



## The French Prime Minister: The Fall of Democracy at the Hands of its Leader

Following the legislative elections held in France on the 30th of June and 7th of July, the French population elected the "Nouveau Front Populaire" as its victor, and not the far-right party RN "Rassemblement National" as many had speculated and theorized. After the first round held on the 30th of June, the RN was leading the polls, with some discussing the possibility of the party winning an absolute majority. This would have allowed them to make parliamentary decisions without the need for a coalition with any other party. Despite this, the result of the second round declared the NFP the winner of the elections. The NFP is a left-wing party, which promises reforms to the retirement age and proposes fewer Islamophobic laws compared to other French parties.

Following their victory, it was understood that President Emmanuel Macron, who had dissolved the parliament in the hopes of his own party winning, was to choose a prime minister from the NFP, who would then form the government according to the wishes of "the French people." However, as of September 5th, 2024, Emmanuel Macron shocked the French population with his undemocratic choice to nominate not a member of the NFP, but Michel Barnier, former negotiator for Brexit, casting aside the choice of the French people in favor of his own.

His actions have been described by journalists in the following manner:

"The aim, by demonizing the Insoumis (Unsubmissive France), is to instill in the public opinion the entirely false conviction that the NFP (Nouveau Front Populaire), which won the legislative elections, would be unfit to govern the country. Or, to put it another way: to signal to the French people that they voted incorrectly, and that the President has very good reasons to disregard their vote. This denial, which the press and mainstream media are perfectly comfortable with, is certainly less brutal than a Capitol assault – but it is nonetheless what can rightly be called a democratic scandal." (S. Fontenelle, 2024)

And:

Rather than respecting the election results and taking into account the will of the voters, to whom he claimed to give a voice, as well as the new composition of the Assembly, Emmanuel Macron has chosen to maintain, against all odds, the liberal policies that his governments have been pursuing at full speed since 2017—the very policies that were rejected by a significant portion of the electorate. This is not so surprising, because the current French president is undoubtedly the best representative of those liberal elites (who, of course, do not exist only in France) who are so convinced that they hold the absolute truth and that there is no alternative to their way of governing, that they are not beyond a denial of democracy." (Le Devoir, 2024)

Others have described the actions of the president as the "burying of democracy," "the drowning of the people's choice," and a "fascist takeover."

However, in the midst of all this, articles have glanced over an important detail: the choice made by the president to ignore the vote of the people, which has been declared as undemocratic by many, is not illegal. The French system allows the president to freely choose a prime minister without taking into account the vote of the people. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the president, faced with the possibility of maintaining power, has chosen to ignore 'democracy' and instead chosen what would benefit him best.

As the French people protest in the streets, spurred on by the NFP, the new prime minister turns a blind eye to their protests and continues to work on forming a new parliament. As the people yell that the foundation of their government has cracked, the president ignores them, satisfied that his own needs have been met.

France, whose motto is 'liberty, fraternity, and equality,' has proven in a few months that its people are not equal, and that their screams are not louder than the whispers of one rich man.

France has openly shown that its system has been created for those with money. It has proven that democracy, which can be translated to "power of the people" and is defined as the 'government of the people,' is only applicable when the choice made by the people does not go against the desire of the 'liberal elite' and 'the 1%.'

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