The labour market for seafarers is not an occupationally homogeneous one. It is two-tiered – the first consisting of officers and the second of ratings. Officers are the senior, tertiary-educated crew members, with the most senior being the captain or master of the ship. Ratings on the other hand are the ‘working class of the seas’, firmly situated at the lower end of the crewing hierarchy and labour market. This occupational differentiation of seafarers contributes to new patterns of inequality in the global and local labour markets for seafarers with regard to their recruitment, wages and working conditions.

Further, the operation of merchant navy vessels necessitates ships being crewed with more ratings than officers. Ratings are therefore the highest labour cost for shipowners. These occupational categories have implications for the way in which the labour markets for seafarers operate. Ratings, as the highest cost factor as well as being low-skilled, are recruited from outside the traditional maritime nations (TMN). Countries such as the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Russia, Poland and North and South Korea are the new ratings supply sources. These ratings are largely not unionised and work for a far lower income than their TMN counterparts. Officers, on the other hand, are not subject to the low wages and job insecurity that characterise ratings employment. Officers are highly sought-after in the labour market for seafarers. Currently there is a shortage of officers and a surplus of ratings in the global labour market, a situation that further exacerbates the divide between them (BIMCO/ISF Report: 2001). According to the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), there are currently 1,600 South African seafarers (ratings) employed in the South African merchant
navy. Exact figures are difficult to determine since a register of seafarers does not exist in South Africa.¹

**Trends in the global labour market for seafarers**

Between 1975 and 1982, the international labour market for seafarers was restructured beyond recognition. The scale and pace of this change was unparalleled in the modern industrial world (ILO Report 2001:31), and nothing short of phenomenal in its creation of new labour markets for seafarers. It is one of the most significant events in labour-market restructuring since the first industrial revolution.

It is essential to understand the nature of the global labour market for seafarers prior to 1975, and how it shifted thereafter, to appreciate the significance of the changes. The shift in labour market hiring practices of mainly European-owned shipping companies in such a short time span can best be described as staggering. The new labour supply countries are not only restricted to the Philippines, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and China but include countries of eastern Europe. These have become the new labour-supply capitals of the shipping industry. The displaced merchant navy crews were all from the TMN of Europe (Brownrigg et al 2001). While historically some of the new labour-supply countries such as India and Pakistan had crewed European merchant navy vessels, the majority of the new labour-supply countries, such as the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia and Poland are relatively new for European shipping (Northrup and Rowan 1983).²

In just over a decade the labour market for seafarers in the merchant navy had fundamentally altered. Not only were south-east Asian seafarers replacing crews from the TMN of Europe, but seafarers from countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea were also replacing the crews of Japanese-owned ships. By 1988 over 50,000 Koreans worked on Japanese-owned ships, displacing thousands of Japanese seafarers (ILO Report 2001:29). By 1986 (ILO Report 2001:29), the number of Filipino seafarers employed on European merchant ships was 2,900. By the end of 1987 that figure had grown exponentially to 17,057. Translated into crewing practices, this meant that the number of European-owned ships with a substantial Filipino crew component went from 200 to 1,130 in just 12 months. By 1995, the number of employed Filipinos on non-Filipino owned ships was 244,782. By 2000, Filipinos comprised 20 per cent of the world’s merchant navy crew (Leggate and McConville 2002:7).
The United Kingdom experienced Europe’s highest displacement of jobs (94,713), followed by France (21,845 jobs). The Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Greece, Norway, Spain and Sweden all reported losses of between 10,000 and 17,000 jobs, the bulk of these occurring between 1974 and 1982 (Leggate and McConville 2002:7). In 1968 the number of seafarers employed in the merchant navy in the UK was 121,750, which number had declined to 112,721 by 1974. By 1982 this figure had decreased dramatically to 53,772, and by 1992 it stood at 33,037 (ILO Report 2001:32-35). In total, the number of UK seafaring jobs lost during this period was 94,713, a 73 per cent decline in the jobs for UK seafarers in a 24-year period. The sharpest decline occurred in fewer than eight years (between 1974 and 1982), when a massive 58,949 jobs were displaced.

In 2000, seafarers from the TMN and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries constituted 27.5 per cent of the global market for seafarers, as opposed to 31.5 per cent in 1995 (ILO Report 2001:33). This suggests that the number of seafaring jobs in Western Europe continued to decline (albeit less rapidly) at the end of the 20th century at a rate of 0.8 per cent a year for the period 1995-2000. This is indicative of the decline in the importance of Europe, and the UK in particular, as the world’s leading supplier of merchant navy crews. According to the (BIMCO/ISF Report: 2001), the world’s top seven labour supply countries – in numerical order of importance, the Philippines, Indonesia, Turkey, China, India, the Russian Federation and Japan – reflect this change in the geography of labour sourcing. These countries provide approximately 50 per cent of the 1,227,000 seafarers in the world as of 2000. Of this 50 per cent, approximately four-fifths come from the Far East, the Indian subcontinent and eastern Europe. Filipino seafarers represent 20 per cent of the world’s supply of seafarers (Leggate and McConville 2002:7). The next seafaring manpower update will take place in 2005.3

**The South African labour market for seafarers**

South Africa also followed these trends in changing its hiring practices of seafaring crew. Until the early 1970s, the South African shipping industry employed, on a casual and permanent basis, up to 6,000 seafarers of varying skill levels (Kujawa 1996:36b). The largest employer of seafarers then was Safmarine (interview D Collins 2001). As trading conditions became increasingly turbulent for the international shipping industry from the early to mid-1970s because of a wide range of fiscal, financial and technological
factors, Safmarine and other major South African shipping companies were forced to increase their competitiveness with international shipping companies by reducing one of their chief costs, that of labour. Expensive South African ratings were steadily replaced by south-east Asian crew, particularly Filipinos (interviews conducted with the crewing and training managers of key South African shipping companies and SAMSA, the South African Maritime Authority; Kujawa 1996). By 1980, all South African-owned merchant navy ships had a majority non-South African crewing component, and Kujawa (1996) estimates that at least 4,000 South African ratings were displaced by foreign, mainly south-east Asian, crew. This re-crewing is strongly related to the sale of Safmarine to the Maersk shipping group in 1999 and Maersk’s subsequent flag of convenience (FOC) and crewing policies. At the time of the sale, Safmarine operated 50 liner vessels and covered ten trade networks. While there are a number of global influences that resulted in the restructuring of the South African labour market for seafarers, I have identified a range of more localised problems in the training and employment of South African seafarers.

**The training of South African seafarers**

The training, development and employment of seafarers in South Africa has been highly political and racialised (Kujawa 1996; interviews Dlamini 2001, Zungu 2001, Snook 2001, Hagan 2001, Parkinson 2001). The fragmented and multifaceted state of seafarer training in South Africa is directly attributable to apartheid-based education programmes. Education and training was uncoordinated and duplicated owing to the existence of different racialised education authorities. The South African shipping industry was also largely unconcerned about the training and career-pathing of African ratings. At the same time, however, FOC shipping allowed South African companies like Unicorn to run mixed-race rating crews, a practice that resulted in one of the most racially diverse workplaces in apartheid South Africa (Kujawa 1996, interview Dlamini 2001, Parkinson 2001). As shown by Bonnin et al (2004), however, the broad occupational category of seafarers is racially extremely skewed as the majority of South African officers have been white and the ratings predominantly black. This is largely attributable to apartheid training regulations for seafarers.

The main training institution (for officer training) was set up in Cape Town in 1921 (Grutter 1973). This was the General Botha College. Only white men benefited from this college, which legislatively excluded other
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ethnic groups and racial categories. The college was handed over to the Cape Technikon in 1990. The Durban Institute of Technology (formerly Natal Technikon) is a more recent provider of officer training. Until 1996, it was ‘a white male only’ institution in terms of its student population (interview, Parkinson 2001).

In terms of ratings training, the Training Centre for Seamen (TCS) was established in 1963 for ‘Coloured’ men wanting to train as ratings. It is now part of the Wingfield Technical College, which was initially established for the training of South African Navy cadets. Since 1993 it has shifted its focus to general engineering training. The ratings training programme offered by Wingfield is not accredited (interview, Fourie 2001; personal correspondence, Morris 2001). As such, ratings who qualify there cannot compete in a global labour market. The only nationally and internationally accredited ratings training institution in South Africa, accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), is the Unicorn Training Centre. The Natal and Cape Technikons are also SAQA and IMO accredited providers but only of officer training.

The ANC government was aware of the training problems encountered in the maritime industry. Its 1996 White Paper on national transport policy states: ‘The crisis of skills and basic education in the maritime labour market will be urgently addressed through a concerted programme of education and training to meet the growing demand of seafarers and to increase the skills base of existing employees of the industry’ (White Paper on National Transport Policy 1996, Department of Transport: 40). The Skills Development and Employment Equity Acts are the tools that government employed to deal with the training and development concerns in the shipping industry. These acts have met with some resistance in the shipping industry and have achieved little by way of redress.

Unicorn Shipping has its own training school in Durban and instructs seafarers at both officer and ratings levels. It is currently committed to addressing some of the racial imbalances in the training and employment of black South African seafarers. In 2004, the 33 cadets – officers in training who were serving their 12-month sea time, not all of whom were Unicorn employees – comprised six white males, 25 black males, one coloured male and one Indian male. The Unicorn Training School had about 1,900 students in 2003 and 2,500 in 2002; these numbers include those training as yachting crew, crew for passenger liners and professional seamen. At the
time of writing, it was difficult to determine how many of these students had actually found employment, as well as how many were specifically trained for the merchant navy. Unicorn currently employs in the region of 90 South African ratings and 75 South African officers but their fleet is expanding and this number will soon increase.

Overall, however, an implicit – and sometimes explicit – belief exists among owners and managements of shipping companies that training and development ‘for the nation’ ‘is not their problem’. Victor Restis, chief executive officer of South African Marine Corporation, contends that:

… one of the reasons could have been that you expected the shipowners to take the initiative and bear the cost [of training]. Well they will not because they already have access to trained professionals. If the country is serious to utilise this opportunity [to train for the nation], somebody will have to take the initiative and see it through … since many countries make professionally qualified seafarers available at internationally competitive rates, international shipowners and operators do not see the development and training of such staff as their responsibility. Why take on responsibility for and associated cost for something in country A when it is supplied for free by country B?

(comments made to 7th Maritime Conference, Cape Town: 2001)

A recurring theme throughout the maritime industry is that of shipping companies training South Africans solely for their internal requirements, and doing so only reluctantly. This confirms Kujawa’s (1996) findings of her extensive investigation into the training needs of the maritime industry. SATAWU’s position is that the shipping industry in South Africa cannot be the driving force for job creation and equity. At the same time the union acknowledges that it needs resources from shipping companies, such as training berths and training expertise, to ensure the success of any national programme.

Lack of training berths as an impediment to achieving equity, employment, and skill development

Key to the training and equity of South African ratings and officers is the issue of sea time or training berths. In order for a rating or an officer to qualify, s/he needs to serve 12 months of compulsory sea time on a vessel appropriate for his/her qualification level. For ratings, sea time can be less than 12 months, depending on the qualification required, but a compulsory sea time period is required. Failure to achieve sea time means that a candidate who is fully qualified academically cannot qualify as an officer or
rating unless the required sea time is served. In South Africa, the only appropriate vessels that can offer these training berths are owned by the four South African-based major shipping companies. Since the 1970s they have been reluctant to offer training berths to South African cadets and ratings. According to Captain Stohl of Cape Technikon’s Maritime Studies Department and the Maritime Department of the Durban Institute of Technology, more black students entered officer training institutions after 1994 but South African shipping companies have been even more reluctant to provide sea time to cadets. Unicorn Shipping, however, presents an important shift in this practice although it is limited by its fleet size and the physical structure of its ships, which can only accommodate a fixed number of cadets at any one time. Some of the reasons for the reluctance of the wider shipping industry to provide sea time for all cadets or ratings who complete their initial land-based training are discussed under the headings below.

**The perpetuation of racial, ethnic and national stereotypes**

Interviews conducted with the four major shipping companies in South Africa suggest that black African officers are not perceived to be ‘natural’ seafarers. The Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) confirmed that this perception was widespread among shipping companies and served as an obstacle to the training, employment and development of black African seafarers. Coupled with it is the perception that the employment of black seafarers means a lowering of ‘standards’ (interviews, Hagan 2001, Maclennan 2001, Fable 2001). The shipping industry remains one of the most conservative in South Africa though there are concerted attempts to change this image. Racial and ethnic stereotypes abound in the organisational cultures of shipping companies, which base their recruitment and training policies on these, examples of which were provided by several of the respondents. The three examples below came from respondents:

*If we have a work ethic that is a positive one, that makes a good impression that you have people that are hardworking and willing to work hard they are going to knock out a lot of the competition. Without sort of picking on any nationality, you’ve mentioned the Philippines as an example. The Philippine rating is a very low problem type of rating. He doesn’t get into fights, he doesn’t drink too much, he doesn’t get into trouble and miss the ship, but at the same time they have no or little initiative. They need to basically be hand-held by the officers and pointed out exactly what is required for them to do their job. The work ethic there is, there’s a saving, but they actually have to have their hands*
Rough seas for South African seafarers in the merchant navy

held. Our experience of Cape Coloured ratings – I can’t speak for the Black guys or Zulus based in Durban – is that they have a good work ethic in that they work hard, they’re motivated, they have initiative, they have a natural inclination to go to sea but they also play hard and if you don’t manage them properly they can be problems … in terms of people going off the rails in port, getting drunk and stabbing each other and stuff like that. So there’s the work ethic. (interview 2001)

Even though the Zulu and Xhosa lived on the [KZN] coast they’ve never been fishermen or seafarers. They’ve actually never been in the sea. But Cape Town, there’s actually no place where you can’t see the sea. Because everybody there, black, white, coloured has either got an uncle or a father that was on the tugs, trawlers or with Safmarine. (interview 2001)

There is a distinct impression in the shipping industry that black people are not suited to seafaring as officers. (interview, TETA 2001)

The persistence of these racial and ethnic stereotypes in the maritime industry is supported by the dearth of black officers in South African shipping companies. As such, while employment equity and skills development plans for seafarers may exist in shipping companies it is the contention of the TETA, SATAWU and maritime training institutions that the meaningful implementation of these plans has not occurred (interviews, Dlamini 2001, Fable 2001, Stohl 2001, Parkinson 2001, Fourie 2001; see also Bonnin et al 2001).

**The cost factor**

The highest operating cost to any shipowner, apart from the actual capital cost of the ship, is crewing (interview, Snook 2001; ILO Report 2001). The issue is complicated by the fact that it is too expensive for companies to run training schemes on experiential vessels (interview, Hagan 2001) while the Skills Development Fund is viewed by the industry as inadequate to run experiential training vessels (interviews, Hagan 2001, Snook 2001, Maclennan 2001). The industry estimates the training costs of a deck cadet at R55 000 a year and R60,000 a year for an engine cadet, both for three years. One of the key problems identified by the 2004 report of the Training Berth Task Team is that once candidates are trained, there is no guarantee that they will remain with the company that trained them. Owing to the current global shortage of officers in the labour market, these newly qualified officers would be extremely marketable.
A more recent attempt at addressing this issue in terms of rating training and employment is the establishment of the Marine Crew Services (MCS) Crewing Company in Cape Town, which is attempting to mass train and export ratings in the same manner as the Philippines. This would involve the operation of a dedicated training vessel. At the end of 2004 both SATAWU and the ITF had reached an agreement with MCS that all seafarers trained and placed by MCS would automatically become SATAWU and ITF members, and would therefore have access to a range of union benefits. It is cheaper for companies to obtain qualified officers from elsewhere, such as eastern Europe, without encumbering training costs. Shipping companies in regulated and unionised labour markets reduce their fleets by chartering out their ships to subsidiaries. This enables the charter company to make crewing decisions that reduce labour costs and removes the responsibility of the parent South African company to hire South African nationals.

The lack of ship ownership in South Africa

Until the mid-1970s, international and South African merchant shipping had been expanding. The oil crisis of 1974-5 reversed the boom in South African merchant shipping, resulting in a 40 per cent reduction in seafaring jobs. Most jobs lost were in the officer category (Kujawa 1996). Subsequently, during the later apartheid years, the implementation of international sanctions against South Africa also marginalised South African merchant shipping from global markets.

There are only four major shipping companies in South Africa and since the acquisition of Safmarine by AP/Moller/Maersk, only one remains authentically South African. Unicorn, which is part of the Grindrod group, operates nine vessels, of which the majority are chartered. There are 100 South African-owned merchant navy vessels; of these, only five are flagged in South Africa while the remainder fly flags of convenience.

In 2003 the TETA’s Maritime Chamber formed a TETA Training Berth Task Team to produce a report on the issue of South African ships’ register. The task team, which consisted of representatives from industry, labour and academia, was appointed to investigate ways of boosting the availability of maritime training berths at sea. It found that the institution of a tonnage tax-type scheme would be the best way forward and is currently gathering more information to finalise the proposal, after which it will be presented to government.
**Shipping companies in South Africa**

1.1 **Pentow-Marine** vessels are not registered in South Africa. In addition its vessels are not structurally suitable as training berths. According to the IMO, training vessels have to meet certain structural specifications for the sea time to be accredited. Pentow-Marine is mainly engaged in salvage operations and as such most of their vessels are not at sea for 12 months or longer (interview, Maclellan 2001).

1.2 **DeBeers** is an exploratory mining shipping company whose vessels are also unsuitable for training since the periods they spend at sea are much shorter than 12 months. The majority of DeBeers operations are run from Namibia.

3.3 **Safmarine**, now owned by the AP Moller/Maersk group, one of the largest shipping companies in the world, is now employing Greeks to crew their ships at officer level (interview, Fable 2001, Parkinson 2001). There have been concerted attempts by Safmarine’s new owners to recrew their ships with cheaper non-South African labour but SATAWU has managed thus far to stave off the retrenchment of South African ratings on Safmarine ships. Since the company is no longer South African-owned, it remains unclear how much longer these jobs will remain secure.

1.4 **Unicorn Shipping** remains the only South African shipping company. However, most of Unicorns’s operations involve coastal trade along the African, and particularly the southern African, coast. For their deep ocean-going services, they have chartered out ships to their subsidiaries, which are under no obligation to hire South African crews. While some allegations have been made against Unicorn for not being receptive to offering sea time to black cadets, evidence from 2002 to 2004 shows that the company has actively engaged in the training and provision of sea time for at least 90 ratings and 33 cadets. None of Unicorn chartered deep ocean-going ships flies the South African flag. Unicorn has also reduced its fleet from 16 to five ships, though its fleet expanded to nine in 2004. This may translate into more training berths for South African cadets.

**Maritime Fiscal Policy**

A country’s maritime taxation policy is an important factor when shipowners decide where to register vessels. It is strongly felt that if more South African ships were registered in South Africa, more South African nationals would be employed as ratings on South African ships (Financial Mail: Special
Despite these opinions, South Africa’s maritime fiscal policy has proved prohibitive to South African shipowners wanting to register their vessels in the country.

Though there has been a concerted move away from the fiscally rigid 1951 Merchant Shipping Act to the fiscally flexible 1998 Ship Registration Act, which was promulgated on April 25, 2003, shipowners feel that the change in legislation has not gone far enough to attract owners to the South African registry (interviews, Hagan 2001, Snook 2001, Maclellan 2001, Zanders 2001, Parkinson 2001). Shipowners argue that the income tax they pay is prohibitive to the registration of ships in South Africa. Most shipowners, under FOC registries, are taxed a flat tonnage rate on the ship, regardless of whether they make a profit. Tax is therefore charged on the weight of the ship rather than on the profit it generates. Every year a rate is set per ton. For example, if the rate is R1,000 per ton and the ship weighs in at five tons, the tax for the year is R5,000 regardless. This is a simplistic example of the tonnage tax calculation but it does encapsulate its core premise. More nuanced versions do exist: for example, sliding scales can apply whereby the tonnage of the vessel is multiplied by its age, as is done in Greece. In the UK, if a shipping company chooses to be taxed under the tonnage tax regime, it must meet certain conditions that commit it to training and developing its national seafarers. In terms of global trends, ten European countries have had tonnage tax regimes since 1985; countries that had adopted this regime in 2003 are Cambodia, India, Pakistan and Korea.

In South Africa, however, taxation is paid on tonnage and profits made by the ship. SAMSA views the issue of equity and job creation for seafarers as part of a wider initiative to encourage ship registration and owning in South Africa by providing a more attractive fiscal environment for the registration of ships on the South African register. Therefore instead of paying a double tax on tonnage and profit, one tax will be levied on tonnage only. SAMSA argues that equity cannot be divorced from larger economic and business issues in the maritime industry.

The TETA Training Berth Task Team report recommending a beneficial ship registration regime is currently being considered by the National Treasury. If promulgated, the following conditions would apply to a tonnage tax scheme:
1. The company must either own or operate ships;
2. The ships must be registered in South Africa;
3. The company must have its strategic base in South Africa and must also exercise most of its management functions in South Africa. (TETA Report 2004:13)

The flagging issue is a matter of concern to SATAWU. The union has gone on record as stating that there can only be a substantial reemployment of ratings if ships are flagged in South Africa. It argues that South African shipping companies employ South African seafarers by ‘force not by their wish’ (interview, Dlamini 2001). Dlamini further contends that an overhaul of the Merchant Shipping Act is needed. While a revision of the Merchant Shipping Act may be fiscally more rewarding to South African shipping companies, it is unclear how many ships will be returned to the South African ships register. Thus far no firm commitments have been made by any of the shipping companies, though the task team established by TETA is currently trying to engage shipping companies to obtain a sense of how many ships will be flagged here.

While SATAWU would favour more ships being registered in South Africa in the hope that more jobs may be created, shipping companies would still be reluctant to pay SATAWU and ITF-mandated wages. Thus, a change in fiscal shipping policy does not engage with the issue of costs of labour. Further, any fiscal policy that introduces a favourable shipping register should be designed to attract foreign tonnage and not just be a measure to ‘retain or restore the current national fleet’ (TETA Report 2004).

**Conclusion**

Theorists of globalisation argue that the world of work is going through unprecedented change. They situate their arguments within the framework of globalisation and shifting labour markets. They contend that the increased mobility of capital since the 1970s to seek out new, cheaper and more flexible labour markets has resulted in a new international division of labour whereby there has been a spatial reconfiguration of labour’s location. This spatial restructuring of labour and capital has resulted in new patterns of inequality between labour of the North and labour of the South in terms of levels of skill and labour process used. These patterns of inequality are articulated and demonstrated in the way that shipping capital has restructured since the 1970s and the impact this has had on seafaring labour.
For local seafaring labour markets in the traditional maritime nations of Europe it has meant the displacement of thousands of seafarers, specifically ratings jobs. For labour markets in developing countries, particularly in south-east Asia, it has resulted in the expansion of the labour market at the ratings level. South Africa’s seafaring labour market, however, did not grow at the phenomenal rate witnessed in south-east Asia, and the Philippines in particular. Instead, South Africa followed the TNM trend by shedding labour. Thus South Africa, while never a global supplier of seafarers to the extent that the TMN nations were, saw its pool of seafaring labour, specifically ratings, reduced considerably. Local and global processes impacting on the seafaring labour market did not occur independently or discretely from each other. Both the local and global processes occurred, and their simultaneous interaction with each other produced the current nature of the South African and global labour markets for seafarers.

Notes
1. A register of certificates issued to officers is held by SAMSA, but includes certificates issued to officers who may now be retired as well as officers who may now hold citizenship of countries other than South Africa.

2. In the case of the Philippines, Filipino seafarers provided cheap reservoirs of seafaring labour to the Spanish and were a pivotal part of the Spanish galleon during the Spanish occupation of the Philippines from 1615 to 1815.

3. One of the consequences of this global seafaring labour market is that it has significantly influenced the way in which labour organises and services what is a largely mobile workforce. In this regard, the ITF and its national affiliates develop international agreements to prevent the whipsawing of shipping capital. National unions affiliated to the ITF, like SATAWU, negotiate in conjunction with the ITF to set a standard minimum wage for unionised ratings in the global labour market. The ITF also seeks to protect the interests of non-unionised ratings who work on FOC vessels by regularly inspecting these vessels to investigate occupational health, safety and wage issues. Further, when inspecting a vessel, the ITF encourages ratings on board to join a national union. If FOC ships do not sign an agreement with the ITF regarding working conditions and wage levels, these ships are subjected to solidarity boycotts from dock-workers at whichever national port they dock. This action can cost shipowners very large amounts of money in loss of earnings and productivity. In this way then the ITF is interested in unionising as many ratings as it can in the global labour market. As more ratings become unionised and more FOC ships sign wage agreements with the ITF, it will become increasingly difficult for shipowners to whipsaw between regions to seek out cheaper labour, as a standard wage will be the norm.
4. It is beyond the scope of this article to explore the intricacies of maritime fiscal policy and legislation. Readers are referred to Floor’s Report of the Committee of Inquiry into a National Maritime Policy for the Republic of South Africa (1993) and Lloyd’s List Africa Weekly, March 12, 1999.

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