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At Long Last, a Serious Campaign

by Pierre David

AT LONG LAST, THE RACE FOR THE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL nomination appears — appears — to be picking up. For months, GOP activists and fundraisers have been waiting for someone to come along who stands a chance in a general election against President Obama. Now, a handful of credible (possible) candidates are beginning to hit the hustings: Governors Haley Barbour and Tim Pawlenty, former governor John Huntsman, former governor Mitt Romney and a smattering of other would-be commanders-in-chief who are waiting in the proverbial wings. Mitt Daniels, the governor of Indiana, is also looking increasingly serious about a presidential bid.

All Americans, irrespective of political stripe or voting record, should celebrate this latest development. What is needed in this country now, more than ever, is a serious, wide-ranging, no-holds-barred conversation about the budget — and, by extension, the size of government, the role that government should play in the lives of its citizens, and when the United States should intervene in other countries' affairs.

This conversation has been a long time coming: We've known for many years that the budget could not simply continue

growing while we kept on borrowing. And one suspects that there is a widespread weariness in the country with our many wars, none of which have unfolded the way we were told they would. America, twenty years after emerging victorious in the cold war, must decide what it wants to be and how it will get there. These are deep, philosophical questions, and they do not have easy answers, and it will take a very skilled leader in the years ahead not only to chart a clear and constructive course but to build consensus — to harness the political will of hundreds of millions of Americans from all corners of the country.

Mr. Obama may be the man for that job. Certainly, he polls better than his potential Republican rivals (although that is probably because Americans, for now, know a lot more about the president than his political foes). But this remains far from clear. We have no idea what to expect from the people who are exploring a presidential run. And we have no idea how they will fare on the campaign trail. Most important, we do not know who is best fit to the moment. Presidents are people, after all, and some people, some personalities or ideas or political programs, are better suited to

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The Finkler Question and Its Discontents

by Howard Jacobson

THE *FINKLER QUESTION*, BY HOWARD JACOBSON, WAS published last year (first, in Britain, then in the United States), and it immediately stirred a great deal of controversy, especially in polite company in London.

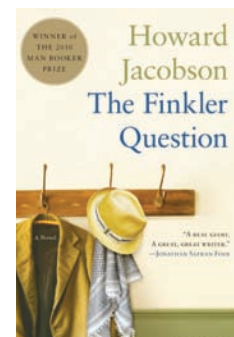
Jacobson's thesis is simple: A powerful and medieval anti-Semitism has gripped Britain's intellectual elite, and it has done a great deal of damage to the public discourse and daily life, and it has even hurt relations between friends and colleagues and long-time associates, at the academy, in the media and publishing houses, in the theater, in the world of politics and law and big business.

Actually, "gripped" is not the right word. "Gripped" implies that this ancient hatred simply appeared spontaneously, out of the blue, that it was not, in fact, ancient and recurring. But that is exactly what it is, according to Jacobson — an ancient hatred that was supposedly extirpated along with the Nazis and the gas chambers that has never really gone away that has reemerged with a vengeance, like a previously low-lying infection that has recently flared up again. His evidence? The ongoing, and irrational, rant against the state of Israel. The ranters, Jacobson argues (through his protagonist, Julian Treslove), offer not a whit of legitimate criticism. (All states are subject to, and should be subject to, criticism. How else to limit the harm they do — to themselves and to others?) What they offer is a thinly veiled faux-argument against the very idea of a Jewish state. Herein lies their anti-Semitism.

It might be helpful to put this argument into an American context. Many Americans, on the left and the right, have plenty of terrible things to say about politicians with whom they disagree. Liberals despise George W. Bush; conservatives believe Barack Obama is the worst president in memory (if not history). But, and this is a critical "but," the vast majority of these people, liberal and conservative, are unwilling to go so far as to say their political foes are illegitimate. Yes, of course, there are those liberals who insist that Bush was "installed" by the Supreme Court (all the judicial arguments and media coverage notwithstanding). And there is that small but pesky element on the far right that insists Obama was not born in the United States (all the facts and documents proving otherwise notwithstanding). Neither camp enjoys much support outside its very small core of believers. Those on the left who questioned Bush's legitimacy found few friends in the Democratic Party establishment. No serious Republican wants anything to do with the "birthers." In other words, Americans are capable of a critical distinction: They can argue and disagree and even disagree with great passion while not depriving those with whom they disagree their authority and their right to exist and their right to give voice to an alternate viewpoint. Indeed, they spar with their rivals with an even greater intensity precisely because they acknowledge these rights.

No such distinction exists in Britain when it comes to Israel. So says Jacobson, whose novel has stoked a powerful debate about what has happened in this country where "opposition to Israeli policy" frequently melds into "hatred of the Jewish state."

Be warned: This is not a novel to be taken lightly. This is not a novel that one mentions in passing at a dinner party or a cocktail party or while sitting on the beach. This is a novel that is funny — Jacobson is known for his keen wit — and very troubling. It is a novel about something that was supposed to have disappeared that has, in fact, never gone away. We might like to believe otherwise. It would be so much easier if we could. Then we could engage in a spirited debate about the war in Gaza or settlements or the latest UN proclamation or Amnesty International report, and we could do this without the tiniest of fears that we were somehow engaging in something hateful. Jacobson would have us believe otherwise. It's hardly the case that Israel is above reproach. (Jacobson has had many bad things to say about Israel over the years.) It's about Britain's failure to be America, to distinguish between criticizing policy and questioning the legitimacy of the policymakers. —PD



"THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE!"

After 25 years of serving as the Medical Director for NAS, I am excited to take on a new role as Director of Education and Training.

In order to dedicate my time to my new expanded administrative role, I will no longer be seeing new patients. I will however continue working with my team of rigorously trained and experienced psychiatrists, I look forward to developing and growing the way we practice workers' compensation within the domain of psychiatry.

Through continuing education conferences, workshops and one-on-one professional development, I will help build and strengthen our approach to psychiatric evaluations; expanding the way our team thinks about psychiatry and helping them build on their knowledge outside of the specialty. Our more holistic view of psychiatry encourages greater learning of non-psychiatric specialties including neurology, orthopedics, internal medicine (cardiology, rheumatology, and infectious disease) and will ensure every NAS physician has the kind of leverage necessary to offer full, reasoned arguments.

Over the years we've developed a unique approach to psychiatric workers' compensation cases, and I believe this transition will ensure that our decades-long commitment to high-quality work will continue into the future. We are excited to share the news about our development and will keep you updated as we invite new doctors onto our team. Our support staff of trained researchers, transcriptionists, and proofreaders will continue their hard work, and I will review all reports to ensure that we are consistently fair, objective, and professional.

Warm Regards,
Irwin Savodnik, M.D., PhD

At Long Last, a Serious Campaign

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particular, political-historical junctures. We have arrived at a very unique, and rather precarious, juncture. What it takes to lead the country out of this quagmire and into a brighter and more productive future remains to be seen.

Preliminarily, we know this much: The country deserves a real debate about real numbers; entitlement programs, long considered off limits, must be part of that debate; the politicians should do their best, hard as this may be (and naïve as it may sound), to behave, well, like adults.

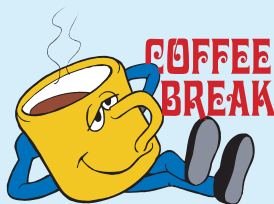
Lest anyone think all this is but a fantasy, they'd best recall the presidential elections that took place in this country during the cold war. For sure, some of the elections that were held between the end of World War II and the collapse of communism, in 1991, were better than others. Richard Nixon, of course, was not above law-breaking, and his 1972 reelection was, in this respect, a travesty. John F. Kennedy did his country no favor by overstating the Soviet threat with his talk of a "missile gap." Lyndon Johnson's blurring of his plans to escalate U.S. involvement in Vietnam, during the 1964 campaign, was dangerously dishonest and probably cost thousands of lives, American and Vietnamese. But what united most of the cold-war campaigns, from Harry Truman's election in 1948 to Ronald Reagan's reelection in 1988, was a sense of sobriety, a sense that what was said and done on the political stage had huge consequences and that these things should be taken seriously and that, in the end, personal ambition must (or should) give way to national interest.

Since 1992, Americans have been electing young men to the highest office in the land, men in their forties and fifties who did not serve in the military, men who had few experiences compared to, say, Truman or Johnson or Reagan or George H. W. Bush. Looks, charm and even celebrity have, at times, eclipsed seriousness and depth. (True, Kennedy had looks and charm and a good bit of celebrity, but he also had a war record.) Slogans and popularity have acquired a significance that would have made an earlier generation of Americans (if not American politicians) just a little bit uncomfortable.

In 2012, we have a great and very serious task — to elect a president. The question is whether the electorate, and the media and the political actors, lives up to the challenge. The times demand it. So, too, does the nation. —PD

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:

- A. is always caused by a physical injury
- B. is an orthopedic diagnosis
- C. is a multi-disciplinary diagnosis
- D. is a psychiatric diagnosis



ANSWER: D
PTSD is often caused by a frightening episode without any physical injury; it does not require an orthopedic injury, nor more than one medical discipline. It is a psychiatric diagnosis.

SUNNIER DAYS IN STORE FOR MAJESTIC INSURANCE?

Majestic Insurance Co. can only hope that April showers bring May flowers.

The San Francisco Superior Court has placed Majestic, whose specialty is workers' compensation insurance, into conservation and California Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones has filed a motion seeking approval for a proposed rehabilitation plan.

According to Jones, Majestic's "financial condition" has been of concern to the state for some time and they have been closely "monitoring the company." While at the end of 2010 Majestic reported a surplus of nearly \$58 million, the state insurance department, in fact, determined the company's total reserve deficiency was more than \$46 million.

While Majestic is headquartered in California, it offered workers compensation insurance coverage to employers across the country, including New York, New Jersey, Arizona, and Nevada.

The rehabilitation plan is intended to protect policyholders and claimants and will ensure that liabilities and certain assets are transferred to AmTrust North America Inc., which will take over responsibility of policyholder claims.

— Sabrina L. Schaeffer

LONG BEACH IS GIDDY FOR GREEN

What do being "green" and "workers' compensation" have to do with each other? Well, nothing exactly. But Long Beach City College has found a way to put the two into the same sentence.

LBCC just completed a five-level, 295,00 square foot, 900-plus space parking structure on its Liberal Arts campus that is topped with a 2,100-panel solar system to power the massive facility and provide partial energy to surrounding buildings.

Now, in addition to being the "greenest" of California's 112 community college campuses, LBCC is also boasting that the project was completed on-time, on-budget, and without a single workers' compensation claim filed. In fact, the overall efficiency and safety of the project has earned it an award from the Statewide Educational Wrap-up Program, which provides insurance to schools and community college districts.

The solar panels, which will produce the amount of energy needed to run two grocery stores, cost nearly \$27 million. What's more, college officials claim the solar panels will pay for themselves over the next 12-15 years. In addition to saving \$110,000 annually on electricity, LBCC will also receive more than \$620,000 in a state-sponsored solar energy rebate.

Now LBCC can add to its list of amenities – solar-powered security lights and elevators, car-counting system – a workers' compensation-free zone!

— Sabrina L. Schaeffer

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INTRODUCING DR. RODRIGO MUNOZ...



Rodrigo Munoz's Colombian heritage adds a new cultural dimension to NAS. He has joined our group and we're proud to have him on board seeing patients in the San Diego area. Dr. Munoz received his MD from the University of Cauca in Popayan, Colombia. Dr. Munoz currently divides his time between Hillcrest Counseling Center, where he serves as Chief of Psychiatry Services, Mercy Hospital and Medical Center, where he is the Medical Director of the Day Treatment Program, and the University of California, San Diego, where he is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry. Additionally, Dr. Munoz has served on the Mexico Border Health Commission.

- San Diego
- QME
- Fluent in Spanish

To read Dr. Munoz's complete bio, please visit our website at www.savodnik.com/our-doctors