

BRAZIL

- 19 -

children under 14 years of age when they feel it appropriate. The authorities rarely enforce legal restrictions intended to protect working minors under age 18, however, and the problem is widespread. The law requires permission of the parents or guardians for minors to work, and they must attend school through the primary grades. The law bars all minors from night work, work that constitutes a physical strain, and employment in unhealthful, dangerous, or morally harmful conditions.

Despite these legal restrictions, official figures state that nearly 3 million 10- to 14-year-old children (or 4.6 percent of the work force) were employed. Many children are forced to work along side their parents in cane fields, cutting hemp, or feeding wood into charcoal ovens; frequent accidents, unhealthy working conditions, and squalor are common in these cases. At sawmills in the state of Rondonia, 20 teenagers lost fingers or suffered other accidents but were not entitled to compensation because they were employed illegally.

Independent shoe manufacturers in Franca (Sao Paulo state) continue to employ thousands of children under age 14, in violation of the law. Public prosecutors brought suit in November against five major Franca shoe manufacturers for illegally subcontracting work which led to the exploitation of child labor. Sugar cane growers illegally employ children and adolescents from 7 to 17 years of age, many cutting cane with machetes. Specific reports of minors working illegally also involve orange growers in Sao Paulo, street vendors in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, and mining and logging industries in the Amazon region. *

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcement of child labor laws, but it has too few inspectors to do so effectively. The widely held view that it is better for minors to work than to be involved in street crime also hampers enforcement efforts.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

Prior to July, the Government adjusted the national minimum wage every month. With the midyear introduction of the economic stabilization plan, it set the minimum wage at \$83 (70 reals) per month. The Interunion Department for Socioeconomic Studies and Statistics estimated that the minimum wage is less than one-fifth that necessary (based on a standard set by the 1988 Constitution) to support a family of four. The most recently available national survey (for 1990) showed that *

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September 5, 1995

John Gregory Lambros
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Dr. Kathy M. Hawk, Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
U.S. Department of Justice
320 First Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20534

RE: PROTECTION OF UNITED STATES SHOE MAKERS

Dear Dr. Kathy M. Hawk:

I am a torture victim from Brazil that is presently incarcerated at the United States Penitentiary Leavenworth, Leavenworth, Kansas due to extradition from Brazil.

As an United States citizen and a torture victim from Brazil I find the enclosed article in the Wall Street Journal on May 15, 1995 very disturbing in that Brazil has raised import duties on shoes to as much as 63% from 20%, to protect domestic shoemakers. The article continues in stating Brazil offers incentives to encourage investment to modernize shoe production.

Leavenworth Penitentiary has and may in the future purchased Brazilian work boots for the inmate population to wear at there assigned job.

I could not let this Labor Day pass without thinking that the United States domestic shoemakers should also be given incentives and favorable considerations in selling shoes and boots to the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Thanking you in advance for your comments and favorable considerations in supporting United States industry.

Sincerely,


John Gregory Lambros

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BRAZIL BOOSTS LEVIES ON SHOES

Brazil raised import duties on shoes to as much as 63% from 20%, to protect domestic shoemakers. The government also offered incentives to encourage investment to modernize shoe production. Brazil's shoe industry has fallen on hard times in the past year. An unfavorable exchange rate has made exports less competitive, and shoe shipments have dropped, while footwear imports, mostly from Italy and China, have made inroads.

POSTSCRIPTS . . .

Poland said its economy grew between 5.5% and 6% in the first quarter, when

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