

Parties in French New Popular Front enter government talks with Macron

Alex Lantier

7 December 2024

The day after the New Popular Front (NFP) and the neo-fascist National Rally (RN) brought down Prime Minister Michel Barnier's government and attacked President Emmanuel Macron, several parties in the NFP carried out a 180-degree shift in strategy. They eagerly seized upon Macron's invitation to the NFP to come to the Elysée presidential palace for talks, declaring themselves open to forming a government with Macron.

Macron and the French political establishment are rushing to form a government and adopt a stopgap budget before 2025 begins. Two parties in Jean-Luc Mélenchon's New Popular Front (NFP), the big-business Socialist Party (PS) and the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF), have responded eagerly to Macron's invitations to the entire NFP for talks. They are reportedly proposing to junk the promises of minor reforms in the NFP program and support deep austerity in exchange for ministerial positions.

This makes clear how the bankruptcy and political corruption of the forces promoted by the media as the "left" enables the rise of Marine Le Pen's RN, an ally of fascist US president-elect Donald Trump and of Israel's genocidal regime. Le Pen can predictably dismiss the NFP again as "cheap Guevarist clowns," argue that left-wing parties are simply corrupt tools of Macron and the banks hostile to the French people, and call on everyone disgusted by Macron and the NFP to vote neo-fascist.

As for Mélenchon, whose France Unbowed (LFI) party played the central role in forming the NFP, his entire strategy for dealing with the political crisis is dissolving along with the NFP itself. He called to form an NFP-led government with Lucie Castets, an unknown Finance Ministry bureaucrat, as prime minister, and to refuse to serve in a government under a prime minister from Macron's party. But the PS and the PCF are moving to do precisely that.

In his prime time address to the nation Thursday night,

Macron made no apologies and signaled that he would make no changes in his policies after Barnier fell. He said nothing about his pension cuts, his call to send French ground troops to Ukraine for war with Russia and his support for the Israeli regime's genocide in Gaza, all of which are opposed by an overwhelming majority of the French people. Rather, he issued the usual arrogant defence of his massively unpopular government.

Macron did not apologize for calling snap elections on July 7 that produced a hung parliament and Barnier's minority government, insisting it was necessary: "I must admit this decision was not well understood. Many people blamed me for this and I know many continue to do so. That is a fact and it's my responsibility. But no one can say that, by doing that, I did not give the French people the chance to speak out. I believe it was necessary."

He denounced the parties who had voted to censure Barnier's government. Accusing them of trying to remove him, he asserted that "the far right and the far left came together in an anti-democratic front. ... They are not thinking of you, your lives, your difficulties, getting to the end of the month, your plans. Let's be honest. They are thinking of just one thing: the next presidential election—to prepare it, provoke it, rush it. With cynicism and, if necessary, a certain sense of chaos."

Instead, Macron proposed to promptly name a prime minister to rapidly assemble a government and adopt a stopgap budget to reassure the financial markets. He said, "This is why I will name in the coming days a prime minister. I will charge him with forming a government of the general interest, representing all the political forces in an arc sufficiently broad to form a government, by either participating in it or agreeing not to censure it. The prime minister will have to carry out these negotiations and form a government to serve the French people."

Yesterday morning, PS National Secretary Olivier Faure went in for talks with Macron at the Elysée palace,

declaring his party open to ruling with Macron's party and Barnier's right-wing The Republicans (LR) party. "I am ready to discuss everything and see what we can do in a brief period of time," Faure said. Asked whether he would continue demanding the abrogation of Macron's unpopular pension cuts, Faure indicated he would not, saying that he is "responsible" and "aware that we need to find money" to balance the budget.

PCF Chairman Fabien Roussel also confirmed the PCF would go into government under Macron and scrap the NFP's election program. Proposing to work with Macron to "build a democratic and social pact," he said: "We are well aware that no coalition has an absolute majority." Calling for "compromise," Roussel said the PCF would "not ask for the implementation of the entire program" of the NFP.

Yesterday evening, Roussel confirmed that Macron had invited the entire NFP to government talks at the Elysée: "I was contacted by Emmanuel Macron's chief of staff, who asked if we are open to dialog. I replied that we are. We were told we would have a meeting on Monday."

Marine Le Pen, predictably, pledged to oppose both Macron and the NFP and, if need be, to keep bringing down governments voting budgets unacceptable to the RN.

Mocking the NFP's haste to form alliances with Macron, she told *Le Figaro*: "I am not outraged that I was not invited [to the Elysée palace for talks with Macron]. If I had been invited, I would have been very worried. I do not plan to participate in a majority around the President. ... The fact that the Socialist Party sells itself for a plate of lentils is not, frankly, very surprising. That LR might find itself in government with the Socialist Party, on the other hand, amuses me."

She warned, "No one should think that my hands are now tied. I can very much vote a new censure motion" to bring down Macron's next government. There is growing speculation in French media that repeated collapses of Macron's governments could force him to resign and call new presidential elections in which Le Pen could run.

The PS and PCF move towards governmental talks with Macron underscores the bankruptcy of Mélenchon's decision to include them in his NFP, although it is widely known that they are tools of the banks, implementing austerity and war when in power. It is completely exploding the strategy that Mélenchon has laid out so far.

In a brief television interview on TF1 Thursday night, Mélenchon defended the censuring of Barnier and asserted that LFI and the NFP still aim to build an NFP-

led Castets government. Referring to the fact that the NFP won the most seats in the July 7 elections, he said: "There is one organization that came decidedly in first: the New Popular Front. It is a coalition, it had a candidate. This candidate is maintained."

Yesterday, LFI coordinator Manuel Bompard issued a tweet confirming that LFI had been contacted by Macron for government talks but said LFI would not go to the Elysée palace on Monday: "We will not sell out the programme on which all the NFP's deputies were elected to participate in government. We will not govern with the parties of the president and the traditional right, since we just censured their programme."

Whether or not LFI sells out the few minor social measures in its programme—which also calls to send French troops to Ukraine, and increase funding for police and spy agencies—is not decisive. The PS and the PCF have effectively scrapped the program already. LFI, which went to great lengths to preserve these discredited parties, withdrawing its candidates so that the PS, PCF and then Macron's party could win seats in parliament, ended up building up the forces that scrapped the program LFI claimed to defend.

It again testifies to the bankruptcy and political stupidity of Mélenchon and LFI, and its periphery: forces like the Pabloite New Anti-capitalist Party and the Morenoite *Révolution permanente* group.

The policies of the next government will provoke explosive social opposition in the French working class. However, these struggles will be sold out insofar as they remain under the control of forces like the NFP and its allied union bureaucracies. The decisive question is the building of a movement from below, in the rank-and-file, based on a socialist struggle against imperialist war, genocide, austerity and fascism, on a perspective ultimately of transferring power to the working class.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)