

POWER TO THE GRASSROOTS

By RICK HOPTON



CULTURE, SUB-CULTURE AND BLACK SELF-GENOCIDE

What is culture? What does it mean, and what use does it hold for a Black man in America? Does the Black in America truly have a culture? Culture simply defined means, "That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".

Society, what society! Has the Black man ever been an interrelated whole within the so-called American society? Society defined means, "An aggregation of human beings (a population) living as a distinct entity and possessing a distinct culture". Therefore to say that a Black man in America has his own distinct culture means that Blacks are in essence something abstract, something that is out of the physical or meta-physical confines of the American society at large. So then to speak of another distinct culture within "one" so-called "American society" becomes a most profound contradiction of American ideals and/or a hypocritical racist oriented concept.

When we think of the Black man in American we always think in terms of "dualism" and "double consciousness", because that is the social disease or stigma that white America has imposed upon our conscious and sub-conscious mind. This social and psychological dualism — the need of having a so-called American Negro culture — comes about primarily from the inferiority that many Blacks have toward themselves, and our racist institutions who perpetuate such myths. These concepts on a distinct Negro culture are white America's, and not our own; these very concepts that sound "ideal" and "classy" are the concepts that will insure for white America a "good Negro" who thinks, believes, and accepts the implication that he is not truly a part of the American society.

I am not however eliminating the fact that we have our own distinct patterns of behavior; only if we possessed a distinct "social" entity with the American population which is impossible — could we claim to have such a culture. We must therefore speak of sub-culture (one that grew out of our racist, so-called American culture), folkways (a mode of thinking, feeling, or acting common to a people or to a social group), and stateways (differences between the northern and southern black), rather than a separate culture. To have what can be called a culture one must first have a "society" that they can most easily identify with.

To have a "culture", one, who is without a "society" that accepts them (as in the case of black people in America) must in the final analysis find a society which is willing to identifiable relate; or, it can also work in reverse, whereas, the group of people (black people in America) take it upon themselves to relate (emotionally, economically or otherwise) to a people who possess a country and social entity needed to have a distinct cultural heritage.

Next week in Part II, I will discuss the differences between a culture complex and an actual or real culture; and also practical solutions toward "psychological liberation" and "self-determination".