

## **Political-Ideological and Organizational Mass Work of the International Seafarer's Club in Vladivostok in the 1930s\***

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**Abstract:** The study considers the political-ideological and organizational mass work of the International Seafarer's Club in Vladivostok in the 1930s identifying and analyzing the reasons for setting up the Vladivostok Seafarer's inter-club as well as its main activities and specificity. The author reveals the results of ideological and organizational work and characterizes major achievements and disadvantages.

**Key words:** The International of seafarers and port workers, international Seafarer's Club, international movement, political-ideological work, propaganda, core group, foreign seafarers, socialist transformations

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In triumph of the October revolution in Russia in 1917, the idea of world revolution began to sound in a novel way. Proletarian internationalism became the political and ideological component of the Soviet Russia. The USSR governing body not only attached great importance to the education of the workfolk on the principles of proletarian internationalism but strived to establish contacts and develop relations with the workers of the capitalist countries in order to involve them in the struggle against the imperialists and capitalists, to break up the foundations of capitalist system from the inside, thus, freeing the way to establish global socialism. To this end in 1919, the 3rd Communist International (Comintern) was established as a global international communist organization.

The Red International of Trade Unions (Profintern), founded in 1921, was functioning under the leadership of the Comintern. The Profintern included one of the largest international trade union associations the International of Seafarers and Port Workers (ISPW), established at the initiative of the USSR in 1930. ISPW had its organizational structure in 22 countries and 19 colonies and managed the operation in three main areas the revolutionary movement, the relationship between the center of Moscow-Berlin and the rest of the world the espionage (Losev, 2003).

**Literature review:** In the 1920s the Pacific region gradually turned into a new world trade-economic and political center. Under these circumstances the Soviet state had to maintain and consolidate its military-political

and economic status in the region. The transition from economic revival to accelerated development in the USSR caused a great interest to currency and export sectors of the economy. This resulted into brisk growth of Pacific trade. Thus, the fish, forest and furs exports increased, mining of strategic minerals such as gold, silver, coal, oil, etc. expanded. Under these conditions the port of Vladivostok remained one of the most important communication hubs and market outlets in the far east of the country. The continued presence of a significant number of foreign citizens-ship crew members in the port of Vladivostok-contributed to the development of international activity in the city.

In accordance with the resolution of the 1st International Conference of Revolutionary Seafarers in Moscow, the International Seafarer's Club was established in Vladivostok in April 1923 to strengthen international relationships with the Far Eastern workers. This event was of great political importance, since the Club was the only one on the Western shores of the Pacific Ocean. The International Seafarer's Club in Vladivostok just like the international clubs in other 12 major ports of the USSR and 25 ports abroad was the body of the International of Seafarers and Port Workers (ISPW) closely linked with the Red International of Trade Unions (Profintern) in Moscow. Direct management of inter-clubs in the USSR was carried out by the Soviet Bureau of ISPW in Moscow (affiliated at the Profintern). According to the directives of the Soviet Bureau of ISPW, approved by the All-Union Central Council of Trade-Unions, the inter-club held daily work whose main task was to demonstrate to foreign seafarers the achievements of the Soviet Union in order to attract them

to defense the Soviet Union in case of an attack of the imperialists and at the same time to focus them on fighting for their own everyday interests as well as combat against fascism, for establishing soviet power all over the world (Anonymous, 1930).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The activity of the seafarer's Club was characterized by the diversity of international work types which became widespread in the 1920s-1930s. These were group and individual conversations on ships and in the club; illustrating specific examples of achievements of the USSR (visits to the enterprises, rest houses, children's camps, hospitals, schools, etc.); night sessions with soviet workers and in particular, seafarers and port loaders; provision to the seafarers cultural recreation and entertainment (amateur's nights, cinema, cultural campaign to theater, etc). Thus, the report of Vladivostok inter-club for the 1st half-year of 1933 states: "conducted international work included the following) carrying the revolutionary days) organizing protests against execution of young men in Scottsboro (Scottsboro Boys was a group of nine black youngsters who in 1931 were brought before a court of the Alabama state (USA) on rape charge. The case became a pivotal milestone in the fight against racism and for a fair trial. The case was conducted by the jury composed entirely of white jurors; it was noted by the manifestations of the false testimony, the reversal of sentences, the attempted lynching and the dishonesty of the court) holding conversations about Harlan events (5 Insurgent warfare of American mining workers in the town of Harlan or Evarts (USA, Kentucky) for civil rights which was suppressed by government troops in 1930) discussing about Thalmann's (The leader of the German Communists; Reichstag Deputy in 1925-1933; one of the main political opponents of Hitler) arrest talking about the arrest of 200 Japanese communists (On July 14, 1930, a group of communists, nearly 200 persons who insisted on a decisive struggle, were arrested by the Japanese police. This group proclaimed itself the Communist party of Japan. Its members were adherents of the precepts of the Comintern and formulated the strategy of "early development of the revolution in Japan)" and noting the release of Tom Mooney (An active participant in the labor movement in the USA; an activist of the World Industrial workers organization. In 1916, he was sentenced to death for murder on false charges. In 1918, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. In 1939 he has been released under pressure from the civil society. In 1961, he was officially rehabilitated). A total of 103 rallies were held. Besides, 16 international gatherings were organized. Four gatherings were conducted together with the foreign

workers (attended by 1500 people). Two radio magazine matinees were released. Two movies-"Thwack on chains" and "Far-off Brothers" were shown (Anonymous, 1933). In the club the seafarers were provided with newspapers, magazines, books in their native languages. In addition, the interclub staff provided seafarers all sorts of minor services at their request such as writing and sending letters assistance in visiting the doctor, embarkation, shopping, sightseeing, etc.

The letters of foreign seafarers, who visited inter-club are of particular value when judging the work of the International Club in Vladivostok. Since the work at the club was carried out exactly for them their evaluation was quite objective. Thus, the letter from the Danish seafarers of the "Garonne" steamship states. Being on the way to Europe, we decided to drop you a few lines about the inter-club. We were in Vladivostok for 5 weeks and attended the club every night-it was our second home. We never thought that we would find so many friends abroad and thus we were very sorry that we had to leave Vladivostok and the club. We are very grateful to you for everything you did for us. We thank the instructor on organizational matters comrade Wenner for giving us a real understanding on the present situation in the USSR and for all his work with us. We were at 3 ports of the USSR and Vladivostok was best of them since there was no other place with such good club"(Anonymous, 1961). These words complement impressions written in the letters of other foreign seafarers. "The seafarers inter-club carries out a great work among the foreign seafarers. In Vladivostok where we were 3 days, we had a good time." Norwegian seafarers made an emphasis in their letter on a great attention that was paid to them in Vladivostok as compared to the ports of the Black Sea. "Two days we attended the circus, where we could see the high level of physical culture and sports in the USSR. We have been to many countries but only in the Soviet Union people are more serious about the recreation and pastime of seafarers as compared to the capitalist countries (Anonymous, 1961).

The work of the Vladivostok inter-club was highly evaluated in the letters of other foreign seafarers who visited the club during their stay in the USSR. "We arrived from Odessa to Vladivostok for 20 days,-states the letter of the Norwegian seafarers of the "Christensen" motor ship dated 28.04.1934 where we attended the Inter Club and also visited workmen's clubs and factories. All of this gave us the understanding that the USSR is indeed a country of the working class. We have seen that the one who wants to live and work will always find a job. We had the opportunity to talk to the working men and women who were pleased to explain to us the essence of the new system in which they build their new life". The seafarers

who came from abroad were greatly impressed by the fact that they could freely walk everywhere and no one was asking them neither for money, nor for a cup of coffee, bread or lodging for the night as it happened pretty often in all capitalist ports: "We have been to America, France, Germany and everywhere we were besieged by hungry people, homeless people-so we're talking based on personal experience. We arrived at a conclusion that the workers in the capitalist countries are innocent in their distressful situation-the capitalist system with the help of its lackeys, the social-democratic parties, plunge the working class into the abyss of poverty. We are convinced that for the workers the only way out of the capitalist oppression is a revolutionary activity. We, the workers know from our experience that we will succeed only within a unified front under a revolutionary leadership (Anonymous, 1933).

However, some gaps, omissions and the formalism were found in the activities of Vladivostok International Club that was related to the lack of detailed and serious attention to work with foreign seafarers. This in turn had a significant negative impact on the whole international work. "The conversation with foreign seafarers on the topic of "Soviet physical culture" as is stated in the memo on evaluation of the inter-club work-was conducted quite superficially with no deeper exploration of the issue. When analyzing the state of sports in the capitalist countries, a wealth of factual material was not taken into account. Thus, the arguments during the discussion were untenable. Watching the "Transbalt" movie revealed the ugly technical condition of the equipment in the cinema. The film was shown without any explanation and help texts; as a result it was very difficult even for us, who know our way of life and conditions, to link various episodes together. As to foreign seafarers, of course, they didn't get any impression from this movie except natural frustration that was caused by bad technical demonstration (Anonymous, 1933).

In general, the activities of the sections and the club were left to chance. The club's governing body practiced formalism and superficial approach to fulfilling direct duties. The club has not carried out the work restructuring in the light of new political challenges. The sections work plans were drawn every month, though nobody checked them. The liabilities of individual sections for regular organization of tours for seafarers to Soviet enterprises and ships (that was of great interest to foreign seafarers and had political importance) usually were not accomplished (Anonymous, 1933).

Agitation and propaganda were often abstract, not concrete, not always associated with seafarer's daily living needs and requests. For example, during the visit to the museum, "the answer to the Afro-American's question about Lenin depicted in the portrait was given in

such a manner that foreigner got the impression like Lenin was a kind of deity rather than political leader. During the conversation about the XVII Party Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (CPSU(b)) held on the Italian steamship by the head of the inter-club, the essence of the conversation was not aligned with the interests of seafarers and in fact was not understood.

However, the inter-club has occasionally faced problems, usually of economic nature. Underfunding and lack of suitable premises resulted in prolonged suspension of work. Comrade Starpin, the Executive Secretary of Pacific Secretariat of the International Dockworkers and Fishermen (PS-IDF), wrote to comrade Lavrentyev at the Regional Committee of the CPSU draw your attention to the number of abnormal aspects concerning the Inter-Club in Vladivostok. The previously practiced type of work is halted. In Vladivostok, there is the organization of the PS-IDF which conducts its work through the inter-club in Vladivostok as well as there are branches that exist on the territory of your region in the ports of Sovetskaya Gavan and Mago. With regard to work there the situation is even more abnormal. I consider closing of the inter-club in Vladivostok at a time when 10-12 foreign ships remain every day in harbor of the Vladivostok port totally abnormal and politically harmful. In the past 2 months since the closure of the club, we had to organize a number of political campaigns having great international importance and all of these campaigns were held without proper coverage of foreign seafarers staying in Vladivostok that caused among them great dissatisfaction, because here they do not have such cultural care which is provided in other ports of the USSR (Anonymous, 1961).

The problems of Vladivostok inter-club associated with the lack of premises, led to the fact that foreign seafarers remained without any service despite the availability of a large number of ships (12 foreign ships as of 20.09.1933), a number of important political campaigns associated with the International Youth Day (International Youth Day, or International Festival of Progressive Youth, celebrated from 1915-1945) and the anniversary of the occupation of Manchuria. With the help of the primorsky regional committee, the inter-club purchased summer houses in Sedanka (suburb of Vladivostok) for carrying out special work among the Japanese and Korean seafarers. "The premises allocated to the Inter-Club-as is stated in the memo concerning the status of inter-club in Vladivostok in 1933-is not suitable for normal operation and requires repair. As of today, it is absolutely not equipped (no furniture, dishes, etc.). The local organizations (Raikomvod, SSPF (Security of Ships and Port Facilities) and City soviet) helped just ideologically. Instead of providing real help, the Soviet Bureau of ISPW limited assistance to sending just two sets of chess and checkers (Anonymous, 1961).

Due to lack of real and effective assistance from the party, Soviet and economic governing bodies, the status of Inter-club left a lot to be desired. As a consequence, its political-ideological and organizational work significantly worsened. The daily attendance of the club by foreign seafarers became extremely low, ranging from 15-60 persons, while number of foreign ships put into a port amounted to 10-12 with the crews of 250-300 persons per day. Having been on the Black Sea, foreign seafarers noted that the Black Sea clubs were equipped much better and provided much better service than in Vladivostok.

In Vladivostok, unlike the ports of the central part of the USSR, the situation with the socialist places of interest to visit by foreign seafarers was very poor. The objects which were worth showing, were sensitive, while the objects that could be shown were in a poor condition and thus it was better not to show them at all. Therefore, majority of foreign seafarers judged about socialist construction in Vladivostok by the condition of the inter-club which (both in terms of the internal and the apparent condition of the premises), according to its head, was creepy "The club looks not much better than any third-rate tavern in the capitalist port (Anonymous, 1961).

It should be noted that such characterization of Inter-club was also given by foreign seafarers who have visited Vladivostok. Thus, in the letter of Norwegian seafarers from the "Christensen" motor ship dated 30.03.1934 the following was written with regard to Vladivostok inter-club: "We were in different inter-clubs of the USSR, last time in Odessa. In those clubs there were separate rooms for each section, where we could read and write letters as well as take part in political discussions. General international meetings were arranged in the common hall. We danced there and had fun. Pictures of socialist industrialization and collectivization giants, etc. were hung on the walls. It was very warm there. The snack bar offered us hot coffee, beer, etc. All this made us to be fond of inter-club and strive there after work on the ship. In Vladivostok we were hosted by a cool club. The room was not sufficiently heated. All meetings were held in the same room and very late. We had no chance to write a letter or read a newspaper. It is clear why many of the seafarers do not attend the club. Inter-clubs are our home in all parts of the world, wherever we come, therefore they need to be convenient and comfortable to attract seafarers (Anonymous, 1961).

The inter-club's staff issue was problematic as well. As a rule, employees were low-skilled and very poorly developed politically. They were not well familiar with the lives of seafarers their requirements and needs. In the core group there were just a few party members. The core

group periodically could not cope with the load of the socio-political issues. A memo on the work of the club states: "We need to change all employees in the Chinese section, because they do not meet even the minimum requirements on the political plane. We need employees who speak Cantonese and Shanghai dialects. The lack of Greek instructors is felt sharply and meanwhile we have to work with the Greeks who are engaged as opportunity interpreters. The main drawback of our instructor's staff is their linguistic diversity that complicates collective work to increase knowledge on specific issues of seafaring movement. Please, urgently select politically prepared members who either can or cannot speak foreign languages from the core group members of the party, the Komsomol and the best shock-workers from industry (Anonymous, 1933).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to a memo sent to comrade Tanygin at the Primorsky Regional Committee of the CPSU(b) about the findings of the inter-club performance over the period from 20-26 of May, 1934, the following was needed to improve the situation at the inter-club's sections) to strengthen the employees with good political and educational level, because the conduction of political conversations requires handling vast factual material on various issues) to affiliate to the inter-club good interpreters in German and English languages) to improve the material infrastructure of the inter-club and its sections (furniture, paintings, flowers, etc.,) to provide section rooms with diagrams, reflecting socialist construction, to hang two maps reflecting the state of our industry before the October revolution and after, providing the maps with relevant texts in European languages) to equip the individual sites, reflecting in photographs various aspects of our Soviet construction and way of life, such as physical culture, the conquest of the Arctic, the site of the Red Army as well as health care, new construction projects, etc. and ) to introduce the right system for demonstration of pictures and presenting documentary films (Anonymous, 1933).

Despite numerous disadvantages and unsatisfactory condition of the Inter-club's premises, its main activities and the deployment of all kinds of cultural and political-ideological work were performed in a timely manner. Of course, the club could perform good and quality work and achieve significantly better results, but only in case of a systematic and efficient help from the local party, trade union and state bodies. Critical financial situation of the inter-club forced its governing body to limit the costs on

**Table 1: The number of foreign ships visited the Vladivostok port and the number of crews in 1935 and during 4 months (from January to April) of 1936**

Flag of the ship	The number of ships		The number of crews	
	1935	1.01-30.04.1936	1935	1.01-30.04.1936
English	49	1	1833	32
American	1	2	38	71
German	1	-	46	-
Norwegian	26	6	908	198
Danish	2	-	59	-
Greek	26	2	901	61
French	4	-	199	-
Italian	5	-	147	-
Japanese	89	14	4274	920
Chinese	18	10	809	457
Total	221	35	9216	1739

Note: The Chinese crews were working not only on the ships sailed under the Chinese flag, but English, American, Norwegian and French ships as well. The number of Chinese seafarers who have visited Vladivostok amounts to 1862 people (in 1935) and 464 people (for 4 months of 1936) 5

the cultural work (night sessions with soviet workers, amateur's nights, tours, etc.) to the extreme. The financing provided by the Soviet Bureau to the inter-club was as a rule without accounting for the special conditions of the Far East (high prices). This financing was barely enough for the maintenance of the governing body, for small expenditure on the current work, though it did not ensure a normal cultural, ideological and organizational work.

However, the propaganda in favor of the USSR and recruitment in the revolutionary mass movement (ISPW and IRA (International Red Aid) were the main objectives of the inter-club. This is proved by the following figures illustrating the progress made in organizational work: while in the last seven months of 1934 (while headed by comrade Stasevich), the average of 33 people per month were drawn into ISPW supporters and 20 persons-into IRA supporters, just in May of 1935, 73 people were drawn into ISPW and 39 people-into IRA. These results were achieved due to the strengthening and qualitative improvement of the individual propaganda of seafarers by the political commissars and some club activists (Anonymous, 1961).

Several proposals initiated by inter-club head comrade L. Del'val to improve international and mass work of the International Seafarer's Club in Vladivostok are of special interest. In particular, they stated" to oblige the Party Committee, the regional trade unions and baskommorye to find at the request of the inter-club the speakers at rallies, meetings and question and answer session with foreign seafarers) to oblige the Party Committee, party organizers of the port areas and assistants of political commissars of large ships arriving in Vladivostok, to provide the Inter-Club with every assistance in the organization of foreign seafarers-soviet workers night sessions, parties and sporting events (Anonymous, 1961) Point No. 7 should be especially emphasized: "to oblige the Soviet merchant fleet to receipt from captains of foreign ships monetary amounts according to the lists filled in by ship crews "for the performance of "inter-club and to transfer obtained currency to the Inter-Club for subsequent transition to the

representative of the International of Seafarers and Port Workers in Moscow (Anonymous, 1933). These amounts were used, most likely, on the needs of the USSR and were a substantial monetary infusion into the country.

As a major port of the Pacific Ocean, Vladivostok admitted each year a large number of foreign ships. With the beginning of accelerated development of Soviet industrialization this number gradually increased. With the increase in the number of ships the number of crews visiting the inter-club of seafarers and port workers increased as well. However, from statistical data on the number of foreign ships and crews that have visited the Vladivostok port becomes clear that in 1935 the number of foreign ships was at times more than that during the 4 months of 1936. Most likely, this was due to the changing of political and military situation in the Far East. Table 1

By the mid-1930s, the character of inter-clubs performance in the USSR changed due to changing of international situation. Before February 1936 the task of inter-clubs consisted in recruiting of supporters from various countries into ISPW, IRA and the International Association of Friends of the Soviet Union as well as organizing the strikes and other demonstrations of seafarers against ship owners and governments. This task was removed from Inter-Clubs activity according to the resolution of the Soviet Bureau of ISPW of 16.01.1936. Consequently, the major emphasis in the work of inter-clubs now was made at public events of political and cultural nature, leaving aside the organizational work which in the past was the main objective of the inter-clubs (Table 2).

In the context of the changing work profile, 20-40 minutes talks were given in the inter-club and onboard the ships on topics related to not only socio-political and economic situation in the USSR but also to international issues and matters that were of interest to seafarers of a certain country. For illustrative purposes we list the topics on which discussions with crews of two Greek ships were held in April 1936: "Core data about the USSR", "Change

Table 2: Cultural-mass and political work with foreign seafarers for 1935 and 4 months (from January to April) of 1936

Types and scope of work, the number of:	1935	1.01-30.04.1936
Visits to ships by the inter-club staff	1357	126
Conversations held on-board of ships	844	128
People involved in on-board conversations	7981	1082
Group conversations on the shore	384	68
People involved in conversations on the shore	6520	535
Question and answer sessions held	2	1
People involved in question and answer sessions	27	14
Foreign seafarers-soviet workers nights	31	7
People involved in foreign seafarers-soviet workers nights	960	94
Tours	41	7
People involved in the tours	715	75
Visits to other clubs	28	5
People visited other clubs	622	81
Visits to cinemas, parties and concerts	101	31
People visited cinemas, parties and concerts	3575	627
People involved in all kinds of events and entertainments	20200	2508
The average number of people per one ship	91.4	80.9
MISCELLANEOUS		
Letters received from foreign seafarers	75	23
Wall newspapers issued in foreign languages	19	9

Anonymous, 1961

in the Constitution of the USSR”, “Stakhanov movement”, “Improvement of the situation with the workers in the USSR” “Conversation of comrade Stalin with Howard”, “Danger of war and the peaceful policy of the USSR” “Italian-Abyssinian war”, “Tellmann and Thomas Man”, “Situation in Greece”, “Success of the people’s front in Spain”, “Lviv events”, “Germany and Locarno” and “First of May (Anonymous, 1933).

The Inter-Club library in foreign languages (English, German, French, Italian, Chinese and Japanese) contributed to leisure activities of the foreign seafarers. Though, it lacked the literature in Norwegian and Greek languages. With rare exceptions, Soviet literature consisted of translations of speeches and reports of comrades Stalin, Molotov, Manuilsky, Abolin, Shverniki, Dimitrov, Pyatnitsky, Peak, Grunwald (IRA) and the works of Soviet authors (Serafimovich, Sholokhov, Gladkov, Fadeyev, Avdeenko, etc.). However, the Inter-Club was constantly receiving newspapers and magazines in English, such as “Moscow Daily News” (Moscow), “The Daily Worker” (printed media of the communist party of England), “The Daily Worker” (printed media of the communist party of the USA), “Soviet Russia Today” (England), “Soviet Russia Today” (USA), “Monthly Review” (England), “Fairplay” (England) in Norwegian: “New Tid” (printed media of the communist party of Norway) and “Russia” in Swedish: “Sovet Nut” in Danish: “Arbejder Bladet” (printed media of the communist party of Danmark) and “Sovet Rusiya Idag” in Dutch: “Russland Fan Ham”; in French “L’Humanité” (the major printed media of the communist party of France), “La Russie Aujourd’hui” (Paris) and “La Russie d’Aujourd’hui” (Belgium) in Italian: “Il Lavoratore Il Mare” in Greek “Cokinos Kapnas” (Sukhum) and “Embros” (USA); in Japanese: “Kai-Zu” (USA) and

“Kokusai-Tusinsha” (USA), in Chinese: “Working Way” (Khabarovsk) and “For homeland salvation” (Paris) in German: “Der Arbeiter” (New York) and “Internationale Gearshafts Press-Correspondents” (Paris). Besides, inter-club regularly received press releases of the ISPW Secretariat, published in France in French, English and German languages. The issues such as “Worker” (printed media of the communist party of Canada), “Communist Review” (USA), “Kommunistische Internationale” (Switzerland), were received on irregular basis. Printed media in Russian language included “Pravda” (the truth), “Izvestiya” (news), “Pacific Star”, “Red Flag”, “Communist International”, “Agitator’s Satellite”, “Agitator’s Notebook” and “Party Training” (Khabarovsk).

As for tours, in Vladivostok there were just a few sites for excursions, among them the Candy Factory, Physiotherapeutic Institute (PTI), Museum, school on Suifunskaya street and Far Eastern State University (FESU). Unfortunately, foreigners were not allowed to visit Voroshilov Plant and DKAF because these objects were of strategic importance. In summer tours were conducted more often; seafarers were taken out of town (to the railroad employees’ rest house and pioneer camps in Sedanka). Also, foreign guests visited the Soviet ships.

## CONCLUSION

We can speak about considerable improvement in the inter-club’s performance during the period from 1935 to 1936 and successful restructuring of its activities aimed at effective mass ideological and cultural work. Staff capacity of political commissars and activists, who carried out all the work with foreign seafarers during their stay in Vladivostok, significantly increased. These employees had systematically improved their skills. In 1935 they

passed the course on international revolutionary movement of seafarers and port workers and were familiarized with the countries from where ships visited Vladivostok (UK, USA, Scandinavian countries, Greece, China and Japan). Coterie on studying CPSU(b) history was functioning on a regular basis. In the end of 1935, a coterie on the Comintern history was created to study international advancements of Comintern. Besides, presentations and discussions on current politics and events in the life of seafarers were held from time to time<sup>8</sup>.

In 1935-1936, the coterie to study foreign languages (English, Norwegian and Danish) were available in the inter-club. Some activists studied Greek, Chinese and Japanese; others deepened their knowledge in English language through the conversations with foreign seafarers. The core group of the inter-club was regularly instructed about the work with seafarers of particular nationalities and individual ships. There was a practice of holding not only the meeting of political commissars but also the meeting of core team before the arrival of a new ship. At these meetings employees were briefed on the latest events and the lives of seafarers in a particular country. In some cases the Soviet seafarers visiting the club helped club employees in their work with foreign seafarers. This particularly concerned the crew of the "Krasin" icebreaker, whose members as a rule, participated in sports events.

A weak staff of political commissars long remained a significant shortage, since they bore the main burden of responsibility for political and ideological work among foreign seafarers. During the concerned period there were five political commissars (including the head) while previously there were ten of them. The lack of employees proficient in Japanese language was another significant drawback (prior to the spring of 1936 there were two of them, but both were called at the disposal of Moscow). Work with Greek seafarers was carried out employing three Greeks as interpreters, who spoke English, Italian or Spanish. In terms of party affiliation among the political commissars there were two CPSU (b) members, two CPSU(b) compassionates and one member of the communist party of Denmark<sup>9</sup>. Thus, characterizing the work of the Vladivostok

International Seafarers' Club in the 1930s, we can say that its staff has achieved significant results in the development of international relations, despite existence of many problems (mostly of economic nature) which were solved independently by the club staff. A friendly atmosphere, hospitality and care about the visitors to the Country of the Soviets contributed substantially to establishing international relationships and led to good results despite the change in the foreign policy. Vigorous promulgation policy of socialist transformations in the USSR, supplemented by tours to enterprises and organizations, meetings with foremost and shock workers as well as "Stakhanovites" (overachievers in industry and agriculture) had a significant impact on the minds of foreign citizens, their perception of socialism and attitude towards the soviet union.

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