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## Is Protectionism Racism?

by *Patrick J. Buchanan*

“Xenophobia and Politics”—the headline got my attention. And the subhead convinced me I would get honorable mention: “Why Protectionism is a Lot Like Racism.”

I was not mistaken. But the main target of Steven Landsburg’s “On My Mind” column in *Forbes* magazine was the neo-racist ideas he had ferreted out—on John Kerry’s website.

Kerry had proposed, “Federal contracts, wherever possible, should be performed by American workers.” Landsburg was morally offended that anyone would argue that American workers should be given preference over Asian or African workers.

“It’s not just Kerry,” wrote the professor from the University of Rochester. “Both major parties (and most of the minor ones) are infested with protectionist fellow travelers who would discriminate on the basis of national origin no less virulently than David Duke or any other overt racist would discriminate on the basis of skin color. But if racism is morally repugnant—and it is—then so is xenophobia...”

Declares Landsburg: “I hold this truth to be self-evident: It is just plain ugly to care more about total strangers in Detroit than about total strangers in Juarez. ... Even if Kerry-style (or Nader-style or Buchanan-style) protectionism could improve Americans’ well-being at the expense of foreigners, it would still be wrong.”

Now I do not know what parents pay to send their kids to the University of Rochester. But if the philosophical imbecility of Landsburg is representative of the faculty, it is too much.

To be more concerned about the well-being of one’s fellow Americans is not “xenophobia,” which means a fear or hatred of foreigners. It is patriotism, which entails a special love for one’s own country and countrymen, not a hatred of any other country or people. Preferring Americans no more means hating other peoples than preferring one’s family means hating all other families. An icy indifference as to whether one’s countrymen are winning—be it in a competition for jobs or Olympic medals—is moral treason and the mark of a dead soul.

We are all born into families, clans, tribes, neighborhoods, countries, all of which—as well as the friends we make, the schools that nurture us, the churches at which we worship—have a claim upon our love and loyalty.

But the professor equates “Buy American” and “Hire Americans” programs with aggressive war. “After all, if it’s okay to enrich ourselves by denying foreigners the right to earn a living, why not enrich ourselves by invading peaceful countries and seizing their assets. ... Stealing assets is wrong, and so is stealing the right to earn a living, no matter where the victim was born.”

The professor’s piece testifies to another truth. Free-trade fanatics are running out of statistical proofs

so fast they must defend their position on the grounds that, no matter if it fails America, it is a morally superior position. For look at what a soaring dependency on imports is doing to our country.

Last year's trade deficit topped \$617 billion. In January, it hit \$58.3 billion, portending a deficit in 2005 of \$700 billion. U.S. trade and budget deficits combined are 10 percent of GDP. We are borrowing \$2 billion a day abroad to subsidize our lifestyle. The American consumer has never been more indebted—in credit cards, auto loans, mortgages.

The dollar has lost a third of its value against the euro in three years. Gold is back close to \$450 an ounce, a run-up of 70 percent. Oil is bumping up against \$55 a barrel. When South Korea and then Japan's Koizumi hinted their treasuries might diversify reserves and hold a lesser share in dollars, the Dow experienced what pilots call, as you grab the arm rests and hold on for dear life, "a little choppiness." The last fruits of free-trade globalism may be financial collapse.

Under Bush, 2.8 million manufacturing jobs, one in six, have been lost. Real wages of working Americans are stagnant. Two-thirds of a million textile and apparel workers face wipeout from Chinese imports that are now unrestricted. As Paul Craig Roberts writes, the jobs being created pay less and demand less in education and training than the jobs being outsourced. Our workers are being sacrificed on the altar of globalism. Says Landsburg: tough luck!

If economics professors are so fanatic about free trade, why not eliminate their tenure and import English-speaking economics professors from India at half the pay? For as Landsburg instructs us, "It is plain ugly to care more" about him than a total stranger.

Moreover, the stranger might come to love America and even prefer America, which some deracinated academics find so racist a sentiment. ■