

# FROM TAIWAN TO COLOMBIA VIA PORTUGAL

## Taiwan; blood stains the blue seas

Last year the fishing boat Dong Chun had four killings at sea in Australian waters. According to Yu Tianshou and the other accused parties, they were driven to kill the captain and officers because they could no longer bear the mistreatment they suffered at their hands. Thus four bodies were thrown in to the sea, and the case created waves here and abroad.

Recently the Fisheries Section of the Department of Agriculture received another case, of a crew member losing his sight as a result of violent mistreatment from the officers of a fishing boat. Investigations by our reporters have revealed that this kind of violence is common in a day's work on Taiwan's fishing boats. The only difference is one of degree. The Dong Chun case, and other reported here, are but a few incidents from the dark side of Taiwan's fishing industry.

Zeng Canze, age 35, came on board Kaohsiung deep sea fishing boat Yi Man 3 last May, through a Taipei "introduction agency". It was his first time at sea. Six months later, he returned home with his left eye put out, his right eye with 1/3 vision (and this after surgery), four teeth knocked out, a split upper lip, and his body covered with obvious scars.

After unsuccessful attempts to work through the fishing company, and unable to track down the ship's officers who had injured him, Zeng took his case to the Department of Agriculture and the Newspaper of FSC (Fishermen's Service Centre-Presbyterian Church of Taiwan). On February 1 Zeng recounted his terrifying sea experience to the reporter from his bed in the ophthalmology section of Taiwan University Hospital.

He describes how the ship's officers made a habit of beating the six or seven new crew members at every turn. They broke one man's arm, and another almost died from loss of blood. The officers attacked them regularly with iron bars. The 1st mate of the ship used a whip to beat them. A knot on the whip hit Zeng in the left eye and he lost sight.

Although this case is currently under investigation by the Fisheries Section of the Department of Agriculture, for a long time past officials have always been party to the interests of the owners, so Zeng Canze will probably have a hard time getting any support from the bureaucrats. He will have to go to court and sue the people who injured him. But then he can't afford the huge expenses of a court case.

The severe beatings that Zeng received on ship are perhaps a more extreme example among cases of mistreatment of fishing boat crews, but if we look at the Dong Chun killings, mentioned at the beginning of this article, and other cases, we can see that the Zeng case is certainly not the isolated case claimed by officials. This kind of pattern is

a smouldering crisis in Taiwan's deep-sea fishing industry, but under official neglect and suppression by the power owners, it has never been fully exposed.

Yvon Lin for two years doing fishermen counselling and case research in the Kaohsiung fishing community. Out of her deep experience of the situation of fishing boat crews she says, "After all, the life of these men at sea is far removed from land society. Their sufferings take place at sea, and so get little notice from the larger society"

## Senegalese fishermen leaders meet canadian fishermen

Two Senegalese fishermen, Dao Gaya and Malic Gueye of Kayar and St. Louis respectively, attended the 14th Annual Convention of the Maritime Fishermen's Union (MFU), held in Moncton in New Brunswick (Canada), on February 9th to 11th, 1990. The Senegalese attended on behalf of the emerging National Collective of Senegalese Fishermen (CNPS). Both the MFU and the CNPS are inshore fishermen controlled organisations that first established contact through the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) members, Aliou Sall of Senegal and Michael Belliveau of Canada. Aliou Sall had previously visited the MFU in 1988 and Michael Belliveau met with Senegalese fishermen in 1987. There has been and continues to be a mutual recognition that the two fishermen's organisations have the basis for long term solidarity in their respective efforts to defend and develop the coastal and inshore fisheries.

Dao and Malic attended all sessions of the Annual Convention and were provided agenda time in plenary session to present their organisation and their fisheries. They established good relations with a number of fishermen and followed up with visits to the widely diverse fishing areas of Northern New Brunswick and Southwest Nova Scotia. They spent one day at sea, lobstering with Graeme Gawn, a fisherman, member of MFU, and another half day in the Government fisheries complex in Halifax. Their visit also coincided with an historic rally in the fishing town of Canso where fishermen, plant workers, and trade-union supporters from across the province were protesting the closure of the town's fish plant and main economic cornerstone by the corporate fishing giant National Sea Products Ltd. It was a unique opportunity to see the problems facing Canadian coastal communities as a result of a resource crisis.

The exchange was assisted financially by contributions from Development and Peace and the Atlantic Committee of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation.

The Senegalese have extended an invitation to the MFU to attend their anticipated 1st Annual Convention and

itis expected at that time to develop practical on-going working relations.

## **South Pacific: the flating curtains of death are still there**

Who will not remember the violent protest actions of last year by the sixteen Pacific countries of the "Forum Fisheries Agency" against Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese fishing boats using extremely destructive fishing techniques? This most destructive fishing technology consisted - and unfortunately still does consist of the use of a nylon monofilament net to form a wall extending between 30 to 60km in length and 10m in depth. These drift nets are used for the capture of albacore tuna in the Pacific waters. (see SAMUDRA Report n82-p-20)

The "Forum Fisheries Agency" as well as various other national research institutes, have furnished scientific data proving the grave risks facing many different marine species, not only fish but also sea mammals and even sea birds, caused by this fishing technology. Some scientists have stated that this type of fishing may wipe out the entire albacore stock in the South Pacific within two years time if no action is taken.

Last January we came to know that Japan had to yield to international pressure and decided to back a United Nations draft resolution calling for an end to high seas drift-netting in the Pacific. What exactly has this resolution to say? The General Assembly recommends all members of the international community, calling upon their responsibility in the conservation and management of living marine resources, as reflected in the Convention on the Law of the Sea, to agree: "a moratoria on all large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing on the high seas by 30 June 1992". This moratoria should be based upon statistically sound analysis to be jointly made by concerned parties of the international community with an interest in the fishery resources of the region.

The draft resolution recommends: "to take immediate action to reduce progressively large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing activities in the South Pacific region leading to the cessation of such activities by no later than 1 July 1991, as an interim measure, until appropriate conservation and management arrangements for South Pacific albacore tuna resources are entered into by the parties concerned". (Draft resolution submitted at the General Assembly of the United Nations -11 December 1989).

The United Nations draft resolution is nothing but a recommendation, the outcome of a laborious compromise between states. It remains relatively vague and will probably only be implemented after a scientific study has been done, a condition imposed by the Japanese in course of the negotiations. But what is even more worrying is the fact that, reckoning the proclamation by some scientists, by the time the resolution will be implemented it may well be too late. The stock of albacore tuna may have been wiped out!

In view of this resolution, the "Forum Fisheries Agency" decided to hold a Convention on albacore resource management in all waters because the text before the United

Nations does not include the Exclusive Economic Zones (ZEE), it only refers to the territorial waters.

Although the extent of drift netting is far from its extensive use as is the case in the Pacific ocean, similar conflicts have surfaced in the Atlantic ocean too, between Spain and France, for example. The European Community intends to draw up a plan for the ban on drift netting for tuna, marlin and swordfish. But this ban will only cover the Atlantic zone leaving the Mediterranean out of bounds.

It is clear that the use of drift netting will affect in the first place the small-scale fisheries, because this fishing activity obstructs the free movement of fish. The main victims are once more the weaker sections, again those sections who unfortunately have little bargaining power to put forward their grievances before international institutions.

## **A historical meeting in Portugal: fishermen and members of the European Parliament get together**

On February 3rd 1990, a meeting between deputies of the European Parliament, members of the sub-commission of fisheries and local fishermen took place in Aguda near Porto (Portugal).

For the Portuguese fishworkers it was an important occasion to be able to have an open discussion with the Eurodeputies because the major decisions on fisheries and the sea are taking place at the level of the European Community. The main interest of the fishermen during this meeting was to be informed about the decisions that had been taken and to express their problems and concerns.

The theme chosen for reflection during the meeting was "Is there a future for the small-scale fishery sector? Some 100 participants exchanged ideas and had many constructive discussions in course of an entire day. They were represented as follows:

- 40 fishermen and owner fishermen from 18 ports and beaches of Portugal and Azores.
- 13 researchers, training personnel and supporters
- 15 delegates from Unions or Public Insurance
- 6 local elected delegates.
- 2 deputies of the Portuguese Parliament
- 3 European deputies.
- the national Director of the "Apostolate of the sea".

The fishworkers of Aguda welcomed the delegation, the preliminary and secretarial work was taken care of by a group of participants of the June 1989 Lisbon Symposium. After the Symposium this group composed of members of Public Insurance, fishworkers delegates of fishworkers unions, researchers, technicians and members of OIKOS (Portuguese NGO), have been meeting regularly. The subject for discussion proposed by them centred around the following five points:

- Support to the small-scale fishery sector by the European Community.
- Integrated development of fishworkers communities, the need for a social policy.

- Ecology and development.
- Hygiene and safety.
- Specific issues related to the Madera and Acores regions.

The district president made the remark that never could he imagine that fishermen would sit together with such dignity, such was the high level of questions posed during the meeting. All participants intervened as individuals, only the Northern Association of owner fishermen from Povoá do Varzim made their intervention as a group.

The regional press and local radios made a considerable coverage of the meeting.

The author of the document - under deliberation by the European Parliament, concerning the recognition and protection of "small-scale artisanal fisheries" (Mr Vasco Garcia) - explained in his intervention the reason for this deliberation not yet being adopted by the economic Commission in Parliament.

This proposal before the European Parliament aims at providing young fishermen substantial assistance in setting up fishing activity, vocational training, retirement benefits for older fishermen, assistance to fishermen's associations and cooperatives, subsidise mutual benefit schemes and credit systems, but most important is the integrated human policy, the social and cultural recognition of the fishing community. Talking about a change in the policy approach of the European Commission was for many participants, such a new attitude beyond their imagination. Everyone hopes to witness one day the recognition and protection by the European Community of local artisanal fisheries!

Mr Miranda da Silva, known for his many interventions at the European Parliament in favour of artisanal fisheries, proposed to hold a meeting between professionals of this sector on a European level. According to him, such a dialogue between fishermen from various countries would permit them to confront international decisions and settle conflicts "between countries" or gear conflicts between front-line states.

An other interesting fact which surfaced during the debates was the fact that the fishermen have little or no access to research studies and information available with the fishery administration. And that the scientists themselves are often handicapped to undertake the research studies which seem to them opportune because of the lack of means at their disposal or because of hierarchical impediments. On the other hand, the scientific data which the policy makers avail themselves to justify the decisions taken are not always available. No doubt the reason for this is towards the existence or the limitations of this knowledge which supposedly are to serve as the basis for the decisions taken. Ms Renee Conan, member of the European Parliament, pointed out, that at the level of the European Community similar problems exist.

Other questions debated were in particular questions relating to marine pollution, resource management, the existence of a six mile zone reserved to artisanal fisheries, the safety at sea, etc.

At present, no target has been set for the follow-up of these debates but the participants hope that once the information has been disseminated to the fishermen they will mobilise support and see to it that the Parliamentary Resolution is being implemented. It is of great importance not only to the Portuguese fishermen but to all fishermen of the European Community.

## Mauritius : when fishworkers take the initiative

In November 1989, the Association of Professional Fishermen of Mauritius (APPIM), representing 600 out of a total number of 2.500 fishermen on the island, organised a workshop on the future of small-scale fisheries. It became quite clear that the majority of the fishermen of the island were feeling very unsettled about the future of their profession.

Four points for reflection were proposed:

- the problem of pollution
- unauthorised fishing
- security on sea
- the access to credits

In course of the preliminary work it was hoped that government officials could be invited for the workshop to allow them to be acquainted with the fishworker's problems. One fisherman, for each item of the agenda, briefed the government officials on the problems related to that particular subject, they put forward their worries and suggested solutions. In this way a dialogue could take place between the fishermen and the authorities. Two ministers and some administrative personnel took part in the workshop. Two journalists were also present to ensure the coverage in the media and allow a wider communication with other sections of the population, who are most often not aware or badly informed about the conditions of life of the fishermen. It is furthermore planned to sustain the dialogue with the authorities on the four themes treated during the workshop. Four sub-commissions are in charge of further studying the questions in detail and negotiating with the concerned authorities.

"The problem of pollution due to industrialisation and tourism has become today the main preoccupation of Mauritius", says Jacques Rose, fisherman and president of Ap-PIM. "We have therefore contacted some NGOs working on these problems and asked them to analyse the degree of pollution and propose actions to be taken". The beaches are more and more being polluted by tourist complexes and the fishermen are driven further inland where they have no access to the sea. On the other hand sewage water is discharged directly into the lagoons and causes the depletion of fish resources. The people of the island are becoming more and more conscious of these pollution hazards and the fishworkers side with this growing awareness to put pressure upon the authorities to take action.

*"For what the safety at sea is concerned, the fishermen take always to the sea with their single boat and with-*

out any safety devices", remarks Robert Fleurot, in charge of training at the Institute for Development and Progress (IDP), the institute that sponsors AAPIM. "The problems are twofold: safety jackets and the operational conditions of the boats. The government did provide the fishermen with safety equipment but without giving them training in the use of these appliances. Consequently, the fishermen sold these materials to make some extra money. For what seaworthiness of the boats are concerned, many old "rafts" are still being used which do not conform with any safety measures. Some of them are 30 to 50 years old and the owners spend very little money on repairs in order to keep up their profit margin. Thus, the fishermen have to face the risks. In heavy sea the boats break into pieces. Four fishermen were drown in this way in November 1987"

Concerning unauthorised fishing, dynamiting is the most common practice in Mauritius. This practice is on the decrease because of the implementation of new laws. An other illegal fishing activity, practised by the fishermen themselves, is underwater fishing. The youngsters, in particular, resent the laborious time spend on the construction of traps or long line fishing, which is often with little result. Because under-water gear is easily available, they prefer fishing with harpoon. This fishing activity gives them more leisure time. This situation has traps of others, cephalopods are particularly the target, the coral reefs natural habitat of many fish species - are destroyed in this way, causing serious implications for the future resources.

Under-water fishing is directly linked with the use of dynamite. In fact when exploding at sight a shoal of fish, 75% of the fish killed disappears to the bottom of the sea. With the help of diving equipment the entire capture is now assured. "At present, asserts Jacques, this abusive activities are on the decrease. APPIM strongly denounced this practice in a press conference and has alerted the authorities".

The problem of access to credit is becoming a major issue for the fishworkers organisation because the latter are unable to secure loans from the banks because of the high interest rates. Moreover the intermediaries - the "banians" in creole language - choose to maintain the fishworkers in a state of dependency. Moreover more and more outside investors induce their surplus capital into fisheries and exploit the small-scale fishermen.

To counter these problems APPIM and IDP established in 1976 a Revolving Fund Project. This people's savings scheme allows the granting of loans, almost free of interest, to small-scale fishery projects. But the demand is becoming considerably too heavy for APPIM, so they consider calling upon the government to make the official credit system more accessible to fishworkers.

## Europe: the barrels of shame

Whether in the English Channel or the Atlantic, not a single month goes by without some fishermen pulling up in their nets barrels containing toxic substances lost at sea by cargo or container ships in their passage from the North

Sea to the Atlantic or vice versa.

Who will not remember the "Perentis" and her containers with lindane, considered as one of the twelve most dangerous pesticides lost in the Channel? The 1.500 barrels sank to the bottom of the sea never to be found. For the past two years they still remain till today a permanent danger to marine resources and the coastal populations.

The trawlers from Brittany (France) bear witness to the fact that this is not an isolated case, the fishermen frequently catch barrels containing a variety of dangerous toxic substances like ammonia, potassium hydroxide, chloromethan, etc. Not to mention those that are washed ashore on the beaches causing grave dangers of contamination to the populations.

Every year some 100 barrels are found with toxic substances lost at sea by container ships. Last February two ships lost in a heavy storm 23 containers near the coast of Brittany. One of these ships, an Israeli vessel, had a cargo of methyl chloride aboard, a very nefarious toxic gas.

Every year some 30 million tons of toxic chemicals transit through this area: the Atlantic, the English Channel and the North Sea. Storms and heavy weather are very frequent in these regions. Consequently, the danger of containers carelessly stacked on deck face a permanent danger of being lost at sea.

The frequency of such accidents imperil marine resources, the lives of the fishermen and health of the populations. The cup is filled to the brim in Brittany. The Local Fishery Committee of Guilvinec (Brittany, France) took the initiative to alert the government authorities for its negligence insisting upon preventive measures to be taken.

*"The environment receives by each and every hazardous accident an irreparable set-back". the committee has alerted the minister of the sea. "At every instance when such accidents occur an imminent ecological catastrophe is likely to happen, maybe not in the near future, but beneath the surface of the oceans lies a bomb ready to explode".*

"As the trawlers are the main garbage collectors of the sea, we propose that they be assisted by the government for the social service they perform. The captain who 'harvests' barrels of toxic waste should be relieved of them quickly either by helicopter or by a ship of the navy".

"It seems of utmost importance to make a start with working out rules and regulations with regard to the stacking of barrels and containers with dangerous substances. The safety rules and regulations in the construction of such goods need to be amended. The control on board at the time of embarkation, stop over, arrival and eventually at sea has to be intensified. to us it seems more reasonable to store such dangerous substances in the hull of the ship instead of fastening them on deck where they risk to be thrown over board by the any minor storm".

The European Economic Commission has decided recently to finance an urgent programme at the

tune of 700.000 US \$ for a research study on accidental water pollution to be carried out by the Centre for Documentation, Research and Development (CEDRE) in collaboration with the USA, Canadian and Swedish coast guards. This initiative was, no doubt, prompted by the cry of outrage by the fishworkers against the damages done to humanity and the environment by the barrels of shame.

## Boga; the birth of a bulletin

Its name is "Boga", meaning "Wave". This bulletin, addressing the fishermen's wives, is sure to navigate the high seas. This new initiative will doubtlessly be welcomed by all those who endeavour to validate the important role women play within the fishing community.

The bulletin was launched following the Second International Meeting of Fishermen's Wives held at Galicia (Spain) last year. This International Meeting, converging on the theme of solidarity, brought together fishermen's wives from 5 French and 14 Spanish fishing ports. Some 130 women took part in the deliberations. For several days they discussed the role of women within the fisheries sector.

"Opening these first pages of "boga" is a tribute to our commitment, we are embarking on the road of hope. A commitment to our many efforts, tenacity and steadiness. We shall walk cautiously but with firm step. The road we embark upon is paved with friendship, generousness and determination", says the editorial.

"If all women of the world decided to walk hand in hand, happiness would be assured by tomorrow. For us, we dare say, this happiness has been realised today", add Jacqueline and Cristina.

In this first issue we find the report of the Second International Meeting, the interventions of women. *For us, we dare say, this happiness has been realised today*", add *Jacqueline and Cristina*

In this first issue we find the report of the Second International Meeting, the interventions of women groups from Spain, "Pays Basque", France providing valuable information on the living conditions of the women at the fishing harbours and their courageous struggle in defence of their rights.

Bon voyage "Boga"!

"Boga" is published by; Apostolado del Mar, Dr. Cadaval 4-6°δG, Vigo, Espana.

## Columbia: more than a question of drugs

Day after day, week after week we see in the media a country torn apart by the war against drug traffic. But that is not the only thing happening in Columbia, the Columbian people are also struggling for an other type of development.

In the fishery sector, for instance, the artisanal fishermen have in response to the hardship of their life been able, after 15 years of protracted struggle, to obtain from the government an integrated development programme. This programme includes:

- Vocational training
- technical assistance
- basic infrastructure
- credit and marketing facilities

The establishment of a Service Centre for Artisanal Fisheries (CESPA) aims at supporting at the national level the creation of economic production units. These Centres will look after the development of long distant as well as coastal fisheries.

The national strategy of the CESPA Centres aim at assuring the needs of the artisanal fishermen and obtain an optimal development of their productive activity. In order to reach this goal, it is planned to start an intensive promotion campaign and to organise the fish communities to enable their active participation in the management of the Centres. It is also intended to harness technical and financial assistance and integrated training facilities to fishing communities through the national institutions.

These various initiatives are designed to generate income, to improve the living standard of the fishing communities and to increase the availability of fish at the national market. The CESPA programmes also aim at a greater participation of women in the production process and the preservation of the environment by the fishermen.

The locations identified for these projects are situated along the Pacific coast, the Atlantic coast and the basins of the Magdalena, Cauca and San Jorge rivers.

Finally, a National Institute for Fisheries and Aquaculture has been set up, in order to strengthen the support base for the fisheries sector. The Institute will also contribute to an efficient sustenance of artisanal fisheries.