

# The Carolina Times

THE TRUTH UNBROKEN

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**Words Of Wisdom**  
Those readiest to criticize are often least able to appreciate.  
..... —Joseph Joubert  
A problem well stated is a problem half solved.  
..... —Charles F. Kettering  
It is not work that kills men, it is worry.  
..... —Henry Ward Beecher

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## Second Issue In A Series of Three

# The State Of The Black Community

## Durham's Underground Black Community

### A Vision of Despair



**WILLIE LOVETT**  
"...a lot more things need improving...we need more people willing to come and work with us...I don't think we are going to solve the problems right away, but you keep plugging away, and I believe eventually we will get there."

**W.W. EASLEY**  
"...for the most part, the black church has surrendered its leadership role in the black struggle to other organizations and is now serving in a supportive role."



## The Durham Committee: Out Of Touch, or Misunderstood?

**By Milton Jordan**  
Durham's major black organization has apparently lost touch with a broad array of needs in the black community, or it is being victimized by a lot of vicious rumors. Interviews with a broad sampling of black people here, including neighborhood and community leaders, unerringly point to one or the other conclusion. The organization is the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People which has a long history of involvement in Durham with varying degrees of success. It is generally conceded that the Durham Committee is the city's most powerful black organization. "They are powerful, but they are not really tuned in to what's going on in this community," said Ms. Etta Vinson, president of the Fayetteville Street Neighborhood Council. "And I really don't think the Committee particularly is responsive to our problems because most of the people in that group don't share our problems."

Ms. Vinson is one of more than 9,500 Durham blacks who live in subsidized housing, and she feels that because most Durham Committee members, in her words, "live in good houses and have good jobs," they are not in touch with those nitty gritty issues with which many black people have to deal. But Willie Lovett, president of the Durham Committee, says that's not true. "It is possible," Lovett said, "that we have not done all that could be done, or even should be done, but it is not because we have not tried to be responsive." Lovett went on to say that the Committee has made a concerted effort to be more open and to encourage more people, from all areas of the community, to get involved with the Committee. "Involvement is a two-way street," Lovett continued, "because some people have this idea that what they should do about their problems is to dump them in the Committee's

lap and leave them. But we need their help to work on some of these problems." But another neighborhood leader contends just the opposite. "You never see those people until it's time for an election," said Mrs. Mamie Young, president of the Hoover Road Neighborhood Council. "They come around then and talk all that good stuff. You go out and follow their ballot, but they never make a political issue out of the things we're involved in." Both Mrs. Young, Ms. Vinson, as well as John Thomas Moore, president of the Edgemont Neighborhood Council, contend that their problems, such as better housing, better services for the elderly, and more jobs, especially for the youth are not issues that the Durham Committee spends a lot of time on. Several things very clearly emerge in this debate. One is the fact that there is an ever-widening communications gap between many

of Durham's average black folk and some of their more well-known leaders. Second, black leadership in Durham functions on two separate and distinct levels. There are those neighborhood level leaders who are usually hard working, committed people — often suffering the same problems as the people for whom they speak. Their perception of the struggle of black people zeroes on the basics: food, clothing and shelter. These leaders apparently are not often consulted, and seldom receive much attention from the white-dominated power structure in Durham except when they become too much of a nuisance. Then there are the black community leaders, those blacks who are often, as Ms. Vinson said, relatively secure in their jobs and have nice homes, and who deal more with the philosophy of the black struggle. The power structure consults them often. The clear differences between the two leader-

ship levels is often revealed in the rhetoric. While the philosophical leaders talk about Minority Business Enterprise Programs for the Raleigh-Durham Airport Expansion, the neighborhood leaders are wrestling with how to get ramshackled houses repaired, and how to get a handle on "excess utility bills" for those who live in subsidized housing. While the community leaders discuss more black representation on city and county boards and commissions, and an affirmative action policy for county government, the neighborhood leaders are trapped between police brutality, and neighborhood black-on-black crime. Third, it is clear that currently there is no accepted forum within which these differences can be discussed and solved. Lovett says the Committee has tried. "We have tried going to the neighborhoods," Lovett said. "We tried with the political com-

And suddenly, without warning, midway the plaza, violence explodes. A squat, powerfully built man pops two quick right hands off the head of his slender and taller opponent. The tall one falls against a car, and almost magically, a knife blade glistens in the night. His hand swipes out, carving a deadly arc, but the shorter man moves backward, stumbling against the wall and slipping to the pavement. At once, the taller man is standing over him, the knife held menacingly. But someone called the police, and minutes later, as three cars wheeled into the parking lot, the violence melted into the darkness. "I'd bet that group of loiterers account for more than half of the black on black crime in this city," said one black public safety officer who asked not to be identified. "But we can't do a whole lot about it because we just don't have the manpower, and the black community seems to protect them." But at least one black businessman contradicts that position on both counts. "Crime is allowed to exist at obvious levels in the black community," said William McLaughlin, who owns McLaughlin Medical Arts Pharmacy in the same block of Fayetteville Street. "In the white community, there is more crime deterrence. We want black merchants to receive the same type of protection that white merchants receive." McLaughlin is working to organize a new black business organization whose first project will be the crime and loitering problem faced by many black business operators in Durham. In other words, they are planning to take on the underground black community. It will be a tough, and probably protracted struggle. The underground black community is a small but formidable foe. While actual statistics on crime in the black community are rather hard to pin down, it is generally understood that blacks commit crime disproportionate to their numbers in the general population, and the black community is the main target of black crime. For example, in August, according to Durham Public Safety Department computer reports, more than 500 incidents of robbery, burglary, aggravated assault and larceny were committed in areas of the city clearly identified as black neighborhoods. During this same month, slightly more than 850 of these incidents were reported citywide. All the experts say definitely that most of that crime is committed by members of Durham's underground black community. But why do they do it?

"It's money, man! You need the money and you can't get no job," said Coco, a young man in his mid-20's, who says he's committed more than 100 burglaries and about half that many strong-arm robberies since he was 15 years old. He says he's never been caught. Coco — he says that's his nickname — is a slender, brown nice looking man with chilly brawn eyes and a face that seldom laughs. He lives on Durham's westside in a rundown house with his girlfriend, a woman in her early 30's who refused to give her name, but they both agreed to talk about life in the underground. "It's a b.....," the woman spits the words around the filter tip cigarette she's smoking. "Don't nobody care about you if you're poor

years ago. Now it is being dug up and hauled to a landfill in Warren County that state and federal officials say is the safest way to dispose of the toxic waste. Many people in Warren County deny that, and for almost three weeks have been demonstrating that disbelief by attempting to block the bright yellow dump trucks that daily haul ton after ton of the deadly dirt into a large, clay-packed landfill sunk in the middle of a 140-acre tract of land in rural Warren County. (Continued On Page 7)

## Reporter Goes to Jail: Gets 'Inside' Story

**By Isaiah Singletary**  
[EDITOR'S NOTE: Isaiah Singletary, a writer for The Carolina Times, went to Afton in Warren County to cover another day of demonstrations there Monday by residents fighting the dumping of PCB-laden soil in a state-owned landfill. As he attempted to interview D.C. Congressman Walter Fauntroy, who was arrested Monday, and other demonstrators, Singletary was arrested and jailed. This is his story, from the 'inside'.] AFTON — There I was, squatting behind

D.C. Congressman Walter Fauntroy as he spoke to a young girl, one of about a dozen demonstrators lying in the middle of a Warren County secondary road, protesting the dumping of PCB soil in a landfill there. Swooping in quickly and efficiently, four North Carolina Highway patrolmen hauled Fauntroy off, though he told them he is a congressman and asserted that it is against federal law to arrest a congressman while Congress is in session. They ignored his protestations as they carted the congressman off to a

waiting prison bus. Still squatting in the roadway, I turned to interview other demonstrators, and seconds later, four officers appeared at my side. Two reached to grab my arms. "I'm a reporter," I said loudly. They kept grabbing, accompanied by their partners who reached for my feet. "I'm a reporter," I said again, even louder this time. The officers ignored my protestations as they carted me off to the same waiting prison bus.

It was not a good day to be arrested. A warm, sunny, late summer day, it was more a time for fun and gaiety. In many respects, it was not even a day for protest. But the people had come, most of them Warren County residents, angered and frightened because the state had decided to dump about 60,000 tons of roadway soil laced with cancer-causing polychlorinated biphenyls, called PCBs for short, in their county. The deadly substance was dumped along 210 miles of North Carolina roadway more than four

years ago. Now it is being dug up and hauled to a landfill in Warren County that state and federal officials say is the safest way to dispose of the toxic waste. Many people in Warren County deny that, and for almost three weeks have been demonstrating that disbelief by attempting to block the bright yellow dump trucks that daily haul ton after ton of the deadly dirt into a large, clay-packed landfill sunk in the middle of a 140-acre tract of land in rural Warren County. (Continued On Page 7)



THIS HARDWARE, pictured in the Durham Sheriff Department's display case usually comes out of the Durham underground black community, and causes many of the headaches that plague the black community. (Continued On Page 8)