Rijetko koja zastava, kao jedan od osnovnih simbola svake zemlje, krije u sebi tako zanimljivu priču kao što je to slučaj sa zastavom Ujedinjenog Kraljevstva Velike Bitanije i Sjeverne Irske. Više puta redizajnirana, ukidana i ponovo uvođena, ona predstavlja znak raspoznavanja nekada najveće kolonijalne sile koja je i danas zadržala vodeću ulogu u kulturi, privredi, nauci i drugim oblastima ljudskog djelovanja.  
Sastoji se od tri pojedinačne zastave zemalja ujedinjenih pod istom krunom (Engleske, Škotske i Sjeverne Irske). Pošto je Vels u vrijeme nastanka prve zastave već bio ujedinjen sa Engleskom (preko Zakona o uniji koji je 1536. donio Henri VIII), crveni zmaj, njegov zaštitni znak nije našao svoje mjesto na njoj. Tadašnja ministarka kulture Margaret Hodž je 2007. predložila da se zastavi doda velški zmaj, međutim, ovaj predlog ubrzo je odbačen jer je procijenjeno da bi troškovi redizajniranja zastave iznosili oko dva miliona funti. Boje zastupljene na zastavi su bijela, crvena i plava. Bijela boja simbol je mira i iskrenosti, crvena predstavlja otpornost, hrabrost, snagu i junaštvo, dok plava boja simbolizuje usredsređenost, istinoljubivost, odanost, istrajnost i pravednost. Zastavu Engleske, crveni krst svetog Đorđa uveo je 1194.kralj Ričard I. Škotska zastava ima pozadinu kraljevskoplave boje na kojoj se nalazi dijagonalno postavljen bijeli krst, na kome je, po predanju, bio razapet sveti Andrej, zaštitnik Škotske. Irska zastava predstavljena je dijagonalnim krstom crvene boje na bijeloj pozadini. Kombinacijom, odnosno ukrštanjem ove tri nastala je „Zastava Unije“,(„Union flag“) a takav dizajn datira još iz 1801. Osim ovog postojalo je još predloga kada je u pitanju izgled zastave, pa su tako postojale sugestije da se krst sv. Andreja i sv. Đorđa nalaze jedan pored drugog, ili da krst sv.Andreja bude u uglu zastave, unutar krsta sv. Đorđa.

Nekoliko riječi o britanskoj zastavi-Few words about the Union Jack

Rarely does a flag, as one of the most important symbols of a country, have such an intersting background as in the case of the flag of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.Many times re-designed, abolished, then used again, it represents an identification mark of the country that once was the biggest colnial force, and which has nowadays maintained a leading role in culture, science, economy, as well as other areas of human action.  
It consists of three individual flags united under the same crown (England, Scotland and Northern Ireland). Since Wales had already been united with England at the time the first flag was made (through the Act of Union brought on by King Henry VIII, who made it a principality in 1536.) the Welsh red dragon does not appear on it. In 2007. the British Minister of Cultre, Margaret Hodge, had suggested that the dragon should be added to the flag, but this was not put into practice because it had beeen estimated that the expenses would be about 2 million pounds. The colours found on the flag are white, red and blue. White colour symbolises peace and honesty, red represents hardiness, bravery, strenght and valour, whereas blue resembles vigilance, truth and loyalty, perseverance and justice.   
The English flag, a red cross of St. George was imposed by the King Richard I in 1194.

The flag of Scotland has a blue background with a diagonal white cross on it. According to the legend, St.Andrew, its patron saint had died on that cross. These three flags combined gave us the „Union flag“ as a result, and its design dates back to 1801.

When it comes to the appearance of the flag, there had been other proposals aswell. One of the suggestions was that the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew should be placed next to each other, and the other one said that the flag of Scotland should be in the corner of the English one.

Prva „Zastava Unije“ stvorena je 12.aprila 1606.za vrijeme vladavine Džejmsa I od Engleske (poznatog i kao Džejms Ujedinitelj) koji je na prestolu nasledio svoju rođaku, devičansku kraljicu,  
Elizabetu I. Ova zastava nije bila korišćena jedino u vrijeme Olivera Kromvela kada je Engleska proglašena republikom (od 1649. do 1660.). Kromvel je želio da se na zastavi nalazi harfa, kao jedan od glavnih simbola Irske. Međutim, sa ponovnim uspostavljanjem monarhije 1660.godine zastavi je vraćen prvobitni izgled. Zastava je zvanično ušla u upotrebu 28.jula 1707.za vrijeme vladavine kraljice Ane, kada je proglašena nacionalnom zastavom. 2003.je postojala inicijativa da se zastavi dodaju crne linije koje bi označavale multikulturalnost u zemlji, ali ona nije urodila plodom, te je izgled zastave ostao nepromijenjen.Sve do jula 2007.britanska zastava iznosila se samo u specijalnim prilikama kao što su:rođendan nekog od članova kraljevske porodice, Dan Komonvelta, godišnjica dolaska monarha na tron ili godišnjica braka trenutnog kralja, odnosno kraljice. 3.jula 2007. britanski premijer donio je predlog zakona po kome je zastava izložena svaki dan, na zgradi Vlade u Ulici Dauning broj 10, kako bi se pojačalo osjećanje zajedništva i nacionalne pripadnosti. Zastava se spušta na pola koplja na dan sahrane bivšeg premijera ili nekog od članova kraljevske porodice, kao i prilikom smrti vladajućeg monarha (osim dana kada se bira novi kralj, odnosno kraljica).

Britanska zastava nalazi se i na zastavama bivših kolonija poput Fidžija, Lagosa, Bornea, Burme i sl. Osim naziva „Zastava unije“ popularno ime je i „Džekova zastava“, čije porijeklo je nejasno ali se pretpostavlja da potiče od naziva malih zastavica koje su se nalazile na pramcima brodova od 1600. godine do današnjih dana.

2009.prilikom potpisivanja trgovinskog sporazuma sa kineskim premijerom zastava

The first „Union flag“ was created on 12th  of April 1606. during the reign of James I of England (also known as the king who united England and Scotland) and who succeeded his cousin Elizabeth I („The Virgin Queen“) on the English throne. This flag was not used only in times of England as a Republic, when Oliver Cromwell had ruled it(1649-1660). He wanted to place a harp, which is one of the best known symbols of Ireland, on it. But, when the monarchy was re-instated in 1660. the flag had been given its previous appearance.

Officialy, it was used on 28th of July 1707. for the first time, during the reign of Queen Anne, when it was proclaimed a national flag. There was an initiative in 2003.to introduce black lines to the flag, which would represent multiculturalism, but this failed to bear fruit. Until July 2007.the British flag was displayed only on special ocassions such as: a birthday of a Royal family member, The Commonwealth Day, Accession Day, the wedding anniversary of a Monarch and so on. On July 3. British Prime Minister created the law which said that the flag should be on display everyday, in 10, Downing Street, where the government is, in order to make the feeling of togetherness and national identity stronger. The flag is at half-mast on the day of the funeral of a member of the British Royal family, or former British Prime Minister, or when the Sovereign dies (an exception is made for Proclamation Day, when the new Monarch is chosen.  
British flag is also found on flags of former British colonies such as Fiji, Lagos, Borneo, Burma, etc. Apart from „Union flag“, „Union Jack“ is also a popular name. Its origin is unclear, but it probably comes from the name of small flags that were used on the bows of the ships from 1600. onwards.

In 2009.when the British and Chinese Prime Ministers were sining a trade agreement between the two countries, the flag had been

je greškom bila okrenuta naopako, što je posledica njene asimetričnosti. Iako zvaničnici to nisu primijetili, to nije promaklo oštrom oku BBC-jevog reportera.

Mnogi tvrde da je budućnost ove zastave veoma nesigurna, zbog mogućnosti da se Škotska odvoji od Engleske, ali vrijeme će pokazati. Bilo kako bilo, zahvaljujući dugoj istoriji i upečatljivom dizajnu, lako je prepoznatljiva, što je ujedno i najvažnije.

turned upside-down, as a consequence of being asymetrical. The officials took no notice of it, but a sharp-eyed BBC reporter of that event certainly did.

Many people claim that its future is very uncertain, because there is a possibility Scotland will grow apart from England, bur only time will tell. Be as it may, thanks to its long history and striking, unique design, it is easily recognized, which is certainly a thing of utter importance.

Milica Milovanović