by Patrick Miner

As November draws near, the media tell us that citizens have an important decision to make: Democrat or Republican? However, the decision is not a binary one. The media thrive on this deception, as it makes for a more dramatic conflict between two supposedly polar candidates. They focus on irrelevant topics (e.g. flag pins and pant-suits) instead of tackling real issues like the Iraq War, poverty, healthcare, and climate change.

The mass media in the U.S. are not at all "mainstream," as they represent the views of the corporate elite, not the public. An overwhelming majority wants to end the war, but the media barely debate it at all. A mainstream media would gather information on the war, present this information to its audience and communicate views of dissent.

Instead, we are faced with propaganda from multinational corporations and our own government. The Pentagon, Media Analyst Program, recently unveiled by the corporate elite, not the public. They represent the views of the mass media would gather infor- mation on the war, present this information to its audience and communicate views of dissent.

Instead, we are faced with propaganda from multinational corporations and our own government. The Pentagon, Media Analyst Program, recently unveiled in a New York Times exposé, is a prime example, wherein the Department of Defense planted retired generals — who had been briefed on Bush Administration talking points — as analysts to alert public perception of the war.

The media constantly use terms directly from the government. Consider the current U.S. foreign policy action. The media have adopted "The War on Terror" as an appropriate title. Where's the analysis here? It is impossible to fight a war against "Terror" or "Terrorism." These are abstractions, and any war in itself is terrible — by every definition of the word. And yet, phrases like these are quite common in mainstream news. In this book, "Media Control," Noam Chomsky draws attention to the use of such phrases:

"In fact, what does it mean if somebody asks you, Do you support the people in Iraq? Can you say, Yes, I support them, or No, I don't sup- port them? It's not even a question. It doesn't mean anything. That's the point. The point of public relations slogans like "Support our troops" is that they don't mean anything. They mean as much as whether you sup- port the people in Iowa. Of course, there was an issue. The issue was, Do you support our policy? But you don't want people to think about that issue. That's the whole point of good propaganda."

The media use public airwaves to distribute their information and advertising, yet they are not accountable to the people. Consumers constantly overpay for services like cable television and internet access, while enormous conglomerates reap record profits. At one point, the concept behind paid-for cable television was that a consumer could elect to pay a monthly fee and no longer deal with advertisements. TV without commercials! Sounds crazy — but remember — we own the airways. It is easy to sit back and let the corporate media influence our actions. The point is: Why is it in the interest of the media for us to follow "reality TV" instead of politics? Fox makes millions on a show like "American Idol," but Fox's profits could be threatened if politicians who stand for the people instead of corporations are elected.

The private interests of mass media have had such an influence that it is now considered unusual to be interested in politics. Is anyone who would instantly label an active citizen with a title like "rad- ical." There's a sense that research- ing candidates and issues is a fringe activity reserved for "politi- cal junkies" and "history buffs." This way of thinking is the direct product of media influence and the corporatization of everyday life.

It is not some conspiracy theory that "the media are out to get us," but rather a result of the market. Media outlets that value profit are more likely to succeed financially, and so their broadcasts, prints, etc. begin to reflect this final goal. In the 2004 Presidential Election, 56.7 percent of eligi- ble voters actually voted — and this was high turnout. Voters see few reasons to go to the polls when their choices are too few and too similar, and they feel their votes may not be counted.

The alleged binary distinc- tion between Democrats and Republicans, reinforced by the media, has created a further sense of apathy among citizens. When the "media" forces the people to choose between the two largest parties is now so entrenched in U.S. society that peo- ple are often hostile to new opin- ions or normal citizen activities. Yet media and corpora- tions can become barriers to all abstract entities, not people. This election can differ from past elections if voters demand new government by voting for progressive candidates in local, state, and national offices. We can think. We can take action. To know and to do is to not to know.

Election 2008 Update

The 2008 Election continues to be the most-watched election in U.S. history. The fight for the Democrats' Nomination is near an end, with Senator Obama gaining 41 delegates from the final lists of as of May 30. Gay Memmott Day (Saturday, June 3rd) and Congress would get a changed from the Labor Party's candidate. His selection was based on the Labor Party's nominee. He joins other third-party candidates such as Chuck Baldwin, who was selected to be the candidate of the Constitution Party in late April. Gloria La Riva is the nominee of the Party for Socialism and Liberation. Brian Moore is the Socialist Party's candidate. The Green Party will name its nominee in mid-July. Prominent seekers of the nomination include Cynthia McKinney and Kat Swift. Recent polling suggests that Obama will narrowly defeat McCain in the general election, with both candidates vying for the third place. The outcome of this election is crucial for the future of American politics.
**CONTRADICTIONS:**

by James McDaniel

In March of this year, the international spotlight once again found itself pointing towards China. Rites and protests broke out across Tibet, China banned media coverage of the area and the tension was naturally drawn to the candidacy of Dennis Kucinich. Both Clinton and Obama propose that insurance companies be required to offer insurance to everyone, and both require the U.S. government to offer an affordable insurance plan. Both plans would make insurance more affordable for poor and middle-class Americans. Unfortunately, both plans fail to subsidize care for the poor with money from the rich.

The plans truly differ in only one respect: a specific way Clinton's plan requires everyone to purchase some form of health insurance, while Obama's plan makes no such requirement. What is the difference? Obama's plan is more expensive and less effective. It forces people who don't want to have health insurance until they become sick. The government and private insurers will still be required to offer the newly sick people insurance, which means that the insurance programs will run strictly at a loss. Clinton's plan requires that healthy and sick alike purchase insurance, meaning that healthy individuals end up subsidizing care for the sick. Clinton's plan is, in this respect, much closer to social medicine than Obama's plan.

The argument that Obama's plan pales in comparison to Clinton's is based only on temporal and spiritual basis. The Tibetans of Tibet and China, the Dalai Lama and these contradictions make up the broader political picture of Tibet.

On the opposite side, the Chinese government kept to the party line, calling the Dalai Lama an instigator and a separatist who designed and encouraged the protests. Who to listen to? I am a Tibetan Buddhist. I am also a Democrat. I have found that these two ideologies can complement each other rather well. Last year I had the opportunity to listen to the Chinese government online. By studying the Chinese language and researching agricultural trends in the city.

To me, Beijing is a city of vast contradictions: Ancient temples share street corners with modern skyscrapers — skyscrapers built by underpaid migrant workers. Communist kitsch sells for high prices at clearly capitalist street markets. Banners declaring the glory of “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” fill Tiananmen Square. Yet there are many noisy, genuinely independent groups fighting the system. Current study groups are petitioning the government to have alternative put on the ballot in November, which would amend the state Constitution to specifically recognize only one party. I have never seen such a low key as the orange sky before. It is this last encounter I came away from the living in Beijing. After this, I came to realize that despite the ever-present shadow of a repressive regime, people can still keep true to themselves in small ways, little drops of resistance. Zooming back out, now, to the broader political picture of Tibet and China — to me, it comes down to this: If China were sincere in their claims about the Dalai Lama, if the events in March were really isolated as they said, then why not let truth support their arguments? Why not let journalist from all nations cover events as they unfold, China banned journalists from media groups from Al Jazeera to The Guardian from entering Tibet. Why the media blackout? Why are these rumors, monks and nuns and common peoples disappearing from their homes and monasteries? I believe all governments should be afraid of their people, and indeed I think the Chinese government deeply fears its own population. Their actions show this to be the case. But a people's voice can only be muffled for so long. The world will watch China very closely as they host the 2008 Olympics and the events unfolding around the games.

James McDaniel is a junior double majoring in Chinese Language and Literature and East Asian Studies, with a minor in Environmental Studies, and researching the “Dharmapada” as well as the native speakers of Mandarin, Buddhism, and how this contrasts with the teachings of the Dalai Lama. From what this abbot said, as we circumbambulated a tall white stupa in one of the courtyard of the temple, I learned that the abbot basically had a profound respect for His Holiness and what he stood for, but that the abbot could rarely express that in China, especially now that he was living Beijing. He led me to a back side room of the temple to a locked door held shut by an old metal padlock. He took out a key and opened this old door. Behind it was a beautiful shrine, contain a picture of the Dalai Lama and the old Punchen Lama. both pictures illegal in China.

We did a brief Buddhist practice. I noticed the fruit that had brought on the altar and filling the altar bowls with water. This secret religious experience had a deep affect on me for the rest of my stay in China. After this, I came to realize that despite the ever-present shadow of a repressive regime, people can still keep true to themselves in small ways, little drops of resistance. Zooming back out, now, to the broader political picture of Tibet and China — to me, it comes down to this: If China were sincere in their claims about the Dalai Lama, if the events in March were really isolated as they said, then why not let truth support their arguments? Why not let journalist from all nations cover events as they unfold, China banned journalists from media groups from Al Jazeera to The Guardian from entering Tibet. Why the media blackout? Why are these rumors, monks and nuns and common peoples disappearing from their homes and monasteries? I believe all governments should be afraid of their people, and indeed I think the Chinese government deeply fears its own population. Their actions show this to be the case. But a people's voice can only be muffled for so long. The world will watch China very closely as they host the 2008 Olympics and the events unfolding around the games.

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