

Flags: Powerful Fabric

By [Frank Scott](#)

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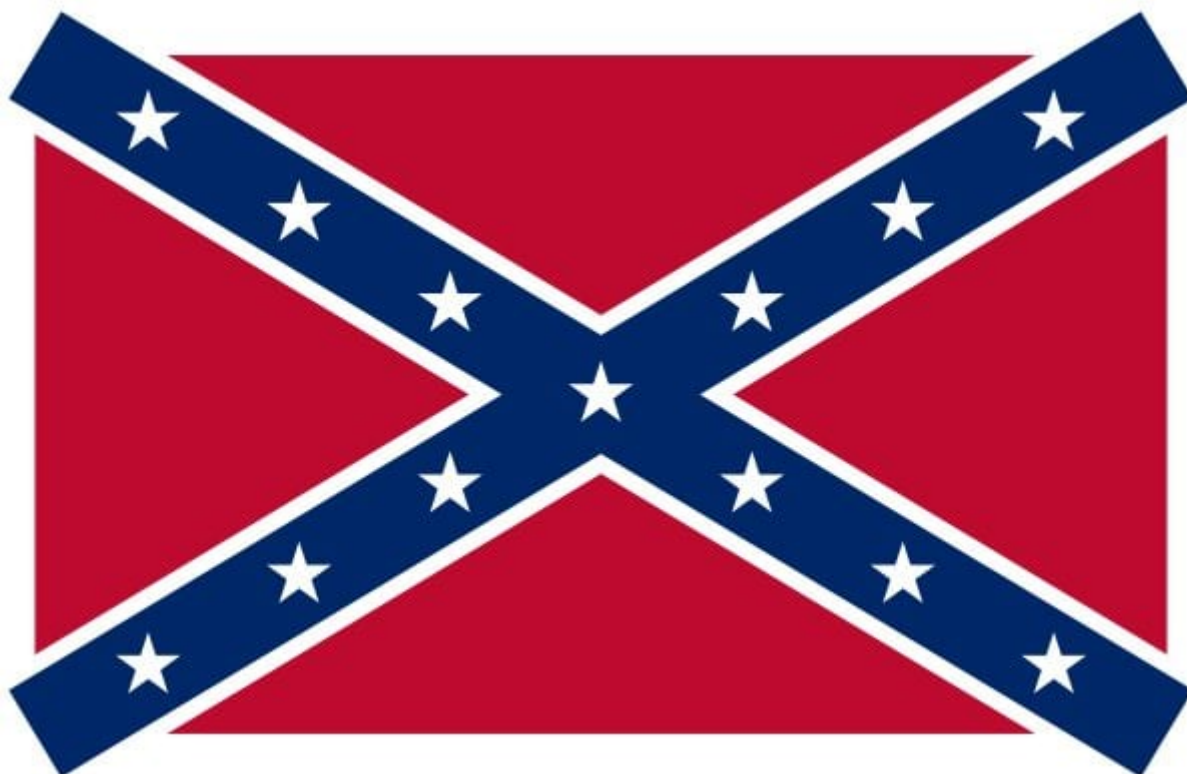
Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

"Flags are bits of colored cloth that governments use first to shrink-wrap people's minds and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury the dead." Arundati Roy

The photo of a racist murderer alongside a confederate flag reignited the long smoldering emotional fire this symbol creates in America.

While there are many who may be innocent of it being other than a sign of rebellion against imposed authority, the rebellion it originally stood for was that of the alleged right of some humans to own other humans as slaves.



Still, there may be a few who harbor no racism in their souls in owning or waving that flag but who are mentally "shrink wrapped" for some other reason, while many more are hurt, angered and infuriated that this particular symbol remained, until this murder, a revered piece of cloth not only in parts of the American south but among football fans all over the country and others no more politically or racially minded than the average American on an average day; which is not politically or racially minded at all, if not politically or racially unconscious.



But it may be that state of unconsciousness that is strengthened even by well meaning desire to rid ourselves of a symbol causing pain to many, without doing much to stop inflicting real material pain while concentrating so strongly on a colored fabric said to represent it in a form of religious symbolism, like marching to war behind a cross, mezuzah or other faith symbol.

The writer quoted at the top was speaking of the general use of flags and not any specific banner, whether waved proudly, in anger, with hate or love. What's important is the manipulative nature of the symbol and the fact that it can be used to move people emotionally because it has no meaning in material life other than being a fabric with stripes, figures or words on it. In a sense, some bloody tyrant's filthy underwear could be painted in the colors of some nation, group or cult and draw a salute from those members previously taught to hate that tyrant. But oh, that symbol is so strong and powerful. And ultimately, meaningless except as a weapon to, as Arundati Roy says, shrink-wrap minds and later bury bodies.

No better example of the contradictory nature of flags may exist than recent debates in governing bodies in the USA, especially congress, where often sincere and emotional speeches were made by people who insist that the confederate flag must go since it is a sign of hatred and worse.

But many of these same elected officials, distraught over this symbol and anxious to align themselves with others on the right side of the issue regarding a particular flag at a particular moment, regularly allocate billions for war, corporate wealth, Israel and more, without a thought for the human suffering caused to those under the murderous onslaught of the military economic dreadnaught whose funds they not only assure, but support often with the same passion they summon while they stand bravely against the confederate flag.

Makes you wonder?

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