France's Recent Government Collapse Marks Fifth in Two Years

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In two years, France has seen five governments. A similar crisis of bourgeois democracy took place before World War II.

Details. The no-confidence vote and subsequent resignation of former Prime Minister Francis Bayrou marked the second governmental collapse of 2025 and the fifth in the past two years. The Prime Ministers selected by Macron during this period have failed to gain the public's confidence.

Context. Historically, political instability in France has been a weak point in liberal democracy and has led to different political forms.

► After the 1848 revolution, economic crisis and a working-class uprising paralysed parliament. Louis Bonaparte exploited the deadlock to dissolve parliament and crown himself Emperor, preserving capitalist rule through dictatorship.

► The Third Republic was born out of France’s defeat in the Franco–Prussian War. When its leaders capitulated to Prussia and moved to disarm Paris, the armed workers rose in revolt, igniting civil war and establishing the Paris Commune — the first workers’ government in history. Its defeat restored bourgeois rule.

► The Fourth Republic, created after World War II, was marked by constant instability. Dozens of short-lived cabinets collapsed under the strain of reconstruction and colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria. In 1958, an army revolt in Algiers threatened civil war, and Charles de Gaulle, a French general, was brought back as a “strong hand.” He replaced the system with the presidentialist Fifth Republic, which still rules France today.

Important to Know. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, liberal democracy proves ever more ineffective and hollow. The capitalist state enforces policies at odds with workers’ interests, cutting social services like pensions while granting repeated tax breaks to businesses, further revealing the façade of capitalist “democratic” rule.

► This has happened before. In the 1920s and 1930s, the crisis of capitalism tore down unstable parliaments across Europe. In Germany and Italy, the bourgeoisie turned to fascism, using it as a weapon to smash the workers’ movement after revolutionary uprisings. In France, instability in the 1930s strengthened fascist leagues that prepared the ground for the Vichy dictatorship. In each case, when bourgeois democracy failed, the ruling class shifted to open dictatorship to preserve capitalist rule.

► Today, the same pattern emerges. The National Rally, led by Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella, is France’s strongest opposition force, polling ahead of Macron’s alliance. Its program relies on the classic slogans of the far right: national unity, law and order, attacks on migrants, and restoring French “sovereignty.” Just as in the 1930s, the bourgeoisie is likely to support these forces as a “solution” to political paralysis — channelling discontent into nationalism while safeguarding capitalist rule.