

**Fashion Economics: FM 4339**  
**Quiz #1: The Introduction**  
**Dr. Adomaitis**

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**Rosen, E. I. (2002). The Globalization of the U.S. Apparel Industry:  
Making Sweatshops. University of California Press.**

Please answer to the best of your knowledge the following essay question. Use detail where appropriate. Remember grammar, punctuation & spelling count.

**a. How has history played a part in the globalization of textiles? Why is World War II significant in the history of textiles? (5pts)**

World War II and the history of the United States played a big part in the globalization of textiles and apparels industries. Prior to World War II, the U.S dominated these industries and provided high wage paying jobs for individuals specializing in these trades. Historical events such as this World War, the Cold War that followed, as well and politics and trade policy all contributed in different ways to globalize the textile and apparel sectors. As Rosen (2002) states, "In the decades that followed, the United States continuing project to thwart left-wing insurgencies in the region contributed to the globalization of apparel industries" (p. 10). Reconstructing and fostering textile and apparel across the globe into low wage countries helped the U.S advance on the globalization of textiles and other industries while fighting communism simultaneously.

World War II is significant in the history of textiles, because it shifted the power onto the United States to rebuild the world after the war and to impose its vision across the globe. As stated by Rosen (2002), "Yet since the end of World War II, the international trade regime has been dominated by American power" (p. 6). The shift of power balance after the war allowed for the United States to rebuild countries such as those in Southeast Asia and Latin America. In spreading the American power, they exported machinery and expertise for the textile industry and apparel industries into lower wage paying countries. This globalization generated more profits for corporations and enhanced America's growth, power and influence.

**b. Why was trade policy important to the United States and to Japan? (5pts)**

Having the responsibility of rebuilding war torn countries and economies, trade policy was important to the United States and to Japan. By providing machineries and introducing experts that fostered these apparel and textile industries, the United States helped dramatically in the recovery of many countries like Japan post World War II. However, these countries having different labor rights and working conditions, created

new competition to the American industries of the same trade. According to Rosen (2002), “During the next half century, backed by U.S military power, corporations at home and abroad would flourish” (p. 6). Trade policy became an important tool needed to control this competition to protect the trade skills of American producers.

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**c. What is Rosen’s definition of a sweatshop? Why were unions created? How did the incident at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City have an impact on unions? On women? (5pts)**

Rosen doesn't give a direct definition for a sweatshop, but instead to the conditions that workers face such as low wages, long working hours and unsafe working environments. Unions were created to fight for improved safe working conditions and fairer wages. “Women sewing operatives now often member of this union, receive good wages, paid vacations and medical benefits and when work was slow could collect unemployment insurance from the federal government” (Rosen, 2002, p. 1). As Rosen explained, unions were necessary to protect the workers from the owners who sought profits above the rights of its employees. Unfortunately, events such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire had to occur to finally address this terrible problem of sweatshops.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory incident in New York City in 1911 was an event that forever changed workers’ rights and unions in America. As Rosen (2002) stated, “In New York City, The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire did lead to reforms” (p. 1). This terrible tragedy led to support for unions such as the International Ladies Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU), who fought for and protected their members working rights. This incident also shed light on the importance of protecting women workers rights and improving their working conditions as they were the force behind these industries that exploited sweatshops.

**d. Name the Union established for Garment workers?**

International Ladies Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU)

**e. How has the media played a part in unionization?**

Media plays a part in unionization because it's an avenue for advocating and representing workers and the good of having a union representing the workforce. As Rosen (2002) stated, "Tragedies like this one generate public support for the passage or enforcement of laws to ensure these incidents are not repeated" (p. 1). Events such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire expose workers struggles and terrible working conditions through the media of their time helped in garnering support for unions and their objectives. In today's society, media plays even a bigger role with the like of social media and advertising, which allow for easier promotions of unions for the protection and representation of workers and their rights. Unions can connect and promote their goals and actions easier, highlighting workers needs and rights against greedy companies and bosses who don't care as much about their employees.

### **Work Cited**

Rosen, E. I. (2002). *Making sweatshops: The Globalization of the U.S. apparel industry*. University of California Press.