

The New Criterion

Notes & Comments

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Libel tourism

On "Free Speech in an Age of Jihad," the conference hosted by *The New Criterion* and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

Last month, *The New Criterion* and the Washington-based Foundation for the Defense of Democracies hosted a conference in New York on "Free Speech in an Age of Jihad." Many who have commented on the event characterized it as a conference about "libel tourism," the practice of jihadists to use and abuse libel laws to muzzle criticism. But as several participants in the conference made clear, libel tourism is but one weapon in the multifarious armory of militant Islam. The unhappy truth is that the threat to civilization in the West comes not only from our enemies but also from within. This was a theme that Mark Steyn developed with his characteristic blend of humor and admonitory insight in his luncheon talk, "The Dimming of Liberty: Legal Jihad and the Criminalization of Resistance." Steyn's talk ranged widely, but its central message, he noted, was summed up by the historian Arnold Toynbee. Most civiliza ...

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