Terror and the Loss of Citizenship

Terror in the name of God and the specter of returning fighters for the so-called “Islamic State” have recently moved some Western states, including Britain and Canada, to revoke the citizenship of terrorists. To critics, this constitutes a “return to banishment”, a “fate universally decried by civilized people”, as an American Supreme Court Chief Justice put it over 50 years ago. In a double reflection on the changing nature of terror and citizenship, this lecture defends denationalization as, in principle, the adequate response to terror, which is no ordinary crime but attack on the fundamentals of citizenship. But what is right in principle may not be the prudent thing to do, because denationalization raises serious practicality problems.

Tuesday, 20 January at 6.00 p.m.

Monument Building Popper Room

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