**PRESS RELEASE**

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**(INDICATIVE) BINARY VOTES ARE ORWELLIAN**

In 2003, the late Robin Cook tried to persuade the House to adopt preference voting, in vain, for “this would have required the technological development of a pencil and a piece of paper,” he said, “far too big a step for our parliament and its medieval procedures.”

His efforts were prompted by a series of majority votes (on Lords reform) – which Lord Desai had warned would be “daft,” (*Hansard*, 22.1.2003). They were indeed inconclusive.

So, Brexit. At least, and at last, the House is now to have a paper vote. (What about an e-vote?) But the proposed indicative vote is not preferential. It is still a number of majority votes. So it is still binary, it is still “daft.”

Binary voting is Orwelllian: ‘this’ option good, ‘that/those’ option(s) bad. In a six-option indicative vote on options ***A, B, C, D, E*** and ***F***, if those who vote ‘yes’ to their 1st preference, say, option ***E*** also vote ‘yes’ for their 2nd preference option ***C***, they will reduce the chances of their favourite, ***E***. So they probably vote ‘yes’ for ***E*** only, and ‘no’ to ***C*** and to all the others. As if in their opinion, all the options which are not ***E*** are all equally bad. Which cannot be true. So the individual votes are not accurate representations of those MPs’ opinions; so the analysis of those votes, the collective will of all the MPs will also be inaccurate. Binary voting in an indicative vote in a multi-option debate is, yes, “daft.”

A preferential points system is needed. MPs cast their preferences for as many options as they wish. Their 2nd preferences need not detract from their 1st preferences. Those who cast four preferences give these options 4-3-2-1 points; those who vote for just one give their favourite 1 point; and those who cast all six preferences exercise 6-5-4-3-2-1 points. The difference is always 1 point. And, as Jean-Charles de Borda said of his invention, it “is only for honest” voters.

“When there are more than two” options, a ranking system is “the best interpretation of majority rule,” (*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*, Iain McLean, 2003, p 139).

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