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BOY SCOUTS OF SOUTH AFRICA: NATAL AND KWAZULU AREA

MACK OMEGA SHANGE ANNUAL COMPETITION RALLY 1986

Address by Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi
Patron: KwaZulu Bureau of the Zulu Language and Culture
Chief Minister of KwaZulu, President of Inkatha and
Chairman, The South African Black Alliance

KING CETSHWAYO'S 20 SEPTEMBER 1986
AMPHITHEATRE, ONDINI

"Indonsa Yokusa", the Master of Ceremonies, the Chief Scout, the Chief Girl Guide, the Area Commissioner Mr. Mervyn Smith, the Assistant Area Commissioner Mr. Shabalala, the KwaZulu Boy Scouts Officer, other Officers of the Boy Scouts Movement and the Girl Guides, the Honourable Minister of Education and Culture Dr. Dhlomo, other Ministers present, other distinguished guests present, Mr. P.G. Gumede the President of Inyanda, teachers, students and pupils present.

I am glad I was able to be here today at this Mack Omega Shange Annual Competition Rally, despite my very demanding schedule. I knew Mr. Shange well: it was I who gave them the praise name of "Umdengentunga" when he with over 5 000 cubs, scouts, parents and many other Blacks, visited KwaKhethomthandayo Royal Residence on the 4 September 1965 for the Investiture of my late cousin, His Majesty King Cyprian Bhekuzulu Nyangayezizwe ka Solomon as a boy scout. We worked very closely with him and I cannot remember one national event which occurred in his lifetime where we did not work very closely with him. He was a remarkable man. He: had : gifts which made him stand out amongst his fellow men. He 'was as you remember a short man who towered above most of those who worked with him. I was privileged to be there on that occasion for the investiture of my cousin the King as a scout. '

I remember only one other boy scouts rally which I attended in Pietermaritzburg about ten years ago. Not that I have not been invited. I have received invitations many times but I have just not been able to attend other equally important boy scouts events

of this magnitude owing to my very heavy and demanding schedule.

Our present Chairman of the KwaZulu Public Service Commission, Mr. C.W. S. Mncwanga, was present on that occasion as Scout Master of the 1st Vocational Training School troop. He was then Assistant

Magistrate in Nongoma and was the first Black to hold such a position in this region.

I give this background to indicate that we here regard the Boy Scouts Movement as an important activity which has our moral Support. We have not been able to give it as much financial backing as we would like to give it owing to the constraints we have to contend with within a very limited budget. We believe that in life nothing is more important than competition. This is why we have all come here to give you moral Support at this vyear's Mack Omega Shange Annual Competition Rally.

The Boy Scouts Movement has been like a beacon of light in a dark room in all the years our country has been blighted by apartheid and racial segregation. It has been one of the few organisations which were truly multi-racial. I recall the threats that were directed at it by the founding fathers of our apartheid society in the late fourties and fifties. It is a miracle that it managed to survive in spite of the way the powers-that-be in South Africa felt about it. It was always looked at as a foreign development which needed to be subjected to some radical surgery. I recall that our people were even encouraged to found their own youth organisations, similar to the Voortrekker Movement, by those who frowned on the Boy Scouts Movement. Through the Boy Scouts Movement while we were being sepaired here from our fellow South Africans, we appreciated the fact that we were joined not only Wwith our -fellow South - Africans - of all race groups through the Boy Scouts Movement, but that we were linked internationally with the ~ International Community through the Boy Scouts Movement.

â\200\234his weekend you have come together to meet each other as members of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movement. You have come to. be Together and to enjoy your weekend of fun, laughter and to enjoy Your: Â«â\200\234work, â\200\230here. So I am very pleased to be able to be with vyou here today as I have already indicated. Wherever young people gather I am reminded of the new hope which you as a new generation promise to bring with you into the many walks of life into which vyou will be moving sooner or later. These years .of vyour llife should be care-free years: years in which you are seeking education; years in which you play together and years in which you should have the freedom from the heavy burdens of adulthood. South African Black vouth have the joy of being young. They do have certain freedoms which adults do not have but South Africa's youth is burdened like youth in other countries are not burdened. They are burdened with deeper concerns and respeonsibilities which are thrust upon them by the suffering of their people.

It lis therefore with no apclogy that I talk to you briefly today about things that really matter, about important things, and abocut your responsibility to your people and to your country. IEÂfsI=talk as I do, understand that as a Black leader, I am bound to give a

Black perspective. I cannot get out of my Black skin whose colour

I have been reminded of all the years of my life. I believe in one South Africa. I believe that this country is one. I believe that both Black and White share a common destiny. However, we are nevertheless still bogged down in so much poverty, in so much ignorance and in so much disease because of the racist policies of our country.

Everyone of you knows the meaning of poverty. If your own families do not experience poverty, you will know the poverty that Â° your relatives experience, that your friends experience and that Black people in your neighbourhoods experience. And you are all aware of the anger which the oppression which leads to poverty evokes in us. Our anger is your anger. All of you come here from schools and neighbourhoods where the youth are informed about what young people among you and young people elsewhere are doing to express anger in violence. There is no one among you who does not know that in South Africa today even young people have turned to use violence and to employ the hideous necklacing of people as an expression of their violence. . Everywhere around you, you can perceive how anger is dehumanising people and distorting their very souls. Only this week, Mr. Alfred Nzo, the Secretary-General of the External Mission of 'ANC openly blessed exacution of Blacks by Blacks through the "necklace". He stated that the "necklace" has the backing of the External Mission of ANC that should be used by Blacks against other Blacks who "collaborate" with the South African Government. He is quoted as having said: "Whatever the people decide to wuse to eliminate those enemy elements is their decision. If they decide to use necklacing we support it." This view clashes with Mr. Oliver Tambo's views which he gave when he attended the Non-Aligned Movement Conference in Lusaka very recently. Mr. Tambo, the President of the ANC Mission in Exile, was quoted as regretting the use of the "necklace" because he stated that it put them, i.e. the External Mission of the ANC, in a bad light.

In this situation of Black anger in which violence is erupting, we have all to decide for ourselves what our own stand will be. We have all to decide what our own responsibilities are and we have to understand what our own duties are. The harshness of an environment forces these decisions on us. I want to talk briefly today about young people's responses to this harsh environment. There are some things I will have to ask you about because you are the young people experiencing them, but there are other things which I must tell you about because !I am a Black leader who wields the authority of the people and who is charged with the responsibility of leading them.

As a Black leader I tell you that there is no responsibility higher than your responsibility to retain your humanity as young boys and girls embroiled in the struggle for liberation. Every Black who becomes dehumanised helps apartheid to do its dirty work. Apartheid has always treated Blacks as a species of the human race which lis subservient and which is not fit to take its place in the fullness of society. Apartheid has always relegated Blacks to

â\200\234 â\200\234inferior positions; it has excluded Blacks from the best that there

is . in' . the country and apartheid has always attempted to give we Blacks an inferiority complex about ourselves. It has attempted to turn us into creatures who do not demand the goodness and fullness oL .. life. If apartheid has treated us in this way and we allow apartheid to dehumanise us, wWe are bowing before the forces of apartheid and granting apartheid that final victory which will shame the nation.

The second most important thing that you have to learn as young Blacks is that noble ends cannot be pursued by foul means. The Black struggle for liberation has always been a struggle for decency, for justice, for freedom, and for democracy. The Black Struggle has always called on Blacks to reject the racial hatred, the fear and the violent imposition of the will of one section of the population against the rest of the population. If we accept hatred and racial fear and if we accept violence as a means of imposing our will on others, we will behave no better than apartheid bosses have always behaved. History calls on us now as never before to preserve our humanity and to employ the power of decency in the pursuit of the time-honoured and noble aims and objectives of the Black struggle for lliberation. We are all longing for a non-racial society. This is what the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba is about. We believe 'in starting our quest for a just society right where we are in our region.

Tyrants are cowards who need to protect themselves by brutal force and who need to impose their will on others by brutal force. Cowardice breeds fear and it is fear that llashes out. Valour, courage and true strength restrain the violence which always threatens to emerge when people are angry. We are justifiably angry, but we should combine our anger with our valour and our bravery to pursue noble ends through noble means. True strength and true valour has no need to bluster and pesture, to burn, loot and kill. Real power does not have to be employed in the dark hours of the night. Real power rises up amongst the people to bring the people together and to pursue the aims and objectives of the Black struggle for liberation in democratic opposition to apartheid. Real power does not have to be employed to get Black to kill Black, nor even for Blacks to kill Whites and Whites to kill Blacks. Real Black power is not used to divide the Black people in the struggle for liberation. The use of brutality should only be found amongst the weak because they do not have the power of the people behind them. Black and White are so interdependent in South Africa that it would be a shameful tragedy if we failed to produce a2 non-racial just society in South Africa.

I thank God that the majority of young Black South Africans know what I say is absolutely true. I thank God for the hope that there is in the new generation. I thank God for their strength. I always feel so at home amongst groups of young Blacks because my struggle is their struggle; my hopes are their hopes; their struggle is my Struggle and their hopes are my hopes. I am glad to be amongst you

today because you as boy scouts and girl guides have dedicated yourselves to a noble organisation which throughout its history has always - had a proud track record of pursuing that which is decent. This spirit of Girl Guides and Boy Scouts is in your custody and I feel sure that you will prove to be worthy custodians of the spirit of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movement which reaches out in the service of others as much as it looks inwards to the development of your characters, and the development of your potential as worthwhile human beings.

Every decent society has a network of decent institutions and human life is lived out in these institutions. If we have a coal fire in front of us in which all the goals are glowing red, what would happen if I took one coal out of the fire and put it aside? You know what would happen. Its glow would disappear and it would turn cold. That is what happens to human beings when they take themselves out of the institutions of society. Every young person who is lost to his or her family is like that piece of coal. Every young person who does not participate in the social life of his or her people, or who does not participate in the religious life of his or her people, is like that piece of coal which loses its glow and which gets cold when it is taken out of the fire. ~

God has created people to be together. We are not beasts of the field which can roam the hills and the valleys, or which can roam the forests caring for themselves. We are the children of God, made in the image of God and as children of God we are created to be with other people, to share with them and to labour with them and to be with each other whether in gladness or in sorrow. We come into our lives on our own and we finally depart this life on our own but while we live, we do not belong to ourselves. We belong to God and to our people. We do not worship God on our own. We join together in prayer and in song and the singing of hymns. We are not joyous on our own. We join with others in laughter and dancing and singing. And in times of adversity, we also need to join together with others in the pursuit of solutions to our human problems. Together we live, alone we die.

I want you to think about this idea that people belong together and that there is a danger in being alone, and I want you to think about it deeply. When you start thinking about it, - you will - realise that being with people in itself is not even sufficient. Everyone of you as a young girl or as a young boy is aware that the boy or girl who flirts and skips from one girl or one boy to another, constant to none and loving none, is somebody you do not respect. And so it is with organisations. We as human beings can always find fault with an organisation in which we are, but to flit - from one organisation to another, ever running away from the problems of being together, is running away from life itself. Fathers who abandon their wives and children, mothers who abandon their husbands and their children, and children who abandon their brothers -and their sisters and their parents have not yet learnt the meaning of being human. "To be human and to be nobly human is

to sit in love with those around you and to work through the problems that confront you. To be nobly human is to conquer your own ever present temptation not to be loyal. To be nobly human is to work patiently in love with others who are facing that temptation you yourselves must have experienced. To be human is therefore more than just being together. Being human is striving to make the togetherness of mankind more rewarding and more perfect and more enduring. :

This brings me to a very important point I want to make today. You have entered the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movement, and you are here today to be together. The courses that you undergo in your Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movement, the assignments which are given to you, should be striven for in a way that makes each of you important and in a way which makes your own Boy Scout or Girl Guide group more important. When you have done this and that time eventually arrives when you outgrow the age group of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, you will move naturally to other organisations and find a rewarding home wherever you go among people.

And this brings me to the third point about living together as people. It is not only sufficient for us to belong to a group. I have stressed that it is also important that we work for the good of the group we are in. The third thing that is important is that we should always seek to develop ourselves as human beings in the group in which we find ourselves. Life is a progression and in it we move from one phase of life to another. The most vital movement we ever undertake is the movement out of childhood into adulthood. As you Girl Guides and Boy Scouts begin approaching your maturer years and as you begin approaching adulthood, you will have to leave the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movement behind you, but if you are a good Girl Guide or a good Boy Scout, if you strove to express the spirit of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movement, and if you were a true participant in its activities, you will move naturally to other organisations and play your role there. But when you move, you will move not as somebody who has abandoned your Boy Scouts Movement or Girl Guides Movement but as somebody who always looks back to it, to support it in every way you can and to make it a better movement even though you pass out of its immediate membership.

Yours will be the choice of what you do with yourselves -when you reach the stage where you are more active in- the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movement. As you do so, the richness of society should fold out in front of you. Whether you decide to join the Red Cross Society or the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, or whether you join to work with other women and other men in a church organisation, or a welfare organisation, will be entirely up to you. All I say is that in whatever circumstances you find yourself, move from group to group and in your movement from group to group never abandon the group from which you came. . FEiE

The preservation of our humanity through these terrible times in which we live is not going to be something which passes quickly. Black South Africans have a long road of suffering ahead of them, because no political victory we may now win will create a Utopia around us overnight. There will be no escape from desperate poverty for millions of Black South Africans during the whole of their lifetime. Even if we won our political victory in the struggle for liberation tomorrow, we like our brothers and sisters everywhere in Africa, will have to face that long, hard uphill grind to salvage our society from the past devastation of oppression. For young people in this country, it is vital that they recognise the need for us as human beings to continue belonging together throughout our lifetime. As you grow older, demands on you will increase and as those demands increase, you will have an ever greater need to be amongst people, to be with people and to love people and to be loved by people.

If you become like that coal that is taken out of the fire, in the history of your own lifetime you will be cast aside by the great movement of Black South Africa towards that final victory which is the victory of lasting decency and the victory over poverty, ignorance and disease which will have to be striven for after liberation. We have to fashion a whole new South Africa and that cannot be done overnight. It will take the whole of your generation and the next generation to achieve that final victory which the people now so long for. I know that the impatience of youth and the vibrant energy of youth wants that final victory much sooner, and God knows that I hope that that will be possible. But hopes for easy victories, hopes for overnight Utopias -sap the will of a people to grapple with the problems with which they are confronted. It is vital that every Boy Scout and every Girl Guide in South Africa uses his or her years in the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movement to strengthen himself and herself and to learn how to work with others so that when he or she eventually passes out of the Boy Scouts Movement and Girl Guides Movement, and moves into other organisations, he or she will be better equipped as a human being and will be stronger as a human being. This is as much a challenge to Blacks as it is to Whites. We cannot accomplish our task as individual race groups. No race group can afford to fold its arms. This challenge is a challenge to every White and Black girl or boy and to every White and Black man and woman.

My young brothers and sisters, you in the Boy Scouts and Girl Guide Movement need to understand one more thing - and it is -this. What I have said to you today is not heavy, it is not burdensome. T

- have simply talked about the best way to equip yourselves to laugh

and to be joyous as you support others and others support you as you face the terrible burdens which our struggle for liberation - thrusts on us as Black and White South Africans. Joy and laughter

must live side by side with strength, dignity and determination to avadicate apartheid and to build a new South -Africa. â\200\230That is . the toad to &a decent victory. That is the road to a sure and final victory. That is the road to the courage we will need to face the future. Our ultimate strength is our humanity. Preserve that

humanity. Employ your anger in the pursuit of human decency. Join with others in that great Black South African liberation struggle, which is assured of the victory which will relieve the nation of the burdens which so crush it now.

We have all enjoyed the various competitions as much as all those who have participated in them today have done. Those of us who are older than you have been reminiscing as we watched you enthusiastically compete one with the other. Life itself is a great marathon competition. If these competitions inculcate in you that spirit of competition, then you will be ready for the rigours of the liberation struggle. Competition is great if it is done: without bitterness or rancour as your competitions have been. No one who imbibes this true spirit of healthy competition can ever be so debased as to pay for the blood of his or her Black brothers and sisters through such crude and barbaric activities as "necklacing" other Black brothers and sisters in the name of the liberation struggle. No one of you who has absorbed in his person the best tenets of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movements can be so brutalised as not to understand that one has to be dehumanised to set alight school buildings and other property which belongs to the poorest of the poor in our troubled land.

We thank God for the lives of people like Lord and Lady Powell, for through their example and their lives, we can also lead as noble a life as they lived on this earth. As a nation torn apart by racism we are challenged to rise above racial prejudice as fellow South Africans and to struggle to find each other as fellow South Africans, as fellow Christians and as creatures of God. As long as whatever we do emanates from our understanding of this, we dare not fail. May God bless you all and may God bless Africa and bless all her children. 3