

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

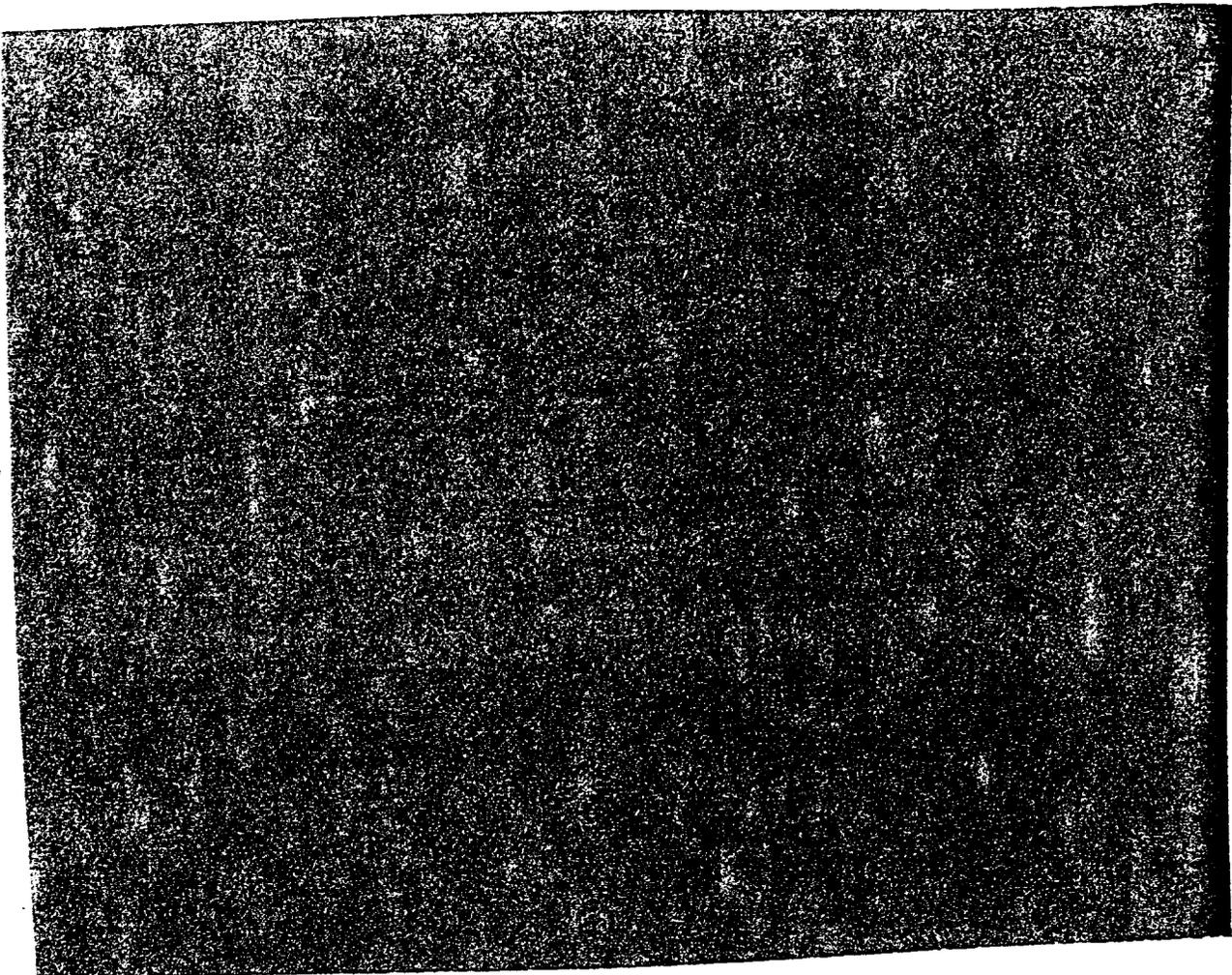
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BITTER ELECTION CAMPAIGN OPENS IN GUYANA

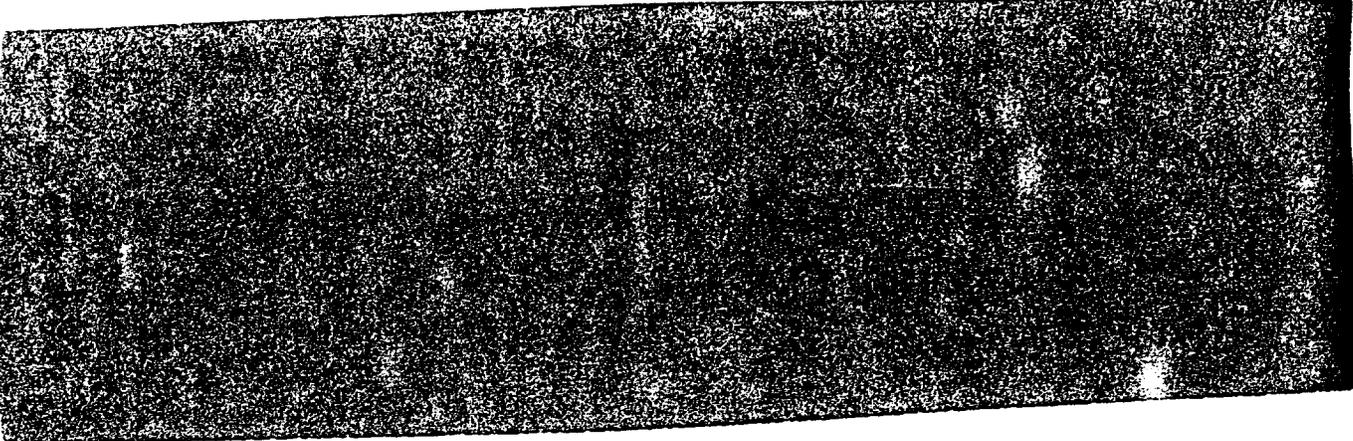
31

The opposition parties, despite their charges of "rigging," have decided to participate in the upcoming elections. As tensions rise, however, the idea of a boycott could become more attractive.



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BITTER ELECTION CAMPAIGN OPENS IN GUYANA

Prime Minister Burnham dissolved the Guyanese parliament on 5 November and officially announced that national elections will take place on 16 December. All parties now are free to give their undivided attention to the campaign, which is already developing into a bitter one.

Burnham has been accused of running a "rigged" election, the opposition is planning to challenge his new electoral law in the courts, and both pro-Communist opposition leader Cheddi Jagan and Peter d'Aguiar, Burnham's erstwhile coalition partner,

have threatened a boycott of the entire election.

Burnham's four-year political partnership with D'Aguiar's small United Force (UF) collapsed last month when D'Aguiar refused to support the electoral regulations that Burnham was determined to push through parliament. Calling the legislation "undemocratic and unconstitutional," D'Aguiar brought his party into the opposition. When it became obvious that Burnham's People's National Congress (PNC) would pass the bill, D'Aguiar led the UF out of parliament. He was followed after an

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interval by Jagan's People's Progressive Party.

D'Aguiar makes no secret of his dislike for Jagan's Communist connections, and would be most reluctant to join with him in a formal coalition. Nevertheless, D'Aguiar's hatred for Burnham and his conviction that Burnham is trying to set himself up as a "black" dictator have drawn him to cooperate with Jagan in propagandizing specific anti-Burnham charges.

The UF's attack has reinforced Burnham's conviction that another coalition would be intolerable. He is determined to win a clear majority, has stated that "the United Force is finished," and at a public gathering of his party pledged, "I shall never again lead the PNC into a coalition government."

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some hot heads could still decide to stir up trouble between Jagan's East Indian followers and Burnham's predominantly Negro supporters. Burnham has recently added a number of influential East Indians to his party and, should violence break out, he would be in a good position to argue that Jagan was exploiting racial tensions while the PNC was attempting to unify the races under one government.

Burnham has modified some of the more controversial provisions in the electoral law, and Jagan's party and the UF now say that they will participate in order to have parliament as a sounding board for their views. As political tensions rise, the idea of a boycott could again become attractive, however.

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