



CONGRESS OF BLACK WOMEN OF CANADA
LE CONGRES DES FEMMES NOIRES DU CANADA



1-2 - Booklet

CONGRESS OF BLACK WOMEN

OF

CANADA

INFORMATION BOOKLET

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INTRODUCTION

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The Congress of Black Women of Canada is a non-profit organization. It provides the organizational format whereby Black women throughout Canada can pool their resources and efforts in order to gain and maintain adequate and legitimate control over their lives.

The Congress recognizes that Black Women have survived in the home, in the workplace and in the larger community. Too often these settings are unaccommodating, sometimes even hostile, to her total development because of race and/or sex. We therefore strongly emphasise action through participation and education.

Effective implementation of our programs largely depend on support and understanding by the community. This booklet provides some basic information for those wanting to know more about The Congress.

HISTORY

1972 The late Kay Livingstone coordinated a conference of Black Women in Toronto under the sponsorship of the Negro Women's Association. Black women from all across Canada and the United States participated. Discussions highlighted some common concerns, and so the ideas for a national organization of Black women was born.

1974 Another conference was held in Montreal. Enthusiasm and commitment were high. The Montreal Regional Committee was founded. This committee eventually became our first chapter.

1976 The Halifax Conference was held. Here a resolution to set up a national organization was passed by delegates and a meeting was planned for the following year.

1977 Windsor, Ontario was the venue for the next meeting. There was the adoption of a motion to set up a National Steering Committee. Members of the committee were appointed. Their tasks were to:

1. Set up a communication network and
2. Work out a constitution and organizational structure.

Another conference was planned for 1980.

1980 The fifth conference was held in Winnipeg. The constitution was ratified and The Congress in its present form evolved. The 1982 Conference was planned.

1982 The Edmonton Conference was held.

1984 The Toronto Conference was held.

ADMINISTRATION AT TWO LEVELS

Nationally: The Congress is administered by the National Executive Council, members of this executive are elected every two years.

Council comprises:

1. Officers
 - Past President
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
2. Provincial Representatives and Alternate Representatives

No member of Council shall be elected for the same position for more than two consecutive terms.

Provincially: Business of The Congress is supervised by the Regional Representative. She liaisons with the National Executive Council on behalf of local chapters, other organizations and individuals.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all Black women (African descent) sixteen years and over and may be

in any of the following areas:

1. Chapter
 2. Affiliate
 3. Individual
1. A Chapter may be formed when there are six (6) or more Black women in a geographical area. A chapter must abide by the general rules and regulations of the National Executive Council. Local government and programs are however, administered by a locally elected Board of Directors.
 2. Individual memberships are accepted from women who reside in areas where there are less than six Black women. In an area where there is a chapter, an individual may not become an individual member.
 3. An organization whose aims and objectives are similar to those of The Congress can become affiliates. The Congress does not require that an affiliate organization abide by the general rules and regulations of the National Executive Council.

LOCAL PROGRAMMING

This area reflects the particular needs of the chapter's geographical area. The following are

some of the programming:

- Workshops & Seminars
- Youth Programming - Camps, Conferences
- Cultural Performing Arts
- Senior Citizens Groups
- Entertainment & Shows
- Rallies, Political Involvement

ELECTIONS

National elections are held every two years at the National Conference. Voting rights are as follows:

Officers	one vote each
Individual members	one vote each
Chapters	one vote per six members
Affiliate	one vote

FEES

Individuals	\$5 per year
Affiliate Chapters	\$5 per year registered member. Local executives may charge additional membership fees suitable to their local situation.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (1984-1986)

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PROGRAMMING

National Conference is held every two (2) years. Programming for the Convention is done by the National Executive Council on the advice of local representatives. Topics for workshops and seminars reflect the needs of the membership.

National Committees are appointed by the National Executive Council on a regular basis, to examine issues of national importance, make recommendations and implement actions. Participants on these committees are usually members of The Congress with the necessary expertise; but members of the general public may also be appointed if the situation warrants it. Since the start of the 1984-86 term, three national committees have been formed to examine the following issues:

- Affirmative Action
- Parenting
- Male/Female Relationships

Other committees in the past have looked at various subjects including: Black Women and Pensions and Equality Now.

The Congress of Black Women is a dynamic and thriving organization which aims, among other things, to promote a positive image of Blacks in the Canadian society.

Article 2 of the Constitution

Purpose and Objectives of The Congress:

The purposes and objectives of The Congress shall be as follows:

- 2.1 To provide a network of solidarity for Black Women of Canada and to be a united voice in the defence and extension of human rights and liberties for Black Women of Canada.
- 2.2 To foster a climate in which it is acceptable for Black Women to openly examine the issues which affect them and their families.
- 2.3 To provide a dynamic forum for the Black Woman to discuss those issues that are relevant to them and to develop the solutions to bring about constructive change.
- 2.4 To plan and implement a program of service and action geared to the needs of Black Women of Canada.
- 2.5 To cooperate with other organizations on those specific issues particularly relevant to Black Women.

- 2.6 To develop relations with other local, national and international organizations whose aims and objectives are in keeping with those of The Congress.
- 2.7 To constantly re-examine our objectives and purposes and adjust our efforts accordingly.

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Why Should You Become Involved?

The Congress provides a large, national support base. As a Black woman you need not feel alone with issues that concern you and your family.

.There are chapters all over Canada. Even when you visit or transfer to a new place, you will have a ready-made "Welcome Wagon."

.Many opportunities for you to develop untapped potentials. Become involved in the various committees, both nationally and locally.

.Be active in the formation of a better Canadian Society. Join the Congress of Black Women of Canada, and grow.



CHAPTERS:

Vancouver Chapter

Edmonton Chapter

Calgary Chapter

Saskatoon Chapter

Regina Chapter

Winnipeg Chapter

Toronto Chapter

Ottawa Chapter

Montreal Chapter

QUOTATIONS FROM FAMOUS BLACK WOMEN:

Mary Ann Shadd Cary (1823-1893)

A woman's work was anything that a woman put her mind or hand to . . .

Harriet Tubman (1823-1913)

There was one or two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other for no man should take me alive; I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted and when the time came for me to go, the Lord would let them take me.

Rosemary Brown (1930-)

If you are going to be a role model, you can't shy away when the only reason to shy away is your own lack of self-esteem.