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<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/08/23/war-the-islamic-state-and-western-politicians-against-the-rest-of-us/print/>

## War: The Islamic State and Western Politicians Against the Rest of Us

By Thomas Knapp

August 23, 2016

On July 28, London's Central Criminal Court of England and Wales, aka "the Old Bailey," announced the conviction of Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary on charges of "inviting support for a proscribed organization" (the Islamic State). He'll be sentenced, likely to a long stint in prison, in September.

On August 18, social networking service Twitter announced that it has suspended 360,000 user accounts since mid-2015 — 235,000 of them just since February — for "promoting extremism." While Twitter is theoretically a private sector entity, the New York Times reports that the company's actions are motivated by "intensifying pressure on Twitter and other technology companies from the White House, presidential candidates like Hillary Clinton and government agencies."

The United Kingdom is back in the business of holding political prisoners on a scale not seen since before the 1997 ceasefire in occupied ... er, “Northern” ... Ireland, and American social networks are handing the US government de facto power to censor Internet communications. What could possibly go wrong?

It’s easy to look the other way and whistle when the roundups target people like Choudary and the censorship is aimed at a particular variety of “extremism” enjoying little support in the UK or the US apart from small groups within insular communities.

First they came for the Islamists ...

It’s easy not to notice that the terrorists who “hate us for our freedoms” chalk up a win each time those freedoms are diminished, openly or surreptitiously, in the name of fighting terrorism.

It became necessary to destroy the Constitution in order to save it ...

We are told the west is at war. That much is true. But the central front in that war isn’t Iraq or Syria or Libya, nor is the enemy the Islamic State. “Daesh” is a gnat in a hurricane, empowered solely by western forces toppling secular regimes and creating power vacuums in which it can set up shop.

The real central front is the west itself and the real enemy is the western governments transforming themselves into totalitarian regimes before our eyes.

Every time an Anjem Choudary is imprisoned, or a Twitter account is shut down for “extremism,” or a beachfront town in France bans “burkinis,” the west looks less like the cradle of the Enlightenment and more like the Soviet Union circa 1937 or Germany circa 1939.

The best weapon against bad ideas is better ideas, not censorship and political imprisonment. Don’t let London or Washington wrest that weapon from us.