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## “Show them the money”? Collective debts, individual migrants, and remittances

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“This essay explores under-studied moral and practical questions concerning historical debts of a particular sort. These debts are owed by one democratic people to another sovereign people; they cannot be paid back via transfers to the relevant state authorities, because these authorities are extremely unreliable trustees of public resources; and finally, the sovereign people to whom the debt is owed suffer from acute political and economic problems that have no obvious solution. I argue that the best way to support individuals subject to such political and economic maladies is (typically) to make it easier for them to migrate. But I also explain why such a policy cannot settle a determinate debt owed to the people as a collective. I therefore suggest that debtor democracies ought to combine a permissive migration policy with extensive tax breaks incentivizing migrants to send remittances to their country of origin, and, in particular, to send remittances meant to facilitate positive political change. The subsidy that such tax breaks represent would count towards payment of the determinate debt owed to the destitute people.”