

Gordon Hancock Points Challenge to New Negro

MUST WORK OUT A PROGRAM FOR ECONOMIC RELIEF

Georgia Is Impressed With Lucid Address

SAVANNAH, Ga.—"The business of getting the Negro out of an economic plight that is fraught with great tribulation," is the supreme challenge to the new Negro. Dr. Gordon B. Hancock, of Virginia Union University, Richmond, Va., told the graduating class of Georgia State College here, at the recent commencement exercises.

The Savannah Morning News, local daily, carries the following generous quotations from Dr. Hancock's speech:

"Sooner or later every individual, race or nation is brought face with issues which challenge its existence and to be or not to be becomes a burning question. No wonder it is written that life is a conflict of forces; no wonder it is the joy of existence to attempt and succeed, to contend and conquer; that is faint of heart and dull of conscience. Today as never before life is making strenuous demands upon the living and it is far more serious to live than to die. The struggle for existence is growing fiercer, the plot of economic drama is thickening and the battle of life is raging with unabated fury. On every front individual, racial or national the battle lines are stubborn and far-dung and there is fighting all along the line. Every claim to a place in the sun is being contested and every advance along the upward way to life at its best is stubbornly opposed and he who aspires to the fuller life of the twentieth century world must set his face life a flint. Turn how he will and his anxious gaze is met with prospects of impending conflict. It is capital and labor, it is wisdom and ignorance, it is righteousness and sin, it is want and plenty, it is materialism and spiritualism, it is science and religion—all in mighty conflict joined. The fight is on.

"The Negro today faces a world that is color-struck, a world in which a dark skin is a liability and a handicap; a world in which the factor of race cannot be eliminated; a world on the curb of whose public opinion the stock of darker peoples is selling 'short,' a world in which the black man is relegated to the rear sometimes for no other reason than that he is black; a world that agrees that the Negro may have 'what is left.' Moreover in the United States a peculiar situation is developing that vitally concerns the Negro. The Negro's economic foundation is being gradually undermined by subtle forces which are incidents of the color question. There are three levels of economic subsistence. There is the highest where large salaries are paid both in the business and political spheres. From this upper level the Negro is shut out by reason of his color. These larger places are made by white men and naturally they are for white men.

"The Negro sometimes forgets that the white man has race pride too. Then there is the very lowest level of economic subsistence; here is the hard work and drudgery and manual labor; is at its worst. Heretofore the Negro has had a monopoly on this level, because the white man—especially the Southern white man has disdained these menial tasks because he has believed that manual labor was degrading—this is a hold over from the days of slavery. The white man has rapidly changed his attitude toward manual labor and today he is competing with the Negro for even the roughest types of work. When the Negro is hard to displace the color issue is raised and the colored man must go! Then there is the middle level the Negro is unprepared and the skilled craftsmen are becoming fewer each generation and more and more the white man is usurping this realm. Unfortunately the Negro does not take to industrial education although such education would prove his economic redemption in the crisis immediately before him. Thus shut out from the upper levels of economic subsistence, unprepared for the middle levels and gradually being forced out of the lowest levels by the keener competition incident to the changing work psychosis of the white man, the Negro's economic plight is an unhappy one. This plight is aggravated by the fact that the Negro's standard of living outstrips his means of economic subsistence.

"Then again, the Negroes are prone through press, platform, and pulpit to vaunt the great progress of the race. Many of the Negro papers take an anti-white attitude and indulge in blistering invectives against the white race. This not only embitters the anti-Negro white man, but it often silences the whites who are friendly disposed. More and more the whites are leaving the Negroes to paddle their own canoe. When a job is to be let, they feel justified in letting it to a poor white man and especially if the job is a good paying one. Our much speaking about our phenomenal progress and our great display of fine cars and fine clothes and churches will eventually force upon us the responsibility of furnishing employment for Negroes. If these conditions develop faster than our sense of responsibility, we are doomed to great tribulation. This in brief sets forth what to me is the supreme challenge to the new Negro. The business of getting the Negro out of an economic plight that is fraught with great tribulation.

"The old Negro who emerged from slavery had nothing. No houses, no education, no lands, no credit no money, and in many cases he had even no name. He was challenged by a 'live or die' situation. Only God knows how but the old Negro made it. It is true, he bent the knee, he bowed his head, he scraped his feet, he used broken English, he lived in the little log cabin in the lane, he sang Negro spirituals but he managed to hand down to the New Negro a great bequest. The old Negro built almost all of our large churches and is still supporting these; the old Negro established an orderly family where the rudiments of character are taught with telling vigor; the old Negro has given the world its greatest lesson in the 'stoop to rise' philosophy; the old Negro has given the race thousands and thousands of graduates who are gone forth to bless the world; the old Negro has laid the foundation of a professional life among the people; the old Negro has best of all given the race a belief in the ultimate justice of God and a hope that defies the scarecrows of fate. The old Negro has given to the Negroes and to the world a spiritual life that guides like the pillar of cloud and fire.

"In the relay of racial survival the old Negro has gained ground and passed on the baton to the new Negro. On the spiritual plan the old Negro kept abreast with the field; the Negro of today is entering upon the economic

lap and the world is watching to see what the New Negro is going to do. The New Negro is running for bread and for jobs."