

HISTORY OF TRADAX S.A., GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Tradax S.A. in Geneva is a subsidiary company of the Cargill Group www.cargill.com a company founded in the year 1865 by William Wallace Cargill in Conover, Iowa, USA. The company was engaged in grain trading and has developed to the present day into one of the major global trading firms for grain, but also for other raw commodities. In the early years of the 20th century the company moved to Minneapolis and in the 1930thies the company began to open the first offices abroad (Holland, Argentina, Canada etc).

In the 1930thies Cargill began to operate barges and towboats on the Mississippi River system and soon started to build their own boats. During World War II a Cargill shipyard on the Minnesota River was engaged in building small oceangoing tankers for the US-Navy. Another Cargill shipyard in Albany on the Hudson River produced and completed in November 1941 one oil tanker. The tanker, called the CARLANTIC was flying the US-flag, had 7414 GRT and was about 12'500 tons deadweight. Later during the war she was sold to Argentina and became the [VICTORIA](#).

In 1956 an office was opened in Geneva, Switzerland, under the name Tradax S.A, at first engaged to trade grain and oil seeds, mainly from USA to Europe.

Cargill became a ship owner in the year 1967, when the first bulk carrier CAPTAIN W.D. CARGILL was purchased and was managed by Tradax, Geneva. In the years 1971 and 1972 Tradax acquired a series of new, gearless mini-bulk carriers (5600 DWT) from a shipyard in Japan and commenced to build 80'000 tons DWT OBO-carriers in Split, Yugoslavia:

Mini bulkers:	GHENT	AMSTERDAM	GENEVE	BREST	SAINT NAZAIRE
	MAWAN	TARRAGONA	HAMBURG	SETE	

OBO's: CARLANTIC CARBAY

Until 1975 another four OBO-carriers of the same size and type were delivered from Split (CARCAPE, CARISLE, EXCOMM MERCHANT and EXCOMM MARINER).

In 1974 the new, two year old, second-hand geared bulk carrier PARALOS of 17'000 tons DWT was purchased and named CARBREEZE and one year later, two OBO-carriers of 120'000 tons deadweight were purchased, followed by another 3 units in 1977, these were: APACHE, MOHAWK, ARAPAHO, CHEYENNE and CAYUGA.

Initially it appears, that most of the daily business of managing the own fleet and chartered vessels was conducted by the marine department of a subsidiary company in the Netherlands, named Handelsvereniging Tradax N.V., Coenhavenweg 3, Amsterdam. During this time many Dutch masters and officers sailed on the ships, but also officers from other European countries, such as Yugoslavia, see the forum <http://www.kombuispraat.com/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=3073&start=0>

However, in the year 1975 the marine department in Amsterdam was closed down and all marine activities centralised in the head office in Geneva, Switzerland. This move was partly caused by strained relations with the local trade unions.

During 1976 and 1977 the four small, geared Alpine class bulk carriers were delivered by Nishi Zosen K.K., Imabari, Japan were delivered and added to the fleet (ALPINE SUN, ALPINE STAR, ALPINE SKY and ALPINE STREAM).

Tradax was also engaged in the carriage of concentrated fruit juice, mainly orange juice and first converted the Norwegian cargo ship OAK into a juice tanker with stainless steel tanks and named it BEBEDOURO. In 1986 the first dedicated juice tanker was built in Korea, about the same time, when Suisse-Outremer in Zürich built the ORANGE BLOSSOM in Norway. The old BEBEDOURO was renamed UCHOA and the new orange juice carrier took over the name BEBEDOURO. The vessels operated mainly in the Atlantic, carrying orange juice from South America to Europe and the USA.

The begin of the eighties was marked with the construction of two 30'000 tons product tankers and the purchase of a Panamax bulk carrier PANTHER. In 1985 followed the two new built Panamax OBO-

carriers COUGAR and JAGUAR. In 1986 and 1987 the two largest vessels joined the fleet, the new OBO-carriers CHOCTAW and CHICKASAW, each with a deadweight of 150'000 tons.

In the year 1986 the fleet of Tradax reached its peak and consisted of 27 vessels with a total deadweight capacity of over 1.5 Mio tons. A qualified team of captains, marine- and electrical engineers, naval architects in the Geneva office kept the ships running. The crews were mainly European officers and officers/ratings from India and Bangladesh, but few Swiss seamen, probably engineers, served on Tradax vessels as well. Unfortunately, the same year 1986 marked also the end of ship management in Geneva and the ships were by and by transferred to third-party management companies, such as V-Ships, OSM Orient Ship Management, Univan Hong Kong etc. and in 2001 all ship owning activities were given up. Note, in this short history we have not mentioned all vessels, but have given a narrative only of the fleet's development (see also list of ships).

However the Cargill Group remained in the shipping business as operators of chartered tonnage and today Cargill International S.A. in Geneva is the headquarter of the ocean bulk transport division www.cargill-ot.com with various supporting offices around the world. Around 300 ships are on charter at any time and Cargill handles every year about 180'000'000 metric tonnes of cargo for their own and for other clients account. In 2008 Cargill International S.A. was amongst the 10 largest Swiss companies in terms of turn-over and employed more then 500 persons in their offices in Geneva.

July 2010