

= Spanish general election , 1936 =

Legislative elections were held in Spain on 16 February 1936 . At stake were all 473 seats in the unicameral Cortes Generales . The winners of the 1936 elections were the Popular Front , a left @-@ wing coalition of the Spanish Socialist Workers ' Party (PSOE) , Republican Left (Spain) (IR) , Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) , Republican Union Party (UR) , Communist Party (PCE) , Acció Catalana (AC) and other parties . They commanded a narrow lead in terms of the popular vote , but a significant lead over the main opposition party , Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right (CEDA) , of the political right in terms of seats . The election had been prompted by a collapse of a government led by Alejandro Lerroux , and his Radical Republican Party . Manuel Azaña would replace Manuel Portela Valladares , caretaker , as prime minister , after what were widely considered fair elections ? although limited cases of electoral fraud did occur . They were the last of three elections held during the Spanish Second Republic , coming three years after the 1933 general election which had brought the first of Lerroux 's governments to power . The poor result for the political right would help bring about the July coup , and the ensuing civil war . The right @-@ wing military coup initiated by Generals Sanjurjo and Franco ultimately brought about the end of parliamentary democracy in Spain until the 1977 general election .

= = Background = =

After the 1933 election , the Radical Republican Party (RRP) lead a series of governments , with Alejandro Lerroux as a moderate Prime Minister . On 26 September 1935 , the CEDA announced it would no longer support the RRP 's minority government ; it was replaced by a RRP cabinet , led by Lerroux once more , that included three members of the CEDA . The concession of posts to CEDA prompted the Asturian miners ' strike of 1934 . Some time later , Robles once again prompted a cabinet collapse , and five members of Lerroux 's new government were conceded to CEDA , including Robles himself . Since the 1933 elections , farm workers ' wages had been halved , and the military purged of republican members and reformed ; those loyal to Robles had been promoted . However , since CEDA 's entry into the government , no constitutional amendments were ever made ; no budget was ever passed .

In 1935 , Manuel Azaña Díaz and Indalecio Prieto started to unify the left , and combat its extreme elements , including the staging of large , popular rallies , in what would become the Popular Front . Lerroux 's Radical government collapsed after two significant scandals , including the Straperlo affair . However , president Niceto Alcalá Zamora did not allow the CEDA to form a government , and called elections . Zamora had become disenchanted with Robles 's obvious desire to do away with the republic and establish a corporate state , and his air of pride . He was looking to strengthen a new centre party in place of the Radicals , but the election system did not favour this . Portela Valladares was thus chosen to form a caretaker government in the meantime . The Republic had , as its opponents pointed out , faced twenty @-@ six separate government crises . Portela failed to get the required support in the parliament to rule as a majority . The government was dissolved on 4 January ; the date for elections would be 16 February .

In common with the 1933 election , Spain was divided into multi @-@ member constituencies ; for example , Madrid had 17 representatives . However , each member of the electorate could vote for somewhat less than that ? in Madrid 's case , 13 . This favoured coalitions , as in Madrid in 1933 when the Socialists won 13 members and the right , with only 5 @,@ 000 votes less , secured only the remaining 4 .

= = Election = =

The campaigning for the election was generally in accordance with the law and peaceful , with few problems . Certain press restrictions were lifted . The political right repeatedly warned of the risk of a ' red flag ' ? communism ? over Spain ; the Radical Republican Party , led by Lerroux , concentrated on besmirching the Centre Party . CEDA , which continued to be the main party of the political right ,

struggled to gain the support of the monarchists , but managed to . Posters , however , had a distinctly fascist appeal , showing leader Gil @-@ Robles alongside various autocratic slogans . Whilst few campaign promises were made , a return to autocratic government was implied . Funded by considerable donations from large landowners , industrialists and the Catholic Church ? which had suffered under the previous Socialist administration ? the Right printed millions of leaflets , promising a ' great Spain ' . In terms of manifesto , the Popular Front proposed going back to the sort of reforms its previous administration , including important agrarian reforms , and those to do with the treatment of strikes . It would also release political prisoners , helping to secure the votes of the CNT and FAI , although as organisations they remained outside the growing Popular Front ; the Popular Front had the support of votes from anarchists . The Communist Party campaigned under a series of revolutionary slogans ; however , they were strongly supportive of the Popular Front government . " Vote Communist to save Spain from Marxism " was a Socialist joke at the time . Devoid of strong areas of working class support , already taken by syndicalism and anarchism , they concentrated on their position within the Popular Front .

34 @, @ 000 members of the Civil Guards and 17 @, @ 000 Assault Guards enforced security on election day , many freed from their regular posts by the carabineros . Six people were killed during the elections , and perhaps another 30 injured . Ballots were generally fair and in accordance with the 1931 constitution , although three cases of electoral fraud occurred . The first was in Galicia , in north @-@ west Spain , and orchestrated by the incumbent government ; there also , in A Coruña , by the political left . The voting in Granada was forcibly (and unfairly) dominated by the government . In some villages , the police stopped anyone not wearing a collar from voting . Wherever the Socialists were poorly organised , farm workers continued to vote how they were told by their bosses or caciques . Similarly , some right @-@ wing voters were put off from voting in strongly socialist areas . However , such instances were comparatively rare . The first results to be released , in the evening of the 14 , from urban areas , were encouraging for the Popular Front .

= = Outcome = =

Just under 10 million people voted , with an abstention rate of 28 percent , a level of apathy higher than might be suggested by the ongoing political violence . A small number of coerced voters and anarchists formed part of the abstainers . The elections of 1936 were narrowly won by the Popular Front , with vastly smaller resources than the political right , who followed Nazi propaganda techniques . The exact numbers of votes differ among historians ; Brenan assigns the Popular Front 4 @, @ 700 @, @ 000 votes , the Right around 4 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 and the centre 450 @, @ 000 . It was a comparatively narrow victory in terms of votes , but Paul Preston describes it as a ' triumph of power in the Cortes ' ? the Popular Front won 267 deputies and the Right only 132 , and the imbalance caused by the nature of Spain 's electoral system since the 1932 election law came into force . The same system had benefited the political right in 1933 . The political centre did badly . Lerroux 's Radicals , incumbent until his government 's collapse , were electorally devastated ; many of their supporters had been pushed to the right by the increasing instability in Spain . Portela Valladares had formed the Centre Party , but had not had time to build it up . Worried about the problems of a minority party losing out due to the electoral system , he made a pact with the right , but this was not enough to ensure success . Leaders of the centre , Lerroux , Cambó and Melquíades Álvarez , failed to win seats . The Falangist party , under José Antonio Primo de Rivera received only 46 @, @ 000 votes , a very small fraction of the total cast . This seemed to show little appetite for a takeover of that sort . The allocation of seats between coalition members was a matter of agreement between them . The official results (Spanish : escrutinio) were recorded on 20 February . The Basque Party , who had not at the time of the election been part of the Popular Front , would go on to join it . In 20 seats , no alliance or party had secured 40 % of the vote ; 17 were decided by a second vote on 3 March . In these runoffs , the Popular Front won 8 , the Basques 5 , the Right 5 and the Centre 2 . In May , elections were reheld in two areas of Granada where the new government alleged there had been fraud ; both seats were taken from the national Right victory in February by the Left .

Despite a relatively small mandate in terms of votes , some socialists took to the streets to free political prisoners , without waiting for the government to do so officially . There were claims of an imminent socialist or anarchist takeover . The right had firmly believed , at all levels , that they would win . Portela would , a year later , claim that Gil @-@ Robles and General Francisco Franco had approached him within days to the election to propose a military takeover . Portela resigned , even before a new government could be formed . However , the Popular Front , which had proved an effective election tool , did not translate into a Popular Front government . Largo Caballero and other elements of the political left were not prepared to work with the republicans , although they did agree to support much of the proposed reforms . Manuel Azaña Díaz was called upon to form a government , but would shortly replace Zamora as president . The right began to conspire as to how to best overthrow the republic , rather than taking control of it .

= = Results = =

= = = Seats = = =