

FEB. 20TH. 1989

Statement of the Black Women's Collective to the Rally Against Racism,
Feb 25. 1989.

Over the past several months the Black Community in Toronto has been under open attack from the police, police administration and indeed city and provincial government officials. We say that we have been under open attack because two of our people have been brutally murdered, numerous in our community have been harrassed and brutalised by the police, aspersions cast on the character of our community, our young women and men have been systematically criminalised through excessive and unwarranted surveillance and more recently through the racist use of biased police statistics.

The community's efforts to speak out against these attacks have been subjected to a campaign designed to discredit and disinform. The police force has put all of its resources toward further attack on Black people in Metro instead of cleaning up their own dirty house of racism. But their denials of racism have only resulted in the exposure of their racism. As in the case of June Rowlands, the head of the police commission who targetted Black youth with the crime of being Black.

Our community is under seige. No government official has spoken out categorically against these attacks. They have allowed the police to call the shots; they have allowed the police to declare that they will withhold protection for the Black community and they have even called on the police to provide racist statistics. They have in fact taken away our civil rights.

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We call on the Premier of this province, David Peterson to lift the seige. We are citizens of this province like all other citizens and he and his government must act in our behalf.

We demand

- That the premier of Ontario issue a categorical statement deploring racism, and police harrassment, and police brutality in this province. That Premier David Peterson also make clear his government's specific intentions to clean up racism in the police forces and the civil service.

- That an independent civilian complaints commission be set up to look into charges of racism in the police force, police brutality and police killings in Ontario.

- That Mandatory Anti-racist education be instituted in the police force and all civil services in Ontario.

- That the Solicitor General order Peel police to stop wearing buttons in support of police officers charged with the criminal offence of manslaughter in the death of Wade Lawson.

- That a public apology be issued by the North York Police department regarding their issuing of racist statistics on crime.

- That the personnel officer of the Metro Toronto Police Force be fired immediately for his remarks that hiring Blacks would lower the standards of the force. (Frankly we think that it would raise the standards quite a bit)