

POWER TO THE GRASSROOTS

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PART II CULTURE, SUB-CULTURE AND BLACK SELF-GENOCIDE

Last week I discussed the fact that the Black man in America is without any distinct cultural heritage he can call his own; and that the reason was that, a group of people must first and foremost possess a "society" that accepts them before a culture can validly exist. It should also be noted that the white man — who lives in North America — has never had and never will have what can be called an American culture. The most they can claim to have is an American way of living — which leaves much to be desired. What we have in America can be summed up from a political standpoint as a "racist institution" that is utilized to insure "white supremacy"; and from an anthropological standpoint it is said to be a "culture complex". What is a culture complex? With regards to anthropology (which is the study of man and all his activities — politics, law, economics, etc.) a "culture complex" can be defined as, "An integrated system of culture traits organized about some nuclear interest". What could be a more vivid description of American racist philosophy? The crucial difference between the Black and white experience however is the fact that white, so-called Americans, have always had the opportunity to trace and keep strong kinship ties with their original cultural heritage and Blacks in America have not. Out of this understanding of what a culture complex is, we can clearly see, it is the Indian and the Indian alone who possesses an authentic American culture.

Therefore to talk about a white American cultural heritage or a Black American cultural heritage becomes — in reality — a misnomer. We must again think in terms of a "culture complex" made up of many ethnic groups who have origins in Europe, Asia, and Africa — Europe being the oppressor and exploitor who formed the "culture complex" — but who now live within the same geographical territory; making up what should be called a "white social institution" (United States) rather than a distinct cultural and/or social entity per se.

Through simple deduction and objective rationale it should be very clear that the Black man in America — just as the European or Asian — must also have a cultural heritage and origin that can meaningfully relate to us and our people — since we now realize that heritage cannot be American, any more than we are.

Could the denial of such an identifiable cultural heritage be the cause of minimal progress — as a social entity — for Black people in America? If the Indian is the only true American, what then, ethnically speaking, is a Black in America?

I will attempt to shed some light on these and other questions next week in part III of "Culture, Sub-Culture, and Black self-genocide".