

Most Words Shown on a Stamp

MSC Article No. 78

In 1976, the Republic of South Africa celebrated the 100th anniversary of the publication of its first newspaper in the African language with this postage stamp. What we see is the first page of the paper issued on Saturday, January 15, 1876. Although not likely considered at the time, the stamp had another distinction—most words shown.

Wikipedia summarizes the paper as follows:

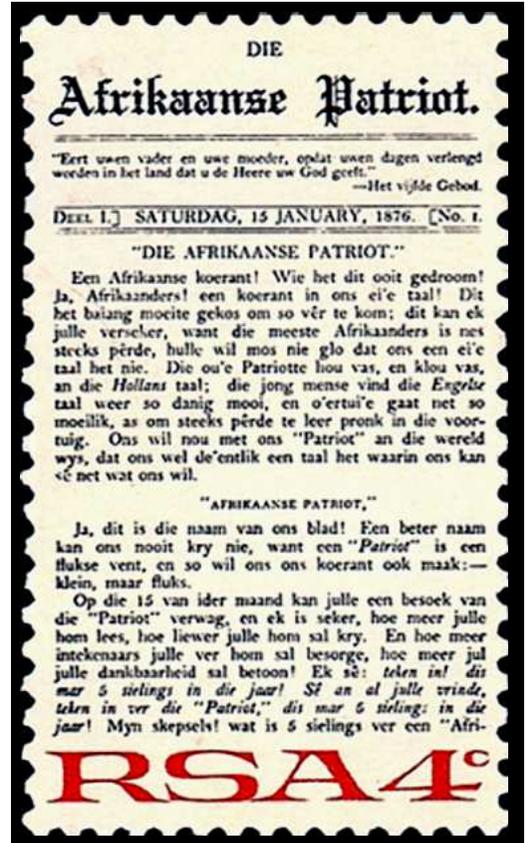
Die Afrikaanse Patriot was the first Afrikaans-language newspaper. The first issue was published in Paarl on 15 January 1876. Initially a monthly magazine, it became a weekly two years later.

Even though the first edition had just 50 subscribers, it swiftly drew sharp condemnation for promoting Afrikaans as a literary language, as it was then considered nothing more than a "kitchen" variety of Dutch. By the third year, subscription rose to 3,000 thanks to the support from readers in the Transvaal Republic.

The newspaper would however lose much of its readership in 1892, when it endorsed Cecil Rhodes in its conflict against the president of Transvaal, Paul Kruger. *Die Patriot* ultimately went out of business in 1904.

Naturally, we are curious to know what the stamp says in English. I put the words through an on-line translator, which provided a good idea of the contents.

The quotation shown under the title effectively says honor your father and



mother so that when your days are through you will enter Heaven and be with God; The Fifth Commandment.

The first paragraph starts, "We did it; ever revere young Afrikaners." It goes on to state that the publishers believe Afrikaners have a native language and the paper will show the world this fact, and they can say whatever they want.

The second paragraph explains the name of the paper and states that readers can expect future editions. It then provides the price of the publication.

Although short-lived, the paper was a major step in bringing about the Republic of South Africa. CLM