

[REDACTED]  
Richmond Hill, NY 11418  
Sept. 16, 1996

Mr. Brian Lamb  
Washington Journal  
400 North Capitol Street, NW #650  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I'm listening to you and David Ignatius discuss the morning headlines while I write this letter. A caller has just mentioned job loss in the United States and you have brought forward Barlett and Steele's articles in the Philadelphia Enquirer. Usually when questions of free trade are asked, your guests will change the subject, claim they're not qualified to answer, or evoke the mantra of "most experts agree." I was surprised when I didn't hear the familiar sound of the football being punted by your guest, Mr. Ignatius.

Mr. Ignatius, an economist, answered that those with education and skills were prospering in the free trade environment while the unskilled and uneducated were not; and, therefore, those without them should get one or the other. This is admittedly not much of an answer. It's a statement of fact and not an explanation of why free trade is good for the nation. Since the beginning of the free trade controversy those who favor it have argued ad hominem that those opposed to it are uneducated, unwashed Luddites standing in the path of the future. Besides reinforcing this stereotype of free trade opponents, Mr. Ignatius has managed in the same breath to beg the free trade question.

The reason American blue collar workers receive living wages is because they can organize, taking their case for equitable treatment to the American people. Mr. Ignatius's statement that no employer is going to pay more for an American worker when he can find cheaper labor abroad is certainly a general truth. The

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question remains, however, should we allow multinationals, through free trade agreements, to use cheap labor abroad, in nations that share neither our economic or social values, to replace American workers. Even if one believes that our values need to be adjusted to new circumstances the questions that must be answered are these: What new circumstances exist? What are our present values? How are they dysfunctional? In what way should they be adjusted and to what purpose? Surely, those who know any history are beyond the Social Darwinism that believes the economic sphere is valueless.

There also appears to be an unwarranted assumption in Mr. Ignatius belief that education adds value to the economy. Many lawyers, advertiser even pundits would be hard pressed to make the argument of how their educations have added value to our economy. Not only can the economic value of professions be questioned but the social values of our universities can also be argued. When what are known as private schools in England (public schools in America) were first started the authorities had to destroy makeshift schools that the working classes had set up for their children. One of the reasons that the English working class resisted state run schools was their correct assumption that the useful values that they had developed out of their experience would be supplanted by the teaching of upper class values that were for the working class invalid. Today I believe that what little passes for social and economic values coming out of our universities are for the working class, still, not only invalid but immoral.

Enclosed in a letter that makes a case for protectionism. It also offers a practical way to raise labor standards along with examples of the role nations and international organizations have play.

I hope my thoughts will help you in the questioning of your guest.

Yours truly,

