General Election Results - 21 August 1961

The parliament was dissolved by the Governor on 14 June 1961, and elections were held in British Guiana on 21 August 1961 under the "first past the post" system.

The elections were the first to be held under the 1961 constitution, which had created a bicameral Legislature with an appointed Senate and an elected Legislative Assembly.

The 36 members of the Senate included 35 members elected in single-member constituencies and the Speaker, who was elected by the other members.

The 13 members of the Senate included eight nominated by the ruling party, three by the opposition and two by the Governor.

A total of 98 candidates contested the elections. The People's Progressive Party (PPP) ran 29 candidates, the People's National Congress (PNC) 35 and the United Force (TUF) 34 .

After an incident-free day of voting, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) was declared the winner with 20 seats.

The People's National Congress (PNC) won 11 and the

The United Force (TUF) the remaining 4. TUF was able to win the Amerindian districts of the Rupununi and the North West District where Catholic and Anglican missionaries were very influential.

The party also won two marginal seats in Georgetown where PPP supporters, angered by the PNC supporters' campaign of violence, decided in the absence of PPP candidates in their districts, to cast their votes for the UF which they saw as the "lesser of two evils".

The overall results of the elections showed that the

ELECTION SNAPSHOT

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

First-past-the-post

35 elected seats

VOTER TURNOUT

Total Valid Votes	218,357
Invalid Votes	1,768
Total Votes Cast	220,125
Registered Voters	246,120
Voter Turnout	89.44%

CRITICAL DATES

Dissolution of House	Wed, 14 Jun 1961
Nomination Day	-
Polling Day	Mon, 21 Aug 1961
First Meeting of New Parliament	Thu, 5 Oct 1961

PPP won 42.6 percent of the total votes cast while the PNC obtained 41 percent and TUF 16.3 percent.

PPP leader Cheddi Jagan remained as Primier.

Voter turnout was 89.44%.

Post-election Note

Although the PPP had only received 1.6% more of the vote than the new People's National Congress, it had won almost double the number of seats.

This resulted in mass demonstrations led by the PNC, a general strike and severe inter-racial violence.

After a few weeks the British authorities intervened by sending in troops and the Governor declared a state of emergency. Following these events, the country's electoral system was changed to use proportional representation.

The first elections held under the new system took place in 1964.

SUMMARY RESULTS

Political Group	Code	Votes	% votes	Candidates	Seats
People's Progressive Party ✅	PPP	93,085	42.63%	29	20
People's National Congress	PNC	89,501	40.99%	35	11
The United Force	TUF	35,771	16.38%	34	4
Total Valid Votes		**218,357**	**100%**	**98**	**35**