

# Black women forced off Montreal bus

by Ita Kendall  
Montreal (CUP)

Police arrested two Black women September 21 after a Montreal bus driver complained they were "causing trouble," but the women say the police overreacted.

"The police talked to the bus driver and two white passengers, but they wouldn't listen to us," said Amuna Baraka, a Concordia student who was with the two women who were ar-

rested.

Akhajic Worrell, a University of Toronto student, and Tereska Nurse were detained at a Montreal police station for more than four hours. Nurse said she was strip-searched by police.

Lt. Alain Ethior said police charged the women with mischief, obstructing justice and obstructing a peace officer. Worrell has also been charged with assaulting a peace officer.

The incident began when the women and several friends were

boarding a bus. Baraka said she heard the driver make comments in a derogatory tone. Although they didn't understand the French-speaking driver, both Baraka and Worrell said they heard him say "negres."

Baraka said she told the driver not to speak to her that way.

"Then I saw him staring at me in his rearview mirror," she said. "So I stuck my tongue out at him."

The driver stopped the bus and got off, Baraka said. Ten minutes later 12

police officers arrived on the scene in a van and several other cars, she added.

"The police told us the bus driver said we were causing trouble," said Baraka. "And they told us to get off."

She said police refused to listen when the women tried to tell their side of the story and they were refused transfers when they asked for them.

When two of the women refused to leave the bus, police forcibly removed them. Police then arrested Nurse.

"They threw her [Nurse] against the bus, wrenched her arms behind her back and handcuffed her," said Worrell, who followed the police as they took Nurse to a police car.

Worrell said the police told her to move away from the car and pushed her away several times.

Worrell was then arrested after a bag she had been carrying landed on the ground near police.

"It didn't hit any of the police," said Baraka. But she said the police then forced Worrell to the ground, handcuffed her and took both Worrell and Nurse to station 24.

Sgt. Francois St.Jean, the officer in charge when the two women were brought to station 24, would not comment on the treatment of the two women after they were arrested.

But St.Jean said anyone arrested by police can be strip-searched if the officer in charge thinks that person could harm herself or the police officers in the station.

The women were each required to pay \$400 in bail before they were allowed to leave. They are scheduled to return to Montreal for November court dates.

Michel Leboeuf, a spokesperson Montreal transit commission will conduct an internal inquiry based primarily on the police reports.

## Library worker harrassed, union claims racism

by Krishna Rau  
Toronto (CUP)

A union representing library workers says the University of Toronto fired an employee as part of a racist and anti-union policy.

But UofT has rejected the unions' grievances and says it will stand behind its decision even if the union takes the case to the provincial ministry of labour.

Wesley Cason, a library employee for 17 years, says he was fired because he is Black and a strong supporter of the Canadian Union of Public Employees' Local 1230, whose members went on a three month strike last year.

"In order to control the union mem-

bership, they used me as an example," said Cason. "I'm a victim of harassment."

Cason also said there is deeply ingrained racism in the way the libraries are run.

"There's institutional racism in the UofT library system."

Cason said he has been called "boy" by his supervisor and though he demanded a written apology, the supervisor would only issue a verbal one.

But Carole Moore, UofT's chief librarian, said she has found no evidence of racism.

"I've certainly looked into allegations along those lines. I have not found any evidence for that."

Cason said he was fired because

he accidentally re-registered a library card that had \$90 in library fines owing on it. He said it is a common error and he didn't know anyone else who had been fired for a similar reason.

But, Moore said Cason was not fired for that one mistake.

"The dismissal is based on serious performance problems over a long period of time."

Union president Hollis Joe said library management has a long history of harassing Cason.

He said Cason has been suspended in the past for such simple things as drinking coffee at his desk and reading on the job. Joe said also said Cason has been denied union representation at his disciplinary hearings.

Cason said he was fired during the strike after a manager charged him with assault, saying he assaulted her while she was crossing the picket line. She later dropped the charges and Cason was reinstated.

Moore said other suspensions have been upheld when the cases have been brought to arbitration before a representative of the ministry of labour.

The union will now be able to take its grievances over Cason's firing to arbitration.

"It should end the harassment," said Joe. "But you never know."

Moore said UofT is prepared to go to arbitration.

"We're certainly content to have it appealed," she said.



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