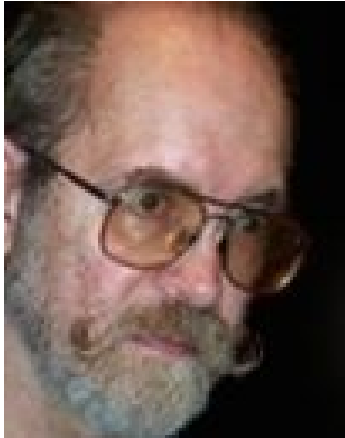


Using Children as Political Props



Lee Duigon

Suddenly we have a lot of adults getting their marching orders from children. Is that shameful, or what? World leaders sit in deferential silence as they're scolded by a Swedish teenager for not "Doing Something" to "Stop Climate Change"—like, "how dare you" *not* set up a global government and... and... and... Well, as long as they "Take Action," the kind of action doesn't matter.

Accompanied by a bit less drama, the [California legislature last week passed a law](#) providing state-funded free lunch to every kid in California's public schools. This change in public policy has been ascribed to a nine-year-old boy, now a policy adviser: "this amazing young man," in the words of Gov. Gavin Noisome.

Do we believe this? His heart moved by the plight of his unfortunate classmates who have suffered "lunch shaming" because their parents had failed to pay their school lunch fees, L'il Whatsisname saved up his allowance until he had the \$74.80 needed to pay off all the unpaid fees. All on his own, of course. No one put him up to it. And I have a nice bridge for sale.

"Lunch shaming"—ooh, that sounds bad! If you don't pay your

lunch fees, you have to eat the “alternative lunch,” dust bunnies in dishwater sauce; and that stigmatizes you. (We are not told whether parents are still allowed to pack lunches for their children. I wonder if they’ve passed a law against it.) But never mind, it’s now a thing of the past, thanks to that amazing young man who came and saw and conquered where the heartless adults feared to tread. Gov. Noisome said it was “an honor” to meet him.

Trotting out children, the younger, the better, to make political points—does that strike you as creepy? Or honest? “If I go up there and bloviate about lunch shaming, they’ll all just laugh at me. But they wouldn’t dare laugh at a kid! They’ll have to sit there and take it from a kid! Heh-heh.”

This why we have public schools: to indoctrinate children to be good little democratic socialists. In the meantime, they can always be used as political props.



Teachers’ unions have known that for years. Study the nooze reporting, if you can find any, of any teachers’ strike. As if tenure, almost ironclad job security, pensions, and, in many school districts, salaries higher than those of the defenseless taxpayers whose labors support them, teachers’ unions sometimes go on strike for higher pay. Heated public meetings follow.

And up to the microphone march students of all ages, from cute little first-graders to sober high schoolers with their hearts set on college—all of them pleading for the teachers to get their raises “so we can all go back to our beloved classrooms where our selfless, saintly teachers pour out wisdom to us,” yatta-yatta. It never fails. You will never, never hear a kid say “Tell these overpaid boring left-wing hacks to go pound salt” or anything like that.

It may even be possible that these youngsters are already so institutionalized that a break from school makes them as uneasy and confused as a lifer suddenly paroled from prison.

Political power-seekers—if your projects and your policies are so absurd that only a child can safely stump for them—well, they are better left unsaid. Don't have them said by children.

And, oh, by the way: if the state of California is now going to provide free lunch for all, no matter what, who's going to bother paying lunch fees?

Guess you'll just have to raise taxes. Again.

I have discussed these and other topics throughout the week on my blog, <http://leeduigon.com/> . Stop in for a visit; a single click will take you there. My articles can also be found at www.chalcedon.edu/ .

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