

Engels | selectief luisteren | oefendeel | transcript en sleutels

Transcript

Inleiding

Presenter: Good evening. Not so long ago, Britain's charities could do no wrong: widely admired and morally impregnable. But their sanctity has slipped lately. In rapid succession, they've been criticized for aggressive and expensive fundraising; for doing dodgy deals with big business; they're selling their donors' data and paying their executives six-figure salaries. This week, it's for playing politics with taxpayer's money. The government said, that it's going to stop them using government grants for political lobbying and campaigning. Some charities say they're being silenced. What should a charity be? And what is it for? That's our moral maze tonight. Our panel, Anne McElroy, senior editor at The Economist, the former conservative cabinet minister Michael Portillo, Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the RSA, and the Anglican priest and polemicist Giles Fraser.

Fragment 1

Presenter: The charity sector's huge: 165,000 registered charities in England and Wales. Most are small and rely on voluntary contributions, but many of the big ones, Oxfam, Save the Children, Christian Aid, for instance, get big chunks of government money. It adds up to 13 billion pounds a year. And many of those charities have been spending part of their income on campaigns, Oxfam's Perfect Storm ads attacking austerity policies; Cancer Research on junk food, tobacco packaging and the price of alcohol, for instance. They say they should take on cause as well as consequence. Critics say they've become politicized. Ministers say that government money shouldn't be used to lobby government. It all raises fundamental questions about charity. What conditions should there be on how they use their money, particularly government grants? Is lobbying and campaigning central to their purpose or a distraction from it? Has selfless altruism turned into just another business, complete with dubious practices, corrosive competition and fat cat executive pay?

Fragment 2

Presenter: Our first witness is Craig Bennett, who is Chief Executive Officer of Friends of the Earth, which is a campaigning organization, certainly, isn't it? What do you think's going on here?

Craig Bennett: I think it's extraordinary, isn't it? Over the last couple of years, we've seen extraordinary unprecedented attack on charities. It's happening in the media, it's happening in our politics. And I think ultimately what's happening is trying to shut down dissent and debate in our democracy. You know, campaigning has been fundamental to charities since their very first existence. And to bring about good in the world, you can't just do it through practical projects alone.

Presenter: Michael Portillo.

Michael Portillo: Doesn't it complicate things? I mean, not least for donors, when they give money to help homeless people or poor people, or children or whatever, and then find the money is diverted into campaigning, of which they may or may not approve.

Craig Bennett: I think the point is if your charitable objectives are to try and deal with homelessness as you suggested, one of the primary ways to deal with that will be through campaigning perhaps. I mean, let's think back to some of the proud British traditions of bringing about social good, back to William Wilberforce and the campaign to end the slave trade. Tell me how you could have ended the slave trade through just practical projects alone? It couldn't have been done.

Michael Portillo: William Wilberforce led a campaign, not a charity. He led a campaign.

Craig Bennett: He led a campaign....

Michael Portillo: How much public subsidy did William Wilberforce receive?

Fragment 3

Presenter: Our next witness is Christopher Snowdon, who's Head of Lifestyle Economics at the Institute of Economic Affairs Think-tank, and author of *Sock Puppets: How government lobbies itself and why*. Are charities being silenced in your view? Are they are they right to be concerned, are they right to be angry?

Chris Snowdon: No, I think actually the reaction to this announcement from the government on Saturday has been completely over-the-top. There's no question anybody being silenced. This is not about charities that receive money from the government not being able to lobby. It's about charities that receive money from the government not being able to lobby with that part of their budget. And that's all there is to it. Now, if you have a charity that's entirely funded by the government, I suppose in a sense, you will be silenced. But, I don't think many people would consider that to be a real charity. And this is not about charities not being political, a charity should be political. They always have been and they always will be. It's a question of getting taxpayers value for money and also stopping the problems, that, I think, do arise when you have a very large state funded charity sector, that is politically active, namely, that you have a crowding out of other charities. The large charities are state funded largely because the state funding makes them big, right? That's one of the reasons they're so big in the first place. It crowds out the three quarters of charities, that don't get state funding

Michael Portillo : You need to be big.....

Chris Snowdon: And it also changes incentives within the charity. So, it makes the charity less likely to follow what the donors want, what the general public wants and more likely to follow what the government wants being their funders and also what the chief executives want. So, you distort the sort of, the market, if you like, of incentives.

Michael Portillo: But, it sounds a lot of people like, this is, you know, it's okay for Google to do their lobbying, but Save the Children not. And then it feels like a very directed attack about on a particular form of lobbying.

Chris Snowdon: It's a particular form of lobbying. It state-funded lobbying. Yeah. They, this is a clampdown on state-funded lobbying. Absolutely correct.



Sleutels

1 A

2 C

3 A

4 A

5 B

6 A

7 A

8 B

