**Black Power and “Integration”.  Mike Miller. 7/14.**

As my thinking developed on these matters, I came to the conclusion that "integration" wasn't even a helpful concept.  And, on the other hand, I concluded that there was no conflict between "black power" and "integration."

If black packinghouse workers were denied the opportunity to work anyplace but the most dangerous, unhealthy and onerous places, were they demanding "integration" when they demanded equal access to all jobs in the industry?  I suppose you could say they wanted to "integrate" the packinghouses, but that obscures more than it clarifies.

Woodlawn's (TWO) slogan was "self-determination through community power" (I think I've got it exact, but I may be wrong about "through").  "Community power" in an African-American community is black power.  FIGHT's Florence said, "In Rochester, when you say 'black power' it's spelled FIGHT."   As Alinsky put it when he was on a panel with Stokely Carmichael, “We don’t go into a black community and end up with pastel power.”

The questions for me were, and remain:

(1) How do you build power?  Lowndes County was close, but John Hewlitt (sp?) made a decision to abandon it, and he was a very popular man in the County. Too bad the SNCC crew didn't stay and continue building. Ditto to Stokely in DC, where the contrast between Marion Berry and him provided a clear laboratory for the Adam Clayton Powell kind of black power and something different--that Stokely/Kwame articulated but never quite built.  (Alinsky, having built it, didn't know how to deal with its cooptation--a different discussion.

(2) How do you use it?  The tragedy to me was that Kwame didn't spend more time building it, because that is the precondition to using it.  Had they stayed in Lowndes County, they would have figured out how to turn that 80% black county into a black government then, recognizing the severe limits that would have constrained that government, figured out how to:  (1) use coops, credit unions and other tools of mutual aid to build a black community infrastructure; (2) use strikes, boycotts and mass disruptive direct action to wrest concessions from the dominant white economic power structure, including "integrating" whatever all-white workforces there were around there; (3) develop a cultural program that promoted black identity and pride; (4) taught black history; (5) rooted the meaning of the current movement in the stream of historic struggle going back to slave revolts on the ships from Africa; (6) made new connections to the then-emerging independent nations of Africa, and perhaps developing the clout here in the U.S. to reverse our foreign policy that was on the wrong side of what was going on in those nations.

Most important, black power would have dealt with this remaining-to-be understood problem:  when to make coalitions, and when not? With whom do you make them?  (I remain convinced that there was, and remains, the possibility of alliances with poor whites in places like Appalachia.  But you have to be secure in your own power before you make them.)  In the north, redlining created the opportunities for those coalitions as well, and there were occasional forays in that direction by various community organizations--but not enough to draw significant conclusions.