

Letters:

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Emily Driver's article (MT March) was a welcome contribution to the subject of children's rights within our society.

Children have become marginalised and constitute an oppressed minority. They are systematically discriminated against and have no standing in law, and no right to independent legal representation. They are subject to physical and emotional abuse in the home, in school, in social service settings and in penal institutions.

There has been little substantial or coherent policy-making on the subject of child abuse and children's rights from either the Left or the Right, while under the present government's legislation more adolescents are being locked up in penal institutions. Perhaps it is time that the Left made the subject of children's lack of rights an issue - the children of today are the Red Wedge supporters of tomorrow.

Francis Charlton, Haywards Heath

CUTTING COMMENT

I would like to register the strongest possible objection to Emily Driver's article (MT March).

Firstly, I wonder who gave consent for the little girl's privacy to be flouted by displaying her picture to the readership. Even in medical texts the

identity of those suffering is carefully protected.

Secondly, it is hard to disentangle real public outrage from the artificial variety of the tabloids. But I think that some of the public disquiet about Myra Hindley is due to her long running and distinctive campaign for release. The distinction drawn by Ms Driver between cutting up children and merely colluding in it is worthy only of contempt.

Thirdly, the grave public reaction to the sexual attack on a boy in Brighton had less to do with 'queer bashing' than the fact that a six-year old child was raped by three men, was dumped in the middle of nowhere and required a subsequent anaesthetic. If it was my child whose suffering was belittled to make a cheap sex-political point it would be the last copy of *Marxism Today* I would ever buy.

Chris Jones, Liverpool

NOXIOUS SERVANT

I do not doubt that John Lloyd (MT March) has uncorked such noxious substances into our cogitations that you will be inundated with calumny. But if he makes us think, turn back to the books, analyse as well as organise, then his preposterous arguments will have served us well.

We cannot feel friendly towards Eric Hammond for he is leading

working class people in a direction directly opposite to the way we wish them to go.

If you are going to 'redistribute' the wages fund by truncating the highest then I suggest that all you succeed in doing is to reduce the overall level of wages. We would do far better to provide a minimum and force the general level upwards. Better still we should fight to expand the wages fund as a proportion of gross national product.

Once all the analysing is in full swing we must make sure that we do what is necessary now to protect our class. Today that means coming to the aid of SOGAT.

*Charlie Swain
Cardiff Congress in Support
of Mining Communities*

SPORTING IMAGES

Sports reporting in this country lags desperately behind other areas of journalism in conveying progressive social concerns. Still, I was disturbed by the traditional and rather conservative biographical account of Viv Richards by Peter Wilson (MT March). In particular, I object to Wilson's reinforcement of the images of battle and sex role stereotyping.

One problem is undoubtedly that the Left hasn't developed an alternative way or language for

describing sporting activity. Even so, was it strictly necessary for words like 'gladiator', 'war zone', and 'might' to follow hard on one another in the first six sentences?

What seemed more dubious still was Wilson's definition of Richards' parents - father by job and club cricket, mother by childcare 'instilling religion and education into the Richards' children'. I wonder where we have heard these sentiments before.

Moves to include sports reporting in *Marxism Today* are to be welcomed, but should be on the basis of challenging the Right's framework and dominance in this field, not of reinforcing its images.

Hilary Barnard, London E8

SPICY SPACE

Since Bert Ramelson is given the space to air his views in *Marxism Today*, is it too much to hope that he might do the same for the Communist party in the pages of *World Marxist Review*!

Davie Laing, Glasgow

We welcome your letters for the May issue. They should be no longer than 200 words and arrive at the off ice not later than April 7 7. The editor reserves the right to cut letters.

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