

# BETRAYED

THE STORY OF CANADIAN MERCHANT SEAMEN



**"Elaine Brière sets the romance of the sea beside the reality of government duplicity and corporate greed in a film that should be seen by every Canadian who cares about our past and our future."**

Mark Leier – Director, Center for Labour Studies, Simon Fraser University

**A**lthough Canada is surrounded by three oceans, there is not a single deep-sea ship flying the Canadian flag today. Sixty years ago, Canada had the fourth-largest merchant fleet in the world. Canadian ships brought vital supplies to allied forces in Europe during World War II. The men sailing those ships were war heroes who suffered terrible losses. Their union, The Canadian Seaman's Union (CSU), brought the eight-hour day, sick leave and pay increases to an industry known for low wages and brutal working conditions.

After the war, when the Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent began to privatize the merchant fleet, the CSU strongly opposed the sell-off. The Canadian government and ship owners initiated a campaign to discredit the CSU. It was a time of fear, confusion and betrayal.

This documentary tells the little-known struggle of merchant seamen to save the merchant fleet and their livelihood. It traces the history of Canadian shipping from the international strike of 1949 to the globalization of coastal shipping in Australia by Canada Steamship Lines – owned by the family of Canadian prime minister, Paul Martin.

Elaine Brière is a well-known Vancouver documentary photographer and filmmaker.

Her first film, *Bitter Paradise: The Sell-out of East Timor*, won Best Political Documentary at the 1997 Hot Docs Festival. Her book, *Testimony: Photographs of East Timor*, was published in May 2004.

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Contact: [ebriere@telus.net](mailto:ebriere@telus.net) t: 604.216.0002

**Elaine Brière is available to show BETRAYED and to speak with your organization or group.  
For information call: 604.216.0002**