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- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [World](#)
- [Sport](#)
- [Finance](#)
- [Comment](#)
- [Culture](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Life](#)
- [Women](#)
- [Fashion](#)
- [Luxury](#)
- [Tech](#)
- [Cars](#)
  
- [Dating](#)
- [Offers](#)
  
- [Politics](#)
- [Investigations](#)
- [Obits](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Earth](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Defence](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Royal](#)
- [Celebrities](#)
- [Weird](#)

[Blogs Home](#) » [News](#) » [Politics](#) » [Daniel Hannan](#)

## [Daniel Hannan](#)

**Daniel Hannan is the author of 'How we Invented Freedom' (published in the US and Canada as 'Inventing Freedom: how the English-Speaking Peoples Made the Modern World'). He speaks French and Spanish and loves Europe, but believes the EU is making its peoples poorer, less democratic and less free.**

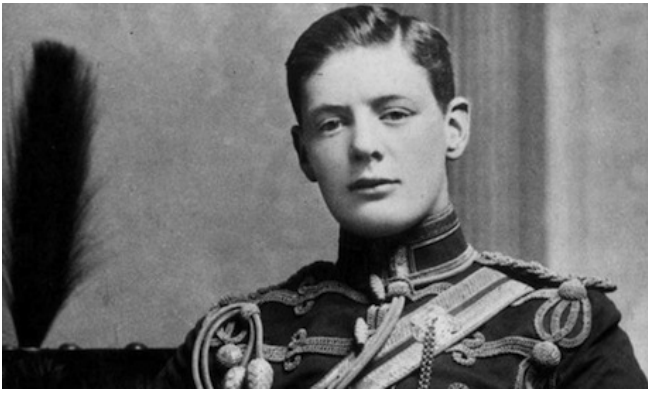
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# Britain has just witnessed a political arrest. Where is the liberal outrage?

By [Daniel Hannan](#) [Politics](#) Last updated: April 29th, 2014

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Churchill was rude about Muslims when in his early twenties

Over the weekend, a candidate was arrested for addressing his potential voters. Clear aside the incidental details, scrape away the mitigating circumstances, and ponder that elemental fact. Paul Weston, standing for election to the European Parliament (against me, as it happens, in the South East) was [arrested in the middle of a speech](#) on the steps of the Winchester Guildhall.

When such a thing happens in Burma or Belarus or Bahrain, we report it in suitably shocked tones. Yet here it is happening in Britain, without any discussions on the Today Programme, any Amnesty vigils, any complaints from Liberty. To repeat, *a candidate was arrested for making a hustings speech*.

It is perfectly true that the candidate was attempting to provoke. He almost certainly set out with the intention of getting himself in trouble, thereby publicising his message and winning sympathy votes. He was quoting, through a megaphone, a passage written by the young Winston Churchill 1899, which says disobliging things about Muslims. Sure enough, as Weston must have been hoping, the few headlines there have been have focused on this aspect of the story: "Man Arrested for Quoting Winston Churchill".

This isn't about the provenance of the speech, though. Churchill's words are not Holy Writ. He was a an extremely prolific author, and was just as capable of writing bilge as anyone else. Nor is it about whether you agree with Weston. A few people do – many of them seem to troll this blog from their mother's basements – but, as I hope we shall see on polling day, their numbers are negligible.

Nor yet is it about the propriety of Weston's behaviour. Most British people are diffident when it comes to discussing religion, and consider insulting an entire faith the height of loudness. Weston likes to pose as a defender of British values; but religious pluralism is one of those values as, frankly, is courtesy.

None of this, though, is relevant. In a free society, we tolerate eccentricity up to the point of madness, boorishness up to the point of intimidation, obnoxiousness up to the point of incitement. While Weston's behaviour was narcissistic, there is no evidence that he was inciting violence.

Why should it fall to me to defend him? Where are the lion-hearted liberals who are so quick to denounce political arrests in distant dictatorships? I realise that "political arrest" is a strong phrase, but it's hard to think of any other way to describe a candidate for public office being taken into police custody because of objections to the content of his pitch.

This is not the first time that the police have invented a right not to be offended, and chosen to elevate it over the basic freedoms we used to take for granted. I often wonder, as a Hampshire ratepayer, whether my local constabulary might not spend less time on politics and more on catching criminals (it hit a low point over Christmas when it chose to investigate for racism the man who had put up [this sign](#)).

The point of having elected Police Commissioners is to bring the priorities of local coppers into line with those of the community they serve. I can't see any reaction from the Hampshire and Wight Commissioner, Simon Hayes, to this case, though I've asked him via Twitter. You might like to [ask him yourself](#).

**Tags:** [arrested](#), [European election](#), [Islamophobia](#), [Liberty GB](#), [Paul Weston](#), [racism](#), [Winston Churchill](#)

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**sarahoo** → Intercontinental · 33 minutes ago  
Perhaps we can start self help groups

RA = Racists anonymous  
1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

**Intercontinental** → sarahoo · 30 minutes ago  
Let's see how long it lasts before it's removed.  
It was up before and has gone along with some comments including mine.  
^ | v · Reply · Share >

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**Fabian Solutions** → gov't · an hour ago  
"race-replacement".

He was talking about Muslims. Islam isn't a race.  
2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

**Intercontinental** → Fabian Solutions · 41 minutes ago  
Rubbish. He repeatedly calls Islam an ideology and a politically driven ideology.  
So add liar to your title, abluations.  
1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

**DJPainless** · 4 hours ago  
We haven't had free speech in this country for a long time, especially if the topic is Islam  
271 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

**James Lovelace** → DJPainless · 3 hours ago  
I wish these "journalists" would try to keep up with some rather significant historical events

- 2002 - Pim Fortuyn, assassinated by a socialist (first political assassination in Holland in 350 years), over his criticism of islam
- 2004 - Theo van Gogh, assassinated by a devout muslim for making a film about islam
- 2005 - Labour Party try to make any criticism of islam illegal (on the back of the 7/7 bombing, no less).
- 2007 - 90 year old socialist man-handled at Labour Party conference, for protesting about Iraq war
- 2010 - assassination attempt on Stephen Timms MP, by a female student of The Religion of Peace (expected to get 1st class honours from London University)
- 2010 - muslims riot in Tower Hamlets (total media blackout)
- 2011 - EDL demo banned from entering Tower Hamlets
- 2012 - devout muslims (using guns, bombs, machetes) attempt to kill protesters at a lawful EDL demonstration
- 2013 - EDL demo banned from entering Tower Hamlets

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**Austin Barry** → James Lovelace · 3 hours ago  
Plaudits are due to this paper's columnist Andrew Gilligan who is one of the few journalists to bravely address, without hackneyed deferential modifiers and hesitancies, the malignities of Islam.

You do get the impression though that his freedom to write about the topic will gradually be extinguished by our ruling elites