

Winning elections

Conservative briefers are saying the party needs to be united to win the election. I have good news for them. Parties with plenty of internal rows and disagreements always win, as the two main parties who usually win always have MPs who disagree with the leadership. Today's Labour party is badly split over Israel and the Middle East, over a faster move to net zero and over Rachel Reeves OBR austerity economics but that has not stopped them doing well in opinion polls.

In the last 50 years there have been two leaders who have won three elections in a row, a remarkable achievement. Margaret Thatcher did so despite facing continuous opposition from a significant group of MPs called the Wets. They regularly briefed disobliging comments about her personally as well as attacking her policies. They rebelled in Parliament on various measures. They put up a stalking horse candidate against her for leadership. They backed Heseltine as a replacement. He resigned from government to promote himself. She kept winning because she set out and enacted a clear vision of UK revival, economic growth and wider ownership.

Tony Blair kept winning despite facing many media stories of his Chancellor's disagreements and briefings from pro Brown people that wanted the Chancellor to take over. He had to deal with a left wing group of MPs who thought he was not nearly socialist enough. He persevered with the low tax rates the Conservatives left him and avoided recession. Eventually he was persuaded out before his Chancellor's policies put us into a banking crash and deep recession.

If an election were a contest of who is the more united party Labour would be discovered as very split. The truth is millions of former Conservative voters are undecided or currently saying they may stay at home or spoil their ballot paper or vote for someone who cannot win. They do not want a Labour government and see that Labour government would double up on those very policies of this government that they do not like.

To win the Conservative leadership needs to do more things this group likes and voted for. Start with getting migration well down as now promised and cut back the woke state to free money for more tax cuts. Let people make more of their own choices. Champion the big Conservative success of halving unemployment and allowing so much job growth.