

TIME

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A letter from the PUBLISHER

James R. Shepley

WITH this week's issue, TIME begins a new feature and welcomes a new colleague. Louis Harris and Associates, one of the nation's leading political polling organizations, will conduct public opinion surveys and research for TIME and other Time Inc. publications on an exclusive basis in the magazine field. Under that arrangement, the editors of TIME will regularly ask Harris to explore how Americans feel about the urgent political, social and moral questions of the day. The first poll, which appears this week in The Nation, was begun in mid-March. It examines public convictions about military power, past, present and future, and how far the American people are willing to go in the exercise of U.S. strength. The results at times are surprising.

Harris' work has been distinguished by a high degree of accuracy and insight. Having studied public opinion with the Elmo Roper organization and then founded his own firm in 1956, he came to national prominence as chief poll-taker for John Kennedy. Since then, he has made political soundings for nearly 50 U.S. Senators and a score of Governors, taken commercial surveys for many firms, and run polls for TV, magazines and newspapers; his own column, distributed by the Chicago Tribune-New York Daily News Syndicate, appears in over 50 papers across the U.S. For any given poll, he can call on a nationwide network of 27 field supervisors and some 3,000 part-time "stringers," who do the actual interviewing. His analysts in Manhattan study the answers amassed in the field, and from the tabulations Lou Harris then writes what he calls an "overlay," a summary and conclusions.

Neither Harris nor TIME's editors believe, of course, that polls provide an infallible guide to public opinion. We do believe that they can be a highly valuable journalistic tool to help re-



KEN REGAN—CAMERA 5

LOUIS HARRIS

port how people live and what they think, which is often, as Harris puts it, "less visible, less easy to define and analyze than such overt breaking news as the shooting down of a U.S. plane or a student uprising at Cornell." His association with TIME, he feels, "merges the best practices of journalism with the new field of polling. It's the most exciting thing I could be involved in."

Last February, TIME's Education Program sent a kit called "Black and White America" to 5,000 high school teachers for use in classroom discussions. The kit contains seven booklets, and it has proved so popular that requests for reprints have come in from all over the U.S. The kits are now available to the general public, at \$3 each, from:

TIME Education Program
Black and White America
Box 870
Radio City Station
New York, N.Y. 10019

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INDEX

Cover Story 10 Essay 39

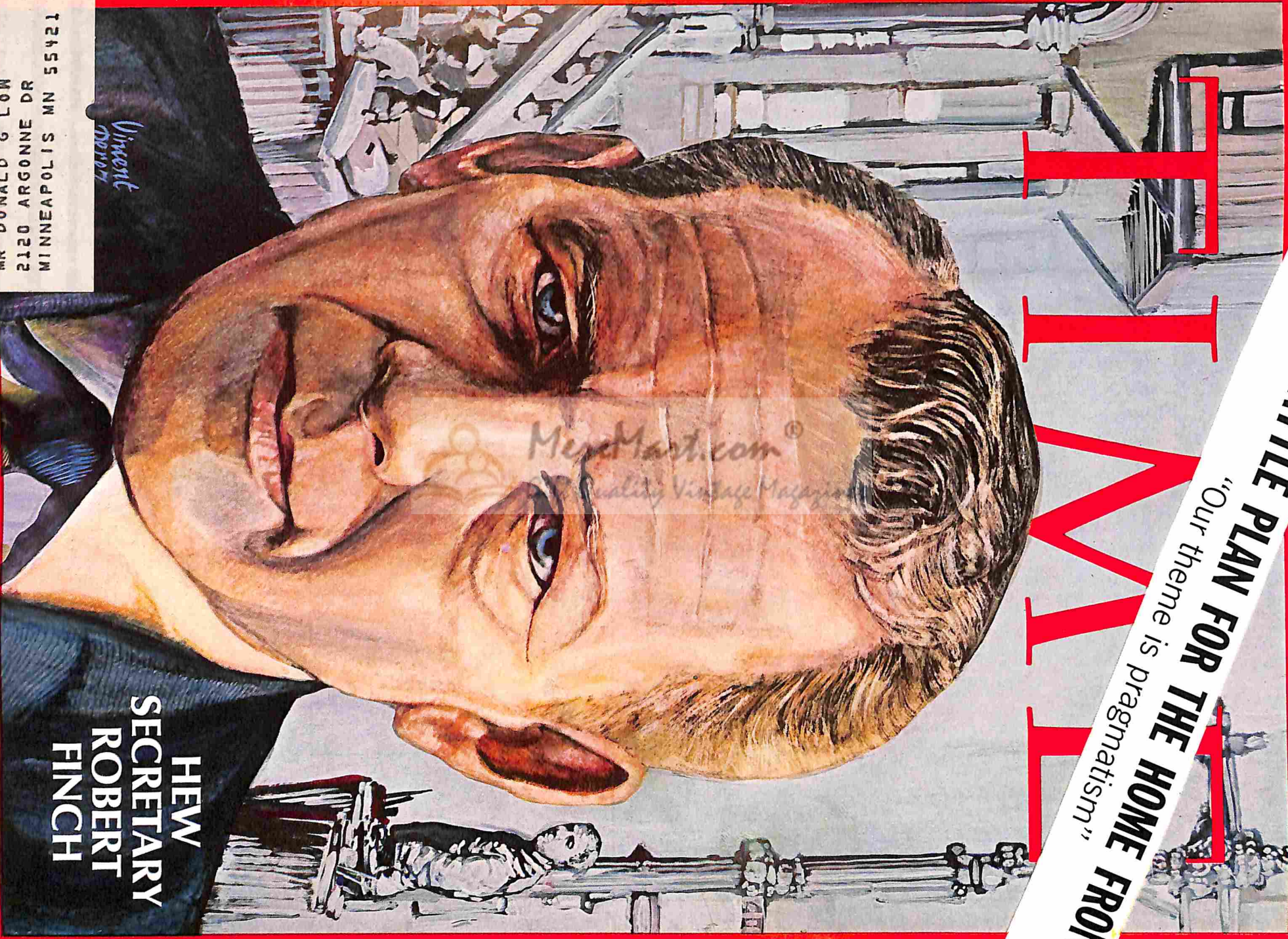
Art 54	Education 37	Nation 9
Behavior 46	Law 76	People 32
Books 94	Letters 5	Press 82
Business 86	Listings 2	Religion 44
Cinema 93	Medicine 58	Sport 73
Dance 68	Milestones 80	World 20
	Modern Living 65	

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