

### WANNA BUY A HOMEMADE AUTOMOBILE?

I was stuck in the rush hour behind one of those giant 18-wheelers. An equally giant picture of a box of cookies covered its back door. The box had “Homemade taste” written on it and a smiling image of a friendly gray-haired lady holding a cookie.

When I finally passed the semi I looked at the driver. He was a middle-aged bearded guy who looked like he appreciated chewing tobacco more than savoring cookies.

There might be some among us who still believe that the hundreds or thousands of items listed as homemade are really made in tiny little cottages where grey-haired ladies or portly father figures busily bake cookies, prepare soups, make pizza or sausages according to secret old family recipes and carefully pack, fill and seal cans and jars of vegetables, jellies and fruit. They then pack them into cases, load them on giant trucks and deliver them to stores where smiling managers in white coats and aprons greet their customers by name.

Yeah, right!

For some reason it is the “Homemade” label that annoys me most. I can live with “Best quality”, “Guaranteed highest quality”, “Best taste”, “Delicious quality and taste”, and the more mundane “Best”, “Unsurpassed”, “Prime” and “Naturally good”. But “homemade?” Shouldn’t it mean that it was made in someone’s home? Or does an industrial complex qualify as a “home” if the night watchman has a cot there to snooze on?

“Homemade” hints at a Norman Rockwell sense of coming home to a delicious meal, made by a loving mother or grandma, a feeling of security and nostalgia, a taste of a vaguely remembered childhood.

There used to be an invisible dividing line that dictated that some things just couldn't be homemade. I have never seen an ad for a "homemade" refrigerator, car or mattress. Alcoholic beverages are never advertised as being "homemade", nor is toothpaste or shampoo.

Traditionally, "homemade" conveys goodness when applied to something that might conceivably be made in a home rather than impersonally in a factory by machines. Complex machines cannot be and are not homemade.

Unfortunately, a quest for political correctness has changed how we use words. A good example is the offensive transformation of "terrorists" to "militants", "fighters" or "insurgents".

But the most recent and bothersome transformation by the media of a complex, well-designed and deadly instrument of destruction into being cute and inoffensive is the designation that used to be applied only to cookies, sauces and the like: "Homemade"!

Here is an April 2006 Associated Press report on the subject:

"The Israeli air strike came in response to **homemade** Palestinian rocket attacks on southern Israel".

Homemade? Made at home by grandmas? A term that is used by our own beloved Los Angeles Times to describe the 500 rockets that rained down on Israel since the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza last summer?

The L.A. Times (6/25/06) says, "...Israel's battle against Gaza militants...targeting fighters who launch homemade Kassam rockets into southern Israel" and "Israeli military planners have been vexed by the Kassams that fall regularly in and near the town of Sderot." And then, a slap at the silly military planners who shouldn't be vexed at the cute homemade Kassams, "Although the crude projectiles usually drop harmlessly into open

fields, often without making it into Israel, five Sderot residents have been killed by rocket fire since 2004. No one has died since the Israeli pullout". (*Wrong! See below*)

But really, what is Israel vexed about? Certainly the U.S. wouldn't be – with a population 50 times that of Israel, the 500 rockets that killed 5 Israelis would be equivalent to 25,000 rockets that killed 250 innocent civilians if they were fired from, say, Mexico. Would the U.S. military planners be vexed? Even if the rockets are homemade? Nah...

Here is a partial score of the homemade Kassams: *6/28/04: a man and 4-year old child killed, 7 others wounded (including the boy's mother); 1/21/05: two babies killed; 7/14/05: 22-year old girl killed; 9/24/05: 5 adults wounded, some with serious brain damage, blindness, paralysis; 2/3/06: a Kassam hits a home, 4 injured, including a 7 month-old baby; 3/28/06: two Israeli Arabs shepherds killed; 4/6/06: nine rockets fired, one hits a factory causing a fire.*

There is more, much more. There are the wounded - handicapped and maimed for life. There are the children who are afraid to go to school, the rockets and alerts that go on without respite.

Vexed? Homemade? Isn't it time that our media told us that Kassam rockets are made in industrial complexes or smuggled in across the porous Egypt-Gaza border? They are not as sophisticated as some other weapons but they are high tech enough to bring death to their targets and they are being improved all the time.

They are not cookies. They are not cute. And they are not made by lovable grannies.