

Negroes Call for Unity To Protest 'Abuses'

By BILL VOGLER

Representatives of the Black Muslims and the Rochester Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People last night called for a united front to defend the civil rights of Rochester Negroes.

They spoke at a meeting which drew more than 600 people to the Baden Street Settlement, 152 Baden St. It was called to protest alleged abuses of Negroes by local authorities, including the Rufus Fairwell and A.C. White cases and the arrest of 16 men following a clash with police at a Black Muslim meeting.

The session was sponsored by the local NAACP, the Congress of Racial Equality, the Monroe County Non-Partisan League, the Committee for Rufus Fairwell, and the Rochester Civil Rights Committee. The last group is a 1959 organization that was re-activated to coordinate efforts by local civil rights organizations.

Rufus Fairwell, a service station attendant, was arrested last August on charges of assaulting two policemen. A grand jury subsequently cleared Fairwell and the police. Fairwell later filed a \$125,000 claim against the city for false arrest and injuries he claimed were sus-

tained during the time he was in custody.

A. C. White, a foundry worker, was taken to Strong Memorial Hospital shortly after his arrest for allegedly driving while intoxicated Jan. 26. His charge that undue force had been used on him led to the suspension of four patrolmen without pay pending an investigation.

Rev. Wendell Phillips, president of the Rochester NAACP, sounded the theme of the meeting by calling on Negro groups to subordinate their differences and cooperate.

"It's high time we unite . . . and no longer stand by while our brothers in Christ are so unjustly treated," the Rev. Mr. Phillips urged.

Although he was not a scheduled speaker, Malcolm X, minister of New York Mosque No. 7, came to the speakers' table during the question period amid shouts of "speech, speech."

He said that he understood that an order had been given to news media to keep news of Malcolm X down to a minimum. He then proceeded to charge that police had broken into a religious meeting on Jan. 6, that Sheriff Albert Skinner had stated falsely that the 13 men recently released on bail had eaten while in the county jail. He also took a swipe at unidentified Negro factions "too afraid of the white man to unite."

"My people have caught hell long enough," Malcolm said. ". . . you do not get anything by being polite . . . the only time you get something is when you let the man know you are fed up."

Dr. Walter Cooper, chairman of the local NAACP's community affairs committee, warned that the community "may well be at the crossroads in race relations." He said the local NAACP has not been successful in achieving social justice through traditional methods and said representatives of the "majority" now had to take part in the struggle.

However, he added that "deeds are called for . . . not empty platitudes."

Speaking as a "concerned citizen," Mrs. Mildred Johnson, vice president of the Negro Business and Professional Women, said Rochester has become "the Mississippi of New York State." She also echoed the call for unity, stating that despite differences "we are black folks first."

In summary, the Rev. Mr. Phillips urged support of local civil rights groups, protests via the ballot and unity to bring Negroes out of the "wilderness." While there is a glimpse of hope, he added:

"This is brotherhood week . . . which I feel at the present time we have no right to observe here in Rochester, N.Y."