

# THE PASSION OF THE MAO

## WHO KNEW THAT COMMUNISM COULD BE SO FUNNY?

This madcap documentary reexamines the Cultural Revolution and restores the once bright reputation of Mao Zedong.

“The Passion of the Mao” begins by correcting misconceptions about Mao’s early years. Unlike the tyrants with whom he is usually compared, Mao was a successful scholar and businessman before he became a rabble-rouser.

By the mid1950s, he had unified China, spurred an impressive rate of growth, restructured the education system, and improved living standards.

Then he became a Maoist. Mao devoted the rest of his life to eliminating the centralized Soviet bureaucracy he and his colleagues had built.

The film takes viewers back to the 1960s. Successful women and men, some now professors at major universities in the West, credit Mao and especially the Cultural Revolution for making them feminists and allowing them access to education.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao brought Western-style ballets and operas, reinterpreted in Chinese form, to China’s villages. Peasants chose leaders who represented their true interests, and rural communities built schools independent of the central government.

And what about the anti-Maoist beliefs that have sullied the reputation of the man once referred to as “the sun in the sky?” They are part of a vast radical conspiracy, the result of propaganda churned out by the same people who turned the tanks on the Tiananmen demonstrators.