

Fall of the French government: The ruling class seeks dictatorship

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Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu offered President Emmanuel Macron his resignation yesterday, making his 26-day government the shortest since the founding of France's Fifth Republic in 1958.

While Lecornu was unpopular, falling to 15 percent in the polls in just a few weeks, his resignation reflects not a revitalization but a mortal crisis of French democracy. It cannot be understood apart from the martial law and civil war policies pursued across the Atlantic by the Trump administration, which is illegally sending troops into major US cities with authorization to use deadly force. In each country, the world crisis is driving the capitalist oligarchy towards dictatorship.

Lecornu, France's fifth prime minister in two years, has not resigned because the rival capitalist parties in the National Assembly have irreconcilable policy differences. They are united on rejecting tax increases for the capitalist oligarchy and instead imposing austerity to repay an unsustainable €3.4 trillion sovereign debt, raise military spending, and strengthen the police-state machine. The capitalist oligarchy, aware that these policies face overwhelming popular opposition, is moving to install a far-right regime.

In Macron's administration, a bitter struggle is unfolding between those trying to recruit factions of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's New Popular Front (NFP) to an ultra-reactionary government led by Macron, and those prepared to form a government directly with the neo-fascist National Rally (RN). Either regime would seek to violently repress mass opposition to its policies.

Lecornu resigned after outgoing Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau, a leader of The Republicans (LR) whose positions are close to the far-right RN, threatened to censure Lecornu in the National Assembly. Retailleau denounced Lecornu's nomination as defense minister of former finance minister Bruno Le Maire, whom Retailleau blames for not resolving the debt crisis with

sufficiently harsh austerity.

Last year, Lecornu and another former prime minister of Macron, Edouard Philippe, held talks with RN leaders Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella on forming an RN government under Macron. These plans were blocked, however, by the election victory of the NFP, which finished first in the July 2024 legislative elections. Now, RN officials are calling for a new dissolution of the National Assembly, aiming to strengthen their position and play a role in the next government.

Le Pen called on Macron to resolve a "crisis of rule," saying he "has two possible ways forward: either resignation, or dissolution." She added that the RN is not demanding Macron's resignation but that it views a dissolution of the Assembly as "unavoidable." Her niece, Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, called for a "union of the right" in upcoming elections.

As for Mélenchon, he first proposed a meeting of all the parties of the NFP—his own populist France Unbowed (LFI) party, the bourgeois Socialist Party (PS), the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF) and the Greens. He urged them all to "consider all the possibilities opened up by this situation."

In a press conference, he called for the impeachment of Macron and the reform of the institutions of the Fifth Republic. Mélenchon blamed the crisis on "the dead end in which the Fifth Republic inevitably plunges when the legitimacy of the presidential and legislative elections conflict." Proposing to "address the heart of the problem, the president of the Republic and his legitimacy," he called for support to LFI's impeachment motion against Macron in the Assembly.

However, first the PS, then the Greens and finally the PCF all indicated that they refused to meet Mélenchon and claimed they were ready to serve as "left" ministers under Macron. Green leader Marine Tondelier applauded Mélenchon's policy of "unity", but said that a meeting

with LFI “will not happen.” She said there were not two but three options, “the resignation of Emmanuel Macron, a dissolution of parliament, and cohabitation” of a PS-PCF-Green-led government with Macron.

In a sign of the crisis at the top of the government, Macron was filmed by TV cameras taking an unprecedented solitary walk through central Paris as he tried to decide what to do. Last night, he demanded that Lecornu stay on at least until Wednesday to continue government talks. The Elysée presidential palace told AFP that Macron would “face his responsibilities” if these talks failed, and call new legislative elections.

It appears Macron has, for now, opted for a last-ditch attempt to assemble a government coalition based on the PS, PCF and Greens, parties linked to Macron, and factions of LR. There is also substantial opposition to Macron’s latest shift among nominally pro-Macron parties: Edouard Philippe went on morning television today to call for Macron’s resignation and new presidential and legislative elections.

A number of the parties involved are signaling, however, that they will try to work out a deal with Macron. Retailleau has declared that he is “not in the opposition,” signaling his potential readiness to back such a deal. Today, the Green party announced that it would host discussions “including LFI, with Clémentine Autain and representatives of François Ruffin” of a potential cohabitation under Macron.

Such meetings expose the bankruptcy of Mélenchon’s NFP. LFI built the NFP with discredited parties of capitalist government like the PS. Then, claiming only an alliance with Macron could keep the RN from taking power, Mélenchon endorsed Macron’s candidates in the 2024 legislative elections. He played a central role in building the government that is now collapsing, systematically refusing to make any appeal to mobilize the 8 million people who voted for him in the 2022 presidential elections.

The working class cannot base its policy on the calculations of such bankrupt parties. With its proposal of €100 billion in austerity measures, the RN has made clear that, should the ruling class entrust it with power, it would pursue a policy of mass impoverishment requiring a fascistic dictatorship. A PS-led government under Macron, whether or not it included LFI, would also rule against the people using violent repression.

The last time the PS was in power, under François Hollande in 2012-2017, it ruled via a state of emergency, suspending democratic rights and brutally repressing mass

protests against its labor law. This law, finally rammed through in its entirety by Macron, set into motion Macron’s current raft of pension cuts. While the PS mouths a few phrases about taxing the rich, a PS-led government would impose the diktat of the banks, which responded to the fall of Lecornu by intensifying speculation against French debt.

The *Parti de l’égalité socialiste* reiterates its call to prepare in the working class a general strike to bring down Macron. As mass protests erupt across Europe and internationally against the Gaza genocide, and Trump goes to war on the American people, explosive international struggles are being prepared. Macron’s regime must be brought down in the course of an international offensive of the working class, not via reactionary intrigues of cabals of capitalist politicians. The solution to the debt crisis must be the expropriation of the capitalist oligarchy by the working class.

As the PES explained in its statement after the fall of Lecornu’s predecessor, “Which way forward for the working class after the fall of the French government?”,

Two stark alternatives are presented. Either the capitalist oligarchy builds a fascistic dictatorship to crush the working class, or the working class wages a revolutionary struggle on a socialist program to expropriate the oligarchs. This requires breaking through the straitjacket of the union bureaucracies and building genuine rank-and-file organizations dedicated to prosecuting the class struggle.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) calls for the transfer of power from the trade union bureaucracies to the workers in all factories and workplaces. Such new forms of class organization, uniting workers in France and throughout Europe, are necessary to organize resistance to and defeat the corporate-financial oligarchy’s program of fascism, genocide and war.



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