

UK Election: Journalists as State Functionaries

By [Craig Murray](#)

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There was a brief moment of truth on Sky News this morning (9th May), where there was a brief discussion of disquiet among journalists that Theresa May will only take questions that have been pre-vetted and selected in advance by the Tory Party. The Sky reporter even gave the detail that the journalists are not allowed to hold the microphone, which is controlled by a Tory Party functionary so it can be switched off if the journalist strays from the script.

This has been the case right from the start, something I highlighted a few days ago.



Craig Murray  @CraigMurrayOrg · May 3

Theresa May goes to Buck House for dissolution. Will Queen have to submit questions to PM in advance for vetting like our servile media?



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But the overall treatment on Sky was that this was not really important, and was simply a matter of ensuring “fairness” in distributing questions between journalists.

This is a desperate situation. I do not know any genuine democracy in the world which would accept this. I have just spent two months in Ghana, where there would be a commendable roar of outrage if the President tried to limit what questions can be asked of him – and he would never dream of doing so. Nowhere in the European Union, not even in authoritarian Hungary, are journalists’ questions pre-vetted.

The idea that the head of the government both gets to choose what they have asked, and gets advance warning of every question so they can look sharp with their answer, is totally antithetical to every notion of democratic accountability. If we had anything approaching a genuine free media, there would be absolute outrage. All genuine media organisations would react by boycotting such events and simply refusing to cover them at all.

The media know perfectly well that the reason May needs protection from difficult questions – and even advance notice of soft ones – is that she is hopeless. Her refusal to debate Corbyn and her car crash interview with Marr illustrate that. But our servile media cover up for her by colluding in entirely fake events.

I learn from a BBC source that in the special Question Time the BBC have organised for May in lieu of a debate, questioners will be selected in advance and May will see the questions in time to prepare.

My observation that the Conservative platform is in its essentials identical to the BNP manifesto of 2005 has received widespread social media coverage. I simply cannot conceive that the UK can have become so right wing. Now add to that, it has become so authoritarian there is no reaction to advance vetting of journalists questions – something Vladimir Putin does not do. And very few people seem to care.

I understand that Theresa May has succeeded in going so far to the right she hoovers up all of UKIP votes. In some ways she has gone further to the right than UKIP ever did. For all his faults, Nigel Farage would be quite genuinely horrified at the idea of pre-vetting of which questions from journalists are permitted. The thing I do not understand, is that it appears that there is no lurch too far into right-wing authoritarianism which causes more liberal conservatives to desert.

I suspect many are deluding themselves she has the ability to control the far right forces to which her every word and action pander. They delude themselves. Firstly, May really is that right wing and illiberal. Secondly it has gone beyond control. Douglas Murray of the Henry Jackson Society has a major article in The Sun today in which he forecasts violence (“deeds not words”) by “the people” if immigration specifically from Muslim countries is not curtailed. He does not state what form precisely these deeds not words by the people would take, but it is hard to see anything he can mean except violence against Muslims. People like Murray are now the mainstream Conservatives.

Craig Murray is an author, broadcaster and human rights activist. He was also British Ambassador to Uzbekistan. Visit his books page [HERE](#).

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