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No Mr. Cameron, the UK has no moral obligations at all [1]

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David Cameron tells us that [2]:

> ?The argument of the heart is even when things are difficult at home we should fulfil our moral obligations to the poorest of the world. There are still more than a billion people living on a dollar a day,? Mr Cameron said.

That's fair enough.

> The Prime Minister acknowledged that the Coalition?s commitment to spending 0.7 per cent of GDP on overseas aid

That's not. It does make me wonder what, if anything at all, they teach in the philosophy part of PPE at Oxford. Only a moral actor can have a moral obligation: a country ain't such so it can't. We as individuals are indeed moral actors and we might well have a moral obligation to do something. Which, amazingly, many of us so with our donations to various international charitable causes. And well done us: but this does not extend to it being moral to confiscate our money to assuage the egos of politicians in alleviating foreign poverty.

Quite apart from which there's a more important point [3]:

> Huge bureaucracies are financed (with the aid money), corruption and complacency are promoted, Africans are taught to be beggars and not to be independent. In addition, development aid weakens the local markets everywhere and dampens the spirit of entrepreneurship that we so desperately need. As absurd as it may sound: Development aid is one of the reasons for Africa's problems. If the West were to cancel these payments, normal Africans wouldn't even notice. Only the functionaries would be hard hit. Which is why they maintain that the world would stop turning without this development aid.

Governmental aid is simply the wrong way to discharge that moral duty even if it existed. I'm sure I recall the British Council spending some of that much vaunted 0.7% on a female dance troupe (most feminist you see?) to interpret the dangers of climate change just as a weird example.

The correct way to alleviate poverty is as Madsen has been saying for decades now. Buy things made by poor people in poor countries. And the government's aid to our doing so could and should be the breaching of all the trade barriers that prevent us from doing so.

As an example, abolishing the Common Agricultural Policy would do more for poor peasant farmers elsewhere than anythinhg else we could possibly conceive.

I have to admit that what confuses me is that all of the above is entirely clear and obvious. And if we really did elect the just, righteous and intelligent to rule us then all of the above would already be happening. It isn't so what is it that this tells us about those elected?

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