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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Time Magazine’s “Man of the Year” (1963) | [Next entry](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_truman_harry_s_1884_1972) | |
| In its January 1964 issue, *Time* named Martin Luther King, Jr., ‘‘Man of the Year’’ for 1963, making the civil rights leader the first African American recipient of this honor. This was not King’s first appearance on the cover of *Time*. In 1957 he was featured on the cover for his role in the [**Montgomery bus boycott**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_montgomery_bus_boycott_1955_1956/).  One of the first news magazines in the United States, *Time* was founded in 1923 as a weekly publication. Over the years, the ‘‘Man of the Year’’ issue (later ‘‘Person of the Year’’), in which the magazine recognizes the individual, group, or object that had the greatest influence on the year’s news, has grown to be one of its most popular features.  *Time*’s tribute to King included a photograph of the civil rights leader on the magazine’s cover, along with a seven-page feature that included pictures of King during some of the most memorable moments of his civil rights career, including a meeting with President [**Lyndon B. Johnson**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_johnson_lyndon_baines_1908_1973/) and King’s arrest in [**Birmingham**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_birmingham_campaign/), Alabama, in 1963. King received many congratulatory telegrams, notably from [**Roy Wilkins**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_wilkins_roy_ottaway_1901_1981/), secretary of the [**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_national_association_for_the_advancement_of_colored_people_naacp1/); [**A. Philip Randolph**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_randolph_a_philip_1889_1979/), president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; and [**Nelson A. Rockefeller**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_rockefeller_nelson_aldrich_1908_1979/), governor of New York.  Although many of King’s supporters celebrated the tribute, King was privately incensed by some of the comments in the story. His clothing style was described as ‘‘funereal conservatism,’’ and he was said to have ‘‘very little sense of humor.’’ King, who had garnered considerable fame from his speeches and oratorical skills, was criticized for his use of metaphors, which the author called ‘‘downright embarrassing’’ (‘‘Man of the Year,’’ 13).  To those outside his inner circle, King said he was pleased to receive the honor. In a 27 February 1964 letter to [**Homer Jack**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_jack_homer_alexander_19161993/), executive director of the [**National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy**](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_national_committee_for_a_sane_nuclear_policy_sane/), he maintained that it was not just a personal honor but a tribute bestowed upon the entire civil rights movement. ‘‘The fact that Time took such cognizance of the social revolution in which we are engaged is an indication that the conscience of America has been reached and that the old order which has embraced bigotry and discrimination must now yield to what we know to be right and just,’’ King wrote. In a letter to Time founder Henry R. Luce, King thanked him for the honor and commended the magazine for its inclusion of other professional African Americans. ‘‘This image of the Negro is certainly one that many of us like to see carried in the pages of our national periodicals,’’ King wrote. ‘‘For it does much to help grind away the granite-like notions that have obtained for so long that the Negro is not able to take his place in all fields of endeavor and that he is lazy, shiftless and without ambition’’ (King, 16 January 1964).  **References**  King to Jack, 27 February 1964, HAJP-PSC-P.  King to Luce, 16 January 1964, MLKJP-GAMK.  ‘‘Man of the Year; Never Again Where He Was,’’ *Time*, January 1964, 13–27.  ‘‘The South: Attack on the Conscience,’’ *Time*, 18 February 1957, 17-20. |