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Although few Blacks can be expected to support the presidential candidacy of Ronald Reagan, his campaign does concern us. Reagan's recent controversial proposals demonstrate clearly that he threatens the well-being of Blacks, the poor, and working people.

The most startling of Reagan's extremist proposals is that rather than federalizing the burden of welfare, huge chunks of welfare, education, and other social programs should be turned back to the states. That's the same old bad news Blacks have heard before. At the same time, desiring to avoid the image of a heartless enemy of the poor, Reagan has suggested that in those states that do not provide adequate benefits the poor should migrate to those states that do.

Strangely enough, there is a precedent for Reagan's proposal. But it is one that has been disastrous. Welfare migration is one reason why our cities are in a shambles. For years, poor Blacks and Whites were forced out of the rural South by the mechanization of agriculture, a lack of job opportunities and miserly welfare payments.

They sought jobs in the cities of the North, where there was at least some hope of gainful employment. They flocked to states and cities that also had kinder attitudes toward working people and the poor and provided welfare and unemployment benefits. While federal agriculture programs had forced the poor to the cities and the interstate highway system stimulated the movement of jobs away from cities, there was no federal plan to provide jobs for the newest immigrants to the cities. The welfare problem is a national problem created by national policies and national failures. To pretend otherwise is merely to set the stage for even worse problems in the future.

Reagan's proposal that \$90 billion worth of federal responsibilities be turned back to the states is an effort to turn back the clock to the days of Herbert Hoover. The idea would be profoundly regressive and reactionary if adopted. It would shift the burden of taxation to the poor and working people, since only two of the fifty states have progressive tax systems. The Reagan proposal would mean that those who most need help would be paying more for programs that do less to meet their needs.

Blacks, liberals, and others of good will are naturally alarmed at the extremism and callousness of Reagan's program. But I am more disturbed at the notable absence of liberal leadership for enlargement of social justice.

One danger of the Reagan campaign is that it makes President Ford look like a moderate. In

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truth, Ford is not that different from Reagan. He is more cautious and less willing to advance conservative panaceas. But as his recent State of the Union and budget speeches indicate he is still willing to tolerate excessive unemployment, while recommending measures that would benefit the rich at the expense of those less well off.

The Congress cannot provide a real alternative to the conservatives. The Congress has been forced into a defensive pattern to resist the attempts of the Nixon and Ford administrations to dismantle the welfare state. It has been a difficult battle. There have been some defeats and some victories. But the victories have been limited to preserving programs enacted in the 1960s; there have been no programs to extend social justice. Almost the entire energies of the Congress are required merely to keeping a deteriorating situation resulting from economic stagnation and recession from growing worse.

To make matters worse, a number of liberals are repeating phrases remarkably similar to Reagan and Ford's. They have the need for cutting back social programs. When liberals are so confused as to speak such nonsense, how can it be expected that the average voter will know that there is an alternative to the outmoded conservatism of Ford and Reagan.

President Truman anticipated the dilemma of the current situation when he observed that given a choice between two conservative parties, people will always choose the one that is honestly and deliberately so. The labor movement and the Black community have been pushing for full employment and the expansion of social justice. But they cannot do the job alone. The only way in which the conservative onslaught can be repulsed is for liberal politicians to speak out in advocacy of humanitarian, decent, and necessary social programs.



Benjamin L. Hooks

FCC  
COMMISSIONER

One of the most vexing issues I face as I move about the country addressing this group or that one, is the often heard remark: "Now Commissioner Hooks seems like a nice fellow, but he is a 'one issue' Commissioner. He appears to be preoccupied with minority affairs. This remark is made usually after I have visited a city or talked to a reporter.

I wouldn't mind being labeled a "One issue" Commissioner if a reporter had taken the time to query me on a wide-ranging number of subjects the Federal Communications Commission must deal with in its regulatory work. But the remark is generally made against a background that is incomplete, to say the least, rendered so by the

reporter's own inclination to ask me only those questions that touch on minority affairs.

Now many of these reporters are from the broadcasting medium and this, it appears to me, doubles the irony. For if these reporters are up on the functions of the FCC, they would know I not only participate in the myriad issues that come before the Commission, but often I write detailed concurring or dissenting statements setting forth my views in these matters.

But these reporters sit down and ask me questions like: "How many Black radio and television stations are there? What do you see as the role of minorities and women in television and minorities in broadcasting?" And then, after we finish all of that, time has usually run out on the show or the interview and it gets reported that all I was interested in was minority affairs.

Well, darn it, I am a minority. I have been all my life. So are my people -- family, friends, etc. Quite obviously I am interested in them and the gross mistreatment they have received historically in the media and other social and economic strata of this country.

I would be less than a human being if I didn't keep foremost among my thoughts the place from whence I came. So it is quite obvious from my record that I have a deep and abiding interest in minority affairs and will have until Blacks and other minorities can fashion a better and more equitable life in our country.

If there hadn't been a growing and vocal minority interest in communications or people like Bill Wright (former president of BEST, a community communications group) and Ted Ledbetter, also a vocal leader in the fight to secure Blacks a more equal footing in the communications media, I would probably have not been considered for, much less appointed to the FCC.

So I do not need to apologize, nor do I apologize for my deep interest in minority affairs. What concerns me always is to be made to appear limited. I do not charge that these reporters are malicious, or if you will, limited in skills. It comes out that way, sometimes, however, in the manner in which they pursue their story.

Even those questions before the Commission that seem to bear uniquely on minority affairs usually have a broader application. And this can be discerned on closer examination. Time the simple, but highly charged issue of equal employment and fair upgrading. A company (and I have heard many express this) feel better about itself and the job it is doing (and consequently, often does a much better job) when it hires fairly and upgrades fairly regardless of race. So even equal employment opportunity issues become less a minority issue than one that impacts heavily on all Americans, Black, White, Yellow and Red. And, even in this narrow context, in waging an unrelenting battle for EEO, I am thus, less a minority affairs Commissioner than I am a federal official who wants to make our stated Constitution principles applicable to all Americans.

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