

# CONTACT

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## WHAT HAPPENED AT WORCESTER?

**W**HEN the result of the Worcester by-election was announced it showed, by some extraordinary coincidence, that the Nationalist majority had remained exactly the same as at the previous election. This confronted the political analysts with something of a problem. How were they to interpret this freak result? The problem was a testing one, but political commentators are never at a loss for long in finding a sympathetic interpretation of an election result, and soon the protagonists of both sides were hard at it, assuring their supporters that this result was the most gratifying they could have hoped for. Nationalists claimed that Worcester showed once more the undiminished support for their cause. The United Party claimed that, at last, the high-water mark of Nationalist appeal had been reached and that from now on the tide of political support could be expected to flow steadily back into its own ranks.

Observing the result from what might be termed a disinterested position and after reading some of the speeches and statements made from their platforms by both sides, it is possible to come to a conclusion completely different from either of these. It is possible to conclude that the unfortunate voters of Worcester, finding, as the election progressed, that the policies they were offered became less and less distinguishable, were, finally, completely overcome with confusion and, in desperation, decided to vote exactly as they had the time before!

Such a suggestion can be ridiculed as nonsense, but is the difference between Nationalist policy and that of the United Party not becoming more and more difficult to pinpoint the longer the U.P. remains in opposition? At Worcester Dr. Louis Steenkamp implied that the main difference between his Party's policy and that of the Nationalists was that the United Party did not place its faith in legislation but in "the inherent learning, culture and tradition of White South Africans". Questions of differences of principle did not apparently arise. The only serious dispute was over the best **means** of maintaining White South Africa's dominant position in the country. In Northern Natal, where the United Party has recently been accused of creating "blackspots", party officials have heatedly denied any responsibility. These denials have been accompanied by a total failure to oppose the removal of the "blackspots" or to put up any defence of the long-established rights to land and home which will be lost to the Africans concerned. Some time ago Mr. Strauss attacked the Government for employing increasing numbers of Non-Europeans in Government service. His cry has since been taken up by other members of his party, notably Mrs. Sannie van Niekerk, M.P. for Drakensberg, at her series of report-back meetings last year and, most recently, in "Die Pretorianer", official organ of the U.P. in Pretoria. This publication has been busy attacking the Government on the grounds that people of colour are better off under the Nationalists than they ever could have been under the U.P.

What sort of opposition is this? It is not opposition at all! It is not even appeasement! It is a deliberately unscrupulous attempt by the United Party to beat the Government at its own game and to do so by appealing to the worst instincts of the electorate. It is a policy which has no hope of success.

White South Africans of liberal inclinations often have to counter the argument that the surest way to achieve what they are after is through the United Party. Some of them are taken in and stay in the U.P. Here they have their answer. The U.P. does not get more liberal as time passes, it gets more Nationalist. In the unlikely event of the United Party defeating the Government at a General Election, and doing so on the basis of its present tendencies, would South Africa be any better off? We doubt it.