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If the Prime Minister doesnâ€™t stand up for democracy, many Tories will judge that he is not worth supporting.

By Norman Tebbit | The Telegraph Blogs

Half a century ago â€” having spent half my life outside Britain, working for a global business alongside colleagues of many nations â€” I eagerly accepted the idea that the best way to solve the problems of the fractious continent of Europe was via the creation of a supranational state. All my experience since then has brought me, gradually and reluctantly, to realise that I was wrong.

What tested my belief in Europe to destruction was my time in government. It is a sensation that should be familiar to David Cameron from his own short time in office â€” not to mention the experience of his recent Conservative predecessors. It was, after all, the European issue that brought down Margaret Thatcher. Contrary to the myth, she was no extreme â€œLittle Englanderâ€•, but a balanced and cautious advocate of the British national interest. Her famous â€œNo, No, Noâ€• was not a petulant reiteration: it was a rejection of each of the three proposals by Jacques Delors that would convert the European Economic Community into a sovereign state called the European Union. From that moment, the Europhile lobby was determined she should go, using Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine as their political hitmen.

Poor John Major was easier meat. My hopes of him were dashed when he told me that the Maastricht commitment to a single currency would not be a matter of principle, but just a practical matter of being in or out â€” a practical matter that shattered his party and government, and lost him the votes of 4.5 million of the 14.1 million electors who had endorsed him in 1992.

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