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Ten reasons why the Left should like the ASI, 3: Trade with poor countries [1]

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3. The ASI enthusiastically supports giving goods from developing countries unrestricted access to developed world markets. The Left should appreciate our stance in firmly and publicly supporting the one thing that can make people in poorer countries wealthier.

Some campaign for more aid, but the ASI's line is that trade is more important. Humanitarian aid is fine, and we should give generously to support victims of natural disasters, to help provide clean water, and to fund health programmes. We do not, however, support development aid that is designed to boost state investment in industry or state direction of emerging economies. Every country that has gone from poor to rich has done it through trade, and none has done it without trade.

Some of those who piously call for more development aid also support the tariffs and subsidies by which some developed countries prevent poorer countries from selling their goods in rich world markets. We express our support for nations struggling to become wealthier with a three-word mantra: "Buy their stuff." When others were wearing wristbands that said "Make Poverty History," we produced and distributed thousands that proclaimed "I buy goods from poorer countries." The former expressed a hope that other people would do something, but ours declared something the wearer was actually doing to bring about change.

When we buy goods from developing countries, we become wealthier by having cash left over after buying their lower-priced produce. They become richer from the money we pay for their goods. It is a win-win process that is rapidly lifting most parts of the world above subsistence poverty.

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