

SYMBOLS OF THE PANAMA CANAL ZONE

Roman Klimeš

The idea of a canal had already found support in the 19th century. In 1826 an American signed a contract with the new Confederation of Central America to build a canal, but he failed to raise the funds. In 1850, American investors started to build the Panama Railroad, linking the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the isthmus, but the American civil war prevented further planning. The French took over in 1876, with viscount Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal. In 1878 his «Société Civile Internationale du Canal Interocéanique du Darien» obtained from the government of Colombia, which Panama was then a part of, a concession for the exclusive right to build and operate a trans-isthmian canal for a period of 99 years. In 1888, a few years after the work had started, Lesseps resigned after a great financial scandal. A new company was organised in 1894, but also without success. On June 28, 1902 the American Congress passed the «Spooner Act», which authorised President Theodore Roosevelt to acquire the rights and property of the French Company for 40 million US dollars under the condition that Colombia would allow United States control over a strip of land across the Isthmus of Panama to be used as a canal route. A treaty giving the United States the rights to build, operate and control a canal in Panama was ratified by the United States Senate in March 1903, but was rejected by Colombia in August. A revolt broke out in Panama, aided by the United States, and on November 3, 1903, the country became an independent republic. On November 6, the United States recognised the new republic and on November 18 a treaty which made possible the building of the Panama Canal was signed. It was ratified in Panama on December 2 and by the United States on February 23, 1904.

By article 2 of this treaty, the Republic of Panama granted in perpetuity the United States the use, occupation, and control of a zone of land and water, extending to approximately five miles on each side from the centre line of the canal. In article 3, Panama transferred to the United States the exclusive sovereignty within the Canal Zone. In return the United States were to pay to Panama 10 million US dollars by annual instalments of 250'000 US dollars beginning in 1913. The Panama Canal was opened to commercial traffic on August 15, 1914. The governor of the Canal Zone was appointed by the president of the United States, subject to confirmation by the Senate. He was automatically president of the Panama Canal Company, which operated the canal and railroads. The Panama Canal Zone was then administered by the Panama Canal Commission, an American agency having a nine-member board of directors, five of which were US citizens and 4 were Panamanians.

The first symbol of the Panama Canal Zone was a seal of the Canal Zone Government [Fig. 1]. It was designed by Gaillard Hunt, who had also designed the seals of Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands, in co-operation with the first Governor of the Canal Zone, Maj. Gen. George W. Davis. The design was the work of artists of

Tiffany & Co., New York City. The seal itself is 2 1/2 inches in diameter¹. 25 sketchy records, conflicting personalities and lines of authority in Washington and on the Isthmus during the early American Canal efforts leave some doubt as to the exact origin of the design and motto of the seal which are generally attributed to Gaillard Hunt, former Chief of the Passport Bureau of the State Department. In December 1904, Governor George W. Davis submitted his designs for a Canal Zone seal to the Isthmian Canal Commission in Washington. They had been executed by C. Bertoncini, then employee of the Commission on the Isthmus, who had formerly worked for the French Canal Company. In 1905, Governor Davis wrote: «Of course, it is well known that M. de Lesseps adopted a motto for his (French Canal) Company, the idea of which was that the continents were divided for the benefit of mankind». Tiffany and Co. presented in 1905 several designs for the seal to the Department of State and the Isthmian Commission. On Hunt's recommendation, the Commission's chairman changed the original word «earth» to «land» and reduced the size of the sails of the Spanish galleon². On the 107th meeting of the Isthmian Canal Commission, held at Washington DC on February 5, 1906, a resolution was passed adopting the seal³. The description of the seal was not published officially before June 8, 1915, when President Woodrow Wilson by Executive Order No. 2208 approved of a flag for the Governor of the Canal Zone. In its centre appears the seal of the Canal Zone described as follows: «The seal consists of a shield showing in base a Spanish galleon of the fifteenth century under full sail coming head on between two high banks, all purple, the sky yellow with the glow of sunset; in the chief are the colours of the arms of the United States. Under the shield is the motto: «The Land Divided; the World United»⁴. The outer circle of the seal is blue and contains the words «Seal of the Canal Zone Isthmus of Panama», separated by three golden (yellow) stars.

For years colour reproductions of the seal had proven troublesome, with mistakes being made in the arrangement of the white and red colours in the bars of the chief and in various shading. In 1956, Acting Governor Herman W. Schull, Jr., approved a colour scheme prepared by Franklin Kwai Ben of the Panama Canal Company Engineering Division as the most faithful execution of the description of the seal given in President Wilson's Executive Order. The final drawing was sent to the Procurement Officer for his file and for use in ordering the Governor's flag⁴. A slightly different version of the seal can be found on postage stamps issued for use in the Canal Zone. On most stamps the entire seal is visible, and on the 5 stamps of the 1932-41 issue the shield appears with the ribbon [Fig. 2].

The flag of the Governor of the Panama Canal Zone was introduced by Executive Order No. 2208 of June 8, 1915⁵: «The flag shall be made in two dimensions as follows: Large flag, 6 feet hoist, by 7 feet inches fly; small flag, 2 feet hoist, by 2 feet 6 inches fly. The body of the flag shall be dark blue. In the centre of the flag shall be a white circle, the diameter of which shall be approximately one half of the fly length of the flag. In the centre of the circle, on each side of the flag, shall be the seal of the Canal Zone, of which the following

Fig. 1
Seal of the Canal Zone Government

Fig. 2
Seal of the Canal Zone Government
(Post stamp version)

Fig. 3
Flag of the Governor of the Panama Canal

Fig. 4
Ceremonial Flag of the Governor of the
Panama Canal

Fig. 5
Seal of the Panama Canal Company

Fig. 6
Distinguishing Flag for ships of the Panama
Canal Company (square form)

Fig. 7
Distinguishing Flag for ships of the Panama
Canal Company (rectangular form)

Fig. 8
Flag of the Marine Director

Fig. 9
Flag of the Port Captain

Fig. 10
Seal of the Panama Canal Commission

Fig. 11
Seal of the Panama Canal Study Group

Fig. 12
Flag of the Panama Canal Zone
(territorial flag)

Fig. 13
Flag of the Republic of Panama

Fig. 14
Flag of the United States of America



is a description: «The seal consists of a shield, showing in base a Spanish galleon of the fifteenth century under full sail coming head on between two high banks, all purple, the sky yellow with the glow of sunset; in the chief are colours of the arms of the United States. Under the shield is the motto: «The Land Divided; the World United!». The flag of the Governor of the Panama Canal shall be used as follows: When the Governor of the Panama Canal is embarked on a boat for the purpose of making an official call, his flag shall be carried on a staff at the bow of the boat in which he is embarked. While on board in his official capacity, or when taking passage on any Canal craft, his flag shall be carried at mainmast head.» The proportions of the flag are 4:5 [Fig. 3]. A ceremonial version also exists, which includes a golden fringe on three sides and on the top of the staff is a gold American eagle⁶ [Fig. 4].

The Panama Canal Company was established on July 1st, 1951 pursuant to Public Law 841, 81st Congress, and replaced the Panama Railroad Company at the Panama Canal. In article II, section 3 of the bylaws of the Panama Canal Company there is a description of the seal: «A view of a lower lock chamber of the Panama Canal, showing the bow end of a ship of the Panama Line in a upper chamber, behind a closed gate, flanked on the left by a control house and on the right by a towing locomotive and three lamp standards. The ship's colours shall be a grey hull with white trim, white superstructure, grey kingposts, and buff funnel with grey stripes. The lock walls, control house and lamp standards shall be white with purple shadows. The control house roof, lock gate and towing locomotive shall be dull red. The sky shall be azure and bear the inscription «INCORPORATED BY ACT OF CONGRESS» in navy blue. All shall be encircled with a silver band edged in navy blue and containing the inscription «PANAMA CANAL COMPANY – 1950» in navy blue letters.»⁷ The corporate seal of the Panama Canal Company [Fig. 5] was designed by the Engineering Division of the Panama Canal Company. The seal was adopted by the Board of Directors at a meeting held on June 18, 1951.

Beside the Governor's flag there was never any governmental flag flown in the Panama Canal Zone. Other flags were used instead. The first of these flags was the distinguishing flag for ships of the Panama Canal Company [Fig. 6] This square blue flag with white letters «P» and «C» was introduced in the year 1915. A rectangular version also exists⁸ [Fig. 7]. The flag of the Marine Director is rectangular and blue with a white anchor between white block letters «M» and «D» [Fig. 8]. The flag of the Port Captain [Fig. 9] is blue with a white anchor in the centre and white letters «P» and «C».

The new Panama Canal Treaty was ratified by a referendum in October 1977 in Panama and by the United States Senate in March 1978. The Panama Canal Commission was established by the Panama Canal Act of 1979 to replace Panama Canal Company and the Canal Zone Government, the agencies which managed all Canal affairs and the Canal Zone prior to the implementation of the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty. The seal for the new commission [Fig. 10] was approved by the President of the United States on April 29, 1981 through Executive Order 12304⁹. The seal is described as fol-

lows: «A view of a lower lock chamber of the Panama Canal, showing the bow end of a ship in an upper chamber, behind a close gate, flanked on the left by a control house and on the right by a towing locomotive and three lamp standards. The ship colours to be dull red hull with white trim, white superstructure, white kingposts, and grey funnel. The lock walls, control house roof to be dull red. The lock gate and towing locomotive to be grey. The sky to be a light blue and the water to be azure blue. All to be encircled with a white band edged in navy blue and containing the inscription «PANAMA CANAL COMMISSION – COMISION DEL CANAL DE PANAMA» in navy blue letters.» The design of the seal was attached and made part of this order.

On April 29, 1981 a project that began in January 1979 was completed. On this date President Ronald Reagan signed the executive order approving the official seal for use by the Panama Canal Commission. The twenty-eight months project began with the Administrative Services Division requesting various designs from different designers. Eventually, one design was selected from the more than 35 proposals submitted for consideration. This design was presented at the meeting of the bi-national Board of Directors of the Panama Canal Commission held in October 1980. A revised seal was approved at the next meeting in January 1981. The seal design was sent to Washington, DC, together with the draft executive order. Both were reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget, the Army Institute of Heraldry and the Department of Justice. Most of the original work on the new seal was done by Frank Kwai Ben of the Commission's Engineering Division, who was already the designer of the 1950 Panama Canal Company seal. The final preparation of the seal design for submission to Washington, DC, was done by Carlos Mendez of the Graphic Branch. The new Panama Canal Commission seal, which will appear on letterheads, publications, awards, certificates and various other official documents, was used for the first time on the Honorary Public Service Awards¹⁰.

The old seal of the Canal Zone was abolished but not forgotten. As early as 1952 the Canal Zone Study Group was established, which approved an emblem of its own. The main motif is the central emblem from the seal of the Canal Zone (the shield and the ribbon). The whole design of the seal is very similar to the seal of Canal Zone [Fig. 11]. The flag plates of volume 9 of the «Encyclopaedia Britannica» show a flag for the Panama Canal Zone which is white and has the ratio 4:5, with the seal of the Canal Zone in the centre [Fig. 12]. I have found no official documents which introduce or refer to this flag. However, there were similar flags, i.e. white with the seal in the centre, such as the flag of the Governor of Puerto Rico (until 1948) or the flag of the Governor of Mindanao and Sulu (until 1946). Perhaps some vexillologist colleague could shed some light on this matter.

Today only two flags are used in the Panama Canal Zone: The flag of Panama [Fig. 13] and that of the United States of America [Fig. 14].

Notes

- ¹ Elizabeth W. King, «Seals of Our Nation, States and Territories», in, «The National Geographic Magazine», Vol. XC, No. 1, July 1946, Washington DC, p. 33.
- ² «Canal Zone Seal Retired But Replicas Abound», in «The Panama Canal Review», October 1, 1979, Panama Canal Zone, pp.25-26.
- ³ «Minutes of the Isthmian Canal Commission, one hundred and seventh Meeting», Panama Canal Zone, pp.20-21.
- ⁴ Isthmian Canal Commission, «Laws of the Canal Zone Isthmus of Panama», August 16, 1904, to March 31, 1914, Panama Canal Press, Mount Hope, Canal Zone, 1922: «Act No. 8 of the Isthmian Canal Commission», enacted September 2, 1904, p. 26
- ⁵ «The Canal Record», vol VIII, No 44, Executive Order «Flag of the Governor of The Panama Canal», June 23, 1915, Panama Canal Zone, p.384.

- ⁶ Whitney Smith, «The Flag Book of the United States», New York, 1975, p. 69.
- ⁷ «Panama Canal Company: A Corporate Agency and Instrumentality of the Government of the United States of America: Bylaws», 1953 Edition, Panama Canal Zone, pp 2-3
- ⁸ «New Flags Canal Zone» in «The Flag Bulletin», vol XVII 4 (73), July-August, 1978, p. 105.
- ⁹ «Presidential Documents», page 24521 Executive Order 12304 of April 29, 1981 «Seal for the Panama Canal Commission» (filed with the Office of the Federal Register 11 13 a m., April 30, 1981). Note: The design of the seal is printed in the Federal Register on May 1, 1981.
- ¹⁰ «Panama Canal Commission official seal approved» in «The Panama Canal Spillway», vol XIX, No 36, Friday, May 15, 1981, Panama Canal Zone, p.1

LE DRAPEAU EUROPEEN: HISTOIRE ET SYMBOLISME

Carole Lager

1) Naissance du drapeau européen

Création par le conseil de l'Europe

Le 5 mai 1949, la France, la Grande-Bretagne, la Belgique, les Pays-Bas, le Luxembourg, le Danemark, la Norvège, la Suède, l'Irlande et l'Italie signent à Londres le statut du Conseil de l'Europe. Son siège est fixé à Strasbourg, où il se réunit pour la première fois au mois d'août. Dans ce climat d'euphorie et d'espoir, se développe un puissant esprit communautaire. Une ligne d'action appelée «propagation de l'idée européenne» est rapidement définie. Il s'agit d'expliquer aux peuples les avantages que présente une union de l'Europe et de créer une vraie conscience européenne. L'adoption d'un drapeau est une des premières mesures concrètes proposées dans ce sens

Pourquoi un drapeau?

Outre son indéniable utilité psychologique (faire progresser l'idée européenne) et pratique (en l'absence d'un tel drapeau, le protocole exige que les drapeaux des pays membres soient hissés suivant l'ordre alphabétique anglais), un drapeau unique permettrait d'éviter la confusion résultant de l'assimilation de symboles d'associations privées à l'emblème officiel du Conseil de l'Europe. En effet, il existe déjà à l'époque deux emblèmes européens appartenant à deux mou-

vements privés. Le premier est le cercle d'or et la croix de gueules sur fond azur du «Mouvement paneuropéen» du Comte Coudenhove-Kalergi, créé en 1923 [Fig. 1, première file, au milieu]. Après la seconde guerre mondiale, le drapeau deviendra celui de l'union parlementaire européenne. La croix symbolise la chrétienté et le soleil doré représente la civilisation européenne illuminant le monde. Le deuxième emblème est le «E» vert sur fond blanc du «Mouvement européen» [Fig. 1, première file, à gauche]. Imaginé en 1948 par Duncan Sandys, président de ce mouvement et gendre de Churchill, il combine la lettre «E» avec la lettre «U», le vert symbolisant l'espérance de l'unité européenne. Cet emblème sera ironiquement appelé «le caleçon de Sandys» par les Britanniques, Paul Reynaud l'ayant comparé à «un caleçon blanc qui sèche sur un pré vert».

Dès le début de ses travaux, le Conseil de l'Europe doit faire face à de nombreuses propositions d'emblèmes, dont la [Fig. 1] donne quelques exemples. Ce n'est qu'en 1955 que le Conseil de l'Europe fixe définitivement les caractéristiques du futur drapeau de l'Europe. Tout d'abord, le bleu sera la couleur du continent européen, puisque l'Afrique est le continent noir, l'Asie le continent jaune, l'Amérique le continent rouge, l'Australie le continent vert. Par ailleurs, comme il est impossible d'utiliser la croix, symbole chrétien (la Turquie étant devenue membre du Conseil de l'Europe), on opte pour les étoiles d'or, que l'on choisit de disposer sur un cercle fermé symbolisant l'union des peuples, et que l'on fixe au nombre invariable de douze

Un premier nombre avait été majoritairement adop-