

# Of what value is democracy when those in power ignore i...

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President Macron of France appointed Michel Barnier as Prime Minister of that country yesterday. By doing so, he has lived up to the neoliberal expectation.

Barnier has, whether as a former French cabinet minister or as a former European commissioner, as well as by being the European official who negotiated Brexit, a long history as a member of the French right-of-centre neoliberal elite. This, no doubt, in the view of President Macron, made him an ideal candidate to be French prime minister.

There is, however, just one problem with that appointment, which is that he is very obviously not the choice of the French people.

Barnier's political associations link him to the grouping that came third in the unnecessary French general election that Macron called in June. As a consequence, it is very unlikely that he will win the support of Marie Le Pen, whose far-right party has the largest number of seats a single party holds in the French parliament, or of the left-of-centre coalition, which was the overall winner of that election whilst having insufficient seats to form a majority government.

If evidence was needed that the neoliberal Single Transferable Party seeks to retain power whatever the outcome of a general election, refusing to accept its rejection by either the left or right, then this appointment is that.

People, including the vast majority of readers of this blog, will have rightly recoiled at the actions of President Trump in January 2020 when he staged what was, to all intents and purposes, a coup that was intended to keep him in office despite his having lost the US presidential election. The question does, however, have to be asked as to what democracy means if, as Macron and Barnier are making clear through their actions, the clearly expressed will of an electorate can be ignored when it comes to the appointment of a prime minister and so, presumably in turn, a government.

I believe that democracy is important. I think it is the only way in which a majority of people, including those who disagree with the outcomes of particular elections, can be

persuaded in a modern, mass communication society to accept the role of government and what it demands of people without recourse to some form of despotic imposition.

But if democracy does not seem to be respected within the echelons of power, as would seem to be Macron's intention in France, of what value is it? Are we, in that case, already living in a form of kleptocracy, the reality of which is only just becoming apparent, both in France and now in the UK, given that it is clear that Labour will be governing in the same fashion as the Tories who preceded them?