



R. THOMAS BUFFENBARGER
International President

Commentary

The Stark Reality Behind China's Economic Miracle

The United States' annual trade deficit with the People's Republic of China hit 161 billion dollars in 2004.

The media treated the milestone as just another — yawn — business story. It is far more than that.

North America faces a haixiao, the Chinese word for a tsunami, which will wipe out entire industries and communities. No mid-ocean sensors trigger alarms. No sirens sound. And yet, these tidal waves of Chinese-made products are heading our way.

As this provocative *IAM Journal* proves, billions of exported products — toys to textiles, computers to cars, air conditioners to airplanes — depend on 337 million working women whose lives are far different than the *China Dolls* on this magazine's cover.

Is what they face in the workplace — ten to fourteen-hour days, six days a week, fifty-one weeks a year to earn less than 60 dollars a month — what we want for our daughters and sisters? If not, then it's time to act, decisively.

Let's support the repeal of Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. Let's make any future annual renewal of China's trade status contingent on enforcement of existing labor laws. Let's force multinational corporations to pay a premium price for exploiting the most powerless in China — its millions of real china dolls — just to make a buck.

And let's understand that free trade with Communist China is not free. It comes at a very high price — a lower life expectancy for millions of Chinese workers and much lower lifetime earnings for millions of North Americans.

Tom

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS, AFL-CIO

R. Thomas Buffenbarger
International President

Warren L. Mart
General Secretary-Treasurer

GENERAL VICE PRESIDENTS:

Lee Pearson, 620 Coolidge Drive, Suite 130,
Folsom, CA 95630

Dave Ritchie, 15 Gervais Drive, Suite 707,
Toronto, ONT M3C 1Y8

Robert V. Thayer, 9000 Machinists Place,
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2687

Robert Roach, Jr., 9000 Machinists Place,
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2687

Lynn D. Tucker, Jr., 135 Merchant Street,
Suite 265 Cincinnati, OH 45246-3730

Robert Martinez, Jr., 1111 W. Mockingbird
Lane, Dallas, TX 75247

James E. Brown, 5 Westbrook Corporate
Center, 11301 Cermack Road, Suite 100
Westchester, IL 60154

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Richard S. Sloan, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

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EDITORIAL STAFF: Donna Georgallas, Cornel Dunmore, Rick Palmer, Frank Larkin, Valana Reid, John Lett, John Carr, Melissa Campbell and Jason Woodward.