

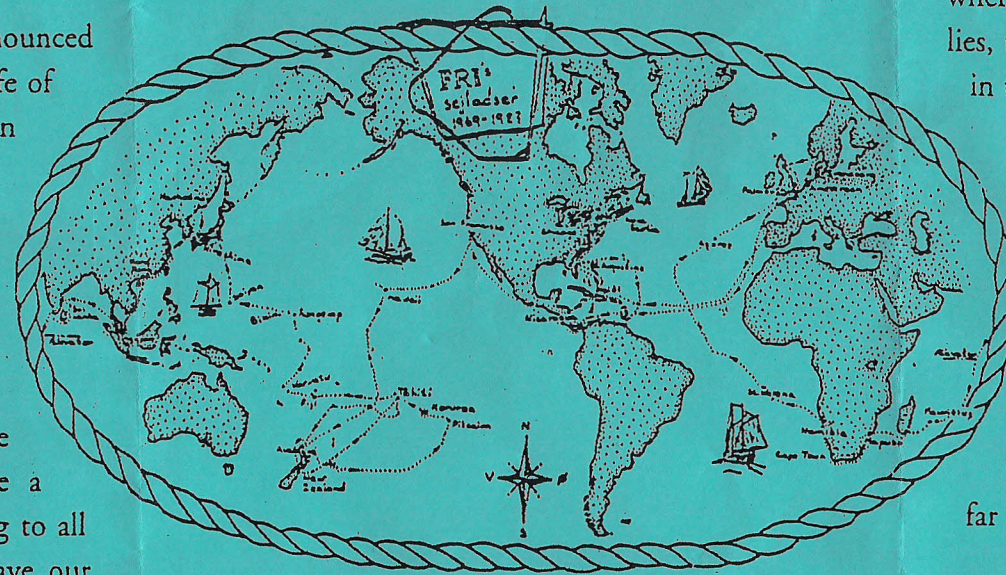
To save the Earth, the FRI sails the seas

Your name is Freedom

Built in Denmark in 1912, the FRI (pronounced "free"), a Baltic trader, had a commercial life of 55 years of which the highlight came in World War Two when, sailing for the Resistance, she enabled 200 Jews to flee Germany. David Moodie, an American dedicated to saving the ship, gave it a second life as a messenger of peace and brotherhood. Since 1971, more than 300 men, women and children have sailed on the FRI as volunteers. The ship has become a floating international community belonging to all those who fight, by peaceful means, to save our planet.

At Mururoa

In 1973 the FRI protested against French atmospheric nuclear tests in the Pacific. On patrol in the test zone for 7 weeks, she succeeded in delaying what turned out to be the last atmospheric explosion. Amongst her international crew was Frenchman Gilbert Nicolas but, immediately after being joined by several well known French personalities (Général de Bollardière, Jean Toulat...), the ship was seized by the French Navy. A two week hunger strike ensued before the FRI was finally returned, sabotaged. The mission had lasted a total of 8 months.



The Peace Odyssey

It is largely thanks to the FRI that Greenpeace was created in Auckland in 1974, and she has remained closely connected to the association ever since. Campaigning to mobilise public opinion in the Pacific against nuclear tests, the FRI carried 20,000 messages between its peoples to defend those suffering directly from nuclear radiation. She also visited Bikini Atoll, where the population had only just returned after 20 years in exile. (It has since been deported again because of a renewed outbreak of illnesses.)

Later, in Japan, after a horrendous storm close to where the Japanese boat irradiated by tests in 1954 lies, the FRI visited Hiroshima. Here she took part in the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the first nuclear bomb. Survivors, still in hospital, sent her messages of support. She then went on to visit victims of the bomb in Nagasaki.

Storms, breakdowns, refused entry to many ports, sickness, radio problems, imprisonment and financial difficulties all put their mark on this long voyage which was far from being a tourist cruise.

The FRI managed to visit the eastern tip of the USSR under strict observation, but was refused permission to dock in China to deliver messages of peace to the Chinese. She then went on to sail around the coast of southern Africa in support of the anti-apartheid movement.

Her next voyage was to the Caribbean where she delivered 40 tonnes of food, medicine and clothing to some of the world's poorest countries: the Dominican Republic, Haiti etc.

In 1985 she campaigned against the pollution of the Great Lakes in North America. And, the following year, for the centenary of the Statue of Liberty she hoisted a huge sail: Liberty without nuclear weapons.