

N.A.A.C.P. Charge Called Unfair by the White House

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Text of Garment's telegram will be found on Page 34.

By JACK ROSENTHAL
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WASHINGTON, June 30—The Nixon Administration, stung by an accusation that it was anti-Negro, responded sharply today, labeling the charge as unfair and disheartening.

Such an accusation, it said, paints a false picture, rallies every fear, reinforces every anxiety and makes a just society more difficult to achieve.

The accusation was made last night by Bishop Stephen G. Spottswood, chairman of the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who was the keynote speaker at the association's annual convention in Cincinnati.

The response today came in the form of a long telegram to Bishop Spottswood from the White House. The response declared, "The President and the Administration are committed to achieving equal opportunity for every American, and are determined to maintain their efforts to reach that goal."



Leonard Garment

The telegram was signed by Leonard Garment, President Nixon's chief liaison with civil rights groups. But it is known to echo the near-despair of other White House moderates.

"It's a calamity," one said of Bishop Spottswood's address, enumerating Administration accomplishments in the

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civil rights and antipoverty fields. The spirit of those in the Administration "who have fought for these things is just absolutely flat," he said.

Bishop Spottswood described the Nixon Administration as the first one since 1920 that "has made it a matter of calculated policy to work against the needs and aspirations" of Negroes. He listed a series of specific instances of this "anti-Negro policy."

The speech was "an unfair and disheartening attack," Mr. Garment wrote. Much of his telegram was devoted to a point-by-point rebuttal of these instances and to a listing of Administration initiatives in the civil rights and poverty fields.

He cited "the landmark family assistance plan, for the first time providing a floor under the income of every family in America," greatly improved food assistance programs, and gains or proposals in equal employment, school desegregation, health and housing.

'Highly Distorting Light'

Bishop Spottswood's specific grievances, Mr. Garment said, "misstate and misrepresent the record of the Administration so as to present it in a highly distorting light."

One of Bishop Spottswood's charges was that the Administration had "weakened our hard-won Voting Rights Act. On the contrary, Mr. Garment said, the extended Voting Rights Act, signed by the President last week, is stronger than before.

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Just a week ago, Mr. Garment said, the President won praise for his "statesmanship" in signing the new Voting Rights Act from Roy Wilkins, the N.A.A.C.P.'s executive director, Clarence M. Mitchell Jr., its Washington director, and Senator Edward W. Brooke, Republican of Massachusetts, the only Negro Senator.

A major theme of Bishop Spottswood's address was the danger in the nation's evident movement toward racial polarization. He called on both races to work toward a single society.

Mr. Garment's telegram implied that the address was itself a polarizing act.