

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

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A letter from the PUBLISHER

Henry Luce III

OVER the past 47 years, the flag of the U.S. has appeared 63 times on the cover of TIME. It embellished a portrait of General Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1942; it provided a backdrop for General Mark Clark in 1946; it rested in the hands of Astronaut Neil Armstrong as he stepped on the moon in July 1969. Only once before, however, has Old Glory pre-empted the entire cover. That was the issue of July 6, 1942, and it accompanied a story that analyzed the new significance of the freedom that the flag symbolized at a time when the U.S. was newly at war and the outcome was still far from clear.

This week, as Independence Day, 1970, approaches, TIME's editors feel that the national mood again demands a reappraisal of the meaning of the American flag—the ifs, hows and whys of its present-day symbolism, where it is a unifying and where a divisive force. The country is again at war, not only in Southeast Asia but also against frightening forces within American society.

To discover and interpret the newest uses and abuses of the flag, TIME's correspondents interviewed Americans of every age and calling. In Atlanta, Joyce Leviton talked to James Wilson, a talented black craftsman who had invented a flag-staff for auditoriums, embodying a concealed fan to make the flag ripple. He did this, he explained, because of his pride in the flag—"It looks better flying than hanging limply from the flagpole." For Washington's Paul Hathaway, searching out the meaning of the flag was an elusive assignment. "You take the flag for granted for so long that it becomes like the telephone pole in front of your house. It's there and it's not there." In Boston, Robert Lewis, who reported on the creation of Canada's new flag five years ago, found that "the passions that debate over that flag

aroused provided a basic text for this week's reporting. The new element is the extent to which the flag in the U.S. seems to have become a vehicle of polarization."

The story was written by Lance Morrow, edited by Jason McManus and researched by Marion Knox. Lance has been involved with the flag, government and politics since a stint as a Senate page gave him his first closeup look at congressional figures, including Senators

DAVID GAHR



GRAHAM & MORROW

John Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Joseph McCarthy. After graduating from Harvard in 1963, he reported for the Washington Star and came to TIME in 1965. He has written a number of essays on the Middle West, including "Time to Remember 'Forgotten America'" and 1969's Man of the Year cover on Mr. and Mrs. Middle America. Among other preparations for writing the story, Lance talked about definitions of patriotism with Evangelist Billy Graham, who dropped in to discuss patriotism and religion as he launched a new crusade in New York.

The Cover: Collage of buntings by Paul von Ringelheim.

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FIFTY CENTS

JULY 6, 1970



FIGHT OVER THE FLAG:

PATRIOTS AND PUT-ONS

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