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A letter from the PUBLISHER

James R. Shepley

THE front pages of many U.S. newspapers carried a reproduction of a handwritten note from President Calvin Coolidge addressed to the American people. "Christmas," announced the President solemnly, "is not a time or a season but a state of mind." The rest of the news that final week of 1927 was scarcely more exciting. Warren Gamaliel Harding and his wife Florence were reburied in a marble tomb in Marion, Ohio. Mussolini was forced to revalue the Italian lira. Salvage work on the submarine S-4, sunk off Provincetown, was delayed by winter storms.

The editors of a fledgling newsmagazine called TIME were hard put to select an individual who so dominated the week's stories that he deserved a place on the magazine's cover. "Forget the man of the week," someone finally suggested. "Let's select a Man of the Year." That choice was easy. Charles A. Lindbergh, first man to fly solo across the Atlantic, was clearly the hero of 1927. Thus, almost by accident, Lindbergh became TIME's first Man of the Year.

The idea caught on. For TIME's editors, the selection of the person or persons who rated the title became a high point of the journalistic year. For TIME's readers, the selection became something of a challenge. For four decades, the year-end mail has brought ever-increasing numbers of reader-selected candidates. This year, as the sampling in the Letters column suggests, the variety of choice is greater than ever. Nominations have come in from all over the world. They range from Senator Robert Kennedy to Presidential Candidate Eldridge Cleaver, who is now a fugitive from justice. The crew of the U.S.S. Pueblo, Ho Chi Minh, the Viet Cong guerrilla and the U.S. G.I. all received votes. Joe Namath, Charles de Gaulle, Bob Hope, Sirhan Sirhan, the non-hippie student, Richard Nixon, Alexander Dubček, Abba Eban, Eartha Kitt, Lyndon Johnson—the list grows daily.



1927'S MAN OF THE YEAR

For the most part, the nominations that flood TIME's mailbox are careful and serious, often well-reasoned. Even those who nominate themselves are usually quite sincere. "You have my photograph in your files," wrote a man from Manhattan. "It is that blurred composite picture showing a man trying to keep his ear to the ground, his eye on the future and his chin up." There is always a group of loyal wives, like the woman from Florida who nominated her husband "on behalf of all husbands and fathers who, though part of the establishment, set an example of honesty, integrity and purposeful endeavor for their sons and daughters to emulate." And chances are no one was more earnest than the high school student from Okinawa, who nominated his father, a U.S. serviceman. "When I needed him, he was always there."

Each year, the choice seems to become more difficult. Week after next, the cover of TIME will present the editors' choice for 1968's Man of the

Cover: tempera by Boris Chaliapin.

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