

The Times is guilty of supporting abuse

Published: January 13, 2026, 7:52 am

I want to ask a simple question. It's this. What would happen if The Times succeeds in its aim so clearly summarised by Rod Liddle in his [article for The Times this morning](#) where he says:

Most of the world's poverty today is occasioned by bad governance and a predatory Third World elite, not by capitalism.

*I think the Oxfam staffers know this. I think they know this and it makes them hot.
Never give these people any of your money.*

(My emphasis added).

What I know, because I have worked with all of the UK's major aid agencies at some time over the last fifteen years, is that Oxfam's thinking is very similar to that of all the rest of them. So what Liddle is saying is that people should not give to development charities. That is because, in his opinion, they represent a left wing plot.

Let's ignore for a moment that Liddle clearly does not know what poverty is, or where it is. How and why he thinks UK poverty might be created by caused by bad governance and a predatory third world elite is hard to imagine unless (and I suspect this is true) he denies there is any poverty in the UK, despite all the evidence.

Why he also thinks our development agencies only work in what he calls the third world is also hard to explain. Oxfam, for example, [also works on poverty in the UK](#).

But let's get to the more fundamental questions. What does he think might happen if charities set up to tackle poverty are not allowed to ask why those in poverty are poor? Might it just be that the poverty might be perpetuated? Is that what he wants?

And what does he think might happen if, because there was a risk that some might abuse, all humanitarian intervention in crisis situations was stopped? Might people die? Is that what he wants?

And does he really think the world would have been a better place without the work development agencies have done, including the lobbying that has, for example, resulted in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and country-by-country reporting that are designed to hold the world's multinational corporations to account when no one else has been able to make that demand? Might it be that bad governance to enhance the wealth of an elite might be rampant? Is that what he wants?

And does he think that apartheid would have ended without the support of organisations like these? Would he wish that voices for change be silenced?

And what of the substantial sums that are spent on good governance projects? Would they happen without civil society pressure to support those within so many countries he want to beat the corruption that is endemic within them? Does he really think that?

Bringing matters remarkably close to my work, does he really think that tax havens would have been challenged in the way that they have been to stop the abuse by a predatory elite (wherever they might be based) but for support of these NGOs for this work?

The simple fact is that if The Times and Rod Liddle got their way the available systems to react to humanitarian crises would collapse.

And development aid would pretty much come to an end.

Whilst pressure on tax havens would dissipate.

And campaigns for better governance in the public and private sectors that are critical to the ending of abuse in both would be pretty much stopped in their tracks.

Whilst tax havens would flourish again as the world turned its attention away from them.

With the consequence that kleptocracy would multiply, unimpeded.

And the world's poorest people would pay the price in a multitude of short and long term ways in countries right around the world.

What a few Oxfam staff did was horribly wrong. They should bear all the consequences for what they did. But utterly unambiguously Oxfam, and the other UK aid agencies, need our continuing support if the type of abuse of ninety nine percent of the world's population that The Times is apparently so keen to support is to be not only be challenged, but stopped.

Of course sexual abuse in all its forms matters. But what The Times is doing is engaging in class warfare under the pretext of exposing a sex scandal that Oxfam has already reported. Without in any way excusing the abuse we have also to name The Times' crime, which is supporting economic abuse of most of the world's population. Oxfam may have made mistakes. But The Times is guilty of supporting the worldwide oppression of people who have a right to live free of the fear that poverty creates.

I have an answer. Never give The Times any of your money.

But more than that: name them as the enemies of well-being that they are.