

■ Tekst 9

A tsar in the soup

Winter approaches and a familiar debate reopens in Britain: do soup vans and free sleeping bags help or hinder the campaign to end street homelessness? Louise Casey, the homelessness tsar, found herself in hot water last weekend for bluntly suggesting the culture of kindness should be swept away. She said: "With soup runs and other kinds of charity help, well-meaning people are spending money servicing the problem on the street and keeping it there. Even the *Big Issue* is perpetuating the problem." But as CP Scott once wrote in these columns: it is well to be frank; it is even better to be fair.

The director of the *Big Issue*, a magazine sold by the homeless, noted that many of its sellers do not live on the streets, but in hostels or cheap accommodation. The aim of the magazine is to provide people with a legitimate income as an alternative to begging. Ms Casey was going over the top in attacking a social innovation that has helped lift people off the street and back into accommodation and work. The Salvation Army expressed concern at the ad hoc nature of soup runs, but concluded that "as long as there are people out there on the streets, we will go to them".

But Ms Casey found a friend in one of the longest-serving campaigners against homelessness. Chris Holmes, director of Shelter, said: "This story is not so new. Two years ago, Shelter was saying clearly and publicly that there needed to be a shift in emphasis from short-term to long-term work with homeless people. I believe that the voluntary sector as a whole, including Shelter, has sometimes got the balance wrong." On Monday Shelter joined Crisis, the other big homeless charity, to launch Millennium Plus. The aim is to help reduce the number of homeless by two-thirds. Soup on the street will still be served; but soup in the hostel remains a better way to rehabilitation.

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“But as CP Scott once wrote (...): it is well to be frank; it is even better to be fair.” (first paragraph)

- 1p 41 ■ Why does the writer suggest that Ms Casey is unfair, according to the second paragraph?
- A She accused charities of not helping enough people.
 - B She asserted that charity is the wrong instrument to help the homeless.
 - C She did not do justice to the aims of the *Big Issue*.
- 1p 42 ■ In what respect has Ms Casey found a friend in Chris Holmes (last paragraph)?
Chris Holmes is of the opinion that
- A homeless people should get used to the idea of work as a fact of life.
 - B some forms of charity do little towards solving the problem of homeless people.
 - C some people are homeless by choice.