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Joliet, IL 60435

10 August 1997

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Donald Clark

Secretary, Federal Trade Commission

6th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Rm 172

Washington, DC 10580

Mr. Clark:

It is my understanding that the FTC is currently accepting public comment on proposed changes in the "Made in the USA" regulations. I learned of this through an editorial in my local newspaper, a copy of which is enclosed. I also enclose a copy of a letter to the editor I submitted in response to the editorial which urges people to resist any changes which would liberalize the use of the Made in the USA label.

As can be seen in my letter, I am in favor of the proposed changes, not simply because they're not manifestly evil, but because I believe such changes acknowledge the international nature of manufacturing and indirectly help to promote global cooperation and free trade.

Thank you,



J.D. Wright

Letters to the **Editor**

**Joliet** Herald-News

Joliet, IL 60436

To the Editor:

In response to the editorial by **Alfie** Rodriguez, "Made in the USA? Whatever that means", (Saturday, August 9) I think he's right. In a global economy labels like these don't mean anything. There are probably few if any manufactured good that are completely made in Thailand, or Brazil, or France either. But Mr. Rodriguez would have us believe this is a bad thing. On the contrary, **this** is a good thing, a **wonderful** thing. For the first time in history global cooperation and the reduction of trade barriers are helping to stimulate the economies of many countries. And perhaps more importantly, nations which are linked economically have more interests in common and are less likely to resort to military means to settle their differences.

Mr. Rodriguez is **rightfully** concerned about the pay scale of workers in third world countries with fledgling economies. But the protectionism he seems to favor is one of the very things that perpetuates these conditions. To insist that companies bring all those jobs back to the US would accomplish a number of things. First of all, many of those foreign workers who are struggling to increase their incomes would simply have no jobs at all. This could only **further** destabilize a third world country economically. Secondly, continued isolation from a bustling world economy would **further** alienate the citizens of third world countries and delay the spread of democracy. Thirdly, from a selfish point of view, this would have the effect of shrinking the markets for US goods, which would put downward pressure on wages and jobs in this country.

In the past, the countries of the industrialized world, especially the US, have given much in the way of money and materials to less fortunate nations. I would submit that jobs are a more precious commodity than food or gold, and the extent to which we can "give" jobs to people in these countries is not only the right thing to do in a humanitarian sense but makes good sense economically as well. As recent history has demonstrated, the "globalization" of manufacturing helps new markets emerge, creates new jobs at home, stabilizes international relations, and

benefits everyone.

As per Mr. Rodriguez' plea, I will be sending a letter to the FTC as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "JD Wright". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Wright".

JD Wright "

## Made in the USA? Whatever that means

**M**ade in the USA. Just a few clear, simple words that can only mean one thing. Look at what each word means. Made built, constructed, the product of a unique blend of knowledge, craftsmanship and sweat. In: here; one place. The USA: the greatest country the world has ever known; our country.

Guess what? That simple phrase, Made in the USA, might mean nothing by the end of the year.

Nothing? That's right. Made in the USA, the phrase that we have all looked for on products throughout our entire lives, the label that sits right next to our union label, will mean nothing if the Federal Trade Commission has its way. It's a sad story of corporate greed, the exporting of jobs and a federal agency gone very, very wrong.

The Federal Trade Commission is the agency which has responsibility for overseeing business in the USA. It sets standards in interstate trade, oversees regulations, and makes policy. One of the things which it has always been responsible for is making sure that the Made in the USA label only appears on items that were assembled in the USA of American parts.

Of course, the truth isn't always something that the American consumer can expect from the government or big business. How many times have we been fed half truths by some corporate spokesman or a

bureaucrat more interested in his or her job than in our best interests? That is what is happening here, right now.

Big business has decided that the Made in the USA label doesn't have to mean what it says. In their opinion, Made in the USA means that at least some part of a product was actually made here, maybe out of materials produced in Japan or Thailand. It's the best of both worlds for the huge multinational corporations: they get to dump fairly paid, union represented American workers off of their payrolls, hire people in Asia or Central America to do our jobs for two dollars a day, and then bring the partially finished product back to the USA to be completed by part time or poorly paid, non-union workers while still telling us that their product is Made in the USA.

They want to turn the badge of pride which is affixed to American products into one more form of corporate welfare.

According to a draft proposal put out by the FTC, products which are "substantially" made here would be able to sport the Made in the USA label. "Substantially" made here? What is that supposed to mean? How is substantially different from "partially" made here? Or some "somewhat" made here? Or, how about, from "Not really Made in the USA, but we would like the extra money we could make if you think it is"? Sure, the label would have to be bigger, but the company could afford it. After all, they would have

saved all that money on paying the unionized American ones.

Think about it. A sneaker company tells you that their products are the best in the world, that the women stitching together their shoes in Indonesia do just as good a job as American workers for the two or three dollars a day that they are paid. Yet, they still want to put a "Made in the USA" label on their shoes. What does this mean? It means that they acknowledge that a product made here by fairly compensated workers is superior to one made by grossly underpaid people somewhere else. They know that if their shoes were made in America, they would be of a better quality, and that they would have been made at a fair, realistic price to the company.

There is a way, however, for us to fight this outrage, this cheapening of who we are and what our flag stands for. The FTC will be accepting comments on the proposed changes in the Made in the USA regulations until Monday.

Write to the FTC, and do it today. Send your letters to: Secretary Donald Clark, Federal Trade Commission, 6th St. & Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Room 172, Washington, D.C. 10550.

We all know what it means to be Made in the USA

*Reprinted with permission from the Sheet Metal Workers Journal. Submitted by business representative Alfie Rodriguez.*