

OUR LIVES

CANADA'S FIRST BLACK WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER

\$1.00

Spring 1989

Volume 3 #1

NO JUSTICE NO PEACE!

The Toronto Black Women's Collective's Proposal to the March 8th Coalition for IWD 1989

The Toronto Black Women's Collective with the support of the Coalition of Visible Minority Women and the Toronto chapter of the Congress of Black Women suggest **WOMEN AND POVERTY** as the theme for the 1989 International Women's Day celebrations.

It is apparent across this country that poverty has far reaching negative effects on women's lives and is the primary cause of most social dilemmas which the majority of women face daily. For this reason, we would like to see workshops organized on the following sub-themes focussing on how poverty affects women differentially according to their race and class: **housing, shelter, daycare, healthcare, and welfare.**

The Toronto Black Women's Collective regards the issue of poverty as the number one cause of most social ills which befall the vast majority of women. The Collective is committed to the struggle of all working class women internationally, though the most immediate focus of our practical work is with Black women in Canada. Our work has afforded us the insight necessary to appreciate how poverty affects women, particularly Black women. Hence, the term *poverty* is not at

all problematic for us because we clearly understand the debilitating effects of the *reality of the condition.*

As pointed out above, it is *poverty* which prevents women access to decent housing. It is *poverty* which forces women to put up with physical, sexual, psychological and other forms of abuses in the home. If they had the means they would surely leave instead. In fact, it is *poverty* which causes many women to enter a household unit of economic dependence on a man in the first place. *Poverty* prevents access to all kinds of necessary resources for a decent life. *Poverty* creates powerlessness which prevents women autonomy over their lives. Indeed, it is *poverty* and that resultant powerlessness which has created what has become known as a "Third World." Clearly, *poverty* has personal, national and international implications for women.

It is evident to us that improvements to women's lives *must* be addressed from the standpoint of *women and poverty.*

Support Black People and People Of Colour Against Police Brutality

Statement by the
Toronto Black
Women's Collective
and Black Women at
York University
on Tuesday
January 17, 1989
at a press
conference of the
Black Action
Defence
Committee.

We demand an end to police killings of Black people in Toronto. We also demand an end to police brutality on the working people's of Toronto. These police actions are racist in their intent and execution! This is a racism which has been proven as historically embedded in Canadian society and which indirectly allows police to exercise their contempt for Black people, and in fact, encourages them to be more brutal to all people of colour.

Toronto is not alone in this practice. The recent killings of Blacks in Quebec, and the injustices to Native and Black people in Nova Scotia, and Native people in Manitoba show racism as endemic to the entire Canadian judicial system and the system of policing. People of colour do not receive due process in Canada. Instead due process is executed by the police officer with a gun on the streets of Toronto.

The police judged and executed Lester Donaldson and Michael Wade Lawson. Now, it is being said that there is a war between the Black people and the police in Toronto. Well, this sure is a one-sided war. It is the police who have the guns and power, and Black people apparently have the wrong colour. The lives of Black people and all people of colour are in peril in Toronto. The Black community has killed no one; the Black community has brutalized no one and indeed defenceless!

We feel defenceless because it appears the police are running the state. They certainly seem to think so. This is why they have been asking for the resignation of the Attorney General. They

Editorial

Canada is racist!! More and more, Ontario is becoming a police state! The police seem to think they are running the state and therefore, they are above the law. On Dec 8 of last year, Micheal Wade Lawson was brutally executed by two Peel Region police officers. Earlier this year, they were charged with aggravated assault and manslaughter. This says nothing, especially when both walked away with pay. This sends a very clear message to the Black community, and that message is that our lives are worth nothing particularly to the police here in Toronto. The police and their actions are racist both in their intent and in their execution.

Police killings of Black people and police brutality on the working peoples of Toronto must stop. It is at this point that I must clarify that it is not only Black men who feel the pain of police brutality, but also Black women. Black women, too, are beaten up by the police. On Saturday January 28, I went to a Justice for Wade Lawson Rally in Mississauga, and it was there for the first time that I heard a woman who was a victim of police brutality speak. Often times, we, as women, are not given the opportunity to speak and let our voices be heard so many are left with the impression that certain things, such as being beaten up by the police, don't happen to us. This is not true! We too get harassed and physically abused by the police. The point here is, once again, that the police are racist!! Let's call it for what it is! They don't care who you are. They don't care if you have a BA, MA, or PhD. You could be an engineer, a student, a worker, a woman, or a man, it doesn't matter. All

they see is your colour, Black, and their guns are out of their holsters. The police have no respect for Black people. They showed that disrespect recently when they invaded the Malvern Christian Assembly Church and dragged out the one woman and four men whom they wrongly accused of committing a crime. The church, for many Black people, is a very important institution and one that commands a lot of respect. Yet, Metro Toronto police officers choose to go in and disrupt the service. They don't care about Black people nor do they respect us!

This was made particularly clear through the racist comments of the president of the Metro Toronto Police Officers' Association, Art Lymer. His remarks about Black people clearly implied that crime is synonymous with Black people. His "warnings" of an imminent Black takeover of the city and its reduction to the conditions like Detroit must be seen for what they truly are; namely, a racist bid to deflect public criticism of the force.

The police are getting out of hand and they are trying to cover their tracks by calling for public support. We don't want to support them nor do we support them!! It is time to regain control of Metro police because it is almost too late. They are policing themselves and think themselves above the law. This must stop. It is full time for the government of Ontario to do its duty and show the police who is in charge of the state; show them they are not above the law. What is needed and demanded is an independent public and publicly chosen citizen's complaints commission. What is

definitely not needed or wanted is yet another task force to examine the problem of police community relations. We don't need to be told that there is a problem. The landscape is littered with studies, from Pitman and Morand to Carter, about relations between the police force and "visible minorities" in Metro.

The studies are there. The number of Black people harassed, beaten up and murdered by the police are there. What is needed now is ACTION!! It is time to take away the power the police have in Metro. They must pay the price for the murders they commit against Black people and the working peoples of Toronto! It is ironic that they are killing us, yet it is they who are howling injustice! Their motto is "to serve and protect" yet I question exactly who it is that they are serving and protecting because I know that surely it is not me nor the thousands of other Black women and men here in Toronto.

To conclude, I will say it again, **THE POLICE AS WELL AS CANADA ITSELF ARE RACIST!!** What we need here in Metro Toronto is an independent public and publicly chosen citizen's complaints commission!! Amandla!

OUR LIVES

Carol Ann Allain
Dionne Brand
Linda Carty
Grace Channer
Dionne Falconer
Carol Camper
Faith Nolan
Angela Robertson
Leleti

We would like to thank the Women's Press for use of their production space in putting together this issue.

Some of the views expressed in Our Lives are not necessarily those of the Our Lives Collective.

BADC Continued

appear to be running the Premier's office, and the Solicitor General's office. There has been a deathly silence on the part of the Liberal government who just a year ago came with outstretched arms for votes from the Black community.

The audacious actions of the police appear to be legitimized by the state. This signifies a moral and political crisis in the white leadership in this city and this province. Furthermore, the appalling actions of the police association in, implicitly or otherwise, sanctioning a work slowdown, in alluding to a withdrawal of protection from the Black community, in attacking the Attorney General's office, and in attempting to silence some of the media, constitute as far as we are concerned, rebellion and a seizure of state power by the police! For us therefore, it is no longer a myth, because if not Canada, certainly Ontario appears to be heading toward a police state.

We demand an independent public, and publicly chosen citizen's complaints commission!

We demand that the police be charged with murder in the killings of Lester Donaldson and Michael Wade Lawson because we recognize from the past that the charge of manslaughter is just one step away from acquittal!

We demand that the government of Ontario do its duty and show the police who is in charge of the state; show them they are not above the law!

We demand that the head of the police association, Mr Lymer, withdraw his racist remarks about Black people which clearly implied that crime is synonymous with Black people. It is not Blacks who will make Toronto "like Detroit," but as in Detroit, it is the police who will create that scenario!

This cruelty which is being perpetrated on us Black people by the police has a strange irony. i.e. They're killing us, yet it is they who are howling injustice!!

Support The Black Action Defence Committee

Police Are Criminalizing

Young Black People!



Black Women Unite! Fight Racism, Sexism, Homophobia and Class Opression



Women Against Poverty Fighting for Social Equality

Poverty is an unnatural human condition which is the central feature of Capitalism, a system built on massive exploitation of the majority by the wealthy minority. This minority own all the resources and means for survival. The majority own nothing but their power to work, which they are cheated out of daily. In this majority---the working class---women are the most exploited and oppressed and therefore make up the poorest of the poor. Both in Canada and internationally this group of women share a similar suffering.

Healthcare

Dionne A Falconer

Poverty has very negative effects upon women's lives and is the primary cause of most social problems which women face daily. Women earn much less (\$0.67 of a dollar) than men and Black, Native, Asian, Immigrant and women with disabilities earn even less than that. It is this economic reality that impacts directly on women's health. Having money and being a part of the middle and upper classes within society grants access to many health resources and services and also, to the *knowledge that these services are available*. Poverty is the single most important factor in the continuation of ill health in our society.

Poor women have much higher health risks and reduced access to healthcare than do rich and middle class women. Our economic status forces us to live and work in places that are often dangerous to our health, such as those which are pest-infected, have inadequate heating and insufficient facilities. We are more likely to have to live near factories that produce chemical wastes and other dangerous pollutants. We are also more likely to work where there are hazardous conditions or where health insurance is not available. Often we don't have enough money for proper foods for our children risking malnutrition and diseases.

Healthcare must be more accessible. Drug and dental plans must provide complete coverage and user fees must be eliminated. Cutbacks and privatization must be stopped. Our healthcare system is now being threatened by the Free Trade Agreement. Businesses can now manage and/or own our hospitals, nursing homes, health clinics, labs and even our blood banks. This brings a high degree

competitiveness. Now our healthcare will become even more of a profit-making venture. Nurses and nursing assistants, women who are overworked and underpaid now, will lose their

jobs because full-time staff will be minimized. Again the cycle of women's poverty will continue.

We demand more money for AIDS research. The homophobic government has proposed \$12.9 million over 5 years for AIDS research. This is not enough, especially when they intend to spend over \$12 billion to buy unnecessary nuclear submarines. Surely, human lives are worth far more than submarines.

We demand access to alternative healthcare that must be completely covered under all health plans. We must be able to have our children delivered by midwives in our homes, instead of by doctors in the cold, clinical surroundings of a hospital.

Often times there are sliding scales that are so high they slide right by us and the health literature is written in such jargon one needs a college or university degree to understand what is being said. This must not be so. Poor and working-class women's living conditions must be looked at be they Black, Native, Asian, People of Colour, Immigrant or White. Middle-class solutions for poor and working-class women's lives don't work. **Healthcare must not be a privilege for the few but a right for all.**

Childcare

Dionne A Falconer

We demand publicly funded, universally accessible childcare. Often, when women do manage to obtain housing, the lack of affordable, accessible childcare severely restricts their ability to gain employment and leaves them confined to the cycle of poverty. Children are a country's most valuable resource, yet so little is done to care for them.

In the 1986 "Caring For Our Children" the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women reported that 2.7 million children require care on an intermittent basis, yet less than 9% were served by the formal childcare system because there were only 172,000 licenced spaces in centres or homes across the country. These figures don't include children whose parents work or study full-time or part-time.

We demand affordable accessible daycare centres that are regulated to keep high standards. Well-paid workers are needed who

will be an active voice along with parents in the decision-making and running of the centres.

The government has proposed \$4 billion over 7 years to cost share with the provinces for the creation of 200,000 childcare spaces. This is not enough. There are 4 million children who need daycare. Also, with Free Trade means that that private corporations can claim access to public funds for the establishment of centres here and in doing so, they would be competing on an equal basis with our own non-profit centres. What this would translate into is lower wages for workers and lower standards of care-giving. This must not be so. Publicly funded, universally accessible childcare is needed and wanted.

Childcare must be seen as a basic right, not as a profit-making venture.

Shelter

Carol Camper

As we are all aware, Toronto is in the midst of a housing crisis. Vacancy rates of .002% mean that many people are caught in the crunch regardless of their income. Women and children are hardest hit by the shortage of affordable housing since more of them are poor and therefore have fewer accommodation choices. Single mothers, Black women, Native women, Women of colour, Lesbians, Immigrant women, Asian women, White women and women with disabilities also face the hurdle of discrimination. Inner-city dwellings traditionally inhabited by lower income people have been bought up, in the recent years, by the upper middle-class, and renovated beyond the reach of a poor and working class woman.

Historically, having a job meant one was assured of having the necessities of life. Soaring housing costs today mean that there are no such assurances.

No woman should be in the position of having to take her children to hostels or to leave her children and have the state care for them because she cannot. Hostels are not the answer (although for the moment they are an absolute necessity). Affordable, decent housing is

The government is clearly not committed to housing people. Women and children need homes to live in not promises to watch evaporate.

There is no reason why anyone in this country should be homeless. **The money is there. The land is there. The need is there. Women must join together and demand action.**

Housing

Angela Robertson

The lack of safe, affordable and low-income housing in Metro Toronto is one of the biggest problems faced by women. It is estimated that 70% of the buildings in Metro Toronto are Adult-only buildings and that 30% are so-called "low standard" housing for Metro's poor. Most of this housing is not barrier-free and therefore is inaccessible to women with disabilities.

Working-class and unemployed women constitute the largest percentage of applicants for Metro Housing. However, affordable and safe housing is being regarded by the government as a privilege, not a right. Instead of increasing affordable housing, the government is subsidizing developers to construct middle to upper income residential and non-residential buildings. Developers are encouraged to build or renovate for the middle and upper income earners only. The government's title for this is "gentrification," for poor women-Native women, Black women, Asian women, Women of Colour, White women. Immigrant women and women with disabilities it is homelessness.

The Ministry of Housing has also shown what its position on affordable housing is by reducing the Metro Toronto Housing Authority chair from a full-time to a part-time position, showing that they do not see housing as a priority. This move is a direct attack on poor women who need housing.

As working-class women we demand decent, affordable and accessible housing.

Safety

Carol Camper

In their homes, on the street and in the work-place, women are not safe. Women are targets and men are perpetrators of violence against them. Society not only

Continued
pg 6.

Women in our Herstory

Source: *The Black Woman in Canada* by Rella Braithwaite

Marie Joseph Angelique

Enslaved in Lower Canada, she ran away from a slave owner burning down fifty buildings in her wake in Montreal in 1733. She was later recaptured, beaten, dragged through the city and burnt at the stake because of her bid for freedom.

Harriet Tubman

This famous abolitionist escaped from slavery herself returning time and again to lead some three hundred of our enslaved ancestors to freedom in Canada. She was known to threaten with death anyone who gave up hope on the way to freedom. Helping the cause of emancipation, she later served as a spy, a scout, a soldier and a nurse when war broke out between the north and the south. In Canada she lived in St Catherine's, Ontario.



Mary Ann Shadd

Born a freed woman in Delaware in 1823, she moved to Canada in the early 1850s. A committed abolitionist, Shadd advocated for fugitives from slavery to flee to Canada. Settling in Windsor and later in Toronto, she owned and edited the newspaper, the *Provincial Freeman* from 1853 to 1857, promoting the anti-slavery campaign. She also ran a small school in Windsor.

Annapolis Royal Rose Fortune

Born around 1774 she came to Annapolis Valley with her parents as slaves of the Devonne family. She became a policewoman and 'baggage-masher' in Annapolis Royal around 1825. Her descendants founded the Lewis Transfer. In her day she was to be found carting her transfer wagon full of luggage and goods to and from the decks of ships along the wharf of that seaport town.

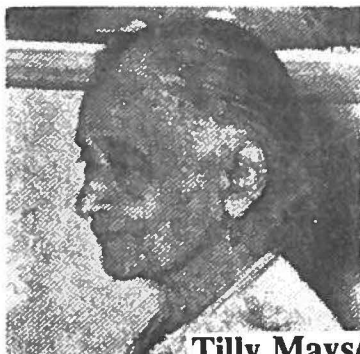
Rosetta Amos Richardson

Born in Toronto in 1857, her mother and grandmother had escaped to Canada via the Underground Railroad. She and her husband owned and operated the first soul food restaurant in 1891 on York Street near Richmond. Later she was the first Black person to operate a lunch counter at the CNE.

Tilly Mays

Founding member of the Coloured Women's Club, she was born in Montreal in the 1870s. The Coloured Women's

Club was a benevolent club



Tilly Mays

formed around the turn of the century when soldiers were returning home from the Boer War. The women of the club worked with the poor, sick and injured in hospitals and soup kitchens.

Christina Jenkins

Born in Chatham, Ontario in 1897, she was co-publisher and editor in 1923 of the London newspaper *The Dawn of Tomorrow*. The newspaper was the voice of Black people in Southern Ontario like its forerunner *The Provincial Freeman*. At its peak in the fifties it had a wide circulation not only in Canada but around the world. The paper is still published periodically by her descendants in London, Ontario where she lived for over sixty years. Jenkins was also a staunch community activist and held positions on the executive of the Women's Council of Churches. She was also mother to nine children.



Carrie Best

A civil rights activist, journalist and commentator, she was born in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia in 1903. She wrote articles on



racial discrimination in Nova Scotia and championed the cause

of Black rights. In 1949, her own newspaper the *Negro Citizen*

began publishing nation wide. Dr Best is known all over the country and in Black communities as strong fighting woman even now in her 86th year.

Violet Blackman

Coming to Canada in 1921, she was born in Jamaica. Now in her eighties, Violet Blackman was a founding member of the Universal Negro (African) Improvement Association in Toronto in the early thirties. A Garveyite, she believed in the advancement of Black people and helped to build the Negro Credit Union. She still attends community meetings bringing her years of struggle and her wisdom to the issues.



Violet Blackman,

Viola Desmond

A Halifax beautician, in 1947 she attended the Roseland theatre in New Glasgow Nova Scotia where the 'Jim Crow' law required Blacks to sit in the balcony and whites in the main section. She bought a ticket for upstairs but was refused. She in turn refused to leave the downstairs section and was assaulted by a policeman and the theatre's manager. She was arrested, charged with not paying the correct tax of one cent and jailed for twelve hours. She was later tried and convicted with defrauding the federal government of one cent!! Fighting back Viola took her case to the Supreme Court which later reversed the decision.



Jean Daniel

She grew up in Nova Scotia and later moved to Montreal. Working in a hat factory during the second world war she was active in the Black community and gave talks on Black history and culture. Later moving to Toronto she continued doing her work on Black history and also got involved in the Anti-Apartheid Committee in the late fifties. The committee raised funds and agitated for the struggle in South Africa and mounted a demonstration when Nelson Mandela was first

arrested. Photographs can still found in the community of Jean Daniel holding up a picket to free Mandela. She was the president of the committee for ten years. Another of her major contributions to Black history in Canada was her founding of the Library of Black Peoples' Literature, now defunct, but which attempted in the years of its existence to preserve the history of Black Peoples.

Marie Hamilton

A teacher for fifty years in rural Nova Scotia she is a member of the National Anti-Poverty Association. Born in Beachville, Nova Scotia she taught school when there were no roads or modern day schoolrooms. Using her wit and her wisdoms she made her way through the harsh racist times, firmly believing that education for both Black and white children would make a better world one day. Two years ago, Marie Hamilton received an honorary doctorate from Mount St Vincent University marking her great contribution to education in Nova Scotia. She still tutors at the North end Public Library in Halifax and is an active public speaker.

Pearline Oliver

Was born and raised in Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, she is a community leader and activist. She led the struggle in the 1940s for the first Black nurse in Nova Scotia.

Recently she researched and presented the written history of Black Churches in Nova Scotia at the Black Cultural Centre there.

Grace Trotman,



She arrived in 1920 from Liberia, graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Music and for 45 years taught music lessons to more than 1,000 children. She was choir leader and organist at the British Methodist Episcopal Church and in the thirties established a camp for Black children. She is probably responsible for inspiring many of the contemporary Black women singers in Toronto, many of whom passed under her tutelage.

Subscribe

OUR LIVES
the cutting edge

Kay Livingston,

Daughter of Christina Jenkins of the *Dawn of Tomorrow*, she was pioneering Black actress and television host. Her community activism and her struggle for women's rights made her the founding president of the Canadian Negro Women's Association in 1951.

**Dorothy Wills**

Based in Montreal, born in Dominica in 1933, she studied in Halifax and then in Montreal in the fifties. Her work in education and social work led to her activism in the cause of justice for Black people. She was national chairperson of the National Black Coalition of Canada in 1972 and 1973 and the executive secretary from 1969 to 1972.

**Betty Riley**

The first Black woman to produce a Black television series, 'Black Is', in Canada. Born in Montreal her family dates back to 1871 here. Her work in the media and her concern over the lack of Black images in the media led to her many endeavours in the service of the community, including, a Black community radio workshop training youth and work at the Negro Community Centre in media arts.

Kathleen Searles

A school teacher, she was responsible for establishing a Black Heritage Program long before any Board of Education did so in Toronto. In the fifties, sixties, and seventies, she worked actively in Black community organisations such as the Home Service Association, the U.N.I.A., the Toronto United Negro Association, the Toronto Negro Credit Union and the B.M.E. church where she began a program called 'Student Sundays' which motivated Black youth in their academic aspirations.

**Gwen Johnson**

Her great-grandmother came to Canada via the underground railroad. That history was not wasted on Gwen Johnson. In 1968, she and her husband opened Third World Books & Craft Store. The store now on Bathurst Street was and is a safe harbour for Black people in search of their heritage and history. It is also where many political discussions take place, Gwen and Lenny being themselves storehouses of Black history and struggle. Gwen is also an active and longtime member of the Universal Negro (African) Improvement Association.

**Rosemary Brown**

Until her retirement in 1986, she was the only Black woman to sit in the Canadian legislature, provincial or federal. As the member of parliament for Vancouver-Burrard, Brown was first elected to the British

Columbia legislature of the New Democratic Party. A feminist, in 1970 she became the first Ombudswoman for the Status of Women. A socialist of the highest calibre she once introduced a private member's bill to establish collective bargaining rights for tenants, and, supported rent control. As a civil right activist she strongly objected to scapegoating immigrants for the failing economy. Brown came to Canada from Jamaica in 1951.

Rella Braithwaite

A community activist, a journalist and historian for many years she was the Black history columnist for *Contrast* the Black community newspaper. She has written the only biography of Black women in Canada which she published in 1976.

Eva Smith

Coming to Canada from Jamaica on the domestic worker scheme in the 1950s, she became an activist in the cause for domestic worker rights and Black rights in Toronto. A pioneer of the Jamaican Canadian Association of Toronto, Smith also counselled and tutored Black youth through that organization for many years. Every year a scholarship is given in her honour to outstanding Black youth.

Lois DeShield

Founder of Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre, DeShield began her activism in Hamilton, Ontario, agitating against racist programming on children's television. A stalwart of the Black Education Project she's fought many a battle in the struggle against racism.

Marlene Green

Founding member and ideologue of the Black Education Project, Green came to Canada from Dominica in the sixties. The Black Education Project 1969-1979, through its advocacy on behalf of Black children wrought a radical change in the thinking and policy of educators in the Toronto school system. Prior to the work of Green and others there were no race relation departments, heritage programs or mechanisms for dealing with systematic racism in the schools. Veteran of African Liberation struggle for self determination in the Caribbean, Green now works in Southern Africa.

Fran Endicott

The first Black woman trustee of the Toronto Board of Education, from 1981 to 1988, Endicott was central to the progressive changes at the Board toward Heritage Languages, questions of streaming, equal access and opportunity for innercity and Black children.

Margaret Gittens

A long time activist, Gittens came to Canada in the sixties. Her major contribution has been in the area of tenants rights where she has worked for the past ten years. A veteran of African liberation support organising and activist on immigration problems faced by Black people, she is also a member of the Coalition of Visible Minority Women and the Congress of Black Women.

Anne Cools

Prominent in the Sir George Williams University uprising (1970) where Black students occupied the computer centre protesting against racism, Cools later became the first Black woman senator in the Canadian Parliament in 1982. She founded and worked for many years at Women in Transition, a shelter for battered women in Toronto. Her community activism led to her involvement in electoral politics and she gave David Crombie, the previous Minister of Multiculturalism a run for his money in the riding of Rosedale in 1981.

Vera Cudjoe

Founder of Black Theatre Canada some 14 years ago, she was born in Trinidad coming to Canada via England. Through good times and mostly bad financial times, she has kept the theatre going with the deepest conviction that the work of Black writers actors and artists must have a place for expression.



cutting edge



... safe. continued

permits, but encourages this. The number of women who are subjected to physical and sexual violence are so staggeringly high (30% is at best a very conservative figure) that they begin to make such outrages the norm rather than the exception for women's lives. The same holds true for our children.

So many women are "under siege" it is as if war has been declared on us. Date rape. Drug-related street crime. Violence in women's prisons and institutions. Lesbians being harassed by police and the freedom the police seem to have to commit violence to Blacks and People of Colour without prosecution all add up to make any women's life a war zone.

In increasing numbers women have begun to fight back against this outrageous and unacceptable oppression. We demand change. The women's community needs more crisis support workers and more safe houses. We want the media to stop portraying women as nothing more than the sum of their saleable parts and stop promoting the message that violence towards women is normal, acceptable and exciting. We want to educate women so that they can recognize forms of violence that we have been socialized into accepting and indeed not even seeing. Women are and must be empowered and galvanized to fighting back against the forces that make our lives and homes a battle ground.

Welfare

Angela Robertson

Women have very little economic control over our lives. It is no accident that a large percentage of welfare recipients in this country are women. It is estimated that 70% of poor households are headed by single women struggling to survive on social assistance.

Women receiving welfare are forced to deal with the harassment and humiliation built into the social assistance system plus the fact that the income they receive from social assistance cannot meet the rising costs of life's basic necessities. Welfare is not a handout, it is a necessity because the government refuses to provide employment for all. Social assistance in Ontario is just enough to starve on.

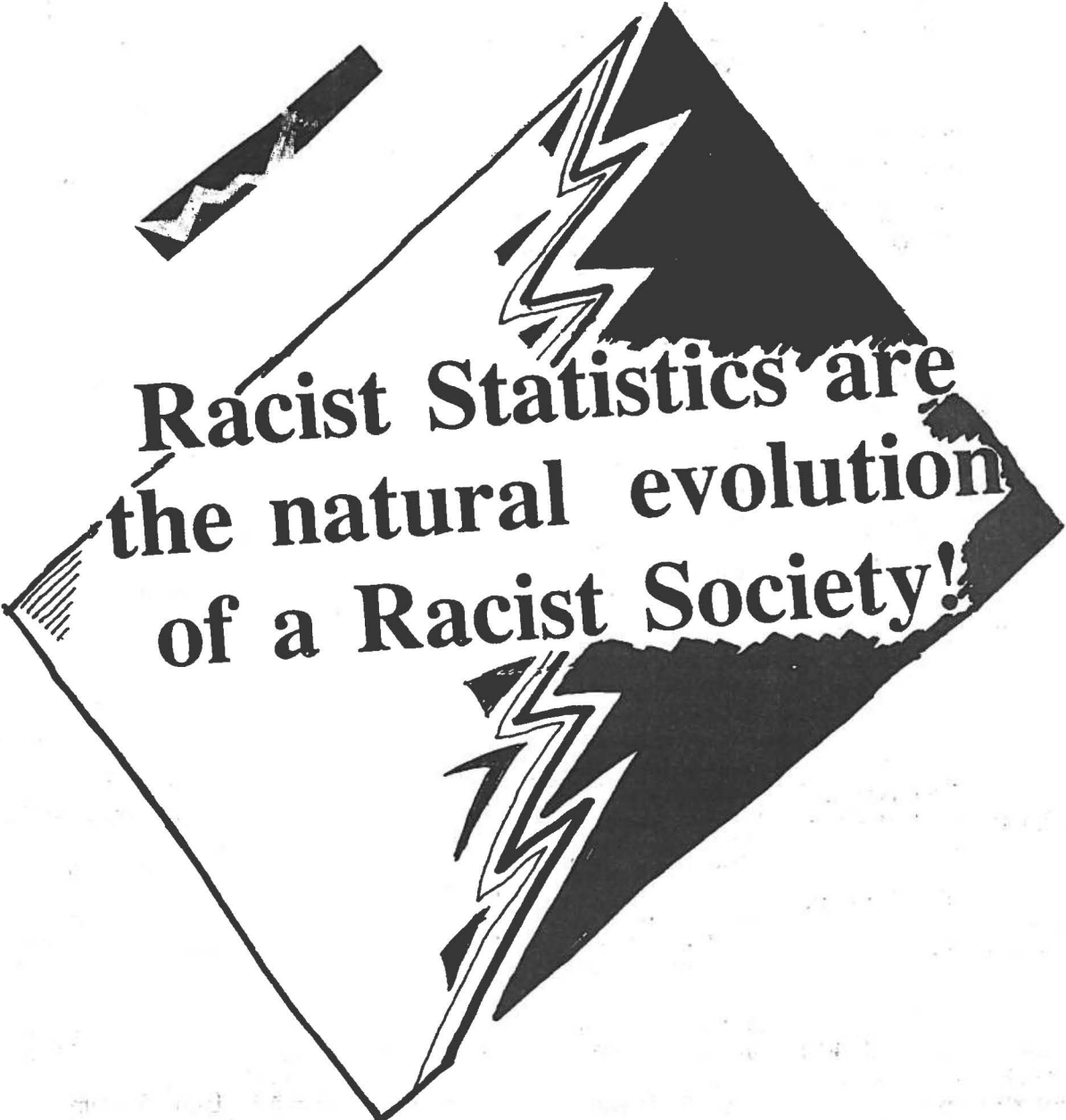
Working-class women--Native women, Black women, Asian women, White women, Immigrant women and women with disabilities demand that:

(1) the Ontario government raise social assistance rates immediately by 25% and continue to raise the rates above



the poverty line; (2) immediate recognition of Native rights to self-determination in social areas to be recognized; and (3) the Ontario government implement the recommendations of Phase One of the Social Assistance Review Committee's Report submitted in 1988.

The march against poverty is a march for justice. We refuse to starve in silence.



**Racist Statistics are
the natural evolution
of a Racist Society!**

**DIASPORIC AFRICAN
WOMEN'S ART**

**BLACK
WIMMIN
WHEN
AND
WHERE
WE
ENTER**

**JANUARY 28 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 1989**

BUSEJÉ BAILEY
CLAIR CAREW
GRACE CHANNER
DZIAN
FOLUKÉ OLUBAYO
MARIE-AURILE JORDAN
KHADEJA
KIM McNEILLY
BARBARA PREZEAU
SULI WILLIAMS
WINSOM

Black Her/history Month Calendar

West Indian Students' Association of U of T presents WISA Week 89
A Black History Month Celebration
February 20-25

Monday: Education-What is the school system doing to Black students?

Location: Toronto Board of Ed Auditorium 155 College St 7-10pm

Tuesday: Sexuality with speakers Doug Stewart, Erica Mercer and Debbie Douglas

Location: Hart House U of T 7 Hart House Circle 7-10pm

Thursday: Movie Night--Movies to be announced

Location: International Students' Centre 33 St George St 7-10pm

Friday: Black Women in the Arts featuring Ebony Voices

Location: Toronto Board of Ed Auditorium 155 College St 7-10pm

Saturday: Domino Tournament
Location: International Students' Centre 33 St George St

All events are FREE!! For more info call 978-8613
Co-sponsored by SAC

Black Wimmin When and Where We Enter -- Art Exhibition

Presented by Diasporic African Women's Art.

January 28 - February 25 1989 at A Space

183 Bathurst St. Artists include Grace Channer, Kim McNeilly, Buseje Bailey, Dzian Lachrite, Foluke Olubayo, Clair Carew, Marie-Avrile Jordan, Khadeja, Barbara Prezeau, Suli Williams, and Winsom.

FREE For more info. call 364-3227

Friday, February 17, 1989 at SCM Book Room, 333 Bloor St W at 7:30 pm

Authors Series featuring **Dionne Brand** and **Daphne Marlatt**. There will be reading by both poets followed by a discussion about their work. The event is hosted by Ruth Pierson, of the History & Philosophy Dept OISE. Dionne Brand is

author of *Chronicles of the Hostile Sun*, *Primitive Offensive* and *Sans Souci*, a collection of Short stories published in 1988. Daphne Marlatt is author of *How Hug a Stone*, *Touch to My Tongue*, and *Ana Historic*, her first novel published last year.

Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) Exhibit on Display

Feb. 1-28 Humber College North Campus, 205 Rexdale Blvd. Sponsored by Afro-Caribbean Club, Humber.

Remember Malcolm X-- Public Meeting

A new video on Malcolm & a discussion
February 25 at 6pm
The Buttery, 15 Devonshire Place

For more info call 921-7783 or 979-8907

Organized by Biko Rodney Malcolm Coalition

Black History Thru' Music
Featuring Faith Nolan

At Downsview Public Library, 2793 Keele St

Feb. 16 1:30pm FREE

Sponsored by North York Public Library 733-5512

Salute to Black Scientists

Featuring Hunter Adams III, U.S. Scientist

At Ontario Science Centre Auditorium

Feb. 19 2pm Free with admission to Centre.

Sponsored by The Black Heritage Assoc. East York.

An Exploration of Caribbean Dialect

At York Woods Library, 1785 Finch Ave. W.

Feb. 22 1:30 FREE with Pre-registration

Sponsored by North Public Library 733-5512

Video Launch "Berbice Uprising"

Featuring "Freedom Drums"

At Nexis Club, 1386 St Clair Ave W

Feb. 24 at 7pm, \$8 adv. \$10 door

Sponsored by Leon Saul (Writer) and Bianca Brynda (Director)

Africa in the 20th Century
Symposium at the Royal Ontario Museum

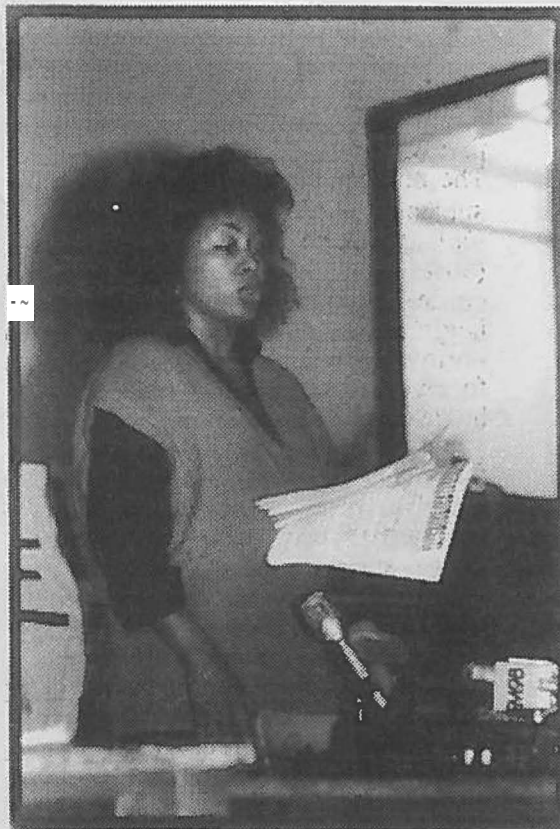
March 5 10am - 4:30pm
Call 586-5788

International Women's Day (IWD) Rally & March

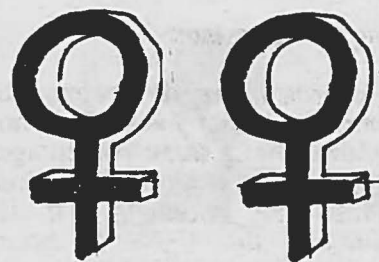
March 4 at 11am Convocation Hall, U of T
Kings College Circle

IWD Women's Dance

March 4 at Concert Hall
888 Yonge St 8pm



Linda Carty, speaking at the Black Action Defence Committee Press Conference, January 17, 1989 at the Black Secretariat



**There is No More Important a Time As
the Present**

The Black Women's Collective presents "Women's Breakfast 89" on Sat March 4 at Alexandra Park Community Centre. Breakfast begins at 8am. All women and children welcome. FREE!!

OUR LIVES is a non-profit
newspaper
run for, by and about Black
Women.

If you are a Black woman,
you've got
something to say. Say it Here!
Send stories, articles, poems,
letters,
reviews and ideas.

OUR LIVES invites submissions
from
Black women living all over
Canada.

Support The Black Action Defence Committee

Support Black People and People Of Colour Against Police Brutality

Join The Rally Against Racism on Queen's Park February 25 1988 1pm

Fire Rushton the Racist. Nuff Said!



OUR LIVES is a non-profit newspaper run by Black women.
Subscribe and support this brave endeavour in the cold north.
For individual subscription send \$15.00.
For institutions - \$25.00.

NAME

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....PROV.....POSTAL CODE.....

Payment must accompany order. Make all cheques payable to
OUR LIVES and send to
P.O. BOX 248 STATION P TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 2S8
