

Meanwhile, deep in the bowels of a police station somewhere in the Free World, a bunch of normally affable bobbies are just following orders:



"Now will you show us your documents, Mr Bojangles?"

OUTRO

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- *Agitate*, P.O. Box 202, Shipley, BD18 3WB
- *The Cunningham Amendment*, 1005 Huddersfield Road, Bradford, BD12 8LP
- *Extranjero*, Kris & Lola, Calle Obispo 4 Bajo, Plasencia 10600, Càceres, Spain
- *Total Liberty*, 47 High Street, Belper, Derby, DE56 1GF

Finally, if you would like to contact us please write to: *Readers Digress!*, c/o 15 Dartington Walk, Leigham, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 8QA. Letters of comment, stamps and zines are always welcome.

READERS DIGRESS!

AN IRREGULAR ZINE FOR THE IRREGULAR MIND

NUMBER 6



Man hatte und wiste chinon

SHUT UP AND KEEP SERVING THE CAUSE!

INTRO

A zen master and one-armed billiards champion once told Shogun Watusi that ideological certainty is the sound of one ass crapping. Please bear this intriguing thought in mind as you peruse the following pages. Happy reading.

STATE MORALITY

Prime Minister Slocky Twoshoes, still smarting from his dalliance with the seamier side of American life described in our last issue, found himself facing the gentlemen of the press. "It is perfectly true that my straying hands somehow found their way into the underpants of that Iraqi orphan," he explained. "However, it is my firm belief that I have done nothing wrong. In fact, it is the moral duty of every democratic statesman to interfere with the Middle East."

AT THE DENTIST

"Next please," a hoarse voice called. It belonged to Daisy Drawback, a woman of peculiar equine beauty. Despite such a tempting invitation there were no takers. Except one. Den Chewer rose to his feet, flashed his pearly gates in the direction of the unwilling onlookers and proceeded to follow the golden mane which had disappeared into the final door on the right. As he did so he just managed to avoid the staggering pharmacist who was trying to liberate a container of nitrous oxide from the premises. "Good morning, Mr Chewer. Any problems to report?" asked the jovial, red-faced dentist that lay in wait behind the aforementioned door. "Only one," insisted our brave hero. "Isn't this supposed to be the bookies?"

DUCK FOR COVER

Sir Francis Mallard was an explorer of the outer regions of consciousness. His last voyage, however, was an unmitigated disaster due to a dispute with a petty bureaucrat. It appears that the tetchy knight took umbrage to the official's insistence that he could not pass until his papers had been "properly examined". When said documents did finally see the light of day the poor clerk concluded that it would be better to remain standing for the foreseeable future.

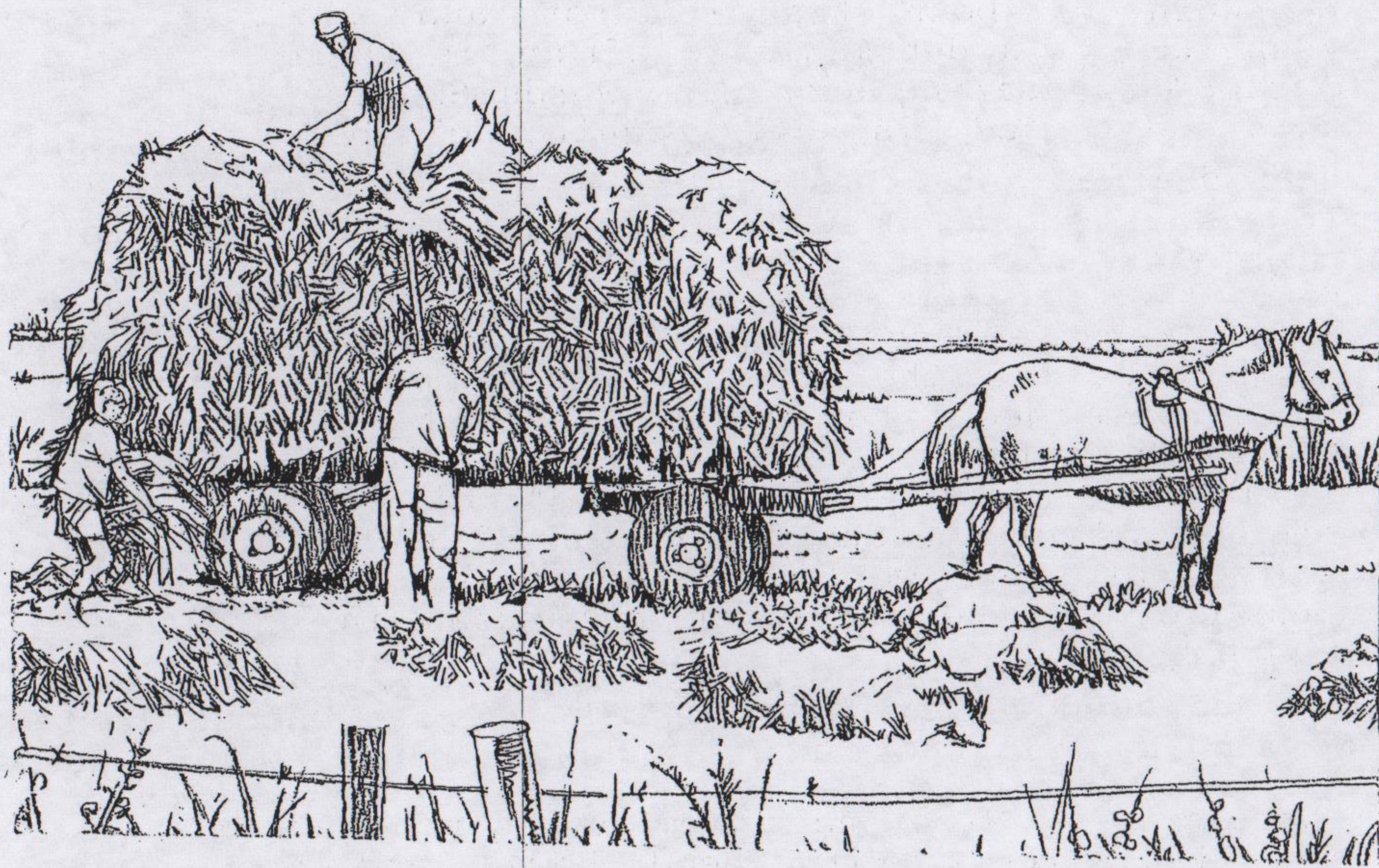
WAITER, THERE'S A PELICAN IN MY SOUP

Emily Roughshod was a woman with far too much time on her hands. As a result, she would spend every Tuesday afternoon standing at the pelican crossing next to Sainsbury's. However, when the green man flashed (cue cheap exhibitionist joke) Emily would not cross the road. She would just stand there and watch the reaction of her fellow pedestrians. This is because she was amazed at the amount of people who, seeing that she was not crossing, delayed their own journey. It was as though they had lost the ability to trust their own judgement. A seed of doubt was planted by a force that was not their own. "Aha," thought Emily to herself. "So that's how the State maintains its power."

NORMAN'S CONQUEST

"You leave me...breathless," sang an asthmatic Jerry Lee Lewis. This was of no interest to Maria, a girl who was chesty in an altogether different way. She just handed the ageing rock'n'roller his inhaler and carried on down the road. On the way she encountered Norman Frogwell. Norman was an odd bird and Maria was rather attracted to him. This attraction, however, did not stem from the lanky boy's good looks. In fact, not many people were attracted to Norman's good looks. This was probably due to the fact that he hadn't got any. He had the type of face that looked like he was gazing into a spoon. Fortunately for Norman his view of the world was far less distorted. And this is what endeared him to Maria. "Good morning, my dear," he said as he spooned a mouthful of peanut butter into his mouth. As he did so Maria could not fail to notice that the boy's reflection in the spoon was the spitting image of George Clooney. Carelessly unaware of this uncanny resemblance, Clooney's concave doppelgänger continued to speak. "Despite protests to the contrary the keepers of this society wince at the very thought of individual responsibility. This is because personal responsibility and true freedom go hand in hand. I mean, let's face it, the jokers that man the cages aren't going to let on that people are perfectly able to think and act for themselves. It might lead to anarchy." He always said things like this and Maria loved him for it. However, she also wished that he would occasionally try to sneak his hand up her jumper when they were together at the local picture house.

"The atom bombs are piling up in the factories, the police are prowling through the cities, the lies are streaming from the loudspeakers,



but the earth is still going round the sun, and neither the dictators nor the bureaucrats, deeply as they disapprove of the process, are able to prevent it."

George Orwell

I'M NOT SURE I LIKE THE TASTE OF THAT

Rabelais Thomas strolled into his favourite public house and ordered the usual. "Bitter?" asked the young inexperienced barmaid. "Too bloody right I am!" replied the thirsty patron. "They're expecting me to fork out between eighty and three hundred quid for a compulsory identity card[*]. And what's this card for? Psychological control, of course. It's a symbolic representation of the State's power over its already subdued subject. In other words, it's the governmental equivalent of the school bully pissing over the boy that he's just beaten up."

[*] And let's not forget the accompanying national identity database.

UNIFORMITY

Smedley McClintock put on his brand new uniform and looked proudly in the mirror. "Just remember one thing," said his thitherto impassive wife. "A uniform was worn by both the violator and violated of Auschwitz. It's dehumanizing effect is there for all to see." On hearing such wise words Smedley stripped naked and tossed his newly acquired clobber straight onto the fire.

HUMOUR

Donning ruby red nose, giant shoes and a bow tie that shoots water in the face of the pompous, Valerian Tonsil bemoaned the shallowness of the modern televisual prankster. "Where's the joy in humiliating the little fellow?" she asked. "Real comedy comes from the subversion and demolition of hierarchy - the turning of the world upside down. It is the Chancellor of the Exchequer face down in a vat of raspberry jam."

OOPS

A particularly glum and gloomy young man was walking down the street. With head bowed and shoulders hunched he chanced upon a sheet of white paper. Written on it was the word "HOPE!". And he did. Unfortunately, the following morning our freshly emboldened chum found himself involved in an unplanned collision with the number 59. It goes to show that sometimes hope just isn't enough.

CHUBBY DEFIANCE

Quietly indifferent to the jeers of the would-be supermodels, a pleasantly plump young lady breezes effortlessly down the street. Each step a blow for freedom. Each step motivated by the next cream pie.

REFUSER

Nebulizer Confuse was a recruit who politely declined his master's invitation to partake in the latest round of bloodshed. As a result, he found himself the subject of a court martial. "Why should I fight, kill and die for YOUR cause?" he asked. "After all, isn't my natural enemy the government that commandeers my body for its own use?"

MAD?

Mahatma Coat, Indian cloakroom attendant and crude comic stereotype, had recently landed himself a job as a delivery driver. His first assignment was to deliver a lorry full of manure to the local asylum. On arriving at his destination Mahatma was greeted by an amiable chap who directed him towards the place where the manure was to be tipped. "Just put it over there please, Sir," he said, pointing to a vacant area of the car park (just in front of the building's main entrance). "Okey-dokey, my good man," replied Mahatma as he proceeded to unload the manure by hand. Unfortunately, the tipping mechanism on the lorry had been damaged by his predecessor so this was the only way to remove the load. After he had completed this somewhat arduous task another man approached Mahatma and asked him what the bloody hell he thought he was doing. "I've brought the manure that you ordered. That fellow over there told me to dump it here." On hearing this the second man appeared to get decidedly vexed. "HIM!" he exclaimed. "Don't take notice of anything that that idiot tells you. He's as mad as a hatter. You'll just have to load it back onto your lorry and take it round the back." This naturally caused Mahatma a good deal of consternation. "Are you taking the piss out of me!" he screamed. "You say this man is mad. How do I know that YOU are not the mad one?" With a wry smile that gave nothing away, the second man looked deep in the eyes of Mahatma and told him sweetly and simply: "You don't."

A PISCATORIAL PARABLE

Mrs Gramophone kept her pet goldfish locked in a darkened cupboard to protect him from the cat. The fish died.

SILLY-BILLY

Cowpox Etcetera turned on the wireless and was greeted by an obscenely wealthy popstar, tied to the apron strings of a vile corporation, telling him to make poverty history. "Aah, that's nice of him," he thought to himself. [*]

[*] A few additional words of wisdom from Larry Law - "It is the mark of our conditioning that, when confronted with such twaddle, we don't all roar with laughter."

Cities of Illusion (Spectacular Times)

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

"Oh dear, the tap's running," said Sam Diamond, keeper of the Queen's pontoon table. "Quick, after it!" retorted Her Majesty, sprinting down the road in stockings and suspender belt. It was really no way for a monarch to behave. Therefore, we won't dwell on the sordid details. Instead we shall relate the tale of Dora and Reg. The pair were strangers. Yet when their eyes met in the underwear section of Marks and Spencer there was an instant glint of recognition. It was as though they had met somewhere before. Neither of them knew where. Neither of them knew why. Neither of them really cared. They just stood silent, each breathing in the rarefied air of fractured rationality. They then smiled a mutual smile and went their separate ways. Despite life continuing as normal, the marvellous had just penetrated the everyday. Magic was temporarily restored to a world that had denied its existence.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A NORMAL SEA

Scarlett looked in awe at the stunning diversity of life and declared war on those that pooh-pooh the multifaceted wonder of the universe(s). "You're just not normal!" blasted her dim-witted spouse. "That's because nothing is normal," she calmly explained. "Generalizations about what is or is not normal, ordinary or typical often reflect the ideological mind-set of those making the claim. Unless I have seen, met or experienced every possible example of a given phenomenon I cannot safely say that it is the norm. For example, while I might like to claim that all coppers are bastards, the fact that I have not met every single policeman indicates that such an assertion would be somewhat premature. Unfortunately, many ideologues of both left and right are not quite so careful in their extrapolations. Hence we are burdened with raft after raft of repressive legislation (sometimes concocted with noble intentions) to counteract this or that social group or activity. And anyway, if your an example of what constitutes normality, I'm fucking glad that I'm not normal."

[*] An interesting essay for those seeking further food for thought is Robert Anton Wilson's "Claims of the Normal" in Jim Feast, Ron Kolm & Alfred Vitale (eds) - *Help Yourself!* (Autonomea)