

business of the State; government should keep its hands out of what is not its business. And not long before the election Wicker, writing on the abortion issue, said abortion "is not one of the very real social, economic and international problems with which the nation is faced. Those are the kind of problems—unemployment, for example, or health care, or Soviet-American relations—with which politics can best cope, and then not always effectively. To concentrate instead on matters of personal behavior and morality can only divert attention from the real issues of the campaign...."

O.K. For Mr. Wicker abortion is not a real issue. And the other issues he mentions are indeed important. And yes, abortion does involve "matters of personal morality and behavior." But that does not automatically remove it from the realm of "real social" problems, as he would have it. As much as health care (which he does mention as a real problem) abortion is concerned with questions of life and death. And with definitions (legal and otherwise) of what a human person is. How our society resolves the issue of abortion will tell us a good deal about ourselves and the society we want. We can neglect the issue, shunt it aside as a lesser matter of "personal morality," or we can address it as seriously as it deserves. If we do the latter, as we should, we can expect little help from Tom Wicker or S.I. Hayakawa.

The Polls and Hayakawa

Can polls help (or hurt) a candidate for, say, the Senate? The two men who managed Hayakawa's campaign think so. What, therefore, did they do when their private polls showed that, in the closing days of the campaign, Hayakawa was slipping badly, falling eight or nine points below his opponent? They kept the results secret and issued a statement showing Hayakawa leading by 3 per cent. They had, of course, a rationale for their deceit, which they made public. But it is the kind of thing that gives polls (or pollsters) a bad name.

Looking Back on Ford

Max Lerner made a guess at how historians a decade from now will look at Ford, and—as guesses go—it looks fairly good. He conjectured that the historians "will assess him more generously and justly than most observers did in the primaries and the campaign.

"They will say that he came to the presidency at a time of deep wounds and divisions, when the legitimacy of the office had come into question. He did much to heal the wounds, close the divisions and restore a measure of the legitimacy."

Looking Ahead to Carter

In winning the election Jimmy Carter had to overcome two troubling obstacles: the national bias against Southerners and the liberal, intellectual bias against seriously held religious beliefs. Insofar as no one will now argue that a true Southerner cannot be

elected to the Presidency, Carter has overcome the first bias. The second is still alive and active, however. If his performance in office does something to mitigate that bias, he will have performed a definite service to the nation.

Carter will be judged primarily, however, by how he performs those political tasks to which the office has committed him. In coming from political nowhere, in overcoming the obstacles he did, in winning the primaries and then the Presidential election, Carter revealed a number of qualities—thoroughness, shrewdness, energy, intelligence, determination, self-discipline—that suggest he will not be a mediocre President. He will be an active President who will leave his mark. Too early yet to determine on which side of mediocrity that mark will be.

EXCURSUS III

Israel Mowshowitz on Finding Babi Yar

In the summer of 1956 the New York Board of Rabbis was invited by Rabbi Solomon Schliefer, then Chief Rabbi of Moscow, to send a delegation of rabbis to visit Soviet Jewry. It was my privilege to serve as spokesman of that delegation.

We visited cities with large Jewish populations: Moscow, Leningrad, Odessa, and, of course, Kiev. We came to Kiev on a Tuesday afternoon and immediately made our way to the Synagogue.

Even though we arrived unexpectedly, the Synagogue and the streets leading to it were filled with Jews who had somehow learned of our presence. The local rabbi, Rabbi Panich, was visibly distressed at the sight of the large crowd. "It is all right to worship in the Synagogue," he told me, "but it is not permissible to have a demonstration, and this is a demonstration." He implored me to speak a few words of greeting to the people and ask them to disperse quietly. This, of course, I did. An elderly Jew on the way out stopped to shake hands with me, and whispered in my ear, "You must see Babi Yar."

This was many years before Kuznetsov and Yevtushenko forced Russians—and the world—to acknowledge Babi Yar, and no one in our delegation had any idea what Babi Yar was. But I was determined to fulfill the old Jew's request. I immediately asked our guide, who accompanied us throughout our stay in the Soviet Union, to take me to Babi Yar. He appeared shaken by the request, and explained to me that it was impossible to see Babi Yar because we had a full day of meetings the next day, and the following day we would be leaving Kiev. Still not knowing what I was asking for, I continued to press our guide to take me to Babi Yar. He reminded me of the important meeting scheduled with the Minister of

Cults for the Ukraine; it would be an insult to him not to keep the appointment. I then suggested that the rest of the delegation go to the meeting with the Minister and that Rabbi Harold H. Gordon and I go to Babi Yar. Our guide did not like this idea at all. He argued that Babi Yar was quite a distance from the city, that it was not wise to split the delegation, and advanced all kinds of reasons to discourage me from going there. The more he argued against it, the more I was determined to see Babi Yar, although I still did not know what it was that I wanted to see. I told our guide that if he did not want to take us there with one of the cars at our disposal, we would take a taxi and go there ourselves. Faced with this threat the guide consented—albeit most grudgingly—to accompany us next day for a brief visit to Babi Yar.



Oleg Egorov

The next morning we stood before a ravine a hundred yards or so from the Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of Kiev, seeing nothing there to justify our trip. In wonderment we inquired of our guide whether this was indeed Babi Yar. He answered affirmatively. We inquired about the meaning of the site. He said he didn't know, and reminded us that he had warned us the trip would be a waste of our time, that there was obviously nothing here. Suddenly we saw three elderly Jews coming through the cemetery gate. They quickly approached us. One of them said to us, "We would like to request our visiting rabbis to recite the traditional prayer for the departed." Somewhat puzzled by this request, I asked him why we should offer the prayer here and not in the cemetery. He answered, "It is here that the Jews of Kiev—men, women, and children—were

gathered on the eve of the Day of Atonement in the year 1942 and shot to death. The bodies fell below into the ravine on top of which we now stand. The remains of tens of thousands of our brothers and sisters now lie in the ravine." Shocked by this revelation I looked down into the ravine with awe and trembling and noted there was no sign or marker to commemorate this tragic event.

The area was not even fenced in, and one could observe a cow or two wandering onto the grounds. I turned to my guide and asked him: "Alexei, do you think it is right that nothing was done to preserve and mark these grounds consecrated by the blood of thousands of innocent men, women, and children, as a memorial to their martyrdom?" He stood silent, pensive, and did not answer. We then recited the prayer in memory of the martyred dead. I looked at our guide and saw his eyes filled with tears.

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EXCURSUS IV

Richard John Neuhaus on A Shaky Market in Myths

In recent years myths have grown up around China and South Africa that provide for many Americans a near absolute antithesis of good and evil. The contrast has been depicted in a way that is reminiscent of the late 1930's, when the antithesis of good and evil was represented for many by the Soviet Union and Franco's Spain. While the mythologies of the 1930's are now a source of embarrassment to those who bought into them, so in the last few months the myths of China and South Africa have been rudely shaken. For those who deal in moral simplisms these developments must be troubling.

We do not wish to exaggerate the degree to which the China myth has been shaken. There is still a steady flow of three-week tourists returning from well-guided expeditions to proclaim China is the happiest, most "Christian," most civilized, most humane society on earth. Just last month the publisher of the Kansas City-based *National Catholic Reporter* returned to write glowingly of the Peking regime, wondering "why atheistic communism seems to have succeeded where Christianity has failed." (A few years ago the same publisher fired his "radicalized" editor who had been greened when greening was in season. Now it seems that in Kansas City "they've gone about as far as they can go" in catching up with the 1960's.)

Any tendency on our part to exaggerate the change is also restrained by manuscripts received here at the office. One day a few weeks ago the editors received three unsolicited articles from