

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

INSIDE MAIL

Randall: Wants to test voters on sharing

ANTHONY HOLIDAY

PETER RANDALL is a bespectacled ex-schoolteacher. A mild-mannered former Methodist, he lives in a middle-class Johannesburg suburb with his wife and three children — two of whom attend a small private school.

Short and slightly built, his hair is unfashionably short, his soft speech has none of the orator's stentorian pitch. He is nobody's image of a gut-level rabble rouser — yet this "reluctant politician" is a General Election candidate, committed to selling to voters in the United Party stronghold of Von Brandis doctrines of socialism and nonracialism which have their echo in the Freedom Charter, espoused by the long-banned African National Congress and the Congress of Democrats.

Candidate

At first the "ad hoc" Committee of Social Democrats had hoped to put up the banned ex-priest, Cosmas Desmond as its candidate. When the Minister of Justice, Mr. Pelsler, vetoed this project, Peter Randall agreed to be nominated himself.

The Social Democrats stand for socialist land-sharing, nationalisation of other natural resources, worker participation in the decisions taken by big companies, non-racial power sharing and — perhaps most important — the belief that Whites must give up their monopoly of economic as well as political power.

These are not precepts calculated to attract a landslide vote from White hustings, nor does Peter Randall expect such a miracle. At the very most he hopes to keep his deposit.

Yet as far as Randall himself is concerned, his involvement in the election is far from quixotic. It is a serious venture designed to test the electorate's response to socialism as an alternative and a possible starting point for a new political party.

Burned

What were the turning points which led Peter Randall to this juncture in his career? On his father's side of the family, he is descended from a Kentish sergeant who came to South Africa with the 1820 settlers. His mother boasts Voortrekker blood and recalls the Boer War days when the "Tomnies" burned down the family homestead.

The son of a journalist, Peter was born in Durban in 1934 and educated at a Methodist boarding school, the clean scrubbed rigidity of which produced in him a

reaction against "education for conformism."

He gained a B.A. in History and English from the University of South Africa, taught school for four years in Natal, spent a two-year period teaching in Britain and then returned to South Africa for a two-year period teaching in Britain and then returned to South Africa for a two-year lecturing spell at the Natal Teachers' Training College.

At the end of this period, as Randall himself admitted in our interview, a kind of crisis occurred in his personal development. "I wanted to work in a broader arena. I was concerned about working for racial justice."

Leaving the world of education was something of a crisis he admits. He was young and holding down a reasonably senior job for his age. But he took the plunge and became assistant director of the South African Institute of Race Relations, a post he held from 1964 to 1969.

Then came another shift in perspectives: "I had begun to believe that it was more effective to work for change through short-term programmes. Also, I had begun to see through White liberal attitudes."

Institute

He was offered the job of director of the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society, a post which he held until the final SPROCAS report was published last year.

During his SPROCAS period, however, he continued to keep a close watch on the affairs of the institute, particularly with regard to the debate on whether it should co-operate with the Schlebusch Commission.

Significantly, two of the workers for the Social Democrat campaign, Mr. Horst Kleinschmidt, his election agent, and Mr. Jonathan Paton, a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, were among those who favoured a "non-co-operation" stance by the institute vis-à-vis the Schlebusch issue.

Randall himself has refused to give evidence to the 10-man commission and has been brought to court as a result.

The hearing has been postponed 10 times and he is due to appear again on June 20.

He speaks warmly of the supportive role played by his wife, Isabel, during this pilgrimage towards the world of active politics. "She always backed me up and was always prepared to take risks."

He says a domestic tragedy — the sudden death in his cot of a three-month-old son — was probably another turning point in his growth towards socialism.

"It helped to make me see that living was about fundamental things like life and death, joy and sorrow and not about affluence or working towards a position of privilege and prestige."

This kind of statement and the shocked intensity with which he speaks about the hardships suffered by old people living in "human batteries" in Von Brandis show that his socialism, like his Christianity, is much more an experiential than an intellectual affair.

Love

He has been influenced by the writings of the Protestant theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and by the Left-wing South American Roman Catholic Bishop, Helder Camara. But he has never read Marx or Lenin.

He regards himself as a "non-denominational Christian." He sees the commandments to love God and one's neighbour as calls to action, rather than as subjects for meditation.

In 1972, the Department of the Interior confiscated his passport, thus preventing him from taking up a study grant which would have taken him to Britain and America.

He has applied to have it returned three times, predictably without success. This event too, he says, pushed him further into the political arena. He has never before been a member of a political party. The closest he ever came to joining one was in the late 50s when he did some work for the now defunct Liberal Party.

For a person of such minimal experience in electioneering and party politics, Von Brandis is a pretty tough nut for the Social Democrats to try their milk teeth on. To retain his R600 deposit, Peter Randall needs to get one fifth of the votes cast for the United Party's Mr. Derick de Villiers, who will undoubtedly keep the seat.

Mr. De Villiers' 1970 majority was 2 632 votes when he fought a Nationalist. The constituency now has 14 416 voters, but if Von Brandis runs true to form, many of these will not come to the polls. To be on the safe side the Social Democrats must aim at getting between 2 000 and 2 500 votes.

For a candidate without a party machine which would enable him to do even a superficial canvass this is a pretty tall order.

But the Social Democrat effort does have political interest. Peter Randall's showing on April 24 will test whether White voters are still susceptible to ideas

which have been anathema to officially sanctioned White politics for the past 14 years.

(Report by Anthony Holiday, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.)



Peter Randall . . . serious venture.

Randall hits at White slums R.D.M. 8/4/74

Political Reporter
THE SOCIAL Democrat candidate in the Von Brandis constituency, Johannesburg, Mr. Peter Randall, yesterday hit out at the conditions under which White tenement dwellers live in the constituency.

He said he had been horrified by the conditions affecting old people in the area. The Social Democrats would launch a poster campaign to draw attention to the issue.

The slogan on the posters reads: "The Eskimos used to freeze their old people to death. We bury ours alive

in places like Von Brandis." Mr. Randall said working class Whites, pensioners and widows in the constituency were victims of economic exploitation.

"We have found in suburbs like Braamfontein, Doornfontein and Mayfair, people housed in unkempt tenements with communal toilet and washing facilities."

It was significant that such conditions could exist in Africa's richest city where White privilege was firmly entrenched.

(Report by Anthony Holiday, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.)

HEALTH CARE 'FOR ALL'

MR. PETER RANDALL, Social Democrat Committee candidate for Von Brandis, has attacked health services in South Africa and proposed a comprehensive national health scheme along socialist lines.

In a second special bulletin, Mr. Randall said that access to health care was the right of every individual, and to deprive anyone of this was an "absolute injustice."

"A person is deprived when he cannot reach health services, cannot afford them, is ignorant of them, or when they are available but inappropriate to his needs."

As the majority of South Africans could not afford to pay for their health care, a national health service had to provide a basic service to everyone without distinction.

Mr. Randall said Blacks in this country suffered

most from "the South African way of life."

"They are discriminated against in almost every sphere of health care."

"Old age hospitals and homes should be built and run by the State for every senior citizen, and every disabled and infirm person should be cared for by the State."

(Report by L. Pringle, 47 Sauer Street, Johannesburg.)

Anglo guards stop pamphleteers

Staff Reporter
SECURITY guards were posted at the Anglo American Corporation head offices in Main Street, Johannesburg, to stop campaigners on behalf of Mr Peter Randall, Social Democratic can-

didate for Von Brandis, handing out leaflets yesterday. They were protesting over the Schlesinger takeover. The pamphlet condemned the growth of monopoly capitalism.

Mr Randall objected to the take-over because monopolies forced out smaller competitors, and then raised prices. "I wanted to highlight the fact that there is a problem," he said.

Backing for Cosmas election move

Staff Reporter

CHIEF Gatsha Buthelezi yesterday supported the ad hoc Social-Democrat Committee which has proposed house-arrested Mr Cosmas Desmond as a candidate in the General Election.

Speaking from his home at Ngilazi, the Zulu leader said: "It will be exciting if he stands."

"A lot of young people need a political home and I support his being named to stand."

Because he had a conviction under the Suppression of Communism Act for attending a gathering, Mr Desmond would have to write to the Minister of Justice to apply for permission to stand if he decided to accept the nomination, said the convener of the Social-Democrat Committee, Mr Horst Kleinschmidt, yesterday.

Because of the Act, the group had not been able to consult Mr Desmond about standing.

Mr Kleinschmidt said Mr Peter Randall, an organiser for the Programme for Social Change, and a member of the Social-Democrat Committee, was considering making election speeches and holding meetings to try to get Mr Desmond to Parliament.

MEETINGS

This was because Mr Desmond could not be quoted, hold or attend meetings, be anywhere where Government policy was discussed, attacked, propagated or defended, or join any organisation where this was done, or publish election material in terms of his restriction orders.

Yesterday Mrs Helen Suzman, Progressive Party MP, said: "It is a symbolic gesture and it is doubtful whether it will prove very significant."

In Durban, Archbishop Denis Hurley, who knew Father Desmond as a priest, said: "At first I did not know whether to take it as a joke or seriously."

"To talk about all people participating in a democracy is fine, but it will take ages of social education to bring about."

(Report by Peter Wellman, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.)

Randall warns of war

Staff Reporter

THERE was no doubt that the South African Government was preparing for war, if not in the immediate future, then in the not too distant future, Mr Peter Randall, the Social Democratic Committee candidate in Von Brandis told 120 people in Doornfontein last night.

Speaking at his first public meeting in the constituency, which is being used as a testing ground to see whether the Social Democratic Committee should form itself into a political party, Mr Randall warned that this was the reason for the early election.

Quoting the Prime Minister, Mr Vorster, as saying that the next five years would see "our enemies doing their utmost to bring the Republic to her knees," Mr Randall said that the election was intended to clear the decks for the National Party to continue its preparations for war.

DEFENCE

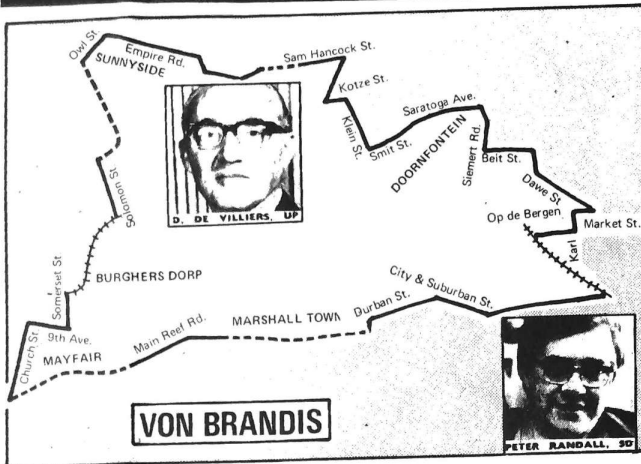
Mr Randall said that the money allocated to defence of 1973/74 was nearly R500-million, which was R110-million more than in the previous year.

Mr Randall warned that South Africans were trying to defend an indefensible social system, based on the power and privilege of a few and the poverty of the many.

Mr Randall proposed that company tax should be greatly increased, a national health scheme should be instituted, as well as a national housing scheme in terms of which "private exploitation would be phased out."

(Report by John Matlison, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.)

Meet the candidates



A safe UP seat

Staff Reporter
THE chief aim of the Social Democrat candidate in the Von Brandis constituency is to retain his deposit.

The campaign should not

be seen as an attempt to take the seat from the United Party, but as a sounding-board for the introduction of new ideas into South African politics.

The Social Democrat candidate, Mr Peter Randall, sees a threat to the society posed by a ruthless profit motive which causes prices of food to rise sharply while company profits increase unabated.

He proposes a planned economy in which the people have a role in economic decision making, rather than just a few rich and powerful men.

Fighting on a shoestring budget, and apparently not doing the canvassing which is the backbone of any election campaign, the Social Democrats do not pose a serious threat to the UP.

Delimitation added 2 704 votes from Johannesburg West and 2 786 from Jeppe. Small numbers of voters were taken from Von Brandis and added to Hillbrow, Langlaagte and Rosettenville, leaving the UP position considerably strengthened.

Von Brandis now has 14 416 voters, representing a loss of 11 per cent. How delimitation affects the So-

cial Democrats, it is impossible to say.

The United Party candidate Mr Derick de Villiers, 55, joined the army after completing his legal studies at the University of Cape Town. After the war he entered the foreign service, becoming first secretary at South Africa House in London.

He was a member of the South African delegation to the United Nations in 1960 before leaving the foreign service to go into the uranium industry.

MAJORITY

In 1970 he was elected MP for Von Brandis by a majority of 2 632 votes against a Nationalist named Mr J. J. de Villiers.

Mr Randall, 38, has a senior teachers' diploma from the Natal Teachers' College as well as a BA from the University of South Africa.

He was a school teacher and a lecturer at the Natal Teachers' College before founding the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society — Spro-cas.

He is now an organiser of the Programme for Social Change, which grew out of Spro-cas. He is also editor of the Ravan Press.

(Report by John Matlison, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.)

Share wealth

THE Social Democrat Committee candidate for Von Brandis, Mr Peter Randall, announced last night that his basic principles were that people should be able to share in the political life and have a fair share of the wealth of the country.

(Report by L. Pringle, 47 Sauer Street, Johannesburg.)

Candidates are in voting quandary

Political Reporter
SEVERAL election candidates on the Reef have decided to vote for parties other than their own on April 24 — because they are registered in constituencies where their party has no candidate. A blow for those who have

been claiming a secret "pact" between the United Party and the Progressives is the news that the Progressive provincial candidate in Parktown, Mrs Thelma Henderson, has decided to vote for Mr Peter Randall of the Social Democratic Committee against the UP in Von Brandis, where she is registered.

By coincidence, Mr Randall is registered in Parktown, and has decided to vote Progressive for Mrs Henderson and her parliamentary running mate, Mr Rene de Villiers.

Mr de Villiers himself faces the prospect of voting for the candidate of another party in Randburg. He said today: "I believe there is an obligation on every citizen to use his vote, not waste it. As I am registered in Randburg,

my vote will go to the enlightened candidate, Mr Dick Enthoven 't Hooft, even though he belongs to the wrong party and his political philosophy and my own differ considerably."

"At the same time, of course, I will have the satisfaction of voting against the National Party, which I regard as important."

Mr Gordon Waddell, the Progressive candidate in Johannesburg North, lives

White system 'falling apart'

Political Reporter

THE White political system in South Africa is beginning to disintegrate, Mr Peter Randall, the Social Democrat candidate in the Von Brandis constituency, said yesterday.

Speaking at a lunch-hour meeting of about 30 people, Mr Randall said the United Party did not have a clear-cut alternative to offer the voters and the Progressive Party largely represented the interests of privileged urbanised Whites.

DEBATE

There was a vacuum in the spectrum of White politics which needed to be filled by a party which talked about the economic system.

There needed to be a voice somewhere in the political debate which told South Africans to reject attempts by "truthless and unscrupulous men" to gain a monopoly of all economic and political power.

He said the Social Democratic programme was not something new in the country's political history. Socialist political ideas had been expressed by Black political movement since the 1920s.

(Report by Anthony Hilder, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.)

in the Sandton constituency where he has a choice of UP, Nationalist and Democratic Party candidates.

He said: "Obviously I will exercise my vote, but it is private and I do not intend to disclose how I will vote."

ASSURED

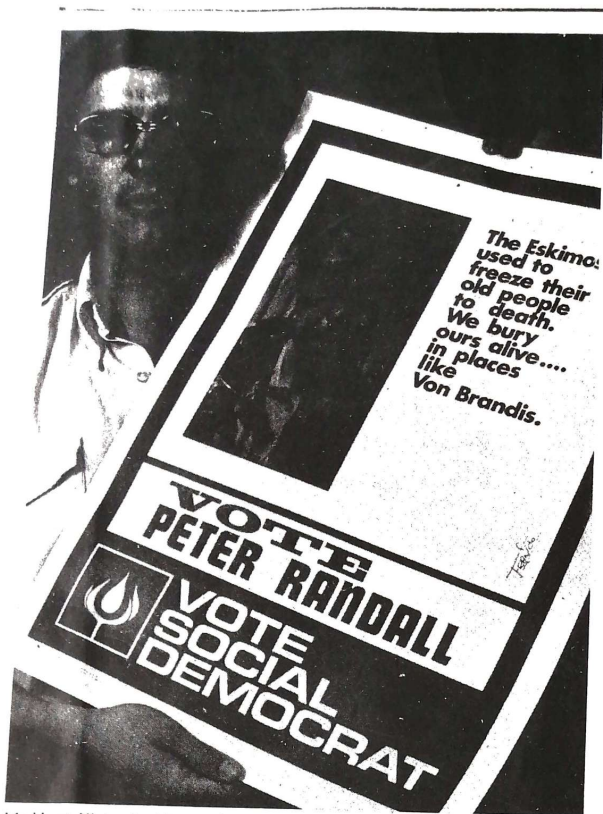
The Progressive candidate in Hillbrow, Mr Ray Barrell, is registered in the Maraisburg constituency and said today he would probably vote for Mr D Christie of the UP against a Nationalist opponent.

Mr Randall said he had at first been inclined to spoil his vote, but he had approached Mr de Villiers, who had given assurances of his support for those who refused to give evidence to the Schlesinger Commission, and on the question of communism and censorship.

Because of these assurances, he had decided to vote for Mr de Villiers and Mrs Henderson.

(Report by L. Pringle, 47 Sauer Street, Johannesburg.)

THE STAR 9/4/1974



Mr Horst Kleinschmidt, an election agent for the Social Democratic candidate Von Brandis, Mr Peter Randall, holds up an example of the posters that were torn down in Johannesburg at the weekend.

Election posters are ripped down

Staff Reporter

POSTERS supporting the Social Democrat candidate in Von Brandis, Mr Peter Randall, were torn down in Jan Smuts Avenue and other areas of Johannesburg at the weekend.

Social Democrat campaigners spent the past few nights replacing a number of posters, which protest at the slum conditions in which elderly Whites live in the Von Brandis constituency.

They also planned to keep watch to see if vandals turned up again to remove the posters.

The slogan on the posters

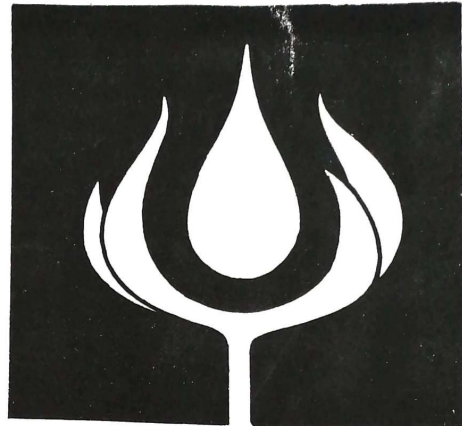
reads: "The Eskimos used to freeze their old people to death. We bury ours alive in places like Von Brandis."

The picture shows an old White woman who lives in a run-down tenement in the constituency.

Mr Horst Kleinschmidt, election agent for Mr Peter Randall, said he had no idea who had removed the posters. "All we found left were pieces of string," he added.

He described the posters as "a protest against the exploitation under which the aged lived".

Report by Jennifer Hyman, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.



Call for new thinking in SA

Political Reporter

SOUTH AFRICA needs a new direction to get it beyond arguments about race to the basic issues at stake, claims the first of a series of bulletins put out by the Social Democratic Committee, whose candidate, Mr Peter Randall, is challenging the United Party in the Von Brandis constituency.

The bulletin styles the MP for Von Brandis, Mr Derrick De Villiers, as a "silver-haired Young Turk", unable to challenge the stranglehold exercised by his moribund party.

It asks whether Mr De Villiers has ever raised his voice against UP participation on the Schlebusch Commission, which, the bulletin claims, has harmed South Africa both internally and externally.

The bulletin says the Social Democrats will use the election campaign to highlight some of the ills in South African society and to make serious proposals for a new direction.

It says two basic principles underlie the Social Democrat proposals: That all people should be able to share effectively in the country's political life, and that everybody should have a fair share in the country's wealth.

(Report by Anthony Holiday, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.)

10.4.74
The Government was preparing for war, if not in the immediate future then in the "not so distant future," said Mr Peter Randall, Social Democrat Committee candidate in Von Brandis last night. He cited as justification for this belief statements by Government members such as: "We will fight in the streets" and "We will call for the blood of our people." **STAR**

Give all a say, urges Randall

Political Reporter

MR PETER RANDALL, the Social Democratic candidate who is standing in the Von Brandis constituency, yesterday called for the nationalisation of land and other resources in South Africa.

Mr Randall told about 200 students at the University of the Witwatersrand that when the Social Democratic Committee evolved into a fully fledged political party, one of its first aims would be to achieve the nationalisation of the country's natural resources, like land, and fight for greater participation by ordinary people in the affairs of big companies.

"I think there is some truth in the gibe that one day we are all going to be employed either by the Anglo American Corporation or

by the State," he told a questioner.

He said the real political debate in South Africa was not taking place in Parliament, but in the growing confrontation between the structures of White power and emergent groups in Black society like the homeland leaders and the Black labour movement.

All the major White political parties tended to place the relation between economic and political power on the periphery of their thinking rather than at the centre, where it belonged, Mr Randall told his audience.

"The choice in Von Brandis is between clinging to the old, outworn policies of the United Party, and striking out in a bold new direction," he said.

(Report by Anthony Holiday, 171 Main Street, Johannesburg.)



The Social Democratic candidate in Von Brandis, Mr Peter Randall, addressing students at the University of the Witwatersrand yesterday.

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