

Macron names new French minority government based on New Popular Front support

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President Emmanuel Macron on Friday named his longstanding parliamentary ally, François Bayrou, to head a new minority government. This comes after Prime Minister Michel Barnier's minority government fell when its 2025 draft budget was censured. Yesterday, the divided National Assembly passed an emergency budget resolution continuing the 2024 budget until a majority can be found to pass the 2025 budget.

The naming of Bayrou does not resolve the impasse facing the French political establishment, rooted in mass popular opposition to Macron's policies of austerity and war. Despite weeks of talks, Macron failed to rally any new parties in the Assembly to join his government and support Bayrou. Polls found that only 31 percent of the French population believes Bayrou's nomination is "a good thing," and 73 percent believe he will continue the previous government's policies.

The New Popular Front (NFP) led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon has emerged as the main new source of support for Macron. While Mélenchon's own France Unbowed (LFI) party is still threatening to censure the Bayrou government, the rest of the NFP is supporting Bayrou from outside his government. The big business Socialist Party (PS), backed by the Greens and the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF), offered a pledge not to censure the government as long as it does not try to impose its budget via a confidence motion without a parliamentary vote.

It is the bankrupt policy of Mélenchon and LFI, propping up the the longstanding parties of bourgeois government around the PS, that allows the ruling class to constantly shift official politics to the right. By publicly supporting Macron, the NFP is handing the mantle of parliamentary opposition to Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN).

The air of crisis and disorientation inside Macron's coalition is unmistakable. When Macron initially called Bayrou into the Elysée palace on Friday morning, it was to explain to him why Macron would not nominate him as

prime minister. According to various reports, Macron proposed to name close supporters such as Roland Lescure, the parliamentary representative of French people in North America, or Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu as prime minister.

After an explosive, one-hour meeting during which Bayrou reportedly threatened to withdraw his Democratic Movement (MoDem) party from Macron's coalition, Bayrou left the Elysée without the prime ministerial nomination. Fifteen minutes later, Macron called him back to the Elysée and told him he would be prime minister.

As Macron's influence fades, the main forces gaining strength are on the far right. Le Pen has refused to promise that the RN will not censure Macron's next government and is posing as the sole credible parliamentary alternative to the corrupt allies of Macron.

"Observing the display of mediocrity and debasement of our political opponents, I in no way regret this decision" to bring down Macron's previous government, Le Pen said at a meeting yesterday in the town of Etrépagney in Normandy. "In ten days, all these parties of hypocrites have turned into a genuine one-party regime... which was already an unnatural electoral alliance," she continued, mocking them as "willing to do anything to grab ministerial posts."

If Le Pen can pose as the sole opposition to Macron, this is above all due to the bankruptcy of the forces that capitalist media falsely promote as the "left." Though the PS did not dare openly join the government, and LFI is impotently threatening to send a motion to censure the government that it is too weak to pass through the Assembly by itself, the NFP is clearly backing Macron.

While PS secretary Olivier Faure offered Macron a pledge not to censure the government as long as a PS official was named prime minister, LFI is now mouthing empty threats against Bayrou. Mélenchon tweeted, "Mr Bayrou's government is not viable. His group has even fewer deputies than Barnier before it. We will ask him to submit to a no

confidence motion. If he refuses, we will manifest our lack of confidence by placing a censure motion.”

Mélenchon’s parliamentary word-juggling, rejecting any mobilization of workers in struggle, is a dead end. Mélenchon won 8 million votes in the 2022 presidential elections, concentrated in the urban working class, and the NFP has the support of all France’s union bureaucracies. Nevertheless, these organizations have never called on the working class to bring down Macron, even during last year’s pension struggles, when two-thirds of the French people wanted a general strike to block Macron’s wildly unpopular pension cuts.

Instead, Mélenchon focused his efforts on reviving the parties of the old Plural Left governments of the 1980s and 1990s—the PS, the PCF, and the Greens—which had disintegrated in the 2022 elections. It is clear that these long-standing parties of capitalist government, whose candidates ran in the last years with the endorsement of Mélenchon, are utterly hostile to the working class and to mobilizing it against the Bayrou government.

As he went in for talks with Macron, PCF chairman Fabien Roussel said the NFP “will not insist on the enacting of its entire election program.” Roussel made clear that, by this, he did not mean the NFP program’s support for sending French troops to Ukraine or further funding for military police and intelligence units. Rather, this meant that the NFP was ready to support austerity against the workers.

Roussel dropped the NFP program’s demand to abrogate Macron’s pension cuts, saying it would “place the matter in the hands of the social partners,” that is, the union bureaucracies’ talks with the Macron government and the employers’ federations.

Green party leader Marine Tondelier made clear that the NFP was seeking to get closer to Macron. “Each must make a step towards the other,” she declared during her meetings with Macron at the Elysée palace. She added that the NFP strategy was to convince Macron to drop the de facto alliance with the neo-fascist RN that he formed at the beginning of the Barnier government and instead rely on the support of the NFP.

“The solution would no longer be an agreement with the National Rally,” Tondelier told the media about her meetings with Macron last week. “He was very clear that the National Rally, for him, is not within the perimeter of parties that want to talk.”

This raises the question: what is it about the NFP that makes it compatible with a president who is himself compatible with the neo-fascists? And how can the working class stop the capitalist agenda of military-police escalation, attacks on democratic rights and deep austerity defended by Macron and the NFP? Indeed, it is all too clear that a

situation where the RN is allowed to posture as the sole viable opposition to an anti-worker all-party regime is pregnant with the threat of far-right dictatorship.

The policies of what the capitalist media promote as the “left” will, in any case, only further disgust and embitter broad masses of workers. This was evident in the radio interview given by former 1997-2002 Plural Left government Prime Minister Lionel Jospin to *France Inter*, endorsing the PS policy of supporting Macron from the outside. Jospin said, “The socialists, the communists and the ecologists, considering that they had not been called upon by the president to form the government, decided to remain in the opposition. They are in opposition, and they must remain there.”

While the PS, PCF and Greens publicly declare themselves to be opposition parties, Jospin added, “at the same time they must contribute to making sure that this government, whose choices it does not share, will last.”

The political dishonesty of Jospin’s statement is self-evident. While loudly proclaiming that the PS and its allies are opposition parties that do not support Macron’s unpopular policies, it calls to make sure that this government remains in power so it can push through its agenda of imperialist war abroad and class war at home.

The Bayrou government will, soon enough, face explosive social opposition in the working class. However, ensuring that workers struggles against it are not sold out, like last year’s strikes against Macron’s pension cuts, or do not lead to the installation of a dictatorship—by the RN or nominally “democratic” parties—requires a political struggle within the working class itself. The way forward must be the mobilization of workers in France and internationally in struggle against imperialist war and social reaction, based on a perspective for workers power and the building of socialism.



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