6,000 at Detroit Rally Protest Mississippi Verdict

BY WILLIAM SUODOMIER
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More than 6,000 Detroit Negroes met in protest Sunday.

Gathering in Bethel AME Church, 550 Frederick, 4,000 jammed into a structure built to seat 2,500.

Another 2,000-plus gathered outside and were moved into Scott Methodist Church at 609 E. Kirby, about a block away.

THEY CAME from all over the city to protest the verdict freeing two white Mississippians in the slaying of a Chicago Negro boy, 14.

Rep. Charles C. Diggs, Jr. (D., Mich.), one of the chief speakers, commented on his return from the " jungles of Mississippi" and his pleasure-in returning to the "clean, fresh air of Michigan."

He spoke of the " savages who lynched 14-year-old Emmett Till."

"In all my life I have never witnessed such a shameful twisting of facts," said Diggs.

Some politicians, Diggs said, are grinning at us in Michigan and New York and examining the door of our faces in Mississippi."

"Mississippi represents a shameful and base strain of Americans who are disgusting that democracy is to represent."

DIGGS SAID that when he returns to Washington, he will bypass Attorney General Herbert Brownell and go to the White House for a conference.

"I want to get support of the Administration on the question of civil rights," he said. "I want something done, too, on the bills I introduced which would give the Justice Department the right to intervene in trials."

The huge protest meeting was sponsored by the Detroit Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Announced as a protest at the "reign of terror" generated against Negroes in Mississippi, the gathering also was a drive for funds to back the fight.

THE REV. C. L. Franklin, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, 4218 Hastings, drew cheers when he stepped down from a car clutching a sheaf of bills.

He was $200 he had brought from his church and contributed himself.

When the three-hour meetings ended, one black satchel was jammed with checks and bills. It could not be closed.

Filled, too, were numerous church collection baskets and envelopes.

While Diggs sat in the pulpit of the Methodist church waiting to speak, bills were thrown into the congressman's lap, gathered and passed them to the audience.

Beside Diggs, the other principal speaker was Medgar Evers, NAACP field secretary for the Mississippi branch of the NAACP.

Evers reported on developments in the NAACP's desegregation fight in Mississippi and steps being taken to bring justice in the Till case.

A slender young man with a pen and mustache, Evers forcefully criticized treatment of Negroes in Mississippi.

He said only one twenty-fifth of the half million registered voters in the state were Negroes while the population was about half Negro and half white.

"It's about time that we Negroes become interested in ourselves," he said.