



Britain's New Authoritarian PM Theresa May Bans Ministers Talking To The Media

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The BBC's rather charming piece entitled "[Who is Theresa May: A profile](#)" sets out a life reminiscent of Margaret Thatcher, from her early days as a schoolchild to the ascension to the most powerful job in Britain. It's a piece littered with affection and sentiment, typical of a state broadcaster.

"An early advocate of Conservative "modernisation" in the wilderness years that followed, Mrs May quickly joined the shadow cabinet in 1999 under William Hague as shadow education secretary and in 2002 she became the party's first female chairman under Iain Duncan Smith. She then held a range of senior posts under Michael Howard but was conspicuously not part of the "Notting Hill set" which grabbed control of the party after its third successive defeat in 2005 and laid David Cameron and George Osborne's path to power."

The BBC continues with an almost evangelical hysteria, crowing that May "has pledged a shake-up of boardroom ethics as part of which workers will be guaranteed representation on company boards while shareholders votes on executive pay deals will be made binding every year." I'll eat my cat if ever that happens!

Even worse, the BBC story went as far as to make direct comparisons with Thatcher, mentioning; "Former Conservative chancellor Ken Clarke also had run-ins with her and was recorded on camera ahead of an interview last week saying that Mrs May was good at her job but a "bloody difficult woman" - before adding as an aside, a bit like Mrs Thatcher. A reference to be Conservative leader can hardly come better than that."

Having depicted Theresa May as a tough, good sort, with traditional English stiff upper lip values and a sense of social justice, one could be forgiven for forgetting that she has forced through some of the most oppressive laws Britain has seen since the start of World War Two in what many see as the start of an authoritarian leadership style bordering on dictatorship.

OpenRightsGroup says -"This is the fifth time a Government has tried to bring in the Snoopers' Charter. The Home Office wants to give the police and intelligence services even more powers"

The Snoopers Charter or Investigatory Powers Bill should alarm us all as government agencies will very soon have the ability to not just listen into devices but interfere with them at will - it's an extension of intrusive state power under the rather bland heading of "equipment interference". Described as a '[machiavellian masterpiece](#)' it authorises the

state to hack our devices, deliver viruses, malware and destructive trojan's at will. Nothing has been said of the damage that will be caused to our personal devices and equipment, creating openings for hackers to steal financial and personal data, or the fact that most of these hacks and interventions are designed by private companies and sold to the government.

Then there's all the other stuff Theresa May has forced through such as; The censoring of over 1,000 pages of information on the internet each week, introduced secret courts, proposed the scrapping of the Human Rights Act, classified non-violent activism as terrorism, allowed ministers and government agencies to veto Freedom of Information requests, condoned the arrest of journalists under the anti-terrorism act, forced schools to hand over private pupil information and even threatened a 7 year-old with deportation. [Tom Pride](#)'s excellent piece provides all the links for the above and quite rightly states that "Britain is fast becoming a civil liberty free zone."

Even The Telegraph, a rampant right-wing neoliberal Tory supporting daily headlined with "[Theresa May's repulsive threat to EU citizens could make the Tories toxic again](#)"

And as our new prime Minister gets her knees under the table at No10, would it come as a surprise to learn that her authoritarian style has actually ordered a clampdown on her own ministers speaking, or even making contact with journalists without gaining explicit prior permission from her office.

The Guardian likens it to 'control freakery' as they make light of the alarming characteristics of limiting traditional press freedom enjoyed in the UK for a very long time. An outright ban has even been put on ministers having informal lunches, dinners, or a chat over coffee with friendly and trusted journalists. There are to be no interviews on the radio and definitely none on television. All such activities have to be pre-approved from here on in. No10 has press chiefs and special advisors for every department of government to ensure strict adherence.

A text or off-the-cuff comment made to long established, dependable and loyal journalists could be fatal to a career. Ministers are already reporting there is an uncomfortable level of interference coming directly from Theresa May's office, but these are the new rules for ministers and that's that.

Theresa May has form. At the Home Office she effectively turned her department into what amounted to a baronial fiefdom that was inaccessible to instruction or even direction from No 10. And this authoritarian style will clearly be a mark of her leadership going forward.

The Observer reported that "three government ministers separately told the Observer that they found the level of control alarming, and that they believed it had been introduced to ensure the government spoke with one mind and consistently on all policy matters. One said: "Any media bid now has to be approved, any quote has to be approved, even if it is with a local television or a radio station on a local issue. It is very frustrating and there is a lot of irritation. It means nothing can be done spontaneously even if it is on subjects that are entirely uncontroversial and show the minister and government in a good light."

There is apparently an enormous backlog of media requests for access to ministers, frustrating journalists waiting for approvals whilst stories move on.

A healthy relationship between the media and politicians is not just key, but is a basic

foundation stone of democracy and the press were getting agitated months ago, hence headlines such as;

Vice: [Meet Theresa May, Britain's Blandly Authoritarian New Prime Minister](#)

TechDirt: [Theresa May Tries To Out-Orwell Orwell](#)

politics.co.uk: [Theresa May: Something wicked this way comes](#)

Buzzfeed News: [Civil Liberties Groups Are Anxious About Theresa May](#)



The Telegraph were forced by Theresa May's office to pull an article they thought was not conducive to her position as Prime Minister

If you weren't convinced of Theresa May's ability to be openly dictatorial, you only have to look at what happened to The Telegraph when they headlined "[Theresa May is a great self-promoter, but a terrible Home Secretary](#)" A demand by May's team was promptly sent to pull that piece in what amounts to a curtailment of free speech of the press - and the order was just as quickly complied with. Guido-Fawkes pulls no punches (as usual) on explaining the situation and published the entire text should you be inquisitive - [HERE](#)

The Telegraph piece paints an entirely different picture of our latest Prime Minister, who, quite incisively says is a "secretive, rigid, controlling, even vengeful minister, so unpleasant to colleagues that a dread of meetings with her was something that cabinet members from both parties could bond over." The piece went on to say "Unsurprisingly, Mrs May's overwhelming concern with taking credit and deflecting blame made for a difficult working relationship with her department, just as her propensity for briefing the press against cabinet colleagues made her its most disliked member in two successive governments."

Well, if anyone should know about Theresa May, The Telegraph will!

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