

Funding climate activists

Aileen Getty is famous as the heiress to the family oil business that made her grandfather one of the richest men in the world. But now MPs are questioning why some of her fortune is going to a nonprofit that is bankrolling Just Stop Oil - whose activists have been arrested in recent days for bringing chaos to the streets of Britain.

Ms Getty, 65, the granddaughter of the oil tycoon J Paul Getty, is a founding member of Climate Emergency Fund, a US non-profit that is funding direct action across the globe. She is reported to have personally given \$1million (£892,000) to CEF, which has handed out more than \$4million in grants, including to Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion.

In recent days CEF has moved to protect Ms Getty against the backlash for her perceived conflict of interest. They wrote on Twitter: "If you were in her shoes, how would you use your money for good? Should a person be held responsible for the sins of their deceased grandfather?"

Ms Getty has never been personally involved in the fossil fuel trade, the CEF points out, and her family left the industry in the early 2000s. However, she is listed on the CEF website as a co-founder and board member alongside the quote: "'Don't we have a responsibility to take every means of trying to protect life on Earth?"

Ms Getty has previously said of her donations to climate activist groups: "Whether the resources I have come from oil or not, I feel an urgency and it's a privilege to give whatever resources you have."

Just Stop Oil says on its website "most of our funding for recruitment, training, capacity building, and education" comes from the CEF. It is believed to have received \$1.1million.

After its activists threw soup at Van Gogh's Sunflowers last week, it was praised by Margaret Klein Salamon, CEF's executive director, who warned that "more protests are coming".

Tim Loughton, former minister and a member of the home affairs committee, said: "It is bad enough that these arrogant self-entitled individuals think they have some right to disrupt the lives of our hard-working law-abiding constituents. It adds insult to injury that foreign millionaires are funding them to do their dirty work."

It is unclear what powers the Government would have to intervene on funding for a campaign group that is not a registered charity. One MP told The Daily Telegraph: "There may be some old obscure law around treason for accepting funds from foreign interests intent on harming the British state."

A spokesman for CEF said: "We make strategic investments in organisations that look to disrupt everyday life to put tremendous pressure on governments to treat the climate emergency with the urgency it demands. All activities we fund are fully legal and foundational to a functioning democracy."

(adapted from The Daily Telegraph – October 20th, 2022)

Corrigé DS Mines-Ponts
funding climate activists

- utilisez des mots de liaison : ils montrent les liens de cause à effet, la construction de la pensée.
- n'ayez pas peur de montrer votre richesse lexicale.

Lexique et orthographe :

MPs / to be interested **in** (doing) sth / be helpful **to** sb / to be afraid **of** / to invest – **an investor**/ a fund – **to fund** ± **to found** - foundation ± to find-found-found / to **inherit** sth – an inheritance – **a heir** – **a heiress**.

Question 1 (80 words +/- 10%) : Why does Aileen Getty's fortune hold British MPs' interest ?

Ms Getty, an American millionaire, is one of the founders and financiers of Climate Emergency Fund. This is an organization sponsoring dramatic actions worldwide to incite governments to take drastic measures that would reverse climate change. MPs consider Ms Getty's money and ideas are intruding and disturbing the British citizens' social peace, thus exceeding what is tolerable. That is why they are looking for a lawful way to make the use of Ms Getty's contribution illegal in the United Kingdom. (80 words)

Rappels pour Q2 :

- faire une petite introduction et une petite conclusion
- utiliser des exemples extérieurs à l'article qui sert de support.
- les exemples sont OBLIGATOIRES
- ne pas contracter l'auxiliaire *be* : « I am / you are / he is not, etc »
- ne jamais commencer une phrase par « And »
- la qualité de la langue compte autant que le contenu

Lexique : beside : à côté de ± **besides** : de plus / **a demonstration, a protest march** = une manifestation / **a means** = un moyen / **politicians** = les (hommes-femmes) politiques / to be afraid of sth- sb = **to fear sth-sb** ± **to frighten sb** = to scare sb / **to destroy** – **affect** – **undermine the credibility of...**/ a controversy = une polémique **a fierce controversy has flared up about...** (une violente polémique s'est engagée sur.../ **beneficial** **to** ± **detrimental to** / **to raise awareness** – **to make sb aware of sth** = sensibiliser / sensibiliser quelqu'un à / **effective** (ineffective) : producing the result that is intended (*aspirin is an effective treatment*) – **efficient** (inefficient) : doing sth well and thoroughly (*my colleagues are very efficient*) / **a conductor** = un chef d'orchestre ± **a driver** : un conducteur / **loose** : desserré, lâche ± **to lose**= perdre / **to warn sb that...** : prévenir, avertir quelqu'un que ± **to prevent sb from doing sth** : empêcher qq'un de faire qqchose.

Question 2 (180 words +/- 10%) : Are climate flash actions justified ? Discuss using relevant examples.

The goal of flash actions is to attract attention to raise people's awareness and force governments to take action against an impending global disaster.

Undoubtedly climate activists have been embracing extreme tactics all around the world such as gluing themselves to Boticelli's Primavera in Florence, blocking traffic on the London motorway at rush hour, setting oneself on fire in front of the Supreme Court in Washington on Earth Day. Such desperate stratagems are meant to shock people and make them realize they are more concerned by a piece of art or getting late at work than by living on a healthy planet.

Such actions are effective up to a point as they may seem frightening and sometimes lead to a misinterpretation of the intended message and so become counterproductive. Not to undermine the credibility of the message and the messengers more peaceful means could be used as for instance the school climate strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg.

The stakes are high, if climate activism has so far been fairly peaceful, one may wonder if demonstrating is enough as, until now, even the UN has not been able to coerce governments into implementing the Paris agreement. (195 words)