



GUYANA: Election Outlook

*President Forbes Burnham and his People's National Congress will emerge from the national election on Monday with a still tighter political hold on Guyana, despite incipient discontent.*



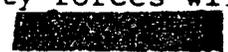
Burnham, a shrewd manipulator and nonaligned socialist, has called the election at an opportune time. The Moscow-line opposition party led by Cheddi Jagan, which boycotted the last election, will participate this time, lending greater legitimacy to the balloting.



The radical Working People's Alliance had the potential to seriously threaten the government until its leader was killed—but it now is in disarray and will boycott the election. Moreover, public concern over electricity shortages and scarcity of consumer goods has not yet begun to harden sentiment against Burnham.



Burnham's party has made sure that it will win at least two-thirds of the 65 seats in the legislature. Recent constitutional changes assure his party 12 additional seats, polling lists allegedly have been padded, and security forces will intimidate voters while guarding the polls.



In addition, party thugs are disrupting opposition rallies, and opposition party members are being arrested. The Working People's Alliance has threatened to sabotage the election, but its actions probably will be isolated and ineffective.

