# AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL



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## Sharing the World with China

By Dave Chaddock

A few weeks ago an angry letter writer wondered how columnist David Brooks could possibly have had "anything positive to say about such an oppressive regime as China" (NYT 8-15). Commenting on the opening ceremonies of the Olympics, Brooks had described it as "a high-tech vision of the harmonious society performed in the context of China's miraculous growth" (NYT 8-12).

Why had he broken ranks with the CNN announcer who had referred to the Chinese leadership as "goons and thugs"? Or with the editors of his own newspaper who had declared that Bush had been too "deferential" to this "reprehensible" regime (7-31), and who went on to suggest that China's "appalling" record in human rights would "neither be ignored nor forgotten," though there was concern that the huge "prestige bonanza" it reaped from the Games would cause it to "tighten its grip at home" (8-23).

But Brooks was not alone in being impressed with China. "Who will forget the stunning images of the opening ceremony," writes John F. Burns, "speaking more powerfully than any propaganda could of the happiness that three decades of prosperity have brought" (NYT 8-10). Charles McGrath could not help but wax lyrical about the "legions of volunteers...so many of them...so focused...so polite and friendly, that it can be a little disconcerting"

(NYT 8-11). Thomas L. Friedman had this to say:

"Just compare arriving at La Guardia's dumpy terminal in New York City and driving through the crumbling infrastructure into Manhattan with arriving at Shanghai's sleek airport and taking the 220-mile-per-hour magnetic levitation train" (NYT 8-27).

And for Nicolai Ouroussoff his arrival gave him the "inescapable feeling" that he was "passing through a portal to another world." He found China to be "a great laboratory for architectural ideas." It seemed as if "everything is possible here." The buildings were not just "blunt expressions of power" but exuded an aura "that has as much to do with intellectual ferment as economic clout." He compared his reaction to that of the Viennese architect Adolf Loos, who stepped off a steamship in New York City over a hundred years ago, and realized that Europe was "culturally obsolete" (NYT 7-13).

But what about the parks that were set aside for protests, but which never saw any protests because, we are told, those who declared their intention to protest were denied permission, including two old ladies 77 and 79 years old, who were sentenced to one year in a labor camp? Well, actually there were 77 protest applications but nearly all of them were dropped after complaints were "properly addressed by relevant authorities or departments." As for the

## From page 1

two old ladies who felt that they had not gotten sufficient compensation for being evicted from their homes in a case of what we would call "eminent domain", they were told that their sentence "might remain in suspension if they stayed at home and stopped asking for permission to protest" (NYT 8-21). Later the sentence was "formally rescinded" and the local police also bought them a new TV set. (NYT 8-30)

Of course the main New York Times reporter in China, Jim Yardley, was on hand to bemoan the fact that there was no "organized opposition" in China, and this showed that the leadership was "insecure and defensive" (NYT 8-7). But why is it that a recent poll found that 86% of the Chinese expressed "content with their country's direction" as compared to only 23% of Americans? (NYT 7-23) Where is the vast discontent ready to burst loose? Are we to assume that our two-party system is a solution for all the world's problems, with its necessity to spend vast sums of money and create partisan conflicts most of which have little to do with real issues?

Let me offer an analogy. We debate many questions at our union meetings but one thing we never debate. That is the legitimacy and value of our union itself. We are up in arms against a "scab" who would oppose the union. In the same way the popular Icelandic singer who, after her performance in Shanghai, shouted out "Tibet! Tibet!" would not be invited back for the Olympics, nor would anyone who showed a tendency to do anything similar. It's not that arguments could not be made for and against the existence of our union, but we have already considered all these arguments. The debate is over. In the same way the Chinese have already decided the question of Tibet. Much has been written about it. Opposition arguments have been considered and rejected a long time ago. Uninformed Westerners who burst in upon the scene are simply out of order. I have done a lot of research on this question and intend to write a book about Tibet when I have time.

Another point of conflict, as reporter Jim Yardley points out, is that Westerners view China "through the prism of the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown." They are constantly agitating for people to stand up and condemn it. But they have studiously ignored the detailed accounts that China herself gave of this incident shortly after it occurred. I plan to write about this event as well. But I have recently had my seventieth

# Final Dispatch

PENSIONERS
Roy Cutchlow 19
William R. Esquibel 19
Jack D. Hansen 98
Ralph V. Heino 19
Lawrence R. Hennum 19
Joseph A. Jurich 19
Virgil G. Liudahl 19
Jack C. Reihling 98
Thomas J. Sullivan 52
Clifford Vinje Sr 19

SURVIVORS
Elaine M. Bennett 19
Shirley Carle 19
Carole L. Hulbert 19
June A. Johnson 98
Roberta Stallcop 19

birthday. Life is short. I cannot continue to work six days a week and commute two hours a day and still do all the writing I want to do. I will miss all of you guys and gals but soon I will have to cut the ties that bind us together. Ernie Williams just retired at the age of 75. Sometime within the next five years I plan to do the same!

I remember back in 1979 when the very first ship docked in Seattle from China. I was already a big China fan, a devotee of Edgar Snow and Agnes Smedley and Anna Louise Strong and Han Suyin and Felix Greene and Graham Peck and Simone de Beauvoir, and many others who had written favorably about China. I had been to China in 1973 a year after Nixon, walked on the Great Wall, climbed the Big Goose pagoda in Sian, landed by plane in Yenan, inspected double-sided embroidery in Soochow, rode through the darkened streets of Shanghai as they were in those days, and visited the pandas at the Beijing zoo. So when this first ship arrived at Pier 90 I was not working there that day, but I made sure to be on hand, sitting in one of the Datsuns that had been discharged a day or two earlier. That is where the Port of Seattle police found me, hauled me out and frisked me, and looked suspiciously at the leaflets I had brought with me, titled "It's Not Just Pig Bristles", a paean I had written to the possibility of increased trade. But the word "pig" in those days was a disrespectful term for the police, and I think this may have seemed a bit dangerous to them.

How remarkable it is that from this humble beginning, trade with China has increased so dramatically that it is all important in Seattle, and the slightest instance of its diminishing is seen as a threat to our livelihoods.

### Sharing the World with China

From page 2

But now one of that tribe of alleged "China experts" warns us that China is "pinning America down" from Canada to Cuba to Venezuela "cutting massive resource and investment deals." As a matter of fact, we are told that "every country in the world currently considered a rogue state by the U.S. now enjoys a diplomatic, economic or strategic lifeline from China." Moreover, the small Asian states surrounding China, most of which had long been in the U.S. orbit, and "should be balancing against the rising China," are doing nothing of the kind. Instead they "rally towards" China, "resulting in America's grip on the Pacific Rim being loosened one finger at a time" (Parag Khanna, NYT Mag., 1-27-08).

Of course, if China were trying to expand militarily it would have tough sledding, as the U.S. has troops in Korea, and bases all around China, and the Chinese military budget is a tiny fraction of the U.S. military expenditure. But China has no troops stationed in any other country. And its offer of friendship is nondiscriminatory. It is not only a friend to every country considered a rogue state by the US., but to every country that is not considered a rogue state as well! It rejects all sorts of "balance of power" schemes and endeavors to build a world where all can live in harmony, as they do at the Olympics.

I believe that China's attitude toward history is completely misunderstood. Yes, it is true, Chinese textbooks "dwell on China's humiliation at the hands of foreign powers in the nineteenth century as if they took place yesterday" (Matthew Forney, NYT 4-13). And David Shambaugh, another China "expert", says he hopes that the Olympics will be seen as a major threshold "when China ditched all its baggage of the historical narrative of aggrieved nationalism...and just re-wrote that narrative" (NYT 8-25).

But China is not trying to get even with the West because of the misery it caused in the past. It takes a much broader view than that. Rather it is determined to show the world that there is a much better way to proceed. It has made a solemn promise that it will never never take the path followed by all the world Powers in the 19th century (and well into the twentieth as well!) – it will never take the road of attempted world domination. There is no future on this path. Every conquered and dominated country seeks to rebel, to free itself from domination. Thus the road of

conquest leads only to increased conflict and war. China itself has suffered many long years of warfare in its struggle to finally stand up. It does not want to forget this painful history and the lessons it teaches. Incidentally, I have just about completed an historical study of the nineteenth century entitled "Starting Off on the Wrong Foot: U.S. Relations with China and Korea 1839-1895." It should be available from a local publisher before the end of the year. Chinese students and Korean students are familiar with these events, and it would be good if American students knew about them as well.

Despite its checkered past, China does not exclude the United States from its catalog of potential friends. An article in Beijing Review recently declared:

While the U.S. military's assistance has been a small part of the overall international aid that has poured into China since the disastrous earthquake, the interaction between American and Chinese soldiers and officers may indicate brighter prospects for further co-ordination (BR 6-19).

But China hopes that the US. will stop talking down to it. Instead of Beijing listening to Washington's instructions, Yan Xuetong of Tsinghua University hopes that the U.S. and China can become "class mates" – learners "between whom dialogues are held equally" (BR 2-22)

Recently the amount of containers coming into Seattle from China has been in decline. There are many reasons for this. Ripples from the mortgage debacle are part of it. Higher fuel prices have increased shipping costs. This has encouraged Ikea to open a factory in the U.S. The falling dollar has also eaten away at profit rates that had already been miniscule. The local press recently had a story about one exporter in China, expecting to make 5 cents a piece on blankets for Target stores, having his entire expected profit of \$7,500 wiped out by the plummeting exchange rate. But in addition to these factors that are forcing China to change. China is also deliberately cutting back on exports. It is fed up with the role it has been assigned of being the modern equivalent of "fetching wood and drawing water" - producing low-end high-labor stuff while multinational companies control the core technology, the product design, the software support, and the brand names. It wants a piece of the action, a chance to move up the value chain. For example, it has cut back on tax rebates for the textile industry and

Continued on page 4

## Sharing the World with China

From page 3

for some other industries with high levels of pollution and energy consumption.

Many Chinese companies have decided to stop going all out for Wal-Mart because its single-minded insistence on bedrock prices will instantly leave them high and dry even after they have expanded production solely for this predatory retailer and have reduced their capacity to service anyone else. But in a strange turnabout, Wal-Mart sells luxury goods from Europe and the U.S. to increasingly wealthy customers in China!

Another factor is the increased labor costs in China today. As 90% of China's work force was getting labor union protection at the end of 2007, Nike, Dell, GE, and Microsoft, putting "profit before justice", as China Today puts it, were threatening to pull out of China on the eve of the passing of a new labor contract law (CT 11-7). Under the new law, if a worker is given no contract after a month and a year of working, he is entitled to double his wage. And if a fixed term employee is not given a renewed contract, his employer must give him one months salary for each prior year of tenure, up to a maximum of twelve months. Also China intends to curb what it calls the "excessive discretion given by employers in deciding the level of salary payments" (BR 11-15). A lawyer representing many of America's largest corporations in China declares: "It will be more difficult to run a company here" (NYT 6-30-07). Just before the new law took effect, Wal-Mart slashed 2,000 jobs!

Although the trade picture is changing I believe it will eventually settle into a pattern of increased trade that is more solidly and fairly based. But it certainly did not help when, in July of 2006, the U.S. suddenly added 47 products to the list of banned exports to China. It was doubly stupid because China will be able to buy most of these things from Europe or Japan instead.

The U.S. must realize that China is not our enemy, that its people must be given a chance to share the good things in life with the rest of us, and that the whole world, working together, can address the difficult problems facing the advance and survival of humanity.

## Memorandum of Understanding

The contract caucus reconvened on the 18th of August, with a proposal for approval. And it will go to the rank-and-file for a vote the first half of September. As with most contracts, it has some good and some bad.

The duration is for six years. This is both good and bad. Good because we (Pensioners) know we have MOB for the next six years. The bad is the fact that we are entering into an inflationary period and that was not taken into consideration. The basic wage will increase just over sixteen percent over the life of the contract, but the inflation rate this year alone is pushing six percent. And it's not going to slow down.

The pension; after striving to reduce the number of brackets and bring the older retirees up, we have an increase in the brackets from three to five. Those retired before 7/93 will get \$3/year for each of the first three years, nothing the last three years, (remember they only have 25 years eligibility.) That's 11.25% over the six years. Those retired between 7/93 and 7/99 are again front loaded with \$4/year for each of the first three years and nothing the last three. A little better, 15% over the life of the contract. Those of you who retired between 7/99 and 7/02 get nothing the first three years, then, \$2/year for the next three years. 6% in six years. Those of us who retired under the last contract are again back loaded. Getting nothing for the first three years, then \$1/year for each of the next three years, for a total of 2% for the six years. The fifth bracket is those who after 7/1/08, (37 years of eligibility,) will get no increase for the first three years, then \$10 a year for each of the last three years. A 20% increase.

But, what concerns me the most is what we are doing for our Surviving Spouses. Do we not believe in our motto "AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL." Why do we short change our Spouses? Again the survivors pension amounts goes from two brackets to five brackets. Pre 7/93 will go from \$55/yr. to \$60.85. That's \$1.95/yr. for each of the first three years with nothing the last three years. 7/93 to 7/99, from \$55/yr. to \$62.80. That's \$2.60/yr. for each of the first three years. 7/99 to 7/02, from \$55/yr. to \$68.90, with \$10/yr. the first year, nothing the next two years and \$1.30 each of the next three years. 7/02 to 7/08 will go from \$82.50 to \$99.45, with \$15/yr. the first year, nothing the next two years, then \$0.65/yr. the last three years. And lastly, 7/08 on, from

#### AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

## **Conversations with Harry**

By Ian Kennedy

I flew down to San Francisco the week following the caucus. As I walked into the bar, I saw that Harry was agitated. Jerry Bulke sat silently, waiting for Harry to have his say. He poured me a beer.

"Where have you been? We expected you to come by last week. What's going on, anyway?" Harry paused for air.

I took a long drink of my beer, "I expected to be here as well. But the pensioners decided they didn't need to spend the money after the fiasco last month."

What happened last month?" Jerry asked. "And what happened with the contract? Was it voted up by the caucus? Is it a good contract?"

"Is it a good contract?" I repeated, " it's for six years. That's good in that it assures us pensioners of medical coverage for six years, but the fact that we are going into an inflationary period and the small increases that we are getting are so small they won't begin to keep up with inflation. Even the actives are going to be hurt by the inflation. Actually, it's been several contracts back since we've matched the rate of inflation."

Harry is swirling the beer in his glass. He looks up at me. "What about the rest of the contract?" he asks. "What protections did they get for the rank-and-file? Did they improve health care? Did they clean up the issues left over from the last contract? What did they do in all this time?"

"To answer Jerry's question first." I responded, " The Coast reconvened the caucus at the end of July, thinking they would have a contract by that time. Instead of canceling, they met for two hours on the Monday and then on Tuesday morning, sent everyone home. If they had notified everyone, the pension groups and small ports could have saved that expense." Jerry shakes his head as I continue. "I had thought they would have asked for authorization to call for a strike vote if needed, but they didn't even do that. Actually, they spent the majority of the time in negotiations on the MOB (maintenance of benefits.) And they did a good job holding the line. The pensioners received a very small increase, but inflation has already eaten that up. And the survivors should have been brought up to 95%, but no, they get a token

increase. At least the actives pension should keep up with inflation. It's front loaded, that is, it increases each of the first three years. And they also get two more qualifying years." I pause, refill my glass and wave to the bartender for another round. I continue, "The negotiators were able to get several improvements in the welfare package."

Harry sighs, gives me a look that says "give me the meat."

I smile at the impatience, then go on, "The contract is mostly a mechanics contract. They did nothing to get the employers to honor the Technology agreements of the last contract. When I asked one of the negotiating committee members why, he gave me a strange look and said, "There were no resolutions on Technology." I sat quietly for some time, then continued, "The Coast Committee knows about the problems. They should not have neglected them. If you look at this contract and the last, you'll see that the work load is going to shift from the present longshore and clerks work to technology and maintenance."

Jerry looked up at the time, turned to Harry "It's time to go." He said. Then turning to me, he smiled, Thanks kid, we appreciate you coming down just to update us."

Harry nods, "Ya, thanks kid, take the tab, will ya?" He smiles, they get up and head for the door as I get out my wallet.

#### Memorandum of Understanding

From page 5

\$82.50 to \$135.00. That's \$20/yr. the first year and \$7.50/yr. each of the last three years.

My question is, why do our survivors have to reduce their standard of living because their spouses pass away?

There are several improvements in the welfare plan, including a change in management. It would be best to get Nick to fill you in on them. With that said, a few of the improvements include the addition of TMJ benefits, hearing aid increase, death benefit increases and vision improvements. There is also a letter of understanding on Long Term Care. Calling for the study of the design and cost of such a program.

I do not consider this a good contract for either pensioners or actives.

In Solidarity, Ian

## Hit the ladder, your all fired!!"

As told by Don Allen, to Jon Halgren

A short time ago, in the grocery store, I met Don Allen.

"Don, do you have a story about the waterfront, that I might share in the Rusty Hook." Starting as a casual in 1957, he was registered in 1962, I think. He worked lines for many years, before transferring to Local 52. Having a successful career Don retired in 2001.

Don started as a casual. An early job, was at the Navy dock.

I went down the hatch, and could see the runways set up. The four wheelers had no power except for the three stevedores pushing and one steering. I did not think the runway was going to support one ton of weight. We were OK on the first load."

"The Boss had been in the hatch to tell us, 'High and Tight.'

I really did not know what that meant. I learned, as another load was to be stowed, just what high and tight meant.

Fill the space with cargo.

"You know how we sometime rush and try to do something before things are ready. Well, on the four wheeler was full pallet of soda, or beer. One of the wheels found a hole and over the pallet went. The punctured cans were squirting liquid. What could we do.

All the noise and commotion brought the boss.

"Hit the ladder, your all fired!"

#### CORRESPONDENCE

We received contributions at the hall for the Rusty Hook from the following members. No messages, just the money.

TED LEONARD \$100.00
JOHN FERN \$50.00
JACK MATHEWS \$30.00
RONDY VONCARNOP \$44.00
LEE ANDERSON \$100.00
RAY NELSON \$100.00
BILL & MARY FAIRBANKS \$200.00
BUD JOHNSON \$50.00
KENNETH D. FIELD \$100.00

#### CORRESPONDENCE

The response to our appeal for members and funds in the Summer issue of the Rusty Hook Has been most gratifying!

From Professor CHUCK BERGQUIST, second holder of the HARRY BRIDGES CHAIR

Just a note and \$20.00.

Thank You Professor BERGQUIST, for the money and for your work at the CHAIR, in support of labor.

From ERROL JOHANSEN, Seattle.

Dear Brothers and Sisters at the RUSTY HOOK,

Thank you very much for the well written articles in the RUSTY HOOK. I appreciate them every time I get my copy. I really liked DAVE CHADDOCK's article, "These colors don't run (the world)." It made me think about all the chaos in the world right now. I thank you so much to all the pensioners on the docks that paved such a nice road that the workers now travel on. Such sacrifices made it a great place to work and be a part of. I sure hope that we can pass down such an inheritance as you have. Here's \$50.00 because you guys sound like you are hurting for it. Please only send me one copy from now on because you currently send me two. Please check your computer system. I'm sure I'm not the only one.

**ERROL JOHANSEN** 

Thank you ERROL, For the welcome \$\$s and the timely reminder.

From GEORGIA HENSLEE, Seattle.

To Whom it may Concern,

Enclosed is my check for \$100.00 in memory of CLA-RENCE HENSLEE. You may spend it any way that is necessary! CLARENCE had retired in 1978 and he died in 1988.

Thank You,

GEORGIA M. HENSLEE

Thank you GEORGIA for the contribution.

From DONALD P. REIDEL, Port Angeles.

To the Rusty hook (May it Live Forever)!

Just a Note - Have enjoyed traveling, etc. for 12 years, and only because I can thank wonderful guys like you for all the hard work you do. Use money where ever.

A big thank you.

**DONALD P. REIDEL 67018** 

Thank You DONALD. for the \$100.00 We are glad to hear of your good retirement.

#### AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

From JOHN WOLD

Dear Pension Committee,

Please accept this check for \$100.00 to be used as needed by the association for the benefit of the ILWU-PMA Seattle members.

Thank YOU JOHN. The Pension club has plenty of needs.

From RUSS ROUSSEAU, Port Ludlow.

Rusty Hook Gang,

Here's \$100.00 to use as you see fit.

I'm retired in Port Ludlow and don't get on your side of the water much. I am keeping busy with volunteer work and traveling a lot, this keeps my Hook from getting too rusty. Hello to all my brothers and sisters. Keep up your good work

**RUSS ROUSSEAU** 

Thank you for the good note and the money RUSS.

From BUD JOHNSON, Tucson, AZ.

Hi.

Just received the Hook. which reminds me that I must be behind dues.

Wow just think. Next March I will have been retired 30 years.

I can still remember the first job I had. Topside in a locker on the Hian Maru. Stinking hides and maggots. No gloves, took a week to heal. That's the kind of jobs the sons got. That was in 1938.

Nobody will ever convince me that there is no need for unions. We have just about the best medical in the world I can attest to that because of my wife's and my history, including a 4 way bypass and pace maker. With not one dime out of my pocket. I am very grateful of this union.

I'm sending a check for \$150.00. Never donated to the BRIDGES FUND and I know nothing of the JUGGUM FUND. So put \$25.00 to the JUGGUM FUND and \$25.00 to the BRIDGES FUND. With the \$100.00 to go to the RUSTY HOOK.

I enjoy the Hook and would miss it if it stopped.

Thanks BUD JOHNSON

Thanks BUD for your story of the past and your contribution to the future. We always love to hear old stories of the Waterfront. So keep'em coming.

Page 7

From DONALD C. FRANZ, S. Cle Elum

I really do appreciate all that the pensioners club does to support the ILWU. Here is \$320.00 to use wherever you feel it is most needed.

DONALD C. FRANZ

Thank you, DONALD. Your generous support is deeply appreciated

From MANNY VENTOZA, Seattle.

Mailed from St. Louis, Ill.

I send you greetings and salutations to all, upstairs and down, with blessings. Thanks to a great pension plan we can travel. I am with some of my old war buddies here in St. Louis for a reunion.

MANNY VENTOZA

Good to hear from you, MANNY. Drop by the hall when you get home.

From PETE KOLLOEN, Redmond.

Hi, DICK, PARKER, and gang.

\$100.00 To the RUSTY HOOK or what ever fund needs the money.

PETE KOLLOEN

Thanks, PETE. And thanks for your good work as Recording Secretary.

From DALE & JOANNE MORTENSEN South Bend.

\$100.00 for the Rusty Hook.

Thanks so much DALE & JOANNE. The money is very welcome We'd really like to see you, too.

From W. P. LEWIS, Shoreline.

\$200.00 donation.

Thank you BROTHER LEWIS. Every large bit helps too!

From JAMES D. CRANSTON, Tacoma.

\$50.00

Thanks JAMES. We appreciate it very much.

From WALTER KNITTLE, Olympia. \$50.00 with a note "WALT KNITTLE No note,

\$50.00 Donation."

Thanks WALT for the money, and the no note note!

RUSTY HOOK / Fall 2008



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