

Old Glory signifies freedom to freely exchange ideas

On Wednesday the United States Supreme Court made an effort to ensure the preservation of the First Amendment — in a 5-4 vote, they said no law could make it illegal to desecrate or destroy the American flag in peaceful protest.

The case stemmed from a protest during the 1984 Republican National Convention in Dallas where Gregory "Joey" Johnson burned an American flag in a political protest.

To say it is illegal to punish those who desecrate the flag is to support the very principles for which the flag stands — individual freedom and the free exchange of ideas, both of which are critical in a Democratic society. In the majority opinion, Justice William J. Brennan Jr. said, "We do not consecrate the flag by punishing its desecration, for in doing so we dilute the freedom that this cherished emblem represents."

Burning the flag does not harm the spirit of America. Physically, the flag is just another piece of colorful cloth, another icon — its true meaning lies in its spirit. The decision upholds the spirit and values of the flag and America. You must protect the ideas you hate in order to protect the ideas you love. You can burn the symbol, but you cannot kill the meaning, and for the Court to decide otherwise would have done just that.

The Battalion Editorial Board

University Tower: home or playpen for the wealthy?

First there was the controversial door-lock policy. Then there was the heated "dormitory"/"residence hall" debate. And now (to continue what seems to be my tradition of voicing my opinion about various aspects of student living) there is the University Tower, which will open in Fall 1989 as Aggeland's first private, co-educational off-campus dormitory.

The newly renovated hotel, described as "above and beyond the rest," is just that: above and beyond the financial reach of the average college student looking for affordable housing.

The 304-room facility will house about 700 students. For a fee significantly higher than on-campus housing fees, the students will be provided with numerous "benefits" which include full meal plans, an indoor swimming pool, a sun deck, a volleyball pit, a weight room, a computer room, a TV room and, of course, a game room.

The whole thing sounds like a glorified playpen to me.

Now if you're like me and have been griping about the rising costs of on-campus living since the day you set foot on this campus, this pricy, self-contained living arrangement definitely doesn't appeal to you. Drawing upon personal experience, I know that

after the first year of college a student realizes he has little time to "play" and needs a roof to sleep under for only short periods of time. (After your freshman year, you either party until the wee hours of the morning, work late or stare at the library walls until the building closes). So much for play time.

Now I admit that when I first came to A&M my mother carefully inspected all the living options available to me and practically made my housing decision for me. Of course she wanted the best



Juliette Rizzo
Opinion Page Editor

for her little girl and the best included the necessities: carpet and air-conditioning. That's it, though. Quality over quantity. None of these "extras."

I question whether this alternative living option actually appeals to a significant number of students. With the addition of five modular residence halls on campus (two of which are coed), who deemed it necessary to provide this additional living space?

With the availability of additional dorm space and a significant number of apartments and houses in the community, just how many students will need to take advantage of this "Dynasty"-like dorm setting, complete with winding staircases? By setting such high prices and by advertising after students have already made their fall housing choices, Tower management may be in for a surprise.

Anyone who has ever had the privilege of visiting the University of Texas has seen a similar structure inhabited by a bunch of wealthy slobs. The once "ultimate" tower-style dormitory, known as Dobie Center, has been trashed by its inhabitants (who are seemingly spoiled students) and is basically unattractive both inside and out.

Because high costs will limit residents, the University Tower may follow Dobie's downfall as a toy rich kids will play with and discard when the newness wears off. Only time will tell.

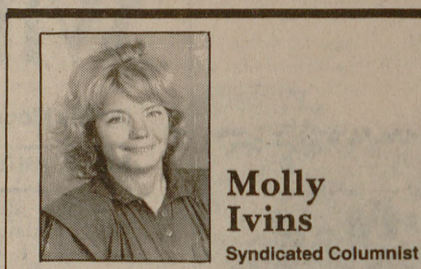
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Izzy Stone won't be forgotten

Izzy Stone, that extraordinary mind and lovely spirit, is gone. A hero; short, puny, dimpled, looked like a madly intelligent chipmunk, but a real hero. As a citizen, the model. As a journalist, none better. And as a human being, a perfect delight. He was so generous, he loved nothing more than sharing. I think, "Have you read . . ." must have been the words most often out of his mouth — he had always just discovered some wonderful "new" writer. In one fairly typical 20-minute discussion of Marxism a few years ago, he offered wonderful insights on the works of Marx, Lenin, Hegel, Heraclitus, Victor Serge, Roman Rolland, Gide, Koestler, Howard Fast, Francois Fejtel, Jean-Paul Sartre, Kingsley Martin, Wolfgang Leonhard, George Moore, Abelard, Jesus, Berdyaev, Czeslaw Milosz, Anatole France and Krapotkin.

But just reading and knowing more than almost anyone else I ever met isn't what made Stone a great man. The academy is full of learned professors who have no gift for life. Izzy Stone was as "in the ring," as Teddy Roosevelt put it, as you can get; he was one of the greatest muckrakers the country ever produced, and the man knew his muck. "All governments lie" was one his dicta, and he certainly proved often enough that ours does. But none of the ugliness and none of the unfairness he found in life ever dimmed his hope or his energy — not an ounce of bitterness in him and I don't think I ever knew anyone who had a better time than Izzy Stone. In his late 60's, already nearly blind and nearly deaf, he was thrilled to be off to Europe by ship. He loved ballroom dancing with his wife, Esther, and of course by then shipboard bands were about the only ones left where the dancers didn't have to do The Monkey. And he would rise every morning before dawn so he could watch the sun come up over the water — oh, he loved that.

Easily the finest newspaperman of his generation, Stone became unemployable during the McCarthy era because he was "a red." Of course he was a man of the Left, but always of the independent left. He infuriated those on the Left as much as he did those on the Right. He was briefly a member of the Socialist Party as a young man, but never a Communist. After his first visit to the Soviet Union in 1956, he wrote, "This is not a



Molly Ivins
Syndicated Columnist

good society and it is not led by honest men."

Since Stone couldn't get a job, he started his own paper, "I.F. Stone's Weekly." Among the original subscribers were Albert Einstein, Bernard Russell and Eleanor Roosevelt. By the time he finally quit in 1971, he had over 70,000 readers. They mourned when he shut down the paper, but not Izzy: He was so excited about doing longer pieces, he said, "I feel as though I've been practicing my scales for years and now I'm going to play music." In his 70s, he began studying Greek so he could read about the origins of freedom of thought in the original. The result was his book, "The Trial of Socrates." With his usual scrupulous reporting, Stone studied the documents and then challenged the conventional academic theory that Socrates was sentenced to death only for preaching virtue. He brought to life a 2,500-year-old national security case.

In Andrew Patner's book, "I.F. Stone, A Portrait," Izzy surveys the walls of his home in Washington, D.C., all lined with books in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, English, Yiddish, French and German, and remarks, "There's so much I haven't read. There's so much to learn." What a shame that so many people are under the impression that William F. Buckley is a well-educated and well-read journalist: You have only to compare Buckley to Stone's breadth and depth, and to his laser-like ability to cut through bull, to see what a truly educated man can bring to public debate. There was nothing affected or jejune about Stone, his language had the energy and simplicity of the newsroom. But what made him so special to know was his joy — at a poem, at natural beauty, at a good joke, a pithy phrase, a meaty essay.

The list of causes that made Izzy a pariah for many years are now pretty much the conventional wisdom: He opposed McCarthyism, racism, the nuclear

arms race, the Vietnam War and a host of other things he considered stains on democracy. He was kicked out of the National Press Club in 1941 for bringing a black judge to lunch there. He was finally readmitted 40 years later. Perhaps his last great controversy was over the Israeli war in 1967, he urged Israel to compensate Arab refugees for their losses and to cede the occupied territories to them to create an Arab-Palestine federated with Israel, with Jerusalem the joint capital. Once again, he was right long before anyone else.

There's a wonderful documentary film about Izzy called "I.F. Stone Weekly" made in 1973: They still show it at film festivals and it may be on sometime. Try to catch it if you can. The books, I would recommend starting with "Polemics and Prophecies," a collection of essays from 1967 to 1970, will give you an idea of his wonderful style and of the formidable research behind his reporting. As an investigative reporter, there was no one better than Izzy. One of the things investigative reporters know is how much information there is in the public records — just have to dig to get it out. Stone was a champion digger. He used to read the entire federal budget, plus the status in the back and the "Special Analyses and Topics" section — and he emerged with wonderful stories. His book "The Killing at Kent State: How Much Went Unpunished" (1971) is a classic piece of investigation.

One reason Izzy Stone remained on the side of the pale of respectable discourse for so long was not only because he advocated unpopular causes, but also because he was so unconcerned with prestige. He simply did not care about winning the Pulitzer Prize or any of the other little tokens of professional success, including lunching at "in" restaurants. He not only refused to become close to anyone in politics, he didn't care whether other journalists invited him to dinner. He wasn't anti-social — he was an absolute charmer and had the most wonderful laugh; he just couldn't be corrupted by the phony glitter of "success" or money. He never wanted to be "respectable."

He was so wise, so brave and so fun.

Mail Call

Aggie apathy unavoidable

EDITOR:

I take issue with Greg Pogue's letter on June 22 concerning apathy at A&M for the people of China. I have yet to speak with anyone who is not shocked and disgusted. The demonstration on Wednesday was an honest reaction to the events in Beijing, but I personally didn't see the point, and I expect that several thousand Aggies didn't either.

Rather than interpret this as an indication of apathy among the Aggies, I feel that people may have classified the demonstration as a silly gathering that served no beneficial purpose.

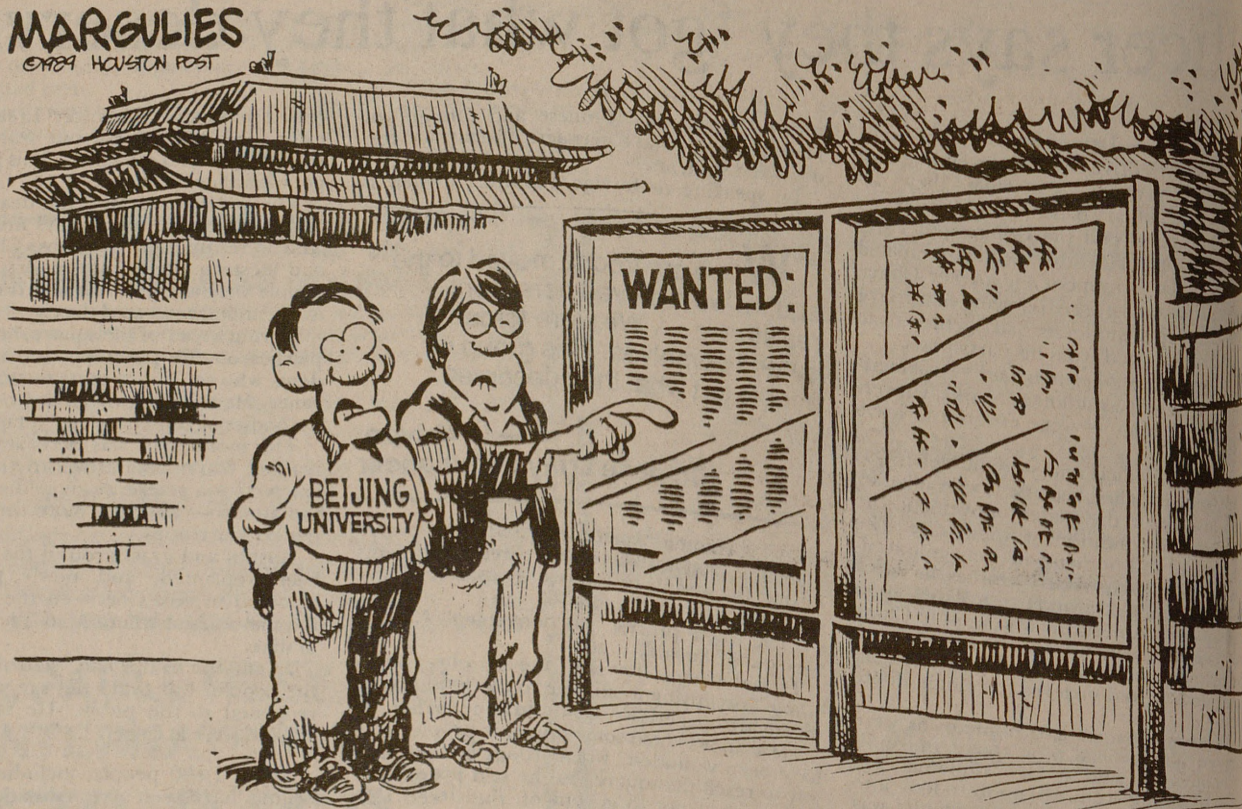
With respect to Mr. Pogue's opinion that Bush's reaction has been limp and anemic, it appears that Mr.

Pogue feels the United States is the savior of the world. It is this imperialistic attitude that got us into the Vietnam fiasco, or have we forgotten that already?

I mourn the deaths of these Chinese people and pray for the immediate halting of these murders, but I also feel that direct involvement by the United States would probably accelerate the bloodshed and result in a very tense world crisis. Rambo Reagan would probably have sent in the troops, but I applaud Mr. Bush for showing common sense and restraint in this difficult and complex situation.

Gary Sera

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"Hey...you made dean's list!"

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