

Unit VI: Material Things and Soul Things

- Purpose: 1. to develop insights about the inadequacies of pure materialism;
2. to develop some elementary concepts of a new society.

Summary: Starting with a questioning of whether the material things have given the "Power Structure" satisfaction, to raise the question of whether achievement will bring the Negro and/or poor white fulfillment. Then to explore whether the conditions of his oppression have given the Negro insights and values that contribute to the goal of a more humane society. And finally to develop this relevance into some insights as to the characteristics of a new society.

Materials: Statement of discipline of non-violent movements.

Introduction: The last few days we have been exploring in another world--different than the one we live in everyday--the world of the "power structure," and we have made some interesting discoveries:

1. That the "Power Structure" has a lot of power to make things just as they want them to be;
2. That the "Power Structure" has a lot of money that buys--big, luxurious houses, expensive cars, expensive clothing, trips, and all the other things we see on TV and in the movies.
But we've also discovered that--
3. The "Power Structure" is afraid of losing its power and its money; and
4. The "Power Structure" is afraid of Negroes and poor whites finding out the "truth" and getting together.

Ideas to be developed:

1. The possessions of men do not make them free. Negroes will not be freed by:
 - a. taking what the whites have;
 - b. a movement directed at materialistic ends only.
2. The structure of society can be altered.
3. While a radically new social structure must be created in order to give man the room to grow in, it is not the changing of structure alone that produces a good life or a good world. It is also the ethical values of the individual.
4. There are many kinds of power we could use to build a new society.

Concept: That just taking the "Power Structure's" money and power would not make us happy either.

We have seen that having money and power does not make

5. Education--should all children be able to go to the same schools regardless of their race or religion? Should all children have the right to get as much education as they are capable of? Suppose they can't afford to go to special high schools or to college? Should they still be able to go? How? Who should pay?

What should be taught in schools? Do we teach myths and lies? Why? Should we? Should we train people for jobs in schools? To be good citizens? What else should we train people for? culture, resourcefulness, world citizenship, respect for other people and cultures, peace.

What about teaching adults? Should they have a chance too? Should it be free? Should they be able to go to special schools if necessary?

6. Legal--should the laws and the courts treat all people the same. Should the laws be more concerned with protecting the property a man has, or the man himself? Why?
7. Political system--should every man have the right to vote? What if he cannot read? Should he still have the right to vote and choose his representative? Should politicians have a right to give out favors? Can they be honest in this system? Suppose people can get good housing, jobs, health services, etc. in other ways . . . will they need political favors?
8. Mass media--should newspapers, TV, magazines tell the truth? Should that be their basic job? Should they have to support themselves by advertising? How else could they get enough money?
9. International relations--how should we want to treat other countries? Should we want them to be just like us? Should we help them if we have more than they do? Should we work for peace? Can we have peace if we keep building bigger bombs and faster planes (what does fear do, threats? what about children fighting . . .)
10. Cultural life--are artists, actors, musicians and writers important? why? Should art and acting and music and writing be considered work? Should there be free concerts and free plays for everyone to see? Why?

Concept: It is not simply the changing of the structure that will make a good world, but the ethical values of the individual.

What if men were just naturally bad to each other--if they didn't care about each other? Would it matter about the structure of society? Are men good to each other because of laws? What is an ethical value?

the "power structure" happy. We have seen that they have to pay a price for it.

Questions: Would just taking their money and power away and keeping it ourselves make us happy? Wouldn't we have to be afraid and distrust people too? Wouldn't we have to make up lies to convince ourselves that we were right? Wouldn't we have to make up lies to convince other people that we were right? Wouldn't we, too, have to keep other people down in order to keep ourselves up?

Suppose you had a million dollars. You could buy a boat, a big car, a house, clothes, food, and many good things. But could you buy a friend? Could you buy a spring morning? Could you buy health? And how could we be happy without friends, health, and spring?

This is a freedom movement: suppose this movement could get a good house and job for all Negroes. Suppose Negroes had everything the rest of the country has . . . everything that the middle class of America has . . . would it be enough? Why are there heart attacks and diseases and so much awful unhappiness in the middle class . . . which seems to be so free? Why the Bomb?

Concept: That the structure of society can be changed. Discussion of a possible new society.

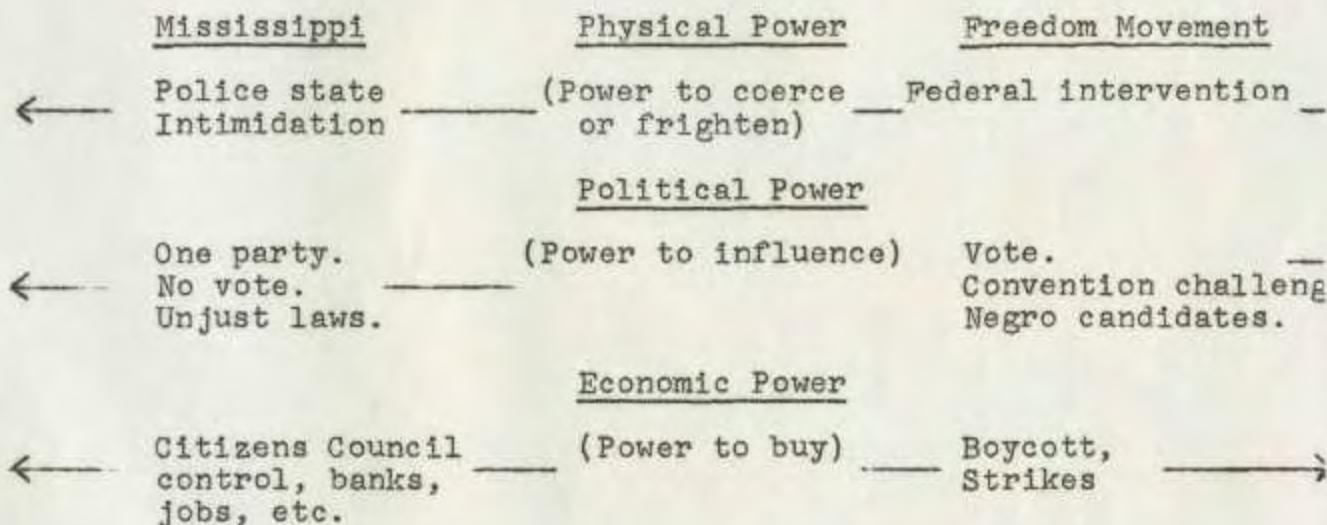
1. Money--should a few people have a lot of money, should everybody have the same, should everybody have what they need? What could we do?
2. Jobs--should men to able to work at any job they can do and like, regardless of color, religion, nationality? Suppose a man were put out of a job by automation (like the mechanical picker?), what should happen to him? Should he just sit around? Should he be trained for a new job? Who can train him? When he is old, should he have to depend on his family or be poor? Should he be helped when he is old? Why? Should all workers join together if they wish? Should they share in the profits? Why?
3. Housing--should every family be able to live where they wish to live, regardless of race or religion? Why? Should every family have a decent home? Should it have heat, a kitchen, a bathroom, hot water, nice furniture? Why does the kind of house a family has effect their family life? Suppose a family does not have enough money? Does a family have a basic right to good housing?
4. Health--should all people have a right to receive the same medical services regardless of religion or race or money? Should all people be able to receive whatever medical services they need regardless of how rich or poor they are? Why? Should people who need special care receive it? Why? From whom?

Case Study: Statements of discipline of non-violent movements.

Discuss "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Do you have a set of values? Are society's laws enough? Are your own personal "laws" important too? Are they ever more important than society's laws?

Is the movement the germ of a new society? How do people act toward each other in the movement? How do people act toward each other in Freedom School? How does this way of life differ from the way of life of the larger society? We must keep these good ethical and spiritual values in the new society which we build.

Concept: That there are many kinds of power we could use to build a better society. What is power? (Power is the ability to move things, or to make things happen or to change things.) What kinds of power are there? Discuss. List on blackboard.



Do these "powers" balance each other? Do they succeed in bringing the two sides together or do they tend to pull apart? Are there any other kinds of power?

Truth Power
(Power to convince or persuade)

Does persuasion pull people apart? Is it a different kind of power? Can we use truth to reveal the lies and myths? What happens once they are revealed? Once someone is convinced or persuaded, can they join with us? Is the better world for them too?

Soul Power
(The power to love)

Can you love everyone like you love your family or your friends? What does compassion mean? Is that a kind of love? Is there something in other people that is like what is in you? Can soul power change things? How?