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ILANGA / AMALGAMATED CONSTRUCTION - HOUSE COMPETITION

HANDING OVER OF HOUSE AT KWANDOSI, EMLAZI

Address by Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi
Chief Minister of KwaZulu, President of Inkatha and
Chairman, The South African Black Alliance

KWANDOSI : EMLAZI 31 OCTOBER: 1987

Mr. Master of Ceremonies, members of the KwaZulu Cabinet, the Mayors of Newcastle, Utrecht and Danhausser, members of the eMlazi Town Council, Mr. D.C. Brink, Chief Executive Murray & Roberts, Mr. C.R. Knudson Executive Chairman Murray & Roberts Construction, Mr. P. Goodson Managing Director Amalgamated Construction, Directors of Murray & Roberts and Amalgamated Construction, Mr. A.D. Niemandt, Assistant General Manager Natal SA Perm, Mr. T.G. Mthembu Editor of Ilanga, Mr. A.J. Konigkramer General Manager of Ilanga, members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, senior officials of KwaZulu, Councillors present, all distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

We are living in times of crisis. Our country and our society is deeply wounded. Indeed, there are forces at work which threaten to tear the very fabric of our society asunder.

Things have come to such a pass because for decades repugnant race policies imposed on the majority by a small minority resulted in despair which led to anger. I understand those who have given up hope that things can be changed through decent means. However wrong they are, they are the products of apartheid. The destruction of apartheid will mean the destruction of despair and sense of hopelessness which has in recent years been so problematic as it was translated into political violence.

Gloom there may be aplenty, particularly among Black people who have suffered repression for generations. And when droughts and floods are visited upon those least able to cushion themselves against disaster because their daily lives are a constant battle for survival, despair can so easily translate itself into destructive anger and bitterness.

Who can gainsay, though, that the bulk of ordinary people have the will to struggle on, that they are quietly determined to build a better future for themselves and their children, that they have no desire to tear down what has taken generations to build up? If you will forgive me for slightly altering the imagery used in a sonnet by William Shakespeare, ordinary people do not wish to lie on the ashes of their youth and know only too well that fire has the same effect on people as it does on wood it consumes that which nourishes it.

It is unpardonable for those who profess to be leaders to preach a gospel which dictates that our country must be destroyed before we can rid ourselves of apartheid and begin a process of re-development. Now is not a time to break down and destroy, but a time to build up, to use the wise words of Solomon.

Let me begin by telling you something about this new township. It was as recently as May 2 last year that I performed the official opening of what was then called "Z" section.

I should like to compliment the KwaZulu Department of the Interior, Ilanga and Amalgamated Construction for doing away with the soulless use of letters of the alphabet to describe where people live. I should like, too, to congratulate the eMlazi Town Council for agreeing to have the section and the streets named by way of a competition in Ilanga. The judges, which included the Mayor of eMlazi, unanimously decided that the name "KwaNdosi" was the most appropriate. Other names entered in the competition were used to name the streets, so one can truly say that the people themselves have decided on the names used.

KwaNdosi represents a R35 million rand investment and is thus one of the biggest Black home-ownership projects ever undertaken in South Africa.

More than 1 000 homes are being built and the development has given jobs to at least 1 000 people, all of whom have been trained on site. This alone is a major and very significant investment in training and will stand those who have been lucky enough to be trained in very good stead in the years ahead. Construction at KwaNdosi will be complete by the end of this year.

From here Amalgamated will move to Unit 27, which has, as yet, been re-named. It is my hope that this will be attended to.

further 3 000 homes will be built there and construction will begin in July next year. At least another 1 000 people will get jobs through the new development.

Home ownership is the very foundation on which any society rests. If you tamper with the home, you tamper with society and by doing so you are inviting instability and worse.

As I said at the beginning of this address, our country is in a serious crisis. Politics has brought this about and the destruction of family life lies at the core of evil policies which are now threatening all our people.

Let us examine this statement. Industrial development which has produced modern day South Africa has taken place through a series of major economic upheavals that have transformed this country. The first began with the discovery of gold and diamonds, which attracted foreigners from all over the globe. The frictions that resulted culminated in the AngloBoer war.

The second stage of what was an industrial revolution was triggered by the great depression earlier this century, which drove vast numbers of Afrikaner people off the land and into the cities, where they fought to improve their lot.

They won their battles and got control of the machinery of state. They introduced policies that favoured their own people and Whites, in general and discriminated against Black people.

But economic development needed labour and this time it was the turn of Black South Africans to be caught up in the third wave of the industrial revolution. They flocked and continue to flock into the urban areas in vast numbers.

It became a key issue of apartheid policy to try and stem this process. Every trick in the book from pass laws to influx control and the deliberate rationing of housing, was used to try and perpetuate the folly that Black people were not South Africans and would one day go back to what are termed "homelands."

Even worse was the fact that the migrant labour system was used to separate members of families. I do not believe it is possible to

quantify the vast damage that was done to Black family life and the Black psyche by these evil policies.

The social stresses brought about by urbanization are traumatic enough in themselves. When you deliberately compound this trauma by separating members of families, and creating artificial shortages in housing, you are creating a recipe for disaster.

It is my view that much of the ugliness we are witnessing throughout our society today is the direct result of a process of social disintegration that has been caused by government policy.

However, I said that today was a happy day and did so because we must make a start somewhere. These houses that will offer shelter to families represent a good start. These efforts need to be multiplied many times over so that we can start building a better and more stable future by nurturing the family unit.

It is against this background that I should like to say a few words about the winner of the Ilanga / Amalgamated Construction house. He is, as you all know by now, Mr. Reuben Sikhakhane, of Esikhaweni.

This brings me to the purpose of today's function at KwaNdosi. It is an occasion of hope one that almost has fairy tale qualities. Let me tell you the story behind it, so that you can see what I mean. It is my wish, Mr. Sikhakhane, that you will forgive me for disclosing some of the personal details of your life today. To speak of them today has great relevance.

Mr. Sikhakhane had the misfortune to suffer as one who did not have a parental home to grow up in. His father died before he was born in the Melmoth district. Then, to compound his problems, he was forsaken by his mother when he was only two months old. He was brought up by his grandmother and his aunts. He went to school and it gave me great joy to hear that he was on leave so that he could write his matriculation examinations when he won this beautiful house.

He has clung to decency and fought hard to better his lot. Although he earns a very modest salary, he has been lucky to live in a house provided by his employers. He is a proud family man and I was pleased to hear from the staff of Ilanga that he has a model home for his wife and three young children.

He found great difficulty in believing that he had actually been blessed so greatly to win this house, and the first one he thanked for his blessings was his Maker.

It is my sincere hope, Mr. Sikhakhane, that you will continue to receive God's blessings and above all, that you will be a good father to your children and that you will do all you can to protect your family. :

I should like to conclude by paying special tribute to Amalgamated Construction for making this house available to Ilanga for the competition. It was not a handout. Not only did it go to a good cause, but it has helped raise funds for education. It gives me great pleasure to announce that Ilanga's readers contributed R17 559 to The Ilanga Education Fund, which has just been formed. It will be used to provide scholarships for deserving Black students.

I should also like to commend Ilanga for the initiatives it took to mount this competition and to establish the Education Fund.

Ilanga has confounded its critics and all those who sought to destroy it after it had been taken over from Natal Newspapers by the new owners, MandlaMatla Publishing. Not only did its detractors fail in their mission, but they have suffered the censure of Ilanga's readers. When MandlaMatla took over the newspaper, circulation stood at little more than 105 000. The audited circulation for August and September was of the order of 120 000 and sales continue to grow. On Thursday last week an incredible 137 000 newspapers were offered for sale to the reading public.

It now gives me great pleasure to formally hand the keys to this magnificent house to Mr. Sikhakhane.

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