

LIONEL FORMAN writes on

Ray Alexander's Winning Election

"It is a stock practice of Communists to keep on seeking election. They like to stultify the workings of parliament and the democratic system by obliging the government repeatedly to prevent their nominees from coming to the house." (The Minister of Justice Swart, 9th March, 1954).

THIS thoroughly undemocratic Communist habit of keeping on getting an overwhelming majority of votes in a free election is infuriating the Nats and delighting the people. Nothing is more sure than that Ray Alexander, the candidate described by Swart as a Communist, will win the Cape Western By-Election.

Interest is lively and all the signs—even long before the election—showed that the electors will support Ray as solidly as they did Kahn, Bunting and Carneson. Meetings are large and enthusiastic—reports that this or that meeting has been the largest election meeting in the history of a place have come in so often as to be monotonous—but the important thing is that the reports are not election hyperbole—they are fact.

Other criteria—the spontaneous letters of support coming in, the fizzle that dogs every step of the opponents—everything points to it being possible to make it the safest political prediction that Ray will top the poll.

The target electors are setting themselves is not mere victory but that Ray's figures should rival those gained by Brian Bunting (4,123) and her opponents' total should not exceed that of Bunting's opponents' (940).

FACTORS FOR VICTORY

A big advantage Ray has over her opponents is her simple uncomplicated programme—summed up as "Full immediate equality, with Africans in Parliament."

Also of great assistance to Ray's campaign are the records of her two predecessors, Sam Kahn and Brian Bunting.

There is no doubt that the electorate is completely satisfied with the way these two members of Parliament (who were expelled because they were Communists) carried out their election pro-

mises. Ray stands on the same platform as they did and has their whole-hearted support.

Third important factor is the anger of the people at the contemptuous attempt of Swart to force an unpopular candidate onto them. This put any candidate who has not been named as a Communist under a heavy disadvantage in the election.

And fourth point is that Ray is such a strong candidate. She has been well known among the voters for donkey's years and almost everywhere she goes, workers young and old get up spontaneously and tell their fellows of the struggles they have fought in the past, side by side with Ray.

"Full, immediate equality." There isn't a single voter who doesn't want that. This makes it awfully difficult for the rival candidates, who, of course, are standing for election precisely because their clothing becomes moist at the thought of immediate equality for Africans.

Let's look at them.

WHO ARE RAY'S OPPONENTS?

Both of Ray's opponents suffer under what must be a great handicap for an election candidate—they have no popular support.

Mrs. Jonker-Fiske can be dismissed as a bad joke. She calls herself Christian Coalition and wears a blanket. Her candidature defies political analysis, invites psycho-analysis.

What opposition there is comes from Advocate Gibson, the Liberal Party candidate. He hopes for votes on the plea that a vote for Ray is "wasted" because she cannot sit in Parliament. As subsidiary election material the Liberals use such things as the fact that Gibson is a lawyer and can give "legal advice", and also very delicately handled anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda. Faced with the overwhelming support for Ray's programme, Gibson has found it best to say nothing of the Liberal policy of limited franchise in the sky when you die.

While Gibson himself cannot take a very big part in the campaign for the very reason that he can't very well disavow his party's franchise policy, his election agents take this line: of course we really support Ray Alexander's poli-

cy, but she can't get into Parliament, so better than nothing let's have Gibson.

THE MOOD OF THE ELECTORATE

Cape Western has again and again shown itself to be the most advanced and politically aware constituency in South Africa. The voting figures have been consistent and completely unaffected by the changes in the tactics of the opponents of the policies of the candidates Swart describes as Communist.

The electorate has always been quick to see through every government manoeuvre against these candidates, as well as every action whose effect would be to assist the government.

No candidate who opposes the policy of complete, immediate equality will be returned in the Cape Western constituency in its present climate.

LIBERALS SHOW THEMSELVES UP

Before Sam Kahn was returned to Parliament the speeches of Liberal leader Mrs. Ballinger seemed brave and brimful of battle compared with the rancid racialism of the reactionaries.

But now the people have experienced the kind of stand made by the representatives who were expelled as Communists. And the people will be satisfied with nothing less.

The speeches of the other "Native Representatives" are pale mush compared with those of the expelled members. And the people would rather see empty seats in Parliament than seats full of pale mush.

The Liberal Party makes little pretence that it has entered the election to fight anyone other than "the Communists". Certainly it is not fighting apartheid.

A startling example is embodied in the second issue of "Liberal News" (Gibson's election leaflet). It contains 72 inches of election matter and 71 of them are devoted to an attack on Advance, and the Liberal idea of "Communism"; one inch takes a side-swipe at fascism—but only by linking it with "Communism".

WHAT OF BOYCOTT?

The boycott slogan had absolutely no success in the previous elections. It is even less realistic, has even less attraction, this time.

(Continued on page 13)



THE LYING DAYS, by Nadine Gordimer. (Gollancz).

South African literature has been growing up fast in recent years. The whole period before the last war can be regarded as the period of infancy. There was an occasional precocious flash of genius, but on the whole South Africa produced few and bad books. Social and political questions were evaded, or treated with the tame conventionality. The mass of the South African people were ignored or introduced as part of the colourful local scenery.

"Cry the Beloved Country" marked the beginning of adolescence. During the post-war years the real problems and tasks of the South African writer have been recognised. With varying degrees of success, several authors have tried to depict the realities of present-day South Africa.

Where they have tried, Nadine Gordimer has succeeded. With *The Lying Days*, South African literature has come of age.

Nadine Gordimer has been known through her short stories as a writer with brilliant powers of description and great feeling for atmosphere. *The Lying Days* has these virtues and a great deal more. With ruthless insight, Miss Gordimer has demonstrated the anatomy of urban middle-class White society in South Africa. She has shown, on the one hand, the moribund "British" community, inhibited, bigoted and ignorant, existing in a vegetable unawareness of the living Africa. With them are contrasted the young intellectuals, rootless, lost and afraid, wanting desperately to make a better South Africa but not knowing how to set about it. No Non-European characters feature prominently in the book, but there is no compromise with the myth of "White South Africa." The Whites are firmly placed in their context as a part of many-coloured South Africa.

Miss Gordimer has succeeded in conveying all this without sermonising, without sociological digressions, through a vividly realised personal story. The characters are not, perhaps, all equally well drawn, but at least three emerge

solid and memorable at the end of the book — the heroine, Helen Shaw, her mother and her friend Joel Aaron.

Read this book; it is a memorable experience and it is the yardstick by which future South African novels will be judged. A.O.D.

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RAY ALEXANDER—(Continued from page 5)

Boycotters have argued that the government want a white "representative" so that Africans can be bluffed that they have some democracy. But the frantic ass the government has been forced to make of itself to keep Ray out makes the argument that they want her in Parliament look very silly indeed.

For this reason the boycotters are weaker than ever. The freedom of action which has been allowed to African National Congressmen to decide for themselves has led to a situation where a large number of influential Congressmen — not only in the constituency but throughout the country — have come out for Ray. In fact the boycott is now pretty well limited to the highly dis-

credited Unity Movement. And even they content themselves mainly with attacks on Fiske and Gibson, for attacks on Ray's meetings, they have found, can be dangerous.

THE PEOPLE SAY

Let anyone who doubts how the people feel about this election look at some of the letters which have been coming in since Ray's candidacy was announced. They are written with all the beauty so often found when deeply-felt sentiments are expressed in a language not one's own.

"The news came to my heart and I was mad with joy," wrote a woman.

"We know that what is honey to us is a bitter pill to the government," said another.

"We congratulate her for her beauty — it is her deeds which are beautiful." was one line of a verse to Ray.

The words of one African farmer: "Her name is found among those wrongfully restricted from sowing seeds of love," are unconsciously complemented by another. "We should send Ray Alexander to Parliament because it is a plot which does not yield good crops."

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