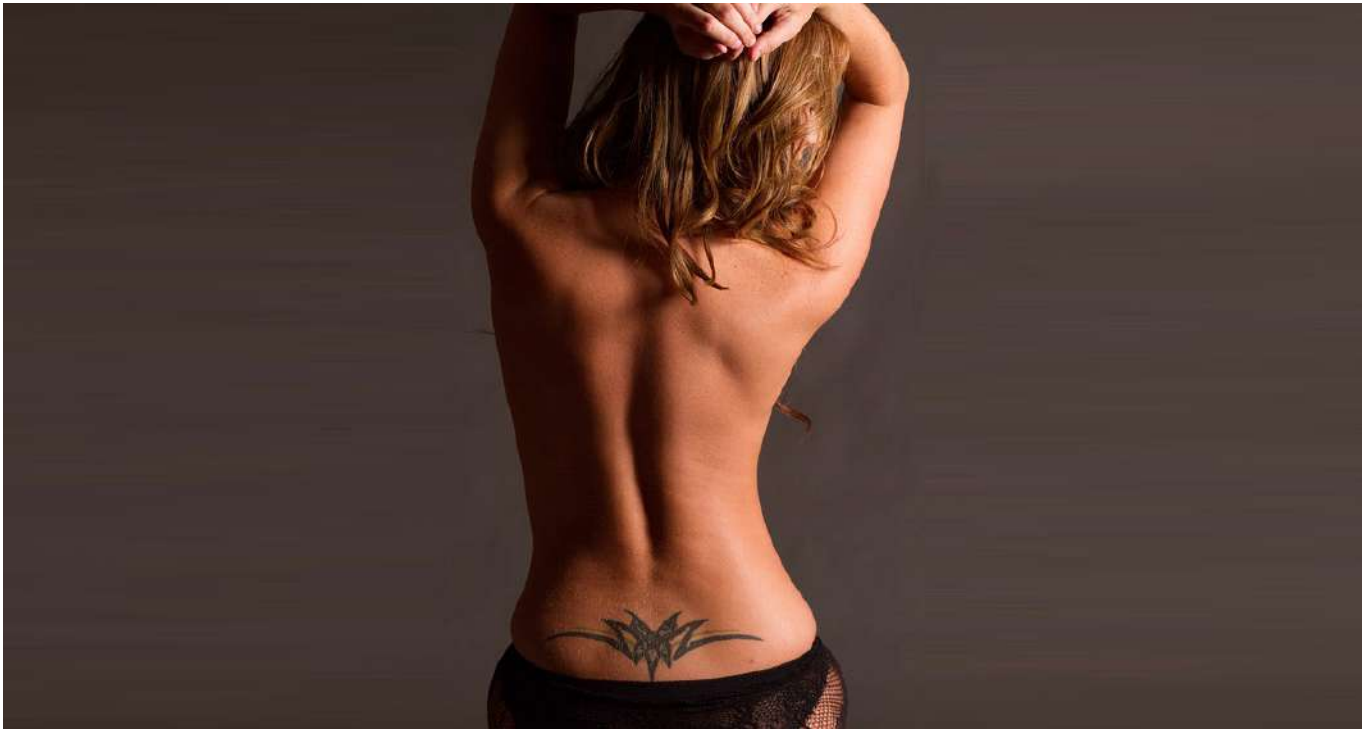


No More Page Three And The Politics Of Whining



FEATURED NEWS POLITICS

By Alexander Baron



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In an age when Western women have never had it so good, when they are living longer than ever before, can choose any career open to them contingent only on their abilities, and can even aspire to high public office, you might rightly ask what they have to complain about. Well, poverty is one thing, especially for working class mothers, the disabled, etc. How about the environment? Or even police brutality? – not as big an issue in the UK as it is **in the US**. No, what many of these *wimmin* complain about is the fact that since November 1970 a scurrilous tabloid newspaper has taken to publishing photographs of topless models on its third page.

Well, not all topless models, to begin with they are always female, young and attractive. What is so terrible about looking at photographs of attractive young women, surely it's better than looking at pictures of unattractive old men? Not so according to the ludicrous **No More Page 3** campaign. This was founded by Lucy-Ann Holmes, who would once have been Page 3 material herself, alas she is now far too old, although the years have been kind to her.

The hysteria generated by the sight of an attractive young woman posing topless is a wonder to behold. Last year, the website **published a letter** to the *Sun*'s editor from a large tranche of MPs who whined:

“As MPs our role is to serve the people, and we cannot remain silent in the presence of a page that limits and misrepresents over half the population.

The largest female image in our most widely-read newspaper is of a semi-naked young woman. She is there purely for the sexual gratification of men. This is unacceptable.

We want to live in a society where the most widely-read newspaper is one that respects women. Instead, The Sun publishes Page 3, which reduces women to objects. It reduces men to objectifiers. And it reduces this country to one that upholds 1970s sexist values.”

What is wrong with this statement apart from everything? In the first place, how does a topless model in a newspaper misrepresent over half the population? Women are not over half the population, indeed, attractive young women form a rather small percentage. Would putting an old man in a cardigan on the page instead suggest that all men should wear cardigans?

The image is not put there solely for the sexual gratification of men – lesbians too can enjoy it – and even if it were, one might argue that the sexual gratification of men is rather a good thing... consenting adults and all that. Then we have that awful word respect, let's try to use something else for a change, hold in esteem, for example. How does admiring a woman's shape not hold her in high esteem? Then we have the feminist nonsense about objectification; don't we all strive consciously to surround ourselves with objects and indeed people we find attractive, and does sex always enter into it?

Sexism, oh dear, that nonsense was invented to portray women as an *oppressed* minority the way *racism* – or more accurately racial discrimination – was said to oppress blacks, but the two are not really comparable, certainly not since the *Married Women's Property Act* of 1882, regardless of female suffrage.

The reality is that the ludicrous No More Page 3 campaign is part of a victim narrative that extends right across the political spectrum from red to red. It may have an impressive number of high powered supporters, but its content is less than impressive; one of the signatories to the aforementioned letter is Dawn Primarolo, who tried to **enact legislation** against page 3 back in the 1980s. Whatever one thinks of the *Sun*, its readers vote with their cash, and its topless models vote with their feet, walking into jobs that back in 2004 **were said to be paying** upwards of £30,000 a year, and that for what is essentially part-time work. Furthermore, many of these girls are not so dumb, and can argue their case eloquently, but when one looks back in history, one wonders why they should have to, or indeed what all the fuss is about.



Artist: Lavinia Fontana, completion date: 1613, title: *Minerva Dressing*

The painting above is called *Minerva Dressing*; it dates from 1613. Would anyone who knows about Renaissance art call it pornographic? Hopefully not, in any case it was painted by Lavinia Fontana, who was not simply a leading woman artist but a leading artist of her day, period. Artists have portrayed the human body naked since time immemorial yet it was not until the idiocy of women's liberation – the second wave of feminism – that mindless fanatics with vaginas decided taking off their clothes oppressed women. Pornography – so-called – was seen as a multimillion dollar industry run by men for men with women paying the price. Whether or not that was ever the case, women are now making big bucks for taking off their clothes and doing all sorts of other things on-line from the tasteful and quaint to the bizarre and disgusting. Many of them run their own websites, and if men are involved at all it is behind the camera or writing code. As far as page 3 of the *Sun* is comparable with the on-line industry it is a very modest contribution of a tasteful nature, and one not worth wasting ink protesting against, but some people are never truly happy unless they are angry, or in Lucy-Ann Holmes' case, outraged.

Endnote: After the above article was published, some feedback was received from a number of self-styled feminists associated with the No More Page 3 website. Their comments were of two kinds: sneers that the article was four months out of date, and lies about the author, claiming he is a misogynist or even a rape apologist. To take the second point first, exposing feminist lies about

rape statistics, **false allegations of rape**, and disagreeing with female agitators **when they are clearly wrong**, does not constitute misogyny.

The article is not out of date, the *Sun* may have dropped its page 3 topless models for the moment, but page 3 is still currently appearing in cyberspace. The *Daily Star* newspaper is also publishing a page 3 topless feature, but this was not an article solely about page 3, rather about the attempts of a noisy vociferous minority to impose its will on the rest of us.

More startling than amusing is the video message from Lucy-Anne Holmes to her supporters – currently **available on YouTube**. Her eyes make her look as though she is seriously high on drugs; if she looks like that all the time, best give her a wide berth. Furthermore, from her ecstatic performance you’d think she was celebrating a Moon landing, developing a vaccine for rabies, or at least a clean sweep at the Oscars rather than a vacuous petition that has to date garnered over 243,000 electronic signatures. If she wants to start a worthwhile petition next, she might consider one for the Government to create debt-free money rather than borrow at interest from the banks money that is created out of thin air. This would end austerity overnight, something that is a tad more important than stigmatising women for undressing in public, and men for watching them do so.

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