

# Cult of Personality

## Mao-mania based on misconceptions

Columnist



Michael Heinroth  
Teacher certification student

the materialistic West was busy exploiting its own proletariat in 1949, Mao took power in China and began perpetuating his cult of personality.

Like any committed Communist, he was sold on the idea of five-year plans.

And it didn't take long for China to go through the first grueling directive to industrialize the populous, rural country.

Although Mao's efforts were met with some success, the costs — especially in lives — were immense and inexcusable.

Mao was just getting started, though. His next undertaking allowed the brutal Hundred Flowers campaign to bloom.

But after encouraging intellectuals to offer criticism, Mao denounced them as counter-revolutionaries.

They don't exactly give out shiny medals for that in Communist countries.

In fact, it usually resulted in a quick trip to one of Mao's "re-education camps," better known as gulags.

Then, Mao ordered the People's Liberation Army to brutally suppress an uprising in occupied Tibet in 1959. At the same

time, he was busy forcing peasants into collective farms during his uncoordinated Great Leap Forward.

In sharp contrast to the program's name, agricultural production levels plummeted, and the Chinese people were brought to their knees.

Although famine ensued and millions of Chinese starved, relief groups were not allowed to enter the country.

Now that's detestable — not admirable.

But it wasn't enough, so Mao finished his tyrannical career with the Cultural Revolution.

Because he was displeased with the expanding bureaucracy and even some of his personal advisors, the Chinese dictator decided to conduct a good ol' fashioned purge. Millions were publicly humiliated, detained, tortured, shot or hanged.

Countless others committed suicide to escape Mao's wrath.

Not until his own death in 1976 was it revealed that three million people were falsely accused.

My Western mind may be tainted with thoughts of democracy, but these are not indications of a compassionate leader.

So why anyone would want to show off this guy's picture on a T-shirt is beyond me.

Despite the First Amend-

ment, Mao's mug is not exactly an image that should be paraded and promoted around campus — or anywhere else.

He was nothing more than a power-hungry, self-contradicting Marxist philosopher whose miscalculations and raw brutality cost the lives of millions.

Make no mistake — the man was evil.

Maybe there is a lesson here, though. Power is best derived from the vote. Not, as Mao was fond of saying, from the "barrel of a gun."

The merits of limited democratic governments, separation of powers and constitutional rights are reaffirmed each time the histories of dictators such as Chairman Mao are revisited.

Unfortunately, there will always be the few that continue to promote the false benefits of Communism over individual freedom.

These bourgeois-bashers would do themselves a service by reading Harry Wu's first-hand account of the Chinese gulags, *Bitter Winds*. It's an excellent alternative to Mao's *Little Red Book* of quotations.

And it just might convince them to thank God they never lived under the iron fist with which Mao Tse-tung punished so many innocent people.



looks like that alternative, revolution-advocating Rage Against the Machine has finally won some hearts.

So should we be on the lookout for people climbing rocky hills with glowing red flags and a pocket full of shells?"

Don't kid yourself. However, something disturbing on campus

the other day caught my eye. Outside the MSC, there were

some students wearing T-shirts with a picture of Chairman Mao

tung on them.

Why would somebody want to display an image of the former Communist dictator that

terrorized the People's Republic of China?

Do these students realize what kind of statement they're making? Maybe. Maybe not.

But by casually touting such a despised political despot, one can only assume they are

endorsing who this man was, what he stood for and what he

did to the Chinese people.

For all the misinformed Marxists out there, here are the facts. Don't worry, it's not bourgeois propaganda — it's the

old, uncensored truth. It just so happens that while

1968:

1996:



FREE THE CHICAGO 7

1996:



FREE THE LITTLE ROCK 7

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## Stamp depicts cold day for track

Hugh Hefner is not running the United States Postal Service. But according to a few irate postal customers, he might as well be.

In the latest example of political correctness gone awry, some Americans are complaining about an "unnecessary anatomical detail" on the new female track Olympic commemorative stamp.

If examined, a nipple-like impression can be seen in the shirt of the runner.

We're not talking Victoria's Secret here. The nipple on the stamp is difficult to see, although it is certainly there. Whoever drew the stamp was simply trying to create a realistic illustration with life-like dimension.

But it's enough to make some people complain that the Postal Service is selling 32 cents worth of oppression. The offended people should realize it's wrong to misinterpret an artist's faithful conception as a work of disrespect.

In a letter published in last Sunday's Dallas Morning News, an M.C. Burnham of Highland Village writes, "... the unnecessary nipple detail distracts many viewers from noticing what actually goes into the makings of a great athlete."

It's probably true that a nipple is not what makes an athlete great. I have two nipples and as far as I can tell they don't improve my athletic ability or make me more aerodynamic. And although there is both a right and a left one, they probably are not the cause of my cat-like balance.

Do you ever get the feeling that some people are

Columnist



Jeremy Valdez  
Senior chemical engineering major

taking stamp-collecting too seriously? Rebekah Geistweid, a high jumper on the Texas A&M Track and Field Team, said it is common to see athletes wearing clothing more revealing than what is shown in the stamp.

"Athletics is kind of like a job; you have to have a professional attitude. Like a doctor in the office, you see what you see, but it's just business," Geistweid said.

Hopefully, this little controversy will not serve to stifle stamp artists' freedom of expression.

But if just one nipple can cause an unfavorable reaction, the Postal Service might be wise to postpone the release of the new "Dairy Milking in America" stamp.

Nobody who I showed the stamp to seemed offended. Most people took a lighthearted look at the topic. Stefani Lefevre, a freshman political science major, joked that "at least [the artists] gave her some breasts. A lot of those athletes don't have any."

The problem with goofy complaints like Burnham's is that every time the mainstream dismisses a grievance as being ridiculous, it may be further desensitized to true sources of conflict.

When an extremist group makes such a prudish argument, it trivializes a real and valid issue, like our society's view of males and females or the out-of-control sexualization of our culture.

People like Burnham should relax a little bit, maybe take a cold shower and go for a little early-morning jog. But they better not wear a form-fitting shirt.

## Parking problem can be solved

Columnist



David Minor  
Graduate student

To say there is a parking problem on the Texas A&M campus is an understatement.

Driving and parking in Houston is easier than attempting to do so at our university during peak commuting hours.

Have you ever sprayed lighter fluid on an open flame? The same thing happens when you add Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services into the mix — the problem magnifies tenfold.

PTTS' mission seems to be how much much money it can squeeze from the student body, instead of creating a better commuter parking system.

Rather than finding a long-term solution to avoid snafus, PTTS is focusing on short-term solutions to parking problems.

PTTS claims Texas A&M has more parking spots than any other school in the country. Since we have the largest full-time undergraduate population, that should not be a surprise.

Students require parking or close transportation because they cannot easily use most modes of pedestrian transportation in College Station for the majority of the year. From spring to fall, the high temperatures make a trip from Zachry to the tower by foot impossible without needing a shower afterwards.

Just think how much worse it would be if you had to walk or ride your bike to campus from Northwest Parkway. And when it is not scalding, it is raining — making the trip even more miserable.

Here's a clue for PTTS: Just because it stops selling parking permits after the first week of school does not mean the over-crowded parking lots are going to go away.

Although there are viable solutions to the problem of transportation, none seem to be taken

advantage of.

A&M should close its campus to all motorized vehicles during school hours except for University buses. This is common policy on many university campuses across the country.

With less automotive traffic on campus, the bus transportation system on campus will rapidly improve, especially if the University increases the number of off-campus buses.

With the closed campus, the off-campus buses could complete a full circle of campus with various drop-off/pick-up locations. This would allow students greater access from the off-campus buses, encouraging more students to ride the buses to school.

Next, PTTS needs to eliminate many on-campus shuttle bus routes — go back to the old shuttle system that had two efficient routes, Rudder and Howdy. They would move even more quickly with the no-outside-traffic policy.

Now the toughest step — working with Union-Pacific to schedule when trains will cause the fewest delays on campus. If students were able to avoid trains between classes, they would have more time to travel between East and West Campus. Eventually, the tracks should be moved outside 2818, as the city of Bryan proposed a few years ago.

The final stage would create car pool parking lots. If it were mandatory for at least two students to be traveling in a vehicle to park in certain convenient lots, students would begin to car pool out of necessity and convenience.

Many enjoy the freedom to drive their own cars, but sacrifices must be made. If these changes occur, Texas A&M students will see an improvement in traveling to and from school, a more rapid form of transportation between classes, and a few less reasons to hate PTTS.



## CRs use kiosk space correctly

Regarding Shannon Halbrook's Sept. 10 column

Halbrook's column is a prime example of what is wrong with American thinking today.

A campus organization is doing the best it can to recruit prospects, and simply because it has the largest membership of any student organization on campus, it is chastised.

It stands to reason that the largest organization on campus would have the biggest PR campaign.

No, I am not a member of the College Republicans.

I am writing this because people must realize that simply because a group is larger or more powerful does not mean it should be held to a different standard.

That is like saying that A&M should hold off recruiting football players for the next four

## MAIL CALL

years in order to let Baylor catch up so that they can be competitive with us (after all, they don't have the resources, alumni or traditions we do).

The flier issue has nothing to do with free speech, but it does have to do with a desire to get out and work for your goals. With a campus as big as ours, I guarantee that if an organization is looking for flier space, they can find it, just as the College Republicans did.

Curtis Franke  
Class of '99

## Other traditions supercede dunking

Regarding Kendra Rasmussen's Sept. 12 article

As an "old Ag", I understand that if it happens twice at Texas A&M, it's a tradition.

However, I've seen many comments that ring dunking is an "old Army" tradition. This simply

isn't true. I'm from the Class of '81 and there was no dunking going on when I was here.

Also, the Dixie Chicken has only been open since 1974.

That year is significant because Brazos County was a dry county before then.

Therefore, there couldn't have been any "tradition" of dunking rings prior to that year.

In short, dunk your rings if you feel you must.

However, don't do so for the misguided belief that you are honoring some alleged long standing tradition.

There are too many really fine traditions at this university that would be missed if lost. This ain't one.

Mark Klemm  
Class of '81

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