



## The mv MAGDEBURG and the CUBAN OLYMPICS by John Howie

The cause of the collision in the River Thames on 27th October 1964, where mv Magdeburg was wrecked with 42 Leyland Olympics for Cuba on board was, and continues to be, at the centre of a conspiracy theory. The East German registered ship was struck by the Japanese mv Yamashiro Maru and was holed beneath the waterline, causing it to heel-over, it then becoming beached. Photographs indicate that the

Magdeburg remained on its side until 'righted' to 20 degrees the following July. A total of 28 buses, mainly stowed on deck, was salvaged but the other 14 remained in the wreck. These were subsequently 'lost at sea' whilst the vessel was being towed (some sources say to Cuba, but probably to Greece) under the instructions of the Greek salvage firm who had bought it for scrap. The tow got into trouble in bad weather in the Bay of Biscay, necessitating it to be cut adrift, whereupon it sank altogether on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1965.



*The first of the 1964 batch of Olympics for Cuba. They bore the lettering 'El Omnibus Ingles Leyland', reflecting a degree of pride that we could do with nowadays*

(Alamy)