**PRESS RELEASE**

**IMMEDIATE 16.01.2019**

**FORGING A CONSENSUS**

Brexit is not binary. And “when there are more than two [options],”

the Borda and Condorcet rules “are the two best interpretations of ‘majority rule’.”

Iain McLean, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*, 2003, p 139.

One of the lessons from Weimar is what the Germans call “the constructive vote of no confidence.” An ‘option ***A***, yes-or-no?’ question is inadequate; the format has to be ‘option ***A*** or option ***B***?’ Better still would be a multi-option vote.

One of the lessons from Brexit is that, when the topic is indeed not binary, you cannot best identify the will of the people (2016) or the will of parliament (2019) in a binary vote, or even a series of binary votes.\* If the debate is multi-optional, the ballot should also be multi-optional.

In seeking to “forge a consensus” – in other words, in trying to identify the option with the highest average preference – we need a multi-option, preferential vote. Let every relevant option be ‘on the table’; let an independent authority draw up a (short) list of about 4-6 options; and then let the MPs and/or the voters cast their preferences.

So, in a five-option ballot:

* he who abstains has no influence on the result;
* she who casts one preference has a partial influence: she gives her favourite 1 point;
* he who casts two preferences gives his favourite 2 points (and his 2nd choice 1 point);

and so on;

* so she who casts all five preferences has a full influence: she gives her favourite 5 points, (her 2nd or best compromise 4 points, her 3rd choice 3, etc.).

The option with the most points best represents the consensus, the collective will.

\* In 2003, the Lords took a series of majority votes on Lords reform, and lost the lot!

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