

October 1985



COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IN PRESENTING TO YOU THIS EVENING THE SECOND PART OF THE FIFTH SENATE LECTURE, WITH THE TITLE "RHODES UNIVERSITY 1985-95", I AM ACUTELY AWARE THAT I AM ATTEMPTING A PROGNOSTICATION EXERCISE IN THE MOST INAUSPICIOUS OF CIRCUMSTANCES. THE POSITION IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES IS ONE OF EXTREME FLUIDITY, POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY. ANY VISION WHICH I PLACE BEFORE YOU AS TO HOW OUR CORPORATE LIFE MAY UNFOLD DURING THE FORTHCOMING DECADE IS CERTAIN TO PROVE INCORRECT IN MANY IMPORTANT PARTICULARS. INDEED, THAT IS PROBABLY THE ONLY CERTAINTY WHICH I CAN OFFER YOU. FURTHERMORE, THE UNIQUE INSIGHTS WHICH I HAVE GAINED IN EXPERIENCING THE PRIVILEGE OF HAVING BEEN YOUR VICE-CHANCELLOR FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS ARE LIKELY ONLY TO ASSIST ME marginally in my task: MY CRYSTAL BALL IS AS CLOUDY AS THE NEXT MAN'S.

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IN ORDER TO PROCEED AT ALL I MUST MAKE CERTAIN ASSUMPTIONS, MORE PARTICULARLY ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM, AND ABOUT THE NATURE OF A UNIVERSITY. SOME OF YOU WILL NOT SHARE THESE ASSUMPTIONS: MANY OF YOU WILL. IN ANY EVENT I OWE IT TO YOU TO RENDER THEM EXPLICIT.

POLITICALLY, THE VARIOUS SCENARIOS CAN BE GROUPED INTO ONE OF THREE ALTERNATIVES: REPRESSION, REFORM OR CATASTROPHIC VIOLENCE. THE FIRST CAN BE DISPOSED OF IN A FEW WORDS: NOBODY EXCEPT A SMALL MINORITY ON THE EXTREME RIGHT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM CAN STILL IMAGINE THIS AS A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY. POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND HABITS OF MIND HAVE, HOWEVER, A VERY HIGH INERTIA. TO USE A SEAFARING ANALOGY, A LARGE OIL TANKER AT CRUISING SPEED TAKES UP TO FIFTEEN KILOMETRES TO BRING TO A HALT. ONLY THEN CAN A CHANGE OF DIRECTION BECOME APPARENT. THE MEN

ON THE BRIDGE HAVE ALREADY ORDERED FULL SPEED ASTERN, BUT THE JUGGERNAUT STILL ROLLS ON FOR SOME TIME, IN SPITE OF THEIR INTENTIONS AND OF THE SHOALS AHEAD.

THE CATASTROPHIC VIOLENCE OPTION, THOUGH NOT TO BE DISPOSED OF SO READILY, NEED NOT BE SUBJECT TO SERIOUS DISCUSSION IN THIS CONTEXT. SHOULD A FULL SCALE SEIZURE OF POWER BE ATTEMPTED, THEN REGARDLESS OF ITS OUTCOME THERE WILL BE SUCH A WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION OF INFRA-STRUCTURE THAT A SMALL, RELATIVELY ISOLATED INSTITUTION SUCH AS RHODES WOULD IN ALL LIKELIHOOD NOT SURVIVE AT ALL. IF IT DID IT WOULD EMERGE IN A GUISE SO RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM ITS PRESENT NATURE THAT I FOR ONE CAN OFFER NO USEFUL SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHAT ITS FUTURE MIGHT BE. WE SHOULD BE UNABLE TO SEE ANY ORGANIC CONTINUITY WITH THE RHODES WHICH WE KNOW AT PRESENT.

THIS LEAVES REFORM, WITH SOME FORM OF CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY, FEDERAL OR CONFEDERAL, AS A CONCEIVABLE OUTCOME. SUCH AN EVENTUALITY WILL NOT BE WITHOUT ITS TRAUMAS. THE RIDE WOULD BE A BUMPY ONE, AND UNLIKELY TO SATISFY MOST OF THE PASSENGERS. IT WOULD BE EVERYBODY'S SECOND-BEST CHOICE, AS INDICATED IN A RECENT TELEVISION INTERVIEW BY AHREND LIJPHART, THE COINER OF THE CONSOCIATION LABEL. NONETHELESS, IT IS THE ONLY OPTION WHICH AVOIDS UNBRIDGEABLE DISCONTINUITIES AND DISLOCATIONS. I MUST THEREFORE PREDICATE MY THOUGHTS ON THIS ASSUMPTION.

HISTORICALLY, WITH THE GENERAL EXCEPTION OF THE MAJOR RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS, UNIVERSITIES RANK AMONGST THE OLDEST OF HUMAN INSTITUTIONS. OUR PARADIGMS DATE BACK TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY, OR EVEN EARLIER. WITH EIGHT CENTURIES OF CONTINUOUS HISTORY A WIDELY HELD VIEW OF WHAT A

UNIVERSITY IS HAS EMERGED. IT IS A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION, EXTENSION AND TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE. ITS SENIOR MEMBERS PRESERVE AND EXTEND THAT KNOWLEDGE AND ITS JUNIOR MEMBERS ACQUIRE IT. RHODES UNIVERSITY AND ITS PRECURSOR, RHODES UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, HAVE EXPERIENCED EIGHTY YEARS OF THAT TRADITION, ACCOMPLISHING MUCH THAT IS WORTHWHILE. MY SECOND ASSUMPTION IS THAT WE ENTER THE NEXT DECADE OF OUR EXISTENCE WITH THIS CONCEPT OF A UNIVERSITY'S NATURE STILL VERY MUCH AT THE CENTRE OF THE STAGE.

IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS LECTURE PROFESSORS BUNTING AND BAART HAVE OFFERED YOU THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF SOME OF THE IMPORTANT FACETS OF OUR MORE RECENT COMMUNAL HISTORY. I SHOULD LIKE IN SOME INSTANCES TO REINFORCE WHAT THEY SAID AND IN OTHERS TO BRING ADDITIONAL ASPECTS TO YOUR ATTENTION. PROFESSOR BUNTING DELINEATED IN DETAIL OUR GROWTH IN

NUMBERS, OUR FINANCIAL VICISSITUDES, OUR ADMINISTRATIVE EVOLUTION, RESIDENCE MATTERS, AND DWELT AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH ON ONE OR TWO USES CELÉBRES. PROFESSOR BAART GAVE US "THEN" AND "NOW" SNAPSHOTS OF THE UNIVERSITY'S STYLE IN 1975 AND IN 1985. HE REGALED US WITH SOME GRAPHS OF THE GROWTH IN STUDENT ENROLMENTS COMPARED WITH ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF NUMBERS. HE POINTED OUT THE DANGERS OF UNDER-ADMINISTRATION AND INDICATED THAT RHODES WAS NOT OVERADMINISTERED IN RELATION TO OTHER UNIVERSITIES. BOTH CONCLUDED THAT RHODES WAS EFFICIENTLY AND OPENLY ADMINISTERED. FOR THIS SENTIMENT I AM DULY GRATEFUL: PERHAPS I NEED NOT THINK OF PACKING MY BAGS JUST YET.

AS WAS INDICATED BY A COMMENT FROM THE FLOOR, EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL PROBITY ARE NOT ENDS IN THEMSELVES: THEY ARE AN INDISPENSABLE MEANS TO THE GOAL OF MAINTAINING RHODES UNIVERSITY AS A

COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS. WE ARE JUDGED EXTERNALLY NOT BY OUR ADMINISTRATIVE ADROITNESS BUT RATHER BY THE IMPACT OF OUR SCHOLARSHIP AND OUR TEACHING AND BY OUR COHESION AS A COMMUNITY, BECAUSE WITHOUT THAT COMMITMENT TO MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AND WELLBEING WE SHALL NOT LONG SURVIVE AS SCHOLARS.

HOW ARE WE JUDGED TODAY AS COMPARED WITH 1975? I MAKE BOLD TO CLAIM, THAT WE ARE NOW HELD IN CONSIDERABLY HIGHER ESTEEM THAN WE WERE TEN YEARS AGO. IN ONE STUDY (BY PROFESSOR D J BOTHA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND) IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT OUR ACADEMIC STAFF ARE BETTER QUALIFIED THAN VIRTUALLY ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA. OUR OVERALL EXAMINATION PASS RATE AT JUST UNDER 80%, STANDS REASONABLE COMPARISON WITH OTHERS, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO CALL TO REST ON OUR LAURELS. A RECENTLY REPORTED FIGURE OF MERIT FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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INDICATED THAT WE SHARED THE TOP SPOT WITH ONE OTHER INSTITUTION. I FEEL THAT I MUST ALSO AWARD A PARTICULAR ACCOLADE TO THE COMMERCE FACULTY. NOT ONLY HAS IT RECORDED THE MOST GROWTH, BUT IT HAS TAKEN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OUR EAST LONDON DIVISION IN ITS STRIDE AND HAS ALSO PAID PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO ITS TEACHING. ITS NAME NOW STANDS HIGH IN COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS CIRCLES. OUR RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND UNITS ALL HAVE EXPANDED RESOURCES AND HAVE BEEN GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY OUTSIDE AGENCIES, A STRONG INDICATOR OF EXTERNAL APPROVAL.

OUR STANDING AS A COMMUNITY IS ALSO ONE FROM WHICH WE CAN GENERALLY DERIVE COMFORT. AS AN EMPLOYER, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO OUR SERVICE STAFF, WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES. REAL SALARIES HAVE INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY, AND FRINGE BENEFITS SUCH AS PENSIONS, A CLINIC AND A MAJOR COMMITMENT TO HOUSING HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED. THERE HAS BEEN

SUBSTANTIAL INTERNAL PROMOTION AND A DETERMINED COMMITMENT TO TRAINING. IN IMPORTANT WAYS WE HAVE LED SOUTH AFRICA IN PROVIDING COMPLETELY NONRACIAL FACILITIES. OUR RESIDENCES HAVE ALL BEEN UPGRADED. THE APPEARANCE OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS HAS BEEN ENHANCED, ALTHOUGH MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE. WE ARE ABOUT TO INTRODUCE A LANDSCAPING MASTER PLAN. WE HAVE IMPROVED SPORTING AND LEISURE FACILITIES. THESE FACTORS ARE NOT SUPERFICIAL COSMETICS, BUT EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE CONCERNED NOT ONLY FOR THE INTELLECTUAL BUT ALSO THE PHYSICAL, AESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL WELL-BEING OF OUR MEMBERS.

ALL THESE POSITIVE FACTORS HAVE NOT EVENTUATED BY ACCIDENT: THEY ARE THE FRUITS OF THE ENERGY, INITIATIVE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF COUNTLESS PEOPLE WHO HAVE PAINSTAKINGLY BROUGHT THEM ABOUT, STEP BY LABORIOUS STEP. THEIR REWARD IS THAT RHODES CAN HOLD ITS HEAD HIGH IN ANY

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COMPANY. IN THE COURSE OF MY DUTIES I MEET PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND IN MANY PARTS OF THE COUNTRY - PARENTS, PROSPECTIVE AND FORMER STUDENTS, TEACHERS, POLITICIANS, CIVIL SERVANTS, COLLEAGUES IN OTHER UNIVERSITIES, DONORS, BUSINESSMEN, CIVIC LEADERS. THEY HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: THEY ALL TAKE RHODES SERIOUSLY. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I HAD TO APOLOGISE FOR BOORISH STUDENT BEHAVIOUR, INDIFFERENT TEACHING, TRIVIAL OR NONEXISTENT RESEARCH. TODAY, WITH RARE EXCEPTIONS, I CAN LOOK ANYBODY STRAIGHT IN THE EYE. THERE IS CLEARLY MUCH STILL TO BE DONE, AND NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY, BUT MUCH ABOUT WHICH WE CAN BE PROUD.

THE TRADITIONAL IMAGE OF A UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN AT TIMES DENIGRATED AS AN IVORY TOWER, A GROUP OF MANDARIN-LIKE SCHOLARS UNCONCERNED WITH THE WORLD AROUND IT, OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE REALITIES OF ITS SOCIETY. THIS

CRITICISM MAY WELL HAVE VALIDITY IF THE TEACHING AND RESEARCH OF A UNIVERSITY IGNORE LOCALISED PROBLEMS. THERE IS NO REASON, HOWEVER, WHY A UNIVERSITY SHOULD NOT ADHERE TO UNIVERSAL ACADEMIC GOLD STANDARDS AND SIMULTANEOUSLY LOCALISE MANY OF ITS INTERESTS. THIS, I BELIEVE, RHODES HAS TO A LARGE EXTENT SUCCEEDED IN DOING. WE ARE CONCERNED WITH AFRICAN LANGUAGES, HISTORY, ART, MUSIC, POLITICS AND THE PLACE OF ENGLISH IN AFRICA. MUCH OF OUR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IS ALSO FOCUSSED ON LOCAL PROBLEMS IN FISH, WATER, INSECTS, PLANTS, PHARMACEUTICALS, ORGANIC CHEMICALS, PRECIPITATION, ATMOSPHERIC PHENOMENA, TO NAME A FAR FROM EXHAUSTIVE LIST. THE SOCIAL SCIENCES TOO CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH THE DEVELOPMENTAL AND HUMAN PROBLEMS OF OUR IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT. TO BORROW AN EXPRESSION FROM BISHOP TUTU, RHODES UNIVERSITY IS AS SOUTH AFRICAN AS BILTONG.

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UNIVERSITIES OF OUR PATTERN ARE ALSO BROUGHT TO TASK FOR ONE OF THE CARDINAL REASONS FOR THEIR EXISTENCE: THE PROVISION OF AN IMPARTIAL FORUM OR MARKET PLACE WHERE CONCEPTS AND THEORIES CAN BE PROPOSED AND CRITICISED. IT IS ARGUED THAT THE UNIVERSITY CANNOT IN TIMES OF CRISIS RETAIN ITS ROLE AS REFEREE, BUT MUST, QUA INSTITUTION AS DISTINCT FROM QUA INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS, ESPOUSE PARTISAN STANDPOINTS. THAT IS VERY WELL, AND AN ATTRACTIVE TEMPTATION, IF THE STANDPOINTS ADOPTED AGREE WITH ONE'S OWN. THE PRICE THAT ONE PAYS, AND IT IS A SEVERE ONE, IS THAT CERTAIN IDEAS CAN NO LONGER BE ESPOUSED WITHOUT ANY FEAR OF BIAS FROM THE INSTITUTION. OUR PRECIOUS IDEAL OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM WILL HAVE BEEN COMPROMISED. FURTHERMORE, SUCH A VIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY'S FUNCTION DESTROY'S ANY THEORETICAL GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION SHOULD A COMPETING, AND LESS CONGENIAL IDEOLOGY CAPTURE THE HIGH GROUND.

WE ARE ALL WRESTLING WITH THESE ISSUES DURING THIS CRUCIAL PERIOD OF OUR COUNTRY'S HISTORY. PROFESSOR KARL TOBER, FOR EXAMPLE, IN AN ADDRESS TO A GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND ON 16 AUGUST 1985 REITERATED WHAT HE HAD AFFIRMED IN A SPEECH SOME 18 MONTHS EARLIER, IN THESE WORDS:-

"IF A UNIVERSITY ALLOWS ITSELF TO BE USED AS A POLITICAL WEAPON, EVEN FOR THE NOBLE CAUSE OF ERADICATING INJUSTICE, WE MAY ENDANGER THE VERY FUNCTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY WHICH ALONE ENABLE IT TO MAKE REAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHANGE. NO SINGLE UNIVERSITY IN THIS WORLD HAS ENOUGH POWER TO END ALL SOCIAL EVILS, LEAST OF ALL BY POSTURING AND CLAMOURING FOR PUBLICITY. THE ABUSE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM CAN ONLY LEAD TO ITS ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION".

HE THEN CONTINUED:-

"THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT UNIVERSITIES SHOULD BE DIVORCED FROM SOCIAL REALITY OR ABSOLVED FROM SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. BUT UNIVERSITIES MUST SERVE THE PEOPLE AS INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING. IT IS NOT FOR US TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE DAY BY PUBLISHING POLITICAL MANIFESTOS. BUT WE CAN AND SHOULD RESPOND TO GRAVE NATIONAL PROBLEMS AS SCHOLARS IN OUR SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES, BE IT AS HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS, IN COMMUNITY MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY, IN THE EXPLORATION OF OUR MATERIAL RESOURCES, OR IN THE DESIGN OF NEW SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGIES.

NOR DOES IT MEAN THAT THE UNIVERSITY WILL REMAIN SILENT, WHEN ACTIONS BY THE AUTHORITIES HINDER STAFF AND STUDENTS IN THE PURSUIT OF THEIR ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES OR, WORSE, CURTAIL THEIR FREEDOM".

AS WE COME NOW TO OUR CENTRAL THEME THIS EVENING, THAT OF CONSIDERING OUR PROSPECTS FOR THE FORTHCOMING DECADE, IT IS CLEAR THAT WE MAY DO SO FROM A SOLID PLATFORM OF ACADEMIC, SOCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACHIEVEMENT. TO WHAT EXTENT WE SHALL BE ABLE TO BUILD FROM AND EXTEND THIS PLATFORM IS UNFORTUNATELY NOT SO READILY APPARENT. THERE IS NO LACK OF WILL, BUT THE PROVISION OF RESOURCES WILL OFFER SEVERE CHALLENGES.

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT CONCERNS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE FINANCE. AFTER A LONG PROCESS OF CONSULTATION AND DEBATE ALL THE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE NOW SUBSIDISED BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH A SINGLE UNIFORM AND VIRTUALLY MECHANICALLY (PERHAPS ONE SHOULD RATHER SAY ELECTRONICALLY) APPLICABLE FORMULA. THIS FORMULA, FOR ALL ITS SHORTCOMINGS, REAL OR PERCEIVED, HAS ONE VERY SOLID ADVANTAGE. IT PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR FINANCING A UNIVERSITY SUCH AS RHODES TO A NOT UNGENEROUS DEGREE, WERE IT TO BE APPLIED IN FULL. REGRETTABLY, THAT HAS NOT SO FAR BEEN THE CASE. IN ITS FIRST THEORETICAL YEAR OF OPERATION WE WERE DE FACTO FUNDED ON THE OLD FORMULA, WITH THE AMOUNT AWARDED EXPRESSED AS AN AD HOC DISCOUNT FROM THE NEW FORMULA. FOR THE CURRENT YEAR THE CUT WAS APPROXIMATELY 17%. ANY PERSON WHO BELIEVES THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR 1986 ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE AT LEAST AS BLEAK HAS LOST SIGHT OF THE REALITIES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY AND OF THE

GOVERNMENT'S PREDICAMENTS. ONE MAY WITH FAIR CONFIDENCE PRONOUNCE THAT ONLY TWO AREAS OF STATE EXPENDITURE ARE LIKELY TO RECEIVE A LARGER REAL SLICE OF THE EXCHEQUER CAKE - SECURITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE LESS WELL ENDOWED SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY. FURTHERMORE, I FOR ONE CANNOT IMAGINE ANY SIGNIFICANT AMELIORATION BEFORE, AT THE EARLIEST, 1990.

HOW THEN SHOULD RHODES REACT TO THIS BLEAK ENVIRONMENT? ONE OPTION WOULD BE THE ROUTE OF FINANCIAL FECKLESSNESS, IN THE EXPECTATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT PERMIT A UNIVERSITY TO GO UNDER. THAT COULD JUST CONCEIVABLY BE TRUE, BUT ONLY AT THE COST OF DIRECT GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF OUR AFFAIRS. THE RESERVE BANK MAY WELL BE STANDING BEHIND A CERTAIN COMMERCIAL BANK, BUT ONE SHOULD NOT RELY ON ITS EXTENDING THE COURTESY TO A UNIVERSITY. UNIVERSITIES, REGRETTABLY, ARE NOT

IMMORTAL: THE GATES OF HELL CAN, AND SOMETIMES DO, PREVAIL AGAINST THEM. IN NORTH AMERICA THEY SPRING UP AND WITHER LIKE MUSHROOMS AT THE RATE OF ONE A WEEK. IF NORTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES WERE TO SUCCUMB, WITHOUT REPLACEMENTS, AT THAT RATE, IT WOULD TAKE SIXTY YEARS BEFORE THE LAST HAD GONE. IN SOUTH AFRICA THERE WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH LEFT TO FORM A QUORUM AT THE CUP MEETING IN JANUARY 1986!

OUR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE ONE OF SEVERE CURTAILMENT OF DISCRETIONARY EXPENDITURE. THE FREEZING OF ALL BUT ESSENTIAL BOOKS, EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE, TOGETHER WITH A VIRTUAL MORATORIUM ON BUILDING ALTERATIONS, WHILE UNPALATABLE, WOULD NOT BE LETHAL AS A SHORT TERM REACTION. IF CONTINUED FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME IT WILL LEAD TO INEFFICIENCIES, DEGENERATION OF RESOURCES AND SEVERE LOSS OF MORALE.

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IF RHODES IS TO RUN AT THE RESOURCE LEVEL INDICATED BY THE FULL FORMULA IT MUST EITHER INCREASE ITS REVENUE FROM THE ONLY OTHER SOURCE AVAILABLE, STUDENT FEES, REDUCE OVERALL EXPENDITURE BY SOME 15 TO 20%, OR CURTAIL CERTAIN LESS ESSENTIAL ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, WITHOUT ERODING THE STUDENT BASE. THE FIRST OPTION WOULD IMPLY A DOUBLING OF THE PRESENT FEE LEVELS, THE SECOND WOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, CHALLENGE EACH ACADEMIC TO DO 15% MORE LECTURING FOR THE SAME PAY, OR FAR LESS REALISTICALLY, CONTINUE AS NOW WITH 15% LESS. INCREASING THE STUDENT BASE BY 15%, WHILE FREEZING STAFF, WOULD DEMAND R10 000 000 IN CAPITAL TO HOUSE THEM, AN EXCEEDINGLY REMOTE PROSPECT. TO MY MIND THE PRUNING ALTERNATIVE IS PERHAPS THE ONE ON WHICH THE MOST EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED. IN ANY EVENT, THE RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROBLEM IS CERTAIN TO CONCENTRATE MINDS WONDERFULLY IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS.

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A SECOND, AND POTENTIALLY FAR MORE SERIOUS CONCERN, WILL BE THE CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF SOUNDLY QUALIFIED ACADEMIC STAFF IN SUFFICIENT NUMBERS. RECRUITMENT FROM OVERSEAS, ALTHOUGH A LESS SIGNIFICANT FACTOR THAN IN AN EARLIER GENERATION, HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE FOR THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE UNIVERSITIES. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE LIKELY TO REDUCE THIS STREAM OF IDEAS AND TALENT TO A MERE TRICKLE. INDIVIDUAL UNIVERSITIES WILL ATTEMPT, AS FAR AS THEIR DEPLETED RESOURCES ALLOW, TO COMPETE VIGOROUSLY FOR THE AVAILABLE TALENT POOL, AND INEVITABLY THOSE DEPARTMENTS WHOSE REPUTATIONS ARE IN TEMPORARY ECLIPSE ARE GOING TO BE UNDER SEVERE STRAIN.

IT IS CLEAR, THEREFORE, THAT LIMITED RESOURCES, BOTH HUMAN AND MATERIAL, WILL ENGAGE OUR MOST SERIOUS ATTENTION FOR THE NEAR AND MEDIUM TERM FUTURE. FORTUNATELY, THE OBVERSE SIDE OF EVERY PROBLEM IS

AN OPPORTUNITY. A PERIOD OF RELATIVE ADVERSITY FORCES BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS TO REASSESS THEIR GOALS AND VALUES. FOR ME OUR GOAL IS STILL TO MAINTAIN OUR STATUS AS A UNIVERSITY OF QUALITY, A PLACE WITH WHICH STAFF, STUDENTS AND ALUMNI ARE PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED, AND IF POSSIBLE EACH YEAR INCREMENTALLY TO IMPROVE THAT STATUS.

RECENTLY I HAVE BEEN READING A NUMBER OF BOOKS ON MANAGEMENT. MY BUSINESS FRIENDS HAVE HALF-JOKINGLY WARNED ME THAT THIS CAN POTENTIALLY BE A VERY DANGEROUS THING. THESE BOOKS HAVE ALL EMPHASISED THAT THOSE INSTITUTIONS WHICH CONSCIOUSLY ESPOUSE A CLEAR SET OF WELL ARTICULATED BASIC VALUES AND FOCUS ON THEIR MAIN FUNCTION, ARE THE ONES WHICH FLOURISH AND PROSPER. HAZY OR CONFLICTING NOTIONS OF PURPOSE, AND OF VALUES ACCEPTABLE IN ACHIEVING THAT PURPOSE, HAVE OFTEN BEEN THE OVERRIDING FACTOR IN THE DECLINE AND ULTIMATE DEMISE OF AN INSTITUTION.

FORTUNATELY, A UNIVERSITY CAN FOCUS VERY CLEARLY ON ITS FUNDAMENTAL REASON FOR EXISTENCE : WITHOUT A DOUBT OUR BASIC BUSINESS IS KNOWLEDGE. WE PLACE AN ENORMOUS EMPHASIS ON THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH. IN THAT PURSUIT WE EXAMINE ALL SIDES OF A QUESTION, CONSIDER ALL COMPETING THEORIES, AND CAREFULLY WEIGH THE PRO'S AND CON'S OF EVERY ARGUMENT. THERE ARE NO SACRED COWS. IN FACT ONE COULD GO SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT IN ACADEMIC LIFE THE ONE UNFORGIVABLE SIN IS THE SIN AGAINST TRUTH. FAKED RESEARCH RESULTS, PLAGIARISM, CHEATING IN EXAMINATIONS, BIASSED ASSESSMENTS, CONSTRAINTS ON OPEN DISCUSSION, WHETHER IDEOLOGICALLY OR LEGISLATIVELY BASED, OR CONSCIOUS AND DELIBERATE INDOCTRINATION HAVE NO PLACE IN A UNIVERSITY, AND ARE QUITE PROPERLY ABHORRED.

THIS GOAL OF COMMITMENT TO TRUTH IMPLIES A SET OF CONCOMITANT VALUES, WITHOUT WHICH THE QUEST WILL BE RENDERED NUGATORY AND INEFFECTIVE. AMONG THESE VALUES ARE:-

- I. COURTESY AND DECORUM. IN ACADEMIC LIFE, AS ON THE RUGBY FIELD, A REGRETTABLE TENDENCY IS SOMETIMES EVIDENT TO PLAY THE MAN AND NOT THE BALL. PERSONAL INVECTIVE AND LACK OF COURTESY GENERATE HEAT RATHER THAN LIGHT. IDEAS, AND NOT THEIR PROPONENTS, ARE THE PROPER OBJECT OF DISCOURSE. PROFESSOR BUNTING HAS REFERRED TO THE CENSORSHIP DEBATE OF 1977. IN THAT DEBATE I MADE MY VIEW PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT NO IDEAS WERE OFF-LIMITS. MY OBJECTIONS WERE TO PERSONAL ATTACK AND INNUENDO. I ALSO BELIEVED THAT COARSE LANGUAGE AND SUGGESTIVE ILLUSTRATIONS HAD NO RIGHTFUL PLACE IN ANY UNIVERSITY PUBLICATION.

2. RESISTANCE TO ALL OUTSIDE PRESSURE, WHICH WOULD TEMPT OR THREATEN US FROM OUR COURSE. DURING THE COMING DECADE WE SHALL HAVE TO GUARD OUR AUTONOMY MORE ASSIDUOUSLY THAN EVER AGAINST WHAT THE POET DOUGLAS LIVINGSTONE CALLS "THE PSYCHOPATHS OF THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT". WE SHOULD ALSO BE ALERTED TO POSSIBLE INROADS INTO OUR AUTONOMY FROM A MORE UNEXPECTED QUARTER, THAT OF THE MANY ORGANISED PROFESSIONAL BODIES, WHO HAVE A STATUTORY RIGHT TO CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH WHAT WE TEACH. THESE BODIES HAVE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS, BUT WE MUST ENSURE THAT THESE INTERESTS DO NOT EVOLVE INTO OUT-AND-OUT PRESCRIPTION. OUR GRADUATES MUST BE PROFESSIONALLY COMPETENT, BUT THEY MUST ALSO BE EDUCATED HUMAN BEINGS.

3. RECOGNITION OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND OF THE WHOLE PERSON

THERE ARE NO GROUNDS, ESPECIALLY AT A UNIVERSITY, FOR PLACING ANY INDIVIDUAL AT A DISADVANTAGE BECAUSE OF SEX, CREED OR ETHNIC ORIGIN. WE ARE CONCERNED WITH PEOPLE AS INDIVIDUALS, WITH THEIR SPECIFIC CONCERNS, ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS. PEOPLE ARE NOT DISEMBODIED BRAINS: THERE ARE PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPLETE PERSON. ON THE WHOLE I BELIEVE THAT OUR SMALL-SCALE STRUCTURES AT RHODES ENABLE US TO PAY DUE ATTENTION TO THESE FACTORS MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN MOST OTHER UNIVERSITIES. YOUNG PEOPLE OF UNDERGRADUATE AGE ARE FIERCELY RESISTANT TO ANY HINT OF PATERNALISM (EXCEPT OF COURSE WHEN THEY FALL INTO SERIOUS TROUBLE). NONETHELESS, "NO MAN IS AN ISLAND". ONE OF OUR GREAT

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STRENGTHS UP TO NOW HAS BEEN OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY, AND WE CANNOT ENTIRELY ESCAPE OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER. IN PARTICULAR, INTERVENTION IS UNAVOIDABLE WHENEVER INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR INFRINGES ON THE RIGHTS, PROPERTY OR SAFETY OF OTHERS.

4. PIETAS AND A SENSE OF HISTORY. WE ARE ALL PART OF A COMMUNITY WHICH EXISTED BEFORE OUR ARRIVAL, AND WILL DOUBTLESS CONTINUE TO EXIST AFTER OUR DEPARTURE. EACH GENERATION OF STUDENTS DOES NOT START WITH AN EMPTY SLATE. IT FINDS ITSELF IN CONTACT WITH ESTABLISHED MORES AND A SENSE OF TRADITION. THIS PATTERN OF LIVING IS NOT SO MUCH WORTHLESS BRIC-A-BRAC, BUT PROVIDES THE RAW MATERIAL OF A SENSE OF CONTINUITY AND OF COMMUNITY. NO ORGANISATION CAN FLOURISH WITHOUT ITS MYTHS AND ITS HISTORY, NOR

IS IT UNTOWARD TO ADMIT TO SENTIMENTS OF ATTACHMENT AND COMMITMENT TO THE INSTITUTION WHICH NOURISHES US. THE LATIN PHRASE REFERRING TO ONE'S UNIVERSITY AS ALMA MATER, OR NOURISHING MOTHER, ENSHRINES A PROFOUNDLY HUMAN SENTIMENT. FILIAL PIETY IS A COMMENDABLE TRAIT : WE SHALL HAVE TO LEAN HEAVILY UPON IT IN THE DIFFICULT YEARS THAT LIE AHEAD. RHODES UNIVERSITY IS OUR UNIVERSITY : WHATEVER BEFALLS IT IS TO THE WEAL OR WOE OF EACH ONE OF US.

5. COMPETENT MANAGEMENT AND OPENNESS OF COMMUNICATION

AS I HAVE ALREADY INDICATED, EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF : IT EXISTS TO PROMOTE AND FACILITATE THE ATTAINMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S GOALS. IN THE COMING YEARS ONE OF THE MOST

PRESSING TASKS WILL BE THE OPTIMUM DEPLOYMENT OF STRICTLY LIMITED RESOURCES. THE DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE PURSUIT OF THAT TASK WILL NOT ENJOY THE WIDEST ATTAINABLE ACCEPTANCE UNLESS IT IS PERCEIVED THAT THE FACTS AVAILABLE ARE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PEOPLE WHOSE CIRCUMSTANCES WILL BE AFFECTED. PROFESSORS BUNTING AND BAART HAVE GIVEN THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION MORE THAN A PASSING GRADE IN THIS REGARD. I FULLY INTEND TO MAINTAIN, INDEED TO IMPROVE UPON, THIS ASPECT OF OUR COMMUNAL LIFE.

6. PRUDENCE. IN EARLIER AGES OF FAITH WHEN MORAL CONCEPTS TENDED TO BE HEAVILY CATEGORISED, AND EVEN SUMMARIZED IN CATECHETICAL FORM, GREAT EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON THE NATURAL AS WELL AS THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES. AMONGST THE FORMER FOUR IN PARTICULAR WERE SINGLED OUT : JUSTICE, FORTITUDE, TEMPERANCE AND PRUDENCE. TO

OUR GREAT CREDIT WE DO NOT LACK IN OUR MIDST DOUGHTY CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE. MANY OF OUR NUMBER ARE NOT FOUND WANTING IN FORTITUDE. TEMPERANCE, WE SHOULD SURELY AGREE, COULD WITH ADVANTAGE RECEIVE MORE EMPHASIS IN SOME QUARTERS. PRUDENCE, I FEAR, HOWEVER, IS THE SINGLE MOST NEGLECTED VIRTUE IN OUR LIFE TODAY, YET IT IS THE ONE THAT BINDS THE OTHERS TOGETHER, AND HOLDS THEIR CONFLICTING DEMANDS HARMONIOUSLY IN CHECK. ALL OF US IN POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY HAVE THE AWESOME OBLIGATION NOT ONLY TO LIVE BY NOBLE SENTIMENTS, BUT TO FORESEE THE LIKELY PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE SENTIMENTS. ALL TOO REGRETTABLY IN PRACTICAL AFFAIRS THE CHOICE IS NOT BETWEEN AN UNAMBIGUOUSLY AND RIGOROUSLY MERITORIOUS ACTION AND SOME MORALLY DOUBTFUL ONE. WOULD LIFE NOT BE GLORIOUSLY SIMPLE IF THAT WERE SO? NO, THE CHOICES ON OFFER ARE OFTEN BETWEEN DOUBTFUL AND DEMONSTRABLY

WORSE. CONSIDER ONE CLASSICAL EXAMPLE : THE DECISIONS TO DEVELOP THE INITIAL ATOMIC BOMB AND THEN TO DEPLOY IT. IN THE FIRST CASE THE NAZI GERMANS MIGHT WELL HAVE GOT THERE FIRST AND WOULD NOT HAVE HESITATED TO USE IT. IN THE SECOND THE DESTRUCTION OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI WAS PERCEIVED AT THE TIME TO BE LIKELY TO HAVE INVOLVED LESS HUMAN MISERY AND LOSS OF LIFE THAN THE BITTER CONQUEST OF JAPAN BY CONVENTIONAL MEANS. PITY THE ANGUISHED LEADERS WHO HAVE TO MAKE SUCH DECISIONS, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ACT ON NARROWER STAGES. THEIR NEED FOR PRUDENCE, OR IN PROFESSOR BUNTING'S PARLACE, PRINCIPLED PRAGMATISM, IN THE FULLEST POSSIBLE MEASURE WILL CERTAINLY BE FELT IN THE COMING YEARS.

HAVING SET OUT MY ASSUMPTIONS, GIVEN MY ASSESSMENT OF OUR PRESENT STATUS, DELINEATED THE MOST URGENT PROBLEMS WE ARE LIKELY TO FACE AND CATEGORISED THE KEY VALUES INFORMING A HEALTHY UNIVERSITY, I HAVE NOW REACHED THE MOMENT OF TRUTH. PROFESSOR BAART PRESENTED US WITH SNAPSHOTS OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY IN 1975 AND AGAIN IN 1985. WHAT IS MY SNAPSHOT OF RHODES IN 1995?

I OFFER IT WITH SOME TREPIDATION AND WITH THE CAVEAT THAT MY ASSUMPTIONS BEAR SOME APPROXIMATION TO WHAT IN FACT TRANSPIRES IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT. IT IS WORTH NOTING IN PASSING THAT NONE OF YOUR THREE SPEAKERS IS SO ADVANCED IN YEARS THAT HE COULD NOT, IN PRINCIPLE, BE ASKED TO REPEAT THE PERFORMANCE TEN YEARS FROM NOW. I AM IN EFFECT BEING ASKED TO DELIVER THE GOODS TEN YEARS IN ADVANCE.

RHODES UNIVERSITY IN THE CLOSING MONTHS OF 1995 WILL BE RECOGNISABLE AS AN ORGANIC CONTINUITY FROM ITS PRESENT POSITION. AFTER ALL, THINGS CHANGE MORE SLOWLY IN GRAHAMSTOWN THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE COUNTRY. IN MANY RESPECTS IT WILL BE AT LEAST AS GOOD A PLACE TO BE AS NOW, AND IN SOME RESPECTS BETTER.

THERE WILL HAVE BEEN NO REAL DEBASEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC CURRENCY. WE SHALL HAVE ROUGHLY THE SAME UNDERGRADUATE NUMBERS IN GRAHAMSTOWN AS WE DO NOW, WHEREAS THE EAST LONDON DIVISION WILL HAVE GROWN CONSIDERABLY AND WILL BE OFFERING A WIDER CHOICE OF CURRICULA. UNDERGRADUATE QUALITY, HOWEVER, WILL HAVE IMPROVED SUBSTANTIALLY. IF THROUGH SOME KIP VAN WINKLE TIMEWARP THE 1985 ENTERING STUDENTS WERE TO HAVE APPLIED IN 1995 ONLY 75% OF THEM WILL HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED. I SHALL NOT SPECULATE ON THE GENDER OR ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE 1995 STUDENT BODY,

SINCE I SHOULD WITH ALMOST MATHEMATICAL CERTAINTY BE PROVED WRONG. SINCE IT WILL BE HARDER TO BE ACCEPTED IN 1995 STUDENTS WILL BE MORE SERIOUS-MINDED AND RESPONSIBLE. PETTY FORMS OF MISBEHAVIOUR AND STUPID EXCESSES ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS WILL BE A RARE EXCEPTION. INTEREST IN POLITICAL QUESTIONS WILL NOT, HOWEVER, BE ON THE WANE.

HONOURS AND POSTGRADUATE ENROLMENTS WILL HAVE BEEN INCREASED, PERHAPS BY 20%. THEY AND JUNIOR MEMBERS OF STAFF WILL BE CONTRIBUTING MORE TO OUR RESEARCH EFFORTS THAN IS PRESENTLY THE CASE. FORMAL UNDERGRADUATE LECTURING WILL HAVE REGISTERED A REDUCTION OF 10-15%, AS WILL FULL TIME ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS WITH TENURED POSITIONS. PLATO OR ALLIED SYSTEMS WILL HAVE COME INTO THEIR OWN, AND WILL BE A RECOGNISED COMPONENT OF TEACHING IN NEARLY EVERY DEPARTMENT, OF WHICH THERE MAY WELL BE THREE OR FOUR FEWER. PERIODICALS AND BOOKS BETWEEN COVERS

WILL HAVE DIMINISHED IN IMPORTANCE, SINCE MUCH OF THE INFORMATION WILL BE MORE CONVENIENTLY AVAILABLE THROUGH TERMINALS LINKED TO DISTANT DATABASES.

OUR RESEARCH ENDEAVOURS WILL BE MORE EXTENSIVE THAN TODAY, AND WILL ENJOY STRONGER SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS WILL HAVE BECOME MORE URBANE : CIRCULARS FROM THE REGISTRAR MAY PERHAPS READ " LADIES AND GENTLEMEN WILL REFRAIN" RATHER THAN "STUDENTS ARE REQUESTED NOT...."

IN SPITE OF FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS OUR BUILDINGS AND CAMPUS WILL PRESENT A MORE PLEASING APPEARANCE. THE LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN WILL BE WELL ADVANCED. EVEN THE DROUGHT WILL HAVE BROKEN.

BY 1995 WE SHALL HAVE WRITTEN ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF RHODES. WHETHER IT WILL BE ONE ON WHICH WE CAN LOOK BACK WITH PRIDE DEPENDS NOT ON THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND SOME MYTHICAL KITCHEN-CABINET OF CLOSE CRONIES. IT DOES NOT DEPEND ON THE SENATE AND THE COUNCIL. IT DEPENDS ON EVERY MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY TO PLAY HIS PART. RHODES WILL MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE ITS STANDING ONLY IF ITS MEMBERS ARE PREPARED TO DETERMINE THAT IT SHALL BE SO. I DO NOT LACK CONFIDENCE IN THIS RESPECT. IN THESE TRYING AND DEPRESSING TIMES IT IS SO EASY FOR PESSIMISM TO FEED ON PESSIMISM, AND SO BECOME A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY. I HAVE STRESSED PRUDENCE AS ONE OF THE NATURAL VIRTUES. LET ME NOW EMPHASIZE HOPE AS A THEOLOGICAL ONE. ST PAUL TOLD HIS ROMAN READERS "ABRAHAM, THEN, BELIEVED, HOPING AGAINST HOPE". IT IS IN THAT SPIRIT THAT I HAVE OFFERED YOU A CONSTRUCTIVE VISION OF RHODES IN THE DECADE 1985-95.

IN 1995 IT IS, AS I HAVE MENTIONED, THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE THAT I MAY STILL BE YOUR VICE-CHANCELLOR. I SHALL NOT TEMPT PROVIDENCE BY SPECULATING ON THAT TOPIC. TO USE A CONCEPT THAT PROFESSOR BAART AND HIS COLLEAGUES WILL APPRECIATE, THE HALF-LIFE OF VICE-CHANCELLORS IS NOT EXCESSIVE : IN FACT I PRE-DATE ALL BUT TWO OF MY SEVENTEEN COLLEAGUES ON THE COMMITTEE OF UNIVERSITY PRINCIPALS, AND THOSE TWO ARE ON THE THRESHOLD OF RETIREMENT.

WHETHER OR NOT I AM STILL IN OFFICE THEN I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE INTELLECTUAL STANDING OF RHODES UNIVERSITY. WHEN RHODES CELEBRATES ITS 100TH BIRTHDAY IN THE YEAR 2004 I SHALL DEFINITELY NOT BE PRINCIPAL. IF I AM SPARED UNTIL THEN I SHALL UNDOUBTEDLY TAKE IT SERIOUSLY AMISS IF WHOEVER IS OMITS TO INVITE ME TO THE FESTIVITIES.