories specifically to meet modern mass needs. Not only were entirely new symbols like flags and anthems, created but also ‘historic continuity had to be invented, for example by creating an ancient past beyond affective historical continuity ...’”⁹⁶ In the African context, a classic example of this invention of historic continuity will be found in the case of Ghana. This ancient west African empire, which was established in about the sixth century, was situated in the sub-Saharan savannah region of what is now east Senegal, south-west Mali and south Mauritania. Ancient Ghana had disintegrated by the thirteenth century, but when the former British colony of the Gold Coast and the adjacent British Togoland gained independence in March 1957 as the modern state of Ghana, it took its name from the ancient empire which had existed centuries before some 1000km to the north-west.⁹⁷ Likewise, when the national flag of modern Ghana was designed, its principal colours were derived from the flag of the Ethiopian empire, on the other side of the African continent.⁹⁸

Clearly, the invention of an often emotionally-laden “system of interpretation” in the form of a panoply of symbols, of which national flags are arguably the most important, is a crucial component in this process.⁹⁹ Schatz and Lavine point to the power of national symbols in arousing impassioned emotion and assert that expressions of national sentiment “are directed to national symbols rather than the nation itself and that such symbolism is infused with

⁹⁵ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism*, p 8.

⁹⁶ E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The invention of traditions* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983), pp 7, 12-14.

⁹⁷ Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa* (Macmillan Education, Oxford, rev. ed. 1995) pp 81-87.

⁹⁸ Crampton, *The world of flags*, pp 136-137.

⁹⁹ Castoriadis, *World in fragments*, p 9. See also pp 3-18 and 84.

unique psychological meaning and political import.”¹⁰⁰ By the same token, especially when it comes to “new” nations, because of past divisions, such artificial symbolic creations can exclude as well as include. Peberdy makes this point as follows: “the ways that nation states construct their national identities signifies who belongs and who does not.”¹⁰¹

In his 1994 doctoral thesis the late William Crampton, then Director of the British Flag Institute, dealt at length with the question of political symbols and symbolism, within the broader context of national identity. In this he commented that while a national flag is undoubtedly the most prominent, it is by no means the only item in the national panoply. He then addressed the “most frequently encountered methods of contributing to the national self-image,” in other words the broader panoply of symbols that can represent the nation.¹⁰² Of these, the national flag is generally agreed to be one of the key symbols of the nation and its people. In this category Crampton includes national flag-based Ensigns for use at sea [although their use is often more widespread]. Following on the flag, the need or use of a national coat of arms or emblem arises mainly from the need to identify the state and to verify the authenticity of state papers. It thus often constitutes the central element of the state seal, which is used to certify state papers. In addition to the national coat of arms or emblem, some countries also have one or more national badges. Included in this category can be flora and fauna emblems.¹⁰³ Then there is the national anthem or patriotic song that is now a sine qua non for a nation-state. In addition, most modern nation-states institute honours and awards, in many cases named after national heroes. Their ribbon colours are often derived from those of the national flag or sometimes the coat of arms or national emblem.¹⁰⁴ Postage stamps often depict national figures or some other emblem or illustration of historic, cultural

¹⁰⁰ Robert T. Schatz and Howard Lavine, “Waving the flag: national symbolism, social identity, and political engagement,” *Political Psychology*, 28 (3), 2007, p 330.

¹⁰¹ Peberdy, *Selecting immigrants*, p x.

¹⁰² Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” p 52. Crampton indicated that the summary of the national panoply which followed, included all the features referred to by George Mosse, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, together with Raymond Firth and other writers whose contributions he had examined.

¹⁰³ Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” p 53. In the South African context, the national flora and fauna emblems adopted prior to 1994 have continued unchanged under the new political dispensation. See F.G. Brownell, *National and provincial symbols: and flora and fauna emblems of the Republic of South Africa* (Chris van Rensburg Publications, Johannesburg, 1993) pp 40-46 and the plate opposite p 37; Delien Burger (ed.), *South Africa Yearbook 2008-2009* (Government Communication and Information System, Pretoria, 2009), p 76.

¹⁰⁴ Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” p 54. For South Africa’s new series of national orders, see Hazeem Mahety (ed.), *The highest honour: South African national orders* (The Presidency, Pretoria, 2004).

or some other aspect of national importance. While a nation's coins and banknotes are in themselves essentially tokens of minimal intrinsic value as scrap metal and paper, their symbolic value and authenticity needs to be certified in some manner. This is often done by means of a depiction of the head of state, the national coat of arms or badge, or some other depiction or symbol of national interest.¹⁰⁵ Like postage stamps, currency is an ever-present reminder of national symbols – however, in recent times the usage of hard currency and postage stamps has diminished as the electronic world takes over.

National buildings are perceived of as symbolic architecture and along with the erection of national monuments contribute to the invention of tradition. Similarly, national days are often used as a means of presenting to the public the national ethos and its symbols, or of commemorating national heroes. At least one national day, such as the anniversary of independence, is a virtual prerequisite for any nation-state.¹⁰⁶

As with most questions of identity, the name by which a state is known, and in particular its full and formal title, provides an important guide to its self-image. The national title and place names can change to reflect political and other realities, while changes to long-standing place and street names must be seen, in many instances, as part of an over-all process of asserting an often mythical and unsubstantiated identity, which is consciously indigenous. In many cases state owned or controlled airlines or shipping lines, known as national carriers, have their livery or markings inspired by national symbols and their colours. This is often in arrangements suggestive of the national flag.¹⁰⁷

Lastly, on a more cultural level, the promotion of national languages is seen as an integral part of the heritage and identity of a people, as too are national myths and legends. These are the body of written or oral tradition about the mythical origins of a people and their early history, which have been used since the times of pre-literate societies to provide a background to reinforce national identity.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ A series of eight postage stamps depicting national symbols was issued by the South African Post Office on 20 April 2012. *SAVA Newsletter*, SN:62/12, 30 April 2012, pp 22-23. This article also listed eight previous occasions on which the new national flag has been depicted on postage stamps.

¹⁰⁶ South Africa's national day is 27 April, the anniversary of the date on which the national flag was taken into use.

¹⁰⁷ A case in point is the tail-fin markings of South African Airways, SA Express and the South African Air Force aerobatic team, the Silver Falcons, all of which are based on the colours of the national flag.

¹⁰⁸ Crampton, "Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity," pp 52-57.

1.3 Flag characteristics and terminology

Throughout the world, flags have a remarkable similarity in form and their functions are virtually identical in all societies. Apart from their functional use as signals or as a means of identification, flags can also be powerful instruments for social participation and communication. The integral role flags play in society is emphasised in the following quotation from Whitney Smith, the founding father of modern vexillology:

So strong is the tradition of flags that it would not be far from the truth to surmise that there is a law - not of nature but of human society - which impels man to make and use flags. There is perhaps no more striking demonstration of this than the fact that, despite the absence of any international regulation or treaty requiring the adoption of a national flag, without exception every country has adopted at least one.¹⁰⁹

Generally speaking, the national flag is available to all nationals/citizens of a country, rather than being restricted for use by the State or on special occasions, situations or activities. Nations nevertheless make it clear that their flags are important symbols of nationhood and national identity and, as such, should be treated with due dignity and respect. In most cases flag codes, in the form of clear guidelines are prescribed as to their display, both outdoors and indoors, alone or in conjunction with other flags.¹¹⁰ Like other national symbols, the purpose of a country's flag is, in essence, to project a clear and visual expression of unity and identity.

One of the most fundamental attributes relevant to the use of flags is that the human eye is attracted to movement and colour. The most eye-catching characteristics of a flag are thus its mobility and visual impact, which attract and hold the viewer's attention. Special qualities which make flags a prime choice for symbolic use are their availability and variability. Flags are capable of great variety in shape and design, by the use of different patterns and colour combinations, with or without the addition of some motif. Flags are also comparatively cheap to manufacture and thus to buy. Although many hand-held flags are now printed on paper or

¹⁰⁹ Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, p 32.

¹¹⁰ Raymond Firth, *Symbols: public and private* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1973), especially pp 365-367; William G. Crampton, "Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity," p 50.

plastic, most flags are made of some form of cloth, be it silk, like the old hand-made Chinese banners, wool and/or cotton bunting, originally sewed together in strips, or in more recent years, printed on nylon or polyester, all of which are brought to life by even the gentle stirring of a light breeze. The creation of flags, as we know them today, only became possible and then progressively developed when the human race moved into the field of manufacture.¹¹¹

In the case of national flags, it is important that they should both fit into the “normal” established general pattern followed by the flags of other nations, but at the same time be unique and of a readily identifiable design. With the exception of the national flags of Switzerland and the Vatican State which are officially square, although for practical reasons Switzerland’s civil ensign is 2:3;¹¹² and the flag of Nepal which is in the form of two conjoined triangles, all national flags are oblong, in a wide variety of proportions.¹¹³

By modern convention, these proportions are expressed in terms of the ratio of breadth, or width (the vertical measurement) to length (the horizontal measurement). From practical experience it has been found that a flag which is longer than it is wide flies better. Among the world’s national flags, the simple ratios or proportions 2:3 and 3:5 have proved to be the most practical and popular. A considerable number of national flags are also manufactured in the ratio 1:2. Falling between these simple ratios is a plethora of esoteric proportions which seem hard to justify, since they cannot be distinguished from a distance. Although earlier flag books seldom addressed the officially prescribed ratios, vexillologists such as Whitney Smith fortunately appreciated the need for accuracy and incorporated such detail into his groundbreaking 1975 publication, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*.¹¹⁴ Vexillographers such as his protégé, Alfred Znamierowski, one of the world’s leading flag artists, have likewise given painstaking attention to such detail.¹¹⁵

Depending on specific usage, at times more than one ratio is prescribed for a national flag. Apart from Switzerland, of which mention has already been made, a case in point is the

¹¹¹ Firth, *Symbols: public and private*, pp 341-342.

¹¹² Alfred Znamierowski, *Flags of the world: an illustrated guide to contemporary flags* (South Water, London, 2000), p 15.

¹¹³ Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” p 43.

¹¹⁴ Whitney Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, p 207. In addition to accurate illustrations, Smith also included a matrix of symbols providing significant facts about the flags which were illustrated.

¹¹⁵ Znamierowski, *Flags of the world: an illustrated guide to contemporary flags*.

British Union Jack. When it and its derived Ensigns are under the control of the Admiralty [now Ministry of Defence], they are made in the ratio 1:2. In contrast the Earl Marshal, under whose jurisdiction the English College of Arms falls, is the controlling authority over flags flown on land. It was only in 1938 that Sir Gerald Wollaston, Garter Principal of Arms, the most senior heraldic officer under the Earl Marshal, indicated that flags flown on land should be of the approximate relative dimensions of 3:5. Such a shape flies better than a square flag, while reducing the visual distortion caused by flags in the dimensions 1:2. World War II intervened soon after Sir Gerald's issued his guidelines and it was only on 16 June 1947 that the dimensions 3:5 were formally entered in the Chapter Book of the College of Arms, as the officially accepted dimensions of all flags flown on land within the jurisdiction of the Earl Marshal.¹¹⁶

Despite these carefully prescribed ratios, proportions and dimensions for national flags, it is ironical that when many national flags are flown together, such as at the headquarters or agencies of international bodies like the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union, convention determines that the officially prescribed ratios and proportions are blithely ignored and the respective national flags are all manufactured in very much the same proportions, so as to ensure a visually symmetrical display.

Although it is a generic term, when used in a national context the word “flag” most frequently refers to the typical rectangular flag hoisted on or in front of buildings or worn on ships as a symbol of national identification. Such a flag may serve a variety of purposes and a country may, indeed, have a number of national flags, each of which has its own distinctive use. These principal functions include the civil ensign, the national flag flown on commercial and privately owned vessels; the civil flag, the national flag flown on land by private citizens; the state ensign, the national flag flown on non-military government vessels, which is often of a basic design with special badges added for individual services; the state flag, the national flag flown on land over non-military property, also called [the] government flag; the war ensign, the national flag flown on armed vessels, also called [the] naval ensign; and the war flag, the version(s) of the national flag [or its derived Ensigns], flown over camps and other military establishments on land, often in conjunction with the state flag.¹¹⁷ These flags or Ensigns

¹¹⁶ Woodcock and Robinson, *The Oxford guide to heraldry*, p 111.

¹¹⁷ Whitney Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, pp 13-31.

should obviously not be confused with a [military or para-military type] “Colour,” which has an entirely different ceremonial function and is traditionally carried on parade and not flown.¹¹⁸

In his book *The world of flags*, Crampton, wrote that the term “national flag,” referred to “the flag normally and habitually used to denote nationality,” and then explained that “some countries have different flags fulfilling this function in different circumstances, of which Great Britain is the outstanding example.” For example: “On land the national flag is the Union Jack, but at sea it is the Red Ensign for civil vessels, the White Ensign for naval vessels, and the Blue Ensign for government vessels.”¹¹⁹

If a national flag is to fulfil its primary purpose as a means of identification of a nation – state and its people, the most important characteristic required is thus that it should embody a unique combination of colour and design. From a practical point of view the design should also be such that it can successfully be reduced to the size of a postage stamp – or of a metal and enamel lapel badge – without losing detail. In addition to its colours and the means by which the field is partitioned, its shape, proportions and the type and location of any emblem which might appear on it are also important. These basic characteristics are such that they lend themselves to a comparatively simple system of recording, codification and analysis.¹²⁰

An important component in the study of flags, which is barely mentioned in the theoretical writing of disciplines outside heraldry and vexillology, is that of flag terminology. Many heraldic manuals incorporate into their glossaries terms relating to the wide variety of types of flags, while ceremonial and other flag manuals do likewise. By the mid-1960s members of the fledgling international flag fraternity realized that there was a growing need for this scattered information to be consolidated into publications specifically dedicated to defining and setting out standard flag terminology.

One of the first significant publications in this field was the *Dictionary of flag terminology*, prepared by the Terminology Committee of the British Heraldry Society’s Flag Section in

¹¹⁸ The attributes and use of such Colours are set out in the glossary.

¹¹⁹ Crampton, *The world of flags*, p 9.

¹²⁰ These aspects will be addressed more fully in the following chapter.

1968-69.¹²¹ Where necessary the terms described were also illustrated in this publication. The convenor of that initiative was William Crampton, who was to make his mark in the field of flags, later becoming director of the British Flag Institute which he and Captain Edward Barraclough were to establish in 1971. In the same year Klaes Sierksma, another pioneer in the field of vexillology, produced his dictionary of Dutch flag terminology, the *Vlaggekundig Woordenboekje*.¹²² In the introduction to the section entitled “Terms defined” of his groundbreaking work, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, which was published in 1975, Whitney Smith points to the then lack of uniformity in flag terms, and worse still, to the lack of source material on actual usage on which standardization might be based.¹²³ The comprehensive verbal and visual glossary of flag terms which he then provided extended over nineteen pages.¹²⁴ Writing in 1986, Timothy Wilson remarked in the brief glossary to his publication on flags at sea, that flag terminology “remains chaotic despite attempts in recent years to standardize it.”¹²⁵ By the time that A.P. Burgers’ monumental work, *The South African flag book* was published in 2008, his section dealing with flag terminology covered more than forty pages.¹²⁶ Glossaries are useful, but in any serious field of study accurate terminology is essential. In the field of flags, as in many other disciplines, the need for accurate terminology continues unabated and in the current technological era a comprehensively illustrated *Dictionary of vexillology* is in the process of creation, as an ongoing project, on the Flags of the World (FOTW) website. Until his death in 2008 Burgers was one of the prime movers behind this project.¹²⁷ A glossary of flag terminology will be found at **Appendix A** to this thesis.

At much the same time as this process of refining flag terminology commenced, a similar need had also been identified by students and practitioners in the heraldic field. This led to the publication by Julian Franklyn (a lecturer in heraldry at the North London Polytechnic) and his friend John Tanner of a comprehensive publication on heraldic terminology, which

¹²¹ Heraldry Society Flag Section, *Dictionary of flag terminology* (Heraldry Society, London, 1969).

¹²² Klaes Sierksma, *Vlaggekundig woordenboekje* (Stichting voor Banistiek en Heraldiek, Muiderberg, 1971).

¹²³ Whitney Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, p 12.

¹²⁴ Whitney Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, pp 13-31.

¹²⁵ Timothy Wilson, *Flags at sea: a guide to the flags flown at sea by British and some foreign ships, from the 16th century to the present day, illustrated from the Collections of the National Maritime Museum* (HMSO, London, 1986), p 108.

¹²⁶ A.P. Burgers, *The South African flag book: the history of South African flags from Dias to Mandela* (Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2008), pp 35-76. These terms are well illustrated in colour templates to this book.

¹²⁷ Andries Burgers, Terence Martin and Christopher Southwood, *Dictionary of vexillology*. There is a 2008 “hard copy” of this dictionary, which runs to 218 pages in the F.G. Brownell private collection.

also included many flag-related terms.¹²⁸

1.4 Outline of the chapters

Without exception every independent nation has adopted at least one national flag. Such flags are the pre-eminent graphic symbols of a nation's identity. The primary focus of this introductory chapter has been to address flag history as a genre; to define flags and other essential theoretical concepts; and to discuss terminology and the distinctive characteristics of flags. It has endeavoured to set these factors in perspective against a multi-disciplinary backdrop of academic writing on symbols and symbolism; identity and identification; nations, nationalism and "nation building," which interface with one another and thus lay the groundwork for the thesis as a whole.

Chapter II, entitled "Flagging histories," situates the thesis in relation to existing studies on the use of flags. It deals with the evolution of early flag plates into flag books and flag histories; the development of vexillology into a distinctive field of study and the subsequent blossoming of flag literature. The relevant historiography relating to flag usage in general, and more specifically as a background to successive national flags used in South Africa prior to the adoption of a new national flag on 27 April 1994, is explored. This chapter also gives an overview of literature relating to flags in Africa, and in particular to the new South African national flag.

Chapter III, entitled "Flagging the 'old' South Africa," provides a brief overview of South Africa's flag legacies of the past, from the days of the first flags of the Dutch East India Company until the advent of formal negotiations leading to the new political dispensation. It deals especially with the "national" flags introduced since the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. The flags and Ensigns used in South Africa since 1910 went hand in hand with changing constructs and interpretations of nationhood. The national flags introduced by the "Homelands" were an integral part of this process.

Chapter IV, entitled "Flag rumbles of discontent," addresses the use of flags as instruments of protest and the opposition within the then Union of South Africa in the early years to the use

¹²⁸ Julian Franklyn and John Tanner, *An encyclopaedic dictionary of heraldry* (Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1970).

of the British Union Jack and its derived Ensigns, which sections of the Afrikaner component of the South African population tended to see as symbols of imperial domination. The national flag of 1928 also came in for criticism, being viewed as a compromise which did not take into account Afrikaner nationalist and republican aspirations. This is viewed against a background of the decolonisation of Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, which commenced with Ghana's independence in 1957. In each case the new state adopted a distinctive flag and this process set the stage for South Africa's adoption of a flag which would more accurately reflect the changes in its national identity. This chapter also touches on the investigations into South African national symbols which were undertaken by the Human Sciences Research Council, so as to provide negotiators with historical perspective in their deliberations on national symbols.

Chapter V, entitled "Commission, public and graphic designers," deals primarily with the appointment, proceedings and reports of the Commission on National Symbols which was appointed by the Multi-party Negotiating Process in September 1993. Public participation was deemed by the Negotiating Council to be of critical importance. When this phase of the process did not produce an acceptable national flag design, commercial graphic designers were called in to assist. That proved to be a futile exercise. This Chapter ends with an account of the evolution – from outside the official process – of the design which was ultimately adopted as the national flag.

Chapter VI, entitled "Flag issue: a matter of urgency," addresses the adoption of the "interim" Constitution by the negotiators in 1993 and sets out the manner in which the Joint Technical Working Committee, which was appointed by "the channel" between the Government and the African National Congress, concluded the process by which a new national flag for South Africa came into being. Although the design of the flag was adopted by the Transitional Executive Council on 15 March 1994, for some inexplicable reason it was only formally gazetted on 20 April 1994. This resulted in serious logistical problems. This chapter also records initial reaction to the flag design.

The final chapter, "Interim to final: progressive acceptance," covers the period from 27 April 1994, when the then "interim" flag was formally taken into use as the graphic embodiment of the "new" South Africa's identity, until its incorporation into the "final" South African Constitution, which was drawn up by the Constitutional Assembly, adopted on 8 May 1996,

amended by the Constitutional Court and finally implemented on 4 February 1997. The enthusiasm with which the flag was accepted and embraced by the public at large in this period of time, in effect made its formal constitutional adoption a foregone conclusion. The epilogue to this chapter, entitled “A flag fanfare,” addresses the multitude of ways in which the new South African national flag has been used over the past two decades and reflects on the extent to which the present national flag and its attendant colours have succeeded in engendering a feeling of national identity, across a broad spectrum of our multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society.

This thesis must, of necessity, be read against the background of the candidate’s personal involvement in the process by which the 1994 national flag came into being. Only with the passage of time is it believed that it has been possible to balance this subjective factor with the necessary historical objectivity.

CHAPTER II- LITERATURE SURVEY: FLAGGING HISTORIES

At the outset, it is necessary to consider the current state of flag literature. This chapter will then focus briefly on the international literature, look at Africa in general, South Africa in particular and in the latter category, focus specifically on the writing on the new national flag. It will be evident that this literature includes reference, popular and academic work.

2.1 Flag plates, flag books and flag histories

Some of the earliest known illustrations of what can be considered as national flags are found as etchings on nautical charts used by early seafarers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹²⁹ Among the pioneers in the voyages of discovery at this time were the Portuguese. Between 1987 and 2000 their National Board for the celebration of Portuguese discoveries mounted a travelling exhibition to commemorate their country's involvement in these voyages, which then extended back 500 years. As a guide to this exhibition the National Board produced an illustrated publication which encapsulates the essence of early discoveries.¹³⁰ Among the illustrations reproduced in this publication is a map prepared by an unknown Portuguese cartographer in 1502. This was acquired clandestinely in Lisbon by the Italian Alberto Cantino and is known as Cantino's Planisphere.¹³¹ Central to this map is the continent of Africa, around the coast of which are illustrated, for obvious reasons, mainly Portuguese flags, to indicate where Portugal's interests lay. On 17 June 1494 Spain and Portugal had, by the Treaty Tordesillas, agreed to divide the New World between them. Other than for Brazil, which fell within the Portuguese sphere of influence, the remainder of the Americas fell within the Spanish area. Africa and the East were to be explored by the Portuguese.¹³²

¹²⁹ Although the use of flags such as the Danish "Dannebrog" can be traced back six centuries, national flags in the modern sense did not come into existence until the American and French Revolutions of the late eighteenth century. Whitney Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*. (McGraw-Hill, Maidenhead, 1975), p 64.

¹³⁰ António Cardoso, *Portugal pioneer of the discoveries: travelling exhibition* (National Board for the celebration of Portuguese discoveries, Lisbon, 1988).

¹³¹ Surprisingly this map, which is now in the Estense Modern Library in Italy, was reproduced in mirror image. Cardoso, *Portugal pioneer of the discoveries*, p 19. A correctly printed illustration of the map will, however be found in the Institut Français publication, *Extra*, 9, July 2012, p 17. This was distributed as a supplement to *Mail and Guardian*, 29 June to 5 July 2012.

¹³² "Today in history," *Pretoria News*, 7 June 2013, p 11.

Flag illustrations on such maps soon developed into hand-coloured and hand-painted flag charts which were essential for the identification of the naval and trading vessels of friend and foe, both at sea and on approaching foreign ports. These charts duly evolved into flag plates, which were not only issued separately, but were also bound up with encyclopaedias or atlases and incorporated in early flag books. It is important to note that flag plates (and flag books from which they were derived), which were published before the middle of the nineteenth century need to be treated with caution. As Timothy Wilson points out in a note which prefaces part of the classified bibliography of his book *Flags at sea*, which is largely based on material held by the British Maritime Museum, “Most are derivative, slipshod and frequently out of date.”¹³³ The hand-engraving of plates for printing was a laborious process and Wilson adds that once these early plates had been engraved, they were liable to be re-used for many years, with only token updating. The editor of a mid-eighteenth century flag chart, included in a Dutch atlas of that time, apparently found it necessary to assure the reader that the chart had been corrected of all previous errors.¹³⁴

In the section of Wilson’s bibliography which deals with flag books and flag plates to 1860, there are thirty four sources listed. Of these, he identifies C. Allard’s book, *Nieuwe Hollandse Scheeps-bouw* which was published in Amsterdam in 1694, as the most thorough and influential book of the period. He also singles out that by A. le Gras, namely the *Album des pavillons, guidons, flames de toutes les puissances maritimes*, published in Paris in 1858, for special mention. Also among the sources listed is a series of twelve sumptuous flag plates published by P. Mortier of Amsterdam in 1700-1. These are often found bound up with the *Neptune Francois*, an atlas first published in 1693.¹³⁵

Marine oil paintings also provide another source for many of the earliest colour illustrations of these flags.¹³⁶ However, the accuracy of flags depicted in these paintings is often open to question, since they were painted after the time, by artists who had not been present at the

¹³³ Timothy Wilson, *Flags at sea: a guide to the flags flown at sea by the British and some foreign ships, from the 16th Century to the present day, illustrated in the collections of the National Maritime Museum* (HMSO, London, 1986), p 113.

¹³⁴ This chart is reproduced in Whitney Smith, *Flags, through the age and across the world*, pp 204-5.

¹³⁵ Wilson’s meticulously classified bibliography to *Flags at sea*, will be found at pp 113-120.

¹³⁶ An excellent illustration of the flags worn by vessels of the Dutch East India Company, which sailed around the Cape in the mid-17th Century is, for example, the painting of the Dutch “return fleet” at Batavia in 1648, in the Gemeente Museum in Alkmaar in the Netherlands. This is illustrated in Cornelis Pama’s *Lions and virgins: heraldic state symbols, coats-of-arms, flags, seals and other symbols of authority in South Africa, 1487-1962* (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town and Pretoria, 1965), opposite p 22.

event which is depicted.¹³⁷ Heraldic armorials are likewise a source of illustration of heraldic banners, which often served the same purpose. Indeed, many flags were derived from heraldic banners and the livery colours of ruling houses. Many fine examples of such banners are depicted by Whitney Smith in his ground-breaking book *Flags, through the ages and across the world*. It is not surprising then that in the middle of the twentieth century the British Heraldry Society established a “Flag Section,” to cater for the needs of those of its members whose primary interest lay in the study of flags. One of their early initiatives was the preparation of a *Dictionary of flag terminology*.¹³⁸ The British Flag Institute, of which Crampton later became director, evolved out of this “Flag Section.”

Since flags are colourful and their mobility attracts the eye, a growing interest in flags among the increasingly literate population at large, especially from the middle of the nineteenth century, saw the production of an increasing number of general flag books and books dealing with specific flags. It also saw the publication by major maritime nations of official flag manuals. The meticulous illustrations of flags in these manuals led, in turn, to an improvement in accuracy and the quality of illustrations in flag books prepared for the public at large. Among the leading early official flag manuals identified by Wilson are the *Flags of Maritime Nations*, which was first published in 1868 by the Bureau of Navigation of the United States Navy; the British Admiralty’s *Drawings of the flags in use at the present time by various nations* (later entitled *Flags of all nations*) which first appeared in 1875; and the *Flaggenbuch*, which was first published by the German Oberkommando der Marine in 1893.¹³⁹

Of the general books on flags which have been available to the public at large over the past century, probably the best known was the British publication *Flags of the World*. Originally compiled by F.E. Hulme and published in about 1895, it had, over the years, progressed through a number of revisions and reprints. Following in the footsteps of Hulme, it was successively edited by W.J. Gordon, V. Wheeler-Holohan and H.G. Carr, each of whom

¹³⁷ Wilson makes reference in this regard to E.H.H. Archibald’s *Dictionary of Sea Painters* (Woodbridge, 1980). He considers this book to be particularly useful in its field and specifically draws the reader’s attention to pp 18-29. He also cites the importance of C. King’s article entitled “Flags in marine art,” which appeared in the *Journal of the Maritime Museum*, 22 (1936), pp 133-160.

¹³⁸ W.G. Crampton (convenor), *Dictionary of flag terminology*. (The 1968-69 Report of the Terminology Committee, Heraldry Society Flag Section, London, c. 1969).

¹³⁹ Wilson, *Flags at sea*, pp 115-116.

updated the information. By the early 1960s, the two editions produced by Carr were considered to be the best of the readily available general books on national flags. This publication was further improved on by Captain E.M.C. Barraclough, chairman of the Heraldry Society's Flag Section, in his 1969 revision.¹⁴⁰

General flag books were obviously published elsewhere and of those which, for example, appeared in Germany in the first part of the twentieth century, mention can be made of Rudolf Siegel's book *Die flagge*, published in 1912¹⁴¹ and Otfried Neubecker's publications, *Historische fahnen*, published in 1932 and *Fahnen und flaggen*, published in 1939.¹⁴² The outbreak of World War II placed a dampener on the distribution of the latter publication. Although Neubecker is best known for his scholarly publications in the field of heraldry, of which heraldic standards, banners, pennons and the like are an integral part, he was also one of the founding fathers of the serious scholarly study of flags in a much broader context.¹⁴³ Like Whitney Smith's *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, which had appeared the previous year, Neubecker's *Heraldry* was of a similar format, and produced by the same publisher. These two books were in essence intended to be matching companion volumes, in closely related disciplines.

Mention has already been made of flag plates which had been bound into reference books such as encyclopaedias from time to time. The popularity and growing interest in flags was also to extend to publications with which one would not normally associate flags. In 1951, for example, *The National Geographic* published a beautifully illustrated article on the flags of those countries which were by then members of the United Nations Organisation.¹⁴⁴ The only national flags of Africa illustrated were those of Egypt, Liberia and the Union of South Africa.

¹⁴⁰ E.M.C. Barraclough, *Flags of the world* (Frederick Warne, London, 1969). Review by Whitney Smith in *The Flag Bulletin*, IX (I) Winter 1970, p 26. In the 1979 and 1981 revisions of *Flags of the world*, Barraclough was joined as co-editor by William Crampton.

¹⁴¹ R. Siegel, *Die Flagge* (Reimer, Berlin, 1912).

¹⁴² O. Neubecker, *Historische fahnen* (Altona Zigarettensbilderdienst, Hamburg, 1932) and *Fahnen und flaggen* (Stackmann, Leipzig, 1939).

¹⁴³ One of Neubecker's last major works was *Heraldry; sources, symbols and meaning* (McGraw-Hill, Maidenhead, 1976).

¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth W. King, "Flags of the United Nations," *The National Geographic*, XCII (2), pp 213 - 238. The October 1917 edition of *National Geographic*, Vol. 32(4), also contained sections on flags as does an article in Vol. 46(3) of 1934.

2.2 Evolution of vexillology and the emergence of flag literature

Although an interest in the study of flags had gradually been gathering momentum over the past century, it was really only in the early 1960s that the serious study of flags evolved into a distinctive discipline. By then, there had appeared on the international flag scene a young American by the name of Whitney Smith who, more than anyone else, was to usher in a new era in the study of flags. It was he who in 1958 at the age of only eighteen coined the all-embracing term “Vexillology” for the study of flags in all their facets. During the year 1959, twenty-two national flags were created, making this a vexillological *annus mirabilis* - which has never been matched before or since.¹⁴⁵ The break-up of the Soviet Union in 1989-1991 was also marked by a flurry of new national flags in the former Soviet republics.¹⁴⁶

Whitney Smith, by academic training a political scientist, who was then a student in African Studies at Boston University, was experiencing difficulty in obtaining accurate information on flags. Fortunately he had a friend, Gerhard (Gary) Grahl, who lived near the United Nations in New York, who was able to assist. This spurred the establishment in 1962 of the Flag Research Center “to serve the needs of vexillology ... on a world-wide scale.”¹⁴⁷ The Center had as its primary objective “to collect, preserve, organize, and disseminate information on all aspects of flags of every type, era and place as well as information on all forms of social symbolism.” Its establishment saw the concurrent development of *The Flag Bulletin*, of which Smith was editor-in-chief, and Grahl was to become consulting editor. This journal was published quarterly until 1973 and then bi-monthly until 2011, after which Smith retired on health grounds. In the five decades after 1962 the Flag Research Center was in the forefront of flag science.¹⁴⁸ The library of the Flag Research Center in Winchester, Massachusetts, was without doubt the most comprehensive of its kind in the world and a

¹⁴⁵ Comment, under the heading “New flags: Africa,” *The Flag Bulletin* 30th Anniversary Issue, XXXI (145, 1-2) January - April 1992, pp 2-3.

¹⁴⁶ These flags, their date of adoption and the locality of the countries concerned, are clearly set out in Brian Johnson Barker, *The complete guide to flags of the world* (New Holland Publishers, London, 2009), where they are arranged by geographic region.

¹⁴⁷ These aims and objectives are set out on the reverse of the title page of *The Flag Bulletin*, IX (I), Winter 1970, p 2.

¹⁴⁸ From its inception, and at times in almost every issue, *The Flag Bulletin* chronicled the flags of Africa.

tribute to Whitney Smith's dedication to vexillology.¹⁴⁹ One of the first publications produced by Smith, in 1965, was a bibliography of information on flags of the world, of which the Flag Research Center was by then aware, including almost sixty entries on the flags of South Africa.¹⁵⁰ In 1968 Smith was awarded a doctorate in Political Science by Boston University for a thesis entitled "Prolegomena to the study of political symbolism."¹⁵¹ In essence this thesis set out his vision of the future of vexillology as an academic discipline in its own right. Referring to Smith's thesis, the late William Crampton wrote that the breadth of knowledge required to record and understand graphic symbols such as flags is a vast and complex one which embraces a variety of academic disciplines, of which history is an important component. By the time that Smith prepared his thesis he had already accumulated an extensive amount of information on flags and related devices which he believed could form the basis of a new science. As Crampton, then Director of the Flag Institute in Britain, explained in the introduction to his own doctoral thesis almost a generation later: "This was to be a true science in the sense of having a body of data which would be stored and classified in a documentation centre, a corps of researchers collecting and analyzing data, a taxonomy of classification methodology, a body of theory and a set of principles of general application."¹⁵² Over the past four decades there has been some progress in this direction, but as Crampton also observed on page 7 of his thesis, a preoccupation with the collection and filing of data has outstripped the time and effort on building and refining the body of theory. This is evident from the wide range of topics which are presented at the biennial international flag congresses presented by the International Federation of Vexillological Associations.¹⁵³

It is not surprising that Smith was one of the handful of dedicated "flag fundis" who, in September 1965, attended the first International Congress of Vexillology (ICV). This was held in the home of Klaes Sierksma at Muiderburg in the Netherlands, and international flag congresses have been held every second year since then. It was at the first Congress that a

¹⁴⁹ In his electronic newsletter *FlagInform*, 303, 20 October 2010, prior to the Flag Research Center ceasing operations, Smith advised some of his contacts that an agreement in principle had been reached to place the Center's collection with the University of Texas in Houston, a major academic institution, where it would be available to future researchers. This information was supplied by Theo Stylianides, one of those contacts. For details of the transfer to the Briscoe Center at the University of Texas, see: http://www.cah.utexas.edu/news/press_release.php?Press=Flag_History_Collection Oct. 15, 2013.

¹⁵⁰ Whitney Smith, *Bibliography of the flags of foreign nations* (Hall, Boston, 1965), pp 138-140.

¹⁵¹ Efforts to obtain a copy of Smith's thesis have been unsuccessful. Ralph Kelly has, however, mentioned that it is, indeed, available through www.it.proquest.com.

¹⁵² William G. Crampton, "Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity," PhD thesis in the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, University of Manchester, 1994, p 7.

¹⁵³ These papers are published in the proceedings of the respective congresses.

decision was taken to establish the Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques [International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV)], the draft statutes of which were considered at the second Congress, held in Switzerland in 1967. These were ratified at the third Congress, held in Boston in 1969. Twelve flag associations were founder members of FIAV and membership has since grown to more than fifty. Of these, the Southern African Vexillological Association (SAVA), which had come into being in 1990 and of which it may be said that Whitney Smith acted as midwife, was accepted as a member of FIAV during the Congress held in Barcelona in 1991.¹⁵⁴

The fledgling international flag fraternity soon identified the necessity of preparing standard flag terminology. One of the first such publications, to which reference has already been made, was the *Dictionary of flag terminology* which was prepared in 1968-69 by the Flag Section of the Heraldry Society in London and convened by William Crampton. At the same time Klaes Sierksma produced his *Vlaggenkundig woordenboekje* of Dutch flag terminology.¹⁵⁵ These initiatives, which were set in motion half a century ago, ushered in a new era in the literature and study of flags, and in the preparation of flag histories. This is a field of interest which is now also flourishing on the Internet, with its immediate access to information - not all of which is well-researched or accurate.¹⁵⁶

Especially since the 1975 publication of Whitney Smith's comprehensive, meticulously researched, extensively referenced and beautifully illustrated publication, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, which set new standards, flag books, some good, some bad and others indifferent have seen the light of day.¹⁵⁷ With regard to the sources of his material, Smith states in the "Afterword" that: "The present book ... is part of an ongoing process; its pages rely on hundreds of colleagues, government officials, academicians, and countless others who over the years have assisted me. The lack of space to list their names in no way diminishes my gratitude to them."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ A.P. Burgers, *The South African flag book: the history of South African flags from Dias to Mandela* (Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2008), p 34; *SAVA Newsletter* 3/92, 31 July 1992, pp 28-29; *SAVA Newsletter* 4/92, 31 December 1992, p 26; and the writer's personal recollections.

¹⁵⁵ Klaes Sierksma, *Vlaggekundig woordenboekje* (Stichting voor Banistiek en heraldiek, Muiderberg, 1971).

¹⁵⁶ The SAVA website, <http://www.savaflags.org.za> provides numerous links to these electronic sources.

¹⁵⁷ The source notes to the section entitled "Flags through the ages" provide an excellent indication of the flag charts, publications and other sources which were then available.

¹⁵⁸ Smith, *Flags, through the ages and across the world*, p 358.

Subsequent publications on flags were recorded in *The Flag Bulletin* and in newsletters and journals of the world's various flag associations. Many of the later publications have also been brought to the notice of South African vexillologists by means of the *SAVA Newsletter*, even though they might be of little direct relevance to South Africa. A number do, however, make some reference to the flags of Africa, which is relevant to this study, but sadly do so in an often cursory and inaccurate manner. Probably the majority of the flurry of flag books fall into the "pretty picture-book for children" category, illustrating the flags but providing little supporting information. The serious vexillologist soon learns which authors to trust and whom to treat with caution. A gullible public is not always able to distinguish between them.

In the United Kingdom it was William Crampton, who studied sociology at the London School of Economics and had then moved into the field of adult education, who was to play a leading role in the field of vexillology for almost three decades, until his death in 1997. His interest in flags had begun as a child and by the mid-1960s he was in correspondence with Whitney Smith. They first met at a meeting arranged by Smith in London in 1967, where Crampton met other flag enthusiasts. Among them was Captain Edward Barraclough a leading figure in the flag section of the Heraldry Society who was by then preparing the next edition of the standard British flag reference book, *Flags of the world*.¹⁵⁹ Crampton was soon editing the flag section's newsletter, which was subsequently transformed into the Flag Institute's newsletter, *Flagmaster*. In due course Crampton became co-editor and then succeeded Barraclough as editor of *Flags of the world*. He also became editor of *The new Observer's book of flags*¹⁶⁰ and as time progressed he was to achieve a near monopoly in the United Kingdom as editor of such popular titles as *Eyewitness guides: flag*.¹⁶¹ He also revised and updated books such as Eric Inglefield's *Pocket flags*.¹⁶² Although much the same basic material was recycled through these titles and they did depict new flags which had been adopted, in most instances these popular books did not contribute greatly to the serious study of flags.

¹⁵⁹ E.M.C. Barraclough, *Flags of the world* (Frederick Warne, London, 1969).

¹⁶⁰ William G. Crampton, *The new Observer's book of flags* (Frederick Warne, Harmondsworth, 1979, rev. ed, 1986).

¹⁶¹ William Crampton, *Eyewitness guides: flag* (Dorling Kindersley, London, 1989).

¹⁶² Eric Inglefield (rev. William Crampton), *Pocket flags* (Kingfisher Books, London, 1979, rev. ed. 1994). A comprehensive list of the publications which Crampton prepared, edited or to which he had otherwise contributed, prefaces his doctoral thesis, to which reference has already been made.

Of much more value to the vexillologist was Crampton's large-format publication *The world of flags*, which was first published in 1990. Despite some errors (which were corrected in the revised edition two years later), it is an extensively illustrated and most useful reference book which was compiled from the extensive reference sources available to the Flag Institute. Rather surprisingly, Crampton provided only a comparatively limited bibliography. This book deals, inter alia, with the broad spectrum of ancient flags, flags at sea, flags as political symbols, modern national flags, the use of commercial flags and flags in a sporting context.¹⁶³ In 1993 Crampton was elected president of FIAV, and in 1995 was awarded a doctorate by Manchester University for a thesis entitled "Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity."¹⁶⁴ This thesis, which has an extensive theoretical grounding, is largely based on a study of the repeated changes of flags in Germany, as a reflection of the turbulent political situation in that country since the late nineteenth century. It pays particular attention to the German flag crisis of May 1926. In this thesis Crampton also draws a comparison, in case studies, to "flag controversies" which have beset other countries, among them South Africa in the 1920s, Canada in the 1960s and contemporary Australia.¹⁶⁵ The South African national flag drama of 1993-1994 unfurled while Crampton was endeavouring to complete his thesis. In consequence he also included some references to this process. In fairness to him, he was drawing on the limited information then available, and includes some errors in fact and interpretation, which the present thesis corrects.

The progressive adoption of the maple leaf as a Canadian symbol, the process by which Canada's "maple leaf" flag came into being, and its first hoisting on 15 February 1965, are addressed in detail by Rick Archbold in his stunning visual biography of that flag, entitled *I stand for Canada*.¹⁶⁶ In the concluding chapters entitled "Maple leaf rising" and "I stand for Canada," Archbold also shows with a wonderful selection of photographs, how that flag which is so striking in its simplicity, has become a universally recognized visual emblem, a

¹⁶³ William Crampton, *The world of flags: a pictorial history* (Studio Editions, London, 1990; rev. ed. 1992).

¹⁶⁴ William G. Crampton, "Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity," presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Government, Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, University of Manchester, 1994.

¹⁶⁵ Crampton, "Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity," pp 141-162. Crampton died on 4 June 1997, at the age of 61. For an obituary, see *The Times* (London), 16 June 1997, which was reproduced in *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 19/97, 30 August 1997, p 12.

¹⁶⁶ Rick Archbold, *I stand for Canada: the story of the maple leaf flag* (Macfarlane, Walter & Ross, Toronto, 2002).

proud national icon and an immensely successful brand logo.¹⁶⁷

In contrast to Canada which has had a clearly-defined flag-related identity for more than five decades, in Australia the use of “national” flags and the perceptions of national identity which they represent, has been marked by ambiguity since federation in 1901. In her doctoral thesis “Which flag? Which country? An Australian dilemma, 1901-1951,” Elizabeth Kwan addressed the half-century from federation until shortly before the adoption of the Flags Act, 1953. In terms of that legislation, the Australian Blue Ensign was formally designated as that country’s national flag. Prior to that, the British Union Jack had enjoyed pride of place. In her comprehensive and well-researched book *Flag and nation*, Kwan expanded on her previous research, to cover a century of flag history since the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia.¹⁶⁸ In chapter 7, entitled “British or Australian,” Kwan points to the fact that the current Australian national flag, which features the British national flag in the place of honour, is an emblematic acknowledgment of British nationality. More and more Australians see this Union Jack element as the flag of another country, holding pride of place on the Australian flag.¹⁶⁹ As part of the ongoing debate as to whether or not Australia should adopt a flag devoid of colonial symbolism, Kwan illustrates an Ausflag poster, prepared by proponents of change, which incorporates the wording; “Over 50 British colonies have grown up. Shouldn’t we?”¹⁷⁰ The Australian flag debate is by no means over.

Unrelated to the preceding paragraphs, but nevertheless highly relevant to the way in which a flag can attain iconic status in the heart and soul of a nation, is the place occupied by the “Stars and Stripes” in the history of the United States of America. One of the most significant publications dealing with this flag, from its early origins until its formal codification in the 1920s, is Scot Guenter’s *The American flag, 1777-1924*.¹⁷¹ Apart from providing the reader with a comprehensive historical survey, Guenter goes further, stressing the inter-disciplinary nature of flag study. In the preface he remarks that:

¹⁶⁷ Archbold, *I stand for Canada*, pp 115-150 and 151-176.

¹⁶⁸ Elizabeth Kwan, *Flag and nation: Australians and their national flags since 1901* (University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2006).

¹⁶⁹ Kwan, *Flag and nation*, p 123.

¹⁷⁰ Kwan, *Flag and nation*, p 137.

¹⁷¹ Scot M. Guenter, *The American flag, 1777-1924: cultural shifts from creation to codification* (Associated University Presses, Cranbury, NJ, 1990).

[I]t behooves all interested in the political and cultural history of the United States to understand the powerful and evolving relationship between the symbol of the American flag and the development of the nation. Loving the flag is a patriot's prerogative. Comprehending the historical, sociological, and cultural reasons why people behave in such a fashion is a scholar's challenge. Understanding the difference between the two is an intellectual liberation.¹⁷²

Guenter also points to the fact that the United States was the first country to introduce a "Flag Day," a pledge of allegiance to the flag, and a code of flag etiquette – all later copied and modified by a variety of nations.¹⁷³ The United States flag statute and flag code are reproduced as appendices to Guenter's book.¹⁷⁴ As can be expected, these regulations feature prominently in such official publications as the *Flag manual* of the United States Marine Corps,¹⁷⁵ and in the United States Army regulations on heraldic activities.¹⁷⁶ In order to reach the public at large, the flag code is also incorporated into such popular publications as David Crouthers' *Flags of American history*.¹⁷⁷

In his study of the iconic status achieved by the American flag and other national symbols, such as the Statue of Liberty and the massive rock sculptures at Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, Albert Boime, a professor of Art History at the University of California in Los Angeles demonstrates how these highly visible symbols have been manipulated for patriotic purposes; and how they are subjected to contesting interpretations.¹⁷⁸ In the preface to this book Boime remarks that it was only belatedly that he gained an insight into the construction of his national identity through intense subjection to American propaganda. He goes on to say that "no community can rest secure or express an authentic sense of national identity until the experience of each individual is grounded in an alignment of the rhetoric ...

¹⁷² Guenter, *The American flag, 1777-1924*, p 9.

¹⁷³ Guenter, *The American flag, 1777-1924*, pp 22-23.

¹⁷⁴ Guenter, *The American flag, 1777-1924*, pp 203-212.

¹⁷⁵ MCO P10520.3A, *Flag manual, U.S. Marine Corps* (Department of the Navy, Washington, 14 October 1971, reprinted 24 March 1982), pp G1-G5.

¹⁷⁶ Army Regulation 840-10, *Flags, guidons, streamers, tabards, and automobile and aircraft plates* (Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 1 November 1988), pp 4-9.

¹⁷⁷ David D. Crouthers, *Flags of American history* (Hammond Incorporated, Maplewood, New Jersey, 1978), pp 73-84.

¹⁷⁸ Albert Boime, *The unveiling of the national icons: a plea for patriotic iconoclasm in a nationalist era* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1998).

with the brute facts of everyday reality.”¹⁷⁹

In his first chapter, entitled “Patriotism and protest,” Boime makes the point that the American flag flown from a staff is the most pervasive symbol in the country’s visual environment, that its image has been adapted to every conceivable fashion and that it is reproduced in every imaginable medium. It is a prime example of the emblem of a coherent group identity that in principle expresses the shared values of that group and distinguishes it from all others.¹⁸⁰ Apart from illustrating and discussing many examples of patriotic and unifying flag usage, Boime also addresses the flag as a symbol of protest and points to an inherent contradiction, namely that: “When people genuinely feel themselves part of a community, there is little need for a distinctive sign of their association. It is mainly in societies in which there are class and ethnic divisions ... and a bellicose disposition that there is a need for a symbol that pretends to be a common denominator for all.”¹⁸¹

The “Stars and Stripes” is an integral component of its civil religion, and has become a totemic symbol in the United States of America. The many and varied ways in which it is used in communicating this concept, is also addressed at length by Carolyn Marvin of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, in association with David Ingle in *Blood sacrifice and the nation*.¹⁸² This aspect is also the principal focus of Arnaldo Testi’s book, *Capture the flag*, which was originally published in Italian.¹⁸³

Among the other overarching new generation of flag books which deserve mention is Kent Alexander’s *Flags of the world*, which Whitney Smith describes in the foreword as giving “an excellent introduction to ... the national flags as they stand today.” As consulting editor, Smith would have ensured the accuracy of the information from the records of the Flag Research Center. This publication illustrates national flags in accurate detail and proportion, conveniently grouping them by continent, but unfortunately omits to indicate the dates on which each of the flags was instituted, thus depriving the historian of critically important

¹⁷⁹ Boime, *The unveiling of the national icons*, pp xiii-xiv.

¹⁸⁰ Boime, *The unveiling of the national icons*, pp 18, 20.

¹⁸¹ Boime, *The unveiling of the national icons*, p 41.

¹⁸² Caroline Marvin and David W. Ingle, *Blood sacrifice and the nation: totem rituals and the American flag* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999).

¹⁸³ Arnaldo Testi (tr. Noor Giovanni Mazhar), *Capture the flag: the Stars and Stripes in American history* (New York University Press, New York and London, 2010).

information. This book is also not provided with a bibliography.¹⁸⁴

Alfred Znamierowski's book, *Flags of the world*, in which national flags are again conveniently set out by continent, also deals with a variety of flags in other categories, such as ethnic groups, political bodies, commerce and business. Znamierowski, who counted among his mentors Otfried Neubecker and Whitney Smith, has prepared a book which is meticulously accurate with regard to national flags at the turn of the millennium, and which gives the date on which these flags were adopted.¹⁸⁵ Although he acknowledges the help and support received from fellow vexillologists in the preparation of this book, from an academic perspective its value would have been enhanced if it had been provided with a bibliography.

More recently published is Brian Barker's book, *The complete guide to flags of the world*, a well-prepared compact guide in which the flags are also conveniently grouped by continent. The date of adoption of each of the flags is indicated, but again there is no bibliography.¹⁸⁶ Despite the absence of, or only limited bibliographies and source material, such publications have provided the most readily available progressive information in book form on the national flags of Africa. As one of its ongoing projects SAVA is, however, preparing specification sheets on the flags of Africa and has produced a compact disc incorporating the most up to date information at its disposal.¹⁸⁷

The first significant analysis of basic characteristics, which was undertaken in the field of national flags, was that by the semiotician Sasha Weitman in 1970. In his analysis of the principal characteristics of the national flags of the then 137 sovereign states of the world, Weitman concluded that nations do not generally wish to depart too far from what would be considered a "normal" type of flag. In other words, one which fits into the generally accepted conventional pattern of national flags, while at the same time requiring that the design should

¹⁸⁴ Kent Alexander, *Flags of the world* (Michael Friedman Publishing Group, New York, 1992). This book provides one of the best summaries of the evolution of the flags of Africa up to 1992. African national flags, as they existed in January 1994, are depicted in a double-page flag poster published in the *Pretoria News* on 26 January 1994, pp 12-13.

¹⁸⁵ Alfred Znamierowski, *Flags of the world: an illustrated guide to contemporary flags* (Southwater, London, 2000).

¹⁸⁶ Brian Johnson Barker, *The complete guide to flags of the world* (New Holland Publishers, London, 2009).

¹⁸⁷ Martin Grieve and Bruce Berry, "Flag specification sheets, Vol.1: Africa" (Southern African Vexillological Association, Pinegowrie, 2011). This may be accessed via the Association's website: www.savaflags.org.za.

be unique.”¹⁸⁸ Weitman’s analysis of flag design trends has been followed up by other researchers. The most recent comprehensive statistical overview of the colours, symbols and designs of national flags, which draws on earlier research in this field, compares data for 1917, 1939, 1958, 1970 and that of the 192 national flags in existence in May 1999. This information, set out in a paper prepared by two South African vexillologists, was presented at the XVIII International Congress of Vexillology (ICV), held in Victoria, British Columbia, in August 1999.¹⁸⁹ It remains a reference work of note with the vexillological fraternity.

2.3 Flag literature in Africa and South Africa

There is, as yet, no comprehensive published bibliography relating to the flags of South Africa.¹⁹⁰ A useful guide to material published up to 1965, is given in the section on South Africa which appeared in Smith’s *Bibliography of flags of foreign nations*, to which reference has already been made. Subsequent to then, the researcher is largely obliged to draw on the often limited bibliographies given in later published books and articles, and on papers delivered at international flag congresses. The already mentioned *SAVA Newsletter*, which has now appeared for more than two decades, is also a valuable source of such information.

In the South African context, two early books which are of significance are histories of the Netherlands national flag, in view of the thread which can be drawn through from that historical flag to both the former and the new South African national flags. They are J. de Jonge’s *Over den oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag*¹⁹¹ which provides a history of the origin and usage of both the orange, white and blue and of the red, white and blue flags, and which points out that both versions were known as the “Prinsenvlag,” although the general perception in South Africa is that this term referred to the orange, white and blue version.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Sasha R. Weitman, “National flags; a sociological overview,” in *Semiotica*, Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, VIII (4), 1973, pp 328-367. This article was derived from a paper entitled “The flags of all nations,” which was presented to the American Sociological Association in 1971 (See *CSA Sociological Abstracts*); Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols ...,” pp 41-44.

¹⁸⁹ Bruce Berry and Theo Stylianides, “Vexistats: a statistical overview of the colours, symbols and designs of national flags in the 20th Century,” Paper delivered at the XVIII ICV, Victoria, BC, Canada, 28 July – 2 August 1999.

¹⁹⁰ This shortcoming is being addressed as an integral part of the present research.

¹⁹¹ J.C. de Jonge, *Over den oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag* (Gebroeders Van Cleef, s’Gravenhage en Amsterdam, 1831).

¹⁹² De Jonge, *Over den oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag*, p 73.

Likewise, J. ter Gouw's *De oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag*¹⁹³ makes the point that it was often impossible to determine if the colour of the top stripe was orange or red.¹⁹⁴

A number of South African based authors have, in a range of academic studies and publications, addressed the national and other flags which have flown over South Africa for more than three and a half centuries. Among these is J.A. van Zyl,¹⁹⁵ whose master's dissertation on the history of the flags of South Africa before 1910, followed shortly on the nationalistically charged centenary celebration of the Great Trek, in 1938. In addition to touching on the flags of Portugal, the Netherlands and Dutch East India Company, France and Britain, he addressed the Voortrekker flags and then concentrated mainly on the flags of the Boer Republics. These were Natalia, the Transvaal (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) and Orange Free State, together with the flags of the "Little Republics," namely Klein Vrystaat, Stellaland, Goosen, and the Nieuwe Republiek (Vryheid). Although van Zyl did not go into great detail, his sources are adequately footnoted. Among the articles to which he referred are a number which were, for example, published in the Afrikaans periodical *Die Huisgenoot*. In order to bring this early academic study to the notice of the broader flag fraternity, SAVA published a translation into English by André van der Loo.¹⁹⁶ In 1956 Van Zyl published a short article on the history of the flags of South Africa, but does not seem to have written again on this subject.¹⁹⁷

An article entitled "The State Union flag competition" gives an account of the competition, organized by the Johannesburg industrialist and amateur photographer Lancelot Ussher and launched by the monthly periodical *The State*, which aimed at securing a national flag for the new Union of South Africa in 1910.¹⁹⁸ This competition was also the subject of a paper delivered by Peter Merrington, a lecturer in English at the University of the Western Cape, during the XVII International Congress of Vexillology which was held in Cape Town in

¹⁹³ J. ter Gouw, *De oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag* (C.L. Brinkman Amsterdam, 1863).

¹⁹⁴ Ter Gouw, *De oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag*, p 36. The same applies to the chilli red top stripe of the new national flag of South Africa, which falls optically between red and orange.

¹⁹⁵ J. A. Van Zyl, "Die geskiedenis van die vlage van Suid-Afrika voor 1910" (Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an MA in History, Unisa, 1943).

¹⁹⁶ J.A. van Zyl (tr. A. van der Loo), "The history of the flags of South Africa before 1900." [This comprised the whole of *SAVA Journal* SJ: 4/95.] (SAVA, Randburg, 1995).

¹⁹⁷ J.A. van Zyl, 'n Kort geskiedenis van die vlage van Suid-Afrika, *Historia* I (2) Oktober 1956, pp 177-179.

¹⁹⁸ *The State*, IV (1910), pp 337 - 345. Cited in Whitney Smith, *The bibliography of the flags of foreign nations*, to which reference has already been made.

1997.¹⁹⁹ Merrington interprets this competition as one of the “private initiatives” undertaken at the time of Union, to promote the idea of a united South Africa loyal to Britain.

The Belgian, Raoul Gerard,²⁰⁰ who compiled his book on South African flags a decade after Van Zyl, produced what is really little more than an educational-type compilation of flags in South Africa since 1497. It gives brief historical details, but the illustrations which appear in this publication - though in colour - are mostly out of proportion and hence inaccurate from a technical point of view. This publication did, however, provide a basis for future research.

Cornelis Pama, who was known to all and sundry in South Africa as “Dr Pama,” published widely in the fields of heraldry, flags and genealogy. Of Pama’s books on South African national symbols, *Lions and virgins* was the best researched and annotated.²⁰¹ Although he had no formal academic training - his doctorate being an honorary one from the University of Luxembourg - Pama had been fortunate in having as a mentor, while working as a forced labourer in Germany during World War II, the eminent heraldic scholar Dr Ottfried Neubecker who had also published in the related field of vexillology, and was a founder member of FIAV.²⁰²

As regards the previous national flag of South Africa, which flew over the country from 31 May 1928 until 26 April 1994, one of the first academic studies was an MA dissertation submitted to the University of Pretoria by Ferdinanda Human in 1960.²⁰³ This was based on limited primary sources and lent heavily on Dr D.F. Malan’s account of the flag controversy which was first published in a series of articles in the Afrikaans daily newspaper, *Die Burger* between 29 January and 5 February 1957.²⁰⁴ In 1972, Maureen Williamson completed an MA dissertation which focused specifically on the relationship between Natal and the

¹⁹⁹ P. Merrington, “The Union of South Africa national flag competition,” in P. Martinez (ed.), *Flags in South Africa and the world*, the Proceedings of the XVII ICV, Cape Town, 10-15 August 1997 (SAVA, Pinetown), pp 91 - 98.

²⁰⁰ R. Gerard, *Flags over South Africa* (Pretoria Technical College, Pretoria, 1952).

²⁰¹ C. Pama, *Lions and virgins: heraldic state symbols, coats of arms, flags, seals and other symbols of authority in South Africa, 1487-1962* (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town and Pretoria, 1965).

²⁰² These points were confirmed to the writer by Dr Neubecker, when he was visited in his home at 24 Dieselstrasse, Wiesbaden, on Monday 11 June 1979 (Assistant State Herald’s office diary, 1979).

²⁰³ F.J. Human, “Die totstandkoming van die Unievlag” (Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an MA in History, University of Pretoria, 1960).

²⁰⁴ These articles were incorporated, two years later, into a chapter of some forty pages, in Dr Malan’s book *Afrikaner volkseenheid en my ervarings op die pad daarheen* (Kaapstad, 1959). See Harry Saker, *The South African flag controversy, 1925-1928* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town), p xiii.

national flag issue in the 1920s.²⁰⁵ As Harry Saker remarks in the preface to his book on that national flag, Williamson's work "cannot be said to sketch more than an outline to the controversy," was not sufficiently critical and too often dependent on unreliable sources.²⁰⁶ On the "popular front" writers such as Pama²⁰⁷ and Partridge²⁰⁸ also wrote on that flag, but their contributions in this category, which were rather short and superficial, were essentially intended for a popular readership.

The first detailed historical study to deal with the process and tensions leading to the adoption of the former national flag at doctoral level was Harry Saker's 1977 history thesis on the former national flag, entitled "The South African flag controversy, 1925 – 1928."²⁰⁹ This thesis deals in a comprehensive manner with the political crisis which commenced in 1925, when the South African government tried to introduce a national flag which excluded the Union Jack. This account unfolds against the background of the national politics and attendant tensions of that time. Since Saker conducted his research almost half a century after the flag controversy, he was able to make extensive use of material in the papers of leading political figures of the time, as well as newspaper accounts. The controversy was also of vexillological interest, but Saker barely addressed the technical dimension.²¹⁰ In the colour illustration of the national flag facing the title page, the small Union Jack is incorrectly orientated; he also makes no mention of the 1910-1912 version of the South African Red Ensign, or of the South African Blue Ensign.²¹¹ This comprehensive thesis was published three years after its completion, under the same title.²¹²

Two months before the new South African national flag was adopted, a retrospective view of

²⁰⁵ M.J. Williamson, "Natal and the flag issue, 1925 - 1928." (MA History dissertation, Natal University (Durban), 1972).

²⁰⁶ Saker, *The South African flag controversy, 1925 - 1928*, p xiii.

²⁰⁷ C. Pama, *Die Unievlag, sy oorsprong, betekenis en gebruik* (Nasionale Boekhandel, Kaapstad, 1957); *Die vlae van ons land* (Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 1976); and later *Die vlae van Suider-Afrika* (Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 1984). Pama also published many articles in *Arma*, the journal of the Heraldry Society of Southern Africa, of which he was editor for many years.

²⁰⁸ A.C. Partridge, *The story of our South African flag* (Purnell & Sons S.A. (Pty) Ltd, Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1966). This small format book covers but 67 pages.

²⁰⁹ Harry Saker, "The South African flag controversy, 1925-1928." (PhD History thesis, University of Cape Town, 1977).

²¹⁰ See Pama's review of Saker's book in *Arma*, 23/1980 – IV, 92 [December 1980], p 1139.

²¹¹ Saker, *The South African flag controversy*. On two colour plates following page 4, Saker illustrates the Flag Commission, Flag Committee, Senate and "shield flag" designs which were considered at that time. Also illustrated is the 1912 version of the South African Red Ensign – even though the caption states "South African flag – 1910."

²¹² Harry Saker, *The South African flag controversy, 1925-1928* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1980).

the impact of the former national flag on the South African political scene, particularly from the Afrikaner perspective, was published by Dr Philippe Rault, a Breton nationalist and general medical practitioner.²¹³ In this article Rault addresses the tensions between the Nationalists and Imperialists during the flag controversy and deals with the final compromise reached. He also points to the discontent in Afrikaner circles which that national flag caused and makes the observation that while that flag fulfilled its purpose for so long as apartheid and separate development remained official government policy, by 1993 it was clearly obsolete.

From 1928 until 1957 that South African national flag was, in terms of the provisions of the Union Nationality and Flags Act of 1927, flown in conjunction with the Union Jack.²¹⁴ There are a number of books dealing with the Union Jack, but one cannot go far wrong in consulting the venerable British publication *Flags of the world*, for an overview. Successive editions of this publication spanned almost a century. The Union Jack has now been in use for more than two centuries and among the recent publications which comprehensively record its history is Nick Groom's 2006 book, *The Union Jack*.²¹⁵

The Ensigns derived from the Union Jack, both current and obsolete, which spanned the entire British Empire, have been comprehensively recorded by Captain Malcolm Farrow, RN, in his successive editions of *The Colours of the Fleet*.²¹⁶ The role which the Union Jack and its derived Ensigns played in Southern and Central Africa over a period of two centuries, was addressed by myself in: "The Union Jack over Southern and Central Africa, 1795-1994." Published as the third comprehensive journal of the Southern African Vexillological Association,²¹⁷ it considered the place of the Union Jack from the first British occupation of the Cape in 1795 until its disappearance from the South African national flag in 1994.

²¹³ Phillippe Rault, "The South African flag of 1928-1994," *The Flag Bulletin*, XXXIII, 1/156, January-February 1994, pp 2-39.

²¹⁴ This dual flag arrangement terminated on "Van Riebeeck Day," 6 April 1957, when the Flags Amendment Act, 1957 (Act No. 18 of 1957) came into force.

²¹⁵ Nick Groom, *The Union Jack: the story of the British flag* (Atlantic Books, London, 2006).

²¹⁶ The 1997 edition of this publication records no fewer than 196 current and 359 obsolete Ensigns based on the Union Jack. Malcolm J.D. Farrow, *The Colours of the Fleet: British and British derived Ensigns* (Published privately by the author, Petersfield, 1997). Farrow was later elected President of the Flag Institute in the United Kingdom.

²¹⁷ F.G. Brownell, "The Union Jack over Southern and Central Africa, 1795-1994." This publication comprises the whole of *SAVA Journal* SJ: 3/94 (SAVA, Pinegowrie, 1994).

The Ensigns of South Africa's military forces, in which the 1928 national flag featured in the canton, the final versions of which were in use until 1994, were addressed in detail by Professor Hugh Smith in SAVA's second comprehensive Journal.²¹⁸ In this Journal the Ensigns are illustrated as line drawings. This shortcoming was rectified fifteen years later by Burgers in *The South African flag book*, where they are illustrated in colour, on plates 28-32.²¹⁹

Given the existing literature, there was a clear need for a full colour publication bringing together the scattered information on national and related flags and other symbols which had been used in South Africa over the years. As State Herald of South Africa I had unrestricted access to the library and records of the Bureau of Heraldry. The book *National and provincial symbols, and flora and fauna emblems of the Republic of South Africa*, was thus prepared, with a view to providing a summary of these symbols since 1652. In a review of this book, the comment was made that "it is hoped ... [a work would be produced] a decade hence, reflecting the further development of the symbols of our nation."²²⁰ This forms part of the focus of the present thesis.

With mounting international and internal pressure on the South African government to change its policies and bring into being a new and all-embracing political dispensation in which all South Africans would share, preliminary discussions and negotiations had already been in progress behind the scenes since the mid-1980s.²²¹ The formal announcement by State President F.W. de Klerk at the opening of Parliament on 2 February 1990 that Nelson Mandela and other political detainees would be released and that hitherto banned organizations would be free to participate in negotiations leading to a new political dispensation in South Africa, formally and radically changed the political landscape in the country.²²² As part and parcel of this process of reinventing South Africa's national identity, it was also clear that the question of national symbols would need to be an integral

²¹⁸ H.H. Smith, "Flags of the Union Defence Forces and of the South African Defence Force, 1912-1993," *SAVA Journal* SJ: 2/93 (SAVA, Pinegowrie, 30 July 1993).

²¹⁹ A.P. Burgers, *The South African flag book: the history of South African flags from Dias to Mandela* (Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2008).

²²⁰ Gielie Basson, "History overtakes national symbols," *Eastern Province Herald*, 1 June 1994.

²²¹ Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, *The other side of history: an anecdotal reflection on political transition in South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg and Cape Town, 2006), pp 43-53.

²²² F.W. de Klerk, *The last trek – a new beginning* (Macmillan, London, 1998), pp 179-192; Willie Esterhuyse, "2 Februarie 1990: Spioene dek tafel," *Beeld*, 3 Februarie 2010, p 11.

component of the negotiation process which was then set in motion.

An historical survey, together with public reaction to the question of South African national symbols prior to and during the negotiation process, was addressed by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the results of which were set out in two reports, published in 1993.²²³ These reports provided relevant background material for the guidance of the delegates to the Multi-Party Negotiating Process which was then meeting at Kempton Park, and to members of the Commission on National Symbols, which was appointed by the Negotiating Council on 7 September 1993. As the process leading to the creation of a new South African national flag unfolded, SAVA did its best to keep the local and international flag fraternity informed of progress. Indeed, the full SAVA executive was involved in the process leading to the adoption of the national flag, either in membership of the Commission on National Symbols, or as technical assessors and advisers. A *SAVA Newsletter* published at the end of December 1993, compiled by the members of the SAVA executive, carried an extensive background article which was supplemented by a fifty-one page appendix of newspaper cuttings dealing with the national symbols issue, up to that time.²²⁴

The national flag process continued for another two and a half months. After the flag design had been adopted, an “Extraordinary Issue” of the *SAVA Newsletter*, provided readers with technical details of the national flag which had been adopted by the Transitional Executive Council on 15 March 1994. Also included was an accurate line drawing, with all the ratios and proportions indicated, together with the colour codes set out in the “Private specifications” for the national flag, which had been produced by the South African Bureau of Standards for the Office of the State President on 18 March 1994.²²⁵ This was followed at the end of April by another SAVA article on the hoisting of the flag, an event which had taken place only three days earlier.²²⁶ These events were also shortly brought to the attention

²²³ Charles Malan (project leader), *Present national symbols of the Republic of South Africa: HSRC investigation into national symbols, Report No.1:* and *The socio-economic and –cultural role of national symbols in the RSA – a pilot survey: HSRC investigation into national symbols, Report No. 2* (HSRC, Pretoria, 1993).

²²⁴ Bruce Berry, Fred Brownell, Danie de Waal and Theo Stylianides, “Events leading to an interim flag for South Africa,” *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 7/93, 31 December 1993.

²²⁵ Fred Brownell and Theo Stylianides, “New South African national flag,” *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 8/94, 21 March 1994. See also E.E. Aldis, The new South African national flag and the SABS, *SABS Bulletin*, 13 (3), May-June 1994, p 4.

²²⁶ Bruce Berry, “Hoisting of South Africa’s new national flag,” *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 9/94, 30 April 1994, pp 1-7.

of the international flag fraternity by means of an article published in *The Flag Bulletin*.²²⁷

“Instructions regarding the flying of the national flag of the Republic,” which had been published in the *Government Gazette* on 26 April 1994, were reproduced in a *SAVA Newsletter* in August 1994,²²⁸ while the following *SAVA Newsletter* illustrated the new flags of the South African National Defence Force which had been taken into use on Armistice Day, 11 November 1994.²²⁹ In the space of one year the Southern African Vexillological Association had thus given extensive coverage to a range of aspects relevant to the national flag, and the first of the series of new national flag derived Ensigns which were introduced for the uniformed services. The printed media in South Africa had likewise given substantial coverage to the national flag issue both during the negotiation process and after its adoption.²³⁰

The international vexillological fraternity also showed considerable interest in flag developments in South Africa. In consequence, the State Herald delivered a paper on the design of the new national flag during the XVI International Congress of Vexillology, which was held in Warsaw, Poland, during July 1995.²³¹ It was the general consensus at this Congress that both the success of the design and the measure of acceptance enjoyed by the new South African national flag was the most significant contribution to vexillology in the previous two years.²³² As a further gesture of recognition, SAVA was accorded the honour of hosting the XVII International Congress of Vexillology two years later. This Congress was held at the Waterfront in Cape Town from 10-15 August 1997. An exhibition of historic flags was displayed in the local maritime museum on the Waterfront, to coincide with the Congress. Commodore (later Rear-Admiral) André Burgers, by then a leading member of the Cape Chapter of SAVA, prepared what he described as “a hastily written guide to the flag

²²⁷ Bruce Berry, Fred Brownell, Danie de Waal and Theo Stylianides, “Creating an interim flag for South Africa,” *The Flag Bulletin*, XXXIII, 3/185, May-June 1994, pp 82-123.

²²⁸ *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 10/94, pp 1-5.

²²⁹ Fred Brownell, “New flags of the South African National Defence Force,” *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 11/94, 31 December 1994, pp 1-8. These new flags replaced those bearing in the canton the former national flag, which had been in use in the South African Defence Force until 26 April 1994.

²³⁰ Reference will be made to many of these articles in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

²³¹ F.G. Brownell, “The national flag of South Africa: evolution of the final design.” Due to a lack of funds, the proceedings of this Congress have not been published. Reference to the paper is, however, made in William Beinart, *Twentieth century South Africa* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2nd ed., 2001), p 341.

²³² In consequence the writer was presented with the “Vexillon,” the premier award of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations for services to vexillology, at the closing ceremony of the Warsaw Congress.

exhibition,” which illustrated and briefly set the flags on display in historical perspective.²³³

The Proceedings of the XVII International Congress of Vexillology were published by SAVA in 1999.²³⁴ Among the papers delivered in the Southern African component of this Congress, are two which were of specific relevance to the new South African national flag, namely that by Leon Breytenbach, entitled “Contemporary South African design inspired by the post-apartheid flag;” and my own presentation, “The cartoonist’s view of the South African national flag.” The former paper addressed the “explosion of artistic and commercial design-work inspired by the new flag’s colours,” and placed these designs in a broader socio-historical context; while the latter pointed to the fact that cartoonists, in providing a commentary on society, fulfil a role similar to that of the ancient court jester, often “wrapping the truth in a clothing of humour to make it palatable.”²³⁵ Other papers delivered dealt with historic flags of South Africa,²³⁶ or addressed South African legal and technical aspects.²³⁷ Nineteen papers dealt with flags of the world at large.

As the South African population increasingly embraced the new national flag, there was a feeling that a well-illustrated book on the flag should be published. One of those who felt this way was the late Dr Andrew McKenzie, a veterinary surgeon by training and Director of Wildnet Africa, who was passionate about the national flag. What McKenzie had in mind was a full-colour publication which would both appeal to the public and reproduce some of the best photographs which had been taken of the flag. He had initially approached me the then State Herald, and as the flag’s designer, to prepare the historical part of the text²³⁸ for what became *Flying with pride*. However, as he later explained, it was suggested by publishers that if he wanted the book to sell, it would be preferable if he engaged the services of a “known author.”

With Denis Beckett having published a number of books and by then also well-known for his

²³³ A.P. Burgers, *Sovereign flags over Southern Africa: a vexillological history of Southern African flags from Dias to Mandela* (The author in conjunction with Wescape Publishers, Cape Town, 1997).

²³⁴ Peter Martinez (ed.), *Flags in Southern Africa and the world* (SAVA, Pinetown, 1999).

²³⁵ Martinez *Flags in Southern Africa and the world*, L. Breytenbach, pp 9-18 and F. Brownell, pp 19-27.

²³⁶ A. Burgers, “Sovereign flags over South Africa from 1488 to 1994,” pp 37-49; F. Jooste, “Flags of the Boers – a very old history,” pp 76-84; P. Rault, “Afrikaner political flags,” pp 99-107; and P. Merrington, “The 1910 Union of South Africa national flag competition,” pp 91-107.

²³⁷ H. Brownell, “Flags and the law in South Africa,” pp 28-36 and M. van Rossum, “The design and registration of flags in the South African Bureau of Heraldry,” pp 128-126.

²³⁸ “Flag fever,” *Sawubona*, 5.2, October 2001, p 42.

television series *Beckett's trek*, and his trademark national flag ties,²³⁹ this task then fell on his shoulders.²⁴⁰ The draft text which had already been prepared was made available to Beckett along with a copy of the already mentioned book *National and provincial symbols*. Staff members of Wildnet Africa were also given unrestricted access to my private collection as well as papers presented at select international congresses of vexillology so as to enable them to choose suitable illustrations.²⁴¹ In *Flying with pride* Beckett used this material extensively, but obviously gave his own interpretation to the process in his light-hearted style. In addition, he undertook some original research of his own and included a number of personal reminiscences. Beckett's *Flying with pride* is indeed an attractive glossy coffee-table publication containing many superb photographs. It gives a brief historic overview, using the existing sources mentioned, but does not otherwise delve deeply into the mechanics of the process of the creation of the national flag. It does, however, contain a chapter about the serious logistical problems faced by flag manufacturers in the period immediately prior to 27 April 1994.²⁴²

The most recent and comprehensive book which has thus far been published on the flags of South Africa, is that by the late Rear-Admiral André Burgers, which spans five centuries, namely *The South African flag book*.²⁴³ In the author's preface and acknowledgements of this 2008 publication, he stated that:

As can be noted from the endnotes to each chapter it is not presented as an original work but rather as a compilation of relevant information culled from other people's hard work. The purpose is to bring together within one cover all the widely scattered, and generally inaccessible, material on South African vexillology for the convenience of the general reader ... I have made

²³⁹ He and his wife Gael then had a miniscule clothing company, Seffrican Pridewear, which produced a variety of ties on the theme of the South African national flag. See Denis Beckett, *Trekking: in search of the real South Africa* (Penguin Books South Africa, Johannesburg, 1996), p 11.

²⁴⁰ Denis Beckett's books include: *Trekking: in search of the real South Africa* (Penguin Books South Africa, Johannesburg, 1996); *Madibaland* (Penguin Books South Africa, Johannesburg, 1998); and later *Redeeming features* (Penguin Books (South Africa), Johannesburg, 2004), which was based in part on material incorporated into *Flying with pride*.

²⁴¹ The first entry under "Acknowledgments" in *Flying with pride* reads as follows: "Many individuals and organisations contributed of their time, energy and resources in taking *Flying with pride* from concept to reality. The publishers would like to thank Fred Brownell, former State Herald, for his boundless enthusiasm, sage advice and access to his collection of articles and artifacts related to the flag."

²⁴² Beckett, *Flying with pride*, pp 98 - 105.

²⁴³ Burgers, *The South African flag book*.

full, and in most cases verbatim, use of ... excellent contributions over the years in SAVA newsletters, journals and other publications on the various aspects of the vexillology of southern Africa.²⁴⁴

This quote underlines the key role SAVA has played in recording the history and development of South African flag matters. As the subtitle to this publication indicates, it was intended as a general flag reference and South African flag history book, but also covers a broad spectrum of flags and related topics. The origin of flags is addressed in a flowing manner and considerable attention is paid to the question of flag terminology. While engaged in his research, Burgers approached two of his overseas Internet contacts, Christopher Southwood in the United Kingdom and Terence Martin in the United States. Between them they drew up the *Dictionary of Vexillology* which appears on the Flags of the World (FOTW) website.²⁴⁵ This dictionary, of which the print-out of the 2006 version ran to 217 pages, is unique in that it contains Afrikaans translations of many of the terms listed. While Burgers' naval flag terminology cannot be faulted, his translations of heraldic flag terms into Afrikaans are essentially those of a layman and not always in accordance with the terminology which has been developed by the South African Bureau of Heraldry since its establishment in 1963.

In *The South African flag book* Burgers devoted a chapter to the new national flag, and another to its derived Ensigns, using existing published sources. He also went into some detail regarding international flag terminology. His chapter on the rules of respect which should be accorded to flags shows the hand of a former naval signals officer. He was also able to incorporate illustrations in colour of the majority of flags which have flown over South Africa, and which have mostly been dealt with in other publications. This is an important improvement on the illustrations contained in a number of SAVA publications which Burgers used in his research. Colour was first introduced into the newsletters in December 1999, but in the journals due to a lack of funds, illustrations are still in the form of line drawings. Burgers' book contains some errors in text and illustration, while proof-reading corrections and suggestions were not always adopted. However, its scope is such that – despite concentrating on South Africa and making no pretence of being an academic work – it was recognized in 2009 by the international flag fraternity as the most significant and

²⁴⁴ Burgers, *The South African flag book*, pp 9 and 13.

²⁴⁵ Available at: <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/>.

comprehensive contribution to vexillology in the previous two years.²⁴⁶

Mention has already been made of a number of articles on the previous South African national flags and Ensigns, which have appeared in periodical publications. Without going into detail at this juncture, since they will be addressed in footnotes to the appropriate text, reference must also be made to articles dealing with the new national flag which have appeared in a variety of local popular and academic periodicals, among them: *Bona*, *Drum*, *Finance Week*, *Historia*, *Insig*, *Journal for Contemporary History*, *Juta's Business Law*, *Lantern*, *Living*, *Mayibuwe*, *Personality*, *Politeia*, *Rootz Africa*, *Sawubona*, *South African Law Journal*, *Style* and *Vuka*. In addition to these articles my private collection contains thousands of flag related newspaper cuttings spanning more than two decades.²⁴⁷

In this literature review it is also necessary to look briefly at what has been written about other flags which have a bearing on this study. The evolution of South African national flag based military Ensigns which were in use prior to 1994, was dealt with comprehensively by the late Prof H.H. Smith in his "Flags of the Union Defence Forces and of the South African Defence Force, 1912-1993," which was published by SAVA in 1993.²⁴⁸ The military Ensigns that were taken into use between 1994 and 2003 were the subject of a paper co-authored by B. Berry and E. Watson, which was delivered by Berry at an International Congress of Vexillology held in 2003.²⁴⁹ This paper commenced with a visual summary of the flags and Ensigns of the South African Defence Force and its arms of service – Army, Air Force, Navy and Medical Service – which had been used prior to the ushering in of South Africa's new political dispensation on 27 April 1994. In most instances the former national flag had appeared in the canton of this group of military flags. It follows that with the adoption of a new national flag, these flags had become obsolete. To a large extent the replacement flags which were adopted in 1994, merely replaced the former national flag with the new one. However, in 2003 the emblems of the Defence Force and its component parts, which had

²⁴⁶ During the 23rd International Congress of Vexillology which was held in Yokohama, Japan, during July 2009, André Burgers, who died only a month after the publication of his magnum opus, was posthumously awarded the "Vexillon," the premier award of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations.

²⁴⁷ While every effort has been made to record the source, date and page number, there are unfortunately instances in which the relevant page number is not available, and can thus not be included in the text or footnotes.

²⁴⁸ This comprised the whole of *SAVA Journal* SJ: 2/93 (SAVA, Pinegowrie, 1993).

²⁴⁹ Bruce Berry and Lt Col Edward Watson, "Flags of the South African Department of Defence - 1994 and beyond." Paper presented at the XX International Congress of Vexillology, Stockholm, 27 July-2 August, 2003. There is a "hard copy" of this paper in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

hitherto been based on the five-pointed outline of the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town, were replaced by new emblems based on a nine-pointed “star.” This change ushered in a whole new series of military flags which were addressed in this paper.²⁵⁰ Further changes to the panoply of military flags have been addressed in subsequent issues of the *SAVA Newsletter*. The flags of the numerous political organisations operating in South Africa during the negotiation process and other flags relevant to this study have been addressed in a number of the newsletters produced by SAVA since its inception in 1990.²⁵¹ Indeed, the Association has made every effort to keep its members informed of developments in the field of flags as a whole.

Locally prepared flag charts dealing with the flags of Africa, often based on information supplied by the Africa Institute, have appeared for some time, often on an annual basis, as supplements to South African newspapers.²⁵² More often than not, the flags illustrated are not in their correct proportions. Accurate information on the flags of Africa has not always been readily available to the public at large. Despite institutions such as the Flag Research Center in the United States of America, and the Flag Institute in the United Kingdom, doing their best to make available the latest information as soon as it came to hand, many of these charts contain obsolete or inaccurate material. Almost invariably these charts make no mention of the date of adoption of the flags illustrated. So often did the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), for example, depict obsolete national flags in its news bulletins that SAVA reached an understanding with the SABC in 1997 that it would, for a fee, keep the SABC informed of national flag changes as soon as details became available.²⁵³

Articles relating to the flags of the former “Homelands” also appeared in periodicals such as *The Flag Bulletin*, produced by Whitney Smith. Combined with information gleaned from the records of the Bureau of Heraldry, and of the former Department of Bantu Administration

²⁵⁰ Watson, who had been appointed Staff Officer Heraldry in the South African National Defence Force in 2000, was directly involved in designing and implementing these changes.

²⁵¹ See T. Stylianides, “Flags of political organisations in South Africa,” in *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 2/91, pp 6 - 11, which deals with the flags of the: African National Congress; Afrikaner Studentefederasie; Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging; Azanian People's Organisation; Boerestaat Party; Boere Weerstandsbeweging; Federal Independent Democratic Alliance; Inkatha Freedom Party; Koserwatiewe Party; Labour Party; Pan-Africanist Party; South African Communist Party; and the United Democratic Front.

²⁵² Examples of these are the supplement to the *Pretoria News* on 25 September 1990 and the undated [2000] “Africa wall map 2000,” sponsored by the University of South Africa. This was distributed as a supplement to the *Pretoria News*, *The Star*, *Cape Argus*, *Daily News* and *Diamond Fields Advertiser*.

²⁵³ This was first reflected in the Association's income statement for the year ending 15 February 1998. *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 21/98, 30 April 1998, p 8. This arrangement was later terminated by the SABC.

and Development and its successor departments (now in the custody of the Bureau of Heraldry), and from the Official Publications section of the then State Library, this material was, for purposes of easy reference, incorporated into an unpublished manuscript prepared during my time as State Herald.²⁵⁴ The creation of the national flag of Namibia which was taken into use at independence on 21 March 1990 (and its South West African predecessors), were likewise recorded in a series of eight articles which were prepared for *Archives News* later that year.²⁵⁵ Abridged extracts from a number of these articles were published in *The Flag Bulletin's* 30th Anniversary issue.²⁵⁶

Lastly, the Internet is now taken for granted, but its origins lie little more than a generation ago. Its relevance to the field of vexillology was first addressed in the South African context in an article by Bruce Berry entitled “Vexillology on-line,” which appeared in a *SAVA Newsletter* in 1995.²⁵⁷ As Berry explained, the Internet is the world’s largest interlinked collection of computers and through this “network of networks” millions of computer users throughout the world send and receive electronic mail, participate in discussion groups, conduct research and development projects and make use of public and private information services. It is thus hardly surprising that flag-related matters have also found a home on the Internet.

At the time that Berry’s article was published, an estimated thirty million computers were already connected to the Internet, with new users joining and new information being made available through databases and news servers every day. More than thirty World Wide Web (www) sites devoted to vexillology were listed after this explanatory article. In a front-page announcement in a *SAVA Newsletter* in 1996, readers were informed that SAVA now had a website of its own.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ F.G. Brownell, “Symbols of sovereignty of South Africa's former independent and self-governing states,” 1998. (F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

²⁵⁵ F.G. Brownell, The evolution of the coats of arms and flags of South West Africa and Namibia, *Archives News*, XXXII (11) May 1990 to XXXIII (6) December 1990. From there these articles were republished by the Heraldry Society of Southern Africa in *Arma*, 33/1990 – III/IV (131/132) to 35/1992 – IV (140).

²⁵⁶ *The Flag Bulletin*, XXXI (145, 1-2), January - April 1992, pp 40-54.

²⁵⁷ *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 14/95, 31 December 1995, pp 18, 20 and 21.

²⁵⁸ *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 15/96, 30 April 1996, p 1. The addresses of vexillological and other relevant websites have been published in the *SAVA Newsletter* on a regular basis ever since. As with postal addresses, these electronic addresses are liable to change from time to time and SAVA tries its best to keep its members up to date in this regard.

Reference has already been made to the collaboration between the late Rear-Admiral Burgers and two of his overseas Internet contacts, Southwood and Martin.²⁵⁹ Members of SAVA are also actively engaged in the preparation, from the many sources from which appropriate information can be gleaned, of accurate illustrations and specifications of African and, more specifically southern African flags, for incorporation into the Association's website.²⁶⁰ The adoption, changes and other vicissitudes of the flags of Africa are such that they deserve a comprehensive academic study in their own right.

All these publications have provided relevant background material in the preparation of this thesis. The Republic of South Africa is an integral part of Africa and, for historical reasons, it is important that any study which addresses the new national flag of South Africa should also be seen in a broader African and regional context. Moreover, with the degree of misinformation and ignorance around the history and creation of the new South African flag, there is a need for an academic appraisal of the process. In addition, only with two decades of hindsight can the historian evaluate the process with a greater degree of perspective. This is, in sum, the concern of the present study.

²⁵⁹ This website is available at: <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags>.

²⁶⁰ As already mentioned, one of the fruits of this ongoing research has been the production by SAVA in 2011 of a CD-R entitled "Flag specification sheets, Vol. 1: Africa."

CHAPTER III - FLAGGING THE “OLD” SOUTH AFRICA

This chapter presents an overview of the various flags that have flown over South Africa in the past five centuries. It considers their history, but also their concomitant trials and tribulations.

3.1 Early flags over South Africa

It is customary for sovereign independent states, their self-governing possessions, colonies, provinces and other territories to have distinctive coats of arms, badges, flags, decorations, medals and other emblems. The first coat of arms to have appeared on southern African soil was that of Portugal, which was inscribed on the simple stone *padrões* erected by the Portuguese discoverers Diego Cão and Bartholomeu Dias to mark their progress as they searched for a sea-route to the East more than 500 years ago.²⁶¹ However, since the Portuguese neither annexed nor settled what is now the Republic of South Africa, the arms of Portugal have not been perpetuated in any South African national or provincial coats of arms.

Following in the footsteps of the early Portuguese explorers, it was not long before vessels of the Dutch and English East India Companies were rounding the Cape of Good Hope on their way to the East. In June 1620, six months before the Pilgrim Fathers, among the earliest English settlers in North America reached Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts, Captains Andrew Shilling and Humphrey Fitzherbert of the English East India Company “took quiet and peaceable possession of the Bay of Saldania,” as Cape Town’s Table Bay was then known. They hoisted on Lion’s Rump, a foothill of Table Mountain, above Sea Point, a Banner of St George, namely a red cross on a white field in the name of King James. However, since the powers that be in London did not confirm this annexation, the Banner of St George had but a transient tenure on South African soil.²⁶² It was later to return to South Africa as part of the British Union Flag.

²⁶¹ Between 1987 and 2000 a travelling exhibition which paid tribute to the efforts of those involved in the early Portuguese voyages of discovery was mounted by the National Board for the Celebration of Portuguese Discoveries. For a summary of the scope of this exhibition, see António Cardoso (tr. Raquel Santos, Diana Bailey and Manuel Leitão), *Portugal pioneer of the discoveries: travelling exhibition* (National Board for the Celebration of Portuguese Discoveries, Lisbon, 1988).

²⁶² Eric A. Walker: *A history of Southern Africa* (Longmans, Green and Co., London and Cape Town, 3rd edition with corrections, 1959), p 30.

It was thus left to the Dutch East Indian Company (DEIC)²⁶³ to establish the first permanent European settlement – a refreshment station for its vessels – at the Cape of Good Hope in April 1652. Although the DEIC had its own coat of arms, its overseas possessions did not. Sometimes the lion rampant of the Netherlands, with crown, sword and sheaf of arrows was displayed - as can be seen over the entrance to the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. The flag flown was either that of the Netherlands, or that of the Company, which was the Netherlands flag bearing the Company's cipher.²⁶⁴ This was a monogram comprising a combination of the letters VOC, above which a small letter C for Cabo (Cape) was sometimes placed. Each of the Chambers of the DEIC had its own distinctive flag. A contemporary painting which shows the flags of the Chambers of the DEIC is that of the Dutch Return Fleet at Batavia in 1648, which hangs in the Gemeente Museum, Alkmaar, in the Netherlands.²⁶⁵ The impressive painting by marine artist Peter Bilas, depicting Jan van Riebeeck's arrival in Table Bay on the "Dromedaris" on 6 April 1652, appeared on Christmas cards which were sold in aid of the National Sea Rescue Institute of South Africa. This painting is of recent origin, having been painted to commemorate the tercentenary of the arrival of Van Riebeeck.²⁶⁶ The refreshment station at the Cape was established on behalf of the DEIC by the Amsterdam Chamber of the Company, which bore on its flag - the Netherlands flag bearing the company's cipher – the letter "A" placed above the VOC. The upper stripe of the Amsterdam Chamber's flag depicted by Bilas at the stern of the "Dromedaris" is red, not orange, while the lower stripe is a strong blue.

A century older, is the painting prepared in 1850 by Charles Davidson Bell, then Surveyor-General of the Cape, of the landing of Van Riebeeck and his party on South African soil. The plain Netherlands flag depicted in this painting has a faded chilli red upper stripe, white, and then a faded blue lower stripe. This painting hangs in the South African Library in Cape

²⁶³ The Vereenigte Nederlandsche Oost Indische Compagnie, often referred to as the VOC.

²⁶⁴ For the ciphers and a selection of the flags of the DEIC and its Chambers, see R. Gerard, *Flags over South Africa* (Pretoria Technical College, Pretoria, 1952), pp 28-31.

²⁶⁵ This painting is illustrated in C. Pama, *Lions and virgins: heraldic state symbols, coats of arms, flags, seals and other symbols of authority in South Africa, 1487-1962* (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town and Pretoria, 1965), Figure 17 opposite p 22.

²⁶⁶ This painting was brought to the writer's attention by Cor Pama, by way of one of these Christmas cards, in the early 1980s. For the design and illustrations of a replica of the "Dromedaris," which was built in Cape Town in 1951, see A.A. Telford, "The Dromedaris reconstructed," *Africana Notes and News*, IX(1), December 1951, pp 11-16, and the twelve-page booklet *Dromedaris* which was designed and printed by Derek Butcher and Company, Cape Town, at that time. The replica of this vessel was destroyed by fire at the Santarama Miniland, Wemmer Pan, Johannesburg. *Beeld*, 11 September 2013, p 14.

Town.²⁶⁷ In the Australian context there is a comparable painting of Captain James Cook landing on Australia's shores on 29 April 1770 and planting the first British Union flag at Botany Bay.²⁶⁸ Paintings of this nature are essentially artistic interpretations of long past historical events.

There is no definitive record of the precise colours of the Dutch flag which would have been carried ashore at Table Bay by Jan van Riebeeck and his party in April 1652. They were probably orange, white and blue, but this is not certain. In the South African context the orange, white and blue is usually referred to as the "Van Riebeeck flag." In his book on the origins of the Netherlands flag, which has at various times been orange, white and blue or red, white and blue, J.C. de Jonge records an instruction dated 26 November 1587 by the Board of Admiralty of Zeeland to the quartermasters of Vlissingen and Vere for the provision of orange, white and blue tricolours for use on Dutch vessels. These were the colours of the Prince of Orange, hence the name "Prinsenvlag."²⁶⁹ The death in 1650 of Prince William II had been taken by the opponents of the hereditary privileges of the House of Orange as an opportunity to reassert the rights of the United Provinces and the States-General.²⁷⁰ So as to prevent Prince William III (son of William II) from regaining the authority of his father, the office of Stadtholder was abolished in 1667, thus securing the virtual exclusion of the House of Orange from state affairs in the United Provinces of the Netherlands at that time. The office of Stadtholder was, however, restored to William III in 1672.

Writing in 1863, the Dutch historian J. ter Gouw sums up the confusing situation regarding the flag, as it existed in the Netherlands – at sea and in the Dutch overseas territories – at about the time of Van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape in April 1652, and for years to come, as follows:

Zoodra wij onze vlag in die geschiedenis zien te voorschijn treden, zien wij
 zowel rood-wit-blaauw als oranje-wit-blaauw en dat rood en oranje smelt

²⁶⁷ This was the winning entry in a competition to produce a painting to commemorate the bicentenary of the arrival of Van Riebeeck. It is illustrated in Antony Preston's book *Pictorial history of South Africa* (Central News Agency, Johannesburg and Bison Books, London, 1989), p 15.

²⁶⁸ Geoff Hocking, *The Australian flag: the first 100 years* (Five Mile Press, Noble Park, Victoria, Australia, 2002), p 20. This painting by E. Phillips Fox, 1901-1902, is part of the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia.

²⁶⁹ J.C. de Jonge, *Over den oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag* (Gebroeders van Cleef, s'Gravenhage en Amsterdam, 1831), pp 15 and 34ff. De Jonge further states that the orange, white and blue continued in use at sea until at least October 1653, see pp 63-64.

²⁷⁰ Pama, *Lions and virgins*, p 17.

zoodanig met donkerder en lichter tinten in een, dat men in zeer veel vlaggen niet bepaald onderscheiden kan, ‘of het rood dan wel oranje is.’ En evenzeer verdient het opmerking, dat in al de vlaggen, hoe ook de kleuren door elkander spelen, nergens rood en oranje in dezelfde vlag bijeen komen Het geeft ons de overtuigen, dat rood en oranje in onze vlag hetzelfde is.²⁷¹

[Whenever we see our flag appearing in history, we see both red-white-blue and orange-white-blue [and] that the red and orange so melt into one another with darker and lighter shades, that in many instances one is unable to determine “if the red is actually orange.” It also deserves mention, that in all the flags, however the colours appear, nowhere do red and orange feature in the same flag. This leads to the conviction that the red and orange in our flag are one and the same.]²⁷²

Ter Gouw goes on to state:

En wat er nu in het midden der 17e eeu, bij ’t invoeren van den Stadhouderloozen regeringsvorm, tusschen Staats- en Prinsgezinden gehaspeld moge zijn, zoveel is zeker, dat er toen geen oranje is afgeschaft, en geen rood is ingevoerd, want het rood-wit-blaauw was er reeds lang vóór dien tijd, en het oranje-wit-blaauw was er nog lang na dien tijd.²⁷³

[When in the middle of the 17th century, a form of government without a Stadholder was introduced, with tension between those who were State- and Prince-inclined – so much is certain, no orange was abolished, neither was red introduced, because red-white-blue had already long been there, and orange-white-blue was still there after that time.]²⁷⁴

At least some of the “historical sources” to which Ter Gouw refers, must have been contemporary paintings, and in particular marine paintings, which often display the flags which would have been worn by the vessels depicted, at the time of the respective event.

²⁷¹ J. ter Gouw, *De oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag* (C.L. Brinkman, Amsterdam, 1863), p 36.

²⁷² Own translation.

²⁷³ Ter Gouw, *De oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag*, p 40.

²⁷⁴ Own translation.

Probably the most significant Dutch marine painting in South Africa, dating from the latter part of the 17th century, is that of Table Bay and Cape Town, “De Kaap,” painted in 1683 by Aernaut Smit (1641-1710), with the Dutch East Indiaman “Africa,” then on her way to Batavia in company with other vessels in the foreground. This painting, which is part of the William Fehr Collection, dominates the Great Council Chamber in the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. A rather pale illustration of the full painting can be found as a double page spread in Preston’s *Pictorial history of South Africa*.²⁷⁵ A sharper illustration of this painting appears in *Treasures at the Castle of Good Hope*, which documents the William Fehr Collection.²⁷⁶ A detail of this large oil painting, which concentrates on the “Africa,” graces the front cover of the latter publication. Flying from the stern and mastheads of this and the other vessels in the fleet are Netherlands flags. Anyone studying this painting would be hard-pressed to decide if these flags are orange, white and blue or red, white and blue. In view of the historic importance of this painting, it is worth mentioning that it was acquired from the late Countess Mountbatten of Burma, had previously belonged to the Lords Palmerston, and may well have been commissioned by William of Orange. Its provenance is set out in the guide to the William Fehr Collection.²⁷⁷

A possible answer to the shade of colour of the uppermost stripes of these flags may well lie in the use by the Dutch Masters, in their paintings at this time, of the then rare pigment cinnabar, now better known as vermilion, which falls in the range between red and orange. I first learned of the use of the pigment cinnabar in paintings from this period, in October 1991, when a professional art restorer, Vasilios Lianouridis, visited the Bureau of Heraldry to discuss with the State Herald the design and registration of a personal coat of arms.²⁷⁸ While walking down the passage in the Bureau of Heraldry, we passed one of the Bureau’s treasures, a funeral hatchment, painted in oils on a wooden panel, and bearing the date 1650. Lianourides came to a stop, pointed to the shade of “red” used and, in amazement, uttered one word, “cinnabar.” He then explained that China had in about 1715 banned the export of this sought-after pigment which had hitherto been brought to Europe by ships engaged in the

²⁷⁵ Anthony Preston, *Pictorial history of South Africa* (Central News Agency, Johannesburg, and Bison Books, London, 1989), pp 2-3.

²⁷⁶ Anonym, *Treasures at the Castle of Good Hope* (Board of Trustees, Castle Art Collection and NasionaleBoekhandel, Cape Town, 3rd edition, 1969), p 97.

²⁷⁷ *Treasures of the Castle of Good Hope*, p 13.

²⁷⁸ State Herald’s office diary, 17 October 1991. This coat of arms was duly registered under certificate number 2470, which was issued on 7 July 1992.

“spice Trade.”

I have subsequently twice visited the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam,²⁷⁹ to view the 17th Century marine paintings there, and have little doubt that the red/orange in many of the flags depicted, is painted with cinnabar.²⁸⁰ This is a heavy red mineral consisting of mercuric sulphide (HgS), in hexagonal crystalline form. It is the chief ore of mercury and is now known as cinnabar when used as a pigment. When ground it produces a bright vermilion.²⁸¹ A practical problem faced by flag manufacturers at that time was, undoubtedly, the use of unstable dyestuff. After the end of the Thirty Years War, in 1648, when the Netherlands were then no longer governed by a Stadtholder of the House of Orange – with which the latter colour was closely associated – the tendency was definitely towards a red rather than orange upper band on the Netherlands tricolour. In consequence, it was the red, white and blue version of this flag that was best known at the Cape, where it was flown until the first British occupation in 1795 when the Netherlands, in sympathy with the French revolutionary fervour of that time, became the Batavian Republic - virtually a satellite of France – with which Britain was then at war. The British occupation of the Cape was not accepted with universal acclaim and in the far-flung interior, in 1795 the residents of Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet declared republics and hoisted the red, white and blue Netherlands flag. To them it was more than just a symbol of the – now distant – mother country; it was also a symbol of freedom. For this very reason, this Netherlands flag was also to play an important role in the flags of the Boer republics, both large and small, which were established in the interior of South Africa following the Great Trek.²⁸²

With the coming of the British forces, to forestall the French occupying the Cape, the Dutch red, white and blue flag was replaced by the British Union Banner or Flag. This was then a combination of the cross of St George, Patron Saint of England and the saltire of St Andrew, Patron Saint of Scotland, which had been borne since the Union of these two Kingdoms in 1606.²⁸³ Upon the formal

²⁷⁹ This was in 1996 and 1999, while waiting for connecting flights to Canada to attend international congresses in Ottawa and Victoria, BC, respectively.

²⁸⁰ Cinnabar is a close match to “Chilli Red” in the British Colour Council's (now obsolete) *Dictionary of Colours*.

²⁸¹ William H. Harris and Judith S. Levey (eds.), *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* (Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1975), p 2880.

²⁸² A.P. Burgers, *The South African flag book: the history of South African flags from Dias to Mandela* (Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2008), especially pp 124-142. Burgers provides the most comprehensive survey of this group of flags, to date.

²⁸³ F.G. Brownell, *National and provincial symbols, and flora and fauna emblems of the Republic of South Africa* (Chris van Rensburg publications, Johannesburg, 1993), plates 1.5.1, 1.5.2 and 1.5.4, opposite p 12.

incorporation of Ireland into the United Kingdom in 1801 – during the first British occupation of the Cape – the Royal coat of arms changed and the Union Flag of 1606 was replaced by another Union Flag, which also included the red saltire on a white field, ascribed to St. Patrick, Patron Saint of Ireland.²⁸⁴ Technically, the national banner or flag of Great Britain should be called the Union Flag, that is, the flag of the United Kingdom, though in ordinary parlance it is customarily known as the Union Jack. The latter flag is actually a diminutive of the former and the term “Union Jack” ought strictly to be confined to the small Union Flag flown from the jack-staff on the bowsprit of a ship.

In February 1803, Britain transferred the Cape to the (Dutch) Batavian Republic whose flag, also a red, white and blue horizontal tricolour, differed from that of the Kingdom of the Netherlands by having in the upper hoist, on a white panel, a seated female figure of “Liberty,” her shield bearing the fasces, the Roman symbol of authority, holding a pole topped with a cap of liberty. She is protected by a natural lion.²⁸⁵ In this panel the influence of the French Revolution can clearly be seen. The British re-occupied the Cape on 8 January 1806 and it was to remain a colonial possession until the Union of South Africa was established on 31 May 1910, as a Dominion within the far-flung British Empire. **[Figure 1** depicts these Dutch and British flags].

When the colonists moved northward from the eastern Cape and crossed the Orange River into the central interior, mainly in what is known as the Great Trek, they established a number of republics. With the passage of time most of these Boer republics adopted distinctive national flags.²⁸⁶ The flags of the two largest republics, namely the Republic of the Orange Free State (1854-1902) and the South African Republic, or Transvaal (1852-1902) were later incorporated into the national flag adopted by the Union of South Africa in 1928. **[Figure 3]** which is illustrated later in the text, shows the component parts of that flag].

²⁸⁴ Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*, plates 1.5.3 and 1.5.5, opposite p 12; Burgers, *The South African flag book*, pp 124ff.

²⁸⁵ De Jonge, *Oorsprong der Nederlandsche vlag*, pp 73-76; Whitney Smith: *Flags through the ages*, p 162; Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*, plate 1.6, opposite p 12.

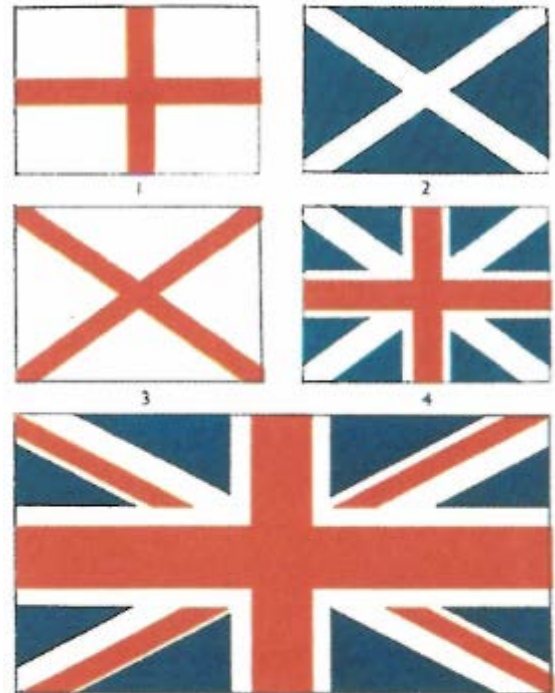
²⁸⁶ J.A. van Zyl (tr. A. van der Loo), “The history of the flags of South Africa before 1900,” which comprised the whole of *SAVA Journal* SJ: 4/95 (SAVA, Pinegowrie, 30 November 1995). This translation into English by André van der Loo is of Van Zyl’s MA dissertation, “Die geskiedenis van die vlae van Suid-Afrika,” which was completed in 1943.



1.3 Netherlands: Orange-white-blue



1.4 Netherlands: Red-white-blue



1.5 Composition of the British Union Flag or 'Union Jack'

- 1.5.1 The Cross of St George
- 1.5.2 The Cross of St Andrew
- 1.5.3 The Cross of St Patrick
- 1.5.4 The first Union Flag (1606–1801)
- 1.5.5 The second and present Union Flag



1.6 Batavian Republic

Figure 1

Reproduced from Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*

Although the “Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek” (Transvaal) came into being on 17 January 1852, on the signing of the Sand River Convention its flag – a red, white and blue horizontal tricolour with a green vertical hoist panel – was only approved by a Volksraad Resolution on 18 February 1858.²⁸⁷ This flag is traditionally known as the “Vierkleur.”

The Republic of the Orange Free State was, in turn, established on the signing of the Bloemfontein Convention on 23 February 1854. Its flag, which comprised seven alternating horizontal stripes of white and orange, with a red, white and blue flag in the canton, was a gift from King William III of the Netherlands. This flag was officially taken into use on 23 February 1857, which was the Republic’s third anniversary.²⁸⁸

The flag of the Boer Republic of Natalia (1839-1943) was also in the colours red, white and blue, but in a configuration of triangles with the red above, blue below and the white with its apex in the centre of the hoist and its base the full width of the fly. This design was to provide the inspiration for the flag devised in 1984 for the Republic of South Africa’s first Executive State President.²⁸⁹

3.2 Flags of the Union of South Africa

Since the establishment of the Union, changing constructions of nationhood and national identity have resulted in distinctive flags being devised for and adopted by South Africa on three occasions. In each instance the flags were visual symbols which reflected a current need in the constitutional development of South Africa and marked a key milestone in the country’s flag history. The first of these came soon after Union and saw the introduction of Ensigns on the standard pattern applied throughout the British Empire. The second saw the hoisting in 1928 of a distinctive national flag, in recognition of South Africa’s independent status. This national flag was retained unchanged when South Africa became a republic in 1961 and continued in use until midnight on 26 April 1994 when the “new” national flag which is the subject of this thesis, was taken into use.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*, pp 70-73.

²⁸⁸ Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*, pp 59-61.

²⁸⁹ Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*, pp 38-39 and 51.

²⁹⁰ Peberdy has pointed out how the changing face of national identity has likewise determined South Africa’s immigration policies over much the same period. See Sally Peberdy, *Selecting immigrants: national identity and South Africa’s immigration policies, 1910-2008* (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2009), p 5.

When the Union of South Africa came into being in May 1910, the British Empire was, in effect, a single state governed from Westminster and the Dominions were really only self-governing components of that world-wide Empire. In consequence, the established British “Colonial pattern” of flags was followed, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lewis Harcourt, urged the Governor-General to dissuade the South African Government from adopting a (national) flag other than the Union Jack. Harcourt had admitted that:

It is possible by legislation to make provision for a special flag, but the proper national flag to be flown on land by every citizen of the Empire is the Union Jack, which, in the opinion of his Majesty’s Government, should be regarded as the national flag of South Africa as well as of other parts of the King’s dominions. The defaced design is only for use afloat. On government Buildings the Union Jack should be flown.²⁹¹

A national coat of arms had been granted to the Union of South Africa by Royal Warrant on 17 September 1910, and arrangements were then being made for the approval by the Admiralty of distinctive versions of the Red and Blue Ensigns – with the Union Jack in the canton – and the shield of arms of the Union of South Africa in the centre of the fly.

Having suffered defeat in the South African War (1889-1902)²⁹² not many years before, many South Africans, particularly those of Boer extraction, rejected these Imperial sentiments and symbols, despite the fact that having lost the war, they were now on the way to winning the peace. Quite simply, they wanted to see a distinctive national flag for South Africa, but eighteen years were to pass before this aim was achieved. A competition for the design of a national flag which was held in 1910 had produced a winning entry - with the Union Jack in the canton - but had otherwise fallen by the proverbial wayside.²⁹³ In the meantime, the Union of South Africa was to be identified to the world at large, by Ensigns bearing the Union Jack in the canton, and with the shield of the national coat of arms in the fly.

²⁹¹ GG 23/138, Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor-General, 10 December 1910.

²⁹² Also known as the Anglo-Boer War or Second War of Independence.

²⁹³ Anonym: “‘The State’ Union Flag Competition”, in *The State of South Africa*, IV, 3, September 1910, pp 337-345; P. Merrington: “The 1910 Union of South Africa national flag competition”, paper delivered at the XVII International Congress of Vexillology, Cape Town, 10-15 August 1997, in P. Martinez (ed.): *Flags in South Africa and the world*, pp 91-98, being the Proceedings of this ICV.

Distinctive Blue and Red Ensigns were duly instituted for the Union by Admiralty Warrants on 28 December 1910.²⁹⁴ The approval of these Ensigns enabled the Union of South Africa to take its place amongst the other Dominions, British Colonies, Dependencies and Territories in the forerunners to what was later generally referred to as the *Admiralty Flag Book*.²⁹⁵ Although these Ensigns were primarily intended for maritime use, they were also flown on land.

If the birth of the South African Red and Blue Ensigns, in which the shield from the Union's coat of arms was placed directly on the field of the fly, seems straightforward enough, the subsequent vicissitudes of the Red Ensign were not. From the Parliamentary debates on the Union Nationality and Flags Bill in 1927 it is clear that the South African Red Ensign was flown at times from Government buildings, but its official use was not widespread.²⁹⁶ During the same debates the Minister of the Interior, Dr D.F. Malan, also mentioned that the South African Blue Ensign, which was even less commonly seen, was flown over the Union's offices abroad.²⁹⁷ The popular view, on the other hand, was that the South African Red Ensign was the national flag.²⁹⁸

For practical reasons – because the first quarter of the national coat of arms was also red - the little-known original design of the South African Red Ensign²⁹⁹ was altered soon after its adoption. On 25 March 1912 the Admiralty informed the Colonial Office that in the case of the Red Ensign, the shield should henceforth be displayed on a white roundel in the fly. This was in accordance with a rule laid down in the *Admiralty Flag Book*, for cases where the badge, arms (or part of it, as here), was of the same colour as the field of the Ensign.³⁰⁰ So

²⁹³ National Archives of South Africa (hereafter NASA): GG 23/149: These Warrants, which were transmitted to the Governor-General by the Secretary of State on 6 January 1911, were published under Government Notices 218 and 219 in *Government Gazette* 83 of 7 February 1911. See Brownell, *National and Provincial symbols*, pp 21-25.

²⁹⁵ *Flags, badges and arms of the British Dominions beyond the seas*, Part I - Flags and Badges (HMSO, 1910), pp v-vii and Plates 4 and 5; *Flags, Badges and Arms*, Part II - Arms (HMSO, 1917), in which the arms of the Union of South Africa appear on an additional plate following Plate 43.

²⁹⁶ *House of Assembly Debates* (1927) IX, cols. 4043 and 4055, 23 May 1927.

²⁹⁷ *House of Assembly Debates* (1927) IX, cols. 4471 and 4472, 2 June 1927. The Canadian Red Ensign was flown over their offices abroad.

²⁹⁸ Brownell: *National and provincial symbols*, p 25.

²⁹⁹ This first version of the South African Red Ensign is illustrated on a flag poster reproduced in Whitney Smith: *Flags, through the ages and across the World* (McGraw-Hill, Maidenhead, 1975), p 187.

³⁰⁰ NASA: GG 23/240: minute NL 11049/12, W. Graham Green to the Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, transmitted to the Governor-General by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 30 March 1912.

the South African Red Ensign appeared in flag books from then on.³⁰¹ Interestingly enough, when the former South African national flag was taken into use on 31 May 1928, it did not do away entirely with the South African Red Ensign. Restored to its original role as the flag of the South African merchant marine, it continued in use until 1951, when the South African national flag also became the flag of the merchant navy.³⁰² [Figure 2 depicts the Union Jack and these Ensigns].

3.3 South Africa's national flag

Since 1910 intermittent discussions about the desirability of a distinctive national flag for the Union of South Africa had emerged. In 1919 the British Empire gave way to the British Commonwealth of Nations and as the political status of the countries of the Commonwealth gradually changed, the symbols in use often reflected these changes. When the Union Party and South African Party decided to amalgamate in 1921, the conference which discussed the alliance also debated the question of a national flag. However, it was only after a new government, under General J.B.M. Hertzog, took office in South Africa in 1924 that the question of a distinctive national flag was revived at the highest level.³⁰³ Great advances had been made towards effective national sovereignty within the British Empire during and after the Great War (1914-1918). Both the South African Government and the Opposition were anxious that the surviving constitutional anomalies should be abolished. This was in line with Canada and the Irish Free State that had defined the nationals of their respective states, and the Irish had also adopted a national flag from which all references to the Imperial connection were excluded.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ The Union Jack and South African Ensigns are illustrated in Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*, Figs. 3.1-3.4 on a colour plate between pp 24 and 25. There were also in circulation unofficial versions of the South African Red Ensign in which the full coat of arms appeared on a white roundel in the fly.

³⁰² Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*, p 25.

³⁰³ Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*, p 26. Pages 26-32 provide a summary of the flag issue at that time.

³⁰⁴ The Irish national flag is a green, white and orange vertical tricolour.



3.1 British Union Flag (Union Jack) officially the national flag of the Union of South Africa from 31 May 1910–30 May 1928



3.2 South African Blue Ensign



3.3 South African Red Ensign according to Admiralty Warrant (1910–1912)



3.4 South African Red Ensign (1912–1928) and merchant navy flag until 1951

Figure 2

Reproduced from Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*

The South African Government, a pact ministry between the National and Labour Parties, resolved to fulfil the long-cherished wishes of most of its supporters by following the example of these two Dominions. In 1925 Malan tabled a Bill to define South African nationality and to provide for a national flag.³⁰⁵ This Bill authorised the Governor-General to call publicly for designs, and appointed an all-party committee of eight, including Malan, to consider them and select the most promising. The *Sunday Times* then sponsored an unofficial flag competition which brought in more than 2000 entries.³⁰⁶ The winning design was later submitted to the Flag Committee, but no more was heard of it.

Surprisingly, the most important element of the Bill, the issue of nationality, was at first almost overlooked. The flag was, in turn, to be the graphic expression of national loyalty and unanimity. It soon became evident that this aim would not be achieved by an all-party committee, or even a referendum. Clearly, a more compromising attitude was needed than most die-hards in the opposing camps were willing to concede. At the suggestion of General J.C. Smuts, the Leader of the Opposition, the whole question was then postponed until the following year when the Bill was tabled a second time, but there was still no resolution to the flag issue.³⁰⁷

As Malan had earlier explained to the House of Assembly,³⁰⁸ the Bill comprised two parts. The first dealt with the definition of South African nationality, in other words:

a legal recognition by ourselves and for the legal information of other nations,
that we exist as a South African nation;

while on the subject of a distinctive flag, Malan continued:

The second part, which is based on the first, has to do with the establishment of an outward and visible symbol of our independent nationhood, and our national status. It has to do with the binding together of all sections of the

³⁰⁵ Harry Saker, *The South African flag controversy, 1925-1928* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1980), pp 9-16.

³⁰⁶ These flag designs are all held by NASA in Pretoria, as part of the PSI (Private Secretary, Minister of the Interior) group of government documents, in what was previously the Central Archives Depot.

³⁰⁷ Saker, *The South African flag controversy*, p 62.

³⁰⁸ *House of Assembly Debates* (1926, II), col. 4027, 25 May 1926.

people in one common sentiment. It provides, in other words, for a South African national flag.

The Minister's argument was sound and the sentiments he expressed were admirable, but many of the views and opinions expressed at that time were immature. In the South African political arena at that time there were, in essence, two opposing factions. On the one side were those, mainly English-speaking South Africans – with Natal to the fore – who wished to retain the Union Jack, in one form or another; while ranged against them were mostly Afrikaners who, still bitter at their defeat during the South African War, saw the Union Jack as a symbol of British domination, to be excluded at all cost.³⁰⁹ There was, by then, also a growing assertion of a black identity in South Africa and although various attempts were made to have this voice heard during the flag controversy, they were to be of little avail.³¹⁰ As Peter Limb points out, John Dube one of the early leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) conceded that while the African “was wholly loyal to the British idea of Justice as symbolised in the Union Jack,” the debate about a new national flag was in the last analysis an issue between whites.³¹¹

From a constitutional point of view, the 1926 Imperial Conference provided a welcome boost for those in favour of a national flag for South Africa. The Balfour Declaration adopted at the Conference had defined in general terms the mutual constitutional relationship of the self-governing members of the Commonwealth. The significant paragraph in the Balfour Declaration reads as follows:

They are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their internal or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.³¹²

It followed that the Union of South Africa, as an independent state, was entitled to a flag of

³⁰⁹ Saker, *The South African flag controversy*, pp 269-273.

³¹⁰ Saker, *The South African flag controversy*, pp 263-265.

³¹¹ Peter Limb, “Early ANC leaders and the British world: ambiguities and identities”, in *Historia*, 47(1), May 2002, p 65.

³¹² D.W. Kruger, *The making of a nation: a history of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1961* (Macmillan, Johannesburg and London, 1969), p 147.

its own. It followed too that South Africa and the other Dominions, which had hitherto relied on Britain to manage their external affairs, would henceforth have to accept greater responsibility in this field.³¹³ The decisions taken at this Conference also led to a change in the position and functions of the various Governors-General.

With the Imperial Conference having clearly opened the way for the adoption of a South African national flag, and moves for the introduction of such a flag already being under way, the Government decided to press ahead with both the flag question and that of South African nationality. It experienced little difficulty over the nationality clauses in its Union Nationality and Flags Bill, once Malan had explained that “Union nationals” would also be “British subjects, a smaller circle within a larger one.”³¹⁴ It failed, however, to secure the adoption of a flag by agreement.

The flag controversy which raged through most of 1926 and 1927 was essentially political and little purpose would be served in dealing with the detail of the various views expressed or with the many designs submitted, but which fell by the wayside. As indicated earlier, it was only in the following decade that Saker most ably and comprehensively documented and dealt with the story of this national flag from a political perspective. The controversy was also of vexillological interest, but Saker barely addresses this technical dimension.³¹⁵ Suffice it to say, that in the political arena feelings ran high, with proposals and counter-proposals being put and rejected by the various proponents.³¹⁶ It was an open secret that Hertzog, the Premier, fresh from his encouraging experiences at the Imperial Conference in September 1926, was prepared to wait for a more opportune time to pursue the matter, but Malan was determined to press on regardless.

By the middle of 1927, the various flag Commissions and Committees had still failed to come up with an acceptable design for a national flag. A special session of Parliament was called for October 1927, specifically to discuss, and hopefully resolve the flag issue. More lobbying

³¹³ R. de Villiers, “Afrikaner nationalism”, in M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.): *The Oxford History of South Africa*, II, South Africa, 1870-1966 (Oxford University Press, London, 1975), pp 391 ff; E.A. Walker: *A History of Southern Africa* (Longmans, London, 3rd ed. with corrections, 1959), pp 613, 614.

³¹⁴ Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p 613.

³¹⁵ See Pama’s review of Saker’s book in *Arma*, 23/1980 – IV, 92 [December 1980], p 1139.

³¹⁶ See also Pama: *Lions and virgins*, pp 88-97; D.F. Malan: “Die Vlagstryd,” series of articles in *Die Burger*, 29 January – 5 February 1957.

took place behind the scenes and it was clear that a compromise was necessary if the country was not to be split by further dissent. In an effort to broker a solution, Tielman Roos, then Minister of Justice, suggested to the Governor-General, the Earl of Athlone, that he prevail on Prime Minister Hertzog and the Leader of the Opposition, Smuts to come to an agreement. It was clear that such an agreement would revolve around the inclusion of the Union Jack and the two former Boer republican flags on an orange, white and blue flag, but the problem was how this should be done. There is an unsubstantiated account that it was the Governor-General who drew a sketch of how the impasse might be resolved.³¹⁷

The Earl of Athlone, who was a brother of Queen Mary and hence brother-in-law of King George V, and who was furthermore married to a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, had a sound grasp of heraldic principles and was apparently trusted by both sides. As Governor-General, he could obviously not involve himself directly in political matters, but when consulted by both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition on a matter of national importance he advised them to the best of his ability. The Earl of Athlone's biography records that it was at this critical point in the process, "and by the exercise of considerable tact and persuasion," that he caused the two Generals to come to an agreement, with the result that "The amended Bill, and a design for the new flag agreeable to both parties was put to the House and passed with 'flying colours'."³¹⁸ In this historical context the Van Riebeeck flag was ultimately used as the basis for the design of the South African national flag which was taken into use on 31 May 1928.

Had only two flaglets been at issue on the central stripe of the flag, no amount of heraldic ingenuity would have succeeded in according each of them equal precedence. This is because the position nearest to the hoist is favoured more than that remote from it, and the upper portion of the flag is preferred above the lower. Whereas one would have expected three flags to compound the problem which had hitherto confounded the politicians, the solution was really quite simple. In essence, the group of three historic flags placed in the centre of the

³¹⁷ When I joined the Bureau of Heraldry as Assistant State Herald in August 1977, I shared an office for a year with a colleague John Bodel. His mother, who was from an old and well-connected Pretoria family, told him that it was the Earl of Athlone who had over a cup of tea prepared such a sketch, apparently on a parliamentary serviette.

³¹⁸ Muriel E. Sara, *The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Athlone, K.G., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.S.O.* (Paul, London, 1941), pp 202-204. See also John Lambert, "'A united South African nation and not merely a South Africa peopled by Afrikanders and English': the Earl of Athlone and the attempt to forge a Dominion South Africanism in the 1920s," *Kleio*, 34(1), 2002, pp 136, 142-145.

white stripe of the national flag adopted in 1928 must be seen as a unit. That of the Orange Free State Republic, since it hangs vertically, is higher than the other two, which is a plus factor. However, in order to ensure that the Netherland's flag in the canton is placed nearest to the upper hoist of the main flag, the Free State flag must be reversed. The Union Jack, which is nearest to the hoist and is thus in a more favoured position, is however spread horizontally from the Free State flag towards the hoist, and is thus also reversed. Although placed horizontally furthest from the hoist, to balance the Union Jack in the group of flags, the Vierkleur is the only one of these flaglets which is spread in the same direction as the main flag. This compensates for its otherwise less favourable placing. In this way, the three flaglets which together form the group in the centre of the main flag, each enjoyed equal precedence. Their arrangement in this manner was described as “an heraldic ‘tour de force’ probably unique in the history of [national] flags.”³¹⁹ In the space of a week, between the adjournment of the Debate in Parliament on 19 October and its resumption on 26 October 1927 the problem had been resolved, thanks to the apparent discrete assistance of the Governor-General. [Figure 3 illustrates the component parts of the national flag adopted in 1928].

Once this compromise had been reached, the question of nationality was embodied in Chapter I of the Union Nationality and Flags Act, 1927,³²⁰ while the flag question was dealt with in sections 7 and 8 of Chapter II. The former section prescribed that the Union of South Africa would have two flags, namely the Union Jack to denote its association with other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations and then its own national flag. This was described as follow in section eight:

The design of the National Flag of the Union shall be –
 Three horizontal stripes of equal width from top to bottom, orange, white, blue; in the centre of the white stripe the old Orange Free State Flag hanging vertically, spread in full, with the Union Jack adjoining horizontally, spread in full, towards the pole, and the old Transvaal Vierkleur adjoining horizontally spread in full away from the pole, equidistant from the margins of the white stripe. The flags shall be of the same size and their shape shall

³¹⁹ See the review by Pama of Saker's book, in *Arma*, 23/1980 – IV, 82, p 1139; F.G. Brownell, “Flagging the ‘new’ South Africa, 1910-2010,” *Historia*, Vol. 56 No. 1, May 2011, pp 44-48.

³²⁰ Act No. 40 Of 1927 (*Statutes of the Union of South Africa* (1927, II), pp 182-186).

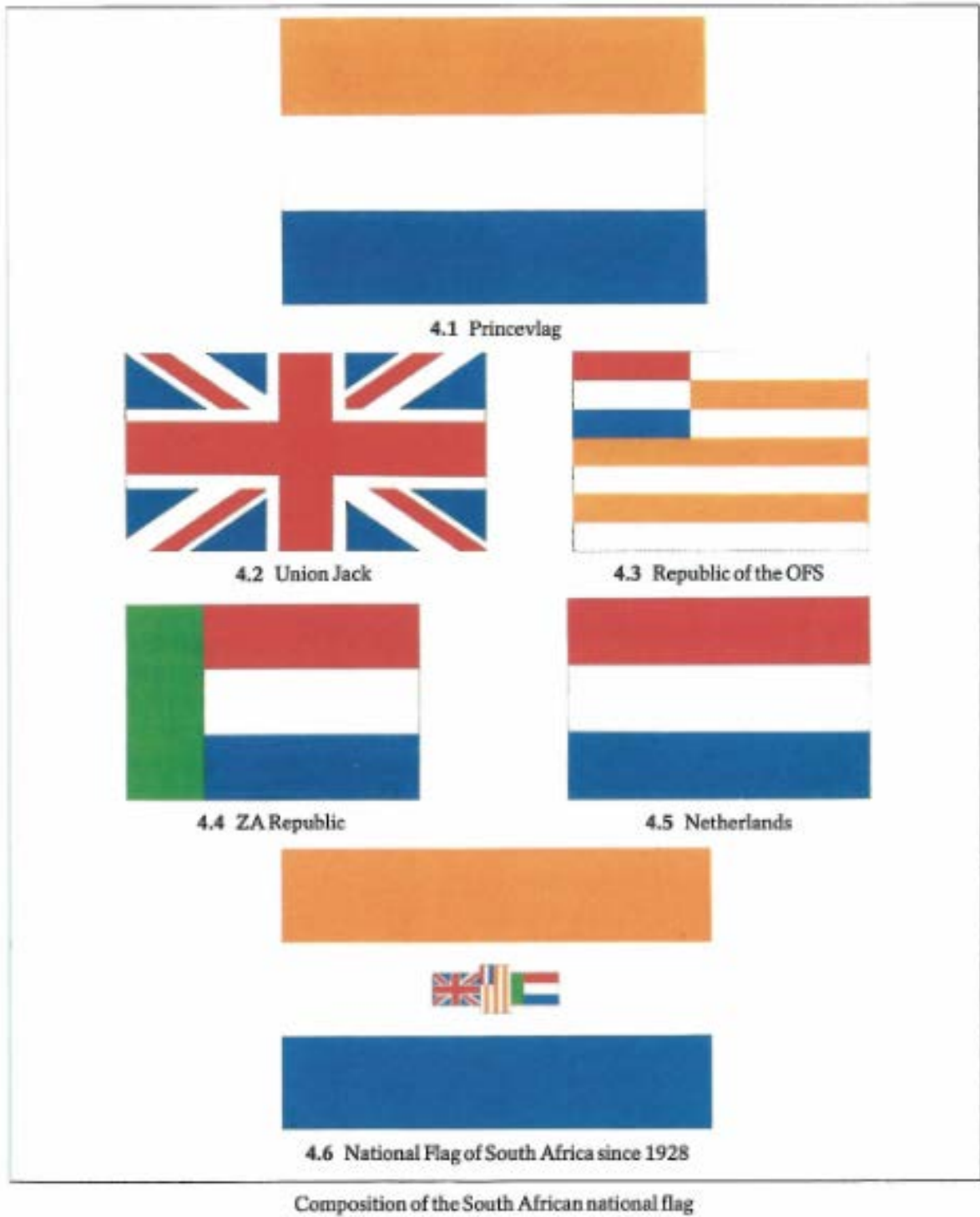


Figure 3

Reproduced from Brownell, *National and provincial symbols*

be proportionally the same as the National Flag and the width of each equal to one-third of the width of the white stripe.

This Act came into operation on 31 May 1928, on which day both the new national flag of the Union of South Africa, and the Union Jack, were hoisted together for the first time, at 11am, in simultaneous ceremonies at the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town and before the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The latter ceremony was presided over by Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, wife of the Governor-General.³²¹ There is a suitably inscribed flagstone to commemorate this event set into the pavement in front of the Union Buildings, at the site where the ceremony took place. The dual flag arrangement provided for in the Union Nationality and Flags Act, 1927, continued until 6 April 1957 when the Government brought it to an end by means of the Flags Amendment Act, 1957.³²² In terms of this amendment the national flag alone would henceforth be flown on all occasions. It was also announced that *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*, which had been gathering popularity since 1937 and for which English words had now also been written as *The Call of South Africa*, would henceforth be South Africa's sole national anthem and sung alone on State occasions, without *God Save the Queen*, despite the fact that Queen Elizabeth II was still Queen of South Africa. Her Majesty's South African subjects were slowly being softened up for the introduction of a republic, by a government committed to the republican ideal.

On 31 May 1960 the Union of South Africa commemorated its Golden Jubilee. This was a year of major political transition in Africa as a whole, with no fewer than eighteen African countries gaining independence, each under a new national flag.³²³ With South Africa experiencing growing internal unrest and increasing external hostility, the visiting British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, focused world-wide attention on the country's problems and policies in an address to both Houses of Parliament on 3 February.³²⁴ "The wind of change," he said, "is blowing through the continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of

³²¹ HRH Princess Alice Mary, *For my grandchildren, some reminiscences of Her Royal Highness, Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, VA, GCVO, GBE, DLitt, LLD* (Evans Brothers, London, 1966), p 187.

³²² Act No. 18 of 1957 (*Statutes of the Union of South Africa* (1957, I), p 252.

³²³ See Chapter IV.

³²⁴ *The Times*, 4 February 1960.

national consciousness is a political fact. Our national policies must take account of it.”³²⁵ There can be little doubt that Macmillan’s message was a contributing factor to South Africa’s decision to declare a republic and leave the Commonwealth a year later.

When South Africa withdrew from the Commonwealth and became a Republic on 31 May 1961, the national flag which had been adopted thirty-three years earlier continued in use. Its description was embodied in Section 5 of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1961.³²⁶ References to the “Union of South Africa” in the 1927 legislation were obviously amended to “Republic of South Africa.”³²⁷ A similar provision was incorporated into the Constitution when it was amended in 1983 to provide for an Executive State President and for Coloured and Indian Chambers of Parliament. Although the flag itself remained unchanged, only minor changes were made to the description which was incorporated into section 4 of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1983.³²⁸ In all, this flag remained in use for 67 years.

Over a period of more than half a century prior to the adoption of the national flag in 1928, South Africans had grown accustomed to the use of Ensigns based on the Union Jack. It is thus not surprising that both the former and present national flags have “fathered” a number of Ensigns, all of which bear the national flag in the canton.

The first of the South African national flag based Ensigns to be introduced was that of Civil Aviation. This was probably adopted between 1934 and 1936.³²⁹ Britain had adopted a

³²⁵ Hermann Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga, *New history of South Africa* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007), p 333-335; *Souvenir of the visit of The Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, on Wednesday, 3 February, 1960* (printed on the authority of Mr. Speaker, Cape Town, 1960), sets out the proceedings that day.

³²⁶ Act No. 32 of 1961 (*Statutes of the Union of South Africa* (1961, I), pp 346-427).

³²⁷ Although the possibility of adopting a new national flag was mooted from time to time in the next two decades, none of these ideas came to fruition. See the editorials in the following issues of *Arma*: 1969 – I (45), p 97 [and pp 98-101, 104]; 1971 – II (54), p 318; 1972 – IV (60), p 440; 1979 – I/II (85/86), p 998; and *Sava Newsletter* SN: 3/92, 31 July 1992, pp18-20.

³²⁸ Act No. 110 of 1983 (*Statutes of the Republic of South Africa* (Butterworth), issue No. 17 (Constitutional Law), p 1303); and J.C. Becker and G. Carpenter (eds.) *Butterworths selection of Statutes Constitutional Law* (Butterworths, Durban, 1990), pp 94-142.

³²⁹ This Ensign, which like the national flag was in the proportion 2:3, had a sky blue field bearing a dark blue cross fimbriated in white, with the national flag in the first quarter. It is illustrated in the 1992 facsimile edition of the German Navy’s *Flaggenbuch* which was originally compiled and published in 1939. *Flaggenbuch (Flg. B): bearbeit und herausgegeben vom Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine* (Reichsdruckerei, Berlin, 1939), p 170.

comparable Ensign in 1931, while Australia did so in 1935.³³⁰ There is photographic evidence of the South African Civil Aviation Ensign flying at the Rand Airport in 1935 and 1936.³³¹ Not long after the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, civil aviation in South Africa was suspended. On the information available there is no evidence of the subsequent use of the South African Civil Aviation Ensign.

All the other Ensigns which were adopted were for the uniformed services. Virtually all of the military Ensigns underwent changes with the passage of time. Since these changes have been comprehensively recorded elsewhere,³³² for the purposes of this study, only brief mention will be made of the versions which were in current use on 26 April 1994, since these would be affected by the replacement of the national flag. The South African Police and the Department of Correctional Services each had a single Ensign which would likewise change with the adoption of a new national flag.

By 1951 the “fighting” arms of the Union Defence Forces, namely the South African Army, the South African Air Force and the South African Navy, each had a distinctive Ensign. However, it was only on 20 March 1981 that the Chief of the South African Defence Force approved the design of an Ensign with a bottle green field, the national flag in the canton and the Defence Force emblem in the lower fly for the South African Defence Force as a whole. This Ensign was formally raised, and carried on parade, for the first time in Durban on 1 June 1981, at a parade to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of South Africa.³³³

The first South African Army Ensign was instituted under Routine Order No. 1705 of 1951. In line with the colour which had earlier been chosen for use on the cap bands and gorget patches of senior officers of the South African Army, the field of this, and all subsequent

³³⁰ Geoff Hocking, *The Australian flag: The first hundred years* (Five Mile Press, Noble Park, Victoria, 2002), p 108.

³³¹ John William Illsley *In Southern skies: a pictorial history of early aviation in South Africa, 1816-1940* (Jonathan Ball SA, Johannesburg, 2003), pp 183 and 323.

³³² H.H. Smith: “Flags of the Union Defence Forces and of the South African Defence Force, 1912 – 1993,” which comprises the whole of *SAVA Journal* SJ: 2/93. In this Journal, the second produced by the Southern African Vexillological Association (SAVA), these Ensigns are illustrated as line drawings. This shortcoming was, however, rectified by Burgers, in *The South African flag book*, published in 2008, where these Ensigns are illustrated in colour on Plates 28 - 32.

³³³ Smith, *Flags of the Union Defence Forces*, pp 13, 14; Burgers, *South African flag book*, p 168 and Plates 27 and 29.

Ensigns of the South African Army, was what was described as “sealed Permanent Force Orange” (Chilli Red, BCC 98). The final version, which addressed various anomalies, and incorporated a revised emblem for the South African Army, was approved on 18 February 1973.³³⁴

After the Royal Air Force, which was established in the closing stages of the Great War (World War I), one of whose founding fathers was the then Lieutenant-General J.C. Smuts of South Africa, a member of the Imperial War Cabinet, the South African Air Force is the second oldest Air Force in the world. From its establishment in 1920 until early in World War II, it used the Ensign of the Royal Air Force. On 3 December 1940, Air Directorate Order No. 212/1158 stipulated that the South African Air Force Ensign, with a steel blue field, was henceforth to be flown at all Air Stations together with the Ensign of the Royal Air Force. A General Order of 17 December 1940 then formally instituted a distinctive Ensign for the South African Air Force.³³⁵ Over the years various changes were made before a sixth version was approved on 27 February 1982.³³⁶

The South African Navy has been through a number of name changes, and its vessels have worn a variety of Ensigns. From 1922 until 1946, the White Ensign of the Royal Navy was in use, and in World War II the South African national flag was worn as the jack. The first Ensign which was instituted for the South African Navy was a plain white flag, with the national flag in the canton.³³⁷ From 1952 a green cross was added, with the national flag in the canton.³³⁸ Over the years a number of changes were made.

The fourth version of the South African Naval Ensign, which was to continue in use until 1994, was approved by the Chief of the South African Defence Force on 5 March 1981. It was hoisted with appropriate honours at “colours” on 1 June 1981 and carried at a Defence

³³⁴ Smith, *Flags of the Union Defence Forces*, pp 13-17; Burgers, *South African flag book*, pp 168, 169 and Plates 27 - 29.

³³⁵ Air Force file 707/6 contains a drawing numbered C 121 and dated 19 May 1938, in respect of such an Ensign, with the South African national flag in the canton, and a roundel of dark blue, white and orange in the fly.

³³⁶ Smith, *Flags of the Union Defence Forces*, pp 18-29; Burgers, *South African flag book*, pp 169-173 and Plate 30. The fifth version of the Air Force Ensign which is illustrated by Burgers on Plate 30 is incorrect, in that the field of the castle should be steel blue.

³³⁷ Government notice No. 1550, in *Government Gazette* 3684 of 26 July 1946.

³³⁸ The history of the Naval Ensigns is addressed in some detail by Smith, *Flags of the Union Defence Forces*, pp 35-46; and by Burgers, *South African flag book*, pp 173-181, and on Plate 31. Burgers added additional material to Smith’s account.

Force parade in Durban the same day.³³⁹

On 1 July 1979 the medical personnel then serving in the uniforms of the South African Army, Air Force and Navy were constituted into a separate arm of South African Defence Force, namely the South African Medical Services (SAMS). Before this date distinctive uniforms and other insignia obviously had to be developed. As part of this process, the Chief of the South African Defence Force had approved the design of an Ensign with a ruby field for SAMS on 11 January 1979, so that this flag would also be in place when SAMS was officially constituted. On 5 March 1981 the Chief of the South African Defence Force approved a revised Ensign for SAMS, identical in design and appearance to that of its predecessor, but on which certain of the colour code numbers had been amended.³⁴⁰

At the time of the formation of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, there were four colonial police forces in existence in the Union. These were amalgamated on 1 April 1913, to form the South African Police. From its inception until 31 May 1928, the South African Police flew the Union Jack at its stations and posts, and then the national flag of South Africa, which had been taken into use on the latter date. With the Defence Force having instituted distinctive Ensigns, the South African Police decided to follow suit and adopted an Ensign in 1983.

When preliminary discussions regarding the design of a Police Ensign were held with the Bureau of Heraldry, the State Herald, suggested that the field should be blue, with a horizontal gold stripe the same width as the stripes of the national flag across the centre, the national flag in the canton, and the Police badge in the lower fly. This suggestion was accepted and the Bureau of Heraldry duly registered the Police Ensign under the Heraldry Act, 1962. Certificate of Registration No. 1359 was issued in respect of this Ensign on 14 October 1983.³⁴¹

What is now the Department of Correctional Services, was formerly the South African Prisons Service. In 1983, with the Defence Force, and the South African Police having

³³⁹ Burgers, *South African flag book*, p 180.

³⁴⁰ Smith, *Flags of the Union Defence Forces*, pp 64, 65; Burgers, *South African flag book*, pp 182, 183 and Plate 32.

³⁴¹ *The South African Armorial*, Vol. 4, pp 85, 86; F.G. Brownell: "Some Southern African flags, 1940-1991." in *SAVA Journal*, SJ: 1/92, p 45. This flag is illustrated in the *South African Police Yearbook*, 1993, p 17.

instituted distinctive Ensigns, the South African Prisons Service also decided to follow suit. An Ensign similar in basic design to that of the South African Police but with a green field, was duly registered by the Bureau of Heraldry, in respect of which Certificate of Registration No. 1442 was issued on 27 April 1984.³⁴² After the change of name of the South African Prisons Service to the Department of Correctional Services a new Certificate of Registration, No. 2425, dated 27 March 1992, was issued for this flag under the new name.³⁴³

In 1985, with the Defence Force, the Police and the Prisons Service having instituted distinctive Ensigns, the South African Railways Police also decided to do so. An Ensign of a rather unusual design, with a black and gold field, which had been adopted by the South African Railways Police was duly registered by the Bureau of Heraldry, in respect of which Certificate of Registration No. 1642 was issued on 7 February 1986.³⁴⁴ This Ensign was short lived since the Railways Police was disbanded on 1 October 1986 and its members integrated into the South African Police.³⁴⁵

3.4 Promotion of the 1928 national flag and institution of the National Colour

In the face of increasing external pressure and internal unrest, 1983 saw the introduction of a tricameral parliamentary system. The South African Coloured and Indian population groups were drawn into the mainstream of South African politics.

Since the national flag of any country should be held in high esteem by all citizens the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1983 (Act No. 110 of 1983) introduced a provision, in Section 92, whereby contempt of and malicious damage to the national flag became a punishable offence. In terms of the provision of this section, any person who maliciously destroyed or spoilt the national flag; who committed any other act which was calculated to hold the flag in contempt; or without being authorized to do so, removed the flag from any place where it was displayed in terms of instructions or directions issued by a State authority, would be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding

³⁴² *The South African Armorial*, Vol. 4, p 132; F.G. Brownell: "Some Southern African flags, 1940-1991," in *SAVA Journal*, SJ: 1/92, p 50; Burgers, *South African flag book*, pp 193, 194 and Plate 36.

³⁴³ *The South African Armorial*, Vol. 7, p 14.

³⁴⁴ *The South African Armorial*, Vol. 4, p 132; F.G. Brownell: "Some Southern African flags, 1940-1991," in *SAVA Journal*, SJ: 1/92, p 58; Burgers, *South African flag book.*, pp 194, 195 and Plate 36.

³⁴⁵ *South African Police Yearbook, 1993*, p 51. This Ensign then ceased to exist.

R10,000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.³⁴⁶

This provision should, of course, also be seen against the rising tide of opposition to the Government's policies and the attendant increase in the level of civil disobedience, which had led to instances of flag burning.³⁴⁷

In line with the government's counter-revolutionary actions at this time, and even before the appointment of Mr P W Botha as South Africa's first executive State President on 3 September 1984,³⁴⁸ the Office of the Prime Minister began taking active steps to promote the use and popularity of the national flag. In October 1983 the *Pretoria News* carried a full-page spread³⁴⁹ under the heading "A flag-waving nation ...". In the first of the articles which appeared on this page, Roy Devenish stated that South Africa was set to become a flag-waving nation - much like the Americans who display the Stars and Stripes on virtually every occasion. He wrote that following an announcement earlier that week, further details had been set out by Mr Stoffel Botes of the Office of the Prime Minister. Ambitious plans had already been launched which would see the South African national flag, in various sizes, on display in almost every classroom and in all State, provincial and municipal offices. This may well have been an indication of the government's response to the rapidly increasing anti-apartheid pressures.

Circulars had already been sent out to the provincial Education departments, schools, colleges and universities would be urged to join the campaign to promote the flag and to buy their own flags. Among the possibilities being considered was that each class in a school be encouraged to raise funds themselves to buy a flag for their classroom. Permission would also "be given to approved firms to produce metal lapel badge-flags and to design flags that could be used as emblems on, for instance, tracksuits." The article continued that: "Brochures are being prepared to initiate the average citizen in the correct procedure to be followed in the use of the flag, and to encourage flying it outside private homes. Miniature flags, to fit on a desk-top or a counter, will be produced, and many will be used in public halls in government departments." The articles in the *Pretoria News* also provided some

³⁴⁶ Becker and Carpenter, *Butterworths Selection of Statutes - Constitutional Law*, p 129.

³⁴⁷ See Chapter IV.

³⁴⁸ He was acting State President until 14 September 1984.

³⁴⁹ *Pretoria News*, 15 October 1983, p 13. This spread comprised five articles.

historical background on the national flag, and a synopsis of the rules of respect, with which it should be treated. Under the heading “Two mementoes record historic ‘firsts,’” it was mentioned that both the ceremonial-size national flag which had been hoisted over the Houses of Parliament on 31 May 1928, and the little silk national flag which had been aboard the American spacecraft Apollo XI, on its historic flight to the moon in July 1969, were on display in the Houses of Parliament.

One of the steps taken after Botha took office as State President, was the appointment in the Office of the State President, of Mr Albert Myburgh as Deputy-Director: National Symbols.³⁵⁰ Another was the institution of the National Colour, to take the place of the Sovereign’s Colour which had been presented to military units prior to the establishment of the Republic on 31 May 1961. The “National Colour” was, in fact, a national flag in Regimental Colour size, fringed in gold and borne on a pike with a Protea flower-head finial. Except for a difference in size, the National Colour was identical to the Standard of the Union of South Africa, which was carried at the coronation of King George VI in 1937, and again at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.³⁵¹

Approval for the introduction of a National Colour was granted by the State President on 8 March 1988. The State President's Guard was the first unit to receive such a Colour. This was presented by Botha on the Grand Parade in Cape Town on 28 April 1988. When the National Colour was paraded with a Unit Colour the National Colour always took precedence.³⁵² More than 500 National Colours were presented to units of the South African Defence Force between 28 April 1988 and 20 November 1993.³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Myburgh and I, then State Herald, collaborated closely. It was at this time that the State Herald was appointed to the National Flag Specification Committee of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS).

³⁵¹ The Coronation Standards, which are 107cm x 76cm in size, excluding the gold fringe, are kept in the College of Arms in London. See D. Drake-Brockman: “Flags of the Queen,” in *The Flag Bulletin*, XXVII, 4/127, July - August 1988, pp 134 - 146.

³⁵² The procedures to be followed when dealing with the National Colour are set out in instruction HSP/D SER/512/7, which was issued by the Chief of Staff Personnel of the South African Defence Force on 8 July 1988. Copy in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

³⁵³ A full account of the history of the National Colours is set out in *SAVA Journal* SJ:10, H.H. Smith and F.G. Brownell, *South African Military Colours 1664 – 26 April 1994*, Part III, Military Colours of the South African Defence Force 31 May 1961 to 26 April 1994, Vol. 1 (SAVA, Pinetown, 2011), pp 671-685. A tabulation of the units to which they were awarded, will appear among the appendices to SJ: 11, which is in preparation.

3.5 “Homelands” flags

This is neither the time nor the place to deal with what were initially called the “native policies” of successive administrations in South Africa, both colonial and national. Suffice it to record that under the National Party administration which governed South Africa from 4 June 1948 until 26 April 1994, there were created as part of their apartheid policy, ten ethnic political entities within the borders of the Republic of South Africa (as it had become in 1961). Four of these “homelands” as they were generally known, namely Transkei (26 October 1976), Bophuthatswana (6 December 1977), Venda (13 September 1979) and Ciskei (4 December 1981) were granted full independence by the South African Government on the dates indicated. Because of international sanctions imposed on South Africa, in no case was the “independence” or self-governing status accorded to these territories recognised by the international or African community. All ten of the homelands adopted symbols of sovereignty which, in nine of the ten cases included a distinctive national flag.³⁵⁴ Since the flag of KwaZulu changed, there were in all ten homeland flags. These constitute an integral part of South African national flag history.

In examining briefly how these homeland political entities came into being one must, of necessity, look back to the period immediately following World War II. The South African government under Smuts had supported the Allied war effort but had, in the process, alienated itself from a substantial section of the Afrikaner population, which was to throw its support behind the National Party. This Party came to power under Malan in 1948 and remained in office until the first fully democratic elections were held in South Africa in April 1994. With a view to the general election of 1948, the National Party had drafted a “native policy” which, for black South Africans, reaffirmed the earlier intention to consolidate the so-called Native Reserves. It also endorsed the notion of a separate political system for these Reserves, based on traditional forms of government, together with the abolition of such “un-African” institutions as the Native Representative Council.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ For facts and figures relating to the first nine of these homelands, namely Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Gazankulu, KwaZulu, Lebowa, QwaQwa, “Swazi” [KaNgwane], Transkei and Venda, see T. Malan and P.S. Hattingh, *Black Homelands in South Africa* (Africa Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, 1976). KwaNdebele was established after this book was published. The first nine homeland flags which came into being are illustrated in C. Pama, *Die vlae van Suider-Afrika* (Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 1994), on rather poor quality colour plates between pp 36 and 37.

³⁵⁵ Malan and Hattingh, *Black Homelands*, p 8.

In the early years of the National Party administration, Malan interpreted apartheid, as not much more than a reaffirmation of traditional segregation, with the emphasis on “differentiation” rather than “discrimination.” Under Dr E.G. Jansen, who initially held the Native Affairs portfolio, policy statements were largely devoid of the jargon of apartheid and the minister seemed mainly concerned with practical administrative problems, notably the rehabilitation of the Reserves and the shortage of housing in the townships.³⁵⁶ However, under pressure from the Native Affairs group in the Nationalist caucus, on 18 October 1950 Malan replaced Jansen as Minister of Native Affairs, with Dr H.F. Verwoerd, who has gone down in history as the architect of “grand apartheid.”³⁵⁷

Verwoerd tackled his portfolio with enthusiasm and imparted a crusading zeal to his fellow devotees of apartheid, a term which soon gave way to separate development in Government parlance.³⁵⁸ There was set in motion an exercise in social engineering which was to affect almost every facet of the lives of South Africans who were not part of the “white” race group. When Malan resigned on 30 November 1954 at the age of 80, he was replaced as Prime Minister by J.G. Strydom under whose tenure the extension of residential and cultural aspects of apartheid, in particular, began to be felt by those affected. Strydom died in office on 24 August 1958 and was succeeded as Prime Minister by Verwoerd who could now give virtually unfettered rein to his ideological ideas and ambition for what was, in effect, an independent white-dominated republic, interspersed by a cluster of economically dependent and therefore politically impotent black client states which were, for a variety of reasons, destined to fail.³⁵⁹ In the context of this thesis, what is of importance is the national flags

³⁵⁶ After being dropped from the Cabinet, Ernest George Jansen was to serve as Governor-General of South Africa from 1 January 1951 until 25 November 1959.

³⁵⁷ Hermann Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga, *New History of South Africa* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007), especially pp 314 ff.

³⁵⁸ Robert Ross, *A concise history of South Africa* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), pp 116ff.

³⁵⁹ T.R.H. Davenport: *South Africa: a modern history* (Southern Book Publishers, 1989), 2nd impression, Bergvlei, 1989), pp 356, 357, 371-381; D. van Pletzen (ed.): *South Africa, 1988-89, Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa* (Bureau for Information, Pretoria), pp 171-177.

which came into being as part of this process.³⁶⁰

Both self-governing and independent states traditionally have their own symbols of sovereignty. The Transkei Constitution Act had been passed in 1963, but in all other cases the Bantu Homelands Constitution Act which was passed by the South African Parliament in 1971,³⁶¹ made provision for three stages of constitutional development for each of these national units. The first stage in this process provided for the replacement of the local territorial authority by a legislative assembly and executive council.³⁶² In the second stage, the State President of the Republic of South Africa could, at the request of the legislative assembly of the national state, by proclamation in the *Government Gazette* declare such national state to be a self-governing state within the Republic of South Africa. It was at this stage that domestic Flag Acts were promulgated by the homeland administrations.

As already mentioned, between 1976 and 1981, four of the national states which were formerly part of the Republic of South Africa opted for “full independence,” which was the third stage of constitutional development. They were the Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, which were collectively known, from their initial letters, as the “TBVC States.” The six self-governing national states were: Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa and QwaQwa. With the exception of KaNgwane, each of these states also passed its own domestic Flag Act. While these territories were still self-governing, their national flags were flown in conjunction with the national flag of the Republic of South Africa, in a dual flag arrangement reminiscent of that which had existed between the national flag of the Union of South Africa and the Union Jack between 1928 and

³⁶⁰ Much of the information on these flags, illustrations in colour, copies of the relevant Flag Acts, and other relevant information will be found in the “Files of Official Bodies” in the Bureau of Heraldry. Also in the custody of the Bureau of Heraldry is the original art-work prepared by the Drawing Office of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (and its successor Departments), and files of attendant correspondence which were rescued by the State Herald when they were on the point of being discarded by that Department, since they were “cluttering” a cabinet which was now needed for other purposes. Also consulted was an undated roneoed/photocopied and stapled booklet entitled *Heraldic and symbolical descriptions of the Coats of Arms, Maces and Flags of the National and Independent States*, which was prepared by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development and its successor Departments. Further material was traced in the “Official Documents” section of the then State Library in Pretoria. This was consolidated into an unpublished manuscript compiled by the writer, entitled “Symbols of sovereignty of South Africa’s former independent and national states,” the latest version of which was dated March 1998 (F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

³⁶¹ Act No. 21 of 1971. See Malan and Hattingh, *Bantu Homelands*, pp 9-12.

³⁶² It was at this stage that the first of the national symbols, namely coats of arms and maces were devised by staff of the Department of Bantu Administration in consultation with the homeland authorities.

1957.³⁶³ [Figure 4 illustrates the Homeland flags].

Since these flags are an integral part of South Africa's vexillological heritage, and representatives from these states were involved in the negotiation process which led to the new political dispensation in South Africa, it is appropriate that the essential details of these national flags and their legislative provenance be recorded here. Indeed, the colours incorporated into these flags were, together with those of the flags of the most prominent political organizations involved in the negotiations, incorporated into a tabulation entitled "Flag colours currently in use in South Africa," which was prepared for the guidance of the Commission on National Symbols in 1993. A further tabulation entitled "Historic flag colours in South Africa" was prepared at the same time. Together these tabulations provided the Commission and its assessors with a comprehensive overview of the relative popularity of the respective flag colours.³⁶⁴

Although Burgers illustrated all the homeland national flags in colour on a plate in his monumental work on South African flags,³⁶⁵ like Pama, he furnished no details of the essential legislative provisions in terms of which these homeland national flags were adopted. Burgers also did not make mention of, or incorporate into his book, the Ensigns and other flags which were adopted by the uniformed and other services in the homelands.³⁶⁶

Since all of the homeland national flags were manufactured in the overall ratio of two in the width to three in the length, unless other ratios are mentioned, this has been excluded from the descriptions which follow. These flags are addressed in date order of internal self-government, namely, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Lebowa, Venda, Gazankulu, Qwa Qwa, KwaZulu, KaNgwane and KwaNdebele.

³⁶³ Copies of most of the "homeland" Flag Acts and the relevant sections of the Constitutions of the Independent States, will be found in the Bureau of Heraldry. The symbolism given in respect of the homeland national flags is taken from the Department of Co-operation and Development's stapled folder *Heraldic and Symbolical Descriptions of the Coats of Arms, Maces and Flags of the National and Independent States*.

³⁶⁴ In the final stage of the process leading to the adoption of the new national flag, these tabulations were also consulted by the Heraldry Council. As such, they were appended to the minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council which considered the final round of draft designs on 10 March 1994.

³⁶⁵ Burgers, *South African flag book*, plate 26.

³⁶⁶ These were addressed in a paper which was delivered at an international flag congress in 1999. F.G. Brownell, "Flags of the Uniformed and other Services in the former 'Homelands' of South Africa," paper delivered at the XVIII International Congress of Vexillology, held in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada in 1999. The Proceedings of this Congress were released on compact disc.

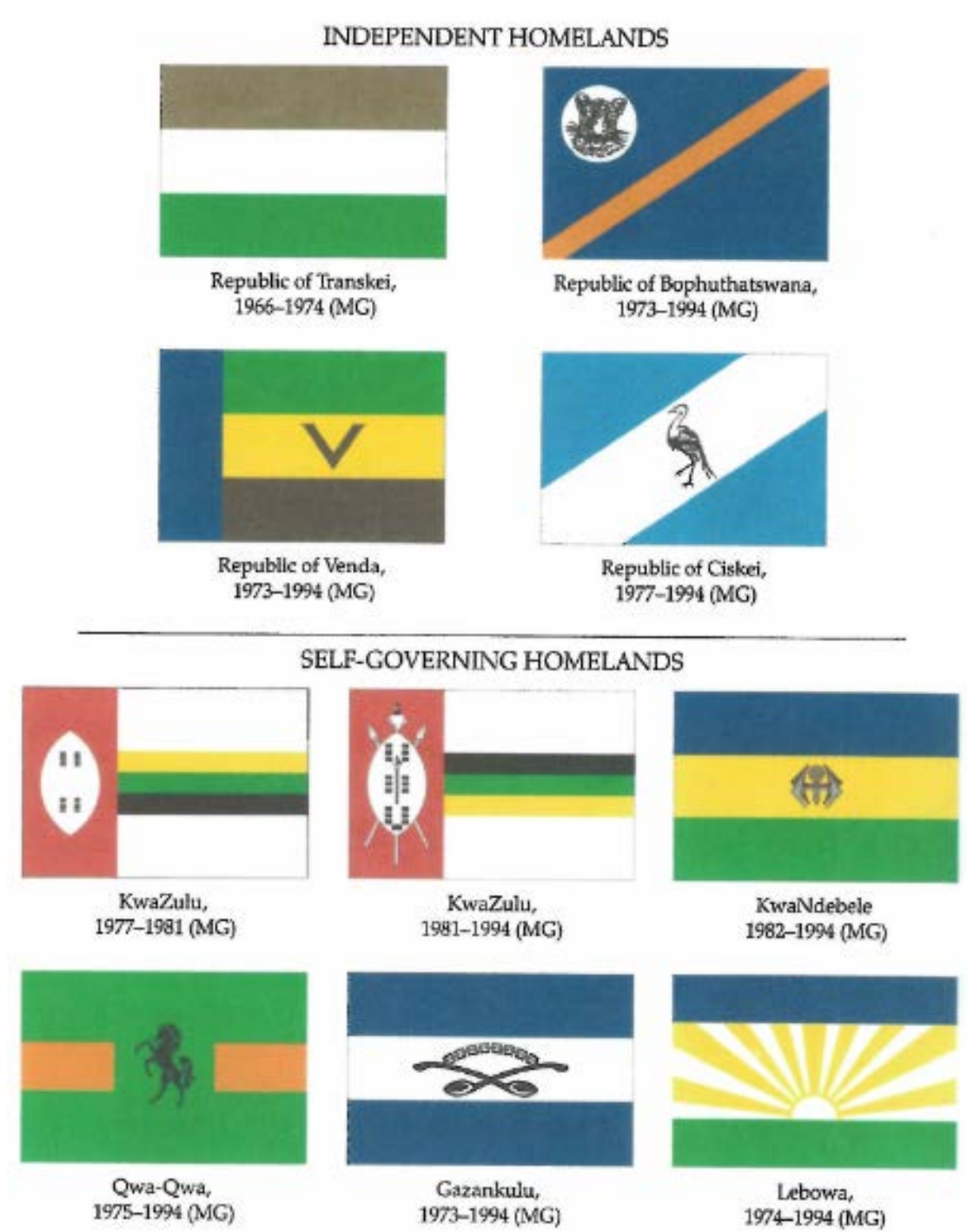


Figure 4

Reproduced from Burgers, *South African flag book*, plate 26

The name Transkei, which refers to the territory to the east of the Great Kei River in the eastern Cape, is derived from the Latin *trans*, meaning across or on the other side of, and the Koekhoen // *khae*, meaning sand, there being many times of the year when the watercourse of the Kei River contains more sand than water. The United Transkeian Territories General Council which was established in 1930 was succeeded in 1956 by a territorial authority and internal self-government was conferred by the Transkei Constitution Act, 1963.³⁶⁷ Transkei achieved full independence from South Africa as the Republic of Transkei on 26 October 1976, in terms of the provisions of the Status of Transkei Act, 1976.³⁶⁸ The design of a national flag is set out in section 2 (1) of the Transkeian Flag Act, 1966,³⁶⁹ which reads as follows: “The Transkeian Flag shall be a flag consisting of three horizontal stripes of equal width from top to bottom ochre-red, white and green.”

This flag was adopted on 20 May 1966 and officially hoisted for the first time on South Africa’s Republic Day, 31 May 1966. It was retained unchanged when the Republic of Transkei came into being on 26 October 1976. As with the principal colours of Transkei’s national coat of arms, the red-ochre of the national flag of Transkei is the colour of the ground, or *im-bola*, from which the local rural huts are built. It is also the colour of the traditional Xhosa blankets, while white was said to stand for peace and Christianity, and green for the rolling hills which provide grazing for the cattle which play such an important role in national culture. The adoption of this flag was however not without opposition and controversy.³⁷⁰

The territory of Bophuthatswana, which was brought into being as a “homeland” for Tswana-speaking people, comprised a number of non-contiguous parts in the then Transvaal and Orange Free State. It was granted internal self-government on 1 June 1972 and achieved full independence from South Africa on 6 December 1977, as the Republic of Bophuthatswana. The design of the national flag of Bophuthatswana was originally set out in Section 2 of the

³⁶⁷ Act No. 48 of 1963. Section 4 of this Act, which was promulgated by the South African Parliament, made provision for a national flag.

³⁶⁸ Act No. 100 of 1976. This was likewise an Act of the South African Parliament.

³⁶⁹ Act No. 1 of 1966.

³⁷⁰ *The Flag Bulletin*, V, 2, Spring 1966, p 44; X, 5, Fall 1971, p 229; XV, 5, September/October 1976, p 143 gives an interesting account of the Flag Debate which took place at this time. See also the *Pretoria News* insert entitled “Focus on the Transkei,” Tuesday 19 October 1976, and an A4 booklet entitled *Transkei Independence 26.10.1976*, which was produced and issued by the Inter-Southern African Philatelic Agency, Pretoria, to coincide with the independence celebrations. Both have a number of illustrations in colour.

Bophuthatswana Flag Act, 1972,³⁷¹ which read as follows:

- 2.(1) The Bophuthatswana Flag shall be Azure with a bar (sic) sinister Tenné,³⁷² in dexter chief a roundel Argent charged with a leopard's face Sable pied Argent.
- (2) (a) The width of the Bophuthatswana Flag shall be equal to two-thirds of its length.
- (b) The width of the bar (sic) sinister shall be one-twelfth of the length of the flag.
- (c) The diameter of the roundel shall be one quarter of the length of the flag.³⁷³

This flag was taken into use on 19 April 1973.³⁷⁴ A description of the flag was subsequently incorporated into the Bophuthatswana Constitution Act, 1977, where it reads as follows:

There shall be a National Flag of Bophuthatswana of which the design shall be cobalt blue background, divided diagonally from top left (sic) to bottom right (sic) by a cadmium stripe the width of which is equal to one-twelfth of the length of the flag, in the top right corner (sic) a white circular shaped insert with diameter point on an imaginary line bisecting this corner and midway between the corner and the diagonal stripe. On this white insert the face of a leopard in black lines.³⁷⁵

The symbolism ascribed to this flag was that the blue referred to the infinity of the sky and the striving for progress and development; the orange to the golden path to be followed to bring about this development; while the leopard's face was a symbol of authority. It is descriptions of this nature which undoubtedly sowed in the minds of many South Africans the idea that there must be symbolism – however far-fetched – ascribed to the colours of a flag. In consequence of the civil unrest which spread through South Africa, especially after the Soweto student demonstrations on 16 June 1976, Bophuthatswana adopted a Flag Amendment Act in 1979. In line with South Africa this Act provided for offences and

³⁷¹ Bophuthatswana Flag Act, 1972 (Act No. 8 of 1972), Section 2.

³⁷² The heraldic tincture Tenné is quite simply Orange.

³⁷³ Although this description employs heraldic terminology, it was clearly drawn up by someone in the Department of Bantu Administration who was not fully versed in this field. In heraldic terminology a bar is a horizontal band placed across the field of a shield. There is thus no such thing as a “bar sinister.” The heraldic term which would have been more accurate and appropriate, is “bendlet sinister.”

³⁷⁴ *The Flag Bulletin*, XII, 1, Spring 1973, p 3; XIII, 6, November/December 1974, p 121.

³⁷⁵ Section 2 of the Bophuthatswana Constitution Act, 1977 (Act No. 18 of 1977). The terms “left” and “right” in this description are obviously to refer to the heraldic terms “sinister” and “dexter.” Quoted from an A5 booklet: *Republic of Bophuthatswana Constitution*, as amended, 5th edition 1991.

penalties for those who at any time defaced, damaged or destroyed a Bophuthatswana flag; deliberately omitted to fly or hoist the flag; or in contempt flew any other flag in place of the flag of Bophuthatswana.³⁷⁶

The Ciskei, which was established for members of the Xhosa nation living to the west of the Great Kei River in the Eastern Cape, internal self-government was granted on 1 August 1972 and achieved full independence from South Africa on 4 December 1981 as the Republic of Ciskei. Originally proclaimed in 1973,³⁷⁷ the design of the national flag of Ciskei was later set out in section 2 of the Ciskeian Flag Act, 1977,³⁷⁸ which reads as follows:

2. (1) The flag of the Ciskei shall be blue with a bend sinister of white, over all (sic) a Blue Crane proper edged white (sic).
 - (2) (a) The width of the flag of the Ciskei shall be equal to two-thirds of its length.
 - (b) The width of the bend sinister shall be one-sixth of the length of the Flag.
 - (c) The height of the blue Crane shall be one-third of the width of the Flag.³⁷⁹

This flag was officially taken into use in terms of this legislation on 22 June 1977 although it had, in fact, been hoisted outside the Legislative Assembly Building from 15 March 1977. A description of the national flag was subsequently incorporated into Schedule 3 of the Republic of Ciskei Constitution Act, 1981,³⁸⁰ where it reads as follows: “A blue flag with a bend sinister of white, over all (sic) a Blue Crane proper edged white (sic). The width of the flag shall be equal to two-thirds of its length. The width of the bend sinister shall be one-sixth of the length of the flag.”

The symbolism ascribed to this flag was that the blue referred to the infinity of the sky and the striving for progress and development, while the white bend sinister alluded to the rising

³⁷⁶ *Statutes of the Republic of Bophuthatswana – Constitutional Law*, Bophuthatswana Flag Act, No. 8 of 1972, as amended by the Bophuthatswana Flag Amendment Act, No. 27 of 1987, p 11.

³⁷⁷ Government Notice 3/VI in the *Ciskei Official Gazette* No. 7 of 22 June 1973, as corrected by Government Notice 7/IV in the *Ciskei Official Gazette* No. 11 of 27 July 1973. See also *The Flag Bulletin*, XIII, 6, November/December 1974, p 123.

³⁷⁸ Act No. 5 of 1977, published under Government notice No. 21 in the *Ciskei Official Gazette* Vol. 5, No. 149 of 19 August 1977.

³⁷⁹ The bend sinister was “charged” with a Blue Crane, and the Crane was thus not “over all.” Although it is described as “proper,” that is in its natural colours, in practice the Blue Crane was depicted on the national flag in black outline and with black detail. Since it was placed wholly on the white diagonal stripe, the Crane was not “over all.”

³⁸⁰ *Statutes of the Republic of Ciskei - Constitution*, Act No. 20 of 1981, published under Government Notice No. 58 in the *Ciskei Government Gazette*, Vol. 9, No. 96 of 4 December 1981.

path to be followed to bring this development to fruition. The Blue Crane - or *Indwe* - was symbolic of courage and steadfastness. During 1990 the Council of State in Ciskei proposed the adoption of a new national flag, one of the objections to the existing flag being that the Blue Crane in the centre was the badge of the Ciskei National Independence Party. In the light of subsequent political developments and negotiations in South Africa, this proposal fell by the wayside.³⁸¹

The self-governing national state of Lebowa was situated in the then northern Transvaal. The name Lebowa means North and this territory was established as a “homeland” for the northern component of the Sotho people, many of whom belong to the Pedi group. Lebowa was granted internal self-government on 2 October 1972. The design of the national flag of Lebowa which was formally taken into use on 5 July 1974 is set out in section 2 (1) of the Lebowa Flag Act, 1974,³⁸² which reads as follows: “The Lebowa Flag shall be a flag consisting of three horizontal stripes, blue, white and green, in the proportions one, two and one, the white charged with a demi-sun of nine rays in gold.”

Although described as gold, the rays on this flag were actually depicted in a golden orange, since yellow (gold) simply does not show up successfully on a white field. The blue in this flag was again linked to the colour of the sky and the green represented the land, while the “sunburst” alluded to the dawning of a new day for the nation. The design of this flag was a simplification of an earlier proposal by a select committee of the Legislative Assembly, in which the full coat of arms of Lebowa would have appeared in colour on a broad white stripe, below a sunburst in orange that overlapped a blue horizontal stripe running along the top of the flag. A green stripe of the same width would have appeared the bottom.³⁸³

The word Venda, which means “world” or “land,” refers as such to the traditional home of the BaVenda. What became the Republic of Venda was situated in the then far northern Transvaal, south of the Limpopo River, west of the Kruger National Park and northeast of Pietersburg. Venda was granted internal self-government on 1 February 1973 and was granted full independence from South Africa on 13 September 1979.

³⁸¹ This is a personal recollection from the writer’s time as State Herald.

³⁸² Act No. 8 of 1974, of the Lebowa Legislative Assembly.

³⁸³ *The Flag Bulletin*, XII, 1, Spring 1973, p 6; This earlier draft design is depicted on the front cover of *The Flag Bulletin*, XIII, 6, November/December 1974; see also p 120.

The design of the national flag of Venda was originally set out in section 2 of the Venda Flag Act, 1973 (Act No. 6 of 1973).³⁸⁴ A description of this flag, with amended wording, was subsequently incorporated into Schedule 3 of the Republic of Venda Constitution Act, 1979 (Act No. 9 of 1979), which reads as follows:

Three horizontal stripes of equal width from top to bottom green, yellow and brown and towards the pole a vertical blue stripe equal in width to a horizontal stripe on which there shall appear, in the centre of the yellow stripe the letter V in brown. The width [of the flag] shall be equal to two thirds of the length. The length of the letter V shall be five-sevenths of the width of a stripe and the width of the letter V shall be five-sevenths of the width of a stripe.

The colours of the national flag of Venda are those used in the traditional beadwork of the BaVenda. The red-brown beads are said to symbolise Venda's soil, while the beauty of the country is reflected in the yellow beads. Blue-green beads serve to recall the ancestors of the BaVenda, while blue beads are for the heavens. These beads have a deep religious significance and are passed from generation to generation. The form of the Venda flag is reminiscent of that of the former Transvaal Republic, with three horizontal stripes and a hoist panel.

The self-governing national state of Gazankulu, which was situated in the then north-eastern Transvaal, was established for the Shangaan residents of that region, who are closely related to the Tsonga of Mozambique. The name Gazankulu (formerly Machanga), is derived from Lake Gaza and Gazaland in nearby Mozambique. This territory was granted internal self-government on 1 February 1973. The design of the national flag of Gazankulu was originally set out in section 2 of the Gazankulu Flag Act, 1973,³⁸⁵ which reads as follows:

2. (1) The Gazankulu Flag shall be a flag consisting of three horizontal stripes of equal width

³⁸⁴ *The Flag Bulletin*, XIII, 6, November/December 1974, p 119.

³⁸⁵ *Gazankulu Statutes – Constitutional Law*, Issue No. 2, p 11, Act No. 4 of 1973, promulgated by the Gazankulu Legislative Assembly. The date of commencement of this Act was 18 December 1973. See also *The Flag Bulletin*, XIII, 6, November/December, 1974, p 117.

from top to bottom blue, white and blue, on which there shall appear, in the centre of the white stripe, two black traditional wooden spoons in saltire with the handles sloping upwards and connected archwise by means of a black chain consisting of 15 links.

- (2) (a) The width of the Gazankulu Flag shall be equal to two-thirds of its length.
(b) The length of each of the black spoons referred to in sub-section (1) shall be equal to two-thirds of the width of the Flag.

The symbolism ascribed to this flag was that the blue referred to the infinity of the sky and, like the sky, there should be no limit to national advancement and development. The black and white in the central panel alluded to co-operation between the black and white people in the country. The spoons joined by a chain are used by the Shangaan people during ceremonies. Carved out of a single block of wood, the spoons cannot be separated and harmony must prevail between two people wishing to eat with them. Their appearance is a signal that disputes must be settled and hospitality offered to strangers.

In the light of civil unrest fermented in South Africa and the “homelands” by the United Democratic Front and other bodies, this Flag Act was amended in 1986 by means of the Gazankulu Flag Amendment Act, 1986.³⁸⁶ A new Section 3A provided for penalties in respect of the defacement, damage, destruction of or contempt for the flag of Gazankulu. Although the Amendment Act was only assented to on 3 September 1986, it was deemed to have come into effect on 6 December 1985.³⁸⁷

The self-governing national state of QwaQwa, which was situated in the north-eastern Orange Free State, contiguous to the Kingdom of Lesotho, with whose people the Basotho (or Southern Sotho), it shared close language and family bonds. It was granted internal self-government on 1 November 1974. The design of the national flag of QwaQwa is set out in section 2 (1) of the QwaQwa Flag Act, 1975,³⁸⁸ which reads as follows: “The flag of QwaQwa shall be a Flag consisting of a field of green, thereon an orange fess stripe, therebetween a Basotho pony rampant proper.”

³⁸⁶ *Gazankulu Statutes – Constitutional Law*, Issue No. 2, pp 11 and 15, Act No.7 of 1986.

³⁸⁷ A similar provision had been adopted in respect of the national flag of Bophuthatswana.

³⁸⁸ Act No. 3 of 1975, adopted by the QwaQwa Legislative Assembly.

The green in this flag was said to symbolize the land, while the two couped orange bands, issuing from the hoist and fly respectively, represented the two Basotho tribes who settled this region, namely the Bathlhokoa and the Bakwena, and their traditional links by nineteenth century treaty with the Orange Free State Republic. The Basotho pony which is depicted in black, refers to the sure-footed progress of the people on the often difficult path ahead.³⁸⁹

The self-governing national state of KwaZulu, whose name means the place or home of the Zulus, was granted internal self-government on 1 February 1977. KwaZulu was the only national state to change its national flag. The design of the original national flag of KwaZulu (1977-1985) is set out in section 2 of the KwaZulu Flag Act, 1977,³⁹⁰ which reads as follows:

2. (1) The width of the Flag of KwaZulu shall be equal to two-thirds of its length.
- (2) On the left (sic) of the Flag shall be a vermilion coloured vertical panel of which the width shall be equal to one-third of the width of the Flag and in the middle of this panel shall be portrayed in white a shield of a Zulu warrior, five-ninths of the height of the Flag.
- (3) (a) The right hand (sic) portion of the flag shall be divided into five horizontal panels.
(b) The top and bottom panels shall be white and each of these panels shall be equal to one-third of the height of the Flag.
(c) The middle portion shall be equal in width and coloured from top to bottom, gold, green and black.

Following a decision of the KwaZulu Cabinet on 20 May 1984, the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly decided to incorporate certain amendments into the national flag as described in section 2 of the KwaZulu Flag Act, 1977. This was done by means of the KwaZulu Flag Amendment Act, 1984, which was assented to by the State President on 14 January 1985.³⁹¹ This amended flag was to serve KwaZulu from 1985 to 1994.

The Inkatha Freedom Party which had exercised political control in KwaZulu since its

³⁸⁹ *The Flag Bulletin*, XV, 6, November/December 1976, p 171.

³⁹⁰ Act No. 6 of 1977, published under Government Notice No. 23 of 1977 in the *Official Gazette of KwaZulu*, Vol. 1, No. 10, 28 October 1977.

³⁹¹ Published under Government Notice No. 38 of 1985 in the *Official Gazette of KwaZulu*, Vol. 9, No. 15, 12 April 1985.

inception, had its origins in the African National Congress (ANC). In the first of the KwaZulu national flags, the stripes across the centre of the fly were in the reverse sequence of the colours on the flag of the then banned ANC. In the amended flag the sequence was changed to black, green and gold, as in the flag adopted by the ANC as far back as 1925. These colours were said to represent the people, by means of the black, with green for the land and gold for wealth. White and red are additional Inkatha colours.³⁹² Whereas the first KwaZulu flag bore a plain white shield in the hoist panel, in the amended flag the full shield from the KwaZulu coat of arms, with plumed staff and spears in saltire was incorporated.

The self-governing national state of KaNgwane, situated contiguous to the Kingdom of Swaziland, was established for that part of the Swazi nation living within the borders of South Africa. It was granted internal self-government on 1 October 1977.³⁹³ KaNgwane was the only homeland not to adopt a distinctive national flag. It flew only the national flag of South Africa.

KwaNdebele was a self-governing national state situated in the former Transvaal, north-east of Pretoria, was established for the Ndebele, an offshoot of the Zulu nation. It was granted internal self-government on 1 October 1979 and was moving towards full independence from the Republic of South Africa at the end of 1986. However, internal unrest fermented by the United Democratic Front and other bodies put an end to the independence process. The design of the national flag of KwaNdebele is set out in section 2 of the KwaNdebele Flag Act, 1982,³⁹⁴ which reads as follows:

2. (1) The KwaNdebele Flag shall be a flag consisting of three horizontal stripes of equal width from top to bottom blue, yellow and green, on which there shall appear, in the centre of the yellow stripe, a short knobkierie erect conjoined to four battle axe heads.
- (2) The knobkierie shall be brown, the rear axe heads shall be brown and the front axe heads shall be grey.
- (3) The width of the KwaNdebele Flag shall be equal to two-thirds of its length.
- (4) The length and width of the charges referred to in sub-section (1) shall be equal to

³⁹² The flag of the Inkatha Freedom Party, which was registered with the Bureau of Heraldry, consisted of horizontal stripes in red, white, black, green, gold, white and red.

³⁹³ Proclamation No. 148, 1984 in *Government Gazette* No. 9408 of 31 August 1984.

³⁹⁴ Act No. 4 of 1982, published under Government Notice No. 4 of 1982 in the *Official Gazette of KwaNdebele*, No. 48 of 6 October 1982.

two-thirds of the width of the yellow stripe.

The symbolism ascribed to this flag was that blue represented the colour of the sky, the endlessness of space and the room needed for the Ndebele people to fulfil their ideals; yellow the light and energy radiating from the sun, so that the nation could advance without fear of the danger which lurks in the dark; while green is the colour of plants and grass and also symbolises growth and advancement. The knobkierie (a stick with a knob on top) was seen as symbolic of the government's responsibility to maintain law and order, while the attached battle-axe heads alluded to the struggle for self-determination and promotion of the nation's traditions and culture.³⁹⁵ Efforts by the Bureau of Heraldry to have a two-dimensional symbol, rather than one in three dimensions depicted on this flag, were to no avail.³⁹⁶

These independent and national states which had been created within the borders of the Republic of South Africa disappeared from the political scene and their coats of arms, national and other flags and symbols of state which had been instituted, fell into abeyance in 1994. This was when the Constitution which had been drawn up for South Africa during the Multi-Party Negotiating Process at Kempton Park in 1993, came into force. They nevertheless played an important role in that there was, in each case, input from the sections of the Bantu-speaking population which these flags were intended to serve and to represent. They thus contributed in setting the groundwork for the institution of the new South African national flag in 1994.

In what might well be construed as a cynical comment on reality, the flags of the homelands were, together with other Southern African flags, illustrated on a miniature philatelic sheet issued by Guinea-Bissau in 2010.³⁹⁷ Although largely ignored by the world at large because of South Africa's apartheid policy, the fact remains that the Homeland flags were an integral part of the country's flag heritage.

³⁹⁵ The colour blue is associated with the Manala, yellow/gold with the Ndzundza, which are respectively the two principal tribes, while green is seen as representing fertility (This is from a note in the unpublished manuscript by the writer entitled "Symbols of sovereignty of South Africa's former independent and self-governing national states," in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

³⁹⁶ Correspondence in this regard will be found on the Bureau of Heraldry's file H4/3/3/43, Official bodies: KwaNdebele.

³⁹⁷ This philatelic sheet is illustrated in colour in *SAVA Newsletter*, SN: 63/12, 31 August 2012, p 21.

This chapter has presented a sweeping overview of the various flags which have flown over South Africa in the past three and a half centuries. As is evident they have not always flown without resistance, but are nevertheless reflective of the due historical time and events.

CHAPTER IV - FLAG RUMBLES OF DISCONTENT

Apart from the mainly Afrikaner opposition to the use in South Africa of the Union Jack, with its imperial connotations, the previous chapter shows that although calls for changes to the former national flag were a hardy perennial, it weathered more than half a century of such storms. Opposition to that flag initially came from those who wanted the small Union Jack removed from the group of three small flags in the centre, but in later years increasing criticism was that the national flag of 1928 was not representative of the population as a whole. That national flag was essentially a resume of South African flag history until 1927. At the time of its creation there was – with the exception of Ethiopia – virtually no indigenous African national flag tradition of any significance.

History is not static and against a background of the rising tide of African nationalism since the 1950s, Africa's decolonization and the then rapidly changing political face of South Africa in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, it was increasingly apparent that a major political transformation faced South Africa. In consequence, it was inevitable that the days of the former national flag were numbered. This chapter sets out to consider the factors which set this process in motion.

4.1 Flags and the rise of African nationalism

In the South African context the adoption of the Freedom Charter at Kliptown (Johannesburg) by the African National Congress and its associates, on 26 June 1956, in many ways marked a political paradigm shift.³⁹⁸ Many of the Charter's clauses have become a reality and its provisions had a marked influence on the negotiations which led to the drawing up of the South African constitution.³⁹⁹ In the broader African context, on 1 January 1956 Sudan, a former Anglo-Egyptian condominium had gained independence. This was followed on 2 March by Morocco, which comprised former French and Spanish protectorates, and on 20 March by Tunisia, formerly part of the Turkish Empire and latterly a French protectorate.⁴⁰⁰ The following year, on 6 March 1957 the former British colony of the Gold Coast and adjacent Togoland became independent as the Republic of Ghana. This was exactly a month

³⁹⁸ Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, *Long walk to freedom* (Macdonald Purnell, Randburg, 1994), esp. pp 159- 164.

³⁹⁹ Gwede Mantashe, "SA's priceless Freedom Charter," *Pretoria News*, 26 June 2014, p 14.

⁴⁰⁰ Guy Arnold, *Africa: a modern history* (Atlantic Books, London, 2005), pp 249, 31 and 33.

before the South African Government brought to an end the dual flag arrangement in terms of the Flags Amendment Act, 1957. The national flag alone would henceforth be flown on all occasions.⁴⁰¹ Ghana's independence was followed on 2 October 1958 by the Republic of Guinea, another former French colony. The Republic of Cameroon, a former French trusteeship territory, achieved independence on 1 January 1960.

This was the first of no fewer than eighteen African countries to gain independence that year.⁴⁰² Indeed, 1960 was to be a year of turmoil in Africa as a whole; with unrest and bloodshed particularly evident in the new Democratic Republic of Congo and parts of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The Union of South Africa was not immune to this groundswell of African nationalism. At a time when the country was facing growing internal unrest and increasing external hostility towards its apartheid policy, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the visiting British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan focused world-wide attention on its problems and policies in his "Wind of change" address to a joint sitting of the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town on 3 February 1960.⁴⁰³

Macmillan had first referred to the "Wind of change" at a banquet in Accra, Ghana the previous month at the start of his African tour, but little attention had then been paid to his remarks. However, the theme was to be the dominant one of his entire journey through Africa. This tour took place at a time in which much of the continent was restless. In South Africa itself the unrest culminated in the Sharpeville and Langa disturbances during March 1960,⁴⁰⁴ followed by the imposition of a general state of emergency, which was only lifted almost six months later on 31 August 1960. It was against this background of socio-political problems that the National Party government decided to consult the (then white) electorate by means of a referendum, on the proposed change from a monarchical to a republican form of

⁴⁰¹ Act No. 18 of 1957 (*Statutes of the Union of South Africa* (1957, I), p 252).

⁴⁰² These were: Sierra Leone and Togo on 27 April; Mali and Senegal on 20 June; Madagascar on 26 June; the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa) on 30 June; Somalia on 1 July; Benin on 1 August; Niger on 3 August; Upper Volta (later Burkina Faso) also on 3 August; Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) on 7 August; Chad on 11 August; Central African Republic on 13 August; Congolese Republic (Congo-Brazzaville) on 15 August; Gabon on 17 August; Nigeria on 1 October; and Mauritania on 28 November 1960.

⁴⁰³ *Souvenir of the visit of The Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, on Wednesday, 3rd February, 1960* (Printed on the authority of Mr. Speaker, Cape Times, Parow, 1960); *The Times* (London), 4 February 1960.

⁴⁰⁴ When writing of the "Sharpeville Massacre" on 16 June 1960, the tendency is to ignore the fact that a few days earlier, seven young policemen had been brutally murdered, at Cato Manor. De Villiers Graaf, *Div looks back: the memoirs of Sir De Villiers Graaff* (Human and Rousseau, Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1993) pp 170-171.

government. In this referendum, which was held on 5 October 1960, a slim majority of those eligible to vote expressed themselves in favour of the establishment of a republic.⁴⁰⁵ The National Party, which had come to political power in South Africa in 1948 and had long cherished the republican ideal was, in a way, also casting off a colonial bond. Macmillan's speech had been a reminder that even a conservative British government was now siding with the forces of African nationalism and could not be expected to give wholehearted support to a white South Africa.⁴⁰⁶ The decolonization of Africa was to continue unabated, with South Africa ultimately being counted as the last state on the continent whose government was to pass into African majority hands.⁴⁰⁷

The events leading to the creation of a new national flag for the Republic of South Africa in 1993 and 1994 cannot be seen in isolation. They are an integral part of a world-wide phenomenon, influenced at every stage by factors from within and without the country. They must thus be viewed in the international, African and local context, in an endeavour to determine what influence the various factors, mainly historical, political and practical, have had on the process. As the previous chapters show, in South Africa there was obviously a strong European vexillological influence, stemming from the country's colonial past, which is reflected in the previous national flag. At the time that flag was created, there was no flag-bearing tradition of any significance among the then predominantly rural indigenous peoples of South Africa.⁴⁰⁸

Particularly from the mid-1950s there was, however, a growing ground-swell of opinion, particularly among the African component of the South African population, that since the national flag was tainted by its association with apartheid, it did not represent them. This perception must be seen against a background of the rising tide of African nationalism after the end of World War II, which reached a peak in 1960. Political and attendant vexillological developments elsewhere on the African continent, and their resonance within South Africa itself, were to play a key role in the need for, and the creation of the new South African

⁴⁰⁵ D.W. Krüger, *The making of a nation: a history of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1961* (Macmillan, Johannesburg, 1969, 6th impression, 1977), pp 322-331.

⁴⁰⁶ Krüger, *The making of a nation*, p 329; Giliomee and Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, pp 333-336.

⁴⁰⁷ For a detailed account of African history in this period, see Guy Arnold, *Africa: a modern history* (Atlantic Books, London, 2005); and Martin Meredith, *The state of Africa: a history of fifty years of independence* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 2006).

⁴⁰⁸ Subsequent urbanization radically changed the political climate.

national flag. It is thus appropriate to look briefly at flag-related influences, the distinctive characteristics of “nation-building” in Africa and the emergence of independent states on the continent, each of which adopted a new national flag. Many of these flags have remained unchanged since independence, but in other cases there have been a succession of national flags, usually as a result of internal unrest and other political factors. In a number of instances former flags have been restored.⁴⁰⁹

Among the exhaustive body of literature dealing with “nation-building in Africa”, one of the key fore-runners and seminal works was the collection of essays edited by the political scientists, Professors Karl Deutsch and William Foltz in the mid-1960s.⁴¹⁰ By this time – beginning with Ghana in 1957 – some thirty sub-Saharan countries had gained independence and were in the process of trying to define themselves as nations.⁴¹¹ Many were in turmoil and there was justification for the comments by David Wilson, then an Associate Professor in Political Science at the University of California, that: “Building a nation” is a pretty bit of rhetoric, but it leaves a great deal to be desired as a social science concept. The definition of a nation is rather difficult to come by, and the idea of building one is a gross metaphor.”⁴¹² In the introductory paragraphs to his incisive essay, Rupert Emerson remarked that “to engage in nation-building, one must first find the nation. In the African setting, this is likely to be a more hazardous and uncertain venture than anywhere else. Nations and nationalism consort uneasily with Africa.”⁴¹³ The political pattern of Africa was largely imposed by colonial powers who had divided the continent among them. Emerson goes on to say that although nations might well be emerging south of the Sahara, it seems that terms such as “nationalism” and “nationalist” were somewhat inappropriate, because they were more favoured terms of the day rather than because actual nations were involved.⁴¹⁴

Much of African nationhood has been created in consequence of a revolutionary struggle and

⁴⁰⁹ In a Power-point presentation entitled “Interpretation of flag symbolism,” delivered on 23 November 2011, to the Annual Protocol Conference for Africa, 2011, which was held at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria, Bruce Berry, Secretary of the Southern African Vexillological Association, incorporated a statistical breakdown of the African flag changes which had taken place. (There is a hard-copy in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

⁴¹⁰ Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (eds), *Nation-building* (Atherton Press, New York, 1966).

⁴¹¹ The dates of independence are taken mainly from Alfred Znamierowski, *Flags of the World: an illustrated guide to contemporary flags* (Southwater, London, 2000).

⁴¹² David A Wilson, “Nation-building and revolutionary war,” in Deutsch and Foltz, *Nation-building*, p 95.

⁴¹³ Rupert Emerson, “Nation-building in Africa,” in Deutsch and Foltz, *Nation-building*, p 95; see also Chapter 8, “The birth of nations,” in Meredith, *The state of Africa*, pp 141-161.

⁴¹⁴ Emerson, “Nation-building in Africa,” in Deutsch and Foltz, *Nation-building*, p 97.

Emerson points to the pivotal role played by dominant parties in this process. Many of these parties evolved from the “liberation” or “revolutionary” movements which spear-headed the “struggle.” In consolidating their position, they have not only subordinated governmental and administrative machinery to the party, but have drawn into its ambit special groups such as the unions, other workers, women and the youth, in order to achieve their objectives.⁴¹⁵ This has certainly been the trend in South Africa, particularly since 1999. In a situation such as this, “nation-building” and its symbols can mean different things to different segments of the population.⁴¹⁶

Mention has already been made of the colonial impact on South Africa since 1652. Although there were a number of other early European settlements on the continent, these were generally of a trading nature, but as the demand for natural resources increased, there was a wholesale “Scramble for Africa,” which commenced in the 1870s.⁴¹⁷ This saw the greater part of the continent being carved up between the major European powers: Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Portugal, and to a lesser extent Spain, at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.⁴¹⁸ Among others, these powers sought resources and markets for their products. There was undoubtedly extreme exploitation, but in numerous countries the colonial powers developed infrastructure, provided health-care, education and other facilities which had hitherto been lacking. Virtually the only country which escaped colonization at the time was the Ethiopian Empire – a fact which was to have a profound vexillological impact on post-colonial African flags. More than any other combination of colours, the red, yellow and green of Ethiopia were to find their way into many of the post-colonial African national flags, particularly in the sub-Saharan region. Hence the common reference to these as being the “Pan-African” colours. The Rastafarian movement in the West Indies, whose followers believed that the then Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie (or Ras Tafari), was divine, also adopted these colours. In North Africa, on the other hand, as a result of Islamic and Arab influences, the “Pan-Arab” colours of green, white and black, together with red, have proved

⁴¹⁵ Emerson, “Nation-building in Africa,” in Deutsch and Foltz, *Nation-building*, pp 96-109.

⁴¹⁶ Elira Bornman, “National symbols and nation-building in post-apartheid South Africa,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30 (3), May 2006, pp 383-399.

⁴¹⁷ Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa* (Macmillan Education, Oxford, 2nd rev. ed, 1995), p 239.

⁴¹⁸ C.F.J. Muller (ed.), *Five hundred years: a history of South Africa* (Academia, Pretoria and Cape Town, 2nd ed., 1971), p 399.

to be more popular in emerging national flags.⁴¹⁹

Apart from the colours which have featured in the flag of Ethiopia since the mid-1890s, the use in some instances of a black star – and by extension the colour black – can in a number of instances be linked to the influence of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican-born proponent of black nationalism and the “back to Africa” movement, which he established in the United States of America in the early twentieth century. The colours of the red, black and green flag which was created in 1917 for Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, were later adopted by the “Black Power” movement in the United States of America and the Caribbean, and were taken up by other black activists. They were, for example, to feature in the flags of Kenya (1963) and Malawi (1964). Garvey’s choice of a black star, as a symbol of African unity, was first used on the flag designed for the proposed Black Star [Shipping] Line in 1919.⁴²⁰ Garvey was the most influential black leader in the 1920s, but following a conviction for mail fraud relating to his misuse of funds intended for the establishment of the Black Star Line, for which he served two years in prison, he was deported to Jamaica and died in relative obscurity. Although the flamboyant Garvey never visited Africa, Shillington points to the extent to which his confident preaching of ‘Africa for the Africans’ and the expulsion of all Europeans, was an important inspiration for many young educated Africans who were to rise to prominence in the nationalist struggles after World War II.⁴²¹ The similarity of many of the flags adopted in Africa at that time may be attributed to the fact that many of the leaders of the newly-independent states were captured by their common commitment to Pan-Africanism and in consequence to the Pan-African flag colours. [Figure 5 shows flags in this category].

4.2 South Africa and Africa’s flags

In the early 1960s vexillology was in its infancy and thus an understanding of flags almost negligible. This was true of South Africans, as although they knew that decolonization was taking place and that parts of Africa were in turmoil, most had but scant knowledge of the new national flags which were springing up over the continent. One of the first serious

⁴¹⁹ For the origins of the Pan-African and Pan-Arab colours, see William Crampton, *The world of flags: a pictorial history* (Studio Editions, London, rev. ed., 1992), pp 135-137; Kent Alexander, *Flags of the world* (Friedman Group, New York, 1992), pp 19-20.

⁴²⁰ Crampton, *The world of flags*, p 135.

⁴²¹ Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp 359-360.

attempts to acquaint them with these flags was an illustrated catalogue of the “Flags of Africa,” which was compiled from information supplied by The Argus Africa News Service. Drawn up in February 1963, it was first published in *The Cape Argus, Week-end Magazine* on



Figure 5

Reproduced from Berry, paper entitled “Interpretation of flag symbolism,” International Protocol Conference for Africa, 2011, page 7

9 March 1963. The accompanying text stated that this catalogue “is intended to help the readers to know more about the swiftly changing continent in which we live.” Interest was such that this catalogue – essentially a poster – was soon reprinted and School Principals were informed that copies could be obtained from *The Cape Argus*.⁴²²

This catalogue illustrated the flags of the then thirty-four independent states in Africa. It did not illustrate the flags of those African territories which still had ties with the colonial powers. Brief factual information was provided, but the comment was made that “enough facts are given to show that many of the newly independent countries are small, poor, and under-developed. Nevertheless, taken together, they are very much a force to be reckoned with in world affairs, and are being actively wooed by leaders of both East and West.” This compilation of African flags was a timely publication when one bears in mind that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), was established in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 25 May 1963.⁴²³ One of the primary aims of the OAU was the elimination of colonialism in Africa.⁴²⁴

Two years later *The Cape Argus* updated its material on the flags of Africa, pointing out that six more had been added and that there had been several changes. They correctly predicted: “Soon there will be more.”⁴²⁵ Among the flags added was that of Rhodesia. On the break-up of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Malawi and Zambia had adopted new flags, but what now simply became Rhodesia had retained the flag of the former Southern Rhodesia. Ironically, when *Beeld* published its supplement on “The new Africa” three years later, after Rhodesia’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), that country was erroneously represented by the British Union Jack!⁴²⁶ Rhodesia’s UDI flag was officially hoisted on 11 November 1968, thus laying to rest the former flag of Southern Rhodesia.

From the early 1960s journals such as *The Flag Bulletin*, edited by Whitney Smith of the Flag Research Center, kept the fledgling international vexillological community informed of new flags and flag changes in Africa and elsewhere, but it was especially from 1975, with the publication of Smith’s superb book, *Flags; through the ages and across the world*, that

⁴²² There is a copy of this poster in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁴²³ May 25 is now celebrated as Africa Day.

⁴²⁴ Arnold, *Africa: a modern history*, pp 95-111.

⁴²⁵ *The Cape Argus*, Week-end Magazine, Saturday 17 April 1965, p 1.

⁴²⁶ “Die nuwe Afrika,” *Foto Beeld*, bl 1 [Bylae tot *Beeld*, 31 Maart, 1968]; *l’Afrique/Africa* (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Diloutremer – Paris, 2e ed., 1968), back cover fold-in.

reliable information on Africa's flags became readily available to the public at large in book form.⁴²⁷ As mentioned in the literature survey in Chapter II, many flag books lack accurate technical information. Probably the most reliable information on the flags of Africa which is currently available is that which has been compiled by the Southern African Vexillological Association (SAVA).⁴²⁸

4.3 Pressures in, on and around South Africa

Numerous monographs as well as recent general histories of South Africa, provide accounts of the pressures, both internal and external which were progressively brought to bear on the South African government to discard its apartheid policy and draw the majority of the population into the political process.⁴²⁹ Outside the country, member states of the United Nations and the Anti-Apartheid movement were in full swing, calling for the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu's biographer has recorded, the churches, often through the auspices of the South African Council of Churches – which was largely foreign-funded - and also black consciousness and civil rights movements in the United States of America all entered the fray.⁴³⁰ One has only to consult the programmes of the investitures of national orders since 2002, to see how many of the leading overseas figures involved at this time have subsequently been recognized by South Africa with the Order of the Companions of Oliver Tambo for “services rendered” in this regard. This Order, which was instituted in 2002, is named for the African National Congress's late leader in exile, and is awarded for “friendship shown to South Africa.”⁴³¹ The inclusion of the word “companions” in the name of this Order, was intended to indicate that it was primarily intended to recognize the contribution of those who had symbolically

⁴²⁷ Whitney Smith, *Flags: through the ages and across the world* (McGraw-Hill, Maidenhead, England, 1975). The literature survey in Chapter II provides a synopsis of the reliability of flag literature.

⁴²⁸ This is set out in the SAVA Compact Disc entitled *Flag specification sheets, Vol. I: Africa*, and regularly updated in the *SAVA Newsletter*, and on the SAVA website: <http://www.savaflags.org.za>.

⁴²⁹ See, for example, Gilomee and Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, pp 346-395.

⁴³⁰ John Allen, *Rabble-rouser for peace: the authorized biography of Desmond Tutu* (Rider, Edbury Publishing, London, 2006).

⁴³¹ A list of recipients from 2002 until 2014 is set out in the publication, *Celebrating the Investiture Ceremony of the National Orders: 20th year of Democracy and Freedom* (The Presidency, Union Buildings, Pretoria, 2014).

“travelled the road” with the late ANC president, Oliver Tambo.⁴³²

Within South Africa, the Soweto student uprising on 16 June 1976 sounded alarm bells throughout the government, but in essence it would seem that the establishment at Mitchells Plain, on the Cape Flats, of the United Democratic Front (UDF) on 20 August 1983, provided the most effective domestic opposition to the government’s policies. Conceived and formed to unite opposition within South Africa, the immediate target of the UDF was to oppose the new tricameral constitution which had been enacted in 1983 and was implemented the following year. The UDF claimed that some 575 organisations were affiliated to it, but was vague about the number of people that these represented. Indeed, many actions attributed to the UDF, were driven by affiliated bodies. Also in the opposition field at that time was the Azanian People’s Organisation (Azapo), but it failed to attract anything like the same level of support.⁴³³ On 8 January 1985 a call was issued by Oliver Tambo to “render South Africa ungovernable,” and the creation on 1 December 1985 of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), further strengthened the hands of those who were in opposition to government policies. Before long there was close co-operation over a wide front, with a country-wide ‘defiance campaign’ of civil disobedience.⁴³⁴

In the midst of the unrest spreading through the country and concerted efforts to make it ungovernable, by 1985 feelers were being extended to bring the opposing parties together in the interests of the country as a whole. These meetings took place at various venues overseas. One of the better-known meetings held with members of the African National Congress, in an attempt to find common ground, was that which commenced in Dakar, Senegal, on 8 July 1987. By that stage the UDF, acting in many respects as a surrogate for the banned African National Congress, was doing its best to make the townships ungovernable, by encouraging residents, inter alia, to withhold payments for rent and municipal services.

⁴³² The writer, who had served in 1984 as a member of the Hiemstra Commission into Honours and Awards under the former political dispensation, was appointed by President Mandela in 1998 as a member of the newly-established Advisory Council for National Orders. Having served in this capacity for sixteen years, his membership of the Advisory Council was terminated by President Zuma at the end of October 2014, when a new advisory council took office.

⁴³³ Giliomee and Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, pp 379-382.

⁴³⁴ Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, p 536; Giliomee and Mbenga, *New history of South Africa*, p 384-385; Butler, *Cyril Ramaphosa*, p 217, and in general for the role played by Cosatu. Ramaphosa, who was General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, was later to play a critical role in the negotiation process.

The delegates from South Africa, who were led by Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and Alex Boraine of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative (Idasa), were mainly Afrikaner writers, journalists, artists, film-makers, academics, businessmen, politicians, a former rugby player and a young “Dopper” minister. In his book *The other side of history*, van Zyl Slabbert devotes an entire chapter to the Dakar Safari, and points out that this was but one of a number of initiatives.⁴³⁵ A photograph of many of those who attended Dakar, is reproduced in van Zyl Slabbert’s book.⁴³⁶ A number of those who went to Dakar were later to be involved in the formal negotiation process within South Africa, while some were members of or assessors to the Commission on National Symbols.

Both in South Africa and overseas, 1989 proved to be a momentous year. As *Time* magazine was to describe it ten years later, it was “The year that changed the world.”⁴³⁷ In February F.W. de Klerk was elected leader of the National Party after State President P.W. Botha had suffered a stroke. On 3 June 1989, after almost a month of protests, Chinese troops stormed Tiananmen Square in Beijing, killing hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators. Ten days later, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl agreed to the reunification of East and West Germany. On 5 July P.W. Botha and Nelson Mandela met at the State President’s official residence, Tuynhuys, adjacent to Parliament.⁴³⁸ Five weeks later, after a Cabinet meeting on 14 August, Botha tendered his resignation to the Chief Justice and was succeeded the following day by F.W. de Klerk (as acting State President).⁴³⁹ Three weeks later, on 6 September 1989, a general election was held in South Africa after which, on 20 September, De Klerk was formally inaugurated as State President. On 10 October he announced that Walter Sisulu and seven other leading ANC detainees would be released from prison. This happened five days later.⁴⁴⁰ In Europe matters were also moving fast and on 7 November the East German government resigned after pro-democracy protests. Two days later, on 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall effectively came down, when the East German Government, “almost mistakenly” announced that East Germans could visit

⁴³⁵ Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, *The other side of history: an anecdotal reflection on political transition in South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 2006), pp 43-84. Between pp 56 and 57 there are a number of relevant photographs.

⁴³⁶ Van Zyl Slabbert, *The other side of history*, this photograph, in which the attendees are numbered, and thus identified, appears between pp 56-57.

⁴³⁷ *Time*, Vol. 173, Nos. 26/27, June 29-July 6, 2009, pp 29-53.

⁴³⁸ Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, p 538.

⁴³⁹ Daan Prinsloo, *Stem uit die Wildernis: ’n biografie van oud-pres. PW Botha* (Vaandel-Uitgewers, Mosselbaai, 1997), bl 419-420.

⁴⁴⁰ Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, p 542.

the West.⁴⁴¹ Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe soon collapsed like a house of cards.

By that stage Cuban military forces had withdrawn from Angola and the final phase of South West Africa/Namibia's independence was on course. Although the date of independence was envisaged for 21 March 1990,⁴⁴² as yet no decision had been taken about a national flag. As was later to happen in South Africa, constitutional negotiations in South West Africa progressed in fits and starts. It should be remembered that South West Africa had been under South African administration since 1915. Although the territory had a registered coat of arms, it had never had a flag of its own. At that stage the provisions of South Africa's heraldic legislation⁴⁴³ extended to South West Africa and the Bureau of Heraldry could, on request, provide advice and register heraldic representations. An independent Namibia would obviously need a national flag of its own. On 26 November 1987 I, as the then State Herald of South Africa, was in accordance with South West Africa's Cabinet decision 1088/87, invited to serve on a committee for national symbols.⁴⁴⁴ Approval to serve on this committee was granted by the South African Director General of National Education on 6 January 1988 and confirmation of the appointment was received from the Department of National Education in Windhoek on 30 June 1988. On 18 October 1988 notification was received that I would shortly be informed of developments in this regard.⁴⁴⁵ For "administrative reasons" matters in Windhoek were moving slowly. Quietly, behind the scenes, guidance was being transmitted to Windhoek, principally through Colonel Des Radmore who was responsible for heraldic matters the South West Africa Territory Force (SWATF), on the possible wording and guidelines of an invitation for public participation in the design of a national flag.⁴⁴⁶ A media release in this regard, dated 10 January 1990, was issued by Hidipo Hamutenya, Chairman of the National Symbols sub-committee of the Standing Committee of the Constituent Assembly.⁴⁴⁷ On Friday 19 January 1990 the authorities in Windhoek requested that the State Herald's expertise be placed at Namibia's disposal. Approval was granted by

⁴⁴¹ Carol Lazar, "Berlin reborn," *Saturday Star, Travel*, 6 June 2009, p 5.

⁴⁴² This date was formally announced on 29 January 1990 (*The Citizen*, 20 January 1990, p 20).

⁴⁴³ Heraldry Act, 1962.

⁴⁴⁴ Letter (without reference number), dated 26 November 1987, from the Secretary for National Education in Windhoek, to the writer (copy in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

⁴⁴⁵ There are copies of this correspondence in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁴⁴⁶ In the same way that all heraldic designs for the South African Defence Force were submitted to the State Herald for approval, Radmore paid regular visits to the State Herald for approval of SWATF insignia.

⁴⁴⁷ *The Namibian*, 11 January 1990, pp 1 and 7; *The Windhoek Advertiser*, 11 January 1990, p 5.

the South African Department of National Education the same day.⁴⁴⁸

In consequence, on Monday 22 January 1990 the State Herald flew to Windhoek and along with technical advisers, Des Radmore and Joan Merrington,⁴⁴⁹ they evaluated the designs received from the public. These were displayed on tables in the Turnhalle – and composite proposals were prepared.⁴⁵⁰ Since it is important for those involved in the final evaluation process to see and feel a full-size product, material in the correct colours was bought, cut out and sewn up into full-size replicas of the final flag proposals. An adaptation of the State Herald's suggestion, with an amended representation of the sun in the upper hoist, was duly adopted as the future national flag of Namibia by the Constituent Assembly on Friday, 2 February 1990.⁴⁵¹ This was, fortuitously, the same day on which President De Klerk made his momentous announcement at the opening of Parliament, which was to change the direction of South African history.⁴⁵²

4.4 Negotiating the way forward

From the time of the creation of the national flag of Namibia in January 1990, it had become clear that the then national flag of South Africa, which was a product of the South African political scene in the 1920s, would be unlikely to survive the transition to a new political dispensation. On 2 February 1990, State President F.W. de Klerk had announced in his address at the opening of Parliament that the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and other bodies would be unbanned and political detainees released.⁴⁵³ In particular, the release of Nelson Mandela from the Victor Verster Prison near Paarl on 11 February 1990 marked the end of a process which had begun in the time of State President P.W. Botha. This not only set in place a power play across the political spectrum, but also initiated the formal negotiation process which led to the “new”

⁴⁴⁸ Copies of this correspondence are in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁴⁴⁹ Joan Merrington, who was a competent heraldic artist, had served both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe in this capacity and did most of the art-work for insignia of the SWATF.

⁴⁵⁰ *The Namibian*, 24 January 1990, p 3; *Die Republikein*, 24 Januarie 1990 (no page number available).

⁴⁵¹ *The Windhoek Advertiser*, Monday 5 February 1990, p 5; *The Namibian*, 5 February 1990, p 3; *Times of Namibia*, 5 February 1990, p 1.

⁴⁵² A little more than a month later, the State Herald was back in Windhoek assisting with the design of that country's coat of arms, which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on Friday 9 March 1990. (State Herald's Office Diary, Wednesday 7 March - Saturday 10 March 1990). *Namibia Nachrichten*, 11/12 März, 1990, p 1; *Sondag-Republikein*, 11 Maart 1990, bl 5; *Algemene Zeitung*, 12 März 1990, p 2.

⁴⁵³ De Klerk, *The last trek*, pp 159-172,

democratic South Africa, which came into being on 27 April 1994.⁴⁵⁴

When announcing Mandela's release, De Klerk said:

I wish to emphasise that there cannot be any further doubt now concerning the Government's sincerity to create a fair dispensation which is based on negotiation. I call on Mr Mandela and all interested parties to make their contribution to the creation of a positive climate for negotiation.⁴⁵⁵

The process which De Klerk set in motion was to extend over the following three years. As Van Zyl Slabbert was later to write, he had a personal discussion with De Klerk in his office in Tuynhuys a few weeks after he made his announcement and asked, "Why did you do it?" De Klerk's reply was: Two reasons. I underwent a spiritual leap ("geestelike sprong"), in which I accepted the moral untenability of apartheid, and secondly, I would have been a fool not to take the gap that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism gave me." According to Van Zyl Slabbert, De Klerk was then apparently convinced that by taking the initiative, he had the ANC at a disadvantage.⁴⁵⁶

Negotiations within South Africa progressed in fits and starts over the next three years. Every now and then the question of flags would arise in the Press. The resumé from Press reports for the period January 1990 to June 1993, which was compiled by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and included as Appendix A to its second Report, make interesting reading.⁴⁵⁷ They show only too well how emotive the flag issue was and the extent to which the question of other national symbols was in the public eye and consequently clouded the negotiation process at that stage.⁴⁵⁸ For the purposes of this study a brief synopsis of some of these articles will suffice.⁴⁵⁹

Less than a month after Mandela's release Dr Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of Constitutional

⁴⁵⁴ Michael Morris, *Every step of the way: the journey to freedom in South Africa* (HSRC Press, Cape Town, 1994), pp 244-249.

⁴⁵⁵ *South African Profile*, p 17.

⁴⁵⁶ Van Zyl Slabbert, *The other side of history*, p 28.

⁴⁵⁷ The HSRC investigation into national symbols and consequent Reports are addressed later in this chapter.

⁴⁵⁸ The HSRC resumé gives details of the source and date of each article to which reference is made, but does not provide a page number. The articles are, however, each numbered by year in the resumé.

⁴⁵⁹ These will be interspersed in chronological order in the following text.

Development and Planning, indicated that he was prepared to discuss certain symbols of nationhood such as the national anthem and possible alternative flags. Presumably in reaction to this announcement, some ten days later Peter Saul, the Democratic Party's spokesman on information, stated that such symbols would need to be negotiated.⁴⁶⁰ The following month Gene Louw, Minister of the Interior, announced in Parliament that any investigation into national symbols at that time would be premature. Once the negotiation process had succeeded, symbols would be addressed.⁴⁶¹

The first round of formal negotiations held in South Africa took place at Groote Schuur from 2-4 May 1990, and saw the adoption of the Groote Schuur Minute which established the initial framework for negotiations.⁴⁶² This was followed three months later by negotiations in Pretoria, which saw the adoption on 7 August 1990 of the Pretoria Minute. At this time the ANC announced that it was suspending the armed struggle which had begun nearly thirty years earlier.⁴⁶³ A week later the Conservative Party controlled Lichtenburg Town Council prevented the women's movement of the National Party from using flagstuffs at the town hall entrance to hoist the national flag during a visit by Marike de Klerk, the wife of the State President. This embarrassing episode was soon followed by an apology to the State President and his wife by the mayor of Lichtenburg for the action of one of the town councillors.⁴⁶⁴ In the early stages of negotiations the national flag was clearly coming under pressure from both the left and the right of the political spectrum.

The growing interest in flag matters in South Africa at this stage, led at the suggestion of Whitney Smith, the founding father of vexillology, with whom all of those present had been in contact, to a meeting on 30 August 1990 in the office of Bruce Berry, a development economist at the Development Bank of Southern Africa in Midrand and an avid collector of southern African flags. The meeting was also attended by Tony Hampson-Tindale, Director of the flag manufacturer, Flag Craft; Theo Stylianides, who probably has the most substantial vexillological library in South Africa; and the author, then State Herald of South Africa, who

⁴⁶⁰ *Business Day* and *Volksblad*, 8 March 1990; *Sunday Star*, 18 March 1990.

⁴⁶¹ *Transvaler* and *Volksblad*, 25 April 1990.

⁴⁶² These developments did not always go down well and later that month the Conservative Party distanced itself from supporters who had burned an ANC flag during a rally at the Voortrekker Monument. *Pretoria News*, 28 May 1990.

⁴⁶³ Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a miracle*, pp 158-166; Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country*, pp 121-124.

⁴⁶⁴ *Citizen*, 13 and 15 August 1990.

had met Whitney Smith and been seduced into the vexillological fold, when attending the 8th international flag congress in Vienna in 1979. At this informal meeting a decision was taken to draw up a constitution and establish a southern African flag association. As mentioned, SAVA came into being in November that year and produced its first newsletter in March 1991.⁴⁶⁵

The resistance against the 1928 flag and the need for a new flag was apparent in action taken by one of the sporting fraternities. On 23 March 1991 the South African Football Association (SAFA), took into use a flag designed by its Secretary General “Stix” Morewa, for use at international football fixtures, in lieu of the South African national flag. Before long it had been used at matches against Cameroon, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU) soon adopted a flag as well.⁴⁶⁶ By the middle of 1991, the view was being expressed that our national symbols should be acceptable to all and not be associated with a specific cultural group. They should be binding, conciliatory and give a feeling of common destiny.⁴⁶⁷ At this time, with the crumbling of the sports boycott and the return of activists who had opposed South Africa’s international sport participation while in political exile overseas, aspects of sport administration started becoming radical.

This threw into relief the potentially vexing problem of national symbols with Sam Ramsamy, chairman of the National Olympic Committee of South Africa (Nocsa) to the fore. He declared that any flag colours and anthem used by sportsmen and women in international competition should be acceptable to Nocsa.⁴⁶⁸ According to Ramsamy the then national flag represented the apartheid era and was thus unacceptable,⁴⁶⁹ while Bill Jardine of the ANC aligned National Sports Congress, an affiliate of Nocsa, declared that his organization had already voted unanimously for changing the springbok emblem and colours.⁴⁷⁰ On the same day, *Beeld* reported that De Klerk had remarked that it was not for Ramsamy to take decisions on the flag and anthem.⁴⁷¹ On 6 November 1991 Nocsa revealed the design of the flag under which South Africans would compete at the forthcoming Barcelona Olympics.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁵ SAVA Newsletter SN: 1/91, March 1991.

⁴⁶⁶ SAVA Newsletter SN: 4/92, 31 December 1992, pp 29-30. Both flags are illustrated in this article.

⁴⁶⁷ *Beeld*, 12 June 1991; *Vrye Weekblad*, 13 June 1991.

⁴⁶⁸ *Natal Witness*, 2 July 1991; *Weekly Mail*, 18 July 1991.

⁴⁶⁹ *Patriot*, 1 November 1991.

⁴⁷⁰ *Star*, 4 November 1991.

⁴⁷¹ *Beeld*, 4 November 1991.

⁴⁷² SAVA Newsletter, SN: 2/91, 15 November 1991, pp 12-14; and SN: 3/92, 31 July 1992, pp 21-22.

Within less than a week Minister Louis Pienaar of National Education and Environmental Affairs is reported as saying that the choice of Beethoven's "Ode to joy," in lieu of the national anthem, and Nocsa's cobbled together interim Olympic flag (for the Barcelona Olympics), were "n klap in die gesig" (a slap in the face) for South Africans. He stated that it was not for Nocsa to make such changes, and that the decision would in due course be taken by a democratically elected authority.⁴⁷³ The general consensus was that Nocsa had no mandate and that its choice was "presumptuous, arrogant and devoid of feeling."⁴⁷⁴ These emotional exchanges led to Dr Stoffel van der Merwe, Secretary-General of the National Party, calling for cool heads, careful consideration and willingness to compromise, in the interests of the country as a whole.⁴⁷⁵

Amidst these heated exchanges about symbols in the sporting field, the State of Emergency which had been imposed by the government in 1985 to deal with escalating township and rural violence was lifted. However, levels of unrest continued to escalate and in an attempt to bring this under control, a National Peace Accord was signed on 14 September 1991 by the leaders of the most important political groupings. As set out in the preamble to the Accord, the aim was: "To signify our common purpose to bring an end to the political violence in our country and to set codes of conduct, procedures and mechanisms to achieve this goal." As part of the process of engendering public awareness, a two-dove logo was taken into use. In April 1993 this logo was incorporated into what became known as the "Peace Flag."⁴⁷⁶

The key product of the first phase of the Conference for a Democratic South Africa was a "Declaration of Intent" which had been carefully prepared, largely in advance, by Fanie van der Merwe and Mac Maharaj, the operational heads of the core negotiating teams. In this declaration the signatories, inter alia, committed themselves to working towards an undivided South Africa with one nation sharing a common citizenship; healing the divisions of the past and creating a climate conducive to peaceful constitutional change. A rectangular logo comprising radiating narrow white stripes against a red, yellow and blue background, and bearing the acronym C•O•D•E•S•A, was unveiled on 18 December 1991. This logo was, in turn, incorporated into the fifty flags which were manufactured in haste to grace the flag-

⁴⁷³ *Volksblad*, 7 November 1992.

⁴⁷⁴ *Die Burger*, 5 November 1991; *Citizen*, 9 November, 1991; *Transvaler*, 12 November 1991; and *Beeld*, 13 November 1991.

⁴⁷⁵ *Sunday Times*, 17 November 1991.

⁴⁷⁶ Bruce Berry, "Peace Flag," *SAVA Newsletter*, SN: 6/93, 31 August 1993, pp 4-7.

posts at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park, where the first phase of this process, known as Codesa 1, convened two days later on 20 December 1991. Such was the urgency that these flags could not be printed in colour in the limited time available and were hence in black on white. Of further interest to the vexillologist was that in addition to constitutional matters, the intention was that Codesa Working Group 2, which met behind the scenes between December 1991 and May 1992, would also be considering the matter of national symbols.⁴⁷⁷ The State Herald wrote to Murphy Morobe of the Codesa Secretariat offering the professional services of the Bureau of Heraldry in this regard.⁴⁷⁸ However, the question of national symbols was not addressed and no decisions were consequently taken by Codesa 1 in this regard.⁴⁷⁹

Not directly related to, but falling between the plenary sessions of Codesa 1 and its successor Codesa 2, the ANC, which was then formulating policy on national and related symbols, arranged a workshop to exchange ideas with professionals in the field. The urgent need for research on the subject was repeatedly stressed at this workshop, the focus of which was: “Towards a National Policy for Monuments, Museums and National Symbols.” This workshop, which was held in Bloemfontein on 18 and 19 March 1992, was also attended by staff members of the Department of National Education, the HSRC, academics and representatives of conservation bodies. Consensus was reached that decisions on future policy and symbols should be taken as democratically as possible and only after a process of consultation with a variety of interested parties.⁴⁸⁰

The final plenary session of the second round of the Conference for a Democratic South Africa, which has gone down in history as Codesa 2, was held on 15 May 1992. These latter discussions broke down almost immediately. The history of the Codesa process was well-researched and written by a team of analysts associated with the Johannesburg-based Centre for Policy Studies.⁴⁸¹ As the compilers were to remark, “In principle, Codesa was not meant to be a constitutional convention at all. It was supposed only to prepare the way for one,” and

⁴⁷⁷ Bruce Berry, “Flags for Codesa,” *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 3/92, 31 July 1992, pp 23-25.

⁴⁷⁸ If memory serves, there was no reply.

⁴⁷⁹ This is a personal recollection.

⁴⁸⁰ *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 5/93, 30 April 1993, p 1. Reference to this workshop is made in the Chairman’s report to the second AGM of SAVA.

⁴⁸¹ Steven Friedman (ed), *The long journey: South Africa’s quest for a negotiated settlement* (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1993).

that with the benefit of hindsight, the breakdown seemed to be both inevitable and necessary. “Both ‘major’ parties, having sparred for months on the basis of flawed assumptions, had a strategic need to withdraw from negotiating in the spotlight of expectations and amid the competing agendas of numerous parties.”⁴⁸² Apart from the comprehensive account on Codesa in *The long journey*, Patti Waldmeir devotes a chapter of her book to the dealings and double dealings which characterized this process.⁴⁸³ The biography of Cyril Ramaphosa, the ANC’s principal negotiator, likewise gives Codesa considerable coverage.⁴⁸⁴

To an increasing extent the emotive flag issue was coming to the fore. In early August 1992 it was reported that some 7 000 members of the ANC, the SACP and Cosatu held a mass rally in the Kempton Park area, at which a national flag was burned before a petition was handed over at the magistrate’s court.⁴⁸⁵ In contrast, a few days later, during a rugby test match between South Africa and New Zealand at the Ellis Park stadium in Johannesburg, attended by 70 000 spectators there was a mass display of national flags and the national anthem, “Die Stem,” was sung.⁴⁸⁶ The following weekend, the *Sunday Tribune* commented that for more than forty years the National Party had tried in vain to raise enthusiasm for the national flag, with notable failure. However, the ANC’s insistence that the national flag should not be flown at sporting events had changed all that and State President De Klerk was riding on the back of this sudden upsurge of enthusiasm for established symbols. The government nevertheless believed that new unifying symbols should be adopted in a new political dispensation, but felt that it was still premature to change them at that stage.⁴⁸⁷ In contrast, the *Vrye Weekblad* believed that South Africa had reached a stage in its history when the problem of national symbols needed to be resolved.⁴⁸⁸

4.5 Pondering national symbols

It was thus against a background of public debate concerning the imminent drafting of a new constitution and growing opposition to certain national symbols that the urgent need for

⁴⁸² Friedman, *The long journey*, pp 171 and 176.

⁴⁸³ Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a miracle*, pp 191-204.

⁴⁸⁴ Anthony Butler, *Cyril Ramaphosa* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2007), pp 291-300.

⁴⁸⁵ *Beeld*, 7 August 1992.

⁴⁸⁶ *Beeld*, 17 August 1992.

⁴⁸⁷ *Sunday Tribune*, 23 August 1992.

⁴⁸⁸ *Vrye Weekblad*, 27 August 1992.

research into national and related symbols was identified in 1992 and undertaken by the HSRC in 1993. This investigation culminated in the publication of two reports, together with an executive summary.⁴⁸⁹

The first report of the HSRC's investigation into national symbols is a substantial document running to 152 pages, with five appendices.⁴⁹⁰ It surveyed the historical and functional backgrounds of the national symbols which were then in use in the Republic of South Africa. As befits a research establishment, the Report also addressed the theoretical nature and functions of symbols. At the end of September 1993 these findings were made available to the negotiating council and to members of the newly-appointed Commission on National Symbols, so as to guide them in their deliberations. The Commission – the members of which also held full-time jobs - were working under extreme pressure and had neither the time nor the facilities to undertake a research project of this magnitude. It is a pity that these research findings could not have been made available a little earlier.

The introduction to the first HSRC Report outlined the scope and objectives of the larger HSRC investigation. This included the objectives, content, phases, committees which would be involved, together with theoretical and other considerations. The HSRC undertook this investigation because public debate concerning the imminent drafting of a new constitution for South Africa had demonstrated the urgent need for research on national symbols. It was felt that such research was imperative for informed political decisions.⁴⁹¹

The importance of unifying national symbols had earlier been stressed in the report of the HSRC Investigation into Intergroup Relations, which was completed in 1985.⁴⁹² Further exploratory research on national symbols had followed during 1991-1992. The HSRC's research on which these Reports were based, was launched at the beginning of 1993. This project was initiated and funded by the HSRC as an independent venture, with the intention of serving the interests of all South Africans. The focus was largely descriptive and analytical and not aimed at influencing the democratic processes of decision making. The aim was

⁴⁸⁹ Copies of these reports and summary are in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁴⁹⁰ Charles Malan (Project Leader), *Present National Symbols of the Republic of South Africa: HSRC investigation into national symbols, Report No.1* (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1993).

⁴⁹¹ *HSRC Report 1*, pp 2-7.

⁴⁹² HSRC, *The South African society, realities and future prospects* (Greenwood, Westport, 1987). Cited in *HSRC Report 1*, p 2.

rather to supply the necessary historical, contextual, heraldic and other information on which informed decisions could be based. In essence three research phases were envisaged. The first was a broad descriptive and historical analysis, focusing on the then South African national flag, anthem, fauna and flora emblems and coat of arms. The second was based mainly on surveys aimed at gleaning the views of civil society. In this phase various political role players were consulted about the nature and content of the surveys. During the third phase which was envisaged, the intention had been to address particular problems concerning the introduction of new symbols. However, the negotiating process overtook the investigation and this latter phase was not reached.⁴⁹³

The research was guided by a broadly representative Advisory Committee, with assistance given to the HSRC research team by heraldic and academic experts. The team liaised with the Bureau of Heraldry, the Office of the State President, the Departments of Constitutional Affairs, National Education and Home Affairs, together with other relevant organizations. Community representatives were also consulted. The HSRC Planning Committee for the project comprised members of the Social Dynamics Group under the leadership of Dr Charles Malan. In addition, ten persons were, on the basis of their expertise in the cultural, communication, historical and related disciplines, invited to serve on an Advisory Committee, in their personal capacity.⁴⁹⁴ Members of the advisory committee commented on the research planning and on the Reports in draft form, but were not responsible for the content or findings of the investigation.

Despite the lengthy debates on South Africa's national symbols which had been conducted in the media and in parliament for some time, few comprehensive studies and publications on the subject were then available. For the purposes of this project, it was therefore decided to compile basic information on the nature and functions of symbols; national symbols in general; and then to focus on the current national symbols of the Republic of South Africa.

In view of the long struggle for recognition of some of these symbols, in particular of the national flag and anthem, the Report made the point that a historical perspective was essential to this investigation. The only comprehensive historical survey of the visual symbols

⁴⁹³ *HSRC Report 1*, pp 3-4.

⁴⁹⁴ Professor Pieter Kapp, one of the members of this advisory committee, was later appointed by the Negotiating Council to serve on the National Symbols Commission.

available to the HSRC at that stage was the State Herald's then still unpublished manuscript entitled "National and Provincial Symbols and Flora and Fauna Emblems of the Republic of South Africa." Large sections of the historical overviews in the first HSRC Report were based on this manuscript, which was published in December that year.⁴⁹⁵

Since the purpose of the first Report was to present only historical and contextual information on the current symbols and to identify the main problem areas for further investigation, no attempt was made to analyze the proposals for alternative symbols or to reflect in any detail on recent debates. This critically important component was addressed during the second phase of the study.⁴⁹⁶ Among the recommendations set out in the first Report, the HSRC pointed out that important lessons could be learned from the history of national symbols in this country. In a new political dispensation, a repetition of the conflict and divisions engendered by these symbols should be avoided at all cost. History has shown that national symbols should not be abused for party political purposes, neither should they be associated with any particular cultural or political group in an exclusivist way. All sectors of the population should thus be involved in and consulted during the process of selecting, proposing and adopting new symbols. In the South African context, they should reflect both Western and African traditions. In the interest of forging unity, it was felt that all major political role players should be prepared to compromise when deciding on new symbols. Rather than confronting significant sectors of the population with unpopular symbols leaders should, at least as an interim measure, consider either recognizing two symbols concurrently, or even to postpone a decision on particular symbols in order to allow time for a natural evolutionary process.⁴⁹⁷

The general consensus was that the interests and preferences of all the major cultural, political and other groups in South Africa should be taken into account during the process of deciding on future symbols, as this had been the main area of conflict concerning national symbols in the past. No group should feel that symbols they held dear were being ignored during negotiations, or that their symbols would be threatened by a new political dispensation. The Report furthermore stressed that research and submissions concerning the

⁴⁹⁵ F.G. Brownell, *National and provincial symbols, and flora and fauna emblems of the Republic of South Africa* (Chris van Rensburg Publications, Johannesburg, December 1993).

⁴⁹⁶ *HSRC Report 1*, p 6.

⁴⁹⁷ *HSRC Report 1*, p 143.

national flag in particular should be treated as a priority. Opinions expressed in the local media and the experience in other countries indicated that a national flag is considered to be the most important national symbol. Among the other recommendations in the report, it was pointed out that it was a clear sign of a growing democratic consciousness that many members of the public and a number of organisations were already aware that they needed to share responsibility for change. Decisions regarding symbols in general, should not simply be left to the central government.⁴⁹⁸

The second Report of the Human Sciences Research Council's investigation into national symbols evolved from the results of a pilot study of the second phase of the investigation into such symbols.⁴⁹⁹ In this phase, the research team aimed at consulting all political groups, cultural organizations and individuals who were prepared to participate in the research, thus laying the foundation for extensive opinion surveys. Questions should also be tested through limited regional samples of opinion, as well as by consulting specialists in the respective fields. As with the first Report, the introduction to the second Report set out the research design of the larger investigation as well as the objectives, content, phases, committees, theoretical and other considerations.⁵⁰⁰ The first chapter surveyed opinions regarding national symbols in the Republic of South Africa as expressed in the press, during interviews with political organizations, regional focus group interviews and workshops.⁵⁰¹ This was followed by a chapter which addressed representative alternative national symbols and discussed future options. The following chapter dealt with unofficial unifying symbols. This was followed by an analysis of the results from past and present HSRC opinion surveys. There was an analysis of the socio-political and cultural implications of symbols. The final chapter provided a summary of the conclusions reached in the Report, offered recommendations for future research and suggested criteria for implementing new symbols.⁵⁰²

In the conclusions to its second Report, the HSRC pointed out that even though there was a feeling among influential leaders across a broad spectrum of society, that existing national

⁴⁹⁸ *HSRC Report 1*, p 144.

⁴⁹⁹ Charles Malan (Project Leader), *The Sociopolitical and – cultural role of National Symbols in the RSA – a pilot survey: HSRC investigation into national symbols, Report No. 2* (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1993).

⁵⁰⁰ *HSRC Report 2*, pp 1-4.

⁵⁰¹ *HSRC Report 2*, pp 6-37.

⁵⁰² *HSRC Report 2*, pp 38-71.

symbols would need to change, it should be borne in mind that these views did not necessarily reflect those of the population at large. Preliminary surveys suggested that the public at large was rather more conservative regarding change.⁵⁰³ It was also mentioned that a HSRC Marketdata exploratory survey, which had been conducted in February 1993, had revealed that a majority of respondents interviewed would prefer the current official state symbols to be retained. Only a small majority of respondents from the African language groups were in favour of changing the national flag and anthem. The national coat of arms hardly featured as an issue.⁵⁰⁴ Most respondents believed that symbols should be unifying and that new symbols should not again be allowed to become divisive, as was the case with the existing flag and anthem. The general feeling was that all population groups should be consulted and be made to feel part of the decision-making process. They should be afforded the opportunity of making submissions and proposing designs and compositions. The public should furthermore be kept fully informed throughout the entire process.

The Report repeatedly stated that the symbols of particular groups should be respected and that no group should feel that their own symbols are threatened by the introduction of new ones. They should all be allowed to honour their own symbols. However, it was of vital importance that no political organization's symbols should be allowed to dominate in the choice of new national symbols.

Based on the lessons from history, it had been recommended in the first Report that national symbols be kept out of the political arena. The recommendation was reiterated in the second Report, but in the latter context it also drew on the contemporary research set out in this Report.⁵⁰⁵

The second Report furthermore suggested that proposals put forward by the Negotiating Council's Commission on National Symbols should not be seen as the end of a process, but rather as the beginning. Even taking into account the urgency concerning the choice of a national flag, in particular, an evolutionary process should still be followed. Ideally the phases would be:

⁵⁰³ *HSRC Report 2*, pp 72-75.

⁵⁰⁴ *HSRC Report 2*, pp 59-60.

⁵⁰⁵ *HSRC Report 2*, p 73.

- (a) Inviting the public's reaction to a selection of proposals for future symbols;
- (b) Testing the population's perceptions of, and preferences for the proposals by means of surveys and other forms of research;
- (c) Consulting a variety of representative organizations, not only about the new symbols, but also about the position of those symbols that they consider to be important to their own groups;
- (d) Informing the public about the choice of symbols and the criteria used;
- (e) Initiating campaigns to educate the public about new symbols and popularize them as an integral part of nation and state building.⁵⁰⁶

In view of the highly emotional and even unpredictable effects of changes to those symbols which represent a common and/or group identity, it was stressed that the sudden and drastic transformation of symbols should be avoided as far as possible. Phasing in change would allow time for the public at large to become accustomed to the changes.⁵⁰⁷

Both Reports on the HSRC investigation were completed after the appointment of the Commission on National Symbols, but still in time for members of the Commission to have access to both the historical material and the latest research findings. Attached to the second HSRC Report as Appendix A was an extensive resume from press reports for the period January 1990 to June 1993.⁵⁰⁸ Memoranda submitted to the HSRC in response to its surveys, and which were extensively used in preparing the Reports, were also placed at the disposal of the Commission on National Symbols. They appear as Appendix B to the Report. Further relevant material was included in five further Appendices.

As it later transpired, public reaction to the invitation by the Commission on National Symbols to put forward proposals for a new national flag, national anthem and national coat of arms, largely mirrored the research findings of the Human Sciences Research Council's investigation into national symbols. For the information of fellow vexillologists, both within South Africa and overseas, SAVA incorporated a summary of the essence of these HSRC

⁵⁰⁶ *HSRC Report 2*, p 74.

⁵⁰⁷ *HSRC Report 2*, pp 73-75.

⁵⁰⁸ This appendix ran to sixty pages.

Reports into the extensive *SAVA Newsletter* which was published in December 1993.⁵⁰⁹ This newsletter also gave a synopsis of the workings of the Commission on National Symbols, which are set out in the following chapter.

It is thus evident from the developments discussed in this chapter that the flag issue was to be a highly contested domain.

⁵⁰⁹ Bruce Berry, Fred Brownell, Danie de Waal and Theo Stylianides, "Events leading to an interim flag for South Africa," *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 7/93, 31 December 1993, pp 5-13.

CHAPTER V - COMMISSION, PUBLIC AND GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

In the early 1990s South Africa was at the threshold of creating a new, all-embracing, “imagined community” and re-inventing a national identity which would now be based, not on ethnic lines, but on the rich diversity of the population.⁵¹⁰ This was the challenge which faced South Africa during the negotiation process, especially in 1993 and 1994. In retrospect, one can be grateful that South Africa was fortunate in having on the scene at that stage a conciliatory leader – Nelson Mandela – and from 27 April 1994 a graphic symbol in the form of a new national flag, both of which were to play a significant role in bridging the transition from the old to the new political dispensation. The process of developing this new national flag was not so conciliatory. This chapter focuses on the convoluted early stages of the process, which did not deliver a solution. The final section of this chapter addresses “A possible solution” to the as yet, at that time, unresolved matter of an acceptable design for a national flag.

5.1 Negotiations commence, Commission appointed

Although preliminary and initially secret negotiations had already been under way since 1985,⁵¹¹ the final stage of the negotiation process aimed at securing for South Africa a new political dispensation, was set in motion at the Multi-Party Planning Conference which commenced at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park on 5 March 1993.⁵¹² Present at the talks were twenty-six political Parties – in alphabetical order they were: the African National Congress (ANC); Afrikaner Volksunie (AVU); Bophuthatswana Government; Cape Province Traditional Leaders; Ciskei Government; Democratic Party; Dikwankwetla Party; Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP); Intando Yeswizwe Party (IYP); Inyandza National Movement; Konserwatiewe Party [Conservative Party]; KwaZulu Government; Labour Party of South Africa; Natal Indian Congress and Transvaal Indian Congress (NIC/TIC); National Party;

⁵¹⁰ Sally Peberdy, *Selecting immigrants: national identity and South Africa's immigration policy, 1910-2008* (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2008), pp 162-168 and 230. See also, I. Chipkin, *Do South Africans exist: nationalism, democracy, and the identity of “the People”* (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2007). It is to Benedict Anderson that we owe the term “imagined community.”

⁵¹¹ See Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country: the inside story of South Africa's negotiated revolution* (Struik, Sandton, 1994); Patti Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a miracle: the end of apartheid and the birth of the new South Africa* (Penguin, London, 1997); and Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, *The other side of history: an anecdotal reflection on political transition in South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 2006).

⁵¹² *Pretoria News*, Late Final, 5 March 1993, p 1.

National People's Party; Orange Free State Traditional Leaders; Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC); Solidarity Party; South African Communist Party (SACP); South African Government; Transkei Government; Transvaal Traditional Leaders; United People's Front; Venda Government; and the Ximoko Progressive Party. This plethora of political representation reflected on the almost extreme democratic nature of the process at hand. Newcomers to the forum – since the Codesa negotiations – were the PAC, the Conservative Party, the KwaZulu Government and the Afrikaner Volksunie. Place had also been prepared for the Azanian Peoples' Organisation (AZAPO), who failed to arrive. According to a media report, AZAPO's publicity secretary Dr Gomolemo Mokaie had indicated that the AZAPO leadership was unanimous in their rejection of the way the talks were structured.⁵¹³

The aim of the planning conference was to decide on a date for the resumption of formal multi-party negotiations, which had broken down in May 1992 at Codesa 2. When on 1 April 1993 the Multi-Party Negotiating Process formally commenced the most important task was the drawing up of a new constitution for South Africa for the transitional period.⁵¹⁴ It was obvious that the national flag – and other national symbols – would come up for discussion, as had happened in Namibia between the latter part of January and early March 1990.⁵¹⁵

During the debates in the Negotiating Council on the Eighth and Ninth Reports of the Technical Committee on “Constitutional Issues,” a decision was taken to refer the matter of national symbols to the Planning Committee for clarification. The Planning Committee subsequently submitted a recommendation on the composition of a proposed Commission on National Symbols to the Negotiating Council, thereby setting the process in motion.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹³ In the spirit of “the broadest inclusivity possible,” unexpected arrivals were accommodated with observer status, while their credentials for full participation were examined. These included the Afrikaner Vryheids Stigting, the African Democratic Movement from Ciskei and parties from Lebowa and KaNgwane.

⁵¹⁴ The actual negotiations were held from 1 April until the early hours of 18 November 1993. Mac Maharaj and Fanie van der Merwe were again the Secretariat. See Pádraig O'Malley: *Shades of difference - Mac Maharaj and the struggle for South Africa* (Viking, London, 2007), pp 393, 591.

⁵¹⁵ F.G. Brownell, “Symbols for Namibia,” *The Flag Bulletin*, XXXI (1-2, 145), January-April 1992, pp 40-54.

⁵¹⁶ Documentation relating to the Multi-Party Negotiating Process as a whole, of which that of the Commission on National Symbols was an integral part, are in the custody of the National Archives of South Africa (hereafter NASA), as part of the NEG group of documents, Accession S436. An extract from the relevant section of the filing system of Accession S436 is set out in the bibliography to this thesis. In my capacity as a member of the Commission on National Symbols I have in my private collection (hereafter the F.G. Brownell Private Collection), copies of all the documentation which was made available to the members of the Commission. The recommendation of the Planning Committee is set out in paragraph 1 of Addendum B, to the draft agenda for the Meeting of the Commission on Symbols (sic), 15 September 1993 (F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

In view of the growing opposition to existing national symbols in certain circles,⁵¹⁷ and the fact that the national flag was provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1983, it was inevitable that the Negotiating Council would include in its brief an investigation into possible new national symbols, as part of the democratic process of formulating a new constitution. On 10 August 1993 the Negotiating Council consequently passed a resolution calling for a Commission of between ten and fifteen people to be set up before 17 August to recommend at least four flags and coats of arms, a seal and an anthem for the transitional period.⁵¹⁸

Nominations for appointment as members of the Commission were called for. Cabinet discussed the call for nominations at its meeting on 11 August 1993 and the following day Mr. J.J.H. (Herman) Booysen, Chief Director (Culture) in the Department of National Education telephoned the Director of Archives to elicit suggestions.⁵¹⁹ The Director-General of National Education also requested the other relevant sections in his Department to provide input, which was transmitted to the Minister of National Education (Piet Marais). On 16 August 1993 he wrote to the Minister of Constitutional Development, Roelf Meyer proposing twenty names, mainly of academics, members of the Heraldry Council and of the Southern African Vexillological Association for consideration.⁵²⁰

Mr F.G. Brownell, State Herald, and Chairman of the Southern African Vexillological Association;

Mr Theo Stylianides Vice-Chairman of the Southern African Vexillological Association (and an authority on flags);

Prof H. de V. du Toit, Department of Strategic Studies, Rand Afrikaans University, and Chairman of the Heraldry Council;

Prof Deon Fourie, Department of Strategic Studies, University of South Africa, and member of the Heraldry Council;

Dr C. Pama, editor of the Heraldry Society's Quarterly Journal (*Arma*), and member

⁵¹⁷ See the resumés from press reports 1990-1993 in Appendix A to Charles Malan (project leader), *The sociopolitical and – cultural role of national symbols in the RSA: a pilot survey: HSRC Investigation into national symbols, Report No. 2* (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1993).

⁵¹⁸ *Beeld*, 11 August 1993, p 2; *Business Day*, 11 August 1993 (no page number available).

⁵¹⁹ Administratively, the Bureau of Heraldry fell within the bailiwick of the Director of Archives who, inter alia, requested the State Herald to provide him with input.

⁵²⁰ Letter reference 5/0/1/4/3/5/3 dated 16 August 1993 (a copy of which is in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

of the Heraldry Council for 30 years;

Prof P. Kapp, Department of History, Stellenbosch University;

Prof Johan Combrinck, Department of Afrikaans, Stellenbosch University;

Dr Charles Malan, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC);⁵²¹

Prof S. Maphalala, Department of History, University of Zululand;

Mr A.V. Shongwe, University of Zululand;

Prof Elsbeth Hugo (née Van der Merwe), Department of Music, University of Pretoria;

Prof J.S.M. Khumalo, Department of African Languages, University of the Witwatersrand (and in view of his musical expertise);

Dr D. Henderson, Vice-Chancellor, Rhodes University;

Prof E.B. van Wyk, National Place Names Committee;

Prof H.J. van Aswegen, Department of History, Rand Afrikaans University;

Prof O.J.O. Ferreira, Department of History and Cultural History, University of Pretoria;

Dr Dioné Prinsloo, Department of History, University of South Africa;

Prof Elize Botha, Department of Afrikaans, University of South Africa;

Prof J.S. Bergh, Department of History and Cultural History, University of Pretoria;
and

Prof F.A. van Jaarsveld (retired), formerly Head of the Department of History, University of Pretoria (and the University of South Africa).

Obviously there were names submitted by a number of other sources involved in the negotiation process, primary among them the African National Congress. It took the negotiators until 7 September 1993 to evaluate those who had been nominated and only then did the Negotiating Council adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION ON THE COMMISSION ON NATIONAL SYMBOLS

1. Whereas in the deliberations concerning a constitution for the transitional period, the question of national symbols will have to be addressed;
2. And whereas this is an extremely emotional issue that will have to be dealt with the

⁵²¹ Malan had, over the previous year, been the project leader of the HSRC's investigation into national symbols.

utmost sensitivity;

3. But whereas cultural, artistic and technical aspects are also to be taken into account;

4. We, the Negotiating Council, hereby appoint:

Prof Elize Botha as Chairperson; Ms P.G.P. Maluleka as Vice Chairperson; and Mr F.G. Brownell; Prof Lynda Gilfillan; Mr Bill Jardine; Prof P.H.M Kapp; Ms Barbara Masekela; Dr C. Pama; Prof C.J. Reineke; Prof Themba Sirayi; Dr Musa Xulu; Prof Fatima Meer; [and] Ms Rosette Nothemba Mlonzi, as members of a Commission on National Symbols to make recommendations before the end of October 1993 to us, the Negotiating Council, or to any body that might at that time have replaced the Negotiating Council, on a national flag, a coat of arms, a seal and an anthem for the Constitution for the transitional period.

5. The Commission is requested to:

- 5.1 invite proposals from all interested persons or parties and to allow at least one month for submissions to be made;
- 5.2 to take into account the diversity of the South African population but concentrate on the unifying function that national symbols must serve;
- 5.3 and in its recommendations submit at least four alternative flags and coats of arms.⁵²²

On the day that the names of those who had been appointed to the Commission on National Symbols was announced in the press, *The Citizen* carried an article under the heading “Careful with new symbols: HSRC,” which stated that Prof Lawrence Schlemmer, Vice-President of the HSRC warned that: “The injudicious introduction of new national symbols in the prevailing unstable political climate could lead to conflict.”⁵²³ This remark followed completion of the first phase of the HSRC’s investigation into national symbols, which had been launched at the beginning of 1993. This article commented that most submissions to the HSRC held the view that national symbols should not be allowed to become a political football and arouse conflict, and that great circumspection should be exercised with the choice and introduction of symbols.⁵²⁴ Schlemmer had furthermore warned that conflict

⁵²² National Archives of South Africa (hereafter NASA), Multi-Party Negotiating Process (NEG), Commission on National Symbols: 1/12/1/3/1, Resolution on the Commission on National Symbols. Also F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁵²³ *The Citizen*, 7 September 1993 (no page number available).

⁵²⁴ See also the article in *Beeld*, 8 September 1993, p 2, under the heading “Simbole moet ‘nie politieke speelbal word’.”

could erupt, particularly if national symbols were seen as a threat to the political and ethno-cultural interests of a particular group. It was not the symbols as such that were of vital importance to a social grouping, but “In a state of material threat or uncertainty people see the defacement of their symbols as symbolical of the total threat against them.”⁵²⁵

Judging from the submissions to the HSRC and the views expressed by political leaders, it nevertheless seemed that there was a general willingness to negotiate new symbols, particularly a new national flag. It was announced that the report on the first phase of the HSRC’s investigation, which comprised a historical analysis of current symbols, would soon be released, and that in the second phase of its investigation the HSRC would seek the views of political organizations involved in political negotiations. Among the findings were that the national anthem and national flag had been divisive rather than unifying; there was very little in the way of unique African symbolism; and that future national symbols would have to be chosen after wide consultation. It was agreed that the HSRC would make available all research findings to the Negotiating Council’s Commission on National Symbols.⁵²⁶

On 8 September 1993 Dr Theuns Eloff, Head of Administration at the Multi-Party Negotiating Process, sent out letters advising the thirteen individuals of their appointment to the Commission on National Symbols, indicating: “The Negotiating Council believes that the question of national symbols for the transitional period is an essential and crucial step for a peaceful and negotiated settlement. It is for this reason that you have been appointed to make what we believe will be a valuable contribution.”⁵²⁷

The first meeting of the Commission on National Symbols was set for 15 September 1993, at the World Trade Centre, Kempton Park, which was the venue for the negotiations. Apart from being given material of an administrative and logistical nature, members were also each given copies of the curricula vitae of all those who had been appointed to the Commission on National Symbols, and with whom they would be working closely. Names alone do not enable one to weigh up the nature of the input which the respective members of the thirteen-person Commission could be expected to make, nor to lay the framework for the social

⁵²⁵ *The Citizen*, 7 September 1993 (no page number available).

⁵²⁵ A news release by the HSRC Corporate Communications Division, dated 8 September 1993, was made available to the members of the Commission on National Symbols.

⁵²⁷ One such letter, in which my surname was incorrectly given as Brownwell, is in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

dynamics which complicated the work of the Commission. These biographical details were included in the documentation of the Commission.⁵²⁸

In appointing the Commission on National Symbols, the negotiators had ensured a reasonable gender, racial and regional spread. Of the members appointed to the Commission, Jardine, who was deeply involved in the formulation of sport policy in the National Sport Congress and its successor the National Sports Council; Masekela, who was then head of the ANC President's Office; and Mlonzi, who had shortly before established a legal practice at Butterworth in the Eastern Cape, attended none of the meetings and played no part in its proceedings. Only two of the members of the Commission, namely Pama a long-time member of the Heraldry Council and author of a number of genealogical, heraldic and flag publications, and Brownell, State Herald and Chairman of SAVA, had any real expertise in the flag science and heraldic fields. This facet of professional expertise was thus clearly under-represented on the Commission. When the Commission met for the first time, members were informed that they had each been appointed in a personal capacity. They were furthermore to ensure that proposals for a national flag, a coat of arms, a seal and an anthem for the Constitution for the transitional period were to be invited from "all interested persons or parties."⁵²⁹

Both these matters presuppose careful and time-consuming deliberations and a creative process. However, under item 6 of the Agenda, the Commission then found itself faced with the following work programme and time frames determined by the Secretariat:

Phase 1: Issuing of invitations for submissions - 15 September 1993 (Addendum B).

Phase 2: Processing of submissions starts - 29 September 1993.

Phase 3: Deadline for submissions - 12:00, 13 October 1993.

Phase 4: Finalisation of report starts - 14 October 1993.

Phase 5: Report submitted to the Negotiating Council - 20 October 1993.

Phase 6: Discussion of report in the Negotiating Council - 21 and 22 October 1993.⁵³⁰

The daunting challenge was that the entire process and the Commission's report had to be completed by 19 October 1993 – a period of one month.

⁵²⁸ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/7/3, Curriculum vitae of members of Commission.

⁵²⁹ F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁵³⁰ NASA, Accession S436, 1/12/1/1/1, Agenda, 15 September 1993.

For practical administrative reasons the Commission established three sub-committees.

That for the national flag: T. Sirayi (Convenor); L. Gilfillan; P. Maluleka; F. Brownell and C. Pama; for the coat of arms and seal: F. Brownell (Convenor); C. Pama and P. Kapp; and for the national anthem: M. Xulu (Convenor); F. Meer and C. Reineke.⁵³¹ The Commission also established three task groups to deal with the following issues: firstly, the process and target groups; secondly, the wording of the invitation; and thirdly, the need for support staff and other resources. It was decided that the initial draft of an invitation for submissions to the Commission on National Symbols in the three categories, national flag, coat of arms and national anthem, which was appended to the Agenda as Addendum B, would first need to be expanded and clarified, if the desired level and quality of participation was to be achieved. Then only would there be any purpose in distributing it to all persons and bodies listed in the directories of the Multi-Party Negotiating Process. These extensive lists, which were made available to members of the Commission on 15 September 1993, included:

- All editors of major newspapers (21)
- All editors of regional and local newspapers (140)
- All Organised Business Fora (9)
- All Church leaders and representatives (21)
- All State Departments (15)
- All representatives of Women's Organisations (3)
- All Civic Organisations (SANCO and its branches)
- All non-Governmental Organisations (6)
- All members of the Negotiating Council (51)
- All interested parties (43)
- Administrators of the Provinces (4)
- Agricultural Unions (7)
- Conference of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
- Regional Services Councils (39)
- Trade Union Representatives (6)

⁵³¹ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/2/1, Minutes, 15 September 1993. As Chair of the Commission Elize Botha was *ex officio* a member of all three of the sub-committees.

Sporting bodies, the Stockvel Association and Burial Societies.

The Negotiating Council certainly tried its best to reach a wide spectrum of society. The task group dealing with the process and target groups, resolved that the following introductory remarks be added to the invitation, to stress the need for maximum participation:

The process of eliciting submissions for a national flag, coat of arms and anthem should be inclusive in order to ensure that they are truly representative. All the people of South Africa, groups and individuals, in both urban and rural areas, are invited to participate. Proposals are invited from all interested persons and parties and local leaders should assist in the process. Participants should be drawn from all walks of life including the following kinds of groupings: schools, religious, cultural, civic, local, youth, women, students, stokvels⁵³² and specialist societies, for example, musical, heraldic and vexillological.

In due course individual letters were dispatched to universities and technikons, as well as to the approximately 24 000 schools in South Africa to ensure that the invitation reached even remote rural areas.⁵³³ At the request of a member of the Commission the appointment of facilitators was approved in regions where it was feared that the invitation might not readily penetrate.⁵³⁴ This all reflected on the encompassing nature of the efforts.

The task group on the guidelines and the wording of the invitation for submissions, decided on the following simple guidelines:

National Flag

The flag should be of a unique design; it should promote national unity and be so simple that even a child can recognisably draw it; that primary colours were preferred; that designs should be submitted in full colour, preferably in A-4 size; and that a brief motivation for the design may also be included.

⁵³² Community savings associations.

⁵³³ The expectation was that the children would bring the invitation to the notice of their parents.

⁵³⁴ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/5/1, Facilitators appointed by L. Gilfillan; T. Sirayi; F. Meer; and M. Xulu.

Coat of Arms and Seal

The design of the coat of arms should be unique and representative of the country and its people; designs should be submitted in full colour, preferably A-4 size; a motto should also be suggested; and that a brief motivation for the design may be included.

National Anthem

The anthem should express and promote national unity; the composition should be original, submissions should be accompanied by lyrics in any of the languages of South Africa, by means of sheet music and a demonstration tape; and may be submitted in either tonic solfa or staff notation.⁵³⁵

In this invitation it was also pointed out that the request for public participation was not a competition and that the Commission reserved the right to use such elements from the proposals as it deemed fit in its deliberations with the Negotiating Council. In view of the tight time frames set for the Commission, the intention had been that the invitation for submissions should be issued by the Negotiators without delay. However, this was not done until after the Commission's next meeting, namely on 29 September 1993.⁵³⁶ The most probable reason for the delay is that the Secretariat was faced with a logistical task of nightmare proportions, namely to bring the process to the notice of the many thousands of schools to which individual letters were to be sent. Before this could be done, permission had first to be obtained from the respective Education authorities. There was an Education Department for each of the three Houses in the tricameral Parliament, while each of the ten Independent and National States (the "Homelands"), also had an Education Department.⁵³⁷ In effect participants were left with only a fortnight in which to submit their proposals to the Commission.⁵³⁸ The decision to send out letters to individual schools, which would then each be expected to bring the invitation to the notice of their pupils, though well intended was

⁵³⁵ The final wording of the invitation was attached to the Minutes of the Commission's meeting of 15 September 1993 as Addendum C.

⁵³⁶ See *Beeld*, 29 September 1993, p 13; *Business Day*, 30 September 1993, p 4 and the full text of the request in *Pretoria News*, 30 September 1993, p 14.

⁵³⁷ The Bophuthatswana Minister of Education, in a letter to Theuns Eloff dated 7 October 1993, referring to the request from the Multi-Party Negotiating Process dated 24 September 1993, replied that: "I regret to inform you that circumstances do not permit for our schools to participate." NASA, Accession S436, 1/12/1/6/3, Response from Bothuthatswana, re invitations to schools.

⁵³⁸ It is not surprising that *Die Burger* of 29 September 1993 (no page number available) carried an article under the heading "Simbole skeel Suid-Afrikaners min, sê Kommissie," which commented that South Africans did not yet appear to be very concerned about which symbols the country would have for the following five years.

undoubtedly counter-productive to the process as a whole. The immediate publication of the invitation in the press, throughout South Africa, as had been done in Namibia in early 1990, might well have produced more satisfactory results. Such is the “Law of unintended consequences.”

On 16 September 1993 simple guidelines, under the title: *Basic Principles of Flag and Coat of Arms Design*, were made available to the Commission’s co-ordinator, Sylvia Briggs.⁵³⁹ The introduction to these guidelines stated that: “In the interests of the widest possible public participation, members of the Commission expressed the wish that certain basic principles of flag and coat of arms design should be made available.” The section dealing with flag design, made the following observations:

FLAGS

1. Although the designing of flags is a specialised discipline, it is hoped that the following basic guidelines will be of value to those persons or bodies wishing to prepare a design for such a flag.
2. In preparing the design of any new flag, the designer should bear in mind that such a flag should be unique, aesthetically pleasing and practical.
3. A flag is primarily intended to be flown out of doors from a flag-post some distance above the head of the spectator. In this position a flag is seldom static and the design should be such that it is easy to identify, even when it is not fully spread.
4. The design of a flag should thus be as simple as possible and unnecessary detail should be avoided. Simplicity also facilitates manufacture.
5. The Commission on National Symbols has requested that designs should preferably be submitted in A4 size. Since the customary proportions used in South Africa are 3 in the length to 2 in the width, a convenient working size would be 18 cm x 12 cm.
6. Strong primary colours should preferably be used, with the darker colours being separated from one another by means of a light colour, such as white or yellow.

⁵³⁹ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/2/1/3, Basic principles of flag and coat of arms design.

7. Strong colours should preferably be positioned on the outer edges of a flag to ensure that it stands out against a pale sky or in unfavourable weather conditions.
8. Words, letters and numerals should be avoided.
9. When a graphic symbol is depicted, this should contrast clearly with the background on which it is placed. It should furthermore be of a size which is clearly visible. Such symbols should either be centrally positioned or, preferably, moved towards the flagpost since this is the most stable part of a flag.

In the conclusion to the guidelines it was stressed that:

While it is in no way the intention to inhibit the free expression of those wishing to submit proposals for a new national flag or coat of arms for the transitional period, it is nevertheless hoped that the basic principles set out above will contribute to the standard of designs submitted to the Commission on National Symbols.⁵⁴⁰

The following meeting of the Commission on National Symbols was scheduled for 28 September 1993, but behind the scenes other bodies also moved into action. It had been suggested to the Commission that SAVA could be of assistance in the process of evaluating flag designs and also clearly had an obligation to promote the process of public participation. As a result, SAVA's Secretary/Treasurer, Berry contacted the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) on 24 September 1993, to give them a "wake up call."⁵⁴¹ The Commission was then unaware that the invitation for public participation had not yet been issued. It was also agreed that the entries for a flag competition run by the *Eastern Province Herald*, and judged by SAVA, in September 1992,⁵⁴² should be forwarded to the Commission. The *Eastern Province Herald* informed its readers accordingly and nearly 360

⁵⁴⁰ These guidelines were quite simply common-sense suggestions based on my practical experience as State Herald.

⁵⁴¹ *SAVA Newsletter*, SN: 7/93, 31 December 1993, p 16.

⁵⁴² See *Eastern Province Herald*, 16, 17 and 25 November 1992; see *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 4/92, 31 December 1992, pp 31-34.

entries were delivered to the Commission on 27 September 1993.⁵⁴³ Furthermore, as a result of the hitherto inadequate media coverage, a sub-committee for publicity, comprising the Chairman and convenors of the other sub-committees, would be established to ensure that the activities of the Commission received wider publicity, especially on regional radio services. In addition, a press briefing would be held that afternoon, to address this shortcoming.

With regard to the availability of expertise to assist the Commission in its work, a decision was taken that representatives from the Foundation for Creative Arts, the Federated Union of Black Artists, the Association of Community Art Centres in South Africa and the National Arts Initiative would be nominated to provide assistance.⁵⁴⁴ With regard to national flag submissions a proposal was accepted that three members of the SAVA executive, who had sound knowledge and experience of flags, be considered for appointment as assessors. They were the Vice-Chairman Theo Stylianides, the Secretary Bruce Berry and Danie de Waal, who was also the Assistant State Herald.⁵⁴⁵

Under “Action Plans for Evaluation and Selection” a suggestion for the evaluation of flags and coats of arms was proposed by Sirayi and Brownell. This was appended to the Minutes of the Commission's meeting the following day, as Addendum A.⁵⁴⁶ A tabulation of historic flag colours, those then in use in South Africa, and of the flags of political and other groupings which had been compiled by Brownell, was appended as Addendum B, while Gilfillan submitted background information on the flag of the ANC, which had been adopted in 1925, and thus predated the then South African national flag (Addendum C).⁵⁴⁷ At this meeting of 28 September 1993 the HSRC reports⁵⁴⁸ and other pertinent research material were made available to members of the Commission.

After the Commission's meeting on 28 September 1993 adjourned, the publicity sub-committee met. Coverage was given to the work of the Commission and the call for submissions on all evening SABC TV news bulletins that day. There were also interviews

⁵⁴³ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/2/2, Minutes, 28 September 1993, paragraph 6.1, records the receipt of 358 flag submissions, and paragraph 6.1.1 that “a vast number of the submissions received was due to a competition held by the *Eastern Province Herald*.”

⁵⁴⁴ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/2/2, Minutes, 28 September 1993.

⁵⁴⁵ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/7/5, Assessors to the Commission.

⁵⁴⁶ State Herald's office diary, 27 September 1993.

⁵⁴⁷ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/2/2, Minutes, 28 September 1993.

⁵⁴⁸ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/3/2, Reports: HSRC.

with Elize Botha, Chairman of the Commission and with Berry.⁵⁴⁹ Brownell was interviewed by the Afrikaans daily, *Beeld*, which ran an article entitled “Nasionale Simbole krap steeds.”⁵⁵⁰ The Commission was making every effort to reach the population at large, yet on the basis of available information, the *Sowetan*, the most prominent “black” daily newspaper in the country, only published the invitation to put forward submissions a week later.⁵⁵¹

Following the media publicity on 28 and 29 September 1993, Ernst de Jong, Managing and Creative Director of the Ernst de Jong Studio Gallery and then a member of the Heraldry Council, wrote to Elize Botha at her home address in Pretoria, making a number of suggestions regarding the process relating to the design of a proposed national flag. “When considering the image for the new flag and other symbols,” he wrote, “I appeal to you to please seriously take note that there are NO RULES governing the design and image of a flag or symbol no matter what other organisations might suggest.” In this letter De Jong also referred to the success and high level of acceptance South Africa’s new series of banknotes, depicting local wild animals, which had been designed by a “powerful team” of designers headed by himself. He suggested that after consideration of all public submissions, a short design brief be developed, and that the design of the flag would best be entrusted to “a small team of 3 designers consisting of a design director and 2 x creative designers.” He furthermore suggested himself as Creative Director, “plus two designers proposed by Ernst de Jong in consultation with your committee.”⁵⁵² This suggestion was directly in line with the *modus operandi* of graphic design studios in creating a corporate identity.⁵⁵³

The Commission was, of course, working within a particularly tight time-frame which had been laid down by the negotiators, and whatever the merits of this suggestion, it would have been impossible to implement. The Blue Sky Group of graphic designers, of which De Jong was a leading member, delivered a pack of their proposals for a national flag to the Commission. In a photograph published in the *Sunday Times* the following weekend, Briggs,

⁵⁴⁹ F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁵⁵⁰ *Beeld*, 29 September 1993, p 13.

⁵⁵¹ *Sowetan*, 5 October 1993 (no page number available).

⁵⁵² This letter was made available to members of the Commission together with the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 1993. A number of the Commission’s files address De Jong’s correspondence at this time. See NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/6/6, Letter: E. de Jongh (sic); 1/12/1/6/7, Response to letter from E. de Jong: Department of Education; and 1/12/1/6/18, Correspondence: E.de Jong.

⁵⁵³ William G Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” PhD thesis in the Department of Government, Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, University of Manchester, 1994, pp 175-177.

administrative co-ordinator of the Commission, was photographed sitting on the floor of Room 2 of the World Trade Centre at Kempton Park, surrounded by a number of these rather large proposals. A4-size designs received from the public are seen pinned to the wall in the background.⁵⁵⁴ An article by Anne-Marie Mischke, which appeared that day in *Rapport* depicted six of the designs which had been received. The article mentioned that virtually every colour featured in the proposals, but seldom in the opposing combinations of yellow, green and black (ANC), or the orange, white and blue of the (then) national flag, although certain of the designs combined some of these colours. It also mentioned that blue was clearly a popular colour. She also remarked that most proposals would probably have heralds and graphic designers with their hands in their hair. People clearly liked full, complicated flags, even though this was apparently what a flag should not be!⁵⁵⁵

In a brief on progress to date by the Director-General of National Education to State President F.W. de Klerk on 5 October 1993, it was urged that over-hasty decisions relating to national symbols should be avoided and that public debate on the matter be set in motion.⁵⁵⁶ On the same date the Heraldry Council held a routine meeting and was also briefed on progress by the State Herald. It was important for the Council to bring its statutory responsibilities to the notice of the Negotiating Council and to offer assistance.⁵⁵⁷ Ernst de Jong was present at this meeting and raised the suggestion he had made to Elize Botha a week earlier. It was explained that the process and deadlines had been determined by the negotiators and that the Commission on National Symbols was bound by this schedule. It was then only eight days until the closing date for submissions and the Commission had to plan accordingly. After the meeting, Brownell informed De Jong that he could see no prospect of the time frame or process being changed by the negotiators at that critical stage.⁵⁵⁸ Two days later the *Pretoria News* carried an article by the political reporter Robert Brand, under the heading: “New SA flag row: top artist resigns.” This report stated that:

Prominent city artist Ernst de Jong has resigned from the Board of the Bureau

⁵⁵⁴ *Sunday Times*, 3 October 1993, p 21. The photograph was accompanied by an article by Ray Hartley under the heading “Anything can happen when Bart Simpson meets New SA,” on p 21.

⁵⁵⁵ *Rapport*, 3 October 1993 (no page number available).

⁵⁵⁶ DG Submission 2659/93, a copy of which is on the Bureau of Heraldry’s file H4/3/3/2/1.

⁵⁵⁷ This was done in a letter, Reference H4/3/3/2/3, dated 8 October 1993, from the Chairman of the Heraldry Council to the Chairman of the Negotiating Council.

⁵⁵⁸ In 1992 De Jong had been appointed to the advisory committee which assisted the HSRC in its investigation into national symbols.

of Heraldry because he fears that the State Herald will “insist on antiquated imagery” in the design of an interim national flag. De Jong, who headed the design team which produced the new range of banknotes, yesterday said unless the Committee on National Symbols disregarded the “antiquated rules of heraldry,” South Africa could be saddled with an old-fashioned and uninspiring flag. He appealed to the committee, of which the State Herald Fred Brownell is a member, to move away from the rules of heraldry and allow specialist designers to produce a uniquely South African flag.⁵⁵⁹

Having gained the impression that some members of the Commission probably did not appreciate what all would need to change, if and when new national symbols were introduced, on 6 October 1993 a memorandum entitled: “Some implications of change” was prepared for the Commission. In this was set out where, by law, the national flag had to fly, and that:

In the event of the introduction of a new national flag, adequate stocks of the flag in ceremonial, normal and storm size will have to be manufactured to fulfil these requirements, before the flag is formally taken into use. In addition to the compulsory flying of the national flag at flag stations, it is also widely flown elsewhere by commercial undertakings, schools, etc. Thousands of flags are thus involved, especially if one considers that at least three flags⁵⁶⁰ are usually ordered per flag-post.

The memorandum also pointed out that the introduction of a new national flag would have other implications. All the flags of the uniformed services, of which the national flag was an integral part, would have to change. New flag designs would need to be prepared and approved, and adequate stocks manufactured. National Colours presented to units of the Services would have to be laid up and presumably replaced by a National Colour of the new

⁵⁵⁹ *Pretoria News*, 7 October 1993 (no page number available). Graphic designers were, indeed, called in by the Negotiators later that month, after the process of public participation had failed to produce an acceptable national flag design.

⁵⁶⁰ Flying a dirty flag shows a lack of respect. There is an appropriate Afrikaans saying that for each flag-post there should be: “Een op die mas, een in die kas en een in die was.” [“One on the flag-post, one in the cupboard and one in the wash.”]

national flag⁵⁶¹ and the name plates worn by members of the uniformed services – which incorporated a flag – would also have to change.⁵⁶²

There would thus be substantial logistic and financial implications attendant on the adoption of a new national flag. The memorandum also addressed in detail the implications of change to the national coat of arms, but concluded with the observation that the results of research conducted so far did not indicate any broadly-based strong feeling against the national coat of arms and it was a moot point whether a change was indeed necessary – bearing in mind the practical, financial and logistic implications.

On 8 October 1993, the flag sub-committee of the Commission on National Symbols, chaired by Sirayi, met at the World Trade Centre. Since no further input had been received, the technical assessors would work according to the guidelines which had been drawn up earlier. The names of a number of persons who had been nominated to serve as technical assessors to the Commission when it convened on 14 October 1993, were considered.⁵⁶³

The problems facing the Commission and its assessors were addressed in a *Business Day* article entitled: “Another flag row could be salutary,” by Kieran O’Malley, a lecturer in Political Science at the University of South Africa. He made the point that debates on “national” symbols are specifically deadly and divisive in multi-ethnic states, precisely because there is no one nation in such states, but rather a number of competing sub-nations. “Each ethnic community wants those symbols to reflect its own culture, history and ideals.”⁵⁶⁴ O’Malley also remarked that: “The committee asked to investigate the question of national symbols is, for example, asked to produce symbols which both unite and reflect diversity. That is akin to asking someone to square the circle.”⁵⁶⁵ The negotiations

⁵⁶¹ An account of the more than 500 National Colours, the successors to the King’s/Queen’s Colours which had been awarded in South Africa in former times, is set out in Part III, Volume 1 of H.H. Smith and F.G. Brownell, “South African Military Colours, 1664 to 26 April 1994,” *SAVA Journal* SJ: 10, 30 June 2011, Chapter XII, pp 671-685.

⁵⁶² NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/2/1/2, Implications of change. This memorandum was prepared by the State Herald, based on practical experience.

⁵⁶³ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/7/5, Assessors to the Commission. Attached to the Minutes of the Meeting of 8 October 1993 is an Addendum which indicates briefly on what grounds most of these persons had been nominated to serve as assessors.

⁵⁶⁴ *Business Day*, 12 October 1993 (no page number available)

⁵⁶⁵ *Business Day*, 12 October 1993. The problems which academics have long encountered in trying to define the concepts of nation and nationality, symbols and symbolism, have been addressed in greater detail in Chapter I of this thesis.

themselves reflected a paradigm shift in South African political thinking and within this context the Commission was, on the basis of submissions from a largely naïve public, expected to produce broadly acceptable national symbols for the constitutionally created chimera of a nation which the negotiators were then endeavouring to construct!⁵⁶⁶

5.2 Flag proposals and Commission reports

On 14 October 1993 the assessors joined the Commission at the World Trade Centre to view the exhibition of graphic submissions which had been received. In essence the duty of the assessors was to help the Commission in identifying dominant features and significant trends in the submissions for a national flag and coat of arms, while commenting on matters of suitability and musicality for a national anthem. In the case of the national flag, the following assessors were appointed:

Mr Bruce Berry	(SAVA Secretary/Treasurer).
Mr Danie de Waal	(Assistant State Herald and SAVA Committee Member).
Ms Belinda Leburu	(Art teacher, Johannesburg Art Gallery and Kagiso Art Centre).
Ms Marilyn Martin	(Director: South African National Gallery, Cape Town).
Mr Kagiso Matlua	(Artist, Graphic design and Fine Arts).
Dr André Odendaal	(University of the Western Cape).
Mr Lucas Siage	(Artist, who had studied abroad and in South Africa).
Mr Theo Stylianides	(SAVA Vice-Chairman). ⁵⁶⁷

In essence, the guidelines provided to the assessors indicated that a flag should be unique; consequently flags which were similar to or likely to be confused with any national or regional flags of which the Commission and its assessors were aware, would therefore have to be discarded, irrespective of their artistic merit. Since the flag ultimately chosen should promote national unity, all designs submitted would have to be evaluated to determine

⁵⁶⁶ The chimera of Greek mythology was a female monster with a lion's head, a goat's body and a serpent's tail, hence an [almost] impossible idea or hope. Catherine Soanes (ed.), *Paperback Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002), p 144.

⁵⁶⁷ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/7/5, Assessors to the Commission. This file also lists the assessors who were appointed to advise the coat of arms and anthem sub-committee.

popular colour trends; the trend in symbols would also need to be evaluated and recorded; and the position of South Africa in the African context should also be borne in mind.⁵⁶⁸

The benefit of simplicity was stressed, both from the point of view of easy identification and cost-effective manufacture. Consequently, any flag design proposed should be such that the colours would contrast clearly with one another and that it should be possible to describe the flag in simple ratios to either the length or width. Even those designs which were inherently unacceptable should nevertheless be evaluated in order to note broad tendencies of colours and symbols. Those designs which showed potential and seemed to encapsulate broadly defined tendencies should, for practical reasons, be moved to a “short list” table. Ultimately designs which best reflected the broad wishes of participants, combined with artistic merit, would be retained and would finally be submitted to the Negotiating Council. As part of the evaluation process, some designs might need to be redrawn and/or a number of ideas might be consolidated into new designs. Since the preparation of artwork takes time, this could not be left to the last moment. The assessors were also reminded that the final proposals by the sub-committees would need to be motivated to the full Commission to enable it to complete its report.⁵⁶⁹

In the case of the national flag, the approximately four hours which the sub-committee and its assessors had at their disposal to evaluate some 7 000 designs which had by then been received from the public by 13 October 1993, and then to prepare a report, was totally inadequate. Designs were still being received days later.⁵⁷⁰ Those submitting designs to the Commission had been requested, if possible, to submit their proposals on standard A4 size paper. If one can imagine designs of this size being displayed alongside one another, with a gap between adjacent designs, at approximately two designs per metre, this represented about 3.5 km of designs which had to be studied, absorbed, and then reported on.⁵⁷¹ As a matter of interest, when Namibia’s national flag was designed, a whole day was set aside by the three

⁵⁶⁸ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/2/1/1, sub-committee: National Flag, documentation, evaluation and draft designs.

⁵⁶⁹ NASA: Accession 5436, 1/12/2/1/1, Sub-Committee: National flag ...; and personal recollection.

⁵⁷⁰ NASA: Accession A436, at the foot of the typed file index relating to the Commission on National Symbols, there is a hand written entry stating that late submissions of flag designs were placed in archival boxes 84-87.

⁵⁷¹ All these original designs were subsequently transferred to the National Archives Repository (now the National Archives of South Africa) in Pretoria, most of them - being of A4 size - in standard archival record boxes. This is one of the reasons why “A4” was identified as the preferred size. Larger designs have created a storage problem for the Archives, and were piled on top of one another on the shelving units in the strongrooms.

technical advisors to the Constituent Assembly, for the evaluation of less than 850 designs.⁵⁷² The overwhelming level of acceptance enjoyed by the Namibian national flag bears ample testimony to the importance of careful technical evaluation.

From the approximately 7 000 flag designs which had by then been received from a population of some 40 million, the sub-committee and its assessors first drew up a short-list of about 130. This was then reduced to ten, after which six proposals were submitted to the Commission for incorporation into its report to the Negotiating Council. Since the assessors to the national flag sub-committee were working under pressure, their comments on most of the six designs which they proposed were brief. It is important to give credit where credit is due. Hence the footnotes which have been added, to identify the respective designers whose proposals made the most important contribution to this phase of the process, and otherwise to amplify the text of the Commission's report. These designs are numbered as in the Commission's Report.⁵⁷³

Design 1 was a combination of ideas from two entries, with green and gold predominating. The report stated that green and gold reflect the overwhelming preference⁵⁷⁴ for these colours in the 7 000 submissions, and they also place the flag in the African context, both with regard to the colours of flags of the continent and the maps of Africa.⁵⁷⁵ Gold, it was stated, signifies wealth, resources, and sun; green the environment, the land, vegetation, fertility, growth and youth. The vertical motif of triangles was said to represent the people, and was associated with indigenous decorative forms, and was a stylised version of a recurrent motif of reconciliation in the submissions. The motif signified interlinked people, unity, harmony and balance.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷² This is a personal recollection of that process.

⁵⁷³ These six designs were published in colour in the Press a few days later, usually on the front page. See, inter alia: *Pretoria News* and *The Star*, Thursday 21 October 1993; *Die Burger*, Friday 22 October 1993; *Sunday Times*, Sunday 24 October 1993. The *Sunday Times* "Flag Phone-in" of 24 October 1993, p 7, invited public comment. They are numbered according to the design numbers allocated in the Report of the Commission.

⁵⁷⁴ Although green and gold were popular colours, the assertion that they were the "overwhelming preference" of participants must be questioned. There was simply no time to undertake an accurate statistical survey of the colours proposed.

⁵⁷⁵ This refers to the flag charts and posters of the flags of Africa which the assessors Bruce Berry and Theo Stylianides of SAVA had taken to Kempton Park for reference purposes that day.

⁵⁷⁶ This design is based primarily on submission C13, submitted by Colleen Pote of 209 Waterkant Piazza, Louder Street, Cape Town, 8001, who attached no symbolism to her design. The elaborate symbolism in the report was presumably generated from within the sub-committee. The Press was later to refer to this design as resembling a beach-towel. The writer has been unable to identify the second design upon which this proposal was apparently based.

Design 2 comprised a green indigenous design with a gold disc representing the sun in the centre, all on a background of blue.⁵⁷⁷

Design 3 was acceptable but the horizontal blue and green bands would need to be separated by a white line.⁵⁷⁸

Design 4, with its triangular motif was said to indicate movement culminating in a point in the future. The report mentioned some similarity between this design and that of the flag of Guyana.⁵⁷⁹

Design 5 was in red, blue, with three green triangles in base, all separated by white stripes.⁵⁸⁰

Design 6 comprised red and black stripes, separated by a yellow serrated stripe in the top third of the flag; while the lower two thirds comprise a downward pointing yellow triangle on a blue background.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁷ This design, submission C 643, which was received from R. Nel of P.O.Box 23103, Innesdale, 0031 Pretoria is typical of Ndebele decorative art found mainly north-east of Pretoria. No symbolism was attached to the design by the artist.

⁵⁷⁸ The design submitted by E. Marais of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, comprised equal horizontal bands of green over blue, with half a yellow roundel against the hoist. Since the blue and green melted into one another, my recollection is that I took a strip of white paper and stuck it over the partition line with "Prestick" to show members of the Commission how the design might be improved. The designer indicated that the blue alluded to the sky and symbolised the future and peace for South Africa. Green represented our fruitful country, ripe for development; while the yellow was the sun of hope and prosperity shining down on the new South Africa.

⁵⁷⁹ The designer of this submission, numbered B581, which was received from M. van den Berg of P.O. Box 82079, Rustenberg, 0300, attached no symbolism to the design.

⁵⁸⁰ This proposal, numbered A294, was submitted by L. Kuhn, 604 Camara Flats, 260 Wessels Street, Arcadia 0083, Pretoria. In the attached symbolism the three green triangles across the bottom of the design were said to represent growth and life, or the future and the environment; referring simultaneously to South Africa's varied landscape and bountiful natural resources. The blue gives the impression of space and sky, which interact with the environment. The red is a source of energy for life and growth, while the white represented peace in our land.

⁵⁸¹ This design, numbered C254, was submitted by Mrs A.J. Merrington of 64 Carmichael Road, Fish Hoek, 7975. In the symbolism attached to this design, Joan Merrington, who had also served on the technical committee which had assisted Namibia with its national symbols in 1990, explained that the southern portion of the African continent was represented by the golden triangle, washed by the blue waters of the Atlantic and Indian oceans, thus suggesting the geographical situation of the country. With regard to the pattern and colours in the upper part of the design, she stated that the red represented the people's sacrifices in the cause of self determination and freedom; that the black is a reminder both of the past as well as indicating the energy required in achieving future objectives; these elements being bound together by a golden zigzag stripe, the overall effect identifying strongly with Africa.

(Figure 6 shows these designs as published for comment in the *Sunday Times* on 24 October 1993, p 7).

Pama and Brownell were technically members of the national flag sub-committee. Although they had regularly viewed the flag designs as they were placed on display at the World Trade Centre, when the Commission and assessors were evaluating submissions on 14 October 1993 they were so deeply involved in the coat of arms sub-committee, that they barely had time to look into the flag evaluation process. This was effectively left in the hands of the assessors. Pama and Brownell thus played no part in the compilation of that report. In contrast, Sirayi and Gilfillan who were members of the flag sub-committee absented themselves and instead joined the coat of arms sub-committee at their own request that day, adding their voices to the two divergent viewpoints which were emerging. Most of the coat of arms designs which were received from the public were at best disappointing, yet as someone remarked, the coat of arms sub-committee was expected to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. The activities of the coat of arms sub-committee are not of primary relevance to this thesis.

When the Commission met the following day, there was a concurrent wrestling with the wording of sub-committee reports and in trying to compile the report as a whole.⁵⁸² As to the Report preparation process, after lunch Elize Botha, who had demonstrated great patience and done a commendable job of trying to keep the peace, adapting a line from Shakespeare's *King Henry V*, remarked with a sigh: "Ag ou Fred, 'Once more unto the breach, dear friend'."⁵⁸³

⁵⁸² This was on Friday 15 October 1993. State Herald's office diary 14 and 15 October 1993.

⁵⁸³ W. Gurney Benham; *Benham's Book of Quotations* (rev. ed., Ward, Lock & Co. Ltd, London, 1929), p. 316b.

SUNDAY TIMES, October 24 1993 7

FLAG PHONE-IN

DO you like any of the suggested designs for a new South African Flag? Record your vote by dialling the telephone number under the design of your choice. The metered cost of the call will be no more than a few seconds

 ☎ (011) 401-2901	 ☎ (011) 401-2902
 ☎ (011) 401-2903	 ☎ (011) 401-2904
 ☎ (011) 401-2905	 ☎ (011) 401-2906
NONE OF THE ABOVE ☎ (011) 401-2907	

6 2

3 5

1 4

Figure 6

Flag designs shortlisted by the Commission on National Symbols

The Commission was working under great pressure since its Report had to be printed and published by 19 October 1993, for distribution to the members of the Negotiating Council for discussion in on 21 and 22 October 1993. The Report ran to 32 pages, followed by twelve addenda, running to a further 64 pages. The media also had copies of the full report, together with the addenda.⁵⁸⁴

On 19 October “all hell broke loose,” mainly on the anthem issue. Elize Botha tried her best to calm matters, but to no avail. It was not long before Mac Maharaj and Fanie van der Merwe, who had been working as a team since Codesa and constituted the Secretariat of the Multi-Party Negotiating Process, were called in to restore peace.⁵⁸⁵ These gentlemen had obviously seen the full report and addenda, which had already been distributed. With considerable tact, they said that since the Negotiating Council was expected to focus on the recommendations in the Report, a unified front should be presented. In essence, the “Report” comprised pages 1 to 32.⁵⁸⁶ Although the proceedings of the Commission had been open and frank, mutual trust had developed. However, they believed that some of the material [addenda] had been added to the Report proper (ie. pages 1 - 32) without close scrutiny and contained certain personal viewpoints. Undue attention to the addenda “will deflect from the Report and minimise the achievements of this Commission.”⁵⁸⁷ A number of members of the Commission on National Symbols then added their own comments. These reflected both personal differences and political tensions which had at times hovered beneath the surface.⁵⁸⁸

The decision of the Secretariat was that the full Report of the Commission on National Symbols would comprise only pages 1 to 32 of the *Report from the Commission on National Symbols*, which had been distributed that morning, since the addenda “reflect part of the working documents of the Commission.” The addenda would nevertheless be “available on

⁵⁸⁴ *Report from the Commission on National Symbols*, 19 October 1993.

⁵⁸⁵ When Brownell remarked to Botha, in frustration, that Meer “was impossible,” she replied gently, “Don't be too hard on Fatima. In many respects her life has been very different to ours. She has been involved in the struggle since she was a teenager, has regularly clashed with both the authorities and her own people, and as you have seen she has learned to fight like a wildcat.” In a memorial tribute delivered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal after Meer's death, her friend and fellow sociologist Professor Ashwin Desai of Rhodes University commented as follows: “It has been remarked to me that so many of the people in the liberation movement who heaped scorn on Fatima were the ones queuing up to eulogise her, tears swelling over her coffin, ... Were the tears those of relief, rather than remorse? After all, their thorn, their nemesis, had been finally silenced. Did they come to make sure she was finally dead ...?” *Sunday Times*, 25 April 2010, p 4.

⁵⁸⁶ These and the following comments are taken from notes which I made at that time (F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

⁵⁸⁷ Annotations in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁵⁸⁸ Annotations in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

request.”⁵⁸⁹

The end result was that in a symbolic and essentially cosmetic exercise, the *Report from the Commission on National Symbols* was stripped of all its addenda, which had been included to give the Negotiating Council as complete a picture as possible of the manner in which the Commission had tried to fulfill its mandate. All references to the twelve addenda were also deleted from the text, but the reality was that they were already in the public domain and in the hands of the Press.

It was this emasculated report, still dated 19 October 1993, but now entitled: *Final Report Commission on National Symbols*, which was released late that afternoon and tabled in the Negotiating Council that evening.⁵⁹⁰ On the following day, 20 October, the Negotiating Council viewed the flag designs. They also considered the coat of arms designs, and listened to the playing of *Vunwe*, one of the national anthem proposals, in preparation for the debate in the Negotiating Council the following day.

Had there been more time available for submissions, the designs which were submitted to the Negotiating Council might well have been different. In essence, none of the designs put forward in the report were to find any significant level of favour either with the Negotiating Council or, after publication by the media, with the public at large. Consequently, the six flag submissions laid before the negotiators were to be regarded as no more than proposals for an interim flag. The submissions were not representative in terms of the racial groupings in South Africa and it was felt that much greater public involvement was required before a flag could be designed for the country. The Report also stated that the people⁵⁹¹ should be drawn into the process more extensively. The time frame within which the Commission had been expected to carry out its mandate had been too short and many entrants were unable to meet the deadline. In fact, decisions were being taken by the Commission while designs were still coming in.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁹ Annotations in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁵⁹⁰ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/1/4/1, Commission: Reports, Final Report. Section 3 of the Report dealt with the proposals for a national flag; section 4 with those for a coat of arms; and section 5 with the anthem.

⁵⁹¹ As explained in Chapter I, in South African political semantics the term “the people” has, in the Africanist context, taken on a distinctive meaning, as referring to the majority black population of the country.

⁵⁹² *Final Report Commission on National Symbols*, 19 October 1993, Section 3.5.

There is a close relationship between flag design principles and those of heraldic design, both of which address the need for a clear identity. In the introduction to a paper which Brownell delivered at the XVI International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, held in Helsinki in 1984, he made the following remark, which applies equally to flags:

In the creation of our own distinctive heraldic idiom in South Africa over the past 21 years, we have endeavoured to draw inspiration from what is best in other heraldic traditions and to enrich this with elements drawn from the cultural heritage of our cosmopolitan population, from our local flora, fauna and architecture, so as to create a heraldic tradition relevant to modern South Africa. A large section of our population does not have a historic heraldic tradition in the accepted sense of the word but to them, as much as to those of us whose forbears hailed from Western Europe, the essence of heraldry, namely as a means of individual and group identification, is as valid in this day and age as it was to the people of the Middle Ages. If heraldry is to live and flourish, it must satisfy a need. It is therefore up to those in control of any heraldic authority to identify and be receptive to that need. Where necessary, they must be prepared to adapt to suit the circumstances.⁵⁹³

In its “Further Recommendations” to the Negotiating Council, the Commission remarked that it had set in motion a process heightening the awareness and strengthening the notion of a collective South African identity.⁵⁹⁴ However, much more time and effort would be required for this awareness to manifest in effective and more permanent national symbols, and to assure the public that South Africans were moving towards common ground. Although every effort had been made to ensure wide public participation within the time constraints which had been imposed, the process of informing and consulting the public could not achieve the necessary momentum. The fact that these symbols were seen as “transitional” had furthermore created a measure of uncertainty among the public and this hampered the

⁵⁹³ Frederick Brownell, “Finnish influence on South African heraldic design,” *Genealogica & Heraldica*, Report of the 16th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences in Helsinki, 16-21 August 1984 (Finnish National Committee for Genealogy and Heraldry, Helsinki, 1986), p 265. In the Commission on National Symbols Brownell gained the impression that the Bureau of Heraldry’s adaptability in this regard was being questioned by some of the members.

⁵⁹⁴ *Report from the Commission on National Symbols*, paragraph 6.1, p 29. The question of identity and identification has been addressed in Chapter I.

process. There would also be wide-ranging practical implications in the implementation of new symbols.⁵⁹⁵

The Commission saw its activities as part of an ongoing process and believed that it was of vital importance for the momentum gained in the “present quest” for national symbols, to be sustained through the immediate establishment by the Negotiating Council of a similar body or cultural forum to conduct and monitor ongoing processes; to invite broader public debate; and to conduct further surveys and research on public reaction to the Commission's recommendations. It would also be necessary to educate the public about new symbols and to promote such symbols as an integral part of nation building.⁵⁹⁶

Thus it was that the *Final Report Commission on National Symbols* was tabled in the Negotiating Council on the evening of 19 October 1993, after the *Report from the Commission on National Symbols*, which had been released that morning had been withdrawn and amended on the insistence of certain members. As mentioned above, by that evening the media had copies of both versions of the report!

5.3 The Report and reaction

The Negotiating Council debate on the Report took place on the morning of 21 October 1993. Introducing the Report, Elize Botha quoted appropriately from Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*:

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways ...”⁵⁹⁷

In referring to the challenges which faced both the Negotiators and the Commission, she also made reference to “this land with all its beauty and sadness,” and stressed that the

⁵⁹⁴ These implications had been set out in Addendum J, which was stripped from the final version of the Report which was considered by the Negotiation Council.

⁵⁹⁶ *Final Report Commission on National Symbols*, 19 October 1993, Section 6, pp 24-30.

⁵⁹⁷ W. Gurney Benham, *Benham's Book of Quotations*, (Ward, Lock and Co., London, rev. ed., 1929) p 358a. The writer was reminded by Professor Reinecke of this opening quotation during a telephonic discussion on 11 June 2009.

Commission had merely set a process in motion.⁵⁹⁸ After initial platitudes the negotiations moved to the anthem and the debate soon became heated. It was extensively covered by the printed media between 22 and 24 October 1993.

By that stage, some members of the Commission were thoroughly incensed by the manner in which their honest efforts, compiled in the limited time at their disposal on the basis of the submissions received from the public, had been denigrated. They were also less than happy with the manner in which their *bona fides* and integrity had been questioned from within the Commission. It was at this stage of the debate that the negotiators indicated that they expected the Commission on National Symbols to “return to the drawing board” and come up with further proposals. Elize Botha, however, firmly but politely stated that the Commission had produced a Report and thus fulfilled its mandate. It was now up to the Negotiating Council to make such further arrangements as it saw fit. This would explain why the Negotiating Council then decided that the matter should be referred to the Planning Committee. While the first accounts of the debate appeared in the late editions of some newspapers that afternoon,⁵⁹⁹ most newspapers had a field day on 22 October 1993.⁶⁰⁰ The Sunday newspapers followed suit two days later.⁶⁰¹ In most cases the reports concentrated on the acrimonious exchanges on the anthem issue, because that is what had been debated.

As is evident from the media coverage, emotions flared and the anthem debate rapidly degenerated into a politically charged fiasco which was adjourned when it became clear that no consensus was likely to be reached. The Planning Committee would be asked to look at ways of ending the stalemate. During the lunch break members of the Commission on National Symbols were informed that their presence was no longer required. There was thus no debate on either the national flag or coat of arms. The Commission on National Symbols having been advised at its first meeting that “this is an extremely emotional issue that will have to be dealt with, with the utmost sensitivity,” the Negotiating Council failed dismally in

⁵⁹⁸ The proceedings of the Negotiating Council were recorded on tape. The file index relating to the Multi-Party Negotiating Process (NEG) in the National Archives of South Africa, Accession S436, contains an index to the number of tapes made during Negotiating Council Meetings each day between March and December 1993. According to this index of tapes, the proceedings on 21 October 1993 are recorded on four of these tapes.

⁵⁹⁹ *Beeld*, *Cape Times*, *Die Burger*, *Pretoria News*, Late Final, *The Argus* and *The Star*, Final, 21 October 1993, all of which also illustrated the six designs.

⁶⁰⁰ Inter alia: *Argus*; *Beeld*; *Burger*; *Business Day*; *Cape Times: Citizen*; *Daily Dispatch*; *Eastern Province Herald*; *Natal Mercury*; *Natal Witness*; *Pretoria News*; *Sowetan*; *Star*; and *Volksblad*, 22 October 1993.

⁶⁰¹ *Rapport*; *Sunday Times*; and *Sunday Star*, 24 October 1993.

applying the same criteria to its own debate. As Ray Hartley, the political reporter commented in the *Sunday Times*, “the reality is that negotiators are searching for the impossible: unifying symbols in a country still deeply divided over its constitutional future. Unity is surely a precondition for a symbol of unity.”⁶⁰²

After the debate Elize Botha was interviewed by the media. During this interview, she again reverted to using an adapted quote from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* when referring to the Council: “Leave them to heaven and to those thorns that in their bosoms lodge, to prick and sting them.”⁶⁰³ This occasioned Hartley’s comment, “Commission chief hurls Hamlet at the politicians.”⁶⁰⁴ In the *Aktueel* (of topical interest) section of the Afrikaans Sunday newspaper *Rapport*, there is a profile on Elize Botha’s involvement in the Commission by Hanlie Retief, under the heading: “Die prof in die vlagstorm,” which gives an interesting insight into Botha’s perceptions of the workings of Commission on National Symbols. When asked how, and why, she as an Afrikaans-speaking woman, had come to chair the Commission, she said that she had accepted the challenge out of unbounded curiosity and because she felt it was her civic duty. She was clearly, as Retief remarked, a “no nonsense” person. With regard to the assertion that there was considerable “nonsense,” indeed conflict and continuous hair-splitting in the Commission, Botha remarked that she would herself, rather not use the word “conflict.” Rather “robust debate.” There were indeed heated discussions and the people “on the outside” could have been offended if this had not been so. The Commission was dealing with emotional and very sensitive matters. But eventually there was appreciation for the divergent viewpoints, because with national symbols one is saying to the outside world, this is my world, the place where I belong and where I seek fulfilment. Ever diplomatic, she commented that the Commission experienced no political pressure, at least not within the meeting chamber, but added that as a simple fool (“soos ‘n reine dwaas”), she might not have got wind of it.⁶⁰⁵

The late edition of the *Pretoria News* which appeared on the afternoon of the debate was one of the first newspapers to carry comments on the flag designs. It was found that black residents polled preferred the new designs, while white residents were divided, some feeling

⁶⁰² *Sunday Times*, 24 October 1993 (no page number available).

⁶⁰³ W. Gurney Benham, *Benham’s book of quotations*, p 292a. The actual quotation reads: “Leave her to Heaven, and to those thorns that in her bosom lodge, to prick and sting her.”

⁶⁰⁴ *Sunday Times*, 24 October 1993 (no page number available).

⁶⁰⁵ *Rapport*, Sunday 24 October 1993, p 21.

that the new designs represented only black interests. Graphic designer and erstwhile member of the Heraldry Council, Ernst de Jong was particularly critical and was reported as describing the six flag designs submitted to the Negotiating Council, all of which were proposals from the public, as “dull, unimaginative and insipid,” with outdated ethnic imagery, symbolism and colour arrangements. “They are not worthy of design exercises by my first-year students at the university,” De Jong is reported as saying. He maintained – as he had done in the past – that: “We’re missing an incredible opportunity to design a visually exciting flag for our country,” and hoped that the Negotiating Council would appoint professional designers to produce a flag. In the same issue of the *Pretoria News*, Professor Nico Roos, Head of the Department of Fine Arts at Pretoria University was reported as saying that: “These are the flags of a small, third-world country” and that they were not a visual success.⁶⁰⁶

An editorial in the *Cape Times* remarked that: “These flags are a joke,” while extracts quoted from “Teleletters” published the same day were scathing. *The Argus* reported on the same day that the general consensus of a phone-in poll which had drawn 500 callers was that the six proposed designs were: “Stupid, horrible, ridiculous ... and another good reason to leave the country.”⁶⁰⁷ Under the heading: “Public’s firm No to ‘dull, insipid’ flags,” *The Citizen* recorded phrases such as: “The country demands something better;” “They don’t symbolise the country’s diversity;” “They’re unimpressive;” “We need something stronger, nicer.”⁶⁰⁸

Beeld similarly reported that: “Voorstelle vir nuwe vlag, simbole kry baie kritiek.”⁶⁰⁹ *Die Burger* reported that: “Kapenaars kla oor voorstelle vir vlag,” and commented that approximately 90% of its readers who had reacted to the flag designs, were dead opposed to them. It prefaced a further article, with the comment:⁶¹⁰ “Mr Fred Brownell, State Herald, chairman of the Southern African Vexillological Association, and member of the Commission on National Symbols, said in a recent article that designing national symbols which would satisfy all the inhabitants of South Africa would not be an easy task.” Three

⁶⁰⁶ *Pretoria News* Late Final, 21 October 1993, p 1; and on the same day, *Cape Times*, p 1 and *Die Burger*, p 11.

⁶⁰⁷ *Cape Times*, pp 1-2 and *Argus*, p 6, 22 October 1993.

⁶⁰⁸ *The Citizen*, 22 October 1993, p 4.

⁶⁰⁹ *Beeld*, 22 October 1993, p 2. [My translation: “Proposals for a new flag [and] symbols receive much criticism.”]

⁶¹⁰ *Die Burger*, 22 October 1993 [My translation: “Cape residents complain about flag proposals”], and article on p 11.

days later *Die Burger* decided to do something concrete about the matter and announced that it would run a competition of its own in an attempt to arrive at a suitable design for a new national flag.⁶¹¹

One of those who were approached for comment on this latest development was the Chairman of the Heraldry Council, Professor Heinrich du Toit. A fortnight earlier he had been involved as an assessor to the national coat of arms sub-committee of the Commission on National Symbols and thus had a measure of first-hand experience of the process. Du Toit stated that the only way in which the question of a new national flag for South Africa could be resolved, was if persons with heraldic experience were to be instructed to put forward four or five designs for consideration. It had not been a good idea to expect the public at large to provide the answer, since there were complex artistic and scientific considerations in the design of a flag, which were thus best left to professionals in the field. To amplify this viewpoint, Du Toit commented that: “Mr Fred Brownell, State Herald and Chairman of the Southern African Vexillological Association, and a member of the Commission on National Symbols had designed Namibia’s flag ‘in a day’, and there had been no complaints about it.”⁶¹²

Du Toit further commented that the Heraldry Council, South Africa’s statutory heraldic authority, which was one of the most creative and eminent authorities of this nature in the world, and whose statutory functions included the design of coats of arms and flags, was surprised and disappointed that it had not been directly involved in the process. He added that there had been no reaction to a formal offer of assistance by the Heraldry Council. The Council felt strongly that a developed country such as South Africa, which had the necessary infrastructure and professional expertise, was in a position to deal with an important and sensitive matter such as this, with a greater measure of insight and responsibility. He also felt that it was ill-advised for national symbols to be incorporated into the Constitution instead of in a separate statute.⁶¹³

⁶¹¹ *Die Burger*, 25 October 1993. [My translation.] Since the closing date for this competition was set at 13 November 1993, this initiative will be addressed later in this chapter.

⁶¹² Du Toit had issued a press release on 29 October 1993. This is my translation of reports which appeared in *Die Burger* and *Volksblad* on 30 October 1993. The report also appeared in *The Citizen* that day (no page numbers available).

⁶¹³ *Die Burger*, *The Citizen* and *Volksblad*, Saturday 30 October 1993; *Sunday Star*, 31 October 1993, p. 4.

In what can be considered as the final episode of the Commission's "six flag design saga," before the designs prepared by the professional design studios were lodged with the Negotiating Council for consideration, was a proposal by someone described simply as "A Rondebosch resident." This was a suggestion that the "peace dove" emblem be incorporated into the six designs proposed by the Commission on National Symbols and incorporated into any future flag, "to symbolise the hopes of all South Africans."⁶¹⁴ Commenting on the Rondebosch resident's proposal, Frikkie Botha, secretary of the National Peace Secretariat, said the Peace Secretariat "would not object," but stressed that the proposal should be put to the Commission on National Symbols. "We would have no objection to either the interim flag, or a national flag depicting a dove of peace, provided it was accepted by the commission." The doves, on a circular blue field, were depicted flying away from the hoist. The article ended with the comment that: "Unfortunately, the feelings of the Commission on National Symbols could not be ascertained".

This is hardly surprising since the Commission had fulfilled its mandate. It was now up to the Negotiating Council, through its Planning Committee, to make further arrangements to resolve the flag issue.

5.4 Design Studio proposals

Since the process of public participation in the search for a new national flag for South Africa, conducted by the Commission on National Symbols, had produced no acceptable results the Negotiating Council now turned to the commercial graphic design fraternity for assistance. The negotiators hoped that these professional graphic designers, or "modern commercial image makers,"⁶¹⁵ who had for some time been punting their expertise in this field, would come up with designs which would stir the enthusiasm of the public at large.

Modern advertising agencies and graphic design studios tend to be "logo" orientated. In essence, a logo is a design or symbol chosen by an organization to identify its products. It is derived from the Greek word "logos" which means "word." A letter or word thus often forms

⁶¹⁴ Heike von der Lancken, "Doves could be the bond on new flag for SA," *Pretoria News*, 1 November 1993, p6.

⁶¹⁵ William G. Crampton, "Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity" (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1994), p 184.

an integral part of the design.⁶¹⁶ In contrast, heraldic designs should be bold, without lettering or fine detail, and dark and light colours should alternate. This heraldic “colour rule,” which has evolved over the past nine centuries, is nothing more than the practical application of common sense. Although commercial design studios and heraldic authorities are both in the business of creating graphic identities and thus share a common aim, each is a speciality in its own right.⁶¹⁷ The logos created by the modern commercial image makers are usually motivated by a belief in constant innovation, and are thus of a more transient nature than the coats of arms, badges and flags devised by heralds. In sum, logos often change on a regular basis, presumably because they are created to meet the current artistic canons and trends of the transient society in which we live. A case in point is the graphic identity of the more than a century old Royal Dutch Shell Petroleum Company, which has changed eight times since 1900. The Finnish heraldic artist Olof Eriksson illustrated the progression of the Shell logo in a book which was published in 1982.⁶¹⁸

The brief which was soon extended to design studios by the Planning Committee of the Negotiating Council, was not the first involvement of the commercial graphic design fraternity. The Pretoria-based artist and graphic designer Ernst de Jong, co-ordinator of the Blue Sky Movement which comprised some twenty design studios country-wide and whose aim was to create a uniquely South African design style, were already at work preparing flag designs. A number of these designs were depicted in an article published in the Afrikaans daily *Beeld*, during September 1992.⁶¹⁹ This theme was taken up, again with illustrations, in an article which appeared in the weekly magazine *You*, a fortnight later.⁶²⁰ At that stage negotiators had not even considered the question of new national symbols, but De Jong was reported as saying that since a new flag was inevitable, he would like to see the old one replaced with “something stylish.” Members of the public were also invited to submit designs

⁶¹⁶ Catherine Soanes (ed.), *Paperback Oxford English dictionary* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002), p 493.

⁶¹⁷ From its inception in 1963, the Heraldry Council had had as its Chairman a legally trained person, but the Council had otherwise been dominated by leading figures in the cultural and historical field. This rather narrow focus was addressed when the Council was reconstituted in 1984. It was, indeed, with a view to engendering a closer understanding and working relationship between these components of the design fraternity, that Ernst de Jong, one of Pretoria’s leading graphic designers, had been appointed to the Heraldry Council. Likewise, Nico Roos, Professor of Art at the University of Pretoria, had been appointed to the Council to provide an academic perspective.

⁶¹⁸ Olof Eriksson, *Heraldiikka ja symbolit: opas heraldisten tunnusten muotoilun peruseisiin* (Soumen Heraldinen Seura, Helsinki, 1982), p 86. As a matter of interest, the essence of Shell’s current corporate identity, which dates from 1971, is still in current use. *Beeld*, 12 October 2011, p 11. Brownell spent two days with Eriksson in Helsinki in May 1979 while on a “study tour” when he was Assistant State Herald.

⁶¹⁹ Liesl Louw, “SA se nuwe vlag moet móói wees,” *Beeld*, 16 September 1992, p 3.

⁶²⁰ Marieta Roos, “Farewell, orange, white and blue,” *You*, 1 October 1992, pp 18, 19.

to Blue Sky. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it should be borne in mind that negotiations were then in an early and tentative stage. In reaction to this invitation, Piet Coetzer, the National Party's Chief Director of Information was reported in the same article as expressing a note of caution: "Not so fast. A lot of talking still needs to be done and all sorts of issues still need to be ironed out and resolved before we start dealing with questions like flags and national symbols." Leon Wessels, Minister of Local Government and one of the South African Government's negotiators in the early negotiations had, however, remarked that the new South Africa was almost a reality and that national symbols that unite everybody would need to be found.⁶²¹

De Jong, then a member of the Heraldry Council, had also served as a member of the advisory committee which had assisted the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), in the preparation of its comprehensive investigation into national symbols during 1992 and 1993.⁶²² In an article by Paul Boekkooi in June 1993, De Jong is reported as saying that the most popular symbols suggested by the public to the HSRC were the sun, the rainbow and the dove. Although the sun was endowed with powerful symbolism in the African context,⁶²³ the rainbow appealed even more strongly to him. Its seven colours and the fact that it was a natural phenomenon had very strong symbolic value and meaning. In this regard, De Jong would seem to have overlooked the fact that the "Rainbow Flag," with its seven horizontal bands of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, has long been associated worldwide with the Gay Rights movement.⁶²⁴ Although the dove also had symbolic meaning, De Jong felt that it was not an original concept and that many of the artistic representations of the dove in circulation were not well-designed. Ironically, De Jong is reported as saying that a dove had been designed by Pablo Picasso in the 1920s as a symbol for the Spanish Communist Party. Referring to the American graphic designer Paul Rand, De Jong remarked

⁶²¹ *You*, 1 October 1992, p 18.

⁶²² Charles Malan (Project leader), *Present national symbols of the Republic of South Africa: HSRC Investigation into national symbols, Report No. 1* (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1993; and *The sociopolitical and –cultural role of national symbols in the RSA; a pilot survey: HSRC Investigation into national symbols, Report No. 2* (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1993).

⁶²³ It had already been incorporated into the upper hoist of Namibia's flag.

⁶²⁴ San Francisco is generally considered as the heart of the international "Gay" movement. When Brownell attended the XII International Congress of Vexillology in that city in 1987, it was his impression that there were more "Gay" flags displayed on the diagonal flag-posts attached to the front of the suburban homes near the Congress venue, than "stars and stripes." James J. Ferrigan III, "The evolution and adoption of the Rainbow Flag in San Francisco," *Flag Bulletin* 28.1-4(130) Jan. – Aug. 1989, pp 115-122. The seven colour "Rainbow Flag" is, fortuitously, also the flag of Cusco, in Peru. Some of the versions of the Rainbow Flag have six bands – red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet.

that symbols, like trademarks, grow in meaning.⁶²⁵ Paul Boekkooi also remarked that according to Professor Mike Hough, Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria, in the African context symbols are closely interwoven with politics. Hough had remarked that symbols should be neither too abstract nor too intellectual and that they should furthermore lend themselves to immediate recognition. Boekkooi had also consulted Dr Bertie du Plessis, another prominent graphic designer. With regard to the rainbow, Du Plessis indicated that he strongly disagreed with De Jong. To him the rainbow was unduly idealistic and represented too much of an escape from reality. Indeed, he wondered if the rainbow would be symbolic of the obliteration or reinterpretation of the past.⁶²⁶

The “new South Africa” has often been described – idealistically and probably unrealistically, by the then Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu in particular – as the “Rainbow Nation.” A point later made by Denis Beckett in his book, *Trekking*, is that “when you think of it: the rainbow is after all not an amalgam of the colours [of the spectrum], but the diametric opposite.”⁶²⁷ Some seventeen years into the new political dispensation, Cape Town based members of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community were to produce a distinctive South African “Gay” flag, to which black and white had been added.⁶²⁸

On 28 October 1993 Colin Eglin, who had long been involved in the negotiation process, reported to the Negotiating Council on behalf of the Planning Committee. Since the flag proposals received from the Commission on National Symbols had not been greeted with enthusiasm by the public at large, three [as yet unnamed] companies which “designed flags on a professional basis,” would each be requested to submit three or four proposals.⁶²⁹ These companies would be given “a short space of time” in which to submit their designs.⁶³⁰ They were thus under pressure from the outset. As it transpired, these three advertising

⁶²⁵ The role of repetition and the emotion which it can engender, together with the concept that the “Rainbow Nation” should be considered as a national symbol, are themes in an article by a Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Wendy Isaacs-Martin, “Strengthening national identity through national symbols and historical narrative,” *Africa Insight*, 40 (3), December 2010, pp 80-91. See also E. Bornman, “National symbols and nation building in post-apartheid South Africa,” *International journal of intercultural relations*, 30 (3), 2006, who is cited by Isaacs-Martin.

⁶²⁶ Paul Boekkooi, “Pas op vir simbole in Afrika,” *Insig*, Junie 1993, pp 18-19.

⁶²⁷ Denis Beckett, *Trekking: in search of the real South Africa* (Penguin, Sandton, 1996), p 176.

⁶²⁸ *Pretoria News*, “Verve,” 25 January 2011, p 12.

⁶²⁹ National Archives of South Africa (hereafter NASA): Accession S436, 1/12/1/6/19, Commission on National Symbols, Correspondence: Letters to agencies re decision on flag.

⁶³⁰ *Beeld*, *Die Burger*, *The Citizen* and *Volksblad*, 29 October 1993.

agencies/graphic design studios – Hunt Lascaris TBWA; Saatchi & Saatchi Klerk & Barrett; and Ogilvy & Mather Rightford Searle-Tripp & Makin – were briefed on 29 October 1993. Representatives of a fourth studio, Herdbouys⁶³¹ were briefed on 1 November 1993.⁶³²

At the suggestion of the Democratic Party delegate Dene Smuts, the Negotiating Council also agreed that [other] design agencies and individual artists be considered if their names were put forward immediately. This opportunity was welcomed by a group of three designers - Ernst de Jong, Ray Clucas and Jeremy Sampson – now under the name of the Flag Design Consortium, who had apparently received a telephone call from the negotiators on 3 November 1993. They delivered their flag designs to the Negotiating Council the following day.⁶³³ The agencies had initially been given until 5pm on 3 November 1993 to present their first efforts to the Council.⁶³⁴ This deadline was extended to noon the following day to accommodate the late submissions.⁶³⁵ The brief to the agencies and designers had been that they should base their designs on the main trends which had been identified by the Commission on National Symbols in its report.

On 3 and 4 November 1993 more than thirty-five designs, many of which constituted variations on a common theme, were delivered to the Negotiating Council at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park.⁶³⁶ Symbolic motivations were submitted in support of the designs.⁶³⁷ This is an integral component of corporate identity development and management, which comprises the three core themes of “coherence, symbolism and positioning.”⁶³⁸ The earnest intentions of the Planning Committee in seeking the assistance of modern commercial image-makers had resulted in a crop of designs largely unsuitable for serious consideration as a national flag.⁶³⁹ An article which appeared in the *Weekly Mail and Guardian* at this time commented cynically that where the politicians and technocrats had failed, commercial

⁶³¹ Herdbouys was South Africa’s first major predominantly Black-owned graphic design studio.

⁶³² Bronwyn Wilkinson, “Ad agencies rush to meet flag deadline,” *The Star*, Wednesday 3 November 1993 (no page number available).

⁶³³ NASA: Accession S436, 1/12/2/1/3, Reports: Design Consortium flag proposals.

⁶³⁴ *Business Day*, Tuesday 2 November 1993, p 25; *The Citizen*, 2 November 1993, p 4.

⁶³⁵ *The Citizen*, p. 4 and *The Star*, p 3, both on Thursday 4 November 1993.

⁶³⁶ *Beeld*, *Cape Times* and *The Star*, 5 November 1993; *Rapport* and *Sunday Times*, 7 November 1993.

⁶³⁷ Commercial image-makers tend to have a fertile imagination when promoting their ideas and designs. In the field of South African national symbols, for example, one has only to take note of the elaborate symbolic meaning propagated by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), for the design-studio generated pseudo-heraldic new South African “coat of arms” which was adopted in 2000.

⁶³⁸ Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” p 175.

⁶³⁹ F.G. Brownell, “Flagging the ‘new’ South Africa, 1910-2010,” *Historia*, 56 (1), May 2011, p 56.

interests had taken over: “After all, ad agencies have a great deal in common with political parties. They both spend their lives trying to sell their skills to the highest bidder, making up slogans that can pass for truth and selling the unsaleable.”⁶⁴⁰

In a press release on 29 October 1993 the chairman of the Heraldry Council had expressed his dismay at the manner in which the Council, as the statutory body responsible for heraldic matters in South Africa, had been sidelined in the national symbols process. He reiterated the Council’s offer to assist in the evaluation of designs. This offer was now taken up by the negotiators and a special meeting held in the offices of the Bureau of Heraldry in Pretoria, was convened on the evening of 3 November 1993 to consider and comment on the designs which four of the graphic design studios had lodged with the Negotiating Council that day.⁶⁴¹ The following afternoon such members of the Heraldry Council as were immediately available met to consider and comment on the final batch of proposals which had been lodged with the Negotiating Council, shortly before the final deadline of 12 noon that day.⁶⁴² Both the negotiators and the Heraldry Council were working to a very tight schedule.

The first group of designs evaluated by the Heraldry Council was that submitted by Herdbuoys.⁶⁴³ In the covering motivation it was said that the black, green and red colours signify African heritage.”⁶⁴⁴ Without going into further detail, only one of the designs submitted by Herdbuoys was identified, with suggested amendments, for consideration as the possible basis of a national flag.

The second group of flag designs which was evaluated by the Heraldry Council, were submitted by Hunt, Lascaris TWBA. A common thread running through these designs was again the use of a dove and the Pan-African colours of red, yellow and green, together with

⁶⁴⁰ “Running it up the flagpole,” *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 5-11 November 1993, p 16.

⁶⁴¹ Bureau of Heraldry (hereafter B/H): Annexure A to the minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 3 November 1993; State Herald’s office diary, Thursday 4 November 1993.

⁶⁴² B/H: Annexure B to the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 3 November 1993; State Herald’s office diary, Friday 5 November 1993.

⁶⁴³ A photograph of all of these designs, which had been placed on display for the negotiators, appeared in *Beeld* on 5 November 1993 (no page number available).

⁶⁴⁴ The more commonly accepted Pan-African colours are red, yellow and green, derived from the flag of Ethiopia. Black, green and red are more closely associated with the Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, and the “Black Power” movement in the United States of America and in the Caribbean, which grew out of Garvey’s efforts.

white.⁶⁴⁵ In its comments, the Heraldry Council stressed the lack of strong contrast to ensure visibility and, as in the designs received from Herdbuoys, again mentioned the unsuitability of a dove for use in a national flag.

The third group of flag designs evaluated by the Heraldry Council, were the five proposals submitted by Saatchi & Saatchi Klerck & Barrett.⁶⁴⁶ A common theme was a line-drawing of a stylized protea flower, within a simple open wreath. The other emblem used was a highly stylized sun motif with radiating bars instead of rays. This design was more reminiscent of a rimless wagon wheel than customary representations of a sun. In its evaluation of these designs the Heraldry Council again pointed out that placing yellow stripes and other elements on a white background, ran counter to the practical heraldic colour rule that there should be a clear contrast between dark and light colours.

The fourth group of flag designs which was considered by the Heraldry Council, were the eight proposals submitted by the Johannesburg office of Ogilvie & Mather Rightford Searle-Tripp & Makin. The common element running through all these designs was the use of the blue, green and yellow. These were used in conjunction with other design elements, but the end results were not a success.

In addition to its specific comments on the individual designs received from the four design agencies which have been addressed above, the Heraldry Council also included in its evaluation some general comments. These were the majority of designs submitted for consideration by the design agencies/graphic design studios had no potential for consideration as a national flag and that even those which showed potential were not internationally on par with what one would expect of a national flag. The submissions furthermore demonstrated that graphic designers are no more expert at designing flags than the general public.⁶⁴⁷

An article which illustrated a selection of six of the design studio proposals, published under

⁶⁴⁵ These three designs were illustrated on the front page of *The Citizen*, and also in *Beeld*, on 5 November 1993 (no page numbers available).

⁶⁴⁶ These designs can also be seen in the photograph which appeared in *Beeld* on 5 November 1993 (no page number available).

⁶⁴⁷ Indeed, William Crampton, who was then Director of the British Flag Institute remarked in his doctoral thesis that "The two worst designed flags are generally agreed to be those of Zambia and [the Canadian Province] of Newfoundland, both designed by professional graphic artists." Crampton, "Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity," p 184.

the heading “More flags, but few find favour,” reported that some negotiators who viewed the proposed flags were not impressed with what they saw. “Is this the best the advertising agencies could do?” one negotiator is said to have commented in the corridors.⁶⁴⁸

The last group of flag designs submitted to the Heraldry Council for comment was from the group of three graphic designers calling themselves the Flag Design Consortium. It was presumably in order to accommodate their proposals that the deadline for submissions had been extended until noon on Thursday 4 November 1993. In the explanatory memorandum dated 4 November 1993, signed by Ernst de Jong as convener of the Flag Design Consortium, this Consortium’s proposals envisaged a three-phase introduction of a national flag. The first phase would have entailed the use of the Peace Symbol flag.⁶⁴⁹ The second, from December 1993 until the April 1994 elections, a Free Bird soaring above.⁶⁵⁰ In the third phase, after the elections, there would be a new South African Flag representing our re-instated global place in the sun plus harmonious unity and hospitality.⁶⁵¹

In its comments on these proposals, the Heraldry Council remarked that as a general principle, the idea of introducing a national flag in phases was impractical. It would not only confuse the public at large but also undermine South Africa’s international image and stature.⁶⁵² For this reason the Council was not prepared to comment on the first two phases proposed in this submission. In its comments on the third phase of the suggested process, the Heraldry Council observed that although the oval sunburst filling the field of the flag better than many of the other designs which had been submitted for consideration, it was impractical because of its complicated nature.⁶⁵³ It would be difficult for a member of the public to reproduce the 45 rays with the necessary degree of accuracy. The design was thus

⁶⁴⁸ *The Star*, Friday 5 November 1993 (no page number available). See also *Beeld* and *Cape Times*, p 2, which commented that the new national flag “would be included in the interim constitution when it is ready;” and *The Citizen*, pp 1-2 which illustrated four of these designs on the front page.

⁶⁴⁹ See Chapter IV, for the National Peace Accord.

⁶⁵⁰ A blue field bearing a single white dove flying away from the flag-post.

⁶⁵¹ These three designs were illustrated (with other designs) in the left-hand column, in *Rapport* on 7 November 1993 (no page number available).

⁶⁵² In this regard it is important to remember that a national flag is a country’s most important non-verbal symbol of identity.

⁶⁵³ The classic heraldic sun has only sixteen alternating straight and wavy rays, while the sun in the flags of Taiwan and Namibia each have twelve straight rays. More rays are seldom encountered in heraldic designs. Olof Eriksson’s booklet on celestial phenomena in heraldic design shows a single instance in which a representation of the Virgin Mary and Child are surrounded by an oval border of forty-two alternating straight and wavy rays. See Olof Eriksson, *Taivaan ilmiöt heraldisessa kuvastossa* (Esitelmä, Suomen Heraldisen Seuran kokouksessa, 11.12.1980), p 4.

not in accordance with the guide-line proposed by the Commission on National Symbols that a national flag should be simple enough for a child to reproduce a fair rendition.⁶⁵⁴ The white ring in the centre of the sunburst, furthermore disappeared against the yellow background, while the green and blue of the Yin-Yang melted into one another. These latter observations illustrated, once again, the necessity of paying attention to the internationally accepted heraldic colour rule which applies equally to good flag design. The Yin-Yang was furthermore a typically Far East symbol.

The Heraldry Council's evaluation of the group of designs submitted by the Flag Design Consortium was transmitted to the negotiators on 5 November 1993.⁶⁵⁵ Line-drawings of seventeen of the designs submitted to the Negotiating Council by the advertising agencies and graphic design studios, on which the colours are indicated by means of the letters and symbols recommended by the International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV)⁶⁵⁶ are illustrated in a comprehensive *SAVA Newsletter* which addressed the first two phases of the national flag process.⁶⁵⁷

In evaluating the proposals from the design studios, the Heraldry Council had thus found that the majority of designs had no potential and were not at par with internationally accepted standards. They also did not lend themselves to easy and successful reduction, reproduction or manufacture. In short, the abiding impression was that modern commercial image makers, although they might be on par with logo design, displayed little knowledge of even the basic principles of successful flag design. Ernst de Jong had, for example, long stressed how successful he and his design team had been with the design of South Africa's new series of banknotes. Indeed they were, and by concentrating on South African wildlife, had succeeded in elevating the designs on our banknotes above the political domain.⁶⁵⁸ However, it is a simple reality that one does not fly a banknote from a flag-post. Banknote designs require the

⁶⁵⁴ The multiple wavy bands and multi-rayed demi-sun in the lower part of the flag of the Canadian Province of British Columbia, display a similar design weakness.

⁶⁵⁵ B/H: Annexure B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 3 November 1993.

⁶⁵⁶ These letters and symbols are set out on page 38 of *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 2/91 of 15 November 1991.

⁶⁵⁷ This entire newsletter, compiled by Bruce Berry, Fred Brownell, Danie de Waal and Theo Stylianides, under the heading "Events leading to an interim flag for South Africa," was published as *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 7/93, 31 December 1993, pp 26-27. This newsletter covered the flag process up until 31 December 1993. An Appendix to the newsletter reproduced 51 pages of newspaper cuttings relating to the process up to that date.

⁶⁵⁸ During his time as a member of the Heraldry Council, De Jong arranged for members of the Council to visit the premises of the South African Bank Note Company in the industrial area of Rosslyn, north of Pretoria. During this visit we were impressed by the meticulous attention to detail which is required in banknote design.

finest engraved detail to counteract forgery, but when it comes to flags, there are entirely different practical criteria for their design. The failure of this phase in the search for a suitable national flag design prompted Theo Stylianides, Vice-Chairman of the Southern African Vexillological Association and one of the assessors to the Commission on National Symbols to write a “letter to the editor,” in which he stressed that a [national] flag design should be simple, and that it should be designed with an eye to being flown rather than to its appearance on paper.⁶⁵⁹ [Figure 7 shows six of the design studio proposals.]

The flag designs submitted by the graphic designers were met with little enthusiasm by members of the Negotiating Council. In contrast, the flag designs which the public had submitted to the Commission on National Symbols, had evoked a heated and prolonged debate in the media and amongst the public. The proposals submitted by the professional commercial image makers were met with what amounted to a deathly silence. As Crampton remarked in the conclusion to his doctoral thesis, professional graphic designers have not, as yet, proved their ability to produce image-systems or flags that are suitable for application to modern nation-states.⁶⁶⁰

An article by Eugene Gunning in *Rapport* pointed out that the flags of many countries had evolved over centuries. The article also made reference to comments by the chairman of the Heraldry Council that graphic designers who view a country as yet another commercial undertaking for which a corporate identity must be created, were not necessarily authorities on flag design.⁶⁶¹ In an article published in *Beeld* four days later, P.H. du Preez of Kimberley stated that while a new [national] flag would need to embody a clear and apparent appeal to the population at large, he could see no reason why the [basic concept of the] Van Riebeeck flag should be discarded. It should also not be necessary to consult some book, before being able to ascertain the symbolic meaning of the graphic representation. Quoting from what are believed to have been the last words of President Paul Kruger,

⁶⁵⁹ This was done in a letter to the editor of the *Pretoria News*, under the heading “Concerted effort needed from all on the flag issue,” *Pretoria News*, Monday 15 November 1993, p 6.

⁶⁶⁰ Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” p 184.

⁶⁶¹ Eugene Gunning, “Ander lande se vlae het oor eeue ontwikkel,” *Rapport*, Sondag 7 November 1993 (no page number available).



Figure 7

Some flag designs proposed by Graphic Design Studios

the article remarked that one should search in the past for what was good and beautiful, and build your future from there.⁶⁶²

After the failure of the public participation phase, the Cape daily, *Die Burger*, launched a flag competition of its own which also elicited some 7 000 designs, from which five were selected for final consideration. This initiative also failed to achieve its objective.⁶⁶³

The second phase of the national flag process was necessary, but in the final analysis it proved to be an essentially futile exercise of drawing commercial image-makers into the design process. In consequence, the Negotiating Council decided not to include a description of a new national flag in the “interim” Constitution. Instead, once the design of a new national flag had been decided on, it would be adopted by proclamation under a special provision in the Constitution at some future date. A similar decision was taken as regards the national anthem(s). These issues did thus not delay the constitutional process. The Negotiating Council decided to retain the existing national coat of arms and great seal, until such time as a “final” Constitution was negotiated.⁶⁶⁴

5.5 Promulgation of the “Interim” Constitution

The work of the Negotiating Council, and of the Multi-Party Negotiating Process culminated during a marathon session which started eight hours late and came to an end on the night of 17/18 November 1993, when the last of the provisions of the “interim” Constitution were agreed on.⁶⁶⁵ The Negotiating Council’s typists had to record the last-minute changes and the final text was signed by the parties involved, in the early hours of 18 November 1993. Claire Robertson was to write in the *Sunday Times* three days later, that “At 14 minutes past midnight on Thursday, November 18, the plenary session of the negotiating council finally killed off centuries of white rule in South Africa.” She remarked that in characteristic fashion, crucial decisions had been taken in haste at the last moment, with apparent concessions here

⁶⁶² P.H. du Preez, “Nuwe vlag moet duidelik spreek,” *Beeld*, 11 November 1993, p 12. This translation into English is taken from Beckett, *Flying with Pride*, p 160.

⁶⁶³ For a summary of *Die Burger*’s flag competition and illustrations of the five designs, see *SAVA Newsletter* SN: 7/93, 31 December 1993, pp 28-30.

⁶⁶⁴ As will be seen from the following chapter, the design studio proposals were again considered in the final phase of the national flag process.

⁶⁶⁵ *Pretoria News*, Thursday 18 November 1993, pp 3 and 17.

and promises there, and with a dab of the Ramaphosa and Meyer glue to hold it all together. One by one, as Robertson reported the final round of speeches [which had continued until 03:30], bestowed the vital words “sufficient consensus” on the resolutions which had been thrashed out over the previous months. She stressed that the consensus on each clause of the draft constitution was only sufficient and not “general,” largely because of objections from the Pan-Africanist Congress and the Afrikaner Volksunie.⁶⁶⁶

The question of national symbols was addressed in Section 2 of the “interim” Constitution, which read as follows:⁶⁶⁷

National symbols

2. (1) The national flag of the Republic shall be the flag of which the design is determined by the President by proclamation in the Gazette.
- (2) The national anthem of the Republic shall be as determined by the President by proclamation in the Gazette.
- (3) The national coat of arms and seal of the Republic under the previous constitution shall continue to be the coat of arms and seal of the Republic.

With the Multi-Party Negotiating Process having been unable to reach a decision on the national flag and anthem issue, these would now have to be resolved by the Transitional Executive Council. Section 248 of the “interim” Constitution addressed these unresolved issues as follows:

National flag and anthem

248(1) The State President may at any time before the commencement of this Constitution or while continuing in office in terms of section 235 (1) (a), exercise, on the advice of the Transitional Executive Council, the powers conferred upon the President by sections 2(1) and (2), and such proclamation shall for all purposes be deemed to form part of the substance of this

⁶⁶⁶ Claire Robertson, article entitled SEKUNJALO (It has happened), *Sunday Times*, 21 November 1993, p 21.

⁶⁶⁷ *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993* (Act No. 200 of 1993).

Constitution.

(2) Subsection (1) shall come into operation at the date of publication of this Constitution.⁶⁶⁸

In addition to the Constitution, the text of four other Acts of Parliament had been endorsed by the plenary session of the Multi-Party Negotiating Process in the early hours of 18 November 1993. These were the Acts for the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC); the Independent Broadcasting Authority; the Independent Media Commission; and the Transitional Executive Council (TEC). These then went to a special session of Parliament, where they were ratified. In terms of this approval, the TEC started functioning three weeks later, on 7 December 1993. From the national flag and anthem perspective it was the TEC which would henceforth determine the course of the process. A bilingual leaflet setting out the aims, membership and general powers of the TEC was soon prepared for general information. Any government, political party or organization that was a member of the Negotiating Council in the Multi-Party Negotiating Process could take part in the TEC, provided that it was committed to the aims of the TEC and undertook to be bound by its rulings. Members were also required to have renounced violence as a means of achieving political ends. It is hardly surprising that the names of many of those who had hitherto been involved in the negotiation process again appeared as members of the TEC.

As explained in the leaflet, “The TEC has been established to prepare for and help during the change-over to a new democratic order in South Africa. The TEC does not take over the powers of the existing Government, but functions in conjunction with all legislative and executive structures at all levels of government in South Africa.”⁶⁶⁹

Any legislation approved by Parliament must pass through the hands of Parliament’s own

⁶⁶⁸ In the final version of the Constitution, as assented to by the State President on 25 January 1994, the text of section 248. (1), following the words “section 2(1 and (2),” was rephrased as follows: “... and if the State President in the exercise of such powers issues a proclamation referred to in that section, such proclamation shall for all purposes be deemed to form part of this Constitution”. Section 248.(2) was likewise rephrased, to read: “(2) This section shall come into operation on the date of promulgation of this Constitution.”

⁶⁶⁹ Fold-out leaflet: *Transitional Executive Council / Uitvoerende Oorgangsradaad*. Printed by CTP Book Printers, Cape, c. February 1994. On 15 February 1994 the TEC gave the go-ahead for the printing of 10-million brochures and 15-million leaflets as part of a R23-million constitutional advertising campaign. See the article under the heading “TEC in brief,” *Pretoria News*, 16 February 1994 (no page number available).

legal advisers and language practitioners before publication. The provisions relating to national symbols, in the text of the “interim” Constitution, as adopted by the Negotiating Council of the Multi-Party Negotiating Process were, to a minor extent, rephrased by Parliament’s legal advisers and language practitioners. The rewording of the text did not alter the intention of the negotiators in any way. This final step in the constitutional process, which culminated on 22 December 1993 with the adoption by parliament of the “interim” constitution,⁶⁷⁰ coincided with the end of year holiday period, with the result that the final text of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993,⁶⁷¹ was only assented to by State President F.W. de Klerk on 25 January 1994. It was published for general information three days later.⁶⁷² This “interim” Constitution would come into force on 27 April 1994. This was thus the target date for the introduction of a new national flag and for a decision as to the national anthem(s) which would usher in the new constitutional dispensation.⁶⁷³ Both of these critical issues were then still in abeyance.

5.6 A possible solution?

Concurrently with the failures and disappointments set out in this chapter, and indeed spurred on by them, the State Herald was quietly working at home on the refinement of a possible flag design.

In late August 1993, while the Negotiating Council was considering the possible membership of a Commission on National Symbols, the State Herald, Fred Brownell, had proceeded to Switzerland to represent the Bureau of Heraldry at the XV International Congress of Vexillology in Zürich. Bruce Berry, Secretary/Treasurer of the Southern African Vexillological Association (SAVA), was the Association’s official delegate to the Congress, but in his capacity as chairman of SAVA, Brownell also attended the plenary sessions of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV), of which SAVA had become a member in 1991. Having already rendered technical advice on flag matters to both Lesotho and Namibia the question of a new national flag for South Africa had long been at the back of his mind. On the evening of 25 August, during a seemingly interminable meeting of FIAV,

⁶⁷⁰ Anthony Butler, *Cyril Ramaphosa* (Jacana, Johannesburg, and James Curry, Oxford, 2007), p 310.

⁶⁷¹ Act No. 200 of 1993.

⁶⁷² Government Notice No. 185, in *Government Gazette* No. 15466 of 28 January 1994.

⁶⁷³ The following chapter deals with the final stage of the process by which a new national flag came into being.

his mind had drifted away from the matters which were then under discussion, gravitating again to the issue of a national flag design. With the Congress providing an atmosphere conducive to flag-related thought, he asked himself: “Aren’t we looking for something depicting convergence and unification?” At that point, he turned over the lecture programme lying in front of him and sketched on the reverse the design which was then in his mind’s eye. In seeking the solution to a practical problem, the human brain draws on, evaluates and consolidates past experience. There was not a blinding flash of inspiration, but rather a consolidation of design ideas which were already embedded in his mind.⁶⁷⁴ Unlike previous sketches which had been prepared since 1990 and all of which been consigned to the wastepaper basket, the more he looked at this design, the more he felt that it might perhaps offer the basis for a possible solution.⁶⁷⁵ Seated alongside him in the FIAV meeting when this sketch was prepared, was his friend and fellow vexillologist, Jos Poels from the Netherlands, who was thus the first person to see and comment on it. He would later reflect on this key moment.

After returning to South Africa from Zürich at the end of August 1993, Brownell revisited his draft sketch, initially trying various colour permutations, to see what might work best. However, within ten days of his return he had been appointed by the Negotiating Council to the Commission on National Symbols. In theory, at least, the Commission was an apolitical technical body, the members of which were appointed *ad hominem*. However, as it later became evident, the political dynamics of the negotiating process had also permeated the various technical committees. He thus decided early in the proceedings not to submit any proposals of his own to the Commission, lest there be allegations of a conflict of interests. As a mental exercise, if nothing else, he continued working on the idea which had come to him

⁶⁷⁴ Among these were the classic design incorporated into many of the chasubles worn by the clergy in the Anglican Church. See “A schoolboy memory formulates a national symbol and unites a nation,” in Roy Gordon (ed.) *As we see ourselves: the first 150 years of St Andrew’s School, Bloemfontein 1963-2013* (St Andrew’s School, Bloemfontein, 2013), p 224; and the “sprig cross” badge which had been designed by Professor Jukka Pellinen for the International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, which was held in Helsinki, Finland, from 16-21 August 1984. See Tom C. Bergroth (ed.), *Genealogica & Heraldica: Report of the 16th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences* (Finnish National Committee for Genealogy and Heraldry, Helsinki, 1986), front cover and p 4.

⁶⁷⁵ This sketch is depicted in: Denis Beckett, *Flying with pride: the story of the South African flag* (Wildnet Africa, Pretoria, 2002), p 75; F.G. Brownell “Flagging the ‘new’ South Africa, 1910-2010” *Historia*, Vol. 56 No. 1, May 2011, p 51; and Gordon, *As we see ourselves*, p 224. Figure 8 shows the original sketch and its translation into colour.

in Zürich, trying alternatives to the design and investigating further colour combinations.⁶⁷⁶

However, since an adverse symbolism could well be attached to the idea of red paths converging, the red was soon replaced by green. A number of colour permutations were tried.

Since Brownell was working on these ideas at home, this progression of designs was followed by his family. On the advice of his youngest daughter, Claire, the continuation of the central red or green stripe from the “V” to the hoist was deleted. Claire’s argument was that there were people who would “stand the flag design on its head” and see the “ban the

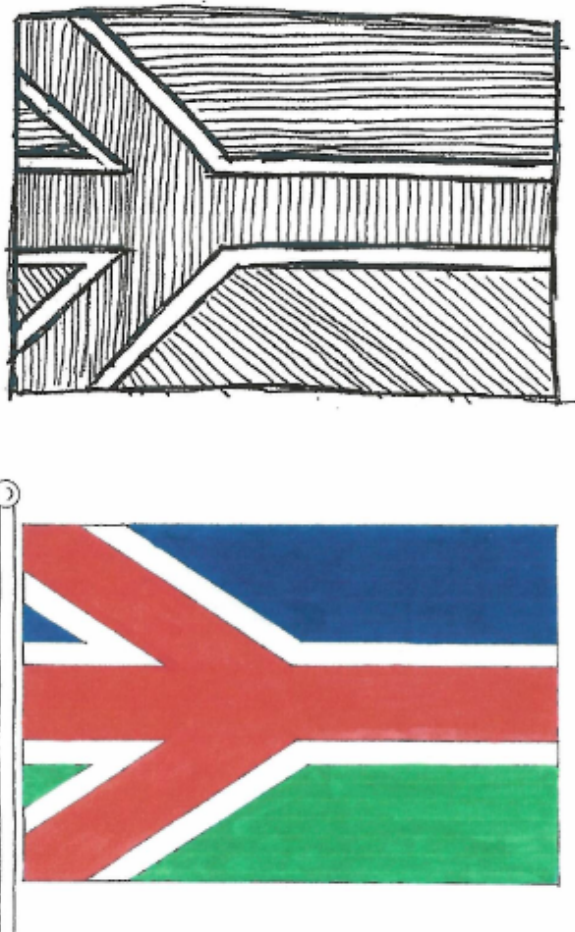


Figure 8

Brownell’s Zürich sketch and its translation into colour

⁶⁷⁶ This line drawing was first shown as one of the illustrations to an unpublished paper entitled “The national flag of South Africa, evolution of the final design,” which he delivered during the XVI International Congress of Vexillology, which was held in Warsaw during August 1995. Due to a lack of funds, the proceedings of that Congress have not been published.

bomb peace sign.”⁶⁷⁷ What Claire was referring to was the emblem of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament – a letter “I” and an inverted “Y,” within and conjoined to a circle – which had been designed by Gerald Holdom. This device had its debut during a protest rally from Aldermaston to London, which terminated on Trafalgar Square, opposite South Africa House, on 4 April 1958.⁶⁷⁸

As designed, this device was devoid of symbolism, in that it was simply derived from a combination of the semaphore signals for the letters “N” for nuclear, and “D” for disarmament.⁶⁷⁹ In addition, this and a number of other well-known symbols, some of which have been in use for centuries, are now perceived, in a rather far-fetched manner, as being associated with Satanism.⁶⁸⁰ The removal of the extension of the red or green central stripe resulted in the creation of a classic “Y”-shaped heraldic pall, and a design which stood out clearly from other national flags. This variation, with a Chilli red⁶⁸¹ upper band, seemed to present a logical solution, from both an historical and aesthetic point of view. By means of a triangular black overlay, it also seemed that if the colour black had to be added to the design, this could successfully be superimposed on the yellow triangle. **Figure 9** shows eight of the progressive designs which evolved from the “Zürich sketch.” As set out in the following chapter, it is the final development of the “Zürich sketch” which was to be adopted and taken into use as the new national flag of South Africa on 27 April 1994.⁶⁸²

It was thus after an extended period of deliberation and disappointment including the Commission, public process and graphic design studies that the solution was to emerge from outside this process. The design of the new national flag was created by the State Herald in his private capacity, outside of the official process. This emanated from his acute awareness based on his many years of experience in the flag world that the “new” South Africa would be in need of a new flag, one that would be widely accepted and one that would comply with international requirements.

⁶⁷⁷ The “peace sign” has had a somewhat chequered career!

⁶⁷⁸ *Time*, Vol. 171, No 14, 7 April 2008, p 44.

⁶⁷⁹ See “Semaphore flag signaling system:” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace_symbol; and also “Peace sign flag:” <http://www.crwflags.co/fotw/flags/qt-p-nd.html>.

⁶⁸⁰ *Patriot*, 15 March 1991 (no page number available).

⁶⁸¹ Chilli red, a rich red-orange, is very much the colour of the blossoms of the South African Coral trees, the species *Erythrina*, the harbinger of spring. Keith, Paul and Meg Coates Pelgrave, *Everyone’s guide to Trees of South Africa* (CHA and Struik, Cape Town, 1985), p 43.

⁶⁸² This progression of designs is in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

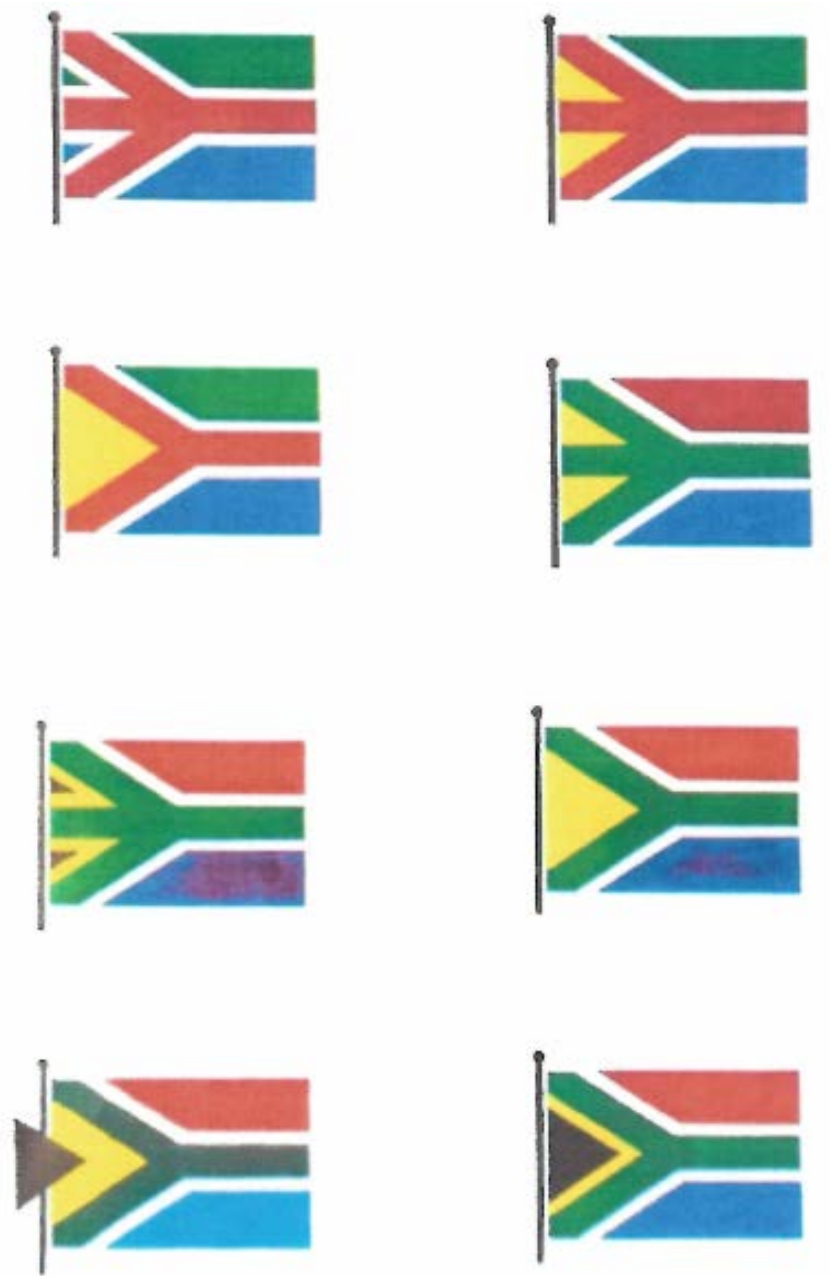


Figure 9
Evolution of Brownell's initial flag design

CHAPTER VI - FLAG ISSUE: A MATTER OF URGENCY

In essence, the final phase of the process which culminated in the adoption of the new national flag, spanned the period of just more than a fortnight, between 28 February 1994 and 15 March 1994 when a joint technical working committee was appointed to resolve the national flag issue which had hitherto produced no tangible results, culminating when the design of the present national flag of the Republic of South Africa was adopted by the Transitional Executive Council (TEC). Thereafter specifications had to be drawn up, the new flag had to be formally proclaimed, manufacturing had to commence and instructions as to its correct use had to be published. This chapter sets out this process up until the acceptance of the flag and concludes by considering the initial reaction to it.

6.1 The Transitional Executive Council, the “Channel” and the Heraldry Council

During the traditional South African “holiday period” from the end of 1993 to the beginning of 1994, the TEC was in place and operational, but the national flag issue was essentially in abeyance. Although the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993* had been passed by Parliament on 22 December 1993,⁶⁸³ the process of formal publication had been delayed by parliamentary linguistic and legal considerations. As a result, the Constitution was only formally assented to by the State President on 25 January 1994, and published in the *Government Gazette* three days later.⁶⁸⁴

In the interim there had been rumbles of concern that the time needed for the manufacture of enough new national flags was rapidly running out. Unless a formal proclamation on the design of a new national flag was published soon, it would not be possible to produce an adequate supply in time for the implementation of the new Constitution on 27 April 1994. This concern was expressed in an article which appeared in *Die Burger* in early January 1994.⁶⁸⁵ In this article the State Herald was quoted as using an everyday domestic analogy

⁶⁸³ Anthony Butler, *Cyril Ramaphosa* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2007 and James Currey, Oxford, 2008), p 310.

⁶⁸⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act No. 200 of 1993), was published for general information under Government Notice No. 185 in *Government Gazette* No. 15466 of 28 January 1994.

⁶⁸⁵ *Die Burger*, 5 January 1994. A copy of this article received from Cor Pama, chairman of the Heraldry Society and an erstwhile member of the Commission on National Symbols.

that “if you want a baby, you have to start nine months in advance.” He had also made the passing comment, when telephoned by the reporter in question, that “babies are not delivered by stork a week or so later.”⁶⁸⁶ Practical considerations determine that it takes time to secure adequate stocks of the materials needed and to manufacture flags, despite the advances in modern technology.

From the national flag perspective, matters had generally been quiet during the holiday period, but on 8 February 1994 Brownell received a telephone call from Professor Elize Botha, who had chaired the Commission on National Symbols, warning him that further activity could be expected in the near future. The press had obviously got wind of some progress, but there was nothing of any significance to report. Claire Robertson of the *Sunday Times* remarked that the flag issue was apparently on the TEC agenda but that the TEC had “dropped it like a hot potato.”⁶⁸⁷ In her article under the heading “In a flap to find a new flag for SA,” Robertson commented that “the politicians have procrastinated for so long,” and that the TEC had been told by its management committee member Colin Eglin to discuss the national flag question at its next meeting (on 15 February). Eglin is quoted as saying that: “The flag and the anthem are two matters that, because they are so emotive, cannot be overlooked.” This article also quoted Mike Clingman, managing director of the flag manufacturing firm National Flag,⁶⁸⁸ as saying that: “If we don't get an answer virtually immediately, there will not be enough time to produce enough flags.”⁶⁸⁹ It was certainly a growing concern that time had already run out for local flag manufacturers to make sufficient new national flags to meet the country's immediate official requirements by 27 April 1994.

As had happened in the past, when the negotiators had been faced with thorny or otherwise contentious issues, these had been referred to “the channel,” a bilateral arrangement between the Government and the African National Congress (ANC), for resolution. In essence, “the channel” revolved around the principal negotiators from these two bodies, namely Roelf Meyer and Cyril Ramaphosa. As Patti Waldmeir was later to write:

⁶⁸⁶ This was a personal comment which was not recorded.

⁶⁸⁷ Remark noted in the State Herald's office diary, 8 February 1994.

⁶⁸⁸ Although it traded as “National Flag,” this company's registered name was Flag and Flagpole Industries (Pty) Ltd.

⁶⁸⁹ *Sunday Times*, 13 February 1994 (no page number available).

Even in the dark hours, the ANC and the National Party kept their sights firmly fixed on the dawn. While Mandela and de Klerk were trading insults from Boipatong to Bisho, their young lieutenants – Cyril Ramaphosa, thirty-nine, and Roelf Meyer, forty-four - were meeting secretly to look for a deal. Between June and September 1992,⁶⁹⁰ they met something like forty-three times in what became known as “the channel.” More than any other two men - indeed, arguably more than Mandela and de Klerk themselves – it was Ramaphosa and Meyer who opened up the road to peace, and kept it open right up until the election.⁶⁹¹

Meyer was reported as having remarked that from early in the negotiation process he and Ramaphosa had jokingly said to one another that there was not a problem that they could not resolve. “And if they could not resolve it, who else would succeed in doing so?”⁶⁹² In the *Weekend Star* just before the elections, Shaun Johnson the political editor remarked on how powerful in the public mind was “the imagery and symbolism of their politically symbiotic relationship.”⁶⁹³ It is not for nought that they were known as the “Siamese twins” of the negotiation process, and that they were eventually – but only 15 years later – honoured at the same ceremony for their services to the negotiation process and to South Africa, with the award of the Order of the Baobab (Silver), during an investiture presided over by President Kgalema Motlanthe on 27 March 2009.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹⁰ Codesa 2 negotiations had broken down in mid-May; the “Boipatong massacre” had taken place on 17 June; on 22 June Nelson Mandela announced formal suspension of negotiations between the ANC and the SA Government; the “Bisho massacre,” resulting from a march led by Ronnie Kasrils, one of the leading Communist members of the ANC, took place on 7 September 1992; and it was only on 26 September 1992 that President F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela signed a “Record of Understanding” which paved the way for further negotiations.

⁶⁹¹ Patti Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a miracle: the end of apartheid and the birth of the new South Africa* (Penguin, London, 1997), p 208.

⁶⁹² “Onder vier oë,” Andriette Stofberg gesels met Roelf Meyer, *Beeld*, Saturday 26 March 1994, p 9. This is my translation of the Afrikaans quotation.

⁶⁹³ *Weekend Star - Spectrum*, 23 - 24 April 1994, p 11, under the heading “Twins but polls apart.” See also Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country: the inside story of South Africa’s negotiated revolution* (Struik, Sandton, 1994), Chapter 13, “The Roelf and Cyril Show,” pp 180-196; and Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a miracle*, p 209.

⁶⁹⁴ Their citations are set out in the programme: *Awards Ceremony for National Orders*, 27 March 2009, pp 18 and 19 (Roelf Petrus Meyer); and pp 22 and 23 (Cyril Ramaphosa). In Brownell’s capacity as a member of the Advisory Council for National Orders, he was present at their investiture and they had an opportunity afterwards to share reminiscences.

It is hardly surprising that on 15 February 1994 the TEC appointed a sub-committee on National Symbols, comprising Roelf Meyer in his capacity as Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, and Cyril Ramaphosa, Secretary-General of the ANC, to advise it. “They will recommend a new national anthem and national flag to the TEC ‘as soon as possible’, the body’s management committee decided.”⁶⁹⁵ A week later, on 22 February 1994, the State Herald was invited to attend a Management Meeting in the offices of the Constitutional Development Service at 260 Walker Street, Pretoria, where the national symbols issue was on the agenda.⁶⁹⁶ There was, as yet, no indication as to “when, where or how,” the national flag question would be addressed.

On Saturday night, 26 February 1994, Dr J.C. (Koos) Pauw, Deputy Director-General in the Department of National Education telephoned the State Herald at home to inform him that they had been booked on a flight leaving for Cape Town on Monday 28 February 1994 at 10h50.⁶⁹⁷ They were required to report to the office of the Minister of National Education at 15h30. The State Herald was to take with him to Cape Town the six designs proposed by the Commission on National Symbols, together with the designs submitted to the Negotiating Council by the graphic design studios. After a desperate search these designs were traced to the Constitutional Development Service in Pretoria, where they were tightly crammed into small storerooms. The last of the designs which were required to be taken to Cape Town the following day were traced shortly before 20h00 on 27 February 1994.

Pauw was aware that Brownell had been working on and refining possible designs for a national flag since his return from the International Flag Congress in Zürich six months earlier, and believed that these ideas might prove useful. Clearly, with elections scheduled for April 1994 and a new national flag needed by then, time was of the essence. After arrival in Cape Town, Pauw held a discussion with the Minister prior to the meeting scheduled for

⁶⁹⁵ Reported under the column “TEC in brief,” in the *Pretoria News*, Wednesday 16 February 1994, p 4.

⁶⁹⁶ Entry in the State Herald’s office diary, 22 February 1994.

⁶⁹⁷ The writer’s place in the hierarchy of the Department of National Education was as follows. As State Herald, he was the professional head of the Bureau of Heraldry which had been established under the Heraldry Act, 1962 (Act No.18 Of 1962). For administrative purposes the Bureau fell under the control of the Director of Archives, who reported to the Chief Director: Culture whose immediate superior, in turn, was the Deputy Director-General, Dr Pauw.

15h30 that afternoon. It is then that the evolution of the “Zürich design” appears to have been mentioned to the Minister. On the flight to Cape Town Pauw had stressed the importance of recording for posterity that afternoon’s proceedings. Had he not done so, the State Herald might well not have thought of taking notes during the meeting which would soon commence.⁶⁹⁸ The minutes which were prepared from these notes later proved invaluable in the preparation of the subsequent report of the Joint Technical Working Committee which was appointed that afternoon.

The first “Meeting of the Sub-Committee on National Symbols of the Channel between the South African Government and the ANC” which was held on 28 February 1994 in the Cape Town office of Mr P.G. Marais, Minister of National Education,⁶⁹⁹ was attended by the Minister and the following persons: Dr L.D. Barnard;⁷⁰⁰ Dr J.C. Pauw; Ms B. Kgositsile;⁷⁰¹ Dr W. Serote;⁷⁰² Ms L. Gilfillan;⁷⁰³ Mr M. Kleynhans⁷⁰⁴ and the State Herald, Mr F.G. Brownell.

Addressing the practical problems which faced the meeting, the Minister stated that it was the opinion of the South African Government “that it is not politically feasible to enter the new dispensation without a new national flag.” All present agreed that time was of the essence, since a new national flag would have to be manufactured in sufficient quantities in the various prescribed sizes prior to the inauguration of the new Head of State. A decision on the design of a new national flag would therefore have to be taken at the earliest possible opportunity so that manufacturers could acquire the necessary materials, namely bunting

⁶⁹⁸ As it transpired, there was no secretary present to take notes.

⁶⁹⁹ A copy of the minutes of this meeting is in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

⁷⁰⁰ Niël Barnard, who had headed the National Intelligence Service for some years, had been in contact with Nelson Mandela since May 1988, when he joined the special committee of officials conducting early behind the scenes negotiations. Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country* (Struik Book Distributors, Johannesburg, 1996), p 36.

⁷⁰¹ Baleka Kgositsile had been a negotiator at the Multi-Party Negotiating Process; was Media Liaison Officer of the ANC Department of Arts and Culture; and for a time General Secretary of the ANC Women’s League. See Jane Raphaely (ed.), *Femina; The Women’s Directory, 1994 - 1995*, p 102; and Anton Haber and Barbara Ludman (eds.), *Weekly Mail and Guardian’s A-Z of South African Politics; the essential handbook* (Penguin, Johannesburg, 1995), pp 60-61. She was later Speaker of the National Assembly and (as Baleka Mbete), Vice-President of South Africa during the time of President Kgalema Motlante.

⁷⁰² Mongane Wally Serote, Head of the ANC Department of Arts and Culture, had played a prominent role when the report of the Commission on National Symbols had been debated in the Negotiating Council.

⁷⁰³ Linda Gilfillan had been a member of the Commission on National Symbols during September/October 1993.

⁷⁰⁴ Marius Kleynhans was a member of staff of the Constitutional Development Service.

(cloth), dye, thread, cord and toggles and clips, before they could proceed with the manufacture of the flags. Not only were there prescribed flag stations at which the national flag was required to be flown, but provision would also have to be made for a supply of the national flag to the public at large.

In view of the urgency with which the national flag issue would have to be addressed, it was decided “that a joint technical working committee, convened by Mr F. Brownell, be appointed. This shall comprise Ms B. Kgositsile, Dr W. Serote and Ms L. Gilfillan of the ANC, and Dr J.C. Pauw as a further representative of the South African Government. This Committee, which shall have powers of co-option, is required to report by Tuesday 8 March 1994.” Once the membership of the Joint Technical Working Committee had been determined, the Minister turned to Brownell and said that since he was State Herald, he was expected to know about flags. Hence it would be his responsibility to serve as convenor, and that he wanted this problem – for which no solution had presented itself in the previous six months – resolved within a week. Pauw must have mentioned to the Minister beforehand that this might well be possible. It was nevertheless a daunting challenge. Heralds are traditionally above politics and it was only later that Brownell was to realize to what extent he had been drawn into the political arena.

Immediately after the meeting in the Minister’s office, the Joint Technical Working Committee convened to discuss the course of action to be taken. Not only was time of the essence, but Wally Serote was on the point of leaving for Portugal, so it was important to secure his input before his departure. The Committee viewed the six designs proposed by the Commission on National Symbols and also those later called for from graphic design studies by the Negotiating Council. Preference was expressed for the ideas embodied in the first six designs (see Chapter V, Figure 6). The Joint Technical Working Committee also considered an adaptation of the first design described in the Commission’s Report, which was now tabled by the ANC members. In this the white divisions between the triangles had been replaced by black, and the gold partition line against the green fly had been changed to white, thus giving a design of six colours (Figure 10, top row). An immediately apparent weakness of this amended design was that the green, red and blue triangles were now joined to one another by

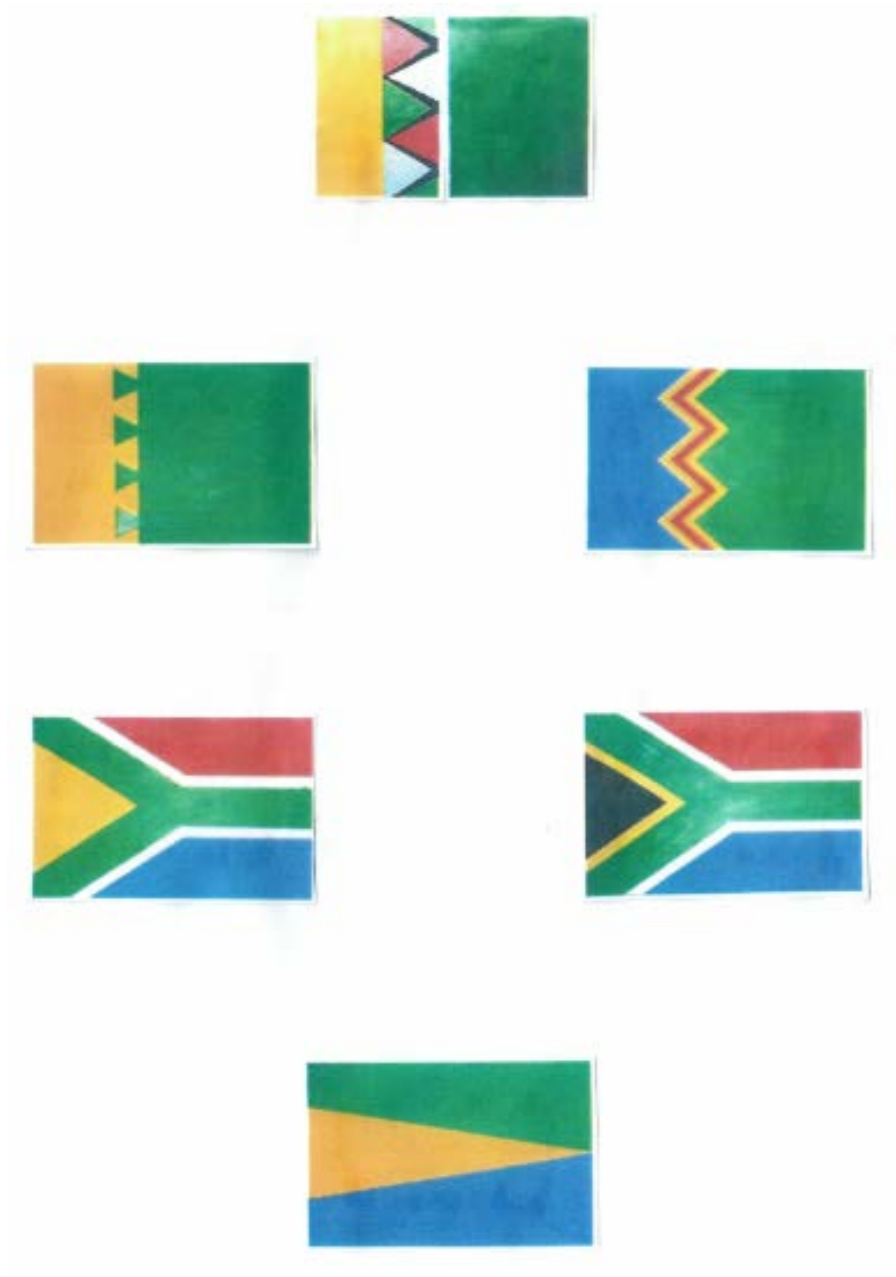


Figure 10

Top flag: ANC proposal submitted to the Joint Technical Working Committee

Second and third row: the four designs proposed by the Joint Technical Working Committee

Bottom flag: Adaptation of the design tabled in “the Channel”

black. If this design was reproduced in black and white, the pattern which now comprised four “dark” colours would melt into an indistinguishable vertical stripe, thus defeating the practical need for clear contrast between them.

Clear consensus emerged on four points, namely that a new national flag should promote unity; be simple in design; be unique; and be practical from a vexillological, manufacturing and marketing point of view. There was also a strong feeling that the Working Committee should recommend a final product and not an interim national flag. The Committee also felt that such designs as it might recommend to “the channel” be accompanied by a well-reasoned motivation of their composition.⁷⁰⁵

As a point of departure the Working Committee decided to concentrate on three basic patterns, namely a zig-zag design and a dovetail design; both of which would symbolize interlinking; and a design symbolising the coming together of various paths.⁷⁰⁶ In addition to the colours green and gold, it was felt that a four-colour option, including red and blue, and a six-colour option including white and black could, for historical reasons, also be considered.

The ANC delegation would undertake some further research into the acceptability of the zig-zag and dovetail patterns, before the next meeting. This was scheduled to be held in the offices of the Bureau of Heraldry in the State Archives Building in Pretoria two days later on 2 March 1994. As convenor, the State Herald undertook to place the technical facilities of the Bureau of Heraldry at the disposal of the Working Committee; to have draft designs reflecting the various options prepared in time for the next meeting; and also to have an artist on hand when the Working Committee next met. Since Pauw and Brownell returned to Pretoria on the same flight, it afforded a further opportunity to discuss the task which lay ahead.

⁷⁰⁵ These points are encapsulated in the minutes of the meeting which Brownell prepared.

⁷⁰⁶ This was compatible with the idea of “convergence and unification” which had germinated in the State Herald’s mind in Zürich, and from which draft designs in colour had already been prepared and refined over the previous six months.

The following morning the Bureau of Heraldry's artists were set to work preparing four designs for consideration by the Joint Technical Working Committee. When it reconvened the members were satisfied with the artwork which had been prepared; there was no further input from the ANC members on the zig-zag and dovetail patterns; and the Working Committee discussed the formulation of the report which would need to be prepared on its behalf. Each of the four draft designs which had been prepared over the previous two days was dealt with in turn and annotations made.⁷⁰⁷

On 3 March 1994, the State Herald was instructed to report to Dr Pauw's office with the four flag designs which had been prepared for the Joint Technical Working Committee. From there they proceeded to the Minister's official Pretoria residence near the Union Buildings to brief him on the designs. After that John Reinders, an administrative secretary in the Protocol and Ceremonial Section of the Office of the State President, was briefed.⁷⁰⁸ On 4 March the State Herald was again required to report to Pauw's office, whence they proceeded to brief a meeting at the Development Bank of Southern Africa in Midrand. This meeting had been arranged by "the channel," with a view to affording other interested parties insight into the designs which had been prepared.

On 8 March 1994 Pauw and the State Herald presented themselves at the Constitutional Development Service Building, Pretoria to report to "the channel" on behalf of the Working Committee. The Working Committee had fulfilled its mandate in preparing by consensus, four designs for consideration as a possible national flag, together with a comprehensive report, all within the allotted time of a week. These could now be submitted to the TEC for consideration, if they met with the approval of "the channel."

In its report,⁷⁰⁹ the Joint Technical Working Committee explained what factors it had taken into consideration and that it had, in line with these discussions drawn up the four proposals which were now submitted for consideration. It also stressed the following considerations which had influenced its reasoning, namely that: symbolism, like beauty, lies in the eye of the

⁷⁰⁷ These are recorded in the State Herald's hand-written notes dated 2 March 1994 (F.G. Brownell Private Collection). They were also incorporated in a simplified form into the report of the Working Committee.

⁷⁰⁸ State Herald's office diary, 3 March 1994. Reinders, it was assumed, would inform State President F.W. de Klerk of progress.

⁷⁰⁹ Bureau of Heraldry (hereafter B/H), Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

beholder and no colour, as such, has an intrinsic meaning; under a given set of circumstances a particular combination of colours can nevertheless take on a certain meaning or be perceived as conveying some message; the mobility of a flag allows it to attract, hold, and focus attention; and that flags can also have a direct and influential role in the political arena.⁷¹⁰

In this context it was of cardinal importance that the national flag issue, with its emotional connotations, be treated with utmost sensitivity.⁷¹¹ Having taken note of the recommendations of the Commission on National Symbols and of the subsequent designs submitted to the Negotiating Council by graphic design studios, the report stressed that a new national flag should promote unity; be simple in design; be unique; and be practical from a vexillological, manufacturing and marketing point of view.⁷¹² There was furthermore a strong feeling that the recommendations put forward should be for a “final product” and not for an interim national flag.⁷¹³

As already mentioned, the Working Committee had decided to concentrate on three basic patterns, which were reflected in the four draft designs submitted to “the channel” for consideration that morning. The following explanatory information relating to these four designs is taken from the Report of the Working Committee:

Design 1 [Figure 10, second row, left]

This design, which is in green and gold only, links these two colours by means of a dovetail pattern. The dovetail is the strongest joint used in woodwork and this design thus simply symbolises a strong bond. The choice of green and gold can be interpreted at will.⁷¹⁴

⁷¹⁰ B/H: paragraphs 5-8 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

⁷¹¹ This reiterated the standpoint of the negotiators when they had appointed the Commission on National Symbols on 7 September 1993.

⁷¹² These were all important considerations which the Commission on National Symbols had stressed in its report.

⁷¹³ B/H: paragraphs 9-13 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

⁷¹⁴ B/H: paragraph 17.1.1 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

Design 2 [Figure 10, second row, right]

This zig-zag design, which incorporates four colours, can equally be seen as conveying a message of interlinking. Blue and green were particularly popular colours in flag designs submitted by both the public and design studios. The gold separates the two principal colours from one another, while the red stripe flowing through the gold places the colour combination clearly in the African context.⁷¹⁵

Design 3 [Figure 10, third row, left]

This design, which incorporates the five most frequently found colours in South African flags, past and present, namely blue, white, green, gold and red is so arranged that it gives the impression of two converging paths, flowing from the flag-post and joining into one.⁷¹⁶

Design 4 [Figure 10, third row, right]

The design, which is similar to the previous one, includes a black triangle at the hoist. This six-colour option could be seen as the most “politically correct” of the four, but this very fact could perhaps be counterproductive.⁷¹⁷

In essence, all four of these designs were unique and would clearly stand out against other national flags. Designs 1 and 2 best embodied the concept of simplicity, while designs 3 and 4 were rather more complicated. All four of these designs could, however, be described in simple technical terminology, which was an essential requirement for incorporation into statute.⁷¹⁸

From a manufacturing point of view, depending on the size of the flag, it was anticipated that between two and three silk screens would be required for the printing process. Whereas most flags had in earlier years been made by laboriously sewing together pre-dyed bunting (flag

⁷¹⁵ B/H: paragraph 17.2.1 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994. In other words, this design also incorporated the popular Pan-African colours of red, yellow and green, with the addition of blue, which had featured prominently in flags over South Africa since 1652.

⁷¹⁶ B/H: paragraph 17.3.1 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

⁷¹⁷ B/H: paragraph 17.4.1 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

⁷¹⁸ B/H: paragraphs 18 and 19 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

material), most South African flag manufacturers were, by 1994, using silk screens to colour the material, which by now was usually woven polyester. Strips of this material were stretched and securely pinned to long tables, after which silk screens were placed over the material and the successive colours were applied. The same silk screen could be used for a number of colours, provided that the colours were physically separated from one another. The manufacturing process should therefore, in all cases, be comparatively uncomplicated.⁷¹⁹

The report also provided details of the standard flag sizes used in South Africa, and the circumstances under which each was used.⁷²⁰ It reiterated the need for the promulgation of standard manufacturing specifications; indicated South Africa's estimated immediate national flag requirements, both official and civil; and the need for an urgent decision in the light of the country's flag manufacturing potential.⁷²¹ In addition, it pointed out that a change to the national flag would logically also result in a change to the flags of the uniformed Services, in whose flags the national flag was positioned in the canton. It was also stressed that, in the case of the South African Navy, by international convention no country's warships ever set sail without wearing the Naval Ensign.⁷²² In the light of the comments set out above and in particular the daunting logistic considerations attendant upon the adoption and subsequent manufacture of sufficient new national flags, the Working Committee recommended that a final decision on a new national flag should be taken at the earliest possible opportunity.⁷²³

The intention had been that "the channel" would view the designs and, all being well, that these designs would be submitted to the TEC later that day, but this was not to be. Other urgent business resulted in "the channel's" discussion on the four flag designs which had been prepared for consideration being brief and to the point. Rather unexpectedly, Fanie van der Merwe, Head of the Constitutional Development Service, then tabled a further design, on

⁷¹⁹ With vexillological colleagues in the flag manufacturing field and having watched the process of manufacture, the State Herald had a sound understanding of the parameters within which they worked.

⁷²⁰ B/H: paragraphs 21.1-21.1.5 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

⁷²¹ B/H: paragraphs 22.1-22.7 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

⁷²² B/H: paragraphs 23.1-23.2 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

⁷²³ B/H: paragraphs 24 of Appendix B to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

which the State Herald commented from a technical point of view.⁷²⁴ This fifth design was duly accorded the same level of attention as the four draft flag designs which were discussed that day. The Working Committee was instructed to consider and, where necessary, adapt this fifth design, which would then be considered by “the channel” at a future meeting.

In consequence it was not possible to lay the four designs which had been tabled to “the channel” that morning, before the meeting of the TEC which was held on the afternoon of 8 March 1994, despite the national symbols issue being on the TEC agenda for discussion that day.⁷²⁵ On the State Herald’s return to the Bureau of Heraldry the artists were requested to refine and paint an amended version of the design as soon as possible. In retrospect, this unexpected delay was probably just as well, since it allowed a little more time for sober consideration of the designs. On the following day, 9 March 1994, the Minister of National Education, who was as yet unaware of the fifth flag design which had been laid before “the channel,” requested a meeting of the Heraldry Council as a matter of urgency, to comment on the four designs so that Cabinet could be briefed.⁷²⁶ In the interim an addendum addressing the fifth design was prepared to supplement the Report of the Joint Technical Working Committee. This addendum addressed the following points:

Design 5 [Figure 10, bottom row]

This fifth design which had been placed before “the channel” was in three colours; from top to bottom blue, gold and green, with the gold in the form of a triangle with its apex in the centre of the hoist and its base half the width of the fly. This shallow gold triangle was charged in the centre with a small black protea flower. From a visual point of view the protea was too small, while particularly in inclement weather, the eye would tend to see the blue and green bands separating from one another, that is, flapping apart. From a technical point of view this design also had a number of shortcomings.

⁷²⁴ When Brownell raised the matter of this design with Fanie van der Merwe in a telephone call which was made to him in his office at the Independent Electoral Commission on 16 February 2009, he stated that this had merely been an idea which had been discussed in the office and that it had not been intended as a formal proposal. However, bearing in mind the “wheels within wheels” of the negotiation process in which Van der Merwe had long been involved, it was within the realms of possibility that he may have been acting as a stalking horse for other interested parties.

⁷²⁵ *Die Burger*, 11 March 1994, (no page number available).

⁷²⁶ B/H: Appendix A to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994.

In an attempt to address the principal visual weakness of apparently separating blue and green bands, it was felt that the base of the gold triangle should rather be at the hoist and the peak in the centre of the fly, with green above and blue below. Although this would result in a flag with a colour sequence similar to that of the national flag of Gabon (namely a green, gold and blue [horizontal] tricolour), it could be argued that the two flags are sufficiently different when spread in full, for this not to matter. They would, however, be increasingly similar when fluttering in a light breeze. If blue were to be placed above and green below, this design would be approaching the basic configuration of the flag of the President of our neighbouring State, Namibia. Although this three-colour design broadened the options which could now be considered, it did not convey the message of either joining or coming together, as embodied into the four initial designs. This addendum reiterated the unanimous feeling of the Working Committee that symbols (such as the protea) should be avoided. This element had consequently been dropped from **Design 5**.

At the request of the Minister of National Education the designs which had been prepared on behalf of the Joint Technical Working Committee were considered by the Heraldry Council at a special meeting held on the late afternoon of 10 March 1994. After consideration of the designs, the Heraldry Council's reply to the Minister was set out in a letter dated 11 March 1994. In short, the comments were as follows:⁷²⁷

Design 1: (Two colour option: yellow and green)

Acceptable, provided that the colour shades were adjusted to ensure a clear contrast between the yellow and green. In the context of national flags this design was unique. It was also aesthetically pleasing in its simplicity.

Design 2: (four colour option: blue, green, red and yellow)

From an aesthetic perspective this design was not considered to be a success, and was thus unacceptable in the context of national flags.

⁷²⁶ B/H: Appendix C to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994. These were my cryptic notes. The Council's comments were formally conveyed to the Minister by letter the following day.

Design 3: (five colour option: orange-red, blue, green, yellow and white)
Although some members of the Heraldry Council felt that there should be a larger yellow triangle against the hoist [which would have lent itself to adaptation into a flag for the Head of State⁷²⁸], both this design and the suggested variant were both acceptable.

Design 4: (six colour option: orange-red, blue, black, green, yellow and white).
This design was also acceptable, but to a lesser extent. It was too multi-coloured and the black tended to overpower the yellow.

In addition to the four flag designs which the Minister had requested the Heraldry Council to evaluate and comment on, there was also the unexpected fifth design which Fanie van der Merwe had laid before the meeting of “the channel.” In this instance the Heraldry Council commented as follows:

Design 5: In the context of national flags this design was not acceptable, since it was too similar in appearance to the national flag of Gabon and also to the colour combination and form of the presidential flag of Namibia.

In addition to providing the Minister with the technical evaluations which he had requested, Professor H. de V. Du Toit, Chairman of the Heraldry Council also expressed disappointment at the over-hasty manner in which the flag issue had hitherto been addressed. If the Heraldry Council and Bureau of Heraldry had been consulted seven months earlier [when the process commenced], the Cabinet could have been furnished with sound technical advice and guidance, leading to a more satisfactory result. He further remarked that the appointment of Brownell to committees dominated by non-professionals who often had politically motivated standpoints, “could not adequately address this problem.”⁷²⁹

A lesson that the State Herald had learned four years earlier while involved in the creation of Namibia’s national flag, was that not everyone can readily make the imaginative transition

⁷²⁸ This comment is taken from my handwritten notes (F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

⁷²⁹ B/H: Paragraph 4 of appendix C to the Minutes of the special meeting of the Heraldry Council held on 10 March 1994: letter from the Chairman of the Heraldry Council to the Minister of National Education, 11 March 1994. The Minister’s Private Secretary acknowledged receipt of this letter on 15 March 1994.

from a design on paper to a full-size physical flag prototype which they can touch and feel. The process had now reached a critical stage in the possible adoption of a design for the new national flag and this lack of prototypes was of concern. A few days earlier Mike Clingman, managing director of the flag manufacturing company National Flag and erstwhile assessor to the Commission on National Symbols had mentioned that if he could be of assistance in any way, the State Herald should let him know. After returning to his office from the Constitutional Development Service that Friday afternoon, and knowing full well that it was approaching closing time for his factory, the State Herald nevertheless took a long chance and asked Clingman if he could perhaps assist with five flag prototypes by Monday. He willingly agreed. True to his word, he delivered the five prototypes to the Bureau of Heraldry by midday on Monday 14 March 1994.⁷³⁰ He and members of his staff had worked for much of the weekend to produce what had been requested. These prototypes were to prove invaluable over the next two days.

6.2 Process of acceptance

On the morning of 15 March 1994 the State Herald was instructed telephonically to report to the Office of the State President at 11h30 and to bring with him the flag designs. Also present were Niël Barnard, together with Roelf Meyer and such other ministers and deputy ministers as were available in the Union Buildings that morning and who had been summoned to attend at short notice. Opening the discussion, State President De Klerk said that he had called in the ministers to view the latest designs, since the national flag issue had reached a “critical stage.”⁷³¹ However, he felt that this was a decision he could not take on his own and he would value the comments of those present. One must, of course, remember that there still existed the tricameral parliament with “White,” “Coloured” and “Indian” Houses. There were ministers and/or deputy ministers present from each of these Houses. The prototypes were placed on display and De Klerk asked the State Herald to explain the rationale behind the designs. In each case he also supplied a summary of the Heraldry Council’s comment on the respective designs. As the ministers and deputy ministers studied and handled each of the prototypes in turn, the State Herald watched their eyes: they seemed to come back again and again to “the one with the black triangle” [Design 4]. Although no formal decision was

⁷³⁰ State Herald’s office diary, 14 March 1994 (F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

⁷³¹ This is a personal recollection.

reached while the State Herald was present, he nevertheless believed that there was tacit support for this design.

When the impromptu Cabinet meeting concluded, the State Herald approached Minister Meyer and mentioned to him what his observations had been. It was his impression that the other parties would also support that particular design. If this was, indeed so, then he believed that sufficient consensus on a national flag design had at last been achieved. His suggestion to Meyer was that one design and one design only, be laid before the TEC later that day.⁷³² Meyer replied that this could not be done, but the State Herald reminded him that we no longer had the luxury of time on our side, and simply could not afford to reopen the previous year's "can of worms." After some reflection Meyer said that "he would speak to Cyril" and that the State Herald was to hold himself in readiness to report to the TEC Building, together with all the prototypes and artwork. Before that, a visit to the South African Bureau of Standards to discuss the matter of specifications was called for.

John Reinders, head of the protocol and ceremonial section in the Office of the State President and the State Herald then set off immediately for the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) to arrange for the preparation – in anticipation of its acceptance – of specifications for the manufacture of the probable national flag. Fortunately both Reinders and the State Herald were known to the textile specialist Eric Aldis, so no time was wasted.⁷³³ The State Herald told Aldis about his discussion with Meyer. In the light of the critical time constraints, it was decided to prepare specifications only for the design "with the black triangle." What transpired that day and over the next three weeks is set out in an article by Aldis which was published two months later.⁷³⁴

In the introduction to this article, Aldis wrote:

⁷³² Unbeknown to the State Herald, an article published in *Beeld* that morning had stated that prototypes of the five designs that the Joint Technical Working Committee had prepared, would be displayed for the members of the TEC that afternoon and that they would then have to reach a decision. Liesl Louw, "UOR moet vandag besluit oor Suid-Afrika se vlag," *Beeld*, Tuesday 15 March 1994 (no page number available); see also *Pretoria News*, 15 March 1994, p 3.

⁷³³ With matters relating to the national flag being a line function of the protocol and ceremonial section, Reinders was the designated contact person between the Office of the State President and the SABS, while the State Herald had been a member of the SABS national flag specification committee since 1983.

⁷³⁴ E.E. Aldis (Clothing, SABS), "The new South African national flag and the SABS," *SABS Bulletin*, Vol 13, No 3, May - June 1994, p 4. This article followed a companion article which the writer had prepared: F.G. Brownell (State Herald), "The design of the new South African national flag," which appeared on pp 2 and 3 of the same journal.

It is essential that all examples of the new South African national flag be recognizably the same, regardless of who makes them or where they are flown. It is therefore of critical importance that there be a specification that manufacturers can use to produce flags that will have, for example, the same proportions and colours.

With its practical experience and expertise in writing specifications and setting appropriate standards, the SABS, through its specification, played an essential role in the production of the new national flag.

An accurate technical line drawing had already been prepared by the Bureau of Heraldry, which facilitated matters. **(Figure 11)** When it came to the question of colour shades, the State Herald suggested Chilli red for the top band and that the blue of the existing national flag be retained for the bottom band. A bright Spectrum green was chosen for the “Y”, and Aldis proposed the use of a rich gold/yellow. The white and black were as specified for the existing national flag. Stressing the urgency of the matter, Reinders asked if it would be possible to have the specifications by the end of that week. From a practical point of view, it was decided that this would be a private specification for the Office of the State President. As Aldis explained in his article, the preparation of a standard specification, while desirable for a national flag was just not possible in the limited time available. The preparation of a standard specification to comply with the SABS mark would have entailed establishing a representative technical committee, holding meetings and sending out drafts for comment. It was simply not possible to do this in the space of three days.

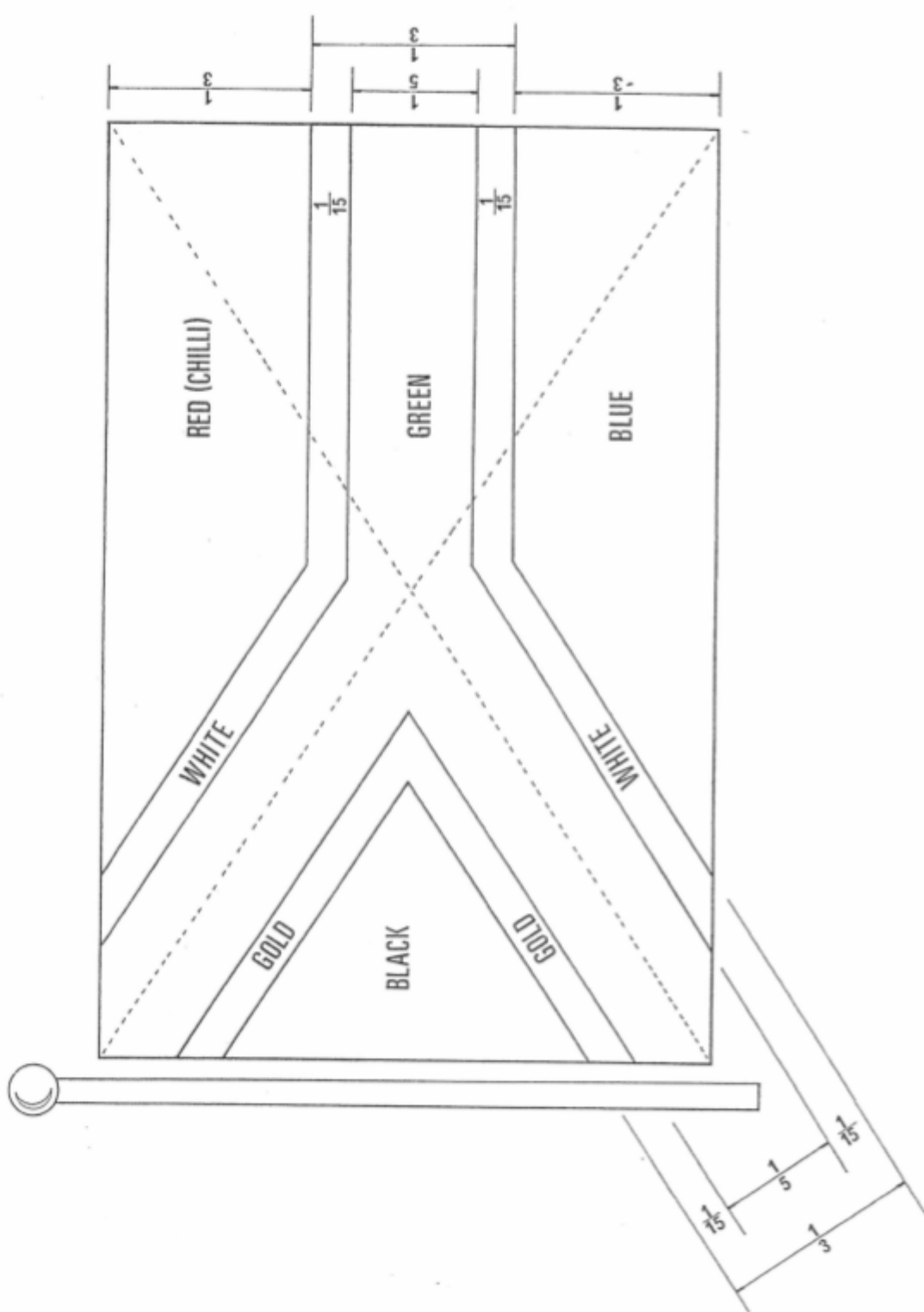


Figure 11

Line drawing of the National flag

After leaving the SABS in Groenkloof, where arrangements had been made for specifications for the probable national flag to be compiled, the State Herald returned to his office. Before long, Kleynhans of the Constitutional Development Service telephoned with the message that he should report to Minister Meyer's office in the TEC Building in the city centre before 16h00, with the flag designs and prototypes, and await him there. The national symbols issue was on the TEC agenda for that afternoon. The State Herald knew full well that he had stuck out his neck by suggesting to the Minister that only one design be laid before the TEC. As time passed he began to wonder if this suggestion had been such a bright idea. It was only some eight years later, after receiving a copy of the book *Flying with pride*, that he learned the reason for the delay. As a leading figure in the negotiation process, Ramaphosa had been asked to contribute the foreword to this book. In this he wrote:

On the afternoon, during the pre-election negotiations, when we needed to make a decision on the new flag, the ANC team was presented with a problem – its president, Nelson Mandela, was away in Rustenburg. There was no question of proceeding without his approval. There was also no time to take a copy of the proposed flag to him. So, calling on the same resourcefulness which had helped to unblock the negotiation process several times before, we faxed a drawing of the flag to him and got someone in Rustenburg to colour in the various shapes with the appropriate colours. And thus the flag of the new South Africa – on a sheet of fax paper, coloured by hand – was approved by the person who was to become its first democratically elected president.⁷³⁵

When the reply from Rustenburg arrived, it was favourable, since Mr Mandela had also given his blessing to the design. When Meyer eventually walked into his office he wore a broad smile and said simply: "Cyril stem saam!" [Cyril agrees!] The final details were then added to the draft report on national symbols, which Meyer and Ramaphosa would soon jointly be

⁷³⁵ Denis Beckett, *Flying with pride: the story of the South African flag* (Wildnet Africa, Pretoria, 2002), foreword, p 9.

submitting to the TEC, hopefully for approval. Their report,⁷³⁶ which resolved the flag issue is included in full, given its watershed significance:

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SYMBOLS

A Sub-Committee consisting of R. Meyer and C. Ramaphosa was appointed by the TEC to advise the Council on the subject of National Symbols.

The Sub-Committee appointed a technical committee to evaluate the submissions to the Commission on National Symbols, which was appointed by the Multi-Party Negotiating Council, and also the recommendations of the Commission. The technical committee subsequently made recommendations to the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee was of the opinion that two criteria are of particular importance:

- 1.) That the National Symbols that are to be provided for in the Constitution for the transitional period are essentially of a transitional nature. This means that the Constitutional Assembly will be entitled to take a final decision on the matter in the process of further constitution-making.
- 2.) Maximum reconciliation (*sic*) should be the aim in order to bring about national unity to the extent that all communities can feel assured that their interests have been taken into account.

The TEC has the authority in terms of Section 248 of the 1993 Constitution to decide on the matter and to advise the State President to proclaim such a resolution to form part of the Constitution.

In view of the above, the Sub-Committee has the privilege (*sic*) to recommend to the TEC the acceptance of the following:

⁷³⁶ This report is reproduced verbatim, typos and all! Copy in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.

NATIONAL FLAG:

A flag consisting of six colours – red, green, blue white, black & gold. The description is as follows:

The National flag shall be rectangular in the proportion of two in the width to three in the length: per pall from the hoist, the upper band red (chilli) and the lower band blue, with a black triangle at the hoist; over the partition lines a green pall one fifth of the width of the flag, fimbriated white against the red (chilli) and blue, and gold against the black triangle at the hoist; the width of the pall and its fimbriations is one third of the width of the flag.

NATIONAL ANTHEMS:

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika

Die Stem

When the final additions to this report had been typed, the State Herald accompanied Meyer to the TEC conference room. Meyer took with him the single full-size prototype flag on which he and Ramaphosa had agreed and which had been manufactured by National Flag over the previous weekend, while the State Herald carried in a folder the same flag design, which had been painted on fashion-board by the artists of the Bureau of Heraldry. All of the other prototypes and painted flag designs were left in Meyer's office. On entering the conference room Meyer instructed the State Herald to sit on side, in case he might be required to answer any technical questions which might arise.

When the time came, Meyer and Ramaphosa jointly delivered the report of the Sub-Committee to the TEC and then held up the prototype flag for all to see. For a few moments there was a deathly silence, followed by rather hesitant applause. A number of the members of the TEC made brief comments. The State Herald had left his notepaper in Meyer's office and was, in any event, too nervous to take any notes. Two of the comments, however, stuck in his mind. M.B. Webb of Ciskei remarked jokingly that he would have preferred the blue

stripe to be on top – the national flag of Ciskei being predominantly blue and white – while Joe Slovo of the South African Communist Party, in similar vein, remarked that he had no objection at all to the colour red being on top! The Press reported that Ken Andrews of the Democratic Party felt that the flag design was so complicated that it might be rather difficult for a school-child to draw, which comment earned a riposte from Ramaphosa that today’s children are brighter than their parents and that they would reconstruct the flag’s design on a computer in a jiffy.⁷³⁷ The design of the new national flag was adopted unanimously by the TEC, which was probably only too glad to have shed that problem. As *Business Day* reported the following morning, “all TEC delegates said they were satisfied with the six-colour design.”⁷³⁸

Meyer and Ramaphosa then excused themselves and headed for the door with the prototype flag. As they passed, Meyer then said to the State Herald that he should accompany them, since they were going to speak to the Press. The assembled reporters had, by this time, long been awaiting the “big news story of the day.” On arrival in the Press Room, Meyer unfurled the prototype of the new national flag and handed a corner to Ramaphosa. On looking down he realized that he was holding the hoist, and with a chuckle said: “Cyril, let’s change places, then you can hold your side⁷³⁹ and I can hold my side.”⁷⁴⁰ This comment raised a hearty laugh, but its significance – that both sides had agreed on the design, even though they might be viewing it from different political perspectives – was not lost on the Press. A photograph with “Cyril and Roelf” each holding their “own side”, appeared in the Press the following day.⁷⁴¹ While some newspapers showed “Cyril and Roelf” holding the artwork,⁷⁴² most of them merely reproduced the design of the new national flag in colour. Together with an illustration of the design of the new national flag, *The Star* was to include on its front page a montage of historical flags entitled: “What went before.”⁷⁴³ After other photographs had been taken, Meyer said that the Press must please excuse the two of them, since they still had work to do. He added: “Mr Brownell will answer your questions.” This session lasted to about

⁷³⁷ *Die Burger*, Thursday 17 March 1994, p 3.

⁷³⁸ *Business Day*, 16 March 1994, p 2.

⁷³⁹ With the black triangle, gold and green.

⁷⁴⁰ With the Chilli red (red/orange), white and blue bands.

⁷⁴¹ It appeared *inter alia* on the front pages of *Beeld*, *Die Burger* and *Volksblad*, and also on p 2 of *Business Day*, Wednesday 16 March 1994.

⁷⁴² *Evening Post* (p. 2); *Pretoria News* (front page), Wednesday 16 March 1994.

⁷⁴³ *The Star*, 16 March 1994, p 1.

19h15 that night,⁷⁴⁴ but by that time the new national flag design had already been seen by the country at large on television news bulletins.

The following morning the State Herald first reported to his immediate administrative superior, the Director of Archives, Dr Johan Snyman, to bring him up to date, before proceeding upstairs to the Bureau of Heraldry. There he found that members of his staff had already compiled a page-long list of names and telephone numbers of persons who were anxious to speak to him. A one-page memo giving a description of the flag and some other basic information as to the rationale behind the design, was prepared post haste and typed up for general information. It was refined once or twice during the day, so as to address as many as possible of the questions which were streaming in. Both the plethora of telephone calls and the multitude of faxes reflected on the interest of the public at large in the new flag.⁷⁴⁵

On 18 March 1994 the SABS sent the “private” specification for the new national flag to the Office of the State President by fax, and Reinders transmitted a copy to the Bureau of Heraldry early the following week (**Appendix B**). A copy also went to the Department of State Expenditure to draw up the necessary documents for the issuing of state tenders. These were then sent to several companies who had expressed an interest in producing the flags. The manufacturers were anxious to get moving and during the following week the first sample flags were submitted to the Office of the State President for consideration.

These sample flags were taken to the SABS for inspection, to ensure that they were of the correct size, colours and proportions. The SABS reported accordingly and the Office of the State President then decided if the companies would be allowed to manufacture the national flag. When they were satisfied, letters of acceptance were then sent to the State Tender Board. The SABS, which had a permanent member on the State Tender Board, was asked to attend a meeting to advise on the tenders, after which contracts were awarded and production of the new national flag could - theoretically - begin in earnest. The approval process could not be undertaken overnight and it was only on 11 April 1994 that the first press reports on

⁷⁴⁴ State Herald’s office diary, 16 March 1994.

⁷⁴⁵ Marga Ley, “Baie bel staatsheradikus,” *Volksblad*, 17 Maart 1994, bl 3.

the approval by the SABS of the first national flag samples appeared.⁷⁴⁶ This was barely two weeks before the new Constitution came into force.

After the adoption of the national flag design by the TEC and the preparation of specifications by the SABS, the State Herald was virtually in daily contact with Reinders in the Office of the State President to ascertain progress with regard to the formal proclamation of the national flag. Manufacturers, who were desperate to commence mass production as soon as possible, were making enquiries all the time. Some of them had applied for state tenders, but others were obviously thinking of the private sector's requirements.⁷⁴⁷ Virtually everyone was asking when the proclamation could be expected. Section 248 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993, was explicit on this score, in requiring that the State President, in issuing the necessary proclamation, was required to act "on the advice of the Transitional Executive Council." Even though the TEC had approved the design, and everyone knew that they had done so, the State President could only act once the TEC had advised him to do so.

However, those in the TEC who were responsible for advising the State President to issue the proclamation necessary to institute the new national flag, do not seem to have considered this as a matter of urgency. For some inexplicable reason it took the TEC a month to transmit the necessary request to the Office of the State President.⁷⁴⁸ This created a logistical problem of nightmare proportions for the flag manufacturers. In the meantime, the Press and public were having a field day expressing themselves on the design of the new national flag.

6.3 Flag field day of dis / content

Human nature is such that change is often greeted by scepticism, if not with reluctance or outright opposition. It is hardly surprising then, that the initial reaction to the design of the new national flag was mostly unenthusiastic and uncomplimentary. Indeed, over the next few days in particular, Press sensationalism was to hold high festival. With the design of the flag

⁷⁴⁶ *Beeld, Die Burger and Volksblad*, 11 April 1994 (no page number available). Certain of these early reports mentioned that there had been a relaxation of some aspects of the specifications to allow all flag manufacturers to make flags; *Citizen*, 12 April 1994, p 3.

⁷⁴⁷ This is a personal reflection from this tumultuous time.

⁷⁴⁸ Reinders was to tell the State Herald at that time that in desperation he asked Jessie Duarte of the TEC please to "light a fire under the behinds" of those responsible for the delay.

having only been approved by the TEC on the evening of 15 March 1994, as was to be expected the public had had little opportunity to comment on it by the time that the following day's morning newspapers went to press. As a result, apart from general remarks by reporters, most of the early public comment appeared in the late editions on Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 March 1994, and over the following weekend.

In its editorial on 16 March *The Argus* urged South Africans to “Rally round the flag ... because it is such a controversial issue, the new design – endorsed by the Transitional Executive Council – is a compromise ... It is markedly African in character with black, gold and green components and yet reflects something of the European past with the red, white and blue elements.”⁷⁴⁹ The late edition of *The Argus* that day reported that Ramaphosa believed it was “the best flag for the transition,” while Meyer had said: “I believe this flag will grow in the minds of South Africans.”⁷⁵⁰

On the front page of its late edition the same day, *Die Burger* reported that Cor Pama, chairman of the Heraldry Society and member of the Heraldry Council, had expressed the opinion that the flag had been very thoughtfully [oordeelkundig] designed. He liked the flag and the many colours did not worry him. The way in which the field had been partitioned successfully separated the six colours. Despite its many colours the design conveyed a restful impression. In the same newspaper Professor Adam Small, writer and head of the Department of Social Work at the University of the Western Cape, was reported as expressing disappointment with the new flag. He considered the design to be emotionally cold and very patriarchal; it was a concoction like much of the new constitution, and he wondered where the sun was.⁷⁵¹ The sun was, of course, already ensconced in the upper hoist of Namibia's national flag.

In the *Cape Times* Willem Steenkamp commented under the heading “No excitement over symbol,” that a snap survey the previous evening showed that South Africans were not wildly excited by the new flag. Under the heading “Unveiling has mixed reaction,” Chris Bateman remarked that reaction the previous night had ranged from outright condemnation to cautious

⁷⁴⁹ *The Argus*, Wednesday 16 March 1994, p 16.

⁷⁵⁰ *The Argus*, City Late, Wednesday 16 March 1994 (no page number available).

⁷⁵¹ *Die Burger*, late edition, 16 March 1994, p 1.

or provisional acceptance.⁷⁵² The *Evening Post* quoted Dene Smuts of the Democratic Party as saying that the new flag must be “taken on appro” and tried on, while Andrew Gerber of the Conservative Party indicated that his Party rejected both the flag and second anthem.⁷⁵³ In the *Natal Mercury* the Minority Front leader Amichand Rajbansi was reported as saying that the flag accommodated both majorities and minorities,⁷⁵⁴ while the *Natal Witness* reported that it had “received several calls last night objecting to the new design.”⁷⁵⁵

In its editorial, with the heading “A muddled flag – but good luck to her,” the *Pretoria News* commented that: “We cannot predict an easy time for this muddled work of give and take ... With luck it will be the first tangible symbol of new unity. Good luck to the muddled new standard. May she fly in growing glory.”⁷⁵⁶ On the front page of the same newspaper, ten Pretoria residents gave their comments which ranged from: “Not mad about it,” and “pathetic,” to “This is the nicest design we’ve had – it is far better than the previous designs which were suggested for a new flag.” The *Volksblad* carried a front page article by political correspondent Peet Kruger under the heading: “Nuwe vlag ontlok gunstige reaksie uit talle oorde.” [New flag draws widespread favourable comment.] This echoed Pama’s comments in *Die Burger*, and remarked that Professor Elize Botha, who had chaired the Commission on National Symbols, felt that the flag was a very good design. Roelf Meyer was reported as saying that he believed that the combination of colours should result in growing popularity of the flag among South Africans and he was under the impression that it could, indeed, become the “final flag.”⁷⁵⁷ One should not lose sight of the fact that the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993*, was an “interim” Constitution and that a final decision on the national flag could only be taken when the Constitutional Assembly adopted a new Constitution.

By 17 March 1994 a number of phone-in surveys had been conducted and reporters, the public and other commentators had had two days in which to digest the design of what would become the new national flag. The end result was that everyone seemed to be having a field day. Reporters had also been afforded the opportunity of reading one another’s articles, which

⁷⁵² *Cape Times*, 16 March 1994, front page. A front page article in the *Daily Dispatch* bore the heading “Opinions differ on transitional flag,” but was otherwise similar in content to that in the *Cape Times*, as was the front page article in the *Eastern Province Herald* that day.

⁷⁵³ *Evening Post*, 16 March 1994, p 2.

⁷⁵⁴ *Natal Mercury*, 16 March 1994, p 1

⁷⁵⁵ *Natal Witness*, 16 March 1994 (no page number available).

⁷⁵⁶ *Pretoria News*, 16 March 1994, p 8.

⁷⁵⁷ *Volksblad*, 16 March 1994, p 1, also pp 3 and 8.

resulted in a fair measure of “rehash.” Under the heading, “Flag’s a drag, say disgusted callers,” *The Argus* remarked that “Reporters could hardly cope with one of the most hectic responses yet to a phone-in poll.” Of the 461 readers who expressed their views, 378 gave the design a “thumbs-down” and it was described as being “Revolting, disgusting, loud, ugly and ‘just plain yukkie’.” Of the 89 callers that liked the flag, one was the Rev Charles Church of Bergvliet who said that the colours were representative of the parties of the past and present. The Y-shape showed the convergence of the many people in South Africa who would walk into the future together. He believed that “Eventually everyone will like it.” Another caller is reported as saying: “I am an Afrikaner and I’m totally in favour. I think it will grow on one.”⁷⁵⁸

In its 17 March editorial, *Beeld* presented a brief overview of the process and remarked that the search for a new national flag had at last produced something with which most people could live. All the stages through which this search had passed had been necessary, and felt it was a good thing that the public at large had initially been involved, even though it was evident from their submissions that successful flag design demands greater skill. This was provided by Fred Brownell’s technical committee, after which the final decision was taken on behalf of the public at large by the Transitional Executive Council, probably the best representative body at that stage. It argued that the final flag for the transitional period was a professional product with a simple design, which embodied the idea of reconciliation. It complied with the principal heraldic rules and incorporated the most popular historic flag colours. All these factors should contribute to the flag becoming a symbol of reconciliation and, who knows, it may well remain the national flag.⁷⁵⁹

Beeld did, however, point to a measure of similarity between the design of the new national flag and that of the island state of Vanuatu which is situated in the Pacific Ocean, north-east of Australia.⁷⁶⁰ The reality is that the latter flag played no role in the evolution of the South African flag and the differences between them far overshadow their similarities. Likewise the *Sunday Times* of 20 March 1994 carried an article in which accountant Ismail Kolia of Lenasia, indicated that he was not seeking financial reward for his design – but he did

⁷⁵⁸ *The Argus*, 17 March 1994, p 15.

⁷⁵⁹ “Beeld-Kommentaar,” *Beeld*, 17 March 1994, p 12. Similar sentiments were expressed in *Die Burger’s* editorial the same day (p 12).

⁷⁶⁰ *Beeld*, 17 Maart 1994, bl 1.

demand recognition as the designer of the new South African flag. He had sent his design to the Negotiating Council by certified mail on 16 November 1993. With the closing date for submissions to the Commission on National Symbols having been set at 13 October 1993 and the Commission having concluded its brief on 21 October 1993, this design which the *Sunday Times* illustrated, will presumably be among the approximately 1 000 late flag submissions which were not considered, either by the Commission or the Negotiating Council. As in the case of the flag of Vanuatu, there are indeed similarities between Kolia's design and the new national flag, but because of its late submission his proposal played no part in the design of the national flag.⁷⁶¹

In the article that Marga Ley of *Beeld* wrote she remarked that once the rationale behind the flag design had been explained to people they found it more and more acceptable. Connie Tait of Pretoria, she reported, had changed her initial perception of the design, namely a crude primitive child-drawing, to the symbol of a number of nations converging and advancing together. She had said that provided the flag was carefully explained, then everyone would accept it.⁷⁶² In another article in the same edition of *Beeld*, it was reported that Robert van Tonder, leader of the Boerestaatparty, believed that the flag would soon be known as the "Absurdijack;" that draped vertically it could become a most acceptable rugby and soccer jersey, with a V-neck; it looked like a wine glass; and like a Boer boy's traditional weapon, the "Kettie" [catapult]; and also that it was reminiscent of Y-front underpants.⁷⁶³ The Y-front theme was also taken up in a satirical article by John Scott in the "Opinion" column of the *Cape Times*, under the heading "A flag that signifies one man one Y-front."⁷⁶⁴ In another article that day there were a number of comments, that by Marilyn Martin, director of the South African National Gallery in Cape Town being that the flag "has no meaning or passion behind it."⁷⁶⁵ One of the first newspapers to produce a souvenir wall chart of the new flag was the *Daily News*, which also carried a "By George!" cartoon on the front page of the flag fluttering from a flag-post, with the caption: "Even the AWB is represented – the green

⁷⁶¹ Cas St Leger, "I designed the SA flag, says Ismail," *Sunday Times*, 20 March 1994, p 3.

⁷⁶² *Beeld*, 17 March 1994, p 4; *Volksblad*, 17 March 1994, carried largely similar articles on the front page and on p 3.

⁷⁶³ Robert van Tonder's comments also appeared in *Die Burger*, 17 March 1994, p 3.

⁷⁶⁴ *Cape Times*, 17 March 1994, p 8. This article also appeared on p 13 of the *Daily Dispatch*, the same day.

⁷⁶⁵ Martin had been one of the assessors appointed to assist the national flag sub-committee of the Commission on National Symbols in October 1993. *Cape Times*, 17 March 1994, p 7.

Y for Terre'Blanche's green Y-fronts.”⁷⁶⁶

In the *Cape Times* editorial entitled “A passing flag” it was remarked that although “South Africa's new transitional flag was far from everyone's taste ... [it] at least it looked like a flag.” However, the editorial expressed the view that “the ultimate choice of a new flag should be subject to a referendum.”⁷⁶⁷ At this juncture it is interesting to note that citing the research of Sasha Weitman into the content analysis of national flags,⁷⁶⁸ William Crampton made the point in his doctoral thesis that there is a natural reluctance to depart from the “normal” characteristics of such flags, which should not only be part of the general international pattern, but which also requires that the design should nevertheless be unique.⁷⁶⁹ In other words, a national flag should not only look like a national flag, but the design should also not lay itself open to confusion with the national flag of any other country.

On its front page the *Eastern Province Herald* reported that the radio personality Tim Modise had commented that the flag looked like a road sign, and that Danny Jordaan of the National Sports Congress had remarked that: “We need some victories under the new flag for people to invest emotion in it as a symbol of unity and reconciliation in the new South Africa.”⁷⁷⁰ Elsewhere in this newspaper there were comments both positive and negative.⁷⁷¹ In a similar vein, the editorial in the *Natal Mercury* commented: “As the reaction to the Mercury's phone-in poll on South Africa's interim flag has shown, there cannot be any hope of designing a flag that will please everyone.” Among the overwhelming response to the phone-in, many of them negative, and the now customary comments about Y-fronts underpants, Kuber Singh of Stanger commented that he was “very proud of the Y-signal – in Hinduism it means peace ...”⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁶ *Daily News*, 17 March 1994. The wall chart appeared as a centre spread. The Press had earlier reported extensively on a dalliance which Eugene Terre'Blanche, head of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, is alleged to have had with a reporter, Jani Allan, during which he was said to have been wearing green Y-front underpants. The press had mercilessly “ridden” him after that, hence the reference to the Y-fronts.

⁷⁶⁷ *Cape Times*, 17 March 1994, p 8.

⁷⁶⁸ Sasha R. Weitman, “National flags: a sociological overview,” in *Semiotica*, Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, VIII (4), 1993, pp 328-367.

⁷⁶⁹ William G. Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity” (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1994), pp 42-44.

⁷⁷⁰ These were to be prophetic words. The first of these victories was to come about when South Africa won the Rugby World Cup tournament in 1995.

⁷⁷¹ *Eastern Province Herald*, 17 March 1994, pp 1-3.

⁷⁷² *Natal Mercury*, 17 March 1994, pp 8 and 9. The *Natal Witness* likewise recorded a mixed reaction from its readers that day.

While also reporting on the usual “Oohs and boos for heraldic hotchpotch,” *The Star* sought the comments of the design agencies who had been involved in the flag process the previous year. These were somewhat hesitant in their praise. Robin Putter of Ogilvie and Mather found it “very intriguing,” but regretted that it made no use of any of South Africa’s abundant symbols; while Peter Kyprianou of Herdbuoys felt that the flag “doesn’t really create anything” and that it was simply “not right.” In contrast, Mark de Jong, design director of Hunt Lascaris remarked that: “It’s an attractive solution.” In its “Opinion” column, *The Star* probably gave readers of a negative persuasion a jolt, with the comment: “Think again. The six-colour flag isn’t bad at all. Who knows, Roelf Meyer may be right when he says that it could ‘grow in the minds of South Africans.’”⁷⁷³

The Sowetan carried a cartoon of Cyril Ramaphosa and Roelf Meyer together carrying a flag-staff bearing the new flag, with Ramaphosa saying: “They’ll get used to it Roelf.” In the background there is a multitude with mainly question marks, but a few exclamation marks above their heads.⁷⁷⁴ This ambivalence on the part of the public is evident in its “Comment” column the following day. Here *The Sowetan* makes the point that national symbols tend to stir deep emotions especially in a divided society such as ours.⁷⁷⁵ The decision of the TEC on a new national flag consequently had as many critics as supporters.

Two days after the adoption of the national flag design by the TEC the “Comments” column of the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* remarked that: “The new flag looks, to all intents and purposes, like the old South African flag being driven apart by an ANC type flag.”⁷⁷⁶ A similar view was expressed the following day in *Die Afrikaner*, under the heading “Yebo-vlag vir Azania,” which stressed the similarity between an inverted “Y” and the “Peace Sign,” and the latter’s association with the anti-Christ.⁷⁷⁷ *The Star* likewise carried a short article under the heading: “New flag ‘heralds the Antichrist’.” This reads as follows:

The new national flag was a confirmation that the Antichrist was about to rule

⁷⁷³ *The Star*, 17 March 1994, pp 6 and 18.

⁷⁷⁴ *The Sowetan*, 17 March 1994 (no page number available).

⁷⁷⁵ *The Sowetan*, 18 March 1994, p 10.

⁷⁷⁶ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 17 March 1994, pp 1, 2 and 4.

⁷⁷⁷ *Die Afrikaner*, 18-24 March 1994, pp 1 and 2. Under the heading “Die skemerwêreld van die Satanisme” [The dusky world of Satanism], *Patriot* of 15 March 1991 illustrated a litany of symbols apparently associated by some with Satanism (no page numbers available).

South Africa, AWB leader Eugene Terreblanche said yesterday. “The triangle on the left is the pyramid of the illuminati/New World Order one-world government. Colours of the ANC about to triumph over South Africa are clearly shown on the left. We are shocked but not surprised that they show the broken cross lying on its side to depict their triumph over Jesus Christ.”⁷⁷⁸

This sentiment would seem to have been widely shared and within days an undated flyer was produced by the “Teikengroep Onderwys” [Education Focus Group] of the Conservative Party’s Constituency Council in Verwoerdburg, showing how the new national flag design had, in their view, been created by means of the “Spear of the Nation” penetrating the Vierkleur and thus raping a beloved flag and making of it a Satanic symbol.⁷⁷⁹ A fellow vexillologist, Franz Jooste, who has long been prominent in the conservative Afrikaner establishment and who has an abiding interest in Boer flags,⁷⁸⁰ was later to tell the State Herald that members of the right-wing were so infuriated with the design of the new national flag that the time would come when he would have to answer to them. When Jooste heard of this he apparently told those concerned that they were to leave the State Herald alone. They were friends and the State Herald had merely been doing his job.⁷⁸¹ As a generalised group, it has been the conservative Afrikaner establishment which has experienced the greatest difficulty in coming to terms with the new flag.

Counter-balancing the virulent opposition to the design of the new national flag by certain segments of the population, and again only two days after the approval of the design, *The Argus* had one of its photographers at the Newlands Cricket Ground in Cape Town, on the first day of the second cricket test between South Africa and Australia. On the following day *The Star* published a photograph of a group of cricket fans enthusiastically waving an

⁷⁷⁸ *The Star*, 18 March 1994 (no page number available). These remarks were also commented on in the “Hogarth” column of the *Sunday Times* of 20 March 1994, p 28, and in the “Viva fever” column of the *Sunday Tribune* on the same day, p 6. The latter column also reported that the Natal Museum historian Graham Dominy, who was later to be appointed National Archivist of South Africa, in which capacity he became my immediate administrative superior, as saying that: “The flag is not as bad as it looks.” See also Pieter-Dirk Uys’ column, “There’s something for everyone in our nice new beach towel flag,” on p 20 of the *Sunday Tribune* of 20 March 1994.

⁷⁷⁹ The armed wing of the ANC was *Umkhonto weSizwe*, which translates as Spear of the Nation, while the *Vierkleur* was the national flag of the Transvaal Boer Republic [*Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*] which had been brought to an end in 1902 by the Anglo-Boer War.

⁷⁸⁰ Jooste was to deliver a paper on this topic at the XVII International Congress of Vexillology in Cape Town in August 1997.

⁷⁸¹ When Jooste visited the writer in his home on Monday 17 October 2011, to discuss a heraldic matter on which he needed some guidance, he confirmed the veracity of this comment.

apparently home-made new national flag. One cannot but comment that those fans would hardly have done so if they had not taken to the design and decided that this was now their new national flag.⁷⁸²

There were indeed other indications that perceptions were beginning to turn in favour of the new flag's design. On the following Sunday the "Herald comment" column of the *Sunday Tribune* remarked that the more one reflected on the flag the more acceptable it became. It was a clever blend of the various party political colours and contained no emotive symbols such as a clenched fist or hammer and sickle. The symbolism it did contain, namely that of divergent paths coming together on a common road to the future, was laudable. It concluded that, "Moderate South Africans yearning for a national symbol everyone can be proud of, see instead a commonsensical design that embodies the rich tapestry of this country's diverse peoples. It is a pennant that presages a fresh beginning and everyone should be proud of it."⁷⁸³

Similarly, in a letter to the editor of the *Pretoria News*, which was published the following day, Roger Seeman wrote that the new national flag excited him but that his first reaction was muddled: "I think I thought it wasn't Western enough for me. Too African. But then I realised my Western roots died out a long time ago, and I was of Africa. And glad to be so. And I saw the flag in a new light ... May God bless our new flag. May He use her to bring greater unity, reconciliation, peace and prosperity to the people of our great land."⁷⁸⁴

In the text above, passing reference has been made to the symbolism which people had, from the time of its adoption by the TEC on 15 March 1994, attributed to both the design and colours incorporated into the design of the new transitional South African national flag. As the designer of this flag, I am prepared to go no further than to stress that the key concept embodied in the design and colours incorporated into it, is simply that of "convergence and unification."⁷⁸⁵ This concept can, of course, be viewed in a number of ways, among them: the

⁷⁸² *The Argus*, 17 March 1994, p 18. This photograph was reproduced in *The Star*, 18 March 1994, p 3 under the heading "It means six, chaps!" and on the same day in *The Sowetan*, p 2.

⁷⁸³ *Sunday Tribune*, 20 March 1994, p 4. By 24 April 1994, three days before it was formally taken into use, both the *Sunday Tribune* and the *Sunday Tribune Herald* had incorporated the new national flag into their their mastheads.

⁷⁸⁴ *Pretoria News*, Monday 21 March 1994, p 6.

⁷⁸⁵ Hence the title of this thesis.

convergence and unification of historic and popular flag colours into a new and all-embracing symbol of national identity; of ideas and aspirations; or of the coming together of the diverse cultures and peoples of South Africa who then take the road ahead in unison. If the core idea behind a design is clear and simple, there is no need to spin an elaborate myth in an attempt to justify it.⁷⁸⁶

In an article which was published in *Beeld* only a week after the adoption of the national flag design by the TEC, Wilhelm Jordaan quotes from a 1943 judgment by Judge Robert Jackson in one of the many “separate but equal” trials in the United States of America. In this the judge remarked that a person gets from a symbol what he puts into it and that what is “one man’s comfort and inspiration is another’s jest and scorn.”⁷⁸⁷ It is a heraldic rule-of-thumb to be wary of attributing symbolism to any design or colour. It is one thing to give reasons why a particular design has been prepared and why the colours have been chosen, but another matter entirely then to clothe that design and its chosen colours with symbolic meaning. Norden Hartman, a former State Herald of South Africa used to impress on his staff that “symbolism, like water, will find its own level.” There was absolutely no guarantee that everyone would attribute the same meaning to a design. For that reason a herald should at all times be professional, dispassionate and neutral.⁷⁸⁸ In a footnote to his own doctoral thesis which was completed in late 1994, William Crampton remarked that: “Brownell’s recent success in getting a new flag adopted for South Africa was achieved because he was acknowledged as being non-partisan.”⁷⁸⁹

Since colour is a natural phenomenon, the colours of the spectrum can have no intrinsic meaning. In his wide-ranging book on symbols and their attendant symbolism, Raymond Firth comments on the fact that running through discussion of the symbolism of national flags is the vague but persistent theme that not only the design but also the colours of the flag of a country may have more than an accidental significance. Although some of these attributions are of a fairly obvious descriptive nature, others are more abstract. While there might thus be

⁷⁸⁶ A case in point is the silver (white) pall wavy on a black field in the coat of arms of Nigeria, which alludes to the confluence of that country’s two most important rivers, the Niger and Benue. Siobhán Ryan (Project Editor) *Ultimate Pocket Flags of the World* (Dorling Kindersley, London, 1997), p 90.

⁷⁸⁷ Wilhelm Jordaan, in the column “Van mens tot mens,” under the heading “Nuwe land-simbole,” *Beeld*, 23 March 1994, p 8.

⁷⁸⁸ This is a personal recollection.

⁷⁸⁹ Crampton, “Flags as non-verbal symbols in the management of national identity,” p 183.

a common thread running through many of these colour symbolisms, Firth makes it clear that there is no predictive value to be seen in the use of any particular colour.⁷⁹⁰ Any symbolism, meaning or other interpretation which might be ascribed to a colour is thus essentially a figment of the imagination. This has not prevented a wide variety of symbolic meanings from being attached to the colours [and design] of the national flag. One of the first, which was prepared within days of the approval of the flag, appeared on a leaflet bearing an illustration of the flag, under the heading, “The Gospel in our Flag.” The accompanying text, printed in black, red, white (outlined), green, blue and gold, reads as follows:

My heart was black with sin ... ‘till Jesus Christ came in
His Precious Blood, I know, has washed me white as snow
And as in Grace I grow
to Heaven I shall go
For in God’s word I’m told I’ll walk on streets of gold.⁷⁹¹

In stark contrast, again referring to scripture, R. Zillah of Pretoria, in a letter to the editor of the *Pretoria News*, declared that:

The new interim national flag shows, in green, the subtle forked-tongue of the serpent, which is regarded as a symbol of Satan. There should be no more doubt that we will soon witness the fulfilment of the most earth-shaking events in all history as prophesied by Daniel, Ezekiel and others in the Bible. It is the nature of men, when all seems lost, to destroy the lives of those around them. They have inherited this trait from Satan, and the sooner we stand up and tell it like it is, the less men will be blinded by the Devil's advocates.⁷⁹²

On the following day, Saturday 26 March 1994, a replica of the new national flag was burned on Church Square in Pretoria during an Afrikaner-Volksfront (AVF) right-wing rally. Professor P.G. Nel who addressed the rally associated the “six colours, six blocks and six stripes” in the flag with the numerals 666, the mark of the Beast, the Anti-Christ, in the Book

⁷⁹⁰ Raymond Firth, *Symbols; public and private* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1973), pp 330-338 and 350-351.

⁷⁹¹ This was printed and distributed by Jesus Calls Ministries and Living Waters Church, Durban, in March 1994.

⁷⁹² *Pretoria News*, Friday 25 March 1994, p 6, under the heading “New flag is satanic.”

of Revelations.⁷⁹³ To the encouragement of enthusiastic calls of: “Brand hom! Brand hom!” [“Burn it! Burn it!”], Radio Pretoria announcer Anieta Armand had set fire to a new flag. This was followed into the fire by posters of State President F.W. de Klerk and Mr Nelson Mandela which had been torn down from lamp posts.⁷⁹⁴

Most shades of opinion probably fell between these two extremes. In a letter to the editor of the *Eastern Province Herald*, “Junior,” of Westering in Port Elizabeth stated that the new national flag “is an excellent interim national symbol.” He remarked that:

All the silly comment about the Y (Y-front underpants and such idiocy) ignores that this symbol is an ancient heraldic device called a pairlie or pall. This is another name for the pallium, which long before heraldry was the garment, with its Y-shaped decoration ... that adorned the backs of bishops given special recognition by the Pope. The sideways-on pall is a unifying device; cutting it into an arrowhead will certainly turn it into a symbol of confrontation.⁷⁹⁵

In other words, far from being a broken cross, the classic heraldic pall which is incorporated into the design of the flag has, for centuries, been used as an archiepiscopal symbol.⁷⁹⁶

6.4 Legislative, practical and regulatory aftermath

An inevitable consequence of the imminent replacement of the then national flag, which had been taken into use on 31 May 1928, by the new national flag which was scheduled to come into use on 27 April 1994, was that all the National Colours which had been presented to the

⁷⁹³ Revelation, 13:18 – “... let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast . His number is 666.” This arithmetic is somewhat puzzling. There are indeed six colours, but there are not six “blocks” or surfaces but seven, since white is repeated and it is unclear where in the design there are the “six stripes.”

⁷⁹⁴ *Beeld*, Monday 28 March 1994, p7; *Sunday Times*, 27 March 1994, p 2. The flag was also burned in Bloemfontein the next week; *Volksblad*, Wednesday 30 March 1994 (no page number available).

⁷⁹⁵ *Eastern Province Herald*, 5 April 1994 (no page number available).

⁷⁹⁶ An illustration from more than three centuries ago will be found in: P. Heylyn, *A help to English History* (Printed for T. Baffet, London, 1680), the Anglican Church’s Archbishops of Canterbury, p 78. Similar arms are borne by the Church of Ireland’s Archbishop of Armagh, the Primate of all Ireland, as illustrated on a poster *Flags and badges of the Anglican Community of Great Britain and Ireland* (The Flagmakers Ltd, Swansea, 1998). By tradition the Pope wears a pallium pinned to his vestments. See the photographs in the *Pretoria News*, 22 November 2010, p 8; and 25 April 2011, p 8; also *Beeld*, 2 May 2011, p 6 and 20 May 2013, p 6.

uniformed Services since 1988, which were essentially fringed versions of the 1928 national flag had to be laid up, and thus “retired” and taken out of use.⁷⁹⁷ This decision, in the case of the Defence Force, was taken by the Joint Military Command Council (JMCC) on 26 January 1994. A month later the Chief of Staff Personnel of the South African Defence Force advised the Chiefs of the four Services in the South African Defence Force to plan accordingly.⁷⁹⁸ The South African Police and Department of Correctional Services had to make similar arrangements.

The laying up of a National, Service, Regimental or Unit Colour is, by tradition, undertaken with due and solemn ceremony, but there was simply no time to do so by means of individual parades for each Unit or Service. It was thus decided to hold symbolic parades for each of the Services, at which some of their National Colours would be laid up, on behalf of the Service as a whole.⁷⁹⁹ All the remaining National Colours of the respective Services would be deemed to have been laid up on the same dates.

The parade for the symbolic laying up of the National Colours of South African Army units was held at the Army College, Voortrekkerhoogte on 15 April 1994;⁸⁰⁰ that for the South African Air Force was held at the Air Force Gymnasium in Valhalla the same day;⁸⁰¹ the parade to lay up the South African Navy's National Colours and the Navy Colour, which bore the national flag in the canton, was held in Simon's Town on 22 April 1994;⁸⁰² while the parade for the laying up of the National Colours of the South African Medical Service was held on the same day at the Dutch Reformed Church's “Mother Parish” [Moedergemeente] in Voortrekkerhoogte.⁸⁰³ The National Colour of the South African Police was laid up during a parade held at the Police Training College in Pretoria West, also on 15 April 1994.⁸⁰⁴

⁷⁹⁷ For an account of the National Colours, see: H.H. Smith and F.G. Brownell, “South African Military Colours 1664-26 April 1994, Part III, Military Colours of the South African Defence Force, 31 May 1961 to 26 April 1994, Volume 1, The National Colour and Colours devised for the South African Army, which comprises the whole of *SAVA Journal*, SJ: 10 (Pinetown, Johannesburg, 30 June 2011), pp 671-685.

⁷⁹⁸ This was done by means of Signal No. CSP/DPD/153/28 FEB 94.

⁷⁹⁹ *Paratus*, April 1994, pp 52-53.

⁸⁰⁰ Programme: *Symbolic laying up of National Colours*, Voortrekkerhoogte, 15 April 1994.

⁸⁰¹ Programme: *Laying up of National Colours*, Valhalla, 15 April 1994.

⁸⁰² Programme: *Laying up of National Colours and the Naval Colour*, Simon's Town, 22 April 1994: *The Argus*, 22 April 1994, p. 11; *Cape Times*, 23 April 1994, p. 4; *Weekend Argus*, 23/24 April 1994, p. 31

⁸⁰³ Programme: Parade for the symbolic laying up of the National Colours of the South African Medical Service, Voortrekkerhoogte, 22 April 1994.

⁸⁰⁴ *Beeld*, 16 April 1994 (no page number available).

At long last, after a month the TEC formally requested the State President to issue the proclamation necessary to institute the new national flag and determine the national anthems. This proclamation, which was signed by State President De Klerk on 18 April 1994, was published two days later.⁸⁰⁵ A description of the design of the new national flag of the Republic of South Africa was set out in the Schedule to this proclamation. The essence of this Proclamation reads as follows:

Under the powers vested in me by section 248 (1), read with section 2, of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act No. 200 of 1993), and on the advice of the Transitional Executive Council, I hereby proclaim that on 27 April 1994 the Flag as described in the Schedule, and The Call of South Africa and Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika shall become the National Flag and the National Anthems of the Republic of South Africa.

The Schedule to this Proclamation reads as follows:

DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL FLAG

The National Flag shall be rectangular in the proportion of two in the width to three in the length: per pall from the hoist, the upper band chilli red and the lower band blue, with a black triangle at the hoist; over the partition lines a green pall one fifth of the width of the flag, fimbriated white against the chilli red and blue, and gold against the black triangle at the hoist; the width of the pall and its fimbriations is one third of the width of the flag.⁸⁰⁶

It is important to note that the number allocated to this proclamation, namely No. 70, 1993, raised the eyebrows of Harold Rudolph, an Associate Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand. In an article published in *The South African Law Journal* later in 1994, Rudolph drew attention to a legal anomaly, pointing out that the reader with an eye for detail would have noted that the proclamation made reference to 1993 and not 1994, the year in which it was done. He consequently wondered if this error would have any effect on the

⁸⁰⁵ Proclamation No. 70, 1993 in *Government Gazette* No. 15663 of 20 April 1994.

⁸⁰⁶ As will be noted, Parliament's language practitioners had made minor linguistic changes to the flag description which Meyer and Ramaphosa had submitted to the TEC.

validity of the proclamation. Of this he remarked that he was not at all sure, since the historians and lawyers of the future when undertaking research into South Africa's new flag "will not find Proclamation 70 of 1994. Instead they will find two proclamations 70 of 1993, one which declares the provisions of the Commissions Act 8 of 1947 to be applicable to the Commission of Inquiry into the Manner of Providing for Medical Expenses ... and the other which deals with South Africa's national symbols." South Africa had again proved the adage that "if legislation is enacted in haste one will be left to repent at one's leisure."⁸⁰⁷

Publication of the Proclamation, regardless of the date error, at last gave official sanction to the future national flag of the Republic of South Africa. Earlier in this chapter an indication has been given of the problems facing our flag manufacturers. By the second week of March 1994,⁸⁰⁸ manufacturers had been warned to "keep the gears oiled," in anticipation of an early decision. Within hours after the adoption of the new national flag design Mike Clingman, managing director of the flag manufacturing company National Flag, stated that he had received some 300 commercial and industrial orders.⁸⁰⁹ He had enough work to keep his factory going. Tony Hampson-Tindale's firm Flag Craft also had orders streaming in from his clients – "We have substantial orders for it – in the thousands."⁸¹⁰ Other companies would also soon be tendering for state contracts but, as mentioned above, that was a process which took time. As it transpired, the official State tender was for a paltry 6 000 flags.⁸¹¹ By the end of March 1994 the *Natal Witness* reported that: "The demand for the new South African flag is so high the manufacturers are barely able to cope."⁸¹² Clearly, a number of manufacturers were making flags despite the fact that it had not yet been formally proclaimed and were taking a financial gamble.

Other manufacturers, the smaller ones in particular, wanted to see the proclamation in black on white before committing themselves to mass production. They had no wish to be landed

⁸⁰⁷ Harold Rudolph, "The waiving of a possibly invalid flag," *The South African Law Journal*, 111, 1994, pp 617-618. The incorporation of a description of the flag in Schedule 1, to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, undoubtedly confirmed the validity of the flag.

⁸⁰⁸ *Die Burger* and *Volksblad*, 11 March 1994 (no page numbers available).

⁸⁰⁹ This was reported in the *Eastern Province Herald*, Friday 18 March 1994, p 3. That was the day on which the SABS completed the specifications. Clingman expected to start "churning out 5 000 flags per week."

⁸¹⁰ "New flag snapped up," in the *Pretoria News*, Saturday 16 April 1994, p 4. In the same article, Alan Goldman, managing director of Sporty Products in Cape Town, said he had "more orders for the new flag than I can cope with."

⁸¹¹ This was way short of the estimated immediate requirement of some 100 000 flags.

⁸¹² *Natal Witness*, 31 March 1994 (no page number available).

with large stocks of unsold flags if, for some reason, the design should be amended prior to formal publication. Even when they were told by the State Herald that they knew that the design had been approved by the TEC and that the SABS specifications were available, they still said: “We know you, we believe you, we trust you, but just remember that it is our money which is on the line.”⁸¹³

Only on 20 April 1994, the day on which the Proclamation appeared in the *Government Gazette*, did the Press report that the State Tender Board had at last approved four manufacturers to start producing flags according to SABS specifications. These were named as Monograms and Flags; Flag Craft; Rostec Plastics; and CI Caravans.⁸¹⁴ Karel Kuiper of Rostec Plastics, in Silverton, Pretoria, was a school friend of one of the leading figures in the Dutch flag manufacturers Shipmate Vlag Produktie, whose factory was situated in Vlaardingen, near Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Together they decided to collaborate on this project.⁸¹⁵

Whereas South African flag manufacturers at that stage generally produced flags by means of the silk-screen process, as Kuiper later remarked, Shipmate had the world’s most advanced rotary flag printer, where rolls of the woven polyester flag material were fed in at the one end like newsprint and the printed material came out at the other end, again in rolls. Shipmate could thus print the basic flags much faster than any South African flag manufacturer, but they soon ran out of the capacity to sew up the printed flags. They then started sending the printed material to South Africa in large rolls. This would explain how these flags could be air-freighted to South Africa in batches of 3000 per day. Eventually Rostec had placed orders with Shipmate for some 65 000 flags, many of which were sub-contracted to companies in Belgium and Germany. Soon Europe ran out of woven polyester and fresh supplies had to be imported from Japan. Rostec applied for and obtained permission to use alternative flag material.⁸¹⁶

Thus largely as a result of the delays in the approval process, which then bedevilled manufacturing, a substantial proportion of South Africa's initial national flag requirements

⁸¹³ This is a personal recollection.

⁸¹⁴ “New Flag made official,” in the TEC Column, *Pretoria News*, Wednesday 20 April 1994, p 6.

⁸¹⁵ *Beeld* (p 2); *Citizen* (p 4), Saturday 23 April 1994.

⁸¹⁶ This was made of trilobal yarn which imparts a silky finish to the material, while retaining the correct colours.

were indeed delivered by air, mostly by KLM and/or South African Airways. These rolls of printed flags were then cut, sewn and finished in South Africa, but here too, there were to be problems and bottlenecks. This completion of the flags was contracted out to companies and other bodies throughout the country.

On the day before the flag was taken into use, a photograph in the *Pretoria News* bore the caption: “Whizzing machines: Betty Chauke, Lucia Madimetsa and their colleagues have been busy since Saturday [23 April] sewing bindings and hooks on new South African flags.”⁸¹⁷ This article reported that Kuiper said his operation was “chaotic”, but that he was supplying flags around the clock “to keep everyone happy.” That same evening, however, Kuiper was obliged to apply to the Pretoria division of the Supreme Court for an urgent interdict, since some of the workers who had been contracted to do the job had stopped work; were refusing to hand over to him the completed flags; were demanding to be paid four times as much as had been agreed; and failing this, were threatening to burn the flags. Judge I.W.B de Villiers granted the urgent interdict.⁸¹⁸

The trials and tribulations which faced the flag manufacturers at this time are set out in the book *Flying with pride*.⁸¹⁹ Up to the last moment the South African Air Force was flying not only ballot papers, but new national flags to all the major centres which did not have local manufacturers. On the day after the new national flag was officially taken into use *Business Day*, unsurprisingly, reported that “Manufacturers have been unable to meet the demand to supply SA’s thousands of official buildings with the country’s new flag. However, a government spokesman said most state buildings in the main centres would have flags.”⁸²⁰ Having been warned for months about the potential logistical problems if an early decision on the design of a new national flag was not taken, the authorities had largely turned a blind eye to these warnings, with predictable results.

On 26 April 1994, the day before it was formally taken into use, instructions for the flying of the new national flag of the Republic of South Africa were – again in haste – published for

⁸¹⁷ *Pretoria News*, Tuesday 26 April 1994, p 3.

⁸¹⁸ *Beeld*, p 22; and the *Citizen*, p 2, Wednesday 27 April 1994. These reports give the number of flags to be supplied by Rostec as 22 000, of which 6 000 were required to be supplied by 27 April 1994.

⁸¹⁹ Beckett, *Flying with pride*, pp 98-105 and photograph on p 107.

⁸²⁰ *Business Day*, 28 April 1994, (no page number available).

general information.⁸²¹ These were closely based on, and replaced, the instructions in respect of the former 1928 national flag, the latest version of which had been published on 9 August 1985. The most important provision was obviously that the description of the new national flag had to be given. But, having been published in haste, in certain respects these instructions seem not to have taken into account the reality that nine provincial premiers would shortly replace the four administrators of the former provinces, whose offices were still mentioned under the flag stations at which the national flag was required to be flown.⁸²² This anomaly was addressed a year and a half later when slightly revised instructions for the flying of the national flag were published for general information on 27 October 1995.⁸²³ Whereas Section 8.(a) of the instructions published on 26 April 1994 had specified that “Founders’ Day: 6th April,” and “Republic Day: 31st May,” had been designated as ceremonial or commemorative days on which the national flag intended for ceremonial use (namely in the size 360 cm X 540 cm) should be flown, these two days were henceforth to be replaced by “Freedom Day: 27 April.”

As a result of the publication of this succession of new instructions for the flying of the new national flag, the Military Ceremonial Manual was also revised accordingly. Then published in punched loose-leaf format so as to facilitate revision – by simply replacing pages on which amendments had been incorporated – and kept in ring-binders, in line with modern technology the Ceremonial Manual is now maintained in electronic format. It is updated on an ongoing basis and is available on-line to those who need to consult it.⁸²⁴

6.5 Conclusion

In consequence of the successive delays in the adoption, proclamation and manufacture of the new national flag, when the former national flag which had served South Africa since 31 May 1928 was struck for the last time at midnight on 26 April 1994, many official and other flag-

⁸²¹ Government Notice No. 865, in *Government Gazette* 15694 of 26 April 1994. These instructions are reproduced in full in **Appendix C**.

⁸²² This provision covered the transitional period until the provincial premiers were elected and installed, in the same way that President F.W. de Klerk continued in office as head of state until the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela on 10 May 1994.

⁸²³ Government Notice No. 1658, in *Government Gazette* 16779 of 27 October 1995.

⁸²⁴ Colonel Kevin Williams, then Director: Ceremonial and Military Music, kindly made available a print-out of Appendix A to this Manual, which deals with “The Flying of Flags & Pennants,” as on 12 February 2004. Doc.: http://wosandf.mil.za:8080/Docs/Cer%20Manual/flying%20of%20flags/flying_of_flag... 2/12/2009

posts in South Africa were still devoid of the new flag. The legal requirements for its institution had been published, specifications for its manufacture had been prepared and rules for its correct use had been promulgated. In many respects it had been a close call, but the “new South Africa” was ushered in under a new national flag, whose vicissitudes are addressed in the following chapter. There had, however, been other casualties resulting from the succession of delays in adopting a new flag. The Ensigns of the uniformed Services, each of which bore the former national flag in the canton, also disappeared from the South African flag scene at midnight on 26 April 1994, with no replacement in sight.⁸²⁵ So ended the national flag debacle which had dragged on for seven months. The new flag was then an “interim” flag, introduced in terms of an “interim” Constitution. Almost three years were to pass before its final confirmation under the 1996 Constitution, which had been drawn up by the Constitutional Assembly.

⁸²⁵ Only later were Ensigns bearing the new national flag introduced.

CHAPTER VII - “INTERIM” TO FINAL: PROGRESSIVE ACCEPTANCE

The new national flag of the Republic of South Africa was adopted in terms of the provisions of an “interim” Constitution and was, for nearly three years of its life, thus an “interim” national flag. From the day of its adoption by the TEC in March 1994, as is evident in Chapter VI, there had been mixed reaction. This Chapter considers the phenomenal change in reaction, converging in general acceptance.

7.1 New flag embraced

South Africa’s new national flag was officially hoisted for the first time at one minute past midnight on 27 April 1994. Flag raising ceremonies were held in each of the nine new provincial capitals to the accompaniment of the two new national anthems, *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrica* and *Die stem van Suid-Afrika*. This symbolized the end of the apartheid era and more than 340 years of progressively expanding white minority rule in South Africa.

South Africa’s new interim constitution also came into effect on 27 April 1994. It was on this day that general voting began in the country’s first fully democratic election, which led to a government of national unity. In terms of this Constitution, by which the country would be governed for the following five years, a system of proportional representation would enable parties receiving 50 000 votes or more to secure seats in parliament. Parties attaining more than 5% of the votes cast would be entitled to a Cabinet post in the government of national unity. Altogether, nearly thirty political parties contested the election at both national and provincial level,⁸²⁶ with the new constitution dividing the country into nine provinces each of which would have limited autonomy. These replaced the previous four provinces and both the “independent” and self-governing homelands. Each province would have an elected legislature, with membership also based on proportional representation.

The new South African national flag not only replaced its predecessor, but also the flags of the homelands. These territories had been reincorporated into South Africa in terms of the

⁸²⁶ For a list of the parties and illustrations of their logos, see *Sava Newsletter*, SN: 4/94, 30 April 1994, pp 3-6.

new constitution and thus no longer exist as separate entities with symbols of their own.⁸²⁷

Despite some misgivings from the general public when the new flag design was announced, the majority of South Africans had soon reacted positively and accepted the new national flag. An editorial in *The Star* simply described it as “A flag that frees.”⁸²⁸ Although new flags were in short supply, symbolic ballot boxes depicted in the Press were in the form and colours of the new flag.⁸²⁹

On the morning of 27 April 1994, the *Pretoria News* published a large “Dr Jack” cartoon, in colour, depicting a ship in full sail passing a directional buoy showing that it had come from “the burning shore” and was heading into “the unknown future.” The name of the ship was “Elections ’94.” Its sails, which were spread in full, were patched and the new national flag was flying from the masthead. The accompanying text read simply, “I know its leaky, Captain, but it’s all we’ve got.”⁸³⁰ On the front page of *The Star* of 4 May 1994 there was a photograph of taxi driver Michael Moroge with a new national flag affixed to the dashboard of his taxi. Under the heading “Kiss of life for our new flag,” the accompanying article stated that: “The new South African flag – which provoked mixed reaction from the public when it was first revealed in March – has become the people’s favourite”. Taxi drivers proudly displayed it and Johannesburg hotels had already hoisted it.⁸³¹

Hardly a newspaper failed to depict the flag and on 10 May 1994, the day of President Mandela’s inauguration, the Post Office produced a new set of postage stamps to commemorate the event. The flag appeared on the 95c stamp. In the same newspaper there was a photograph with the caption, “A nation reborn ... youngsters wave flags as the crowd cheers President Mandela.”⁸³² A number of newspapers published “Inauguration Specials,” filled with photographs and appropriate articles. Among those in the *Pretoria News* was a photograph with the caption “Joyous throng: crowds gather on the Botha lawn in anticipation of today’s inauguration and concert at the Union Buildings.” Brownell, who lived nearby,

⁸²⁷ Bruce Berry, “Hoisting of South Africa’s new national flag,” *Sava Journal*, SJ: 9/94, 30 April 1994 pp 1-3.

⁸²⁸ *The Star*, 28 April 1994, p 10. The same newspaper also depicted the lowering and raising of the flags the previous night, p 8.

⁸²⁹ *Beeld* (Pretoria), Woensdag 27 April 1994, bl 1; *The Star*, 4 May 1994, p 3.

⁸³⁰ *Pretoria News*, 27 April 1994 (page number not available).

⁸³¹ *The Star*, 4 May 1994, p 1.

⁸³² *The Star*, 10 May 1994, pp 1 and 3. See also the same day’s *Beeld*, p 6.

was part of that enormous multi-racial crowd and experienced the jubilant atmosphere.⁸³³

Hand-held flags were in profusion. After the formal inauguration and South African Air Force fly-past, by seventy-four aircraft, the crowd roared with approval as four helicopters flew by the Union Buildings from East to West, with the national flag suspended on cables beneath them.⁸³⁴ In an article in *Beeld* that day, the observation was made that it would prove difficult to introduce a new flag in five years time, since the people had already adopted the new six-colour flag as their own. Of the food and other items on offer on the lower lawn at the Union Building, flags proved to be the most popular item on sale.⁸³⁵

Although the flag should technically, in the absence of written authority from the State, as its owner, not have been used for advertising, a number of businesses could not resist showing their support. Unidata produced a “happy face flag;” Volkswagen used an aerial view of cars and mini-busses of the correct colours parked in the form of the flag; and OK Bazaars depicted the flag with the caption: “South Africa, you’re OK.” This was taken in good spirit with the President’s office indicating that it would not be “petty” and would not prosecute.⁸³⁶

On 23 May 1994, a fortnight after President Mandela’s inauguration, South Africa was admitted as the fifty-third member of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). It is appropriate that the flag-raising ceremony at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was held on 25 May 1994, the thirty-first anniversary of the OAU. Discussions were then also under way for South Africa’s resumption of full membership of the United Nations.⁸³⁷ When the Springbok rugby team took on the visiting English team in the first test at Loftus Versveld Stadium in Pretoria on 4 June 1994, they were wearing the springbok badge on their jerseys and the national flag on the right leg of their white shorts.⁸³⁸ Later that month George Baloyi, then acting manager of the three Central News Agency (CNA) stores at the then Jan Smuts International airport, said that all merchandise relating to the new South Africa and Mandela was selling “like hot cakes.” He added: “The hottest sellers, though, are

⁸³³ *Pretoria News*, 10 May 1994, p 6, *The Arcadian*, No 9, June 1994, pp 1, 2 and 9.

⁸³⁴ *Beeld*, 11 Mei 1994, bl 5; *Business Day*, 11 May 1994, p 7; *Salut*, Vol 1, No 2, June 1994, front cover.

⁸³⁵ *Beeld*, 11 Mei 1994, bl 6 en bl 8.

⁸³⁶ *Sunday Times*, Business Times, 15 May 1994, p 1.

⁸³⁷ *Pretoria News*, 24 May 1994, p 3.

⁸³⁸ *Pretoria News*, Sunrise, 4 June 1994, p 1; and *Beeld*, 4 Junie 1994, bl 1.

the small SA flags, which both South Africans and foreigners just love.”⁸³⁹

With South Africa having been readmitted to the Commonwealth and with the first team of athletes preparing to leave for the Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, they already had kit based on the national flag.⁸⁴⁰ While the Commonwealth Games were under way, both Mike Clingman, MD of National Flag, and Tony Hampson-Tindale of Flag-Craft reported that their factories were working overtime to meet demand for the national flag. Likewise, Action Flags was doing big business supplying small flags for local homes and cars.⁸⁴¹

A month later, in a full-page spread entitled “Inside Parliament: how it all works,” the *Pretoria News* provided a useful guide which would take the reader “through the complex maze that is shaping your future.” Apart from addressing the Cabinet, National Assembly and the Senate it also dealt briefly with the Constitutional Assembly which comprised 490 members in a joint sitting of the National Assembly and Senate. Chaired by Cyril Ramaphosa (ANC Secretary-General) and with Leon Wessels (former Minister of Manpower) as his deputy, the Constitutional Assembly would draft the final constitution within two years, in terms of constitutional principles agreed upon in the multiparty negotiating process. The final constitution was to be passed by two-thirds of the members of the Constitutional Assembly. Should this not be achieved, there were various mechanisms in place to address the matter.⁸⁴² These committees would be at work behind the scenes.

In a short article entitled “New flag wins many hearts,” which appeared in *The Star* five months after the flag was taken into use, it was stated that “You may as well stop calling it ‘interim’ – the new flag has won South Africa’s heart.” A wide-ranging *Star*/MMR opinion poll conducted in August 1994 to ascertain “what we think of the new SA” found, inter alia, that 82% of the respondents replied that they wished to keep the flag; 17% said “No,” while 1% was uncertain.⁸⁴³ As the writer of the article stated, a majority of respondents in all race groups – 95% of Africans and 56% of whites – wanted to keep the flag. Some 72% of

⁸³⁹ *The Star*, 20 June 1994, p 3.

⁸⁴⁰ *Pretoria News*, 9 August 1994, p 18. The Games were held from 18-28 August 1994.

⁸⁴¹ *Sunday Times*, Business Times, 21 August 1994, p 2.

⁸⁴² *Pretoria News*, 21 September 1994, p 6.

⁸⁴³ *Pretoria News*, 29 September 1994, p 4.

English-speakers gave it the nod.⁸⁴⁴ This sentiment by ordinary South Africans that they wished to “Keep the flag flying,” was borne out in submissions to the Constitutional Assembly (CA) a few months later. The CA, which was charged with the responsibility for drafting the country’s new constitution had called for public submissions on the issues of the flag, anthems, capital city, official languages and various other matters. It received 118 submissions recommending the retention of the new flag and 35 suggesting changes to it. All political parties, with the exception of the Pan Africanist Congress, supported the retention of the flag and that the flag debate need not be reopened. SAVA’s submission was amongst those calling for its retention.⁸⁴⁵

As if taking encouragement from these positive sentiments, it suddenly appeared as if flag-based souvenirs were on sale everywhere. A Sator advertisement made the point that “it pays to make tourists feel at home.”⁸⁴⁶ On the facing page in the same newspaper was a Kodak advertisement with a full-colour collage of eight flag-based photographs and the text “For the most colourful nation in the world, the world’s number one colour film.” Economic sanctions had obliged Kodak to withdraw from South Africa and it now announced that “Kodak is proud to be back in a new South Africa. And proud that our colour negative film remains unsurpassed anywhere in the world.”⁸⁴⁷ In the entertainment world the flag also featured. At the launch of Dali Tambo’s new TV1 show, “The People of the South,” was a “very patriotic choir” whose dresses were made from national flags.⁸⁴⁸ It is just a pity that the flags were draped the wrong way round. The same can be said for Evita Bezuidenhout’s now famous full-length, lurex version of the flag in which “she” performed a cabaret for foreign correspondents.⁸⁴⁹

In an article which appeared in the final edition of (Highveld) *Style* for 1994, Gus Silber asked “why have we suddenly fallen head over heels in love with the flag, and everything it stands for?” It stated that it was everywhere. “Flying from the ramparts of official and unofficial buildings, emblazoned on badges, buttons and T-shirts, held aloft at pop concerts,

⁸⁴⁴ *The Star*, 29 September 1994. This was reproduced in *SAVA Newsletter*, SN: 11/94, 31 December 1994, p 21.

⁸⁴⁵ *SAVA Newsletter*, SN 13/95, 31 August 1995, p 25.

⁸⁴⁶ *Sunday Times*, 9 October 1994, p 11.

⁸⁴⁷ *Sunday Times*, 9 October 1994, p 10.

⁸⁴⁸ *Sunday Times Magazine*, 30 October 1994, p 10.

⁸⁴⁹ *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, “Year in review,” 23 December 1994 – 5 January 1995, p 18. “Evita” was, of course, the comedian Pieter-Dirk Uys dressed in “drag.”

cricket matches and Gay Pride marches, stuck on the bumpers of cars, bakkies and minibus taxis. Flag elation. It's sweeping the nation." Silber writes that he discussed the flag with the artist Keith Alexander who had one flying on a pole in his garden. Alexander remarked that the flag was festive and there was a general feeling of euphoria stamped all over it, of satisfaction at the way things had worked out.⁸⁵⁰

Despite this euphoria, it was not all plain sailing on the flag front. In a letter to the editor of the *Pretoria News*, Dawie Jacobs gave the warning that the provocative waving of the former 1928 national flag at sporting events was damaging the reconciliation process and that Afrikaans would not be saved by such actions. In the past the Afrikaans language and symbols were viewed by some of the population as the exclusive cultural property of the "oppressors." If this matter was dealt with in a spirit of reconciliation and an appreciation of the feelings of others, the level of success may well be surprising.⁸⁵¹

Writing to the *Sunday Times* the following month, Geoff Booth of Umtata remarked that "no symbol has ever unified this nation like the new flag." He appealed to the Constitutional Assembly to retain the flag "as the final one."⁸⁵² In contrast, in an article published in *Patriot* the following month, Pierre Bredenkamp called on the "true Afrikaners" ("ware Afrikaners") to reject and distance themselves from the symbols of the new South Africa.⁸⁵³

In anticipation of the Rugby World Cup competition to be held in South Africa from 25 May – 24 June 1995, both springbok and national flag products were soon flooding the market. Pick 'n Pay, an official broadcast sponsor, advertised "Great 'Springbok' goodies," which would be available at their stores. *Sports Illustrated* likewise illustrated "Your authentic supporter's techni-coloured dream jersey" in their Poster of the Month.⁸⁵⁴ Even singer Cliff Richard's award for selling more than a million records in South Africa bore two national flags in addition to two rows of Compact Discs.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵⁰ Gus Silber, "The new patriotism," *Style*, December 1994, pp 45-48.

⁸⁵¹ *Pretoria News*, 18 January 1995, p 8.

⁸⁵² *Sunday Times*, 12 February 1995, p 13.

⁸⁵³ *Patriot*, 24 March 1995 (no page number available).

⁸⁵⁴ Pick 'n Pay's undated full-colour advertisement (copy in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection; *Sports Illustrated*, March 1995, between pp 62 and 69).

⁸⁵⁵ *Pretoria News*, 11 April 1995, p 3. He was then on a concert tour of South Africa.

On 27 April 1995, the first anniversary of the flag, the front page of *Constitutional Talk*, official newsletter of the Constitutional Assembly, displayed a flag-based collage, while inside it provided a schematic layout of the Constitutional Assembly and its functions.⁸⁵⁶ As can be expected, many newspapers gave prominence to the flag and the “birthday celebrations” held that day.⁸⁵⁷

It could be argued that the initial apprehension – call it fear or trepidation – regarding the transition to a new South African dispensation was transposed onto the flag. It was, after all, the only tangible symbol of what the country was undergoing on so many other intangible levels.

7.2 New national flag derived Ensigns

Chapter III has made mention of national flag derived Ensigns which were instituted prior to 1994. This practice has since continued. When the new political dispensation came into being on 27 April 1994, the Defence Force also underwent a change in both composition and name. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) which then came into being comprised not only members of the former South African Defence Force, but also of the Defence Forces of the former Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, together with persons who had served in non-statutory forces which had been part of the “Liberation Movements.”

On 19 October 1994 the South African National Defence Force issued a media release announcing the institution of new series of Military Ensigns, to replace those bearing the former national flag, which had been withdrawn from use on 26 April 1994. These new Ensigns were to be taken into service, and carried for the first time, at a SANDF parade to be held at Pietersburg on Armistice Day, 11 November 1994.⁸⁵⁸ The media release pointed out that these flags “retain a measure of the tradition and standing that the South African Armed Forces have earned over the years side by side with the other great military forces of the

⁸⁵⁶ *Constitutional Talk*, special “Freedom Day” edition, 27 April 1995.

⁸⁵⁷ See, for example, *New Nation*, 28 April-4 May 1995, p 1; *Pretoria News*, 26 April 1995, p 1; *The Star*, 27 April 1995, p 1; *Sowetan*, 28 April 1995, p 1.

⁸⁵⁸ These new Ensigns were illustrated in colour on the front page of the *Pretoria News* City Late of 20 October 1994; see also F. Brownell, “New flags of the South African National Defence Force,” in *SAVA Newsletter*, SN: 11/94, 31 December 1994, pp. 1-8.

world, yet at the same time imbues the fresh and new spirit that has been blossoming in South Africa.”⁸⁵⁹ In most instances these new Ensigns differed from their predecessors only in respect of the replacement of the former national flag with its successor. The further changes which have been made since 2002 fall outside the scope of this thesis.⁸⁶⁰

The only military Ensign which was adopted in 1994 and which has continued in use unchanged since then is that of the Navy. The design of the new South African Naval Ensign was approved by the Chief of the SANDF on 29 September 1994. As with its predecessor, the white field was charged with a green cross. However, for practical reasons, the colour of the cross was changed from Beetle Green, to the Emerald Green of the new national flag. Also, the emblem of the South African Navy – the crest of the National arms – which had appeared in the lower fly of the former Ensign, was excluded from the new Ensign.

More than most other flags, naval Ensigns are exposed to extreme weather conditions, which result in the fly soon fraying. This is less evident on a flag bearing a plain cross, than on one which also bears another device in the fly. After discussion with the State Herald, when the designs of the new Defence Force Ensigns were in preparation, it was agreed that from the point of view of easy identification – which is the purpose of an Ensign – there seemed to be no good reason why the Naval Ensign should bear anything more than the green cross, and the national flag in the canton.

With the exception of the national flag in the canton, the removal of the Navy emblem from the lower fly, and a change of colour shade in the cross, this new Ensign was otherwise similar in design to its predecessor which had been approved in 1981. As a temporary measure the new South African national flag served as the Naval Ensign from the time it was taken into use just after midnight on the morning of 27 April 1994, until noon on 11 November 1994, when the new ensign which had been carried on parade at Pietersburg that day, was also hoisted on the Ensign Staff of the vessels of the South African Navy. The Naval Ensign has continued in use unchanged since 11 November 1994, although the Naval emblem

⁸⁵⁹ Distributed on 25 October 1994 as Info Bulletin B, by Northern Transvaal Command, under file reference: KMDMT N TVL/328/5.

⁸⁶⁰ These changes have been comprehensively addressed in successive editions of the *SAVA Newsletter*. See also A.P. Burgers, *The South African flag book: the history of South African flags from Dias to Mandela* (Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2008).

itself has since changed.⁸⁶¹

A new Ensign for the Department of Correctional Services – bearing the new national flag in the canton – but otherwise identical to its predecessor was registered by the Bureau of Heraldry in January 1996.⁸⁶²

Likewise the design of the new South African Police Service Ensign, with the new national flag in the canton, was registered with the South African Bureau of Heraldry in October 1997. As with its predecessor, the field was blue, with a gold horizontal stripe across the centre, while the new badge of the South African Police Service now appeared in the lower fly.⁸⁶³ This new Ensign of the South African Police Service was taken into use at a parade held at the Police College in Pretoria West on Friday 20 November 1998. In an article published in the *Pretoria News* the following day, it is stated that: “To promote and maintain inter-departmental cohesion, the new flag blends with the flags of the SA National Defence Force and the Department of Correctional Services”.⁸⁶⁴

7.3 The flag and the Constitutional Assembly

After the extensive initial media coverage it is probably not surprising that on and after 11 May 1995 the Constitutional Assembly published in the Press an invitation to South Africans to comment on the national flag issue and, if they so wished, to come up with alternative proposals. This invitation was under the heading: “What will our country’s new flag look like? Help us decide.” Additional text read as follows:

When the Kempton Park negotiators adopted the existing flag, last year, they did so within the ambit of the Interim Constitution. As we are busy drafting a new constitution, the search is now on for a new flag. You can help us decide what our new flag should look like or whether we should keep the existing one. If you would like the present flag to be kept, simply send your comments. If you would like a new one to be designed, send us your

⁸⁶¹ SAVA Newsletter, SN: 35/02 (this should read 03), 30 April 2003, p 4.

⁸⁶² Brownell, *South African Armorial*, Vol. 8, p 23; SAVA Newsletter, SN:15/96, 30 April 1996, pp 12-13.

⁸⁶³ SAVA Newsletter, SN:13/95, 31 August 1995, pp 29-30.

⁸⁶⁴ Kim Helfich, “SAPS flying a new flag representing unity and integration,” *Pretoria News Weekend*, 21 November 1998 (no page number available); SAVA Newsletter, SN: 21/98, 30 April 1998, p 4.

design(s) and explanatory notes of your colours or other symbols you may have included.”⁸⁶⁵

The closing date for comments and new proposals was 31 May 1995.⁸⁶⁶ In *Constitutional Talk*, a few days later, readers were informed that the debate over the flag, anthem and other issues had begun and that the Constitutional Assembly’s campaign to get the view of the public had drawn a huge response. “As the debate begins in earnest, one matter seems to be all but decided. The interim flag has found a place in the heart of the people and is unlikely to change ... [it] has become a source of pride for millions and the centre of numerous informal industries.” Of the more prominent political parties, the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), African National Congress (ANC); Democratic Party (DP); Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and the National Party (NP), were all in favour of the retention of the flag. The only discordant opinion expressed was that of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), which felt that it had too many colours and needed “a central symbol on it that the people can identify with.”⁸⁶⁷

South Africa was at that time in a state of Rugby World Cup euphoria, eventually winning the Webb Ellis Cup in a nail-biting final at Ellis Park in Johannesburg on 24 June 1995, beating New Zealand 15-12. The Webb Ellis Cup was presented to the Springbok Captain Francois Pienaar by President Mandela, clad in a Springbok Rugby Jersey. In Pienaar’s autobiography he remarks that “I still believe that on 24 June 1995 South Africa did stand together, as one country united behind one team.”⁸⁶⁸ Carlin records that “As the captain held the cup, Mandela ... fixed him with a fond gaze, shook his right hand and said, ‘Francois, thank you very much for what you have done for our country’, to which Pienaar replied, ‘No, Mr President. Thank *you* for what you have done for our country.’”⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁵ This is taken from *The Citizen*, 11 May 1995, p 9; *Sowetan* 11 May 1995 (page number unclear); *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 12-18 May 1995, p 18.

⁸⁶⁶ For a selection of the submissions, see *Constitutional Assembly, Theme Committee 1 – Character of Democratic State: Submissions, language, names and symbols, and seat of Government*, Vol. 22, 31 May 1995.

⁸⁶⁷ *Constitutional Talk*, 9-29 June 1995, No 8, p 5. See also Clive Sawyer’s article, “Pride of a nation – the Y-front flag,” which commented on submissions to the Constitutional Assembly, *The Argus*, 20 May 1995 (no page number available).

⁸⁶⁸ Francois Pienaar with Edward Griffith, *Rainbow Warrior* (Collins Willow, London 2000), p 17. For details of “the final”, see pp 192-204. See also the excellent account by John Carlin, *Playing the enemy: Nelson Mandela and the game that made a nation* (Atlantic Books, London, 2008), especially pp 153-154, 202-203, 242-243.

⁸⁶⁹ Carlin, *Playing the enemy*, p 263; and also Pienaar, *Rainbow Warrior* p 204, which conveys the same message, but in somewhat different words.

Before the final started, South African Airways, which was planning to change its corporate identity and the tail marking on its aircraft to national flag colours, had risen to the occasion when one of its senior pilots, Laurie Kay, slowly flew a SAA Jumbo Jet (Boeing 747) low over Ellis Park Stadium, with the words “Good Luck Bokke,” on the underside of the fuselage. Apparently Kay was quoted as saying to his co-pilots: “Boys, I think we are going to make a bit of history here.”⁸⁷⁰ Despite the vociferous opposition to the Springbok by the National Sports Congress and other bodies, there is no doubt that it was President Mandela who saved the Springbok, at least for South African rugby – even though it now occupies a subservient position on the front of their rugby jerseys.⁸⁷¹

In his book *Potent Pastimes*, Albert Grundlingh devotes an entire chapter to a cogent analysis of the 1995 Rugby World Cup euphoria which swept through South Africa at that time. He addresses in detail not only the run-up to this event, but also the aftermath. Be that as it may, the final match in the Rugby World Cup series was undoubtedly a rare historical moment which seemed to have transcended racial divisions at that time.⁸⁷² Other writers have similarly commented on this moment in South African history, among them Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, who attended the thrilling final match, and Patti Waldmeir.⁸⁷³ Indeed, South Africans and others in the English-speaking world were later to relive the final match when viewing Clint Eastwood’s 2009 film *Invictus*. This starred the popular Matt Damon as Francois Pienaar and Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela

Immediately after the Rugby World Cup euphoria, where the new national flags were also increasingly in evidence, the State Herald attended the XVI International Congress of Vexillology, which was held in Warsaw, Poland, from 30 June to 5 July 1995. There he delivered a paper entitled “The national flag of South Africa: evolution of the final

⁸⁷⁰ *Beeld*, 25 April 1993, bl 4; *Pretoria News*, 26 April 2013, p 6 (Rugby World Cup flyover pilot dies); *Sunday Times*, 28 April 2013 (obituary), p 6; South African Airways 8-page full-colour leaflet, *Flying the Spirit of the Nation*, which set out the evolution of its corporate identity. (Copy in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection).

⁸⁷¹ *Pretoria News*, 26 June 1995, p 1 (“Save the Springbok,” urges Mandela); *Pretoria News*, 30 June 1995, p 8 (letter to the Editor, “Rise above it and save the emblem.”)

⁸⁷² Albert Grundlingh, *Potent Pastimes: sport and leisure practices in modern Afrikaner history*. (Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2013), pp128-154.

⁸⁷³ Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, *The other side of history: an anecdote reflection on the political transformation in South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg 2006), p. 61; and Patti Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a miracle: the end of apartheid and the birth of a new South Africa* (Penguin, London, 1998), pp 269 and 287.

design.”⁸⁷⁴ In a report back on this Congress prepared by the SAVA Secretary-Treasurer Berry it was noted that the paper was well received. He also reported that SAVA’s bid to host the XVII International Congress of Vexillology in Cape Town during August 1997 was unanimously accepted. The South African delegates were all seated together, but before proceedings commenced, Dr William Crampton, President of the International Flag Federation, walked over and said that there was an empty seat at the “high table “ and would Brownell please join them. After an excellent repast, the usual speeches and awards for the best papers, et cetera, Crampton announced that the Board of the International Flag Federation had resolved that the prestigious “Vexillon” award would be going to Fred Brownell for the finest contribution to vexillology in the previous two years. This award, which has been described as the “Nobel Prize” for flag science came as a total surprise, but was international recognition of the overwhelming success of the new South African national flag, and the way in which it had “branded” the new South Africa.⁸⁷⁵

On 28 September 1995 Theme Committee 1 of the Constitutional Assembly resolved that the “interim” national flag would be retained. This was proposed by Dirk du Toit of the ANC and seconded by Piet Marais of the NP. The DP and Vryheidsfront also lent their support, while the PAC rejected the flag out of hand.⁸⁷⁶ Two months later Cyril Ramaphosa unveiled the draft new constitution and indicated that the public would be given a further opportunity of commenting on it and making submissions until 20 February 1996.⁸⁷⁷

In January and early February 1996 South Africa experienced another flag frenzy when it hosted the 20th African Cup of Nations football competition, a bumper sixteen-nation and thirty-two match event, the biggest ever. Flags were everywhere – donned on clothing, painted on faces, flown on cars, houses and many other places – and the crowning achievement was South Africa’s 2-0 victory over Tunisia on 3 February 1996.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁴ Due to a lack of funds the proceedings of this congress were not published in full. Some of the papers were made available as a CD-Rom which had limited circulation to some of those who attended the Congress.

⁸⁷⁵ *SAVA Newsletter*, SN: 13/95, 31 August 1995, pp 1-5; *The Star*, 24 August 1995, p 3; *Pretoria News*, 25 August 1995, p 5.

⁸⁷⁶ *Beeld*, 29 September 1995, p 1; *Cape Times*, *Pretoria News*, and *The Star*, 29 September 1995 (no page numbers available).

⁸⁷⁷ *Pretoria News*, 23 November 1995, p 3. See also *Constitutional Talk*, working draft edition (undated), in which “Symbols for a new nation” are addressed on p 3.

⁸⁷⁸ *Pretoria News*, 5 February 1996, “a winning nation,” pp 8-14; *Sowetan* and *New Nation’s CAF Supplement* had been published on 2 February 1996, prior to the final.

It was against this background of flag enthusiasm that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), as approved by the Constitutional Assembly on 8 May 1996, incorporated amendments effected in terms of a resolution adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 7 May 1996.⁸⁷⁹ After some points had been clarified by the Constitutional Court, this version was subsequently amended by the Constitutional Assembly on 11 October 1996.⁸⁸⁰ This further amended version was signed into law by President Nelson Mandela at Sharpeville on Reconciliation Day, 16 December 1996 and came into force on 4 February 1997.⁸⁸¹ Almost three years after its design had been adopted by the TEC, the flag was now “final.”

The national flag, as provided for in section 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act No. 200 of 1993), and subsequently described in the Schedule to Proclamation No 70, 1994, as published in *Government Gazette* No. 15663 of 20 April 1994, has also been registered under the Heraldry Act, 1962. Certificate of registration 2804 was issued on 31 October 1995.⁸⁸²

By the time that Vol. 8 of *The South African Armorial* was published, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) had also been approved. In Schedule 1 to this Act, the flag is described in layman’s terms. So as to reach the public at large, the Constitution was made available – not only in English and Afrikaans – but also in the nine other official languages. All these descriptions have been incorporated into *The South African Armorial*.⁸⁸³

It is perhaps fitting to conclude this chapter with a brief mention of the XVII International Congress of Vexillology which was awarded to South Africa by the International Flag Federation at the previous Congress, held in Warsaw in 1995. This was held in Cape Town from 10-15 August 1997, six months after the national flag became “final.” Eleven papers

⁸⁷⁹ *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, as adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 8 May 1996. Explanatory memorandum inserted before p 1 in the A4 size publication.

⁸⁸⁰ *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (Act No. 108 of 1996), title page. [A6 size publication.]

⁸⁸¹ Pascal Vagnat and Jos Poels, *Constitutions – what they tell us about national flags and coats of arms* (SAVA 10th Anniversary Special, Pinetown, Johannesburg, 2000), p. 60. This publication incorrectly gives the date of adoption of the Constitution as 6 May 1996.

⁸⁸² See F.G. Brownell, *The South African Armorial*; being a computerized register of heraldic representations registered with the Bureau of Heraldry, Vol. 8, 2801-3200 (Bureau of Heraldry, Pretoria, June 2001), pp 2-4.

⁸⁸³ Brownell, *The South African Armorial*, Vol. 8, pp 4-9.

dealt specifically with Southern Africa, while the remaining nineteen papers dealt with flags of the world at large. In the latter category, three papers dealt specifically with the Australian flag saga which persists to this day. This Congress undoubtedly showcased South Africa from the flag perspective and was a fitting tribute to what had been achieved in the previous four years.⁸⁸⁴

7.4 Epilogue: a flag fanfare

The primary aim of this thesis has been to provide a comprehensive account of the process by which the current South African national flag came into being. The personal involvement of the candidate provided some insight, but this was insufficient, since there was clearly a conflict between personal involvement and historical objectivity. After two decades it was believed that both historical objectivity and the broader multi-disciplinary academic background necessary to place the flag process and its subsequent impact on South Africa and its people in proper perspective had been attained.

Since a national flag is the pre-eminent graphic symbol of identity of a nation or state, it was necessary, first and foremost, to define and consider what flags are about and to address other essential theoretical concepts. The opening chapter thus addressed flag history as a genre; the distinctive characteristics of flags; and endeavoured to set these factors in perspective against a background of academic writing on symbols and symbolism; identity and identification; nations and nationalism. Although historians long dominated the flag scene, they have subsequently been joined by those in other disciplines in the human sciences, such as political scientists, psychologists, social anthropologists, sociologists and academics in other disciplines. Every effort has been made to draw on the writing of those whose work has come closest to the subject, while at the same time placing the thesis within a broader African context.

The literature survey has endeavoured to situate the thesis in relation to existing studies on

⁸⁸⁴ A description of the Congress, the meetings of the FIAV (International Federation of Vexillological Associations) General Assembly, visits, tours, seminars, awards and social events is set out in *SAVA Newsletter*, SN: 19/97, 30 August 1997 while the proceedings of the Congress were published two years later. See Peter Martinez (ed.), *Flags of South Africa and the world* (proceedings of the XVII International Congress of Vexillology, SAVA, Pinetown, Johannesburg, 1999). See also M. Billig, *Banal nationalism* (Sage, London, 2004), p 86.

the use of flags, from the evolution of early flag plates into flag books and flag histories. It has sketched the development of vexillology into a distinctive field of study, both abroad and locally. It addressed the establishment of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations fifty years ago; the blossoming of flag literature and the growing popular use of flags in the new era. This included an account of the relevant flag literature in general, prior to focusing on flag literature in South Africa. After sketching the background to publications on previous national and other flags in South Africa, it focuses on what has hitherto been written on the new South African flag.

The third chapter, “Flagging the ‘Old’ South Africa,” endeavoured to provide a historical synopsis of South Africa’s flag legacies of the past, from the days of the first flags of the Dutch East India Company, until the advent of the formal negotiations which led to South Africa’s new political dispensation. It dealt specifically with the “national” and related flags introduced since the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. History is not static and these flags, which were a product of their time, went hand in hand with changing constructs and interpretations of nationhood. They had their opponents, but provide an essential historical background to the process by which the present national flag came into being.

The chapter entitled “Flag Rumbles of discontent,” viewed political developments and flags against a background of the rising tide of African nationalism in the continent as a whole and also within South Africa. It touched on the exposure of South Africans to the many new national flags in Africa and to the growing political pressures in and on South Africa. These led both to preliminary negotiations on South Africa’s political future with members of the “liberation movements” overseas, and also to “behind the scenes” negotiations within the country. It highlighted the turning point which came on 2 February 1990 when State President F.W. de Klerk made his momentous announcement at the opening of Parliament, which was to change the course of South African history and also its flag. Henceforth negotiations were conducted within South Africa and in an attempt to reduce the level of political violence a National Peace Accord was negotiated and the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) got under way. Against a background of public debate concerning the imminent drafting of a new constitution and growing opposition to certain national symbols, this chapter provides a summary of the findings of the HSRC investigation on national symbols.

The following chapter addressed in detail the appointment, proceedings and reports of the Commission on National Symbols, which was appointed by the Negotiating Council on 7 September 1993. Public participation was called for, technical assessors were appointed and the flag designs received were evaluated. The Commission, which was working to a very tight timeframe, produced a report which proposed six flag designs for consideration. It was also dealing with proposals for a new national coat of arms and suggestions for a new national anthem. This phase of the process failed to produce an acceptable national flag design and the debate on the Commission's report in the Negotiating Council was a fiasco. The negotiators then turned to graphic design studios which had long touted their expertise, but that phase also proved to be a futile exercise. For this reason one might have been inclined to write off this aspect of the process in the preparation of this thesis, but this could not be done since the design studio proposals were again considered in the final phase of the flag saga at the end of February 1994.

As set out in the heading of Chapter VI of this thesis, the flag issue was now "A matter of urgency." The Negotiating Council had run its course, the "interim" Constitution had been adopted, elections were scheduled for 27 April 1994, but no new national flag was yet in sight. From a political perspective South Africa was now effectively governed by the State President on the advice of the TEC. This Chapter addressed in detail the process which the TEC set in motion on 15 February 1994 and which culminated exactly a month later with the adoption by that body on 15 March of a national flag design which had been devised by Brownell. For some inexplicable reason the flag was only formally gazetted on 20 April 1994, which resulted in serious logistical problems. This Chapter also records initial reaction to the flag design.

Chapter VII addressed the period from 27 April 1994, when the then "interim" national flag was formally taken into use, until its incorporation into the Republic of South Africa Constitution, 1996. Although this Constitution was adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 8 May 1996, certain amendments were incorporated and it only came into force on 4 February 1997. At that stage the national flag truly became "final." The enthusiasm with which the flag had been embraced by the public at large, in effect made its formal constitutional adoption a foregone conclusion.

In his publisher's note to *Flying with pride*, Andrew McKenzie the founder and director of WildNet Africa wrote as follows:

Nobody living in South Africa at the time of transition could have helped noticing how one thing rose above all others and has remained there, unassailed, ever since. In the literal sense this was the new, colourful, by now quite famous, South African flag. Figuratively too, when the chips were down, it was the flag; a unifying force when things threatened to tear us apart.

The idea of publishing *Flying with pride* arose after reflecting upon the many ways in which the flag had become integrated into the very fabric of our new society. It had become key rings and playing cards ... rulers and ties, and shirts and hats, and belts and shoes and ... so much more.

But besides the obvious trinkets and gear, it has also become part of our image of ourselves. It had become logos and icons for anything from a two-person business to a huge corporation, from a township project to a Government Department. It had morphed into the Welcome Man, and from there into an umbrella. It had become a flower, a golfer, a tree and a diamond. It flowed and it ran, it flew and it swam. Where it wasn't the flag itself, it was the colours of the flag, subtly woven into a pattern or texture, stopping one short in the traffic as the colours suddenly leapt out as something hugely more.

In short, as *Flying with pride* shows, the South African flag has been used in a greater variety of ways than any other flag in the world. And the huge significance of this? Simply that the adoption of our flag as a symbol of unity is something that each and every one of us has done. We, the ordinary people, have triumphed. And in that we have something of which we can be truly proud.⁸⁸⁵

The reality is that symbols not only reflect but affect cultural behaviour. Apart from the

⁸⁸⁵ Denis Beckett, *Flying with Pride: the story of the South African flag* (WildNet Africa, Pretoria, 2002), p 7.

visual impact of the flag, its colours and their graphic adaptability, at least part of its success lies in the extent to which it has been associated in the hearts and minds of many South Africans with the concepts of “freedom” and “democracy,” which were ushered in on 27 April 1994, the day on which the flag was taken into use. These come strongly to the fore in Pdraig O’Malley’s article “South Africa: Reflections on the Miracle,” in which he addresses focus group surveys conducted in South Africa between September 1992 and October 1998.⁸⁸⁶ Quoting from an August 1993 HSRC survey, and November/December 1996 focus group surveys, O’Malley records that many South Africans felt that the April 1994 elections would bring them freedom – in whatever amorphous way that was defined – and that more than anything else, democracy was what participants wanted from the political system. In this regard democracy was widely interpreted as the antithesis of apartheid. Participants did not see democracy as a means, but as an end in which oppression became freedom; discrimination became unity, and so forth.⁸⁸⁷

Herein lies the cardinal difference between the former national flag – which was essentially a symbol of the State – and the new national flag, which is a symbol of the people. Looking back over more than twenty years since its adoption, it is believed that the national flag has truly become a symbol of “convergence and unification,” which most South Africans have accepted with pride.

⁸⁸⁶ This article extends over pages 115-119, in Pdraig O’Malley (ed.), *Southern Africa: the people’s voices: perspectives on democracy* (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Johannesburg and the School of Government, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, 1999).

⁸⁸⁷ O’Malley, “Reflections on a miracle”, pp 123, 126, 127, 157.

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- 1/12/1/4: Reports
- 1/12/1/4/1: Final Report
- 1/12/1/4/2: Report to Planning Committee
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- 1/12/1/5/1: Facilitator appointed by T. Sirayi
- 1/12/1/5/1: Facilitator appointed by F. Meer
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1/12/2/1/2: Implications of change
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1/12/2/1/4: Why is the flag a perfect choice
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1/12/2/2/1: Minority report on national flag
1/12/2/1/2: Report of assessors
1/12/2/1/3: Design Consortium flag proposals
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- 1/12/2/3: Submissions
1/12/2/3 (i) Note: Some 7000 proposed national flag drawings were

received in time for consideration by the Commission. They were recorded on arrival at Kempton Park, and are held by the National Archives Repository as part of the NEG Group. The A4-size drawings are boxed in standard archival cardboard containers. Late submissions, which were consequently neither viewed nor considered by the Commission on National Symbols, are separately boxed.

(ii) AA1 - AA 76 [written submissions]

The first 65 letters relating to the national flag which were submitted to the Commission were bound into two volumes:

Vol. 1: 30 letters indexed and numbered AA1 - AA30 (43 pages);

Vol. 2: 35 letters indexed and numbered AA31 - AA65 (87 pages).

1/12/3: Sub-Committee: National Anthem

1/12/3/1: Documentation

1/12/3/1/1: Evaluation of prospective anthems

1/12/3/1/2: Guidelines for assessors

1/12/3/1/3: The making of a new anthem I, II, III

1/12/3/1/4: Statement: Dr M. Xulu

1/12/3/2: Reports

1/12/3/2/1: Reports from Sub-Committee

1/12/3/2/2: A musicological analysis of Vunwe

1/12/3/2/3: Report of meeting held at the University of Durban-Westville

1/12/3/3: Submissions

1/12/3/3 (i) A1 - A 165 [primarily music and lyrics]. The first 114 of these submissions received were bound into 5 volumes:

Vol. 1: Submissions numbered A1 - A 30 (90 pages);

Vol. 2: Submissions numbered A31 - A 39 (89 pages);
Vol. 3: Submissions numbered A40 - A66 (108 pages);
Vol. 4: Submissions numbered A67 - A85 (100 pages);
Vol. 5: Submissions numbered A86 - A114 (120 pages).

(ii) Letters relating to the national anthem which were submitted to the Commission were bound into two volumes:

Vol. 1: 34 letters, pages numbered (68 pages);

Vol. 2: 28 letters, pages unnumbered (33 pages).

(iii) 20 tapes (bande) - 1 video with anthem.

(iv) 37 tapes (bande) with anthem.

1/12/4: Sub-Committee: Coat of Arms / Seal

1/12/4/1: Documentation

1/12/4/1/1: Basic principles of flag and coat of arms design

1/12/4/1/2: Evaluation of draft designs

1/12/4/1/3: Implications of change

1/12/4/2: Reports

1/12/4/2/1: Draft reports of the Sub-Committee

1/12/4/1/2: Reports from assessors

1/12/4/3: Submissions

1/12/4/3 (i) 1 - 120 [drawings submitted]

(ii) Letters relating to the coat of arms/seal which were submitted to the Commission were bound into two volumes:

Vol. 1: 21 letters (36 pages);

Vol. 2: 10 letters (12 pages).

Following the information in the typed file index [S436], there are the following hand-written entries relating to the documentation of the Commission on National Symbols. The numbers of which refer to the archival boxes in which they were then housed:

- 84 Vlae laat inskrywings
- 85 Vlae laat inskrywings
- 86 Vlae laat inskrywings
- 87 Vlae laat inskrywings
- 88 33 bande van Volkslied duplikate
- 89 1/12/3/3 A1 - 108 duplikate
- 90 1/12/3/3 A1 - 85 duplikate
- 91 Landswapen voorstelle
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Multi-Party Negotiations Process

Negotiating Council Meetings: March - December 1993

Index of Tapes: 21/10/1993 - 4 tapes

(c) *Constitutional Assembly*

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(d) *Office of the Governor-General*

- GG 23/25: Governor-General to Private Secretary of the Prime Minister 29 July 1910.
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- (i) *F.G. Brownell Private Collection, 23 Newlands Park, 230 Gloxinia Avenue, Pretoria.*
- (a) Agendas, minutes and reports of the Commission on National Symbols.
 - (b) Agendas, minutes and report of the Technical Working Committee appointed by “the Channel”, to resolve the national flag issue (February/March 1994).
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 - (e) Unpublished manuscript: Brownell, F.G., Coats of arms and flags in Namibia (1992).
 - (f) Unpublished manuscript: Brownell, F.G., Symbols of Sovereignty of South Africa’s former Independent and National States (1998).
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(ii) *Southern African Vexillological Association Collection, Johannesburg*

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(i) Bureau of Heraldry

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VI. PAPERS, BROCHURES, NEWSLETTERS, FLYERS AND CHARTS

1. *Papers delivered at international flag and other congresses*

BERRY, Bruce, Interpretation of flag symbolism. Power-point presentation delivered on 23 November 2011 by Berry, Secretary/Treasurer of the Southern African Vexillological Association, at the International Protocol Conference for Africa, 2011, held in the Conference Centre of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Pretoria. [There is a “hard copy” of this presentation in the F.G. Brownell Private Collection.]

BERRY, Bruce and Edward WATSON, Flags of the South African Department of Defence - 1994 and beyond. Paper delivered at the XX International Congress of Vexillology, Stockholm, Sweden, 27 July – 2 August 2003.

BERRY, Bruce and Theo STYLIANIDES, Vexistats: a statistical overview of the colours, symbols and designs of national flags in the 20th Century. Paper delivered by Berry at the XVIII International Congress of Vexillology, Victoria, B.C., Canada, 28 July – 2 August 1999. The proceedings of this Congress were published on Compact Disc.

BREYTENBACH, L., Contemporary South African design inspired by the post-apartheid flag, in *Flags in South Africa and the world*, the Proceedings of the XVII International Congress of Vexillology, Cape Town, 10-15 August 1997.

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2. Brochures, newsletters, and flyers.

(i) Brochures on flag etiquette

Our Flag - a guide to the correct usage of and respect for the South African national flag. Produced by the Southern African Vexillological Association, 2002.

Our flag. Produced by Annin & Co., “Flagmakers to the World”, Roseland, New Jersey, USA, 1989.

Our flag, how to honor it, how to display it. Produced by the Flag Plaza, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, USA, 6th edition, February 1991.

(ii) Newsletters

(a) Heraldry Society of Southern Africa:

Between the founding of the Heraldry Society of Southern Africa in Cape Town on 27 August 1953 and the publication of the first issue of its quarterly journal, *Arma*, in March 1958, the Society produced thirteen newsletters. Although the primary focus of the Heraldry Society was matters heraldic, it also dealt with flags. All of the flag-related articles which appeared in these newsletters have been checked, as have all those which were published in *Arma* between March 1958 and December 1992.

(b) Southern African Vexillological Association:

Since the establishment of the Southern African Vexillological [Flag] Association (SAVA) in November 1990, flag matters in Southern Africa have, in essence, become its preserve. An average of three newsletters has been published annually. From the publication of SAVA's first newsletter in March 1991, every issue, to date, has been consulted.

SAVA Newsletter SN:1/91, March 1991 –

(c) Occasional newsletters of other vexillological associations have also been consulted in the preparation of this thesis.

(iii) Flyers

Jesus Calls Ministries:

The Gospel in our Flag (March 1994).

3. *Flag charts and posters:*

(i) General

1963: ANONYM: Flags of Africa, in *The Cape Argus Weekend Magazine*, 9 March 1963.

1965: ANONYM: Flags of Africa, in *The Cape Argus Weekend Magazine*, 17 April 1965.

1968: VOSLOO, Ton, Die nuwe Afrika, *Foto Beeld: bylae tot Beeld*, 31 Maart 1968. [Die voorblad beeld die vlag van Afrika, in kleur.]

1988: POTTINGER, Don, *World of flags* (chart) Edinburgh.

1988/89: ANONYM: *Flaggen der welt* (chart) Frankfurt-am-Main.

1989: ANONYM: *Flags of the world* (poster) Bern.

1990: ANONYM: *Flags of all nations* (chart) Flag Research Center, Winchester, Mass.

1993: ANONYM: *The Flagchart*. Shipmate Flags Ltd., Bedworth, England.

1993: ANONYM: *Flags of the world*. Bartholomew, Edinburgh, 1993.

1994: ANONYM: *The Flagchart*. Shipmate Vlag Produktie B.V., Vlaardigen, Netherlands.

[This chart was authenticated by the Flag Research Center, Winchester, Mass.]

1995: ANONYM: *Organisation of African Unity*. Flags of the member countries of the OAU are depicted on the back cover of the *New Secondary School Atlas for South Africa*. Macmillan Boleswa and Shuter and Shooter, Pietermaritzburg, 1995

2011: SAVA: *National flags of Africa*. This chart, compiled by the Southern African Vexillological Association and sponsored by Flag Craft International, Johannesburg, depicts those national flags of Africa as recognized by the United Nations, as on 1 November 2011.

(ii) Africa Institute of South Africa:

Over the years, a succession of flag charts produced by the Africa Institute, have been reproduced as supplements to the *Pretoria News* and other South African newspapers.

VII. ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SOURCES

Flag days of the world (January – December)

Pagemaster: Edward Mooney, Jr, created on 7 February 1998.

<http://www.qnet.com/~moonbase/fdjan.htm> [printed on 5 May 1999].

North American Vexillological Association

http://www.loeser.us/flags/south_africa.html [6/5/2012]

<http://nava.org/nava-digital-library/>

South African National Defence Force

Ceremonial Manual - Appendix A: The flying of flags and pennants.

http://wosandf.mil.za:8080/Docs/Cer%20Manual/flying%of%20flags/flying_of_flag...
2/12/2009

Southern African Vexillological Association

Website address instituted in 2009: <http://www.savaflags.org.za>

Martin Grieve and Bruce Berry: CD-R: Flag specification sheets, Vol. 1: Africa, 2010.

VIII. PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

LIANOURIDES, Vasilios: in the Bureau of Heraldry on 17 October 1991.

MEYER, Roelf and Cyril RAMAPHOSA: after an investiture of National Orders, at the Union Buildings on 27 March 2009; Roelf MEYER: after an investiture of National Orders, at the Presidential Guest House in Pretoria on 11 December 2009.

VAN DER MERWE, S.S. (Fanie): on 16 February 2009 - Telephone call made to him in his office at the Independent Electoral Commission, Walker Street, Pretoria.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

Prototype flags:

The full-size prototype flags which were manufactured (by the firm National Flag during March 1994), for final consideration by "the channel" and the Transitional Executive Council, are in the custody of the Bureau of Heraldry, National Archives Building, Pretoria.

Flag-related products and artifacts:

In the F.G. Brownell private collection, which has been built up over many years, in addition to full-size flags, there are also examples of the following items bearing representations of, or otherwise based on the design and/or colours of the South African national flags:

1928 flag;

Airmail labels.

Coffee mugs.

Postage stamps.

Table flags.

T-shirts.

1994 flag:

Apparel: caps and hats, facecloths, handkerchiefs, neckties, pantihose in flag packaging, scarves, socks, T-shirts and underpants.

Beaded products: Alice band, bracelet, brooches in the form of a beetle, butterfly, fish, flag key rings and a lizard.

Books and book dust covers.

Bookmarks, book covers, book dust covers, brochures, business cards, note pads and programmes.

Calendars.

Cartoons.

Ceramic products (a salt and pepper set).

Christmas and other greeting cards; postcards and photographs.

Coffee mugs.

Commercial logos.
Commercial logos and company fliers.
Decals, self-adhesive “stickers” and a variety of fridge magnets.
Elastoplast strips.
Embroidered flags and cushion covers.
Enameled lapel flags, cuff links and other similar products.
Face paint make-up kits.
“Flying with pride” 2004 Heritage Calendar.
Food packaging bearing the national flag, indicating a product made in South Africa.
Gift bags, and wrapping paper.
Hand-made chocolate and glycerine soap.
Industrial “hard hat.”
Jigsaw puzzle: “SA Heritage Hunt” (a Smile Education product).
Lapel badges.

Lacquer spray cans.
Matchboxes and cigarette lighters.
Motorcar “mirror socks” and flags to be attached to car windows.
Nursery plant labels.
Postage stamps, first day covers, letter-cards and post-cards .
Posters.
“Red noses,” bearing the national flag.
Ribbons in the national flag colours.
Self-adhesive stickers.
Salt and pepper sets.
Soccer ball covered in flags.
Table flags, hand-held flags, a flag for wall-mounting and small flags on toothpicks.
Tattoo transfers.
Teddy bear with embroidered flag on the chest.
Vuvuzelas.

APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY

Achievement: A complete coat of arms.

Armorial banner: A shield of arms, when spread out in full and made up as a flag.

Armorial bearings, coat of arms, or simply “arms”: The shield of arms [escutcheon], with or without the other attendant heraldic insignia to which a person, state, official, civic authority, body corporate, association, institution or commercial enterprise is entitled by virtue of formal registration, grant or descent.

Armorial ensign: A newly introduced term that is intended to encompass such British or British-style ensigns which bear a [national] flag in the canton and the fly of which depicts either a full coat of arms or the shield of arms [escutcheon] which is derived there-from.

Armorial flag: A generic term that covers any flag showing all or part of an entity's armorial bearings upon either a plain or more complex field.

Badge: A distinctive emblem, usually of a heraldic nature, that can be used alone or added to a flag.

Banner: The term banner is widely used in a figurative context to refer to a flag. More explicitly: (a) An armorial banner; (b) a flag suspended from a crossbar or between two poles; (c) a flag of intricate composition. Because the meaning of this term has changed over the years it is preferable to use a more specific term.

Bicolour: A flag whose field is divided horizontally, vertically or diagonally into two different colours.

Border: A broad band of colour surrounding a field of a different colour or colours.

Branch of Service flag: Those flags pertaining to and identifying a particular branch within a country's armed force.

Breadth: A British term for width.

Bunting: A lightweight, strong, loosely woven fabric for making flags. Formerly wool, cotton, or in the Far East silk, but now mostly synthetic material; cloth in flag colours used for decoration.

Canton: The place of honour on a flag is customarily the upper hoist or first quarter. This is the most stable and consequently the most visible part of a flag, and may at times be larger or smaller than a physical quarter. The second quarter is the upper fly; the third quarter is the lower hoist; and the fourth quarter the lower fly.

Ceremonial [size] flag: A larger than normal flag, flown on special occasions; or flown as a normal flag outside large buildings, such as Parliament or the Union Buildings. In South Africa the normal flag size is 90cm x120cm, while ceremonial flags are four times larger, at 180cm x 240cm.

Charge: An emblem or device added to a shield of arms [in heraldry] or to the field of a flag.

Civil flag and ensign: The version of a country's national flag used by private citizens on land (civil flag) and at sea (civil ensign).

Coat of arms: A generic term referring to both the shield of arms [escutcheon] and to the full heraldic achievement.

Colour: In everyday parlance the word colour refers to one, or any mixture, of the parts into which light can be separated. The visible spectrum is often referred to as the colours of the rainbow, which are usually given as red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. In addition to political meanings which are not addressed here, modern monochromatic flags may convey diverse messages. Some are based on traditions that go back thousands of years, while others are of comparatively recent conventional symbolism. Among these are: red – danger, warning, stop; war, martial law, no quarter; Communism, revolution and protest: orange – Buddhism; Hinduism;

freedom and distress; yellow (or gold) – quarantine, sickness; caution or wealth; green – Islam; safety; proceed and flourishing nature; white – peace, truce, parley; purity; surrender; black – death, mourning, protest; anarchy. See also **metal** and **tincture**, in heraldry.

Colour (military): In the context of flags the official ceremonial flag or flags of a military or paramilitary formation or unit; traditionally consecrated before being taken into use, and in due course laid up with due ceremony in some church or public place when retired from use. In this study such “Colours” are identified by the use of a capital “C”. The regimental, service or similar Colour is specific, while a higher allegiance is owed to a sovereign’s Colour, or, in countries with a republican form of government, to the national or presidential Colour.

Consecration: The dedication ceremony of a Colour.

Courtesy flag: The civil ensign of a host country flown by a foreign vessel while in that country’s territorial waters or in port.

Crest: Literally, the summit. Hence those uppermost ancillary elements of armorial bearings, depicted above the helmet and issuant from, or resting upon, some form of crown, coronet or “wreath of the colours,” namely the principal metal and tincture from the heraldic shield of arms.

Cross: A normal plain cross has two arms at right angles to one another, and which extend to the edge of the [heraldic] shield or field of a flag.

Cross coupéd: A cross, of which the arms are cut off and do not extend to the edges of the shield or flag.

Desecration: The malicious damage to or disrespectful treatment of a flag for political or other motives; or the misuse of a flag in a way that is considered inappropriate.

Difference: To create a variation of another flag, either by changing one or more colours, altering the orientation, adding or removing some element. This is usually done

to indicate close cultural, historical or geographic ties. Such groups of flags thus form a flag family.

Dimensions: The actual size (width to length measurements, unless otherwise specified), of a flag, as opposed to its proportions.

Disc [or roundel]: A circular area of a single colour.

Emblem: A generic and loosely applied term for a device, logo or other distinctive element that is symbolic of a country, entity or person, but is not a coat of arms or heraldic badge. Examples are a country's flora and fauna emblems.

Ensign: A generic term for flag, especially associated with naval flags of nationality. Hence the flag flown at the stern of a vessel to denote nationality. The term may also be applied, by extension in British usage, to the distinctive flags of certain or all of the armed or uniformed services on land. This includes air usage in the form of civil aviation ensigns. In such ensigns the national flag customarily occupies the canton, namely the upper hoist quarter.

Escutcheon: The shield in a coat of arms / a heraldic shield.

Field: The background of a shield of arms or of a flag.

Fimbriation: A narrow band of contrasting colour separating two areas of similar colours or metals.

Finial: A cast or carved ornamental design at the top of a flag-post, flagstaff, mast or the pike of a military Colour.

Flag: In general terms any piece of cloth or some other plastic or flexible medium (or at times even metal), usually with provision for attaching by one edge to a staff or halyard, or mounted on a hand-held staff. Generally (but not exclusively) intended to be hoisted on or in front of buildings and to fly freely in the wind, or otherwise to be waved by the

holder. By displaying its colours and design, a flag acts as a signal or a mark of identification.

Flag code: A set of protocols to govern the correct and respectful use of a national flag. In some countries these are enforceable by law, but in others they serve as recommendations only.

Flag Day/Week: Usually a commemorative day or week for the affirmation of patriotic values expressed in and through a country's national flag.

Flag family: A group of flags that share a common heritage or feature, usually seen in the colours used, the design employed, or both. See also Pan-African, Pan-Arab and Pan-Slavic colours.

Flag station: The public buildings and other venues at which the national flag is required to be flown.

Fly: The half of a flag furthest from the flagstaff.

Half mast: To fly a flag below its normal position, with the upper edge about a third of the way from the top of the flag-post, as a sign of mourning.

Halyard: A length of thin rope or cable by which flags may be hoisted and lowered on a flagpole, mast or yardarm.

Hoist: The half of a flag nearest to the staff, or to raise a flag.

Icon: A term derived from the Orthodox Churches and depicting a holy or venerated figure. By extension, this term has been applied to a person or symbol worthy of veneration. In the South African context, Nelson Mandela and the South African national flag adopted in 1994 are considered as being iconic.

International Code of Signals (ICS): A code of single and multiple groups of letters and numerals, with internationally agreed meanings that can be transmitted by means of

signal flags, radio or lantern. The flags used in such signals are of simple design to represent letters of the Roman alphabet, together with numeral pennants. Although its origins date back to 1817, the ICS is currently published by the International Maritime Organization.

International Colour Code: The simple code prescribed by the *Federation Internationale des Associations Vexillologiques* (FIAV), for use by the international vexillological community. This identifies, usually by means of a single letter, the colours employed on flags, this code is usually used in conjunction with a line drawing. The letters most commonly used are: R = red, Y = yellow, V = green (from vert/verde, in the Romance languages), B = blue, O = orange, P = purple, G = grey, N = black (from noir/negro), W = white, Au = gold (from the Latin Aurum), and Ag = silver (from the Latin Argentum). Lighter shades are indicated by a minus sign and darker shades by a plus sign.

Jack: A flag, usually much smaller than the ensign, worn [flown] from the prow of a ship to indicate its nationality. A Jack is normally displayed when the ship is berthed, at anchor, or moored to a buoy.

Lapel flag: A small, usually metal and enamel or plastic flag, worn on the lapel of a coat or dress as a patriotic or political symbol.

Length: A flag's horizontal dimension, from hoist to the edge of the fly, in relation to its width.

Livery colours: The main tinctures(s) and metal of the field and principal figures or charges on a shield of arms.

Logo: A graphic design serving as the symbol of identity of a commercial enterprise, educational establishment or other entity – that is not a coat of arms, badge or emblem as defined elsewhere in this glossary.

Logo on a bedsheet (or LOB): A derogatory term to describe any flag bearing a logo design on a plain, often white, field.

Magen David: The “Star of David” depicted in the centre of the national flag of Israel comprises two overlaid equilateral triangles in outline, one erect and the other inverted. Closely related to it is the “Seal of Solomon, ” which is a pentagram, namely a five-pointed star drawn using a continuous line, which is used as a mystic and magical symbol. The pentagram is found in the flag of Morocco and in the current flag of Ethiopia.

Mantling: The drapery in livery colours, passing over the helmet and ornamenting the sides of a coat of arms.

Manufacturing specification: See **Specification** and **Specification sheet**.

Merchant flag: See **Civil flag**.

Metal [in heraldry]: Gold (Or) and Silver (Argent), which are customarily depicted on flags as yellow and white.

National Colour: The premier ceremonial Colour of a military or other uniformed service or unit. Such Colours, the origin of which lies in Sovereign’s Colours, take precedence over the service or unit Colour.

National flag: The flag used by a recognized nation-state: it may have several forms, namely civil, government and/or military. See also **Tribal flag**.

National symbols: Those symbols or objects, often established by law, or by convention, which have been adopted as being symbolic of a country. These include the national flag, coat of arms, national anthem and national orders, together with flora and fauna emblems, monuments and place names. Many countries have a comprehensive panoply of national symbols, both official and unofficial.

Naval Ensign: The form or extension of the national flag worn by naval vessels.

Obverse: The face, or more important side of a flag. In Western tradition this is always

depicted as seen with the staff to the observer's left – namely to dexter in heraldry. One thus “reads” such a flag from top to bottom and from left to right. See the “note” at the end of this glossary.

Pall: (a) On flags a Y-shaped panel of equal width throughout, generally with the two V-shaped arms of the “Y” terminating at the top and bottom corners of the hoist, meeting on the horizontal meridian and extending to the fly in a single band, as in the South African national flag adopted in 1994. (b) In heraldry a Y-shaped element of equal width throughout, generally depicted upright and when employed in ecclesiastical arms, usually shown with its lower arm couped (shortened) and fringed.

Pan-African colours: The green, yellow and red of the Ethiopian flag, adopted by a number of newly independent African countries since 1957.

Pan-Arab colours: The black, white, red and green found in the flags of a number of Arab countries. The first flag incorporating these colours was the Arab Revolt flag of 1917.

Pan-Slavic colours: The white, blue and red originally adopted by the Slavic peoples during their struggles for independence from the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires, were derived from the national flag of the Russian Empire, and in recent years re-adopted by the Russian Federation.

Peace flag: As a generic term, any one of a number of flags many of which have been designed – each with its own agenda – supposedly to symbolize peace. Examples are the plain white flag; the Rainbow flag of the Gay and Lesbian movement; a white dove, usually on a blue field; and the combined and inverted “V” and “I” within an annulet (a ring), the semaphore signals for the letters “N” and “D,” associated with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Pike: In British and some other military usage, the spear-headed staff on which an infantry Colour was/is carried. The term is still applied, even though the spear-head has in many instances been replaced by some other decorative finial.

Prayer flag: A small flag, usually used in groups and attached to a cord which is attached to some fixed place, often in plain colours but sometimes decorated with inscriptions, intended to express or carry a prayer on the wind as it flies. These flags are characteristic of Buddhists in the Himalayan region.

Proportions: The relative size of a flag expressed in terms of the width and length of a flag, now usually expressed in that order, for example 1:2 or 2:3. The reverse has also been used, for example 2:1 or 3:2. Also used for the relative dimensions of two or more stripes or bands within a flag.

Quarter: Especially with regard to the positioning of constituent components or emblems. The field of a flag is, for convenience, often considered as being divided quarterly into four equal segments crosswise, namely the upper hoist; upper fly; lower hoist; and lower fly. See also **Canton**.

Rainbow flag: A term applied to several variations of flags which incorporate, usually in seven equal horizontal bands, the colours of the rainbow, namely red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Since the distinction between indigo and violet is largely artificial, there are also versions with only six colours. The most prominent version of the Rainbow flag is that of the Gay Rights movement. The term Rainbow flag is also used by some as an unofficial nickname for the six-coloured South African national flag which was adopted in 1994.

Reverse: The “less important” side of a flag which, in Western tradition, is seen when the staff is depicted to the spectator’s right. This side is generally, but not always, a mirror image of the obverse. There are occasional exceptions. A distinctive reverse design will mostly be found on regimental Colours, of which the two sides are individually embroidered, because of orientation of the charges and the addition of script, motto or text. See the “note” at the end of this glossary.

Saltire: A diagonal cross in the form of an “X,” the arms of which extend to the edge of a flag or shield.

Scandinavian cross: A cross of which the vertical arm is set closer to the hoist than to the fly.

Shield [heraldic] or escutcheon: In heraldry the shield is the basic essential element of all armorial bearings or coats of arms and provides the field on which the principal heraldic partitions and charges are arranged. The shield is always blazoned (described) first and is often depicted alone. All other elements of armorial bearings are ancillary to the shield of arms.

Solomon, seal of: See **Magen David**.

Southern Cross: A stylized representation of the constellation *Crux Australis*, used as a symbol in flags in the Southern Hemisphere.

Specification (or Spec): (a) The detailed description, either by diagram or in writing, of how the design of a flag is constructed. (b) The act of drawing up such design details. (See also **Specification sheet**).

Specification sheet (or Spec sheet): The detailed visual presentation of how the design of a flag is constructed, usually showing construction lines and figures, and often including the sources of such information.

Staff: The pole or cylindrical piece of wood or metal to which a flag is attached or from which a flag is flown.

Standard: The term standard has a wide number of meanings. Among them: (a) a vexilloid; (b) a tapering heraldic flag in livery colours and bearing a badge or badges and/or other device(s); (c) it is the common name for a heraldic banner; (d) the ceremonial flag of a mounted military corps; (e) the flag of a head of state. In obsolete usage a standard was a pole with an emblem on top, around which soldiers could rally. Indeed, the most common vexillological meaning of standard is the figurative or poetical term, a flag or symbol around which people rally.

State Ensign and flag: Versions of the national flag used for official purposes by the government at sea (Ensign) and on land (flag).

Storm flag: A smaller than normal version of a flag for use in inclement weather, when a larger flag would be ripped apart by the wind. In South Africa the normal flag size is 120cm x 180cm, while a storm flag is usually a quarter of that size, at 60cm x 90cm.

Table flag: A small flag whose staff and stand make it suitable for display on a desk or podium.

Tincture [in heraldry]: In addition to the metals gold (Or) and silver (Argent, “Ar”) heraldry uses five principal colours, namely blue (Azure), red (Gules), green (Vert), purple (purpure) and black (Sable). On occasions the “mixed” colours, orange (tenné) and brown (brunatrê) are also (reluctantly) used. The heraldic furs, ermine (black spots on white) and ermines (white spots on black) are used on Royal or noble banners.

Totem: A natural object or animal believed by a particular society to have spiritual meaning and adopted by it as an emblem. This term is of North American Indian [Amerindian] origin. Many South African tribes have, or take their names, from totemic symbols.

Totem pole: A pole on which the images of totems are carved or hung. Thus comparable in certain respects to the standard or pole around which soldiers or tribes would rally in ancient times.

Tribal flag: The sub-national flag of any group which shares an ethnic origin, but which is not internationally recognized as being independent. A tribal flag may also be a political flag under certain circumstances, and some tribal flags may be considered as national flags dependent upon the legal status and/ambitions of the tribal group concerned.

Triband: A flag of two colours divided into three, generally equal, sections or stripes, e.g. Nigeria.

Tricolour: (a) A flag of three parallel stripes or bands of three different colours. The stripes may be disposed vertically, horizontally or diagonally, be of equal or unequal width, and be either plain or defaced. (b) A plain or undefaced flag with three parallel bands or stripes of different colours, usually in equally divided sections, is a simple tricolor, e.g. France [vertical], and the Netherlands [horizontal].

Union Jack: A general and officially recognized term for the British flag whether flown on land or at sea. The term is derived from the national flag when flown as a jack from the bows of a British warship, but also has other naval applications.

Vexillographer: A designer of flags, or the creator of a flag design.

Vexillography: The designing of flags or the creation of flag designs.

Vexillologist: A student of vexillology.

Vexillogy: The scholarly or scientific study of the history, symbolism and/or usage of flags, or by extension an interest in flags in general.

Vexilloid: An object or symbol carried on a pole, which realizes many of the functions of a flag.

Vexillum: This term refers to a Roman cavalry flag suspended from a crossbar, or the cavalry unit carrying such a flag.

Wear a flag: To display a flag – said of a ship or any vessel.

Width: The vertical dimension of a flag, measured from its upper to its lower edge - in relation to its length. This is the equivalent in British usage to the term breadth.

Note: In those societies and cultures - for example Western society – in which one reads from left to right, a flag-post is customarily depicted to the viewer's left, and one "reads" a flag from top to bottom and from left to right. In contrast, in Islamic and other cultures where one reads from right to left, the flag-post is usually depicted to the

viewer's right. This can cause confusion in flag books, which do not illustrate a flag-post, since one does not then know which tradition is being followed.

**APPENDIX B - NATIONAL FLAG “PRIVATE” SPECIFICATION,
MARCH 1994**

**APPENDIX C - INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE FLYING OF THE
NATIONAL FLAG OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA: 26
APRIL 1994**