

# Toilet Paper Patriotism

David Gaynes

1969

Brother Warner Mach, currently living out in the hinterlands of Rochester, sent us a box of "Uncle Sam Cereal" he came across while shopping in the local A&P out there.

Although the advertising puffery on the box claims that good ol' "Uncle Sam's" ("a natural laxative") has been "keeping Americans regular since 1908," none of us had ever heard of the stuff. With that in mind, I thought it would be interesting to explore this phenomenon that might be branded "toilet paper patriotism."

The box itself is, predictably, red, white and blue, with the trade-name "Uncle Sam Cereal" emblazoned on a reasonable facsimile of a pig's badge. What appears, for all the world, to be a silhouette of a bearded hippie in a top-hat is in an oval frame above the badge.

It is not known at this time whether the presence of this hippie-type character on the package-front represents a serious effort to diversify the cereal's market, or whether it is merely some sly ad-man's joke, but it is certainly out of keeping with the true American dignity of the package which is otherwise a consistent visual theme.

All in all, one would not be surprised to see groups of doddering, constipated V.F.W.'s earnestly saluting the box before another morning's effort to set their parched (but patriotic) innards aright.

Although I didn't feel any need for increasing my regularity, I feel that the cause of journalistic integrity dictated a tasting.

As the picture indicates, I whacked away at the bowl with true, flag-waving gusto. Surprisingly enough, it wasn't too bad. It tasted something like Wheaties (remember Jack Armstrong, the All-American boy?)

What I cannot speak so assuredly about is its ability to expedite the hardened bowel, as this article had to go to press before the Uncle (Sam's, of course) had a chance to do his good work.

The world of capitalism, and advertising in particular, holds a great deal of information through which one can better understand the consciousness of America.

Just as the nature of sex in advertising is often a barometer which indicates our sexual trends and titillations, the appearance of blatant patriotic appeals within advertising must be construed as an indication of where the capitalist elite is at (and wants to bring us with them).

When this chauvinistic appeal is combined with a product that purports to have a laxative effect, some (you should pardon the expression) heavy shit is going down.

While I am by no means a qualified psychoanalyst, it doesn't take too much book-larnin' to see that there is a subtle message in every crispy bite.

The golden flakes swim lazily in front of Mr. America's weary eyes each morning as if to say that only through assimilation of the fatherland and its values can he be purged of his sin and guilt.

Unquestionably it is an indignity to have your bowels become publicly linked to the national welfare.

I'm sure most of us subliminally remember the daily inquisitions we had to endure as toddlers concerning our success in the regulated rectum race. I know I do.

This is not enough for Uncle Sam, who must not only make sure that our insides are cleansed...Indeed, they must be cleansed regularly. This is but one aspect of a regimented world in which people no longer eat because they're hungry, or sleep because they're tired, but instead regulate their needs and desires as the clock dictates.

This all points to one fact which further intellectualizing would deal with too politely: UNCLE SAM BRINGS OUT THE SHIT IN PEOPLE.

# fifth Estate

David Gaynes  
Toilet Paper Patriotism  
1969

<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/83-july-10-23-1969/toilet-paper-patriotism>  
Fifth Estate #83, July 10-23, 1969

**[fiftheestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fiftheestate.org)**