

GRADUATION ADDRESS - FRIDAY 10 APRIL 1981

MR CHANCELLOR, RESPECTED COLLEAGUES, GRADUANDS AND DIPLOMANDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

THE FIRST ITEM ON MY AGENDA IS TO EXTEND TO YOU ALL ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSITY A VERY WARM WELCOME, MORE PARTICULARLY TO THOSE SEATED IN THE REAR OF THIS MAGNIFICENT AUDITORIUM, WHO WILL SHORTLY BE RECEIVING PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THEIR STUDIES IN THE FACULTIES OF SCIENCE, LAW, COMMERCE, SOCIAL SCIENCE AND PHARMACY. YOUR PARENTS, FRIENDS AND WELL-WISHERS ARE HERE TO WITNESS THE PROUD MOMENT. MANY WILL HAVE TRAVELLED LONG DISTANCES TO BE PRESENT THIS EVENING. THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN THE TROUBLE TO DO SO IS EVIDENCE OF THE AFFECTION AND ESTEEM IN WHICH THIS REMOTELY LOCATED UNIVERSITY IS HELD.

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YOUR JOURNEY THEREFORE HAS AN ELEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE ABOUT IT. JUDGING BY CHAUCER'S TALES AND OTHER CHRONICLES PILGRIMS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A HARDY AND A CHEERFUL SPECIES. I AM SURE THAT YOU WILL ENJOY THESE GRADUATION FESTIVITIES, NOT THE LEAST OF THE PLEASURES OF WHICH ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO RENEW OLD FRIENDSHIPS AND TO RELIVE FORMER EXPERIENCES.

THE LAST TIME I ADDRESSED A RHODES GRADUATION CONGREGATION WAS IN 1978. ON THAT OCCASION I DILATED AT SOME LENGTH ON THE SUBJECT OF UNIVERSITY FINANCING, FOR IT WAS A SUBJECT VERY MUCH ON MY MIND. LET ME REASSURE YOU THAT I DO NOT INTEND TO DO SO TONIGHT. FOR FOUR SUCCESSIVE YEARS NOW THE UNIVERSITY HAS RECEIVED MORE IN INCOME THAN IT HAS DISBURSED BY WAY OF EXPENDITURE. THIS HAPPY AND ESSENTIAL CIRCUMSTANCE HAS NOT COME ABOUT THROUGH THE MEANS OF A MORE RELAXED GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY POLICY (IN FACT THE REVERSE HAS OCCURRED) NOR YET BY

CHARGING STUDENTS HIGHER FEES IN REAL TERMS. WE ARE IN THIS FORTUNATE POSITION VERY LARGELY BECAUSE THE WHOLE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY HAS ACCEPTED THE IMPERATIVE OF GREATER FINANCIAL DISCIPLINE, AND BECAUSE WE HAVE DEDICATED OURSELVES TO CONSCIENTIOUS AND CAREFUL MANAGEMENT AND TO GREATER EFFICIENCY. IT HAS OFTEN BEEN AFFIRMED AS A TRUISM THAT THE PURPOSE OF A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IS TO MAKE MONEY. I FIND THAT I CANNOT SUBSCRIBE TO SUCH A PEDESTRIAN AND UNINSPIRING DOCTRINE. THE PURPOSE OF A BUSINESS IS TO PROVIDE MOTOR VEHICLES OR COMPUTERS OR WHATEVER OTHER USEFUL ARTEFACTS OR SERVICES IT HAS DETERMINED UPON. THE MAKING OF SURPLUSES TO A GREATER OR LESSER DEGREE IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF, BUT RATHER A NECESSARY PRECONDITION FOR REMAINING IN A VIABLE STATE TO FULFIL ONE'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE. IN THIS RESPECT A UNIVERSITY IS IN A POSITION NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER ORGANISED HUMAN ENDEAVOUR.

BY A STRANGE QUIRK OF HISTORIC RECKONING, QUITE INEXPLICABLE TO A MATHEMATICIAN OR COMPUTER SCIENTIST, THE WORLD APPARENTLY WENT STRAIGHT FROM THE YEAR 1 B.C. TO 1 A.D. WITHOUT PASSING THROUGH THE YEAR 0 A.D., ALTHOUGH OF COURSE NOBODY WAS AWARE OF IT AT THE TIME. AS A CONSEQUENCE THE PURISTS WILL ARGUE THAT WE ONLY ENTERED THE EIGHTH DECADE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ON 1 JANUARY 1981. THIS SUITS MY PURPOSES ADMIRABLY, BECAUSE I CAN ASK YOU TO CONSIDER SOME OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WILL FACE THE UNIVERSITY DURING THE LAST TWO DECADES OF THE CENTURY, WITHOUT BEING ACCUSED OF BEING A YEAR OUT OF DATE. WE ARE IN THE FORTUNATE POSITION, AS I HAVE EXPLAINED, TO SURVEY WHAT THE FUTURE MIGHT BRING US FROM A POSITION OF COMPARATIVE STRENGTH.

PROPHETS HAVE BEEN WARNING FOR YEARS THAT A FULL-SCALE EDUCATION CRISIS WAS ABOUT TO BURST UPON THE SCENE. THE 1976 SOWETO RIOTS, AND POSSIBLY

EVEN MORE SO, PARTICULARLY FOR THOSE OF US IN THE EASTERN CAPE, THE 1980 SCHOOL BOYCOTTS AND ASSOCIATED DISTURBANCES, DROVE HOME THE SITUATION TO THE POINT WHERE ONLY HUMAN OSTRICHES ARE UNAWARE OF IT. COMPLETELY INADEQUATE PROVISION FOR BLACK EDUCATION, EXTENDING OVER DECADES HAS BROUGHT US TO THE PRESENT PASS. IT IS NOW TOTALLY OBVIOUS THAT THE GREATEST IMPEDIMENT TO ECONOMIC EXPANSION, SO VITALLY NECESSARY IF THERE IS TO BE ANY REASONABLE PROSPECT OF FULFILLING EVEN THE MOST MODEST EXPECTATIONS FOR A BETTER LIFE OF THE GREAT MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE, IS THE CHRONIC SHORTAGE OF SKILLED AND TRAINED MANPOWER IN VIRTUALLY EVERY FIELD OF ENDEAVOUR. SO DESPERATE IS THE ECONOMY FOR THESE SKILLS THAT THE VERY SEED-CORN FOR FUTURE YEARS IS BEING CONSUMED. MANY OF THE MORE SKILLED TEACHERS, BOTH BLACK AND WHITE, ESPECIALLY IN THE KEY SUBJECTS LIKE MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE, ARE BEING SUCKED INTO THE ECONOMY BY THE PROSPECT OF BETTER SALARIES AND LESS STIFLINGLY STRUCTURED WORK CONDITIONS.

LYING BEHIND THE ECONOMIC FACTS ARE THE DEMOGRAPHIC ONES. THE POPULATION EXPANSION RATES OF ALL POPULATION GROUPS ARE MERCIFULLY ON THE DECREASE, BUT THIS EFFECT IS MORE MARKED AMONGST THE WHITES, WHO ARE COMING CLOSE TO THE ZERO POPULATION GROWTH CHARACTERISTIC OF ECONOMICALLY WELL DEVELOPED INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES. THE WHITES, WHO NOW COMPRISE ABOUT 17% OF THE POPULATION, ARE DESTINED TO REDUCE IN SIGNIFICANCE TO ABOUT 11% BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. THE MYTH THAT ALL THE ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL, MANAGERIAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS NECESSARY FOR A BURGEONING ECONOMY CAN COME FROM THIS GROUP IS NO LONGER SUSTAINABLE.

IN WHAT WAY WILL THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECT UNIVERSITIES AND WHAT SHOULD THEIR RESPONSES BE? FORWARD PROJECTIONS FOR SCHOOL-LEAVERS WITH UNIVERSITY LEVEL MATRICULATION RESULTS, AND WHO ARE THUS POTENTIAL



RECRUITS TO THE RESIDENTIAL UNIVERSITIES, ARE QUITE DRAMATIC. ONE CANNOT EXPECT ENROLLMENT FROM THE WHITE SECTOR TO INCREASE BY MUCH MORE THAN 1% PER ANNUM FOR THE NEXT DECADE, AFTER WHICH THERE IS LIKELY TO BE A COMPLETE LEVELLING OFF, OR EVEN A SLIGHT DECLINE. WHAT LITTLE GROWTH CAN BE EXPECTED WILL BE FAR FROM EVENLY SPREAD, BECAUSE OF THE PRONOUNCED POPULATION MIGRATION TO THE SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL. IN THE CASE OF INDIAN AND COLOURED SCHOOL-LEAVERS THE INCREASE WILL BE STEADY BUT NOT DRAMATIC, BUT AMONGST BLACKS THE RISE IN STANDARD TEN'S WITH MATRICULATION EXEMPTIONS, WILL BE SPECTACULAR, REACHING THE STAGE THAT AT SOME POINT IN THE 1990'S THE BLACK POTENTIAL UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS WILL SWAMP ALL OTHERS COMBINED. THESE FIGURES ARE NOT EXTRAVAGANT STATISTICAL EXTRAPOLATIONS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WE ARE CONSIDERING HAVE ALREADY BEEN BORN. THEY CAN BE COUNTED AND NO DOUBT WERE COUNTED DURING LAST YEAR'S CENSUS.

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR A UNIVERSITY SUCH AS RHODES ARE VERY CLEAR. ABOUT 50% OF OUR STUDENTS COME FROM THE CAPE, A PROVINCE WHOSE RELATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC STATURE IS DECLINING. JUST OVER 20% ARE FROM THE TRANSVAAL, AND THIS SOURCE IS SURELY DESTINED TO GROW IN IMPORTANCE. ABOUT 15% COME FROM ZIMBABWE, AND PARADOXICALLY NUMBERS FROM THERE HAVE INCREASED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. THIS INCREASE IS NOT SUSTAINABLE IN THE LONG RUN IF WHITE EMIGRATION FROM THAT TERRITORY CONTINUES AT ANYTHING LIKE ITS PRESENT RATE. BLACK AND BROWN ENROLLMENT HAS INCREASED FROM LITERALLY A HANDFUL IN 1976 TO SOMETHING APPROACHING 7% OF THE STUDENT BODY AT PRESENT, AND THIS IS BUT A FORETASTE OF A CLEARLY DISCERNABLE TREND.

THUS THE PROFILE OF OUR CLIENTELE, THE PEOPLE WE SERVE, IS CHANGING. THIS CHANGE IN THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE OPERATE IS BRINGING NEW

CIRCUMSTANCES TO THE FORE. IT IS ALREADY BECOMING OBVIOUS THAT SOME OF OUR BLACK STUDENTS, BECAUSE OF THEIR INADEQUATE SCHOOLING AND THE VASTLY DIFFERENT ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND FROM WHICH THEY SPRING, ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY IN ADAPTING TO TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITY LIFE IN THE WESTERN MOULD. IT TAKES A PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT FOR IT TO BECOME CLEAR JUST WHAT RESPONSES ARE EXPECTED AND FOR THEM TO BE MOTIVATED TO PROVIDE THOSE RESPONSES. COMING TO TERMS WITH THE LEVEL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICAL COMPETENCE REQUIRED IS A PARTICULARLY ONEROUS TASK.

MEETING THESE CIRCUMSTANCES SERIOUSLY FOR THE FIRST TIME HAS BROUGHT TO THE FORE ALL THE DIFFICULTIES WITH WHICH UNIVERSITIES IN BLACK AFRICA TO THE NORTH HAVE BEEN GRAPPLING FOR A GENERATION OR MORE. PROFESSOR ASAVIA WANDIRA, WHO WAS FOR A BRIEF BUT MOMENTOUS PERIOD VICE-

CHANCELLOR OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY IN UGANDA, AND WHO IS NOW AT THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SWAZILAND, DESCRIBES THE DILEMMA WELL IN HIS BOOK "THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY IN DEVELOPMENT". ON THE ONE HAND A UNIVERSITY FOR MANY REASONS WISHES TO REMAIN ON WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS THE GOLD STANDARD OF INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC RESPECTABILITY. WITHOUT THAT ONE'S QUALIFICATIONS ARE IN DANGER OF NOT BEING RECOGNISED OVERSEAS, GOOD STAFF WILL NOT BE ATTRACTED TO AN INSTITUTION WITH AN UNIMPRESSIVE ACADEMIC REPUTATION AND A DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF STEADILY INCREASING MEDIOCRITY WILL SET IN. ON THE OTHER HAND STUDENTS EMERGING FROM A SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT HAS NOT PREPARED THEM ADEQUATELY CANNOT MEET ALL THE DEMANDS MADE UPON THEM. FURTHERMORE, THEY ARE IN NO MOOD TO ACCEPT THIS FACT. HAVE THEY NOT WORKED LONG HARD YEARS WITH GREAT SACRIFICE ON THEIR AND THEIR PARENTS' PART TO GAIN A PIECE OF PAPER WHICH STATES QUITE CATEGORICALLY THAT THEY ARE ELIGIBLE TO JOIN THE UNIVERSITY?

THERE ARE TWO OBVIOUS SOLUTIONS. THE FIRST IS TO MAINTAIN STANDARDS AND TO PROVIDE A SPECTRUM OF SUPPLEMENTARY AND BRIDGING COURSES. THE SECOND IS TO ADAPT TO THE CAPABILITIES OF ONE'S ENTRANTS AND WORK IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME TO ACHIEVING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS. IN THE CASE WHERE THOSE STANDARDS HAVE ALREADY BEEN REACHED AND ONLY A MINORITY OF ONE'S ENTRANTS ARE DISADVANTAGED THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. WHATEVER STRATEGY IS ADOPTED THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION IS A RAISING OF SCHOOL STANDARDS. THERE IS ALSO THE PROBLEM OF PROVIDING SOME FORM OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MATURE AGE WOULD-BE STUDENT WHO SEES HIS CHANCE FOR A PLACE IN THE SUN RAPIDLY MELTING AWAY AND WHO UNDERSTANDABLY BECOMES FRUSTRATED AND ANGRY.

AN ANALOGY FROM THE RELIGIOUS ARENA INDICATES THAT THE PROBLEM IS NOT ONLY AN EDUCATIONAL ONE. IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A GROUP OF TRAPPIST MONKS, MEMBERS OF ONE OF THE MOST AUSTERE CONTEMPLATIVE ORDERS IN THE CHURCH, ARRIVED IN NATAL INTENT ON INAUGURATING A MONASTERY OF THEIR ORDER. THEY CALLED THEIR CHOSEN SITE MARIANHILL, A NAME STILL REVERED IN RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL CIRCLES. SUCH WERE THE PRESSING EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS THEY FOUND ALL ABOUT THEM THAT THEY DECIDED OUT OF CHARITY THAT THEY COULD NOT CONTINUE AS CLOISTERED CONTEMPLATIVES. IN A CAREFUL AND PRAYERFULLY CONSIDERED DECISION THEY WITHDREW FROM THE TRAPPISTS, AND FOUNDED THE MARIANHILL ORDER, WHICH THEN APPLIED ITSELF TO MISSIONARY AND EDUCATIONAL WORK. IN DOING SO THE COMMUNITY CHANGED ITS NATURE, AND CEASED TO BE EXCLUSIVELY CONTEMPLATIVE. NOT MANY UNIVERSITIES, I FEEL, COULD MATCH TRAPPIST MONKS IN THE EXERCISE OF CHARITY. UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL ARE PERHAPS MORE FREQUENTLY TO BE CHARACTERISED BY PRIDE, AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE LITTLE RHYME ABOUT THE LEGENDARY MASTER OF BALLIOL, BENJAMIN JOWETT:



"FIRST COME I; MY NAME IS JOWETT.

THERE IS NO KNOWLEDGE BUT I KNOW IT.

I AM MASTER OF THIS COLLEGE:

WHAT I DON'T KNOW ISN'T KNOWLEDGE."

WE ARE MOVING INTO CIRCUMSTANCES, THEREFORE, IN WHICH WE SHALL BE COMPELLED TO PROVIDE SOME SPECTRUM OF REMEDIAL PROGRAMMES. WE SHOULD ALSO IN OUR OWN LONGTERM SELFINTEREST BECOME INVOLVED IN ASPECTS OF IMPROVING THE SCHOOL SITUATION AND MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO CONTINUING EDUCATION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR THOSE WHO HAVE REACHED AN AGE WHERE THEY CANNOT RETURN TO SCHOOL OR WHOSE FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES DO NOT PERMIT THEM EASILY TO OBTAIN FURTHER QUALIFICATIONS BY CONVENTIONAL MEANS.

IN SOME AREAS WE HAVE ALREADY MADE A PROMISING START. THE MOLTENO PROJECT, ADMINISTERED BY OUR INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF ENGLISH IN AFRICA, HAS MADE IMPRESSIVE STRIDES WITH ITS BREAKTHROUGH TO LITERACY PROGRAMME IN SEVERAL VERNACULARS, WHICH IS THEN SUCCEEDED BY THE BRIDGE TO ENGLISH PROGRAMME AT THE STAGE WHEN INSTRUCTION SWITCHES TO ENGLISH. THESE PROGRAMMES ARE NOW IN OPERATION IN OVER 300 SCHOOLS IN SOWETO, TRANSKEI, LEBOWA AND BOPHUTATSWANA. THANKS TO THE FURTHER GENEROSITY OF THE MOLTENO TRUST WE ARE NOW IN A POSITION TO APPOINT A PROFESSOR IN ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE, PART OF WHOSE DUTIES WILL BE TO ADDRESS HIMSELF TO THE PROBLEM OF FRESHMEN STUDENTS WITH AN INADEQUATE GRASP OF ENGLISH AT THE LEVEL REQUIRED.

A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN THE OPENING OF OUR DIVISION IN EAST LONDON, CONCERNED AT THIS STAGE ONLY WITH THE NEEDS OF PART-TIME

STUDENTS STUDYING TOWARDS A BACHELOR OF COMMERCE DEGREE, WHOSE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE PRECLUDED THEM FROM ATTENDING A UNIVERSITY. THE INITIAL ENCOURAGING ENROLMENT OF 52 INCLUDES A NUMBER OF MATURE AGE AND BLACK STUDENTS, CATEGORIES TO WHICH I HAVE ALREADY REFERRED, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT A CONSIDERABLE DEMAND, ESPECIALLY FROM BLACKS, WILL BUILD UP. IT IS ALSO OUR AMBITION TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION IN THAT DIVISION TO CONTINUING EDUCATION, AN IMPORTANT FACET OF WHICH IS THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS. SOME OF OUR STAFF ARE ALREADY MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO SUCH IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN GRAHAMSTOWN, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 1820 FOUNDATION.

ONE OF THE INHIBITING FACTORS IN ALL THESE ACTIVITIES - BRIDGING COURSES, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING - IS THAT THEY ARE NOT RECOGNISED AS YET BY GOVERNMENT AS QUALIFYING FOR ANY FORM OF

SUBSIDY, IN SPITE OF MANY REPRESENTATIONS. NONETHELESS I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT FINANCIAL PROBLEMS WILL PROVE INSOLUBLE. THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS FULLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK IN THESE AREAS, AND WE ALREADY HAVE CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF THEIR GENEROUS WILLINGNESS TO UNDERWRITE IT. THE MAJOR ISSUE SEEMS TO BE RATHER ONE OF EVALUATING PROMISING DIRECTIONS. A BEWILDERING VARIETY OF OPTIONS, EACH WITH THEIR PROMOTERS AND THEIR DETRACTORS, HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUGGESTED. THERE ARE COMPETING SCHOOL-TO-UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES, CADET SCHEMES, TEACHER-TRAINING OPTIONS, NOT TO MENTION A SEEMINGLY INEXHAUSTIBLE RANGE OF TECHNICAL AIDS, FROM TV IN BROADCAST AND CASSETTE FORM TO MICROCOMPUTERS AND EVEN TO DEDICATED COMPUTER NETWORKS. WITHOUT CAREFUL JUDGEMENT A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY CAN BE EXPENDED WITHOUT COMMENSURATE RESULTS. WHETHER THIS MONEY IS SPENT ON SALARIES OR ON DISCARDED HARDWARE IS OF NO GREAT MOMENT. THE HARDWARE OF COURSE CAN



BE MORE EMBARRASSING BECAUSE IT VERY OFTEN REMAINS IN PLACE WHEREAS THE PEOPLE EVAPORATE.

A FIRST PRIORITY THEREFORE IS ONE OF INTELLIGENT EVALUATION BASED ON A BACKGROUND OF ACCEPTED EDUCATIONAL THEORY. THEREAFTER WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN PILOT SCHEMES CHOSEN ON THE BASIS OF THEIR LIKELY SUCCESS. EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF INTERNALLY CONDUCTED BRIDGING COURSES IT DOES NOT SEEM APPROPRIATE THAT A UNIVERSITY SHOULD MAKE A DIRECT OPERATIONAL CONTRIBUTION. EVEN AN EDUCATOR WITH THE EXPERIENCE AND CREDENTIALS OF PROFESSOR S P JACKSON, FORMER DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, SPEAKING ON AN OCCASION SUCH AS THIS, EXPRESSED MISGIVINGS ABOUT AN INDEFINITE COMMITMENT TO REMEDIAL WORK:

"IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT HOW SUCCESSFUL SHORT REMEDIAL PROGRAMMES COULD BE, AND WHAT RESOURCES THE UNIVERSITY WOULD NEED TO MOUNT THEM. A LARGE INFLUX OF BLACK STUDENTS WOULD REQUIRE AN EFFORT ON A LARGE SCALE. APART FROM ACCOMMODATION AND EQUIPMENT A SUBSTANTIAL STAFF OF TEACHERS OF PROVEN ABILITY AND EXPERIENCE WOULD BE NEEDED. THE EXPANSION OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THIS WAY MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS BUT IT IS MY PERSONAL VIEW THAT IF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE COUNTRY COULD BE BUILT UP SUFFICIENTLY TO RELIEVE THE UNIVERSITIES OF THIS PREPARATORY PHASE OF THEIR WORK IN THE LONG RUN THE RESULTS WOULD BE BETTER."

PROFESSOR WANDIRA, TOO, ACKNOWLEDGES THE POINT:

"COULD THESE TASKS NOT HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY A GOVERNMENT AGENCY OR BY COLLEGES OF FURTHER EDUCATION? OBVIOUSLY IF THESE

ALTERNATIVES DO NOT EXIST THE UNIVERSITY MUST RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF SOCIETY AND MUST UNDERTAKE PIONEERING WORK. BUT WHERE THEY DO EXIST IT SEEMS INDEFENSIBLE TO USE EXPENSIVE UNIVERSITY TIME AND STAFF FOR THE PURPOSE."

MANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH THE UNIVERSITY MIGHT WISH TO PLAY A RÔLE COULD CONVENIENTLY BE BROUGHT TOGETHER IF WE WERE TO OPERATE AN EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOL WHICH COULD SERVE AS THE ANALOGUE OF A LABORATORY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, NOT SOLELY FOR PRACTICE TEACHING BUT ALSO FOR TESTING OUT TEACHING AND LEARNING THEORIES. THIS IDEA IS BY NO MEANS A NEW ONE AND MANY PRECEDENTS, SOME VERY CLOSE AT HAND, ARE AVAILABLE. THE GRAHAMSTOWN TRAINING COLLEGE HAD ITS OWN PRIMARY SCHOOL, THE BUILDINGS OF WHICH NOW HOUSE PART OF OUR DEPARTMENT OF FINE ART. MARY WATERS SCHOOL OWES ITS EXISTENCE TO THE RHODES DEPARTMENT OF

EDUCATION. THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND HAS CONTROL OF A NURSERY SCHOOL. A COGENT CRITICISM IS THAT CHILDREN ARE NOT GUINEA-PIGS AND THAT THEIR INTERESTS MUST BE PROTECTED. THERE SEEMS, HOWEVER, TO BE NO REASON WHY PROPERLY MOTIVATED PROFESSIONALS RUNNING THE SCHOOL COULD NOT PROTECT THE WELFARE OF THE CHILDREN, AND AT THE SAME TIME AFFORD REASONABLE AND CONTROLLED ACCESS FOR TESTING AND OBSERVATIONAL PURPOSES TO ACADEMICS NOT ONLY FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT BUT ALSO FROM A WIDE SPECTRUM OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. THE RUNNING OF THE SCHOOL COULD BE FUNDED BY THE AUTHORITIES ON THE SAME PER CAPITA BASIS AS ANY ORDINARY SCHOOL WITH POSSIBLE AUGMENTATION FROM PRIVATE SOURCES, SINCE THE RESULTS FLOWING FROM THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL SHOULD BE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO EDUCATION AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

IN PLEADING FOR THIS TYPE OF FLEXIBILITY FROM EDUCATION AUTHORITIES ONE SHOULD ALSO WISH TO ADD ONE'S VOICE FOR FAR GREATER FLEXIBILITY GENERALLY. IN ADDITION TO ALL THE OBVIOUS SHORTCOMINGS IN OUR VARIOUS EDUCATION SYSTEMS PERHAPS THE MOST PERVASIVE HAS BEEN DEMOTIVATION AND CONSEQUENT LOSS OF MORALE. THE COMPLETELY RIGID SEPARATION OF THE RACES, ALLEVIATED TO SOME EXTENT IN LATTER YEARS BY SEEMINGLY RELUCTANTLY GRANTED EXEMPTIONS, PERMITS AND CONSENTS ALMOST INEVITABLY LEADS TO RESENTMENT, LOSS OF SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE. THERE IS A NATURAL TENDENCY ON THE PART OF ADMINISTRATORS AND CIVIL SERVANTS TO REGARD THEIR RANGE OF VISION AS BEING ENTIRELY OCCUPIED BY THIN EDGES OF WEDGES. NO CONCESSIONS SHOULD BE GRANTED FOR FEAR THAT THESE WILL LEAD TO FURTHER CONCESSIONS AND SO AD INFINITUM. ONE HESITATES TO MENTION THE WORD QUOTA BECAUSE OF ALL THE UNFORTUNATE CONNOTATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH IT, BUT EVEN THAT WOULD BE INFINITELY PREFERABLE TO THE

WRETCHED AND CUMBERSOME PERMIT SYSTEM CURRENTLY IN FORCE. IF THE AUTHORITIES CANNOT SEE THEIR WAY CLEAR TO ABANDONING IT ALTOGETHER THEN A HEALTHY PROPORTION OF BLACK STUDENTS AT WHITE UNIVERSITIES, THE SELECTION BEING ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF THE UNIVERSITIES, WOULD BE A VAST IMPROVEMENT ON THE PRESENT HAPHAZARD ARRANGEMENTS. WANDIRA, IN DESCRIBING DIFFERENT STAGES OF INDIGENISATION OF STAFF AT AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES, RECOGNISES A FINAL STAGE WITH A RESIDUAL 10% OF EXPATRIATES WHOSE NUMBERS ARE NOT POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT BUT WHOSE PRESENCE PROVIDES A LEAVENING AND ADDITIONAL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. A SIMILAR LEAVENING OF WHITE STAFF IN BLACK EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS, AND VICE VERSA, WOULD BE OF ENORMOUS EDUCATIONAL AND HUMAN BENEFIT. BOTH SIDES WOULD HAVE LIVING MODELS ON WHICH TO BASE ATTITUDES RATHER THAN REMOTE AND STEREOTYPED ABSTRACTIONS. IT HAS OFTEN BEEN REMARKED THAT IN THE DAYS OF



MISSIONARY EDUCATION, WHEN SUCH PEOPLE WERE AVAILABLE, THE QUALITY OF ASSIMILATED EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO ENGLISH, WAS MUCH HIGHER THAN IT IS TODAY. ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE COIN THE ULTIMATE ABSURDITY OF INSISTING THAT AFRICAN LANGUAGES BE TAUGHT BY WHITE TEACHERS IN WHITE SCHOOLS, ILLUSTRATES THE BANKRUPTCY OF PRESENT POLICY.

IT IS SURELY NOT A MATTER OF DISPUTE THAT TWO OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MOST IMPORTANT GROWTH INDUSTRIES ARE CONTROL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS. EVIDENCE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE EDUCATION CRISIS IS THE EXISTENCE OF NO LESS THAN THREE COMMISSIONS OF ONE STATUS OR ANOTHER. THESE ARE THE VILJOEN/RETIEF COMMISSION ON TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR BLACKS IN URBAN AREAS, THE INTERNAL DEPARTMENTAL VENTER COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WHITE EDUCATOR AND THE COMPREHENSIVE INVESTIGATION INTO EDUCATION AS A WHOLE BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE

HSRC. AS WE ANXIOUSLY AWAIT THE FINAL OUTCOME OF ALL THESE ENDEAVOURS WE HOPE WITH A DEGREE OF OPTIMISM THAT SOME ENLIGHTENED AND FAR REACHING RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE MADE, AND THAT THEY WILL NOT SUFFER TOO MUCH EMASCULATION IN THE DELIBERATIVE AND EXECUTIVE STAGES.

WE, ALL OF US HERE PRESENT, PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS, PARENTS, THOSE JUST ENTERING THE JOB MARKET AND THOSE FURTHERING THEIR STUDIES, HAVE A VITAL INTEREST IN A HEALTHY RESTRUCTURING OF THE WHOLE EDUCATION SYSTEM, FOR WITHOUT SUCH A FOUNDATION THE PROSPECTS FOR THE SOLUTION OF OUR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES ARE CONSIDERABLY MORE GLOOMY. IF A MORE FAVOURABLE CLIMATE FOR CHANGE THEN DOES ARISE THE UNIVERSITIES MUST BE PREPARED TO DEVOTE SOME CONSIDERABLE PROPORTION OF THEIR RESOURCES AND TALENTS, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TERM, AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS I HAVE TOUCHED UPON.

RHODES SHOULD BE IN A STRONG POSITION TO BUILD ON THE EXCELLENT BEGINNING WE HAVE ALREADY MADE. IF, MR CHANCELLOR, WE INSIST ON FOLLOWING A STRICT POLICY OF "BUSINESS AS USUAL" WE MAY FIND THAT IN THE LONG RUN THERE IS NO BUSINESS.

D S HENDERSON

9 APRIL 1981