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EDITORIAL

THE SIXTEEN

After so much discussion, so much valid denunciation, is there very much more that can usefully be said about the sixteen bannings?

Well, the main elements of tragic farcicality can hardly be rehearsed too frequently. The eight banned whites discovered, in Kafkaesque fashion, that they had been found guilty by a group of politicians whom they had supposed to be investigating NUSAS rather than conducting a trial. While the banning of the whites had to be "explained" by the Schiebusch Commission's interim report, the banning of the eight blacks was judged not to merit even a bogus explanation: it is of course a firm South African tradition that whites and blacks are treated in terms of separate systems of injustice. Some of the reasons advanced for not bringing the banned persons to proper trial have been more bizarre and more tell-tale than usual: one Nationalist spokesman says that a trial would give the alleged malefactors a platform; another points out that it would reveal the workings of the state's security system; a third

explains that it might be difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused were guilty . . . What is staggering is not so much the poverty of thought (which one is accustomed to in Nationalist pronouncements) as the obtuse inability to recognise poverty of thought. And what are we to make of the fact that the Government has struck at eight blacks and eight whites? Does some subtle Broederbondish calculation lie behind this fearful symmetry — or did some half-bored committee find itself casually tracing a pretty pattern? Whatever the intention or lack of intention, that symmetrical pattern may in future years acquire a symbolic significance quite different from any that the Cabinet is likely to have desired.

Why did the bannings take place? Nationalists dislike and fear "black consciousness", of which the eight banned blacks are leading proponents; they fear it because they realise that it is the force that will in the end, in one way or another, defeat them; they dislike it because they can't help recognising that its energy comes from the resentment aroused by their own policies.

Nationalists also dislike English-speaking white students and universities: they are annoyed that after a quarter of a century of ideological and legislative gloom the latest generation of these students continues to see the light. All this is fairly obvious. But why did the bannings occur when they did?

In our view they may not have been wholly unconnected with the Durban strike, that remarkable manifestation which may prove to be the crucial political event of the early nineteen seventies. None of the banned people — as far as we are aware — had any direct influence upon the strikers. In fact it seems to us to have been established that the strike was caused by an accumulation of popular feeling. But it is well known that both the theoreticians of black consciousness and the white students' wages commissions were in their different ways encouraging modes of thinking and feeling which are hardly a part of the traditional South African way of life. And yet perhaps the principal connection between the strike and the bannings is largely a *non*-connection. Finding it inadvisable, and besides impossible, to punish large numbers of strikers, the Government may have decided to lash out at people who were not themselves strikers but were very clearly in sympathy with the strike. By doing this it would have provided an outlet for its own raging emotions (after all, it is not used to facing situations that it cannot control) and, perhaps more important, it would have directed the attention of the anxious white population — or most of it — away from an area of activity which was proving an embarrassment and towards

one where it was possible to witness still the familiar and comforting spectacle of Big Brother's bullying.

What will be the effect of the bannings? Will they succeed, as many bannings have succeeded in the past, in arresting temporarily the inevitable flow of change? Will they produce disruption of work and projects, intimidation, despair?

There is bound to be — there has already been — a certain amount of disruption, of intimidation, of despair. But bannings do not necessarily "succeed"; indeed they often bring forth a new wave of energy among the friends, colleagues and followers of those who have been banned. We trust that this will happen now — in the black movements, in the universities, in every sector of the true opposition. And there are a number of indications that a fresh wave of energy is indeed on the move: the black organisations are continuing to operate; NUSAS is going strong; the Senate of the University of Natal is supporting Dr. Turner; a number of individuals and organisations have said that they will not co-operate with the Schlebusch Commission.

Undoubtedly the political situation in South Africa is somewhat fluid at the moment; and under the pressure of the flow the Government is beginning to slip. It is the duty of every right-thinking South African to help to prevent white Nationalism from regaining that steady and cruel grip which has been such a curse to the whole country.□

"MONEY MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND"

by Mike Murphy.

For the purposes of this article, the term "go round" as it appears in the title must not be seen as a synonym for "revolve" for from this the word "revolution" is derived, and we all know that revolution is a wicked, nasty, mean thing when mentioned in the context of the South African situation. Let it be clear then that what I am talking about is *not* revolution, but "rapid social change."

To further define my terms: In discussing how money is spent in South Africa, I do no more than nod in passing at Government expenditure on such things as Arms and the whole range of "defence" activities. What this article concentrates on is how "*liberal*" or "*radical*" organisations, and individuals with money to invest should go about investing that money so as to ensure that the social change

they hope to ferment by their investment will ferment *rapidly*. I am, of course, assuming that both liberals and radicals would agree that the direction of social change in South Africa should be such that the end result in the short term is a society that allows its members equal rights; where blacks can be free of material deprivations inhibiting normal human existence; where whites can be free of psychological overprovisions which gave them omniscience and other divine attributes.

Let us examine the potential for rapid social change in South Africa.

I think that we can dismiss the whites (as a group) as a source of pressure for this change. Whites, again as a