

DS type Mines-Ponts

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)

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

Question 2 (180 words +/- 10%) : More and more climate activist groups use flash actions . According to you are such actions justified ? Discuss using relevant examples.