

More than 27 years after the event, the story of a march that nearly turned into a massacre is revealed . . .

The men

who stopped a bloodbath



YOUNG LEADER . . . Philip Kgosana is carried shoulder-high during the protest march in 1960.



TERBLANCHE . . . words rather than force.

Captain 'Rambo' gets his marching orders

SunStar Reporters

CAPTAIN Ockie van Schalkwyk cut an imposing figure. Tall and moustachioed, he was a familiar presence outside the gates of the University of the Western Cape.

Standing with his men, he would watch as youths marched around the campus shouting slogans, sometimes throwing stones.

And then he would act, ordering his men to fire teargas or make sjambok charges. Now he has been relieved of his position as commander of the Bellville Reaction Unit and will in future devote his time to his permanent post as staff officer in the office of the District Commandant.

This move has been described by a PFP MP as a "whittling away of the role of the Rambo-style policeman".

Mr Justice Rose-Innes last week described Captain van Schalkwyk's refusal to give reasons for the arrest of a printer as "high-handed and unacceptable".

Ordering the immediate release of the printer, the judge criticised Captain van Schalkwyk's re-



CAPTAIN VAN SCHALKWYK . . . away from the action

fusal to tell the printer under what authority he was acting. Instead, the policeman had simply entered the printing works and threatened to arrest the printer and close the business.

Two months earlier Mr Acting Justice Viljoen had condemned Captain van Schalkwyk's use of "unreasonable force" in shooting a 14-year-old Belville schoolboy in the back in 1985.

In another case this year, Van Schalkwyk admitted shooting a 17-year-old girl in the leg without warning her to stand still. The teenager was walking, not running, at the time.

In each case, Captain van Schalkwyk's actions have cost the State money.

The shot boy was awarded R15 000 damages; the girl received R10 000 in an out-of-court settlement; the Minister of Law and Order had to pay costs in the application for the printer's release.

His actions also came under the spotlight when, during an operation which he commanded, an entire congregation was arrested at a service at St Nicholas's Anglican Church in Elsies River.

Police sources maintain that Captain van Schalkwyk is a good policeman and said he had been replaced because of complaints that he was not diplomatic enough in unrest situations. They felt he performed his other tasks as a staff officer well and said he was being "tried by newspapers" since he had been replaced.

Mr Jan van Eck, MP for Claremont and member of the PFP's Unrest Monitoring Committee, said the action taken against Captain van Schalkwyk showed the role of the "Rambo-style" policeman was being whittled down and signalled a return to the "traditional law-and-order policeman".

However, he added, there were a number of other policemen who had acted similarly in the past who had not been withdrawn: "Captain van Schalkwyk was not the only person who has exceeded his powers."

"We have been told that we have been giving the police a bad name, to which we have replied: It's these policemen who are giving the police the bad name."

"But I am very glad to see this (Captain van Schalkwyk's replacement) happen. The extent to which the role of the provocateur security-force member or Rambo-style policeman is being whittled down is illustrated by the action taken against Captain van Schalkwyk."

"It is also illustrated by the fact that traditional law-and-order policemen have been more prevalent in Western Cape townships over the past two months," Mr van Eck said.

Captain van Schalkwyk was moved from his post as Reaction Unit commander by Brigadier Ronnie van der Westhuizen, Divisional Commissioner of Police for the Western Cape, who had taken over the area earlier this year.

A career detective, he has, in the few months that he has been in command, taken a fresh look at policing in the Western Cape, and has endeavoured to improve the image of the police force in deprived communities.

Jon Qwelane
A CLOSE shave in South Africa's political history was recalled this week when one of the main actors in the drama, Mr Philip Kgosana, discovered just how close to tragedy he and the 30 000 people he was leading had come.

I contacted Mr Kgosana at his home in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Thursday night.
Mr Kgosana, now employed by the United Nations, recalled the Pass Laws protest march he led on March 30, 1960, nine days after 69 people had been shot dead in Sharpeville and several others in Langa during similar marches.

PHILIP KGOSANA: Young leader persuaded crowd of 25 000 to obey police request

orders to take stern punitive action — Mr Kgosana said the action finally vindicated the Pan-Africanist Congress, which had embarked on the first phase of the "Status Campaign" with

the marches of 1960.
Mr Kgosana, then 21 years old, was a first-year Economics and Commerce student at the University of Cape Town. He was also regional secretary of the PAC in the Western Cape.

Arlene Getz
OUTSIDE the police station in central Cape Town, the street was jammed with 30 000 black protesters. Inside, Colonel Ignatius Terblanche was receiving harsh Ministerial orders on how to deal with them.

IGNATIUS TERBLANCHE: Officer prayed for help after hearing order from Minister

Colonel Terblanche put down the telephone and bowed his head in prayer.
"Dear Lord, I'm not capable of handling this situation. I'm handing it over to You," he said.

He recalled his confrontation with the police, but did not know until this week just how close things had been.
Told that the Government had belatedly promoted retired Colonel Ignatius Terblanche (84) to the rank of honorary brigadier of the SAP — an honour denied him after he had chosen to talk rather than obey

"When we arrived at Caledon Square I told Terblanche that I did not want to talk to the police because they had let our people down. They had just killed people in Sharpeville and in Langa, and they had also arrested our leaders.
"On three or four occasions the South African Police had clearly shown us they were insincere in their dealings with us and our people, and we had had enough of it. That is why I made it clear we wanted to talk directly to Frans Erasmus, who was Minister of Police," Mr Kgosana said.

According to Mr Kgosana, Colonel Terblanche conferred with the then Commissioner of Police, General Rademeyer, and told him about the PAC delegation's demand to see Mr Erasmus.
"Terblanche came back and told me he had fixed up an appointment with Erasmus. He said I must tell our people to disperse and then come back for the meeting with Erasmus.
"Our orders from PAC president Mangaliso Sobukwe were very clear. We were to disperse when ordered to do so by the police. There was to be no violence on our part, because we did not know how to use violence.
"In other words, even if the police had used violence we were not to respond under any circumstances. Our march was a just protest.
"After talking to Rademeyer I kept my side of the bargain and asked the people to disperse peacefully. They went away, and I later came back to meet Erasmus. His side of the bargain was not kept. I was promptly locked up and spent the next nine months behind bars without trial," Mr Kgosana said.

Political observers view the ceremony, as well as this week's replacement of Cape Town riot policeman Captain Ockert van Schalkwyk as a signal that excessive security force violence will not be condoned.
Although Mr Vlok stressed that the colonel was being honoured for his post-retirement work rather than to right past wrongs, PFP MP Jan van Eck said it was impossible to interpret the promotion as anything other than a signal to the force.
Brigadier Terblanche himself was reluctant to discuss the matter.
The promotion was a reward for my faithful service," he smiled.
Nor was he willing to be drawn into a discussion on whether today's police should adopt his policy of trying to avoid violence.
During a lengthy interview he emerged as a sprightly, intelligent and independent soul.
Although he now supports President P W Botha, he was no fan of former Prime Ministers Hendrik Verwoerd and DF Malan.
"To me, their removal of black voting rights was not the act of a Christian," he says.
For him, these Christian principles are extremely important. As a boy, he had intended becoming a minister of religion but had to abandon the idea when the sudden death of his schoolteacher sister left him without funds.
After a spell as a book-keeper, he wrote the police entrance exam, passed with 100 percent and joined the force at 20 because it offered good prospects.
He stayed in spite of many subsequent job offers and in 1950 was almost killed in political

unrest at Witsieshoek in the Free State.
"Even then I was trying to avoid using violence," he recalls.
Brigadier Terblanche vividly recalls details of the march that shook the country in 1960.
He remembers how he protested when Mr Erasmus telephoned orders to him from Parliament. Even today he refuses to disclose the exact nature of these instructions.
He also balked at obeying an order to station armoured cars outside Parliament in case the soldiers on board opened fire with machine guns.
"I said to the Minister: 'Please sir, I'm in full control', and he said: 'Carry out my order'.
The officer, who earlier had sent 25 policemen to the basement of Parliament to protect the Seat of Government, sought out march leader Mr Kgosana, at the time regional secretary of the Pan-Africanist Congress.
When he found the 23-year-old activist, who appeared dressed in shorts, he persuaded him to order the marchers to disperse.
In return, he would arrange for Mr Kgosana to have an afternoon meeting with the Minister.
Mr Kgosana agreed. Accompanied by a small police escort, the marchers returned to their homes to continue the countrywide strike already paralysing some industries.
Colonel Terblanche later broke the strike by cordoning off Cape Town's townships and preventing food deliveries. When supplies began to run low, he agreed to lift the siege.
Meanwhile, when Mr Kgosana returned for his meeting, the Minister ordered his arrest. Mr Kgosana spent nine months in jail before being released. He later fled the country.
His arrest deeply disturbed the then Colonel Terblanche.
"I was hurt because it stamped me as breaking my promise," he said.

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