



A CENTURY OF WESTFAL-LARSEN

1905-2005

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*An exhibition at
Bergen Maritime Museum 2005*

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Print:

BODONI HUS

Paper:

Lessebo Linné 250/120 g

ISBN 82-7064-054-9

PREFACE

This publication – *A Century of Westfal-Larsen* – is a result of an exhibition of the same name. The centennial exhibition consists mainly of posters. In this pamphlet we have gathered the various posters of the exhibition in order to provide an account of the shipping company Westfal-Larsen's activity from 1905 until today.

The exhibition was first opened at the Bergen Maritime Museum October 8th 2005, in celebration of the company's centennial anniversary.

Bergen Maritime Museum is pleased to be chosen for this celebration. It is an emblem of the close connection that has existed between the company and the museum.

It is thanks to Westfal-Larsen that the museum was able to move to its current location in 1962.

The building was financed in full by the shipping company.

In the year of the anniversary, ship owner Hans Peter Westfal-Larsen is chairman of the board of Bergen Maritime Museum.

On behalf of the museum, I would like to congratulate Westfal-Larsen on its centennial and wish the company all the best in years to come.

Bergen, October 8th 2005

Atle Thowsen
Director
Bergen Maritime Museum

1905

H. Westfal-Larsen established his own shipping company in the year of Norwegian independence. Norway's particular needs as a seafaring nation were one of the main issues in the conflict that led to the dissolution of the Norwegian-Swedish Union in 1905. One of the main agents in this conflict was ship owner and Prime Minister Christian Michelsen from Bergen. His shipping company had become the largest in Bergen and the second largest in Norway at the turn of the century.

Bergen was Norway's main shipping port in 1905, with as many as 357 ships and a total of 205 000 net register tons (nrt). At the time, Norway was the fourth largest seafaring nation in the world. Bergen was also at the head of the nation in the transition from sail to steam powered ships. The steam ship tonnage overtook sail ship tonnage in Bergen in 1883, whereas the same thing happened in Kristiania (Oslo), and Norway in general, 20 years later.

Towards the end of 1905 Wilh. Wilhelmsen remained Norway's major ship owner, with 24 ships and 45 000 nrt to his name, whereas the shipping firm Harloff & Bøe was largest in Bergen with 11 ships of 15 000 nrt. Christian Michelsen was second with 6 ships of around 13 000 nrt.



The flag of the Union is replaced by the Norwegian flag June 9th 1905.



Caricature drawing from 1905, Chr. Michelsen has brought "Norway" safely to port.



Bergen harbour

ESTABLISHING THE COMPANY



H. Westfal-Larsen

H. Westfal-Larsen, born 1872, was employed in Rasmus F. Olsen Shipping Company for 16 years before starting his own company in 1905. He had attended commercial school, as well as doing a one-year course at the Bergen Ship Engineering School. He started his shipping career by investing in other owners' vessels. In 1905 Westfal-Larsen took over the management of the newbuilding S/S "Hardanger" as well as S/S "Venezia", which was wrecked shortly after, and S/S "Garibaldi". In 1906 and 1907 he had two newly constructed ships delivered. Thanks to the trust he had gained in the shipping community of Bergen, he was able to take over management of several older vessels.

The new ships were constructed for the t-imber trade, whereas the older vessels were used for transporting coal from England and -herring from Iceland. During the summer season they would also transport ice from Norway to England, among other things. In 1906 Westfal-Larsen hired Georg von Erpecom as his clerk and errand boy. Ten years later, aged 28, Erpecom had advanced to the position of partner and ship owner.



S/S "Venezia"



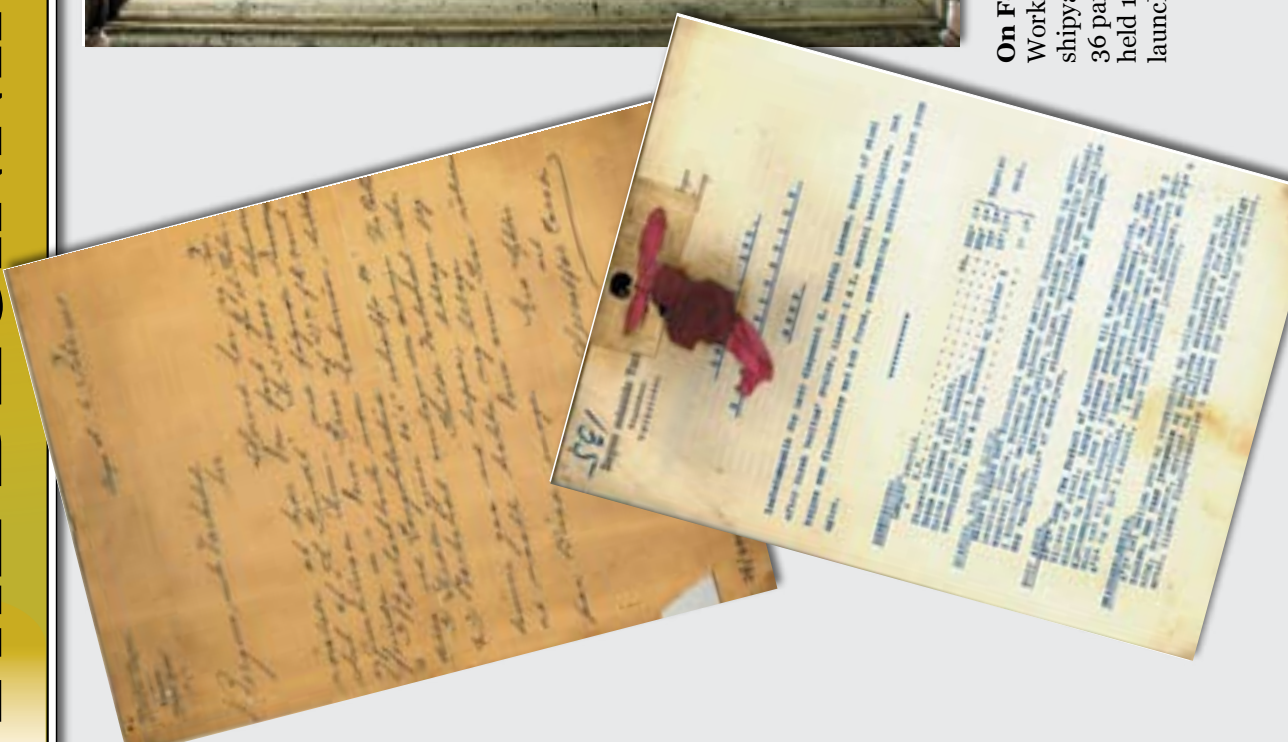
S/S "Garibaldi"



S/S "Venezia" at Kingston Dock, Glasgow

Photo: Per Alsaker's collection

• THE BEGINNING-S/S "HARDANGER" •



On February 6th H. Westfal-Larsen contacted the local yard Bergens Mekaniske Værksted (Bergen Mechanical Workshop) to enquire whether they could provide a steamer worth Nkr 250 000. One of the terms was that the shipyard would sign up for 5/100 parts in the ship. The capital was swiftly put together, with contributions from 36 part-owners. Ship owner Fridtjof Sundt was the major investor, he held 20 parts. Westfal-Larsen himself held 11, and the ship's captain seven. The main contract was signed on February 27th. S/S "Hardanger" was launched on September 26th and delivered on October 6th 1905. The price was Nkr 246 784,32.

WAR AND ECONOMIC BOOM



The launching of S/T "Malmanger", 1916.

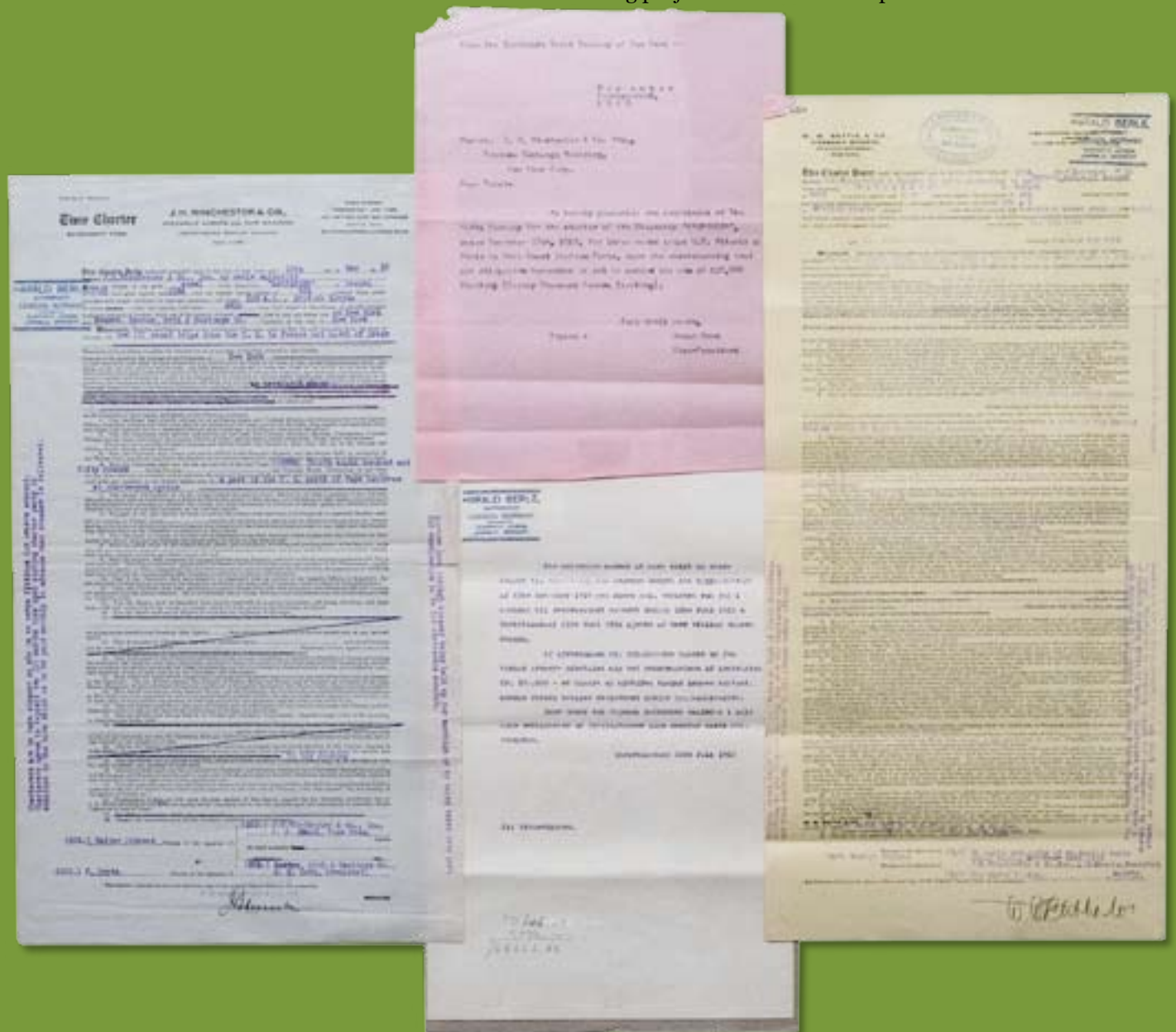
In spite of Norway's neutrality during World War I, 638 Norwegian steamships (over 100 gross register tons) were wrecked as a result of war in the period 1914-1918. Of these, 167 were registered in Bergen. 11 of Westfal-Larsen's ships were lost, among them the brand new S/T "Malmanger" (5671 grt.), which was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland on March 22nd 1917.

S/S "Prosper III" (4298 grt.) was blown up by a mine on June 6th 1916, and was one of the most tragic losses for the company. 29 of its crew were lost.

The war led to a hectic period in the business, such as buying and selling ships and contracts. Westfal-Larsen bought 13 ships during the years of the war. The newly built S/S "Løvli" (7212 grt.), bought in November 1916 for around Nkr 6 million, was sold again three months later for around Nkr 11 million. At the end of the war Westfal-Larsen had three contracts for building projects as well as six ships.



S/T "Malmanger"



Wrecks during World War I

1915

1.1: S/S "Jamaica" (built 1892), wrecked in a storm off Oporto

14.6: S/S "Davanger" (built 1888), sunk by German submarine while sailing from Liverpool to Arkangelisk

7.8: S/S "Geiranger" (built 1907), sunk by German submarine while sailing from Petschora to Southampton

1916

6.7: S/S "Prosper III" (built 1912), blown up by a mine off the coast of France

13.12: S/S "Kaupanger" (built 1890), sunk by submarine in the Mediterranean while sailing from England to Italy
December: S/S "Mauranger" (built 1906), disappeared without a trace while sailing from Pomeran to Goole

1917

11.1: S/S "Ole Bull" (built 1901), sunk by torpedo or mine while sailing from Hartlepool to Rouen

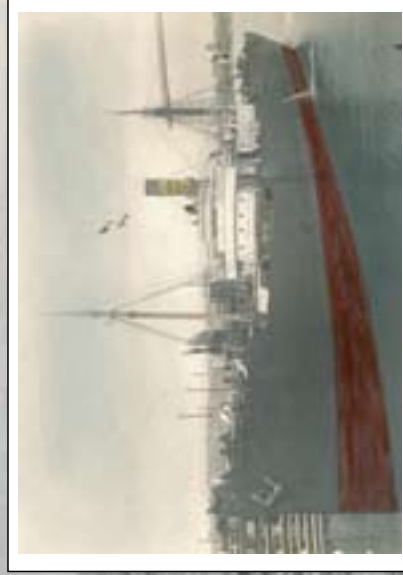
14.3: S/S "Davanger" (built 1916), sunk by German submarine while sailing from New York to Rotterdam

22.3: S/T "Malmanger" (built 1916), sunk by torpedo or mine while sailing from New York to Avonmouth



S/S "Jamaica" built in 1892

S/T "Malmanger" as she sinks after being torpedoed off the West Coast of Ireland, April 22nd 1917.



S/S "Ole Bull" built in 1901

WAR AND ECONOMIC BOOM



The crew of S/S "Samnanger" (built 1895) in 1915



S/S "Evanger" (built 1908)



S/S "Falkanger" (built 1899)



S/S "Malmanger" (built 1910)

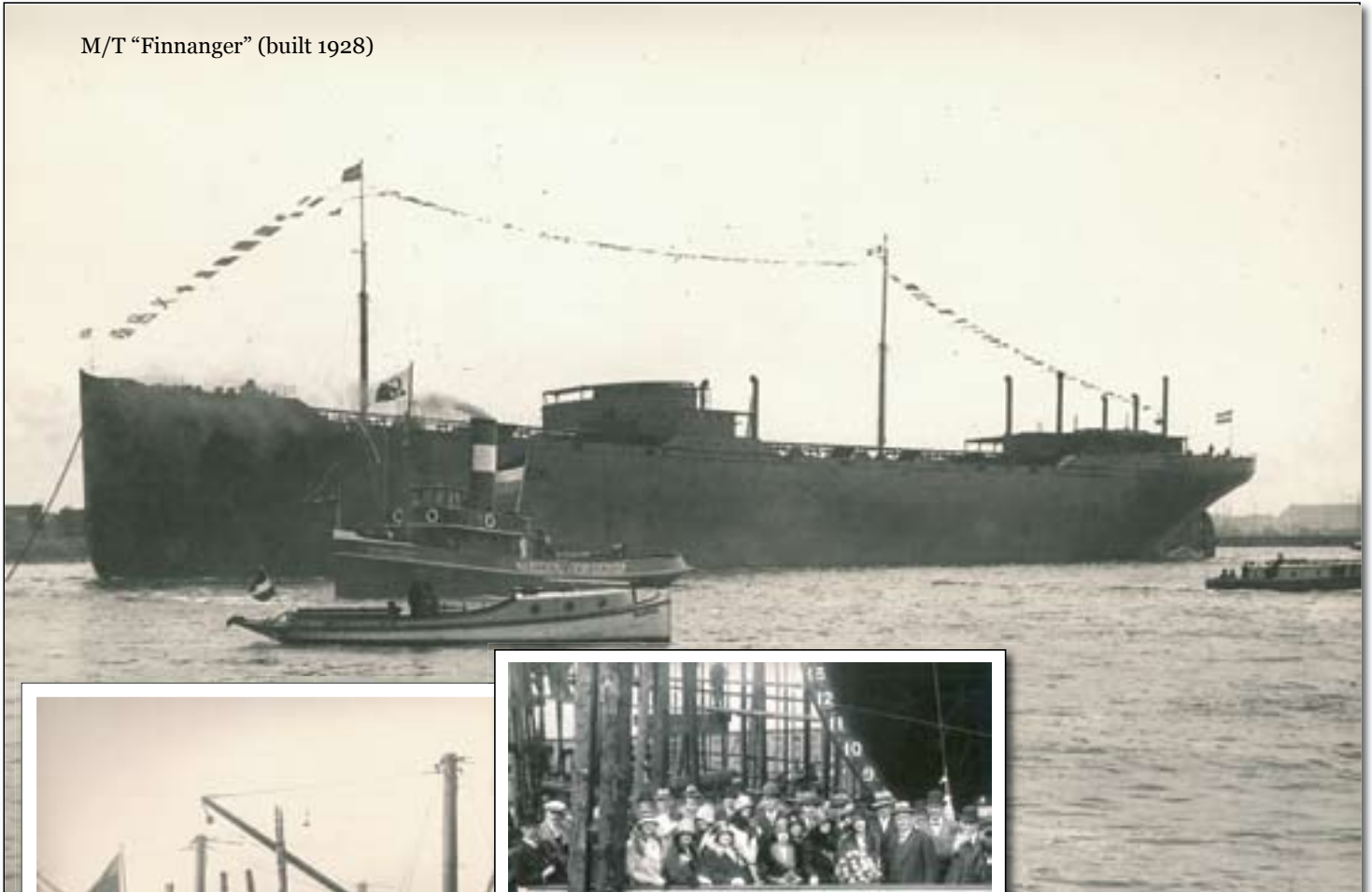


S/S "Løvli" ex: "Yvone Maru" (built 1916)

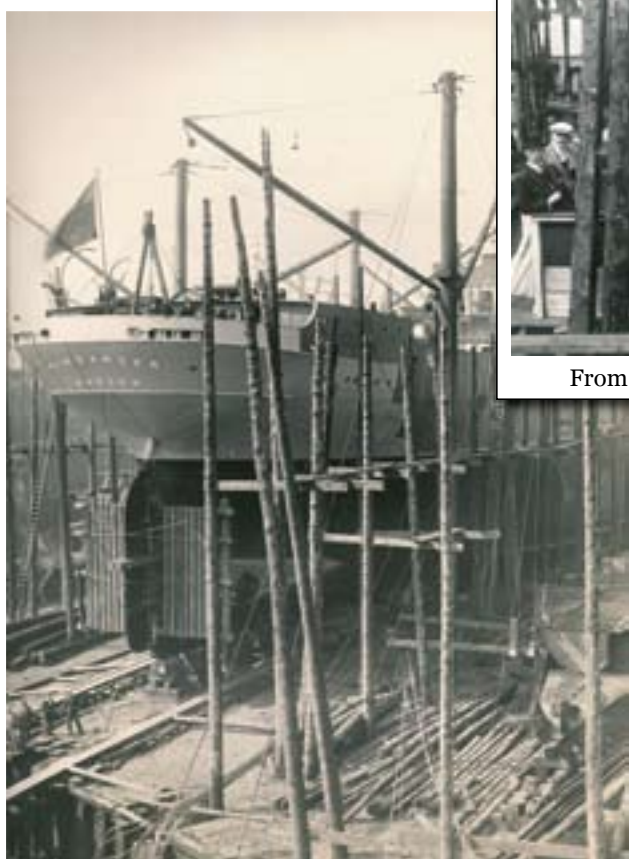
FROM TRAMP TRADE TO LINER AND TANKER TRADE

Tank and overseas liner trade were sectors that expanded within international shipping in the 1920s and 1930s, and Norwegian ship owners were major agents. Westfal-Larsen was among the few Bergen shipping companies that went in for these sectors. In 1938 the company was the largest in Bergen, holding around a fourth of the town's total tonnage, but more than half of its tanker tonnage and well over 60% of the liner tonnage. This year Westfal-Larsen was the largest tanker shipping company in Norway.

M/T "Finnanger" (built 1928)



From M/S "Villanger"s launch in 1929



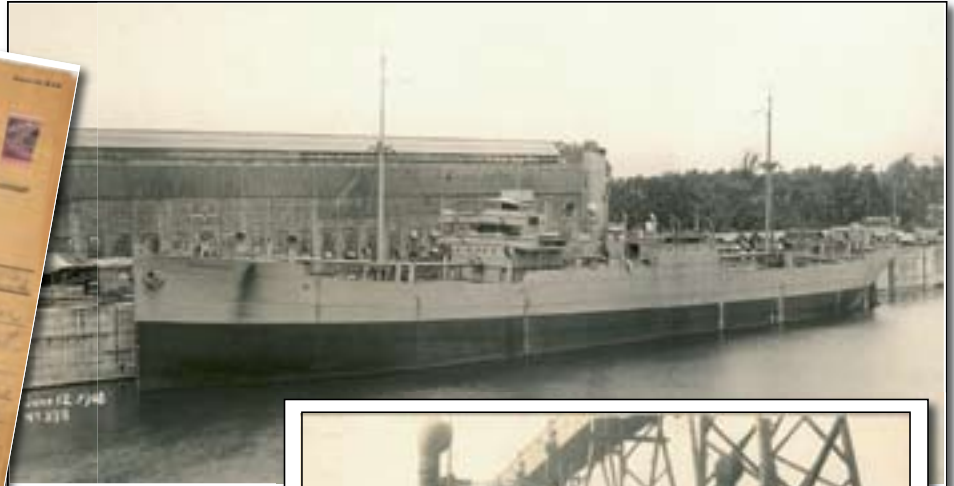
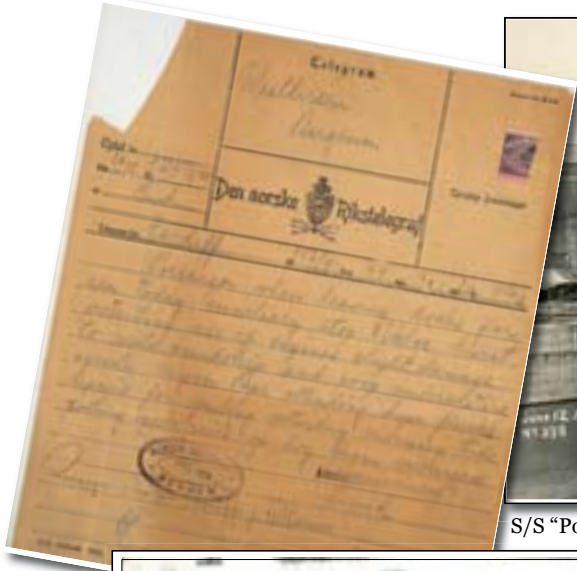
M/S "Hindanger" (built 1929)



M/T "Sandanger" (built 1938)

TRAMP TRADE

The **Bergen fleet** was for the most part engaged in tramp trade also in the years between the World Wars. In spite of Westfal-Larsens growing emphasis on tanker and liner trade, the shipping company also had a small tramp fleet finding business here and there. These were mostly ships built before and during World War I. This fleet was, however, diminished in the period.



S/S "Porsanger" (built 1918)



Crew of S/S "Torvanger", around 1930



Crew of S/S "Risanger"



S/S "Kaupanger" 1930

FROM STEAM TO SAIL POWER

On Sunday February 1st 1925, S/S "Falkanger" left Bergen and headed for Newcastle. The following day the ship's propeller was wrecked midseas, and the engine could no longer be used. Seeing as the wind was westerly, the crew agreed to sail back to Norway. Tarpaulins were transformed into sails and hoisted. The ship set sail for Lista Lighthouse. Three days and nights later the ship moored at Kleven. On February 15th repairs had been made, and the ship could resume its journey to Newcastle.



S/S "Falkanger" (built 1923) at Kleven, February 1925



LINER TRADE

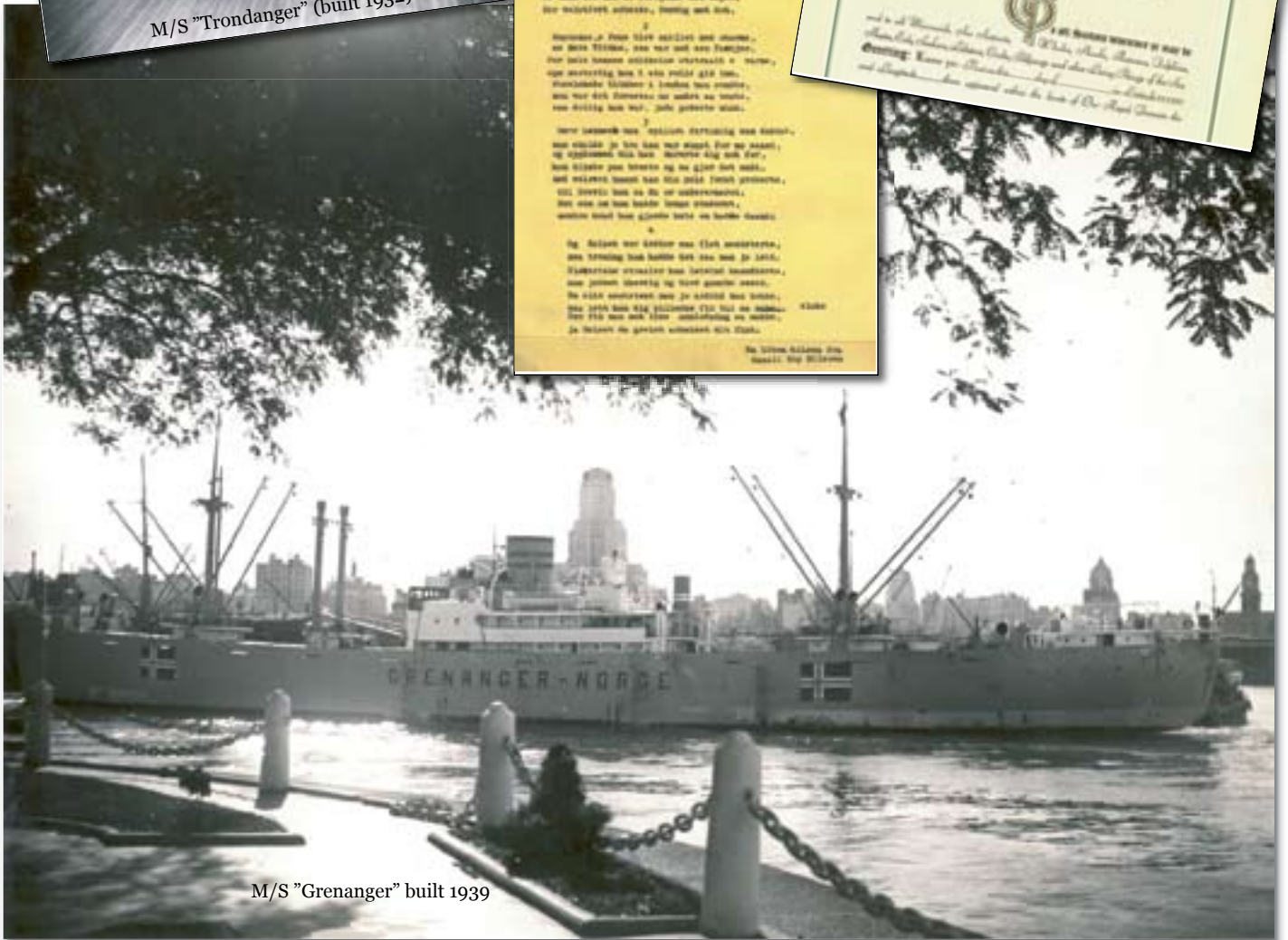
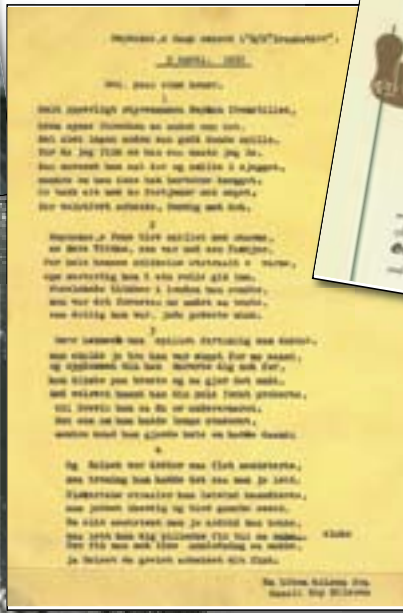
The company started its venture into liner trade in 1921, along with three other Bergen shipping companies. County Line navigated the East Coast of North America as well as the Continent. In 1925 Westfal-Larsen Company Line started a service between the West Coast of North America and around South America, bringing timber and fruit south while returning coffee.

In 1930 Interocean Line was established, navigating between the West Coast of North America and Europe. The Southern Cross Line between North and South America was established in 1939, in cooperation with the J. Ludwig Mowinckel Shipping Company.

M/S "Høyanger" (built 1926)



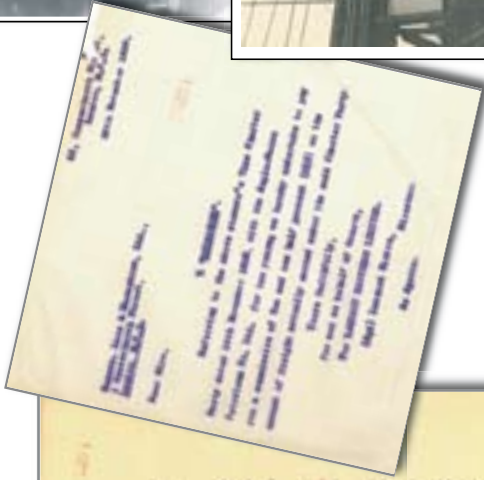
M/S "Trondanger" (built 1932)



M/S "Grenanger" built 1939

TANKER TRADE

The company's first tanker, S/T "Malmanger", was sunk on its maiden voyage in 1917. A new S/T "Malmanger" was delivered in 1920, followed by S/T "Davanger" in 1922. Good results led to further investments in the tanker trade. In the years 1925-1930 another eight tankers were delivered to the company, and two more again in 1938. Westfal-Larsen had now become the largest tanker company in Norway, with a total of 12 ships. Nine of these were to be sunk during World War II.



Crew of S/T "Davanger", The Norwegian Club in London, 1927



S/T "Davanger" (built 1922)



M/T "Nordanger" 1927



First mate, "Nordanger" 1926



Fun and games on board, "Nordanger"



M/T "Varanger" (built 1925)

GREAT WAR LOSSES

Westfal-Larsen & Co A/S experienced greater losses than most other Bergen shipping companies during World War II. In 1940 five of the company's ships and 54 crew members were lost at sea as a result of the war. Out of a fleet of 36 ships, 22 were lost during the war. In comparison, J. Ludwig Mowinckel shipping company lost seven ships out of a fleet of 19.



M/T "Varanger" (built 1925)

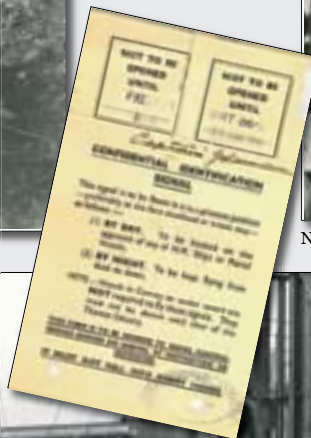
After the war broke out, several of Westfal-Larsen's liners on US West Coast and South America were taken out of service, and employed in the more exposed Anglo-American trade. Many of the company's tankers also navigated the Atlantic. M/T "Varanger" was sunk on January 25th 1942 on the coast off Atlantic City, New Jersey, en route from Curacao to New York.



Crew of M/T "Langanger" in Oran, Algeria, July 1940



Newly installed gun on board M/S "Heranger", 1941



Loading airplanes in New York harbour

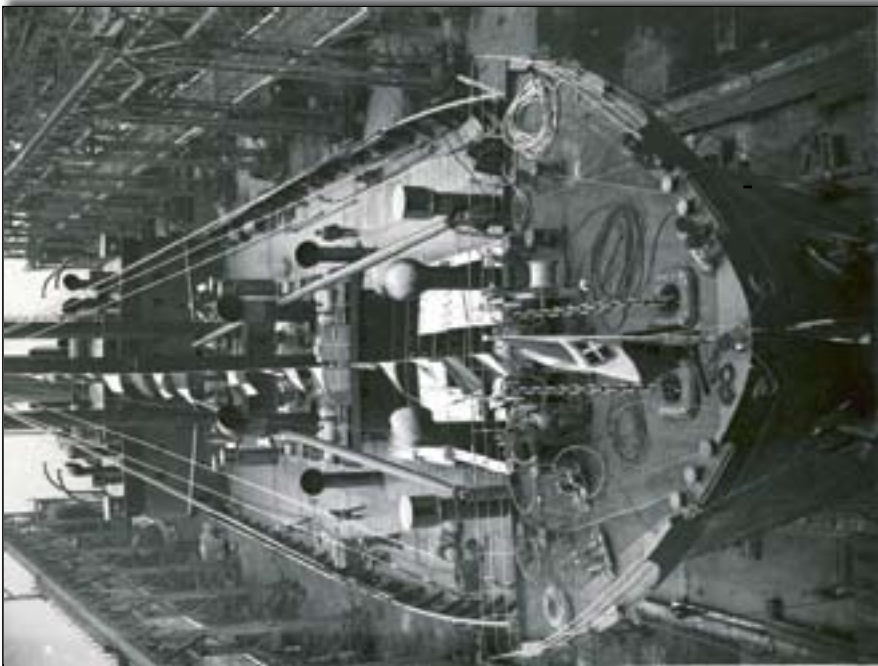


Crew of M/S "Trondanger" in Montevideo, 1943



Crew of M/S "Trondanger" in Buenos Aires, 1943

M/S "SIRANGER" – FROM LAUNCHING TO WRECKAGE



M/S "Siranger" (built 1939)
Vendors on board in the Panama Canal



M/S "Siranger" launched at Cantieri Navali del Quarnero, Fiume, Italy in 1939



Crew of M/S "Siranger"



Aboard the M/S "Siranger" at Coos Bay, Oregon, USA 1939



The M/S "Siranger" was one of two liners delivered to Westfal-Larsen after the outbreak of war in 1939. The ship was built in Italy, and put into service in the Westfal-Larsen Company Line, far away from the war zone. In 1942, however, the "Siranger" was transferred to the Atlantic. On October 24th 1943 it was sunk by the German submarine U-155. The film shows the ship as it sinks, seen from one of the lifeboats that arrived safely on the northern coast of Brazil a week later. All 34 on board survived.



The sinking ship seen from one of the lifeboats

RESTORATION

The great losses Westfal-Larsen suffered during World War II led to Mowinckel's shipping company gaining the top position in Bergen for a short period. There was a lot of competition regarding buying and contracting ships. However, the authorities favoured Westfal-Larsen because of their losses. Two new vessels that had been seized by the Germans were returned; in addition the company gained seven American standard ships and one German replacement ship in the years immediately after the war.

After 1948, the number of newbuildings increased steadily. Liner trade was given priority the first few years, but from 1954 and on the company gained several tankers as well. In 1955 the fleet had been restored to its pre-war standard, as was the whole Bergen fleet, six years later than Oslo.

M/S "Ravnanger" (built 1942). American C1A-ship, taken over by Westfal-Larsen in 1946.



M/T "Austanger" (built 1942). Seized by German authorities, returned to Westfal-Larsen after the war.



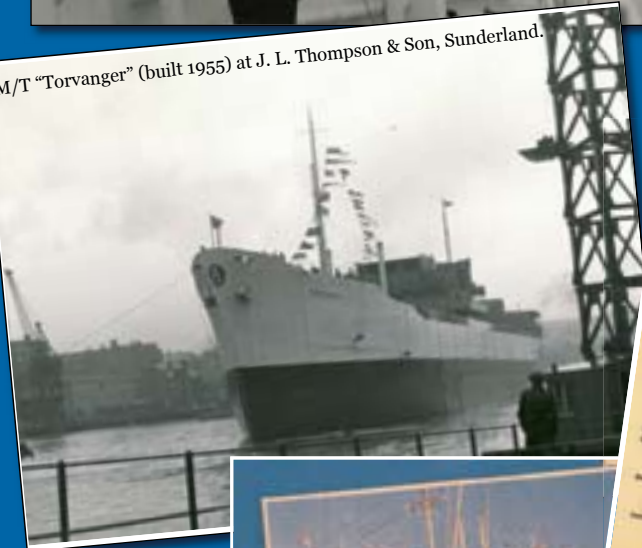
The Liberty ship S/S "Kent County" (built 1943)

RESTORATION

The company flag being hoisted aboard the M/S "Ravnanger" (built 1955) at Bergens Mekaniske Værksted.



M/T "Torvanger" (built 1955) at J. L. Thompson & Son, Sunderland.



Guests at the launch of the M/S "Risanger" (built 1951) at Kockums Mek. Verkstad, Malmö.



M/S "Mauranger" (built 1948) at Oderi Teri Orlando, La Spezia.

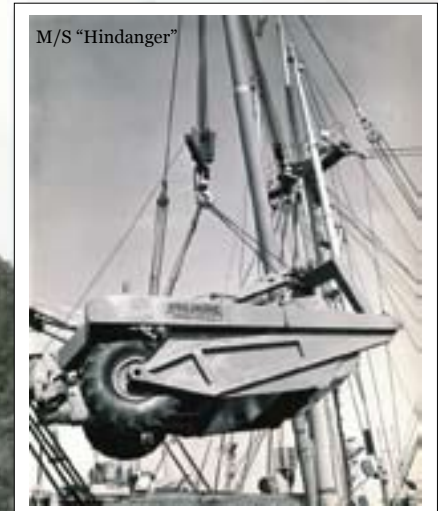
LINER TRADE

Liner trade was given priority after World War II for fear of losing shares of the market, as well as in hope of an increase in profits. Liner services were re-established using American C1A-ships built for purposes of war, but also new vessels arrived on the scene. The company particularly concentrated on the Interocean Line.

Flag discrimination, particularly in South America, posed problems for the liner trade towards the end of the 1950s. Westfal-Larsen pulled out of the County Line in 1958, and the Southern Cross Line was dismantled two years later. The Interocean Line followed suit in 1970, as did the Westfal-Larsen Company Line in 1982. The shipping company's participation in traditional liner trade was over. More efficient bulk and container ships had taken over the market.



M/S "Hindanger" (built 1943) was employed in several of Westfal-Larsen's lines.



M/S "Hindanger"



M/V „PORSANGER“ D.W. 8600 TONS

WESTFAL-LARSEN LINE

OWNERS: WESTFAL-LARSEN & CO. AS, BERGEN, NORWAY

M/S "Porsanger" (built 1958)

GROWTH THROUGH COOPERATION

M/S "Falkanger" (built 1965)



M/S "Malmanger" (built 1968)



M/S "Malmanger" (built 1968)

WESTFAL-LARSEN experienced a growth in business from the 1960s and on. Part of this growth was a result of projects in collaboration with other Bergen shipping companies.



STAR SHIPPING

In 1962 Westfal-Larsen entered into a business venture with Per Waaler's Star Shipping, and in July 1964 they established the Star Bulk Shipping Co. More efficient bulk cargo ships were developed. In 1970 this company operated seven bulk cargo ships.

In 1995 Westfal-Larsen's holdings in Star Shipping were transferred to the newly established Masterbulk Pte. Ltd. in Singapore. Star Shipping is owned by the Grieg Group and Masterbulk, and is the world's largest conveyor of timber products today.



M/S "Falkanger" (built 1965)

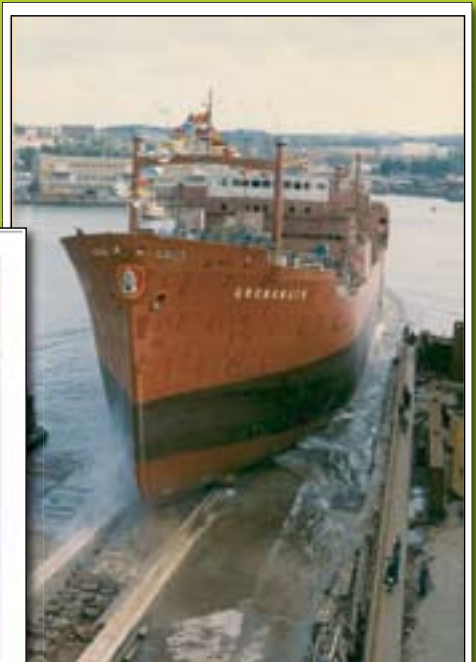
GROWTH THROUGH COOPERATION

ODFJELL WESTFAL-LARSEN TANKERS

Problems in the international tanker market around 1960 led Westfal-Larsen into specialized tanker trade. The company entered into cooperation with Odfjell Shipping Company in 1964. Two brand new specialized tankers, "Austanger" and "Grenanger", were then transferred to Odfjell. In 1980 this collaboration was formalized through the establishing of Odfjell Westfal-Larsen Tankers A/S. In 1990 Westfal-Larsen concluded this collaboration and sold its 13 chemical tankers to Skibs-A/S Storli (Odfjell).



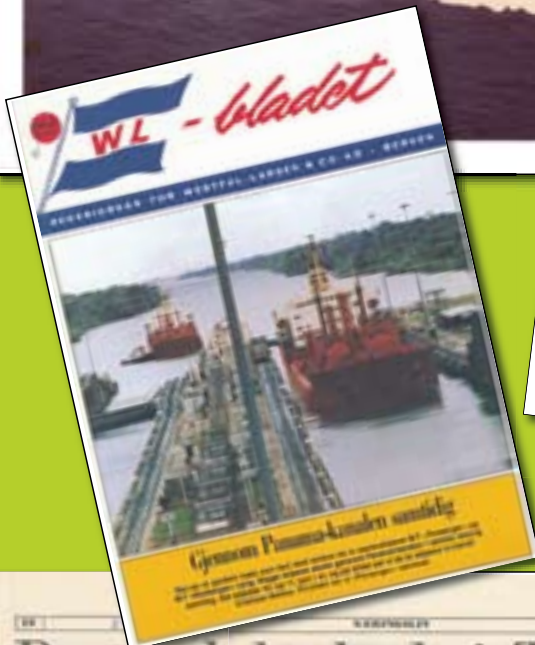
M/T "Torvanger" (built 1976)



M/T "Grenanger" (built 1964)



M/T "Risanger" (built 1976) in Sydney



M/T "Orkanger" (built 1970)

2005

In the year of the centennial anniversary, Westfal-Larsen manages a total of 28 ships of around 1.2 million deadweight tonnage. The fleet contains 24 specialized bulk cargo vessels, three chemical tankers and one gas tanker. Furthermore, two new specialized bulk cargo ships have been ordered for delivery in 2007 and 2008.

The tankers and eight of the bulk cargo ships are run by Westfal-Larsen Management AS in Bergen, while the others are run from Singapore, by Masterbulk Pte. Ltd., owned by Westfal-Larsen. The bulk cargo ships are of the "open hatch" type with gantry cranes. The customary cargo is wood pulp and paper, as well as containers. The ships run within Star Shipping enterprise, which is owned by Masterbulk and Grieg Shipping.



M/T "Fossanger" (built 1988). Tanker for transporting oil and chemicals. The ship has recently been sold to Italian owners, but still sails for Westfal-Larsen Management.



LPG/T "Nordanger" (built 1992). Tanker for transporting gas manufactured from petroleum; liquefied petroleum gas.

M/S "Star Optimana" (built 2003). One of the newest Westfal-Larsen ships, runs for Star Shipping.



Photo: Alabama State Port Authority.

