

The Loss of Conservative Leaders

My years in the Conservative party have seen several leaders destroy themselves politically through a fanatical commitment to the EU. The odd thing is they have adopted this stance when it has annoyed many members of the party and evoked strong opposition from some Conservative MPs. Worse it has done considerable damage to the country and its economy, leading to a loss of confidence by voters generally.

John Major destroyed his leadership by insisting on crippling the UK economy by putting us into the European Exchange rate mechanism. The resulting boom bust undermined the Conservative reputation for economic competence and put the party out of office for 23 years.

William Hague refused to take us out of the pro federal EU grouping of the EPP which annoyed supporters and added to his tribulations. His slogan of in Europe but not run by it was not convincing as it was not backed by a policy to get powers back. He won back just one seat in 2001 after the disastrous result in 1997.

David Cameron argued on the wrong side in the referendum and lost, destroying his Premiership. He could have stayed neutral or backed Leave and led us out in good order after the result. I never understood why he thought Remain would win or why he let them run such a nasty and negative campaign.

Mrs May appointed advisers who clearly wanted to recreate many of the features of our membership of the EU despite the vote to Leave. Her obstinate commitment to an unacceptable lock back in Treaty which the public has decisively rejected has led to the breakdown of her authority. Cabinet members campaigning to become leader need to now create the vacancy they crave by telling her she cannot continue. She will be the third PM victim of trusting the EU too much in ways which lose the trust of the UK people.