

Despite Black mayor and police chief

Compton's youth problem fosters crime

By Lawrence C. X
(Special to Muhammad Speaks)

COMPTON, Calif. — The residents of this largely Black city like to call it the "Hub City" because of its geographical proximity to the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area.

ONE NATIONAL magazine reporting on the latest crime reports, however, recently deemed it the crime capital of America. Of American cities with comparable populations, Compton leads the list in the occurrence of serious crimes.

Because half the city is less than 20-years-of-age, small pockets of restless and rebellious gangs dot the city's streets and thoroughfares. Therefore, Compton's youth problem is part of its crime problem.

Police Chief Thomas W. Cochee (pronounced Ko-shay),

Compton's first Black chief of police and the first within the state, explained that the highest rate of crimes is committed by males between the ages of 16 and 26 years. He said this is a highly crime-prone age-group as well as a hyperactive, thrill-seeking age group. "Crime is a young man's game," he added.

QUESTIONED specifically about the gang problem which has wrought havoc on the city's streets, the chief said, "There are a lot of kids in this community who still evidence to me a lot of self-hate. That's a direct result of a white racist system. They feel Black is not beautiful; black is not worth a damn, and they act like it."

"This seems to stem from the lack of respect that exists in the homes they come from. The parents have no respect for themselves or the children, therefore, it would be foolish to

expect the children to have any respect for themselves or anyone else.

"How little prerequisite there is for being parents. Children are born and they are allowed to grow and that is the extent of it. The cause of crime is unwanted and unloved children. Thus parents create criminals."

"The lack of parental responsibility creates a kind of Frankenstein monster. If the child is not given the necessary kind of guidance and training, the monster then destroys the parent and ultimately the society in which we live."

Further emphasizing his point, he added: "If we can eliminate all of the unsightliness about the community, I think growing kids would identify in positive ways with the community. They would begin to think that adults care, that the city



ELECTION OF BLACK woman, Doris Davis (above), as Mayor and "academic cop" Thomas Cochee as first Black chief of police has not instilled pride into Black youth of the city of Compton. Gang problem is of para-mount importance to city officials. (M.S. photo by Otis Shabazz)

administration cares. Maybe then they would begin to care about themselves and their family name.

"I think the Asians have something that Black people have lost; it may be that the white man took it away from

us — if we ever had it. But I'm talking about pride in self, pride in name and in family. It's discredit to an individual Asian to bring discredit on his family name. And sometimes he will kill himself before he

(Continued on page 19)

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