

# Through a glass, darkly?

July 13, 2001 – Today, Beijing received the nod to host the 2008 Olympic Games. The world's attention from now until then will be on China. There has been some publicity (mostly from countries vying against China for the Olympic bid) on China's dismal record on human rights. Let us also remind ourselves that China refuses to respect some very basic human rights. Here are a few points to remember: China has:

- Refused to fully ratify the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights because one section of the covenant calls for the right to form independent trade unions.
- Continued to demand increased transfer of technology and jobs before agreeing to purchase many products from the Canada and the United States.
- Kept labor union activists like Zhang Shanguang in prison. During the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, Zhang tried to start an independent union and for the last decade he has been subjected to “reform through labor” in the brutal prison system that the Chinese call *laogai*.
- Cracked down on religious freedom. The Chinese government has harassed, persecuted, jailed, beaten and sometimes killed Chinese men women and children for practicing their faith.
- Executed more people in the last three years than the rest of the world combined!
- Become a top contributor to Canada's trade deficit.

China has won the right to host the 2008 Olympic games. Perhaps, it is time prove they belong on the world stage by recognizing the fundamental human and economic rights of workers and all its citizens.

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**Have you heard?**

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