

Increasing Accomplishments Spur Leadership Training Institute

WASHINGTON, D. C. — An imposing array of steadily increasing accomplishments provided the fuse which propelled into being the leadership training institute at the 23rd national convention of the National Council of Negro Women held in Washington, D. C. last week.

It was also the propelling force behind NCNW's mobilization drive of last spring and behind the subsequent decision to continue the membership drive on a priority second only to that of training N. C. N. W. leaders for civic action on the community level.

One of the more recent accomplishments was recorded on the West Coast when with newly-opened offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles, a staff and a corps of determined volunteers, NCNW, in cooperation with the Urban League, launched a dynamic citizenship - education campaign which brought to the polls of those two cities thousands of new voters.

For this achievement, NCNW received a citation from the American Heritage Foundation. Other awards were bestowed by the newspapers of these two cities.

Similar campaigns aimed at corraling new voters were conducted in Detroit and Philadelphia. By ringing door bells and holding public meetings — and without the aid of funds from the national project — workers in those cities persuaded many persons to register and vote.

During the searching months of June, July and August NCNW, in another campaign, brought together over 2,000 persons in 18 different communities to inform citizens of the contents and meaning of the Hoover Report, a feat termed invaluable by the Citizens Committee for the Hoover Report.

With the aid of prominent speakers and motion pictures, NCNW brought to the general public across the country the story and significance of the crisis in the Middle East.

NCNW joined hands with the National Council of Jewish Women, the National Board of the YWCA and the United Church Women to sponsor a "Freedom to Read" project which sent NCNW members through hometown libraries checking on the extent of censorship imposed in suppression of their rights to read and which aided youth in reading interpretation.

NCNW expresses before governmental and private bodies the views of its members on matters affecting the general welfare and the particular welfare of the American Negro.

Watching the international as well as the national scene, NCNW maintains an accredited observer at the United Nations who, among other things, interprets the views of NCNW members in discussions of the various problems confronting the UN.

Affiliated with the National Council of Women of the United States and with the International Council of Women, NCNW dispatches representatives to virtually every major conference affecting its interests, at home or abroad.

In addition to the citation from the American Heritage Foundation, NCNW has received recent awards from Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the Crusade for Freedom, the National Citizens Committee for Educational Television, the National Red Cross and the American Cancer Society.

The National Council of Negro Women was founded and organized Dec. 5, 1935, by a group of 38 Negro women leaders called together by Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune.

These leaders saw the need for "united planning and concerted action for the economic, social, educational and cultural welfare of Negro women on national and international levels."

They envisioned a confederation of organizations to express the hopes, aspirations and desires of Negro womanhood — identifying them with national and international issues.

Having united the major national women's organizations, these leaders next organized local councils to provide the unity and coordination among Negro women on the local level and offer opportunity for participation by individuals who are not members of NCNW's national affiliate organization.

NCNW is sending President Dorothy I. Height on International Seminars' "Town Meeting" tour of South America this month. She will join some 30 representatives of major U. S. cultural, educational, religious, agricultural, labor and business organizations in a series of town meeting discussions

and seminars designed to ascertain facts and foster better inter-American relations.

Similarly it is sending delegates to the international cooperation workshops sponsored this month by the National Conference on International Economic and Social Development.

It is in keeping with the same provisions that NCNW recently displayed and dramatized the story of Negro women in America at the Women's International Exposition in New York.

Through its library and museum program, the organization gathers and preserves historical records and museum objects of America's Negroes and disseminates to interested groups and individuals information on the Negro's contribution to the history of America and the world.

NCNW's social welfare department advocates and supports welfare legislation, participates in welfare service programs including that of the White House Conference on Children and Youth.

It works for the elimination of slums and inadequate housing and supports public health programs.

The achievements of NCNW, begun and firmly established by its founder and first president, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, have been steadily developed and enhanced by succeeding presidents Dr. Dorothy B. Ferebee, Mrs. Vivian C. Mason and current President Dorothy I. Height.

Miss Height, of New York City, is a national YWCA executive and a member of the New York State Board of Social Welfare.

Assisting her at NCNW's national headquarters located at 1318 Vermont ave., N. W., in Washington, D. C. are Miss H. Elsie Austin, executive director who is a Washington attorney and a former national president of Delta Sigma Theta sorority;

Mrs. Arabella Denniston, administrative secretary; Miss Ruth A. Sykes, secretary to President Height and Miss Barbara Bell, special projects secretary.