

# Tory Tyranny

The Conservative Party HQ has written to local associations warning them not to step out of line on the EU referendum. Well aware that the predominantly pro-withdrawal Tory rank and file are not going to swallow Cameron's renegotiation package, it has banned them from using any party resources on campaigning to leave:

"The Party Board has decided that Party resources, which includes any buildings, equipment, or finances, must not be available to either campaign or any third party participants in the campaign" says the letter. Association employees are only allowed to campaign "in their own spare time", while "Staff who wish to get more fully involved in the campaign must request unpaid leave of absence".

The draconian rules also state that anyone who expresses an opinion can't do so as a Tory: "Individual members of the Party may of course take part in the forthcoming campaign on any side they wish, but they may only do so as individuals and must not suggest that they are representing the Party nor must they make use of any party resource to which they have access."

There is also a ban on associations holding any public meetings to discuss the referendum. Any discussions must be done in private: "Associations may wish to hold meetings of members about the Referendum to which both sides of the argument should be put. They may not, however, hold public meetings."

So Tory "Outers" are theoretically banned by "President Cameron" from talking about Europe in public meetings, banned from using their offices or office computers to campaign, and have to make clear at all times that they are speaking as individuals and never as Tories.

You can bet the email went down like a lead balloon in many Associations across the country last week! However, Cameron and his friends in Conservative Central office are not the Tory party, even if he currently has the honour to lead it. How Peter Osborne can consider such a man to have the makings of a “truly great Prime Minister” is a mystery to anyone who has followed his behaviour in respect to the referendum in recent weeks. With his combination of pig-ignorance and sheer wilful deceit, he risks leaving as a legacy a degree of loathing matched by that shown to only one other Conservative Prime Minister – Edward Heath.