

Between the Lines

By GORDON B. HANCOCK

The New Negro Once More

IMMEDIATELY after the great war, the Negro press was deluged with sentiments concerning the emergence of a New Negro who was destined to supplant the old Negro in all things pertaining to the advancement of the race.

These New Negroes threatened to crash the door of full-fledged citizenship in this country and what the old Negro wanted and waited for the New Negro was going to demand. Everything the old Negroes had done to bring the race to where it is was criticized most harshly and the builders of the foundation upon which the structure of the Negro hopes now rest were branded as "Uncle Toms," etc. From the talk that filled our papers the end to Negro subjugation was at hand and his long search for full-fledged citizenship in this country was imminent.

The world waited and the so-called New Negro movement collapsed most shamefully. When the pressure became a little severe the New Negro skulked away to his hiding place. It was said of Caesar that he came, he saw, and he conquered; of the so-called New Negro it may be said, he came, he saw and he ducked! Within recent months little or nothing has been heard of the New Negro.

This is in no way a disparagement of the spirit evinced in the emergence of the so-called New Negro; it is rather an expressed disappointment at the lack of stamina from which the whole movement utterly collapsed. It only shows that there is little or no difference between the New and old Negro. They are alike standing without the door of citizenship in the nation they have sacrificed to save.

Then there was the so-called radical Negro who pretended that he was ready and willing to die for his rights. With opportunities of death parading the highways of the country daily not one of these so-called Negro radicals has been scratched. The dying that has been done for rights has been by the humbler Negroes who live and die in obscurity. With Communism knocking at the doors of the nation, the so-called radical Negro has lacked courage to ally himself with the only radical movement in the country. Had there been the faintest iota of sincerity in the radical "hokus-pokus" most certainly would the Communist movement enlisted a few of the so-called radicals.

The radical Negro dodged the issue by evading the only organi-

zation that offered a test for his manhood claims. If Communism has done nothing else, it has most certainly called the bluff of the so-called radical Negro whose silence in this present critical hour is both ominous and tragic.

Then, too, we had the young "militants" owned and operated by my good friend George Schuyler. These so-called militants were going to organize the Negro race after some cooperative scheme and bring economic deliverance. They spurned the "Hold-Your-Job" gospel and proposed to show the Negro the way out of his economic wilderness. Whether the movement has utterly collapsed or is just hibernating during these strenuous times is not made clear by Mr. Schuyler. At any rate the depression has shown that the new Negro militants like the old Negroes of ante-bellum days must bide their time.

In a crisis the Negro militants and radicals are just as helpless as the humblest Negro in Georgia. The Negro race needs a program and needs it sorely and the New Negroes, the radical Negroes and the militants have not given the race a program. We have had a plenty of talk of divers kinds now we want a program. A programless race cannot survive by the side of a race that is planning generations ahead.

More recently we have heard of "The Negro Alliance" with headquarters in Washington. They are begging to be delivered from the old Negroes in their organization. They are proposing to make the New Alliance an all-youth movement. This writer is not concerned with the age of the adherents but he is tremendously concerned in their program for Negro economic deliverance. If these young Negroes have found a way out for the Negro race, the race needs them and needs them sorely.

The parties hereinbefore mentioned have been to the bat and struck out; they have had the football within the shadow of the goal and lost it, on downs. Now the New Alliance is bidding for recognition. If the older Negro leaders are too conservative and the demand is for a more progressive type of Negro leader and the New Alliance can come to the rescue, they put the race and the nation under the great obligation. It is greatly to be hoped that this New Alliance is not just another of those abortive flurries of Negro sentiment that results in nothing but heartrending disillusionment.

THE NEGRO NEEDS A PROGRAM.