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Global Justice: An Anti-Collectivist and Pro-Causal Ethic

Abstract
Both philosophical and practical analyses of global justice issues have been vitiated by two errors: a too-high emphasis on the supposed duties of collectives to act, and a too-low emphasis on the analysis of causes and risks. Concentrating instead on the duties of individual actors and analysing what they can really achieve reconfigures the field. It diverts attention from individual problems such as poverty or refugees or questions on what states should do. Instead it shows that there are different duties for political leaders, intelligence operatives, opinion leaders and citizens in devising, urging and implementing such plans as transfers of aid with accountability, military interventions in rogue states and limited intakes of refugees. With collectivist excuses for inaction such as sovereignty out of the way, it is possible to take a cautiously optimistic view of the possibility of forceful and morally responsible interventions in the range of major global problems.

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Global Justice: An Anti-Collectivist and Pro-Causal Ethic

James Franklin

The most wretched of the earth – those threatened with genocide, inhabitants of dictators' torture chambers, child slaves, desperate refugees, the poorest subsistence farmers and slum dwellers, the sick without access to medical care and pharmaceuticals – are typically the victims of the failed human systems into which they had the misfortune to be born. Individual action by themselves or by others can do little to relieve their burden, but collective action by the more fortunate could. *Prima facie*, they have a right to demand action from the "world community" and its agents.[1]

That right, however, would require the existence of a collective duty or distributed responsibility, a notion very far from clear. Only individuals can make decisions and act on them.[2] If a collective duty does exist, which individual persons are required to act, and in what way? As Onora O'Neill points out, lack of focus on the duties imposed on individuals by the supposed rights of others has bedevilled discussion for half a century, leading to "the emergence of the free-floating rhetoric of rights that now dominates much discussion of justice, focuses on recipience, and blandly overlooks the need for a robust and realistic account of agents of justice who are to carry the counterpart obligations."[3] That diagnosis is largely correct of high-profile projects like Live8, with its demands for intergovernmental aid and debt cancellation.[4] It is also a tendency, at least, in the language of Declarations of Rights, whose "abstract cosmopolitanism", O'Neill says, "has practical import only when we can determine *who* ought to do *what* for *whom*."[5] It applies also to the way questions of global justice are posed by such leading philosophers as Peter Singer, who assumes that giving to large aid organisations is the main duty of the rich,[6] and Thomas Pogge, who concentrates on the collective responsibility of the rich for unjust global political and economic structures.[7]

The contention of this article is that discussion of global justice has been vitiated by a lack of attention to two related matters: firstly, the individual as opposed to collective nature of

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[1] Justifications of a duty to assist the world poor from various ethical positions in Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 1967, n.3, 17, 22, 44-45; J. Rawls, *The Law of* Peoples, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 1999, especially ch. 15, and the works of Singer and Pogge, below nn. 5-6.
[2] Despite the legal usefulness of corporate responsibility; defence in J.R. Welch, 'Corporate Agency and Reduction', *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 39, 1989, pp. 409-24.
[3] Onora O'Neill, 'Agents of Justice', *Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 22, 2001, pp. 180-195, at p. 186.
[4] Live 8, Accessed: http://www.live8live.com [15/4/2011]
[5] O'Neill, 'Global justice: whose obligations?', in D. K. Chatterjee (ed.), *The Ethics of Assistance: Morality and the Distant Needy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 242-59, at p. 245.
[6] P. Singer, *Practical Ethics* (2nd edition), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, ch. 8; P. Singer, *The Life You Can Save: Acting Now To End World Poverty*, Random House, New York, 2009.
[7] T. Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights,* Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002

responsibilities, and secondly, causality and risk. The two are related in that inattention to how causes work naturally goes together with inattention to how any person can bring about the changes supposedly implied by a collective responsibility. It is argued that examination of these two would result in recommendations different from the usual ones as to action to implement the rights of the most oppressed citizens of the globe.

The thread that runs through cases of obligation on individuals to respond to other people's crises is causal effect, or more exactly the reasonable probability of having a beneficial causal effect.

If I see someone fall in the river, it is my responsibility to help him if he appears to need it. That is just because he is another human being in extreme need and I have the ability to save him. His right to be saved and my duty to save him follow from his need and my ability. I may be excused if I don't know about it, or if I can't swim, or if there is someone nearby with a better chance of saving him who is willing to try. Those considerations are relevant because they concern the causal connections between myself and saving the victim. But I am not excused on the basis of my not having been elected to the office of lifesaver, or by my having other things I would prefer to be doing, or by my being of a different race from the victim. Nor on the basis that the victim fell into the river from the other bank, which is in another sovereign state (unless that results in some relevant causal circumstance, such as the presence of trigger-happy border guards).

What if someone falls in the river and is observed by two potential rescuers, both with the ability, but possibly an unequal ability, to effect the rescue? The obligation is distributed, in the sense that someone must act – ideally the person with the greater ability, but the other must back up as needed, either by assisting or by taking on the burden if the other drops it. To establish who does what, there is an obligation to conduct negotiations (possibly tacit and quick, if the urgency of the situation demands it) to decide who is the one to jump in.

If there are a hundred people on the bank, the obligation is more distributed still. A member of the group of average ability might well hang back and see if any hero selects himself for the job. But if not, some responsibility devolves on anyone who has the ability to take useful action.

If there is a group of people on the bank already partly organised into a society, for example a busload of army recruits under a sergeant, the holder of authority has a special responsibility to evaluate whether the group should turn aside from what it is doing and organise the rescue. Since authority is normally not absolute but depends on the cooperation of the governed, the individuals in the group have a duty to cooperate with a good decision by the authority figure (if allowed, vote for it), and protest against a bad one.

If the falling of people into the river becomes a predictable event – perhaps people are jumping or being thrown in the river to take advantage of the rescuers' previously exhibited good nature – a different style of response becomes necessary. The same people who would have responsibility in a one-off case have a similar responsibility to inquire into the causes of the continual fallings into the river, and to prevent them recurring if that is reasonably possible with available resources. Since inquiry and prevention are very time-consuming, however, and they have other things to do for which they have more talent, they will prefer to delegate those tasks if possible to experts empowered and paid to act on their behalf. That will adequately limit the tendency of the "duty to rescue" to ramify indefinitely into neverending obligations that make ordinary life impossible.[8]

These considerations suggest several lines of attack on the problem of severe world poverty and oppression. On the one hand, there is such a thing as the "right of humanitarian intervention" agreed to by the European Parliament.[9] The most desperate in the world have a right to be helped, and those who can do something have a duty to do it. On the other hand, collectivist platitudes about the rights or duties of states or organisations of states will not in themselves reveal who ought to do what. There must be serious analysis of causes, risks and possibilities before the duties of any particular actor become clear. A collectivist question such as "does a country have a moral obligation to admit refugees, or give aid to poor nations?", as has often been asked,[10] is too blunt, as well as concentrating attention without argument on one particular form of possible action.

It is especially the matter of risk analysis – causality again, since it deals with the probability of causes and effects – that requires the problem to be posed in greater generality than that of compartmentalized questions of "rights of refugees" or "rights of poor countries to aid". Those restrictions of perspective divert attention from proper inquiry into the possible range of actions that might relieve the distress of the worst off, and can make it seem obvious that a certain kind of action is the right one, when it is not obvious. If one is scandalised about the gross inequality in wealth between the world's rich and poor – say, to be specific, about the inequality between two countries with similar natural endowments such as Bangladesh and the Netherlands – then there are three initial directions in which one may think of taking action. One approach finds it natural to suggest that the Dutch should give the Bangladeshis money.[11] A second finds it obvious that the border between the two should be abolished – that is, free transit be allowed.[12] Another approach finds it equally cogent to maintain that the Bangladeshis should be forced to

[8] M.A. Menlowe, 'The philosophical foundations of a duty to rescue', in M.A. Menlowe & A. McCall Smith (eds.) *The Duty to Rescue: The Jurisprudence of Aid* Dartmouth, Aldershot, 1993.
[9] V. Zanetti, 'Global justice: is interventionism desirable?', *Metaphilosophy*, Vol.32, 2003, pp.196-211.
[10] E.g. J.H. Carens, 'Refugees and the limits of obligation', *Public Affairs Quarterly*, 1992, Vol.6, pp. 31-44.
[11] The approach of Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights,* and Singer, *Practical Ethics*, Ch. 4.
[12] J.H. Carens, 'Open borders and liberal limits: A response to Isbister', *International Migration Review* Vol. 34, 2000, pp. 636-43.

reform their political and economic institutions so they can become as rich as the Dutch.[13] Those plans are not mutually exclusive, but it is likely that an emphasis on one or the other should arise from one's analysis of the causes of the inequality. That is proper, and moral discussion ought to await some adequate knowledge of the causes – at the very least, enough to ensure a reasonable probability that the actions one proposes to take will not make the situation worse. Since questions of economics, political theory and their interaction are very complex, a certain wariness in making moral pronouncements is called for.

The hazards of any simple policy of having rich nations give money to the poor ones are made clear by the well-established "curse of natural resources": being well-endowed with natural resources such as oil has proved very often counter-productive for the economies of the countries owning them.[14] It is debated whether this may be due to economic causes such as the resources drawing money from production, or from political causes such as the ruling elites' use of the profits to prop up their power and oppress the citizens. In any case, the simple transfer of resources from rich countries to poor without accountability is not a morally acceptable policy without a good deal more argument on causes and effects. Transfer of resources with accountability is certainly possible, but it requires an attenuation of the sovereignty of the receiving nation and hence is a move towards the third option above, that of enforced reform.

A decision to abolish borders or at least make them more porous by admitting refugees is one that can only be taken or not by a whole country. There will then be conflicts between different interests within the receiving country, and it may be that not everyone has the same moral obligation with respect to the decision. Different citizens have not only different abilities to cause any change of policy but different exposures to the effects. For example, high-minded legislators are unlikely to have to live next to the refugees they decide to admit, to compete with them for jobs, or to bear the effects of possible crime and ethnic tensions that may result from admitting large numbers of refugees. Further, those risks are hard to predict, even by the standards of social engineering in general.[15] The poor in a rich country might therefore reasonably take a less positive view of their obligations to refugees, so that the concept of an obligation on a whole country may be inapplicable. Instead, those with an actual though partial ability to influence events, such as politicians, bureaucrats, newspaper columnists and others, need to consider how far they can move outcomes in a humanitarian direction, given also the risks of doing so (such as political defeat in the short term and its attendant powerlessness to do any other good, and troubles such as ethnic tensions in the longer term).

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[13] National Security Strategy of the United States of America, especially sections VI and VII, 2002, Accessed: http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html [15/4/2011]; "softer" versions in A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Knopf, New York, Chs.. 4, 9; H de Soto, *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, Bantam, London, 2000.

[14] J.D. Sachs, & A.M. Warner, 'The curse of natural resources', *European Economic Review*, Vol. 45, 2001, pp. 827-38.

[15] Emphasised in M.J. Gibney, 'Liberal democratic states and responsibilities to refugees', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, 1999, pp. 169-81.

The risks of accepting large numbers of refugees also need to be balanced against the risk of intervening to stem the refugee flow at its source, whatever that might entail in the circumstances. Intervention may help the oppressed who would otherwise be tomorrow's refugees, while merely admitting today's refugees would not. That brings us to the third suggested strategy, forceful intervention in foreign countries to rid them of the causes that threaten the lives of their citizens. Those causes could be dictators, but could just as well be diseases, natural disasters or chronic lack or theft of resources. The more vigorous the proposed intervention, the harder to evaluate the risk. The risk that armed intervention in a failed or rogue state will lead to a quagmire has to be taken seriously, especially as experience shows foreign intervention is often fiercely resisted simply because it is foreign.[16] But the risk also needs to be balanced (approximate numbers would help) against the risk of leaving the failed state as it is, with its possibilities of proliferation of nuclear and biological weapons, or natural plagues arising far from the reach of Western medical science.

Having posed the moral question as one for individuals and urged that necessary risk analyses be undertaken, one must ask the causal question: what can one person do, even a powerful one? Here, there is cause for optimism in that human societies structure themselves in such a way that major decisions are passed to small groups of people. Otherwise, major initiatives would never get under way, but plainly they do. It is less clear that this can happen at an international level, especially in cases where the interests to be served are those of the world's powerless such as the poor or refugees, but there are enough successful cases to suggest more is possible than would initially appear from concentrating on the biased sample of festering remnants of failed attempts.

In view of the salience of cases where the international community has failed to act, such as the Rwandan and Sudanese genocides, global warming and malaria, it must be emphasised that there are many other instances of intense and effective large-scale international cooperation, even in peacetime. Classic nineteenth-century cases include the Universal Postal Union and the suppression of the slave trade through internationally agreed direct action on the high seas.[17] In the twentieth century, the refugee crises posed by the million anti-Communist "Displaced Persons" left in Western Europe in 1945 and by the Vietnamese boat people of the late 1970s were solved quickly and efficiently; various diplomatic efforts by the most powerful Western governments relieved the intolerable pressure on the countries of first asylum by arranging resettlement in distant lands, without consultation with the (ethnically different) citizens of those countries.[18] There are very powerful international compliance regimes to guard against major

[16] M.W. Doyle, 'The new interventionism', *Metaphilosophy*, Vol.32, 2001, pp. 212-235.
[17] G. Codding, *The Universal Postal Union, Coordinator of the International Mails*, New York University Press, New York, 1964; P.M. Kielstra, *The Politics of Slave Trade Suppression in Britain and France, 1814-1848*, St Martin's Press, New York, 2000.
[18] M. Wyman, *DP: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951*, Balch Institute Press, Philadelphia, 1988 ; B. Wain, *The Refused: The Agony of the Indochinese Refugees*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1981, Ch. 11.

transnational risks such as epidemics, computer incidents and banking defaults.[19] The international community, or at least a coalition of its most powerful members, can act decisively if motivation is present. With the end of the international political stalemates of the Cold War era, international problems should be easier to solve. The excuse that international cooperation to solve global problems is impossible has no merit – effective cooperation was achieved, and the will of individuals caused it.

The possibility and actuality of world-scale action call in question collectivist excuses as to why it should not be undertaken, especially the excuse from sovereignty. In earlier times, when cross-border action was largely unfeasible, sovereignty was to some extent necessary by default, but in the era of globalization (and precisely targeted air power), with intricate causal networks linking all communities, its justification needs re-evaluation. Sovereignty, in the sense of the right of a state to pursue its internal affairs free of interference from other states, has two natural justifications, which must be kept separate in order to determine when one or the other may be overriden. The first applies where the citizens of a functioning state are part of a genuine community. Like a voluntary corporation such as a company or monastery, such a state acquires a presumptive right to be left alone to pursue its business, a right that is the sum of the rights of the individuals in it to pursue their lawful affairs. That moral justification of sovereignty does not apply to cases of failed states and kleptocracies in which the state apparatus deliberately acts against the interests of its own "citizens". Even less does it apply to weak states whose writ does not run in much of the geographical area allotted to them on world maps.

The other justification for sovereignty is in terms of causality and risk, or perhaps more exactly game theory. Agreements, explicit or tacit, between states not to invade one another have a tendency to reduce wars, so there is a presumption in favour of keeping to those agreements even when made with rogue states. A general recognition of sovereignty may be in the general interest. That is a substantial justification, and applies in the case of rogue states as much as to respectable states. As a justification, it is defeasible, and may be defeated by both moral and pragmatic considerations. On the pragmatic side, it may be defeated by a well-substantiated risk assessment as to the probability of future wars resulting from leaving rogue states untouched, perhaps resulting from invasions by them of neighbouring states or from their collaborating in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Pragmatic considerations merge into moral considerations when we consider who pays the costs of risks that are realised. Turning the blind eye of appeasement or "respect for sovereignty" will or may reasonably be assessed to be at someone's expense later, as in the period of "Munich" in 1938. Even before wars between states arise, appeasement is likely to be at the expense of ethnic minorities and dissidents inside the rogue states, who have a right to put their claims on the table.[20]

[19] J. Franklin, Operational risk under Basel II: A model for extreme risk evaluation, *Banking and Financial Services Policy Report* Vol. 27, No. 10, 2008, pp. 10-16.
[20] Generally, A. Cranston, *The Sovereignty Revolution*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2004.

Nor do the moral claims of sovereignty in themselves have force against the claims of refugees, for the same reason as the rights of an organised group to be left alone are overridden by the claims of someone they see fall in the river – a right to non-interference does not bear on the claims of a human being in need. That is the justification for the universalist position on migration taken by the Catholic Church. Pius XII, speaking of the many postwar refugees in Europe in 1948, said:

> The natural law itself, no less than devotion to humanity, urges that ways of migration be opened to these people. For the Creator of the universe made all good things primarily for the good of all. Since land everywhere offers the possibility of supporting a large number of people, the sovereignty of the State, although it must be respected, cannot be exaggerated to the point that access to this land is, for inadequate or unjustified reasons, denied to needy or decent people from other nations, provided of course, that the public wealth, considered very carefully, does not forbid this.[21]

Justifications for excluding refugees will need to invoke instead considerations of risk. Such considerations may well be available. The Palestinians in the 1930s and 1940s faced genuine risks from the immigration of an ethnically incompatible tide of refugees with no intention of assimilating. There are less extreme cases. It may be foreseeable that refugees will form ghettos that will breed a minority of extremists who will demand a theocratic state incompatible with the liberal host state's values.[22] Or it may be foreseeable that admitting refugees who have completed dangerous clandestine journeys to seek asylum will encourage more dangerous journeys and deaths. To use these risks as an excuse for inaction would be callous, but the host state under pressure might well be motivated to courses of action other than simple admission of large numbers of refugees. That might include encouraging the world community or its more active members to take action at source on the problem causing the refugee outflow, or forcing or paying other states to take a fair share of refugees. Those courses of action erode the sovereignty of the target nations.

If an actor with some political power decides to do something on behalf of those in severe poverty in another state, what obligations does he have to inform his own citizens? In a democratic polity in particular, electors may be sceptical of the benefits of high-minded gestures for non-citizens, and there may by electoral pain for the actor – possibly enough to prevent the proposed action coming to fruition. If refugees are to be accepted, should he inform his own xenophobic citizens about it as little as possible, for example by being vague about the likely number of arrivals and by emphasising the economic benefits of cheap labour? If a dictator is to be overthrown, and the citizens of the nation providing the troops have little interest in the

[21] Pius XII to Cardinal McNicholas, 24/12/48, quoted in G. Tessarolo (ed.), *The Church's Magna Charta for Migrants*, St Charles Seminary, Staten Island, NY, 1962, p. 51.
[22] Discussion in M. Weiner, 'Ethics, national sovereignty and the control of immigration', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 30, 1996, pp. 171-197.

victims who are being tortured in the dictator's gaols, should intelligence reports of his weapons of mass destruction be "sexed up" to fill the propaganda gap? If the extreme poor of a neighbouring country need to be helped, should the economic benefits of doing so be exaggerated?

These special difficulties of extracting action from a democracy for the benefit of anyone but its own voters raise the question of whether there is any application of the notion of "reason of state", although that notion was originally developed with reference to absolute monarchies. Jean de Silhon, theorist to Cardinal Richelieu, argued that actions not normally licit, like lying, might be justified in political affairs by "reason of state" ("a mean between that which conscience permits and affairs require").[23] It is all very well for the Prince to keep to exalted moral principles like keeping his word, but ought he do so when the safety of his subjects is at stake? An individual only risks his own when he voluntarily suffers loss in order to do noble deeds, but for princes or their ministers to do the same is not noble but imprudent. "They are unjust if they sacrifice that which is not theirs and has been placed in their hands as a sacred trust."[24] The dilemma is serious for a politician, bureaucrat or intelligence operative in a democracy, who believes that overall regime change in another country is imperative but is in possession of a fact that if revealed would make intervention politically impossible. His duty to the victims of the evil regime hoping for deliverance are serious, and has the potential to outweigh his obligations to be honest in his pronouncements. When all due discounting has been done for the long-term effects of getting involved in murky business, the urgent claims of victims not to be sacrificed for bureaucratic high-minded clean-handedness remain. An absolutist clean-hands doctrine would wrongly assign responsibility for the effects of what we do but not for the effects of what we fail to do.[25] The conflict has the inevitability, even tragedy, of the conflict between justice and mercy. Both sides of the equation have force: the abstract principles and the need for consistency and long-term trustworthiness on one hand, and the special demands – equally matters of ethical principle – of particular human cases on the other.

Although it is not the business of a philosophical article to make detailed policy prescriptions, a small sample of possible recommendations is useful to illustrate what the present anti-collectivist and pro-causal perspective would mean in practice, and how it differs from classical attempts to help the world poor through untied intergovernmental aid, debt cancellation and the admission of refugees. Those policies, though necessary at times, are too easily manipulated in such a way as

[23] J. De Silhon, 'Lettre à l'Evesque de Nantes', quoted in W.F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1973, p. 168.
[24] J. De Silhon, *Le Ministre d'Estat,* Paris, 1631 pp. 99-100, quoted in Church, pp. 263-4.
[25] S. Uniacke, 'Absolutely clean hands? Responsibility for what's allowed in refraining from what's not allowed', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 7, 1999, pp. 189-209.

to entrench or spread problems instead of solving them,[26] as well as erring by thinking of states as actors instead of looking at obligations of and effects on individuals.

The following suggestions urge action on certain agents of "the world community". That is not to be interpreted in the vague collectivist sense that the phrase often has, but on the model of the kind of successful international bodies mentioned earlier that deal with global risks, such as the World Health Organization's Global Outbreak and Response Network and the Bank of International Settlement's Basel II risk compliance regime for banks.[27] In these cases the risks have been sufficient for nations to devolve sovereignty (on particular matters) to international committees of experts and for individuals in most countries to obey their directives. The successful experience in these comparatively technical fields simply needs to be repeated more widely.

The suggestions are:

- *A permanent and well-equipped rapid response force* under the command of the world community. That would enable direct causal action aimed at the worst of the worst problems. It would consist not of contingents sent by states but of volunteers on the model of the old French Foreign Legion. Casualties among those "expendables" – some might say mercenaries, but guardians of freedom might be a more appropriate name – would not have the same depressive effect on public opinion in democracies as casualties in their own armies have. The issue of who should decide on its deployment is a difficult one – the United Nations seems inadequate, given its record in Rwanda and Srebrenica, while it would be equally inappropriate for the force to be effectively at the disposal of a single superpower. There are the usual difficulties of knowing whether a war will make things better or worse. Nevertheless the existence of such a force would give pause to those who believe they can create terror or tyranny with impunity in remote regions.

- A strengthening of *direct interventions by the world community in the economic, security and legal affairs of the poorest countries*, such as World Bank restructurings of failed economies. Whatever the difficulties of such plans, as to both implementation and knowledge of the effects, they have a direct causal action towards affording a basic level of accountability that is lacking in aid shipments to dictators purporting to act on behalf of their citizens. The representatives of the world community will need to consult local citizens more thoroughly than was customary in colonial times, but the world community's proconsul in such a state will also need to be able to call on military and police assistance from outside if necessary, to counter physical threats to himself and his staff and denials of access by them to problem

[26] D. Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2004.
[27] Accessed: http://www.who.int/csr/outbreaknetwork/en/ ; http://www.bis.org/publ/bcbs107.htm [15/4/2011]

areas. Such interventions will also need to be more generously funded than has been the case, or a "restructured" economy will fall apart at great cost to the worst off. The world community's representatives will also have responsibility for holding large foreign firms to high standards in, for example, industrial safety. All such aid projects will need to pass higher standards of accountability than in the past.[28]

- A *pharmaceutical treaty* to improve the supply of drugs to the Third World. Negotiations must cover a co-ordinated approach to the issues of the supply of generic drugs at low prices, action against their re-export to rich countries, and subsidies for research and development on tropical diseases such as malaria. Like Saddam Hussein, the malarial mosquito has tortured thousands who could do nothing to free themselves by their own efforts and a high-tech offensive can rescue them (with fewer collateral casualties than in the Iraqi case).

- *Improvement in the conditions in refugee camps*, paid for by the world community. Refugees are among the most disadvantaged of all people, and direct action to assist them is easy and easily known to be effective. When camp conditions are persistent, camps should be supplied with not only food and shelter, but IT and education facilities such as books in English, to enable the expansions of the mental horizons of, especially, the younger generation.

- A *world vote* for the agency or agencies with carriage of the above initiatives. A complete world parliament may not be necessary or desirable, but the experience of poor regions in Europe shows that having a vote for a distant supranational parliament is worth something in motivating central administrators to action. It creates a causal link between what people think they need and what actions are taken by leaders. The experience of the United Nations shows how not being subject to popular vote undermines both actions and legitimacy.

- A *refocussing of Western military spending towards surveillance* and smart weaponry and away from heavy hardware. Contrary to earlier moral assumptions, much of the huge military research budgets of the late twentieth century proved in retrospect to have been money well spent. They not only ensured for the West the clear superiority that allowed it to prevail bloodlessly in the Cold War, but gave it by the end of the century surveillance capabilities through satellite imagery and signals intelligence that may render nation-scale violence obsolete, in the way that cannon rendered robber barons obsolete. More of such comparatively cheap and widely applicable research is needed, rendering the need for heavy weaponry less. Complementary action against landmines and the arms trade to Third World states is needed.

- A *strengthening of the International Court of Justice* and its investigations of crimes against humanity. As is the case within states, the prospect of justice being done at some time in the

[28] As described by MIT's Poverty Action Lab, Accessed: http://www.povertyactionlab.com [15/4/2011]

> future has the potential to discourage crimes in the present. More legal coordination to allow cross-border compensation cases would also cause those who, for example, operate unsafe factories in third world countries to face legal effects in their own countries.[29]

On the propaganda front, an emphasis on the *excitement of clearing up world poverty* and injustice instead of a diet of pure appeals to compassion. The race to the moon and most medical research have been inspired by a positive will to win. A role model more gung-ho in style than Mother Teresa would be desirable.

Since urging action on the "world community" is as collectivist in tone as urging it on individual states, if not more so, and since bodies acting on behalf of the world community do not grow spontaneously, we must return to the question of which individuals are obliged to take which actions. If there is a civil war or natural disaster in a poor state with atrocities reported daily, which could be stopped by forceful intervention, who may constitute himself sheriff if the self-declared representatives of the world community, such as the UN Security Council, the African Union or similar bodies are doing nothing? The situation is as in the American Old West. If there is a moderately functioning authority, it has priority and everyone must cooperate with it, in return for which it must accept responsibility to do its best with all the demands placed on it; if there is no such authority, the oppressed will have to take their chances with whatever gunslinger will accept the sheriff's star.

Bureaucrats and negotiators need to keep a realistic view of the constraints they are acting under, but at the same time not use citizens' or politicians' apathy as an excuse for doing nothing themselves. Since there have been many cases of positive change of policy, some optimism is justified, and the wide professional knowledge of bureaucrats puts them in special position to initiate change.

Philosophers and other intellectuals are not at the frontline of action or of decisions about action. They do have some role in the formation of public opinion, especially in the longer term. They have a responsibility to conduct at least an initial causal analysis on the likely effects of actions, and the real possibility of actions being taken, before they make moral pronouncements on what collectives such as states or the United Nations ought or ought not do. In considering possible decisions for armed intervention, for example, their analyses should at the very least mention the victims of both intervention (such as casualties) and non-intervention (such as those tortured by existing regimes), and they should attempt a rough count of each. Analyses of the motivations of regimes intervening and regimes being intervened against should allude to what those regimes actually say about their own motivations. Analyses of risks should consider both short and long timescales, so that, for example, the risk of stirring up terrorism in the short term by intervention

[29] J. Franklin, 'Accountancy as computational casuistics', *Business and Professional Ethics Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1998, pp. 31-37.

is set against the risk of strengthening evil regimes by a long-term policy of appeasement. As with body counts, risks should be approximately quantified, so that merely humanistic qualitative talk does not spuriously balance remote possibilities against substantial risks. Intellectuals should not make moral pronouncements on globalization without extensive reading in economics.

Calls for action by collectives, or calls for inaction pending decisions by collectives, can appear to assuage intellectuals' guilt about their irrelevance. What will actually help the earth's poorest is careful analysis of what individuals can carry out what actions, with what effects and with what risks.