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New Leadership For NAACP

Perhaps among the last black Americans who would be wished to be dubbed "a leader"—at least in the traditional sense of the term of a hand-picked intermediary for black Americans—is the Reverend and Honorable Benjamin L. Hooks designated to succeed Roy Wilkins as National director of the NAACP.

The 51 year old Dr. Hooks serves presently as the first black member of the Federal Communications Commission where his outspoken and formidable presence has brought about the beginnings of immense change for blacks in the communications industry.

While to many white Americans, the name of Benjamin Hooks is relatively unknown, his writings for the black press upon a variety of subjects has made him almost like a friendly and most helpful weekly visitor in millions of black America's homes.

Yet, in his new position which holds unparalleled possibilities for enabling and empowering blacks to enter America's mainstream, there are many who will wonder what his directorship will hold in store.

By way of response, might recall the remarks of Jesus where questioned about the qualifications of John the Baptist, to whom large numbers had gone to his wilderness home to see. Jesus said: "What went ye out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? A man used to the easy life of the rich?"

"But went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say more than a prophet."

Now, much the same paraphrase may be made concerning Benjamin Hooks: preacher of the word of God, jurist, essayist, entrepreneur, trustee of colleges, leading member in the National Bar Association, ranking member among black fraternal groups, civic leader, civil ser-

vant . . . and now director-designate of the National office of the NAACP.

Dr. Hooks brings a broad and rich experience to the work of the NAACP. While the choice by the National board of one of its own members was unanimous, no person in the NAACP should be more pleased than the present director, Roy Wilkins.

When a man's life and work have been almost synonymous, nothing could be more rewarding than to see one's work being placed in the finest hands. This deliciously rare experience has come to Mr. Wilkins; and there could be no more finer tribute and farewell to the current chapter of Mr. Wilkin's life.

During the years of racial turmoil in the late 1950's and throughout the 1960's, Dr. Hooks served faithfully and aggressively as pastor of churches in Detroit and Memphis.

Not content with the avenues for service afforded by the pulpit, Dr. Hooks became a lawyer and, in an almost phenomenal way, became a southern criminal court judge, a banker, a founding member of a quick-food chain, a journalist of excellences and presiding officer of several major black fraternal groups.

Soft spoken yet firm and aggressive, he promises almost certainly to regionalize the programming and outreach of the NAACP—a move somewhat away from the rather doctrinaire directions of the past.

The poet has written:
"New occasions teach new duties;

Time makes ancient good uncouth."

In Benjamin Hooks, who has been a part of the best of the ancient good, the new duties required by new occasions will not necessarily reflect negatively upon the NAACP's revered and worthy past.



BLACK EMPOWERMENT By Dr. Nathaniel Wright, Jr. Human Rights Activist

BLACK EMPLOYMENT LOSSES

whether black or white— with those of black males.

This in no way suggests that women are not victimized solely by employment and upgrading discrimination. What is at issue here is the relative acuteness of the problem.

Some years ago, both John Dollard (who authored *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*) and Gunnar Myrdal (of *An American Dilemma* fame) suggested that the discriminatory problems of whites could be attributed to class feelings which are relatively flexible. Caste feelings, by contrast, are strongly inflexible and have a kind of a "middle wall of partition" between the insiders and those kept out.

Black males are, then, in a caste-like position. In any assessment of the nation's economic woes, we must be clear about the type of position in which black males of all age categories find themselves.

The recent gains in employment following the "white recession"—"black depression" in the national economy have reflected yet another major set back for black Americans.

The current employment figures indicate what many involved in affirmative action for minorities have suspected or feared would happen. This has been a relatively high rate of female re-employment and a proportionate loss in re-employment by blacks.

What is implicit here is the much-heralded myth that women must often suffer the double indignity of being women and members of racial, religious or ethnic minority groups. The implied conclusion is that their circumstance is much worse than that of black males.

We need to disabuse ourselves of such folly—which is a costly twist, no matter how one may look at it—that black males, including especially younger adult males, are not the nation's most hard-pressed and hard core unemployed.

Affirmative action programs for fair hiring, rehiring and upgrading cannot be realistic while linking or bumping women's needs—

lack of employment adds most greatly to the nation's social costs.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, for example, is conducting currently an extensive job advertising campaign for clerks and clerk-typists aimed at "all high school youth who may be willing to come to Washington."

A sound sense of the nation's good, in terms both of lessening the taxpayers' social welfare and of increasing the possibilities for urban peace, would suggest that black media be utilized to focus this appeal on our most tragically alienated citizens so far as the job market is concerned.

On-the-job training for file clerks and for clerk typists would not be any major problem. What is of more immediate importance is that the Washington,

While the federal government may not be in a position presently to hire any relatively large number of the most beleaguered unemployed; it should be evident that whatever jobs that are available may be directed toward those whose

D.C.-Baltimore-Wilmington-Philadelphia area has more than enough unemployed and discriminated against black males to fill at least the F.B.I.'s nationally advertised needs.

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