

# Charles De Gaulle's Effect on French Politics\*

## Charles De Gaulle'ün Fransız Siyasetine Etkisi

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### Abstract

*The fate of France's political and constitutional history, which had been rife with instability, was altered with the establishment of the Fifth Republic. However, the transition to a new political system was quite painful. Moreover, system debates continued after the proclamation of the Fifth Republic. Especially the 1962 constitutional amendment process left France faced with a new political crisis. This research aims to reveal how Charles de Gaulle, the first president of the Fifth Republic, had an effect on the shaping of French politics and overcoming the political crises that led to the system debates.*

**Key Words:** *The Fifth Republic, Charles de Gaulle, France, Semi-presidential system, 1958 Constitution.*

### Öz

*Fransa'nın istikrarsızlıkla dolu siyasi ve anayasal tarihinin kaderi, Beşinci Cumhuriyet'in kurulmasıyla değişti. Ancak yeni bir siyasi sisteme geçiş oldukça sancılı oldu. Üstelik sistem tartışmaları Beşinci Cumhuriyet'in ilanından sonra da devam etti. Özellikle 1962 anayasa değişikliği süreci Fransa'yı yeni bir siyasi krizle karşı karşıya bırakmıştır. Bu araştırma, Beşinci Cumhuriyet'in ilk cumhurbaşkanı Charles de Gaulle'ün Fransız siyasetinin şekillenmesinde ve sistem tartışmalarına yol açan siyasi krizlerin aşılmasında nasıl bir etkisi olduğunu ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Beşinci Cumhuriyet, Charles de Gaulle, Fransa, Yarı Başkanlık Sistemi, 1958 Anayasası.*

### Introduction

France is a state that has been the subject of many academic researches due to its rich historical past, strong political and economic structure and geographical location. The country took its name from the Franks, who ruled these lands throughout the 5th century, and it was during this time that France became one of the first states to achieve its national and political unity. Similar to the Palace of Westminster in the United Kingdom, the famous Palace of Versailles, built by King Louis XIV (1643-1715), became a symbol of the political unity. During the Bourbon Dynasty, France was a powerful state

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Gazi

Akademik  
Bakış

207

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

characterized by absolute monarchy and centralism gained importance.<sup>1</sup> But the French monarchy disappeared following the 1789 French Revolution.<sup>2</sup> While this Revolution opened a new era in world history, it affected the development of the political system in France. The 'old regime' (*ancien régime*) collapsed and the foundations of the new regime were laid in France. However, the new regime did not bring stability to France and there were great political fluctuations in the country for a long time. These fluctuations resulted in many constitutional changes and amendments. The fate of French political and constitutional history, which had been rife with instability, was altered with the establishment of the Fifth Republic. France has reached an important political and constitutional stability although the political transition has been quite painful. At this point, it is important to consider this process and to examine the role of Charles de Gaulle, who left his mark on French politics in this process.

### **The Fourth Republic Period in France in the Shadow of System Debates and Government Instability**

After the Nazis withdrew from the country in August 1944, the Vichy regime was abolished and the Fourth Republic was proclaimed in France. However, since there were different opinions on the political system, a referendum was held on October 21, 1945 to determine the political system. Voters were asked in the referendum whether they preferred a new constituent assembly or a return to the 1875 Constitution. As a result of the referendum, almost all voters stated they preferred a constituent assembly with limited powers to a return to the 1875 Constitution. They also accepted the law dated November 2, 1945, which was presented to them in the referendum and which would regulate the government until the new constitution was drafted. In this law, the principle of parliament's supremacy over the executive was accepted.<sup>3</sup> The voters elected also the representatives for the constituent assembly. Three-quarters of the electorate supported the Communists (*Parti communiste français*, PCF), Socialists (*Section française de l'internationale ouvrière*, SFIO), and Christian Democrats (*Mouvement Républicain Populaire*, MRP) in these elections, in which the left gained strength.<sup>4</sup>

Communist and socialist parties opposed to a strong executive branch because the executive could try to restrict fundamental rights and freedoms due to their ties with the bourgeoisie. They supported a political framework with a powerful legislative and a weak executive. De Gaulle, on the contrary, emphasized the Third Republic's bad experience and claimed that lessons should be learned from the past experiences, and that the political structure

1 Cem Eroğul, *Çağdaş Devlet Düzenleri*, Kırılgaç Yayınevi, Ankara, 2005, p. 141.

2 Peter Morris, *French Politics Today*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1994, p.3.

3 Ayferi Göze, *Siyasi Düşünceler ve Yönetimler*, Beta Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2005, p. 585-587.

4 Göze, 2005, p. 585-586; Roger Price, *Fransa'nın Kısa Tarihi* (Translation by Ö. Akpınar), Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2012, p. 333.

should be based on a weak legislature and a strong executive branch.<sup>5</sup> Parliament initially recognized his unrivalled position as head of state, but their authoritarian and 'Bonapartist' intentions raised suspicions.<sup>6</sup> De Gaulle, who was strongly opposed to returning to a regime with parliamentary sovereignty, resigned on January 20, 1946, warning that the Fourth Republic would suffer from the same institutional weaknesses as the Third Republic.<sup>7</sup>

The PCF and SFIO, which held the majority of the constituent assembly, presented a draft constitution based only on parliamentary supremacy. In the April 1946 constitutional referendum, 10.5 million people voted no, while 9.4 million voted yes.<sup>8</sup> According to Price<sup>9</sup>, the biggest reason for the rejection was the concern about the Communist's dominance in the parliament. Thereupon, a new constituent assembly drafted a new constitution following a compromise between socialists, communists and republicans, and this time it was approved by referendum on October 13, 1946. This constitution is the Constitution of the Fourth Republic of France, dated October 27, 1946. Although 9 million people voted in favour of the new constitution, 7.8 million people did not vote in the referendum and there were just as many 'no' votes. It was not a good and encouraging beginning to a new era.<sup>10</sup> Vincent Auriol from the Socialist Party was elected as the first President of the Fourth Republic in 1947. This coalition government was formed by Socialist Paul Ramadier and was called 'Tripartisme' since it consisted of Socialists, Communists and Christian Democrats.<sup>11</sup> It was believed that if the three major parties of the resistance (PCF, SFIO and MRP) remained together, France would have a stable political system with a progressive left majority. This assumption, on the other hand, lacked strong foundation due to the May 1947's political developments in Cole's opinion. When Socialist Interior Minister Jules Moch dismissed the Communists from the government, the triple coalition was in charge. Internal and external pressures had a significant impact on the PCF's overall trajectory. The expulsion of the Communists from the government was a condition imposed by the USA administration as a condition for France to receive financial aid under the Marshall plan. On the other hand, Stalin's passion for Eastern Europe was growing and Stalinism

5 Esat Çam, *Siyaset Bilimine Giriş*, DER Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005, p. 159.

6 Price, 2012, p. 333.

7 Alistair Cole, *French Politics and Society*, Routledge, London and New York, 2017, p. 15; Michael Roskin, *Çağdaş Devlet Sistemleri: Siyaset, Coğrafya, Kültür* (Translation by B. Seçilmişoğlu), Adres Yayınları, Ankara, 2009, p. 118.

8 Cole, 2017, p. 15-16; Roskin, 2009, p. 118; Price, 2012, p. 334.

9 Price, 2012, p. 334.

10 Göze, 2005, p. 587; Seda Dunbay, "23 Temmuz 2008 Tarihli Anayasa Reformu Işığında Fransa'daki Yarı Başkanlık Sistemi", *Ankara Barosu Dergisi*, no 3, 2012, p. 300; Nicholas Atkin, *The Fifth French Republic (European History in Perspective)*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 14.

11 Çınar Özen ve Nuri Yeşilyurt, "Fransız Dördüncü Cumhuriyeti'nde Siyasal Yapı ve Dış Politika : Süveyş Krizi'ne Giden Yolda Fransa'nın İsrail Politikası", *Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 17, 1, 2018, p. 104.

görsel

Akademik  
Bakış

209

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

was getting stronger. Meanwhile, PCF declared its loyalty to Moscow and its total hostility towards the regime from 1947 until the collapse of the Fourth Republic in 1958.<sup>12</sup>

The splits within the left, the outbreak of the Cold War in 1947, and voters' dissatisfaction with left-wing parties all contributed to the rise of the right. General de Gaulle, who created the Rally of the French People (*Rassemblement du Peuple Français*, RPF) as a movement aimed to restore the Fourth Republic under a more presidential-style regime, became the new champion of the right. After 1947, the Fourth Republic faced intense opposition from the left (PCF) and right (RPF). Between 1947 and 1951, the so-called centrist parties (Socialists, Radicals, Christian Democrats, and moderate Conservatives) were forced into a series of defensive 'third power' alliances whose main purpose was to protect the Republic.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of the fall of the three-party system, political instability returned to French political life in 1947. The Algerian problem, however, was the most significant occurrence during this time. From 1954 onwards, serious internal turmoil began to take place in Algeria. The Algerian War of Independence began on November 1, 1954. It was never mentioned that France was at a 'war' because Algeria was seen as part of France. The operations carried out to maintain order were under the responsibility of the Minister of the Interior, François Mitterrand. The war was waged ruthlessly on both sides.<sup>14</sup> The French army insisted on not leaving Algeria, which had been a French colony since 1830 and was considered a normal part of France even by the most left-wing. Civil war and nationalist revolt in Algeria began violently in November 1954. The French government became increasingly incapable of controlling the activities of the army, the colonial administration, or the native French settlers. The majority of the French army was deployed in Algeria to put down the uprising. Successive unstable governments in Paris failed to enact reforms and put down independence movements. In early 1958, the French government lost practically all of its authority. Thereupon, de Gaulle announced on May 15, 1958, that France was on the verge of disintegration and that he was ready to accept the Republic's responsibilities.<sup>15</sup>

At the risk of escalation into civil war, the National Assembly supported and empowered de Gaulle to alter the constitution. As a result, when successive governments failed to address the Algerian situation, the presidency of the government was handed over to General de Gaulle under military pressure. De Gaulle was chosen Prime Minister by President René Coty.

12 Cole, 2017, p. 16-17.

13 Cole, 2017, p. 17.

14 William Smith, "Introduction: France in the making", in *Aspects of Contemporary France*, ed. Sheila Perry, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p. 18; David S. Bell, *French Politics Today*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002, p. 11.

15 Göze, 2005, p. 590; John Gaffney, *Political Leadership in France: From Charles de Gaulle to Nicolas Sarkozy*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2010, p. 1; Bell, 2002, p. 12.

göze

Thus, on June 1, 1958, Charles de Gaulle returned to power in France as the last prime minister of the Fourth Republic. De Gaulle's return to politics was motivated by two objectives: On the one hand, he would resolve the Algerian issue and keep Algeria within French borders. On the other hand, he would restore the territorial integrity of the state and the government effectiveness. De Gaulle's government, created on June 2-3, 1958, held full authority for six months. In addition, the new government was granted the right to modify the constitution. De Gaulle drafted a new constitution and established a new republic in less than six months. De Gaulle's first reform was the re-organization of institutions.<sup>16</sup> The Fourth Republic is notorious for its high cabinet instability. The political structure of the Fourth Republic, which lasted twelve years (1946-1958) in France, led to the emergence of weak, disorganized and short-lived coalition governments. The average duration of a cabinet was about 6 months. During the regime's 12-year existence, 24 cabinets were established under 16 prime ministers.<sup>17</sup> In these governments, despite their political weight, small groups held power and gained influence. According to Lefort, some small groups and politicians played a role in the fate of governments in the Fourth Republic. The Fourth Republic is often remembered for its negative features such as political instability, blockage in the decision-making process, and executive weakness. The governments of the day were weak in showing integrity in following a certain policy.<sup>18</sup>

Although cabinet instability was intense, it is noteworthy that there was a remarkable stability in terms of personnel in key cabinet positions. During the Third Republic, a similar situation can be observed. Of the 561 ministers appointed between 1870 and 1940, at least 120 served in five or more governments. At this point, it is underlined that these ministers gained an administration experience due to their long term in office, and therefore they made critical decisions regarding the existence of France. On the other hand, in the midst of these government instabilities, it is necessary to mention the stability of the administration as well as the stability of the ministers. The French administration is seen as a factor that holds the country together and keeps France alive. While the regimes and governments in France were changing one after the other, the French administration maintained its existence at all times. It can be argued that despite the numerous disturbances in French history, the bureaucracy did not disappear or even renew itself. Even though it was acknowledged that most of the bureaucracy was out of date by the 20th century, it was nevertheless seen as the Republic's cornerstone.<sup>19</sup> As

16 Smith, 1997, p. 18; Gaffney, 2010, p. 1-2; Bell, 2002, p. 12-13; William Woodruff, *Modern Dünya Tarihi* (Translation by H. Vardar and A. Vardar), Pozitif Yayınları, İstanbul, 2006, p. 354.

17 John D. Huber and Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo, "Cabinet Instability and the Accumulation of Experience: The French Fourth and Fifth Republics in Comparative Perspective", *British Journal of Political Science*, 34, 1, 2004, p. 27.

18 Özen and Yeşilyurt, 2018, p. 103.

19 Lee, 2004, p. 151-151; William L. Shirer, *The Collapse of the Third Republic: An Inquiry*

görs

Akademik  
Bakış

211

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

Guérard said<sup>20</sup>, ‘So long as the bureaucrat is at his desk, France survives!’ His statement makes it very evident how vital the French bureaucracy was to the survival of France.

The Fourth Republic, weakened by the domination of the legislature over the executive branch, and the inability of governments to take important decisions, government instabilities, the increase in indiscipline and the weakness of political parties, was replaced by a new constitution and the regime established by it in 1958.<sup>21</sup> But it should be added that this political turmoil is not the only legacy of the Fourth Republic. The Fourth Republic marks the start of significant economic progress, known as ‘*trente glorieuses*’. France made a determined effort in economic modernization and investment during these years. Significant transformation has taken place in the agricultural sector, with industry beginning to respond to the wider European market and policy changes that have encouraged rebuilding.<sup>22</sup>

### Transition to the Fifth Republic

De Gaulle believed that a new regime was essential because of the political fragmentation that existed under the Third and Fourth Republic. De Gaulle gives important clues about how the new regime should be in his famous speech delivered in Bayeux, France in 1946, with the following words: ‘...All the principles and experiences demand that the public powers - the legislative, the executive and the judiciary - be clearly separated and strongly balanced...’.<sup>23</sup> De Gaulle believed that as the executive became dependent on the legislature, its capacity to rule weakened, making France unmanageable. He claimed that by strengthening the executive branch, France would become more manageable.<sup>24</sup> Party rivalries and quarrels, according to de Gaulle, damaged the Third and Fourth Republics. Both periods were characterized by recurrent government instability due to the weakness of multiparty government coalitions. De Gaulle believed that French institutions should be designed to put an end to the political turmoil. The president would be able to prevent the government instability that plagued France during the Third and Fourth Republics. In addition, the president would have a key role in exhib-

*Into the Fall of France in 1940*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1969, p. 96-104.

- 20 Albert L. Guérard, *The France of Tomorrow*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1942, p. 144.
- 21 Hüseyin Nail Kubalı, *Anayasa Hukuku Dersleri: Genel Esaslar ve Siyasi Rejimler*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 1971, p. 414-415; William Safran, “The Context of French Politics”, in *Politics in Europe*, Ed.M. D. Hancock *at al.*, Chatham House Publishers Seven Bridges Press, LLC, New York-London, 2003, p. 86-165; William Safran, *The French Polity*, Routledge, New York, 2016, p. 9; Morris, 1994, p. 20-21; John D. Huber, *Rationalizing Parliament: Legislative Institutions and Party Politics in France*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 1-2.
- 22 Bell, 2002, p. 11.
- 23 Charles de Gaulle, *Discours de Bayeux*, 16 juin 1946. <https://www.charles-de-gaulle.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Discours-de-Bayeux-16-juin-1946.pdf>
- 24 Mahmut Nedim Eldem, “Anayasalarımızda Siyasi Rejim Arayışı ve Yarı Başkanlık Çözümü”, Unpublished master’s thesis, Kırıkkale University, 2007, p. 49-50.

iting the leadership that France lacked throughout the Second World War and the Algerian crisis. However, strengthening the role of the presidency should not be interpreted as an intention to establish a presidential system.<sup>25</sup> According to de Gaulle, the president's sovereignty over the institutions can be genuinely ensured only if the people elect him or her. For this reason, he desired to abolish the parliamentary system and replace it with a strong presidential system.<sup>26</sup>

The Presidency, in de Gaulle's opinion, is the only office that can act as an arbiter at the national level. Regardless of political parties or daily debates, only president can fulfil this responsibility. The state should have a leader in this regard. The president should be in charge of the executive branch's key responsibilities. The president, on the other hand, should be to rise above the parties and engage in direct dialogue with the electorate. In this context, de Gaulle sought to establish an authority capable of dealing with the vicious confrontations between the parties and therefore protecting the common interest, while designing a chief at the national level and above all others.<sup>27</sup> A commission chaired by Michel Debré was tasked with conducting constitutional studies. In three months, a new constitution was drafted. The resulting constitution mostly reflected the views of the general. As a result, on September 4, 1958, the anniversary of the proclamation of the Third Republic, de Gaulle presented the new constitution to the French in the Place de la République in Paris.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the criticism from the left, the new constitution was presented to the public in the referendum on September 28 and entered into force on October 4, upon approval by the majority of the people. The 1958 Constitution was approved by a strong majority in a referendum. The Constitution was widely supported since it allowed for modernizing reforms and the restoration of internal peace that previous republics had failed to achieve. This widespread public support made people forget about the difficult circumstances that led to the constitution. Furthermore, this Constitution was drafted in an environment where the republican system's legitimacy could not be questioned. The law of June 3, 1958 stipulated that the constitutional project must adhere to the republican tradition's essential ideas and ensure respect for the fundamental freedoms mentioned in the preamble of the 1946 Constitution and the Declaration.<sup>29</sup>

The 1958 Constitution is a reaction text to the Third and Fourth Re-

- 25 Rob Turner, "The Presidency", in *Aspects of Contemporary France*, ed. Sheila Perry, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p. 26.
- 26 Philip Nord, *France's New Deal: From the Thirties to the Postwar Era*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2010, p. 1.
- 27 Cemil Oktay, "Çoğunlukçu Kurumsallaşmış Yarı-Başkanlık Rejimi: Fransa", in *Karşılaş-tırılmali Siyasal Sistemler*, Eds. E. Kalaycıoğlu ve D. Kağnıcıoğlu, Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayını, Eskişehir, 2018, p. 81.
- 28 Aurélien Fayet et Michelle Fayet, *L'Histoire de France*, Eyolles, Paris, 2009, p. 351-352.
- 29 Philippe Raynaud, *L'esprit de la Ve République*, PERRIN, Paris, 2017, p. 3.

*gors*

Akademik  
Bakış

213

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

public's political instability. In addition, it also includes new measures to solve social crises. The Constitution of the Fifth Republic's first goal is to establish a strong executive branch that will not be powerless in the face of political instability and societal crisis like those seen in earlier eras.<sup>30</sup> As Turner<sup>31</sup> points out, the president is the cornerstone of the French state in the political framework formed with the passage of the 1958 Constitution. Michel Debré used the term 'keystone' (*clé de voute*) to describe the presidency's importance to the regime while introducing the Fifth Republic's constitution. Kirchheimer<sup>32</sup> compares the constitutional referendum with the referendum held in 1799 and writes: 'As in 1799, the French were asked in 1958: What is it in the constitution that we are asked to ratify in the plebiscite? The similarity of the answer – Bonaparte and de Gaulle – is as misleading as it is obvious.' As a matter of fact, de Gaulle is referred to as the 'founding father' of the Fifth Republic although numerous others worked during the process of writing a new constitution.<sup>33</sup>

### **Fifth Republic Period Under Charles de Gaulle (1958-1969)**

The first legislative elections of the new regime were held between November 23 and 30, 1958. With an alliance of de Gaullists and conservatives, the Union for the New Republic (*Union pour la nouvelle République*, UNR) gained a large majority in the elections. Approximately 70% of the elected deputies supported Charles de Gaulle. The left, on the other hand, suffered a heavy defeat against the right. Their ambiguous or hostile attitude towards de Gaulle was seen as a key factor of this defeat.<sup>34</sup> Following the legislative elections, the first presidential election of the Fifth Republic was held on December 21, 1958. The President was elected by an average of 80,000 people, which included deputies, members of the council, deputies of overseas assemblies and elected representatives of the municipal council. There was an indirect election practice for the presidency. Three candidates ran in the presidential election of 1958: Charles de Gaulle, Georges Marrane and Albert Chatelet. As a result of the election, Charles de Gaulle won the elections with 78.51 percent of the votes and became the first president of the Fifth Republic.<sup>35</sup>

On January 10, 1959, de Gaulle invited Michel Debré, one of his most important supporters and an advocate of maintaining French rule in Alge-

30 Koraltay Nitas, "Fransa Yönetim Sistemi", p. 211. [http://www.arem.gov.tr/ortak\\_icerik/arem/Projeler/21yy/fransa.pdf](http://www.arem.gov.tr/ortak_icerik/arem/Projeler/21yy/fransa.pdf) (18.04.2022).

31 Turner, 1997, p. 25.

32 Otto Kirchheimer, "France from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic", *Social Research*, 25, 4, 1958, p. 379.

33 Safran, 2003, p. 99; Safran, 2016, p. 9; Morris, 1994, p. 20-21; Huber, 1996, p. 1-2.

34 Price, 2012, p. 352.

35 Décision n° 59-2 PDR du 8 janvier 1959 – Proclamation des résultats du scrutin du 21 décembre 1958 pour l'élection du Président de la République, Président de la Communauté, available at <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/cons/id/CONSTEXT000017665092> (18.04.2022); Smith, 1997, p. 18; Price, 2012, p. 352-353.



ria, to establish the cabinet.<sup>36</sup> The head of state aimed to ensure a strong and stable executive power by consulting the nation through a referendum. But the regime had to deal with the Algerian problem first and foremost. De Gaulle was extremely nationalist, sceptical about Europe, anti-American, but he had to get rid of the Algerian problem before he could shape France.<sup>37</sup> Algerian issues and efforts to consolidate de Gaulle's authority dominated French politics in the early stages of the Fifth Republic. Between 1958 and 1962, de Gaulle was able to transform the country into a personal rule. De Gaulle's form of government laid the foundations for the presidency to become the most powerful institution in the new republic.<sup>38</sup> During these years, de Gaulle implemented various unconstitutional methods to run the government effectively. The first was that he forbade government meetings on Wednesday mornings, except for the council of ministers he presided over. He also activated political institutions such as the presidential general secretary, the Community affairs secretariat, and the presidential cabinet in the Elysée Palace. Many significant decisions were taken by smaller groups meeting in the inter-ministerial council led by the president rather than by the Council of Ministers. De Gaulle held regular meetings with the foreign minister in some areas, such as foreign affairs, defence and Algeria. Finally, he became the government spokesperson and took part in presidential press conferences, the main forum where important policy changes were announced.<sup>39</sup>

During this time, opposition to de Gaulle manifested itself in two significant ways. One of them was the Algerian problem and the other was European policies. Although de Gaulle told in 1957 ex-minister Christian Pineau that the independence of Algeria was inevitable, the independence of Algeria was not an issue that de Gaulle openly expressed at that time.<sup>40</sup> De Gaulle was aware that the decolonization process had begun, and accordingly, in 1958, he founded the French Community (*Communauté française*) based on the example of the British Commonwealth, which recognized the autonomy of its colonies, but positioned them economically and politically under the influence of France.<sup>41</sup> In addition to this step, he did not hesitate to take drastic measures to suppress the uprising in Algeria. However, seeing that these measures were not sufficient, de Gaulle started negotiations with the FLN in January 1960. This step caused the reaction of the French settlers in

36 Price, 2012, p. 353.

37 Smith, 1997, p. 18.

38 Cole, 2017, p. 24.

39 Jean Louis Thiébault, "The collapse of the presidential leadership in France", ECPR Joint Sessions Universidad de Salamanca, 10-15 April 2014, p. 2, available at <https://ecpr.eu/events/paperdetails.aspx?paperid=16473&eventid=12> (10.04.2020).

40 Charles G. Cogan, "The Break-up: General de Gaulle's Separation from Power", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27, 1, 1992, p. 174.

41 Halil Kanadıkırık, "İki Darbe Arasında Beşinci Cumhuriyet: Fransız Siyasal Kültürü ve de Gaulle'ün Sentezi", *Journal of International Management Educational and Economics Perspectives*, 10, 2, 2022, p. 140.

gors

Akademik  
Bakış

215

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

Algeria and some members of the army. One of the main factors that brought de Gaulle to power was the Algerian crisis. The army supported him because he believed that Gaulle could solve this crisis. However, de Gaulle's decision to negotiate with the FLN was seen as a betrayal by some groups within the military. A group of soldiers who were against the independence of Algeria planned an uprising known as 'Weeks of Barricade' by organizing the settled French in Algeria, but de Gaulle suppressed it in a short time.<sup>42</sup>

The real coup took place in April 1961, when a group from within the French army attempted a coup against de Gaulle. Prime Minister of the time, Michel Debré, in his statement emphasizing the concept of national will, stated that all officers in Algeria were obliged to be loyal to President de Gaulle. De Gaulle declared martial law based on Article 16 of the Constitution. He appeared on television in his military uniform and informed the French people and soldiers that he forbade them to obey any orders from the putschists. In order for the coup to be successful, the attitude of the rest of the army, political parties and the public towards de Gaulle was also important. The rest of the army did not support the coup, and with very few exceptions, commanders remained loyal to the government. All political parties except National Centre of Independents and Peasants (*Centre National des Indépendants et Paysans*, CNIP) condemned the coup attempt. While the trade unions called the workers for a one-hour general strike against the putschists, the communists reactivated the antifascist committees to rally all the democratic forces. The public, as well as the parties and civil society, favoured Gaulle. Prime Minister Debré's calls to go to airports to prevent possible landing of paratroopers received a positive response from the public. The coup attempt was suppressed with the coming together of all sections of the country. General Salan, one of the putschists who managed to escape, continued to struggle to prevent Algeria's independence through the Secret Army Organization (*Organisation de l'Armée Secrète*, OAS) he founded. Many people lost their lives due to the attacks. They also attempted to assassinate de Gaulle many times, but none of them succeeded.<sup>43</sup>

France and the FLN signed the Evian Peace Agreement on March 18, 1962, after eight years of war. This Agreement meant France's recognition of Algeria's independence. The next day, a ceasefire was declared between the parties. In the referendum held in July 1962, Algeria gained its independence with a 99.72 percent "yes" vote.<sup>44</sup> Following the declaration of independence, more than a million Europeans fled to France, abandoning all their possessions. This population became major opposition against de Gaulle.<sup>45</sup> The Al-

42 Halil Kanadıkırık, "Fransa'da Son Darbe: General de Gaulle ve Halkın Direnişi", *Toplumsal Tarih*, 274, 2016, p. 62.

43 Ibid.

44 Martin Alexander and J. F. V. Keiger, "France and the Algerian War: strategy, operations and diplomacy", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 25, 2, 2002, p. 1.

45 Smith, 1997, p. 18.

gerian crisis allowed Gaulle to expand his influence in the Fifth Republic. Between 1958 and 1962, the head of state appointed and dismissed ministers based on his personal interests, reducing the Debré Government to merely an implementer of his policies, contrary to what the constitution envisioned. By employing the media to communicate directly to the French and increasing the number of referendums, de Gaulle weakened the influence of parliament. Taking advantage of the feelings caused by the Petit-Clamart attack organized by the OAS members on August 22, which was almost successful, he wanted to ensure that his successor would be elected by the people and gain the legitimacy to form a strong leadership.<sup>46</sup> The ultimate aim of this reform, according to Raynaud<sup>47</sup>, was not to ensure de Gaulle's re-election or to strengthen de Gaulle's authority with a new referendum, but to enable future presidents to overcome their weaknesses, who would not benefit from de Gaulle's historical and charismatic legitimacy.

In September 1962, he declared that a referendum would be held to allow the president to be elected directly by the people. The proposed draft constitution received a negative response from the opposition. This draft was viewed by many as a threat to democracy. Moreover, because of this attempt, Charles de Gaulle was compared to Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte. Opponents pointed out that Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte was the last head of state elected by popular vote, and that a dictatorship came after this victory. All non-Gaullist political parties called for a 'no' vote against the draft constitution. In October, the Debré government was forced to resign with a motion of no confidence. During this time, it was observed that the parliamentary opposition became strong enough to overthrow the government. De Gaulle's response was to dissolve the parliament and hold the referendum. The principle of election of the president directly by the people was accepted with a high rate of 62 percent in the constitutional referendum held in October 1962. The results strengthened the presidential system. The parliamentary elections held a month later provided a strong majority for the Union for the New Republic (*Union pour la Nouvelle République*, UNR). These elections strengthened the government majority. Pompidou's second cabinet was established in December. Thus, the de Gaullist Republic was firmly established.<sup>48</sup> This high vote showed that Charles de Gaulle was seen as the only political person who could block France after the Fourth Republic.<sup>49</sup>

These successes, according to Price<sup>50</sup>, ensured the completion of the constitutional reform process that formed the presidential system of the

46 Price, 2012, p. 353.

47 Raynaud, 2017, p. 3-4.

48 Thiébaud, "The collapse of the presidential", 2; William Edmiston et Annie Duménil, *La France contemporaine*, Heinle Cengage Learning, Boston, 2010, p. 98; Fayet et Fayet, 2009, p. 388-389; Price, 2012, p. 353.

49 Fayet et Michelle Fayet, 2009, p. 389.

50 Price, 2012, p. 354.

gors

Akademik  
Bakış

217

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

Fifth Republic. Charles de Gaulle's greatest achievement was the creation of a political system acceptable to almost the entire population. For the first time since the Revolution, a general consensus has emerged in favour of republican institutions. Cole<sup>51</sup>, who supports Price's views, believes that this referendum is critical to the regime's survival. The directly elected president now had at least as much popular legitimacy as the National Assembly. The presidential institution, strengthened by its direct link with the French, was the cornerstone of the Fifth Republic's political legitimacy. This unquestioned position of the President was largely preserved until 1986. On the other hand, with the direct election of the president, Charles de Gaulle succeeded in politicizing the presidency by making this task a subject of political competition, instead of protecting this institution from competition. French political scientist Maurice Duverger summarizes the importance of the referendum in one sentence: 'The 1962 constitutional referendum did not give the president new powers, but it gave him power'.<sup>52</sup> The reform in question was intended to reduce the risk of returning to the party regime. However, it still provided political parties a new and important power. In the new system, no candidate had a chance to win without the support of a major party. No president can dominate executive power without the support of a majority coalition. In this context, a two-round majority system, a structure called *le quadrille bipolar* by Maurice Duverger, emerges, in which two coalitions formed around two parties and separated according to the left/right axis come face to face.<sup>53</sup>

The president was at the centre of the political system founded after 1958. De Gaulle wanted to deal with the Algerian crisis himself, in addition to defence and foreign policy. Regardless of the constitutional position he had, the prime minister was in practice largely under the influence of the president. Ministers, on the other hand, were bureaucratic practitioners who could be fired at any time. The replacement of Prime Minister Debré, who was one of his most important supporters, by Pompidou in April 1962 clearly revealed Charles de Gaulle's approach to the issue. His reappointment in October, right after Pompidou had to resign with a vote of no confidence in the parliament, was also an important indicator of de Gaulle's commitment to the system.<sup>54</sup> The beginning of a process of 'bipolarisation' was one key trend that emerged after the elections. This was actually a process of political restructuring, in which various parties tended to merge with Gaullist and opposition groups, while centrist parties such as the Radicals and MRP were largely included in the presidential coalition. Another factor promoting bi-polarization was the presidential system itself. This system allows only two candidates in the final vote.<sup>55</sup>

51 Cole, 2017, p. 24-25.

52 Cited in Morris, 1994, p. 28

53 Raynaud, 2017, p. 4.

54 Price, 2012, p. 354.

55 Price, 2012, p. 354-355.

In the 1965 Presidential elections in France, the principle of two-round direct voting was applied for the first time. The first round of the elections took place on 5 December 1965 and the second round on 19 December 1965. In the first round on 5 December 1965, Marcel Barbu, François Mitterrand, Jean Lecanuet, Pierre Marcilhacy, Charles de Gaulle and Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour competed. Charles de Gaulle and François Mitterrand were the winners of the first round, in which 24 502 916 voters voted (equivalent to 84.75% of the total electorate). In the second round on December 19, 1965, when these two candidates competed, 24 371 647 voters (equivalent to 84.32% of the total electorate) voted, and de Gaulle was elected as the president for the second time in the 1965 Presidential elections in France with 55.2% of the votes.<sup>56</sup> Television played an important role for the first time during the pre-election campaigns.<sup>57</sup> Mitterrand's results in these elections are at least as important as Gaulle's victory. It is seen that the opposition to the policies followed by de Gaulle was quite strong.

Gaullist regime achieved significant success in political stability, social reconciliation and economic growth. However, the dominance of the Gaullist party at all levels of the state was not welcomed by the French. De Gaulle was re-elected in 1965, but his paternalistic and even autocratic administration style began to disturb some parts of the society. The 1958 Constitution maintained political stability, but there was a risk of authoritarianism. As a matter of fact, as of 1965, de Gaulle began to lose his supra-partisan position. De Gaulle had won the 1965 elections, but it turned out that there were other political alternatives. The results of the 1965 elections revealed the existence of a left-wing opposition in French politics.<sup>58</sup> With the 1967 elections, it became more evident that de Gaulle's position was weakening. In the legislative elections held on March 5-12, 1967, Communists and Socialists achieved 40% representation in the parliament. On the other hand, the Gaullists did not win the majority in the parliament alone and established a coalition government with Giscard's Independent Republicans. In the March 1967 legislative elections, the left-wing alliance was in full swing. The Gaullists, on the other hand, retained their absolute majority while losing seats. Prime Minister Georges Pompidou re-established the government as prime minister following the elections. De Gaulle's political framework appeared to be far from unassailable over a decade after he took office.<sup>59</sup>

Essentially, the founding of the Fifth Republic put the left in a potentially negative position. In the 1958 elections, only 10 Communists, 47

56 Décision n° 65-10 PDR du 28 décembre 1965 – Proclamation des résultats de l'élection du Président de la République, <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/decision/1965/6510pdr.htm> (18.04.2022).

57 "Élection présidentielle 1965: ses spécificités", Vie publique, le 6 juin 2019, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/24174-election-presidentielle-1965-ses-specificites> (19.04.2022).

58 Cole, 2017, p. 27; Smith, 1997, p. 18-19.

59 Ibid.

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Socialists and 40 Radicals were able to be elected to the parliament. The communists had been in decline for a long time. Socialists, like the Radicals, were publicly associated with the failures of the Fourth Republic. Moreover, the strict Stalinist and pro-Soviet stance of the Communists made cooperation between these parties much more unlikely. The 1962 legislative elections, in which de Gaulle was credited for resolving the Algerian issue, further reinforced this apparent appearance of final decline. Throughout the 1960s, however, the left would increasingly take a stand against the excessive 'personal' power of the president, denouncing social injustice. In addition to the presidential elections in December 1965, in which de Gaulle failed to obtain a full majority in the first round, the legislative elections held in March 1967 revealed that this viewpoint was gaining more and more supporters.<sup>60</sup> The improved appearance of the opposition was due to the fact that the Communists were now a little more cooperative and, in the person of François Mitterrand, a reliable alternative to de Gaulle emerged. Alongside the Radicals, Mitterrand had convinced mainstream Socialists and various scattered groups to assemble and cooperate in the newly created Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (*Fédération de la gauche démocrate et socialiste*, FGDS). Mitterrand's long-term strategy would be to change the political balance in favour of the left and to increase the appeal of the opposition in the elections by reducing the Communists to an extremely unimportant position.<sup>61</sup>

The unexpected upheavals that erupted in 1968 were, in fact, yet another testament to the current discontent. May 1968 was a period of serious crisis for France. All the resentment against authoritarianism in the family, elitism in society and its manifestations in secondary and higher education, overcrowded and under-resourced education opportunities, inequality, injustice and insecurity fuelled by rapid social change, as well as in government and the workplace, suddenly surfaced.<sup>62</sup> The student movements that started at the University of Nanterre in May 1968 quickly spread to other campuses and the strikes paralyzed the economic life of the country. According to Smith<sup>63</sup>, the violence and chaos in the demonstrations and the utopian idealism of most of the participants reminded the 1848 revolution and the 1871 Commune. The country faced with a major crisis in which street clashes took place between the police and the demonstrators. The turmoil caused by some student groups was soon supported by leftist political groups, followed by the occupation of faculties and other education centres, and occupation of factories and workplaces. At the end of May, millions of workers were on strike and violent clashes took place between demonstrators and police. The economic life in the country came to a standstill and objections to the current

60 Price, 2012, p. 360.

61 Price, 2012, p. 360-361.

62 Price, 2012, p. 361.

63 Smith, 1997, p. 19.

political regime emerged. The social opposition suddenly paralyzed France with all its institutions.<sup>64</sup>

These events exposed some of the disadvantages of a highly centralized political system that was now dependent on the decisions of an aging head of state and unable to respond to an unexpected crisis. At the same time, it showed that the trust in existing institutions had been considerably lost.<sup>65</sup> In the face of this situation, Charles de Gaulle declared his intention to present a national reform program, first of all through a referendum. In the ruling party's view, the weakness of the parliamentary majority since the 1967 elections tied their hands and hindered reforms, which deepened the crisis. This view has also been one of the themes of election campaigns.<sup>66</sup> In a broadcast he made on May 30, de Gaulle announced the dissolution of the National Assembly and called for unity to defend the Republic against the danger of anarchy and communism.<sup>67</sup>

Parliamentary elections were held on 23-30 June 1968 and as a result of the two-round elections, the UDR won the majority by taking 292 seats in the parliament. UDR is followed by RI with 61 seats. Georges Pompidou was replaced by Maurice Couve de Murville. Thus, as a result of the elections, the majority of the voters showed that they still trust the current administration. Compared to the elections in March 1967, it is seen that many candidates received the absolute majority of the votes in this election. No candidate from the Reform Movement, Technical and Democratic, and far right-wing groups won the number of votes equal to 10% of the registered voters, and as a result, did not qualify for the runoff. Similarly, although the Unified Socialist Party (*Parti socialiste unifié*, PSU), which strongly supported student and worker groups in May, was the only left-wing group to gain votes in 1967, 229 of its 232 candidates were thus eliminated. It can be said that the lack of unity in the left-wing groups and the fact that they are divided among themselves have an effect on the voters. This is one of the biggest reasons why some politicians such as Mendes-France failed in the elections.<sup>68</sup>

Continuing to struggle on a platform of law and order in the 23-30 June elections, the regime was making great progress to regain its legitimacy.<sup>69</sup> Raynaud<sup>70</sup> also states that these events show the regime's inability to overcome the divisions in French society, but adds that the victory of the

64 IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union), France, Elections in 1968, [http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/France\\_1968\\_E.PDF](http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/France_1968_E.PDF) (19.04.2022); Claire Annesley, *A Political and Economic Dictionary of Western Europe* (First Edition), Routledge, London and New York, 2005, p. 92; Price, 2012, p. 361.

65 Price, 2012, p. 362.

66 IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union), France, Elections in 1968, [http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/France\\_1968\\_E.PDF](http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/France_1968_E.PDF) (19.04.2022); Annesley, 2005, p. 92.

67 Price, 2012, p. 362.

68 IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union), France, Elections in 1968, [http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/France\\_1968\\_E.PDF](http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/France_1968_E.PDF) (19.04.2022).

69 Price, 2012, p. 362.

70 Raynaud, 2017, p. 4.

gors

Akademik  
Bakış

221

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

Gaullists and their partners in the June elections was sufficient to reaffirm the legitimacy of de Gaulle and the power that Gaulle embodied. The election results also revealed the power of political conservatism. This was actually an instinctive reaction based largely on fear of social upheaval. Despite the victory, the May events proved to have significantly weakened the authority of the president. The events only increased the reputation of Prime Minister Pompidou, who was better able to cope with the crisis. Hence, his dismissal in the following period would appear as a philistine effort by the General to eliminate a former subordinate who had become a potential successor due to the events.<sup>71</sup>

Charles de Gaulle established a Fifth Republic in which the presidency gained more weight, resolved the Algerian problem, abolished colonial administrations in French North Africa, and followed an international grandeur policy. Remaining in power for ten years, de Gaulle maintained control over the broad student and labour movements in May-June 1968, but resigned the same night after his proposal to reorganize the regional government was rejected in a referendum in April 1969, and remained in power until November 1970, when he died. De Gaulle interpreted this negative game of the French as a lack of confidence in the politics they followed and resigned.<sup>72</sup>

### **Gaullism: The Legacy of Charles de Gaulle to French Politics**

According to Cole<sup>73</sup>, de Gaulle should be considered as the most important president of the Fifth Republic of France and one of the leading statesmen of Europe in the post-war period. For him, among the many aspects of de Gaulle's legacy, we should mention: the creation of a strong presidency, the reorganization of the French party system, the resolution of the Algerian conflict, the adoption of a more independent foreign policy, the consolidation of the Franco-German alliance at the heart of the European Community, and fostering a new spirit of national self-confidence and economic prosperity. De Gaulle's influence on French politics led to the emergence of 'Gaullism', a new term in political terminology. De Gaulle is seen as the founding father of the 'Gaullist' political movement.<sup>74</sup>

The first aspect of Gaullism was an improved political system based on a strengthened executive, shaped by a strong president. De Gaulle advocated a strong presidency that allowed the interests of the entire French nation to be represented above what he defined as the special interests represented by political parties. According to him, France needed a strong government that would allow it to regain its international prestige. In de Gaulle's terminology,

71 Price, 2012, p. 363.

72 Charles Tilly, *Avrupa'da Devrimler: 1492-1992*. (Translation by Ö. Arıkan), AFA Yayın-cılık, İstanbul, 1995, p. 254; Smith, 1997, p. 19; Edmiston and Duménil, 2010, p. 99-100; Oktay, 2018, p. 82.

73 Cole, 2017, p. 25.

74 Annesley, 2005, p. 92.

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this was a prerequisite for France to 'be it'. Presidency constituted the central core of the political system.<sup>75</sup>

The second important feature of Gaullism lay in the field of foreign policy. Charles de Gaulle had a strong belief that France should play an independent and leading role in world affairs. De Gaulle was primarily against anything that would restrict the sovereignty of France. He was critical of the growing influence of the United States in Western Europe after the Second World War. Although de Gaulle was not completely against military alliances, he advocated the idea that a state should be able to stand alone in its own defence. This approach led de Gaulle to decide to withdraw from NATO's integrated command structure. De Gaulle said that thanks to this step, France regains its freedom of action and decision when it comes to defence. However, he stressed that France remains a member of the Atlantic Alliance. Besides, according to de Gaulle, France had to have nuclear weapons if it wanted to ensure its security through an independent defence policy. Therefore, de Gaulle took action to create a French nuclear deterrent. Another reason for this step was the belief that it would provide prestige to the country and strengthen the position of France as a world power. On the other hand, de Gaulle gave importance and priority to the concept of the nation-state. For this reason, he approached the European Economic Community (EEC) with a distance. When he came to power, although he did not object to France's membership in the EEC due to the economic benefits, he opposed developments that would reduce French sovereignty. Disturbed by the influence of the USA in Europe de Gaulle took steps to strengthen the role of France in Europe in this context. First De Gaulle vetoed the British application for EEC membership, which he saw as an American Trojan horse, twice, in 1963 and 1967, on the grounds that it had very close ties to the United States.<sup>76</sup> Secondly, it sought to strengthen the Paris/Bonn axis as the driving force of the EEC. De Gaulle and Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Konrad Adenauer worked hard for a Franco-German peace. In this context, he signed the Elysée Agreement, a friendship and cooperation agreement, with Chancellor Adenauer. De Gaulle desired to have a close continental ally to help him achieve his goal of a 'European Europe' led by France, where Anglo-Saxon influence waned. De Gaulle thought that the bloc system reduced the sovereignty of European states. For this reason, he advocated the idea of reducing the influence of the USA and the USSR in Europe. At this stage, he thought France was the state best positioned to play the lead. At this point, De Gaulle tried to follow a policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union and its satellite regimes in Eastern Europe in line with the goal of weakening

75 Cole, 2017, p. 26; Fayet et Michelle Fayet, 2009, p. 390-391.

76 Price, 2012, p. 358; Cole, 2017, p. 26; Fayet et Michelle Fayet, 2009, p. 390-391; Woodruff, 2006, p. 354-355; Özlem Demirkıran, "Fransa'nın Güvenlik Politikası: De Gaulle Dönemi (1958-1969)", *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3, 5, 2007, p. 83-87.

gors

Akademik  
Bakış

223

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

the bloc system and ending the division of Europe.<sup>77</sup>

The third aspect of Gaullism was the advent of a period of economic prosperity after the weak years of the late 1940s and 1950s. Although the mechanisms that made economic revival possible were put into practice in the Fourth Republic, they bore fruit in the de Gaulle period. During the de Gaulle period, the economic growth and restructuring process continued at a fast pace. The political stability provided by a more effective anti-inflationist policy and the fiscal rigor of the government, which was the main feature of de Gaulle's presidency, has greatly facilitated this. The Treaty of Rome, which admitted France to the EEC, was signed in 1957 and entered into force on January 1, 1959. Besides its potential economic advantages, the EEC has given France the opportunity to assume a dominant role in a resurgent Western Europe and to exert greater influence in international affairs. During de Gaulle's 11-year tenure, the growth rates of the French economy surpassed that of other European Union members. Economic growth reached 5.8% in France, 4.8% in Germany, 4% in the USA and 2.7% in the Britain between 1958 and 1969.<sup>78</sup>

As the founder of the Fifth Republic, de Gaulle introduced new institutions to France. His works were notable: decolonization, state reconstruction, Franco-German reconciliation, economic growth. Their priorities were national independence and the impact of France on the world.<sup>79</sup> However, according to Gaffney<sup>80</sup>, de Gaulle not only brought Gaullism to French politics, he also brought 'himself' politically.<sup>81</sup> Thus, it has become possible to see the traces of de Gaulle's political personality in the institutions of the Fifth Republic.

## Conclusion

In this study, which aims to reveal how Charles de Gaulle, the first president of the Fifth Republic, had an impact on the shaping of French politics and overcoming the political crises that led to system debates, firstly, the Fourth Republic, which is known for its system debates and governmental instability, secondly the transition process to the Fifth Republic, thirdly, the political developments and crises in the Fifth Republic under Charles de Gaulle, and finally, within the framework of the concept of Gaullism, Charles de Gaulle's legacy to French politics were examined. The 1789 French Revolution brought the end of the French monarchy, which paved the way for the establishment of nation-states in Europe. However, the new era did not mean the emergence of a stable political system. France was occupied by

77 Rodney Balcomb, "Defence Policy", in *Aspects of Contemporary France*, ed. Sheila Pery, Routledge, London, UK, 1997, p. 67-70; Price, 2012, p. 358; Demirkiran, 2007, p. 83-87.

78 Cole, 2017, p. 26; Fayet et Michelle Fayet, 2009, p. 390-391; Price, 2012, p. 358-360.

79 Isabelle Flahault et Philippe Tronquoy, *Le président de la République en 30 questions*, La Documentation Française, Paris, 2017, p. 12.

80 Gaffney, 2010, p. 3.

81 Ibid.

Germany during the war. The conditions of occupation by Germany during the Second World War created a political leader who would leave his mark on French political history: Charles de Gaulle. Addressing the French people through his radio broadcasts from London, de Gaulle won the support of the people. The role he assumed during this period enabled him to gain the characteristic of a charismatic leader. After the occupation, he served in the structuring of French political life. During the Fourth Republic, he officially became involved in politics as a political party leader.

But very soon the Fourth Republic faced political crises. As a result of the discussions on the political system, de Gaulle resigned. Although a new constitution was adopted in 1946, governmental instability led to the weakening of the Fourth Republic. The deadly blow of the crises came from Algeria. Gaulle was appointed as prime minister for the resolution of the Algerian issue and the making of a new constitution. On the one hand, de Gaulle wanted to solve the Algerian issue and keep Algeria within the borders of the country, on the other hand, he wanted to lay the foundations of a new political structure that would put an end to government instability. De Gaulle was aware that Algeria's independence was inevitable at a time when the colonies were gaining their independence one by one. Despite this, he continued to intervene in the crisis. However, when he realized that the steps taken were insufficient and that the crisis were out of control, he resorted to the option of negotiation with the FLN. This step also resulted in de Gaulle being accused of treason and led to a coup attempt against him. De Gaulle was able to reverse the direction of the wind thanks to the support he received from all parts of the country. As a result of these developments, Algeria declared its independence as a result of Evian Peace Treaty and referendum in 1962. However, the independence of Algeria should not be seen as a political failure of de Gaulle. A few months later, in a referendum held in France, the principle of direct election of the president by the people was accepted, and de Gaulle thus realized the strong executive dream that he had insisted on since the Fourth Republic.

However, the transition to a new political system was quite painful. In the Fourth Republic, the political debates that took place in the process of making a new constitution were experienced again. De Gaulle believed that the only way for France to avoid governmental instability was to abolish parliamentary supremacy. In the new system, the executive had to be strengthened. Thus, de Gaulle spearheaded the construction of a new political system in which the president was the cornerstone and the power of parliament was limited compared to the past. However, system discussions continued after the proclamation of the Fifth Republic. Especially the 1962 constitutional amendment process left France faced with a new political crisis. However, this crisis was overcome after the amendment was approved by referendum. Thus, the political system of France, which continues to this day, took its final form. In this sense, the most important legacy left by de Gaulle to French political life is the semi-presidential system. This system, which enabled France

*gazi*

Akademik  
Bakış  
225  
Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023

to leave behind the political fluctuations it was exposed to from the end of the 18th century to the middle of the 20th century, also reflects Gaulle's political views and in this sense is his work. Another important legacy of de Gaulle is his foreign policy approach. De Gaulle, who was in favour of independence in foreign policy, left the military wing of NATO within the scope of this policy approach. De Gaulle was in favour of strengthening France's role in Europe. Although France re-joined NATO's integrated command structure, this country continues to express its own opinion within such organizations as in the Libyan intervention.

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Akademik  
Bakış

227

Cilt 17  
Sayı 33  
Kış 2023