**PRESS RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 0001 on 4th May, 2019, his birthday.**

**JEAN-CHARLES DE BORDA, “*Capitaine et Savant,”* 4.5.1733 – 19.2.1799,**

**versus the world’s first ‘DEMOCRATIC DICTATOR’.**

***Imagine***, if the 2011 referendum on the UK’s electoral system had been a multi-option ‘preferendum’ on five options – as was the 1992 New Zealand vote on their electoral system: FPTP, PR-STV and three in the middle – the UK like NZ would probably now have PR; (NZ has ½ FPTP and ½ PR-list).

***So imagine***, the 2015 elections would have been fairer, with fewer Tories and fewer DUP (and SF), but more Greens, Lib-Dems and UKIP. So no Tory majority. So a coalition government, probably not with UKIP (the Tories’ main rival) but with the Lib-Dems again.

***So imagine***, no Brexit referendum, at all! Or, if there had been such a ballot…

***… imagine*** a multi-option referendum on, say, three options – “The UK in the EU, the EEA or the WTO?” – like the three-option poll Westminster ‘gave’ to Newfoundland in 1948. On possibly 48% again, ‘remain’ could have won! At the very least, a debate on the various options – customs union etc. – could have taken place *before* the vote!

***So imagine***, if our 2011 and 2016 referendums had catered for pluralism, like the world’s first multi-option referendum in 1894 in NZ, Finland’s in 1931, Uruguay’s of 1958, Australia’s 1977…

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Not unlike Ramón Llull (‘Spain’) in 1199 and Nicholas Cusanus (‘Germany’) in 1435, in 1770 Jean-Charles de Borda (France) invented the Modified Borda Count, MBC. It was presented to *l’Académie des Sciences* in 1784, just five years before the French Revolution, and adopted in 1796.

Napoléon Bonaparte, however, didn’t like this ‘consensus stuff’ and in 1804, *l’Académie* (bynow re-named *l’Institut Français),* reverted to majority voting. France then had a third binary referendum and thus Napoléon became Emperor, the world’s first ‘democratic dictator’. Mussolini, Hitler, Duvalier, Gaddafi… and the rest is history, which continues to repeat itself.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

MPs with their ‘indicative (sic) and other (sick) votes’ in parliament, and the Electoral Commission with its binary referendums, along with rulers like Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, also believe in majority voting. It suits them: they choose the question; and – well, usually – the question is the answer. Alas, both Westminster and the otherwise meticulously independent EC have consistently refused to consider the practicality and accuracy of multi-option, preferential voting.

***BUT NOW, JUST IMAGINE***, a Brexit solution: not a second binary, but a preferential referendum with say five options, i.e., something for (almost) everybody. *Joyeux Anniversaire*, Jean-Charles!

Peter Emerson, (not as was de Borda, an ex-naval captain, only a retired first lieutenant submariner).

Director, the de Borda Institute

36 Ballysillan Road, Belfast BT14 7QQ

[www.deborda.org](http://www.deborda.org/)

pemerson@deborda.org

07837717979

02890711795