



Further To Fly: Black Women and the Politics of Empowerment

Sheila Radford-Hill

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Women's Studies/African American Studies

How feminism has failed African American women and why they must fight back.

Amid the longest-running economic boom in American history and despite the emergence of a significant black middle class, the lot of low-income black people in general-and black women in particular-seems more troubling than ever. Their plight, Sheila Radford-Hill argues in this book, is directly related to the diminution of black women's traditional power as culture bearers and community builders. A cogent critique of feminist theory and practice, *Further to Fly* identifies the failure of feminism to connect with the social realities it should seek to explain, in particular the decline of black women's empowerment.

Further to Fly searches out the causes and effects of this decline, describing the ways in which, since the 1960s, black women have been stripped of their traditional status as agents of change in the community-and how, as a result, the black community has faltered. Radford-Hill explores the shortcomings of second-wave black and white feminism, revealing how their theoretical underpinnings have had unintended (and often unacknowledged) negative consequences for black women's lives and their communities.

While acknowledging that African American women have made significant contributions to the black struggle for justice in America, Radford-Hill argues that more needs to be done. She combines social criticism and critical analysis to argue that black women must revive their legacy of activism and reclaim the tradition of nurturing in the black community, proposing specific tactics that can be used to revive the support networks that help determine the obligations of community members and guide how people interact on an everyday level.

As a deft account of genesis and effects of black women's diminishing power, and as a sobering analysis of the devastating blunders of feminist theory and practice, this work makes a compelling argument for an "authentic feminism," one that aggressively connects the realities of women's experiences, needs, aspirations, and responsibilities.

Sheila Radford-Hill is an educator and activist whose work has centered on community, economic development, and educational policy issues. She is currently a division administrator at the Illinois State Board of Education and lives in Chicago.

Translation Inquiries: University of Minnesota Press

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