



WHAT IS  
THE DENMARK SOCIETY  
A brief orientation

## **THE DENMARK SOCIETY**

The foundation of the Society in 1908 took place during a period characterized by the political tension before the First World War and by national political conflicts. This inspired a group of citizens into founding the Denmark Society having as its main objective to strengthen national solidarity.

A very important decision was made already at the founding meeting which decided that the work should be carried out on a non-political basis as was natural in connection with the national symbol "Dannebrog".

After four years of intensive work the Society had become national, and at the same time the idea arose to start an annual national subscription on 15 June which was hereafter called "Valdemar's Day". The small flag which was sold, was called "Valdemar's Flag". And is still called so. The permission to do so was granted by King Christian X in 1912.

The funds thus raised were mainly spent on procuring flags and flag equipment, which was donated to organizations, in particular to the two big groups of youth organizations and to sports associations – and furthermore to somewhat smaller groupings such as pensioners' associations, soldiers' associations, folk dancers, schools and kindergardens. Danish associations abroad, and many other groups of the population. A feature of the activities of all these groups is still that they show the flag in Denmark and abroad to the benefit of Denmark.

During the 95 years a sum of about 20 million Kroner has been collected, which has been spent on the purchase of more than 30.000 standards and a corresponding number of flags.

The strength of the Denmark Society is its background, which will always be present in the work for the symbol of unity of the nation, as well as the fact that the work is carried out without any group of paying members. The tasks are solved by a group of young and elder volunteers who back up the sale of flags – the necessary financial source for the Society's work.

In practice, the Society works as a "Help to self-help" organization, in order that associations and others who have received standards and flags have understood the necessity of contributing to the work, through the sale of flags on Valdemar's Day, to provide the funds to pay for the purchase of equipment.

Furthermore, the Denmark Society looks after the interests of the flag, among other things through publications and by answering questions concerning the correct use of the flag.

In that context it is worthwhile mentioning that no special act has even been made concerning the flag, but that the use of the flag is based on old "statutory instruments" and some "circulars". This provides the possibility of different interpretations of the different questions arising when the symbol of unity of the nation is part of the various daily activities under different conditions.

## DANNEBROG

The oldest Danish flag was the "Banner of the Raven", a red banner with the raven of the Nordic god Odin embroidered in black colour. It was widely known to be the banner of the Vikings and was called "Danebrog" i.e. the cloth (banner) of the Danes. During time the spelling of the name has changed to "Dannebrog".



After the introduction in Denmark of Christianity, Odin's raven was superseded by the symbol of Christianity, the cross, and "Dannebrog" with the white cross on a red background was probably around the year 1200 a mark of crusaders attempting to Christianize heathen Estonia. Popular tradition and later written accounts have connected the origin of "Dannebrog" with the final battle at Lyndanisse Castle in Estonia on 15 June, 1219. The unexpected appearance of the flag in the strong wind as if it were a godsend stirred up the hard pressed Danes under King Valdemar's leadership to win the final victory, and since that day "Dannebrog" has been the national symbol of the Danes, although it did not come into popular use until relatively late. For many hundred years the flag remained the King's banner, not least as the mark of assembly in warfare, from which followed that it gradually became the naval flag as well.

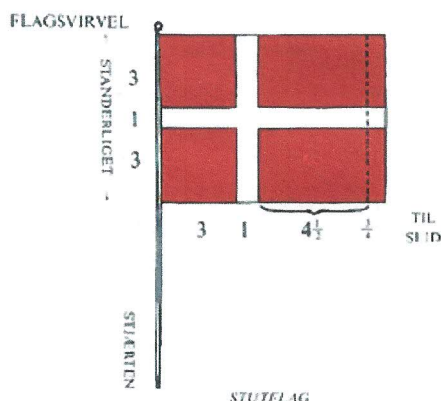
The first colour painting indicating "Dannebrog" as the banner of the King of Denmark is from app. 1375 and to be found at the National Library in Brussels



## FLYING THE FLAG IN DENMARK

The "Dannebrog", the national symbol of Denmark, should be regarded as befits the flag of a country.

From a flagstaff ashore the swallowtailed state flag must be flown only on special licence. For general, civilian purposes the square flag is used, the size and proportions of which are shown below:



These proportions must be observed, and the square must not be embellished with logo, embroidery or the like.

The normal size of the square shall be 1/5 of the flagstaff. By hard weather or when flying every day, a storm-flag may be used, the minimum proportion 1/10 of the staff.

No other flag may be flown from the same pole at the same time.

The flag may be flown between 8 o'clock (but no earlier than sunrise) and sunset – or for any part of that period. Outside of the above period the flag may be flown of lightened.

In connection with death or mourning the flag may be half masted after first having been run up, and before lowered, the flag is again run up. On the day of the funeral it is customary to half mast the flag until the obsequies. Then the flag is run up.

When a flagstaff is not in use a Danish streamer may be flown. The correct length of the streamer is half the height of the pole.



In Denmark the following flags may be flown, the other Scandinavian flags, the UN and the EU-flag. The flying of other flags requires a permission from the local police.

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