

Climate activists recruiting child soldiers

By Jennifer Oriel, The Australian, 30 September 2019

In the 20th century, the United Nations was created to prevent totalitarianism re-emerging. In the 21st century, UN leaders are adopting the totalitarian method of using children for mass political action. The UN generally regards child exploitation as a no-no unless, apparently, the child is useful to a left-wing cause. Child marriage is rightly condemned as primitive. Child labour is criminalised. But exploiting kids for political gain is making a comeback.

The Permanent Mission of China to the UN hosted a reception to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. It's a euphemistic term for the communist one-party state. Xinhua reported the opening speech of the country's permanent representative to the UN, Zhang Jun: "Under the Communist Party of China, Chinese people have embarked on a glorious journey in the history of human development." In a message to the reception, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said it was a pleasure to celebrate the founding of the communist state. He commended its work on "climate solutions" and its commitment to peace and human rights.

The peace Guterres praises was won by China's communist regime banning dissent, murdering 45 million people, and turning children into militants for Maoist ideology.

The United Nations has presented Greta Thunberg as the leader of a revolution against the old world. In a telling session, Guterres urged youth to "force" revolution and hold his generation to account. He claimed adults had failed to preserve justice in the world and incited young people to revolutionise it. Following Guterres's advice, Thunberg took to the stage. She denounced dissenters, raged against adults and threatened people who disagreed with her.

Some critics were concerned about the emotional manner of the speech and its express hatred of dissent. But the UN applauded her. The left-wing media lavished praise on her. In The Guardian, her speech was compared to the Gettysburg Address. Channel 10's The Project tweeted its admiration for the "incredible human". The ultimate doomsday prophets — extinction activists — projected images of the teen on landmarks in Western Australia. The US media website Good wrote of Thunberg's Viking blood and lauded young people "bonded by fear, outrage" who realise "economic privilege, class, or the random luck of birth will not protect them from the poisoned planet they're about to inherit". Everywhere, the left framed climate change as a battle between us and them.

Despite the shift from 20th-century class struggle to 21st-century climate struggle, the West is still held culpable by broad sections of the left. The “in” group conforms to the UN line that the developed world is responsible for climate change disasters, despite communist China producing 27.2 per cent of global emissions. The developed world comprises mostly Western states with relatively free political systems. Under UN climate proposals, the free world would finance corrupt regimes and mass emissions by developing nations. For those of us who want a clean, green future and a free world, the UN does not provide the answer. Nor do teenagers too young to grasp the power dynamics distorting global environmental politics.

The Prime Minister expressed concern about the UN treatment of Thunberg. He emphasised the importance of knowledge and facts in teaching children about the world. Importantly, he took the high ground and spoke of adults’ responsibility to manage the problem of climate change while reassuring children they have a future.

No responsible adult would look at Thunberg’s UN performance and reward her anxiety with praise. Like many children, she wants a good future. And like many budding activists, she sees the world in absolute terms because she has not lived long enough to understand the passage of history and the predictability of human error.

I took to the streets at the ripe old age of eight in a one-girl protest to save the whales. It was the opening act of a happily misspent youth devoted to righting political wrongs with direct action and protests. It is natural for kids to want a better world, but there is nothing natural about adults who exploit children for political ends.

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