

Those Who Know Don't Say: The Nation of Islam, the Black Freedom Movement, and the Carceral State

Garrett Felber

The University of North Carolina Press (Jan 13, 2020)

Softcover \$22.95 (280pp)

978-1-4696-5382-2

The judicial system's bias against minorities has deep roots, acknowledges Garrett Felber in *Those Who Know Don't Say*, which argues that the penal, or carceral, state expanded due to "dialects of discipline." It shows that police departments steeped in cultures of bigotry, and a judicial system that promotes punishment over rehabilitation, were harsh in responding to black protest movements, many of them led by the Nation of Islam.

Investigating Nation of Islam-organized 1960s demonstrations at New York's Clinton and Attica prisons as well as uprisings in Los Angeles, Watts, and Harlem, the book shows that violent police actions were met by peaceful hunger strikes, courtroom demeanors that faced judge and jury bigotry, and demands for basic human rights for prisoners. Felber devotes much attention to Malcolm X's charismatic leadership of the Nation of Islam and the Organization of Afro-American Unity, which he founded after breaking way from Elijah Muhammad, and to both organizations' paths following Malcolm X's assassination.

The text indicates that the growing carceral state was augmented by black American intellectuals who viewed the Nation of Islam as violent and segregationist. Felber makes a compelling case that media contributed to this perspective, while C. Eric Lincoln's bestselling *The Black Muslims In America* also portrayed the Nation of Islam as mysterious and cultlike with an antiwhite agenda. The book reveals that the Nation of Islam was forced to fight a two-front war against the carceral state and mainstream civil rights groups that viewed its program as an impediment to their own. It concludes with commentary on the parallels between the post-World War II era and the Black Lives Matter movement. *Those Who Know Don't Say* is an impressive academic investigation and an appealing contribution to black American history.

KARL HELICHER (January / February 2020)

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