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# SEMAJI

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Official Newsletter of the BCRC

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## **OVERCOMING KAUFFMAN'S COMPLEXITY CATASTROPHES: AVOIDING FRAGMENTATION, OPPORTUNISM, AND COLLECTIVE DEATH.**

**WRITTEN BY DR. CLARENCE BAYNE;  
EDITED BY ASHLIE BIENVENU**

The National Federation of Canadian Blacks Montreal Town Hall an Example of the Fragmentation Effect.

Montreal and Quebec Blacks have a tradition of deciding for themselves; and engaging in innovative activism. Montreal is the home of Marie-Joseph Angélique (1774), the Black Writers Congress (1968). It gave birth to and nurtured the National Black Coalition of Canada (October 1968); its leadership negotiated Black Canadian participation in the Second World Conference on Black and African Arts and Culture, Lagos Nigeria (Dr. Dorothy Wills, Principal negotiator, and Dr. C. Bayne, 1978). Montreal English speaking Blacks lead in the anti-racism rebellions of the sixties and seventies: the struggle against the railways by the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car porters (A.R. Blanchette); and against Diamond Taxi and the Hilton Hotel of Canada Ltd (The Baylis Case, April 1965); the Anthony Griffin marches and the riots of the Black and Caribbean students at Sir George Williams University (1969). It is the home of the second largest Black populations in Canada; home of Reverent Este, Oliver Jones, Oscar Peterson; Charlie Biddle; the Black Theatre Workshop; Black Festivals, the Universal Negro Improvement Association; Maison d'Haiti; Coloured Women's Club and the Union United Church celebrating 110 years of activism; a friend and refuge to Viola Desmond and Markus Garvey and his family. Host to Mandela. Incubator of the Jackie Johnson story.

Montreal Black community is capable of re-engineering itself. We don't need Toronto elite to

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organize us. We will not tolerate the disrespect shown by the National Federation of Canadian Blacks that ignores our initiatives and structures and proposes to duplicate or replace them. We have created, worked with and supported many National agencies in the past. We will continue to do so. But we will not tolerate external disrespect of our history of work, contributions and achievements; and disruptions of the delicate and patient efforts to manage the unique social and political situation of Blacks in Quebec. It is presumptuous of the Federation to tell us that it will allow us to select one person who will represent Quebec Blacks on their National Council; and a person who will accompany Montreal Black organizations when they meet City Hall and the Government of Quebec. Clearly, the leadership of the National Federation is a victim of misinformation, blind uninformed enthusiasm, and self-aggrandizement. But it has no excuse for getting its top leadership trapped in a futile “flip chart” low validity data collection process, with no central implementation mechanism.

Searching the Landscapes of Montreal and Quebec for Solutions

From late 2016 to March 2018 Montreal Black organizations have had at least 25 community meetings, workshops, and conferences; consultations with the federal and provincial governments, the City of Montreal, Sud-Ouest Borough, and the Cote des Neiges-NDG boroughs. From these sources the following summarizes of the Black Community priorities were developed, adopted by the Black Community Forum and presented to all levels of government. Each organization may assign different ranking to the items in this list, we know of no Black organizations or network of organizations that have rejected them as not critical and comprehensive. The following priorities are a significant representation of the needs Blacks in Montreal.

1. Support for the Black Family
2. General Health and Mental Health
3. Youth, Education, Employment and Employability
4. Arts and Culture
5. Rights and Freedom: Anti-Racism Strategies
6. Economic Development
7. Reinforcement of Community Structures
8. A Black Community libraries, archive and communication network system

For fifty-eight years (beginning 1960) the Black English-speaking communities of Montreal have engaged Quebec governments making demands for a fairer and more inclusive settlement and development of Quebec and Canada (Val Morn Black Community Forum 1992). More recently, there has been a revival of Black community demands for inclusiveness and full participation in the development and decision making of Montreal and Quebec societies. (The Yolande James Taskforce 2005, and Black Community Forum June 16 2016).

We have a full list and summary of the emerging demands and recommendations, which came from ten key Black community organizations, consultations, workshops and conferences. These demands and recommendations symbolize a page that we can all be on. The Montreal Town Hall (March 25, 2018) of the National Federation of Canadian Blacks added nothing to this (Yvonne Sam, Montreal Journalist, March 25 2018). Fragmentation will mean the death of our collective movement, we are stronger together.

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**THE BCRC**

THE BLACK COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE (BCRC) TAKES A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING YOUTH. WE REFER TO THIS APPROACH AS THE “HOLISTIC PROJECT.” IN ADOPTING THIS APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SERVICE, WE RECOGNIZE THAT YOUTH HAVE MANY NEEDS (E.G., SOCIO-CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND ECONOMIC, ETC.) THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED IN ORDER FOR YOUTH TO ACHIEVE THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL IN OUR SOCIETY.

# GETTING THE BALL ROLLING: PRELIMINARY MEETING WITH THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY OF QUEBEC

WRITTEN BY DR. CLARENCE BAYNE;  
EDITED BY ASHLIE BIENVENU

On May 17, 2018, the BCRC, under the leadership of Dr. Clarence Bayne, president of the BCRC and BSC, and board member of various other Black community organizations, conducted a meeting with William Floch, the head of the secretariat of the English-speaking community of Quebec. BCRC, in its role as the secretariat of the Black Community Forum (BCF), spoke to Mr. Floch about the limited resources of the Montreal Black community and offered suggestions remedy these limitations.

## The Limitations

Dr. Bayne advised Mr. Floch that the Black communities tend to be marginalized and disadvantaged because of their lack of access to information; and the absence of sharing and collaboration between subcultures. As well, Dr. Bayne recommended that, if the Secretariat for English-speaking communities in Quebec is to

effectively assist the Black English-speaking communities in Quebec, it must inform the Government of Quebec that the problems of Black minorities in Quebec differ in very significant ways from that of White English-speaking minorities, and, therefore, need to be addressed separately, and in the relevant historical and political context. For example, White English-speaking Quebecers have institutions that are protected by the Constitution and Quasi constitutional arrangements such as the Official language Act and its Fund. In Quebec, Black English-speaking Quebecers do not enjoy the same constitutional guarantees protecting the language and cultural vitality of English-speaking Whites in the Townships and Cities of Quebec. Demographics and historical realities define the constraints. Thus, Strengthening White English institutions in Quebec does not necessarily translate into benefits for English-speaking Blacks. Therefore, the reality of the matter is the resources recently announced by the Secretariat as destined for English-speaking White Institutions, while justifiable, have little or no impact on the preservation of the vitality of the Black communities or the building of the capacity of Black organizations to provide for the social, political and cultural needs of English-speaking Blacks. In fact, everywhere you look in the English-speaking Black community there is a tragic lack of infra-structure to ensure the sustenance of its vitality or to respond effectively to changes in the needs of the Black English-

*"Black communities tend to be marginalized and disadvantaged because of their lack of access to information"*



WILLIAM FLOCH AT THE BCF Third General Meeting and Joint Conference (BCRC-ICED)

speaking community. All the organizations present here today are severely limited by the absence of full-time staff and full-time senior managers. Some have no paid staff at all but are expected to provide services that are needed on a daily or weekly basis.

#### Suggestions

During this meeting many suggestions were made to respond to these limitations in resources, which affect the Black communities of Montreal. It was suggested that extra funding be given to communication technologies to increase the access to and sharing of information as a strategy for community development. It was also suggested that the government provide infra structure funding to the Black Community Resource Center (BCRC) to enable it to provide improved services that strengthen its member, and other community, organizations. It was also suggested that funding go towards the education and employment sectors. In regards to education and retention of Black graduates, funding by the government for matching grants to the new aid committed by the Black Studies Center was recommended. This would support funding provided to two students selected by the BASF and the QBMA.

#### Our Hopes for The Outcome

Our overall hopes for the outcome of this meeting is that the government will come to recognize the Constitutional and human rights of Black English-speaking Quebecers, not simply as English-speaking persons, but as distinct cultural communities of peoples of African descent, who, according to Census Canada, are non-white. It is recommended that the provincial government provide sustaining funding for Black organizations with a long-term mandate, to strengthen their capacities to maintain the vitality of the community they serve; and for the effective use of the information technologies to inform their development their development strategies. (Bayne and Saade, International Journal of Community Development and Management Studies, Vol 2, 2018)

Our overall plan of action is holistic, supported by collaborations and partnerships. But because of the fragmentation in the Black populations in Montreal and Canada, it is strongly suggested that this can best be accomplished by community planning that is based on a network leadership approach as opposed to the individual "superman entrepreneur leader" of the hierarchical systems approach. The Black Community Forum represents a shift from the competitive rivalries and multiple voices of closed cultures to partnerships and a network of collaborators. Its overall objective is to put in place strategies and policies that ensure the full participation of English-speaking Blacks in the society of Montreal and Quebec (as recommended by the Yolande James Task Force, 2006)

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# POSSIBLE COLLABORATION WITH CONCORDIA LIBRARY IN OUR FUTURE?

**WRITTEN BY DR. CLARENCE BAYNE;  
EDITED BY ASHLIE BIENVENU**

At the beginning of May, the BCRC and BSC met with the Concordia Library, and the oral history centre, to discuss archiving some important documents of the Montreal Black community. Concordia mentioned that they are working to implement a new strategic plan laid out in their 2017-2020 strategic plan; however, they are trying to determine what resources they have at their disposal. They made clear, as well, that their plan centred around a more dynamic archives and library to facilitate the teaching and research mission of the University, and to be more comprehensive and accessible to the community. At the moment, their main limitation is the cost of restructuring library services in line with changing needs.

Dr. Bayne, president of the BCRC and BSC, suggested that, due to our long history and close relationship to Concordia, especially in regards to ICED, a collaboration between Concordia libraries and member organizations of the Black community would be beneficial to all parties. He stated that the BSC, BCRC and QBBE were interested in collaborations with the library, within the framework of its new transformation plans. These plans include the development of an open data base/open archive system, digitization initiatives and student involvement in experimentations and displays relating to community partners, as well as support for research centres and institutes. He also made reference to the NCC archives Oral History project, in the holdings of the University, as an example which can be expanded to include the archives of BCRC, BSC, QBBE, and the BTW.

Dr. Bayne described the archival work going on at the BSC and the public description of its archives published on its portal. He noted the similarity between the BSC strategy for community education using the communication technologies and the informing sciences with the objectives set out in Concordia Library 2016/21 strategic plan: to provide collections and services fundamental to the advancement of teaching, knowledge, and lifelong learning. He pointed out that the creation of document centres and archives at the BSC and the BCRC was inspired by community leadership determined to reconstruct the history of Blacks in Quebec, and to teach young Blacks about the presence and history of Blacks in Quebec and Canada. He pointed to the use of pictorial and archival displays of indigenous and immigrant Blacks presented at the BSC in down town Montreal.

At the moment, we are unsure of the direction this discussion will go. However, we are hopeful that Black Studies Center Archives will continue discussions with Concordia Library, and the Center for Oral History, with a view to developing a long-term partnership. As part of this process, BSC will negotiate and encourage the BCRC, QBBE and BTW to be partners in a collaboration that may be realized in the not too distant future. Concordia Library, and the Center for Oral History, will provide BSC Archives with guidelines as to how the relationship/partnership may proceed by informing it of the most likely short- and long-term forms of collaboration suitable to the strategic directions, and purposes of the respective agencies. To facilitate this process both groups, BSC and The Center for Oral History, will prepare a listing of their holdings, regarding the Black Community, and discuss ways in which to develop and enrich these holdings, preserve them and make them accessible and actively a part of Canada heritage and its knowledge base.

# COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS



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