Black brother killed by Houston pigs

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HOUSTON, Texas (LNS) — Another young black leader has been murdered by police. Carl Hampton, the 21 year old chairman of People's Party II, Houston's revolutionary black organization, was killed by police snipers in a carefully planned ambush late Sunday night, July 26.

Carl died in Ben Taub General, the local charity hospital, a few hours after Houston police, perched on a nearby church rooftop, shot him down in the street near the People's Party Community Center, located in one of Houston's largest black ghettos.

At least seven others were wounded in the battle that followed Carl's shooting, including other members of the People's Party and Bartee Haile, a leader of the John Brown Revolutionary League (JBRL) a white organization allied with the People's Party and with MAYO, the Mexican American Youth Organization, allied in Houston's "rainbow coalition."

One of the wounded, Johnny Coward, had to have his foot amputated.

The ambush was laid as Carl spoke to a group of about 150 community people at an impromptu rally protesting the arrest earlier that evening of two young black men for carrying weapons. The group was trying to raise support and bail money to get the brothers out of jail.

While Carl was speaking, Ovide Duncantell, leader of the Central Committee for the Protection of Poor People, another militant black group, approached Carl and warned him that an unmarked police car was parked in a lot at St. John the Baptist Church, some 300 yards from the center. A few minutes later, more heavily armed pigs were discovered on the roof of St. John's Church. Carl told the crowd about them and two young men, armed with shotguns, went to see where the cops had moved in on the rally.

A single .22 calibre shot was heard. Duncantell said that "some fool" must have fired at the police; none of the People's Party members had .22 rifles, and the party's policy forbids firing on the police except in self defense. So Carl and another man ran down to the church to check out the scene.

As they moved out into the street, they found themselves exposed to police guns, so they ducked into an alley that runs alongside the church and tried to hide near a business building across the street.

Then the cops opened fire. The first three shots hit Carl, two through the chest and one in the liver. The pigs knew who they wanted to get.

Most of the crowd dispersed as police gunfire continued, and the rest, including JBRL members, ran inside the center to get their weapons.

Four or five people ran out from the center towards the church, dodging bullets, to get to Carl. They hid behind a parked car as others, with guns, moved behind them. There was an exchange of gunfire, and Bartee Haile of JBRL was shot in the arm.

Bartee, bleeding profusely, ran back to the center, dodging police bullets all the way as they bounced off the sidewalk.

He was later charged with assault and attempted murder.

An unidentified man in a Volkswagen drove through a rain of bullets to rescue Carl. The car was fired on, and swerved away, leaving one man holding Carl over his shoulder. The man escaped with Carl, arriving at the hospital sometime after 11 p.m., with Carl in very critical condition. The people remaining in the center, seeing that they were overpowered, escaped out the back. The injured were on their way to hospitals.

Police began to cordon off the area, and conducted a systematic search of all buildings up and down the block. Two police helicopters with spotlights hovered over the area.

After the shooting was over, the cops entered the People's Party headquarters and tore the place up. Then they launched an attack on community people standing along the street a few blocks south of the center. The pigs swept down the street, beating and arresting everyone they could get their hands on.

In the hospital, the pigs were taking no chances. They were armed to the teeth. Carl's three-hour surgery was guarded by heavily-armed cops, who were seen giving each other some hearty pats on the back when it was all over.

The next day, the cops arrested Maggie Hampton, Carl's widow, on charges of "burglary."

The men that killed Carl were part of a special "sniper unit." The last time the unit was deployed was during the police riot at predominantly black Texas Southern University, when police swept through the campus, shooting up dormitories.

Two Houston pigs, both members of the Criminal Intelligence Department—the red squad—seem to be vying for the honor of having killed Carl. Each has made a claim to that effect to one of Houston's establishment dailies. They claim to have been on top of the church to "watch for snipers," and that the People's Party members began the shooting.

"It's ridiculous to say that People's Party members and supporters went down there and opened fire in the middle of the street on snipers who had such a superior firing angle on them," Bartee Haile explained to KPFT.

Hampton's killing was a shock, but not a surprise to Houston's radicals. If Houston's militant blacks had not armed themselves, Carl would probably have been killed the very week before. He had gotten into a verbal argument with two patrolmen who had tried to stop a Party member from legally selling the Black Panther paper. During the argument one of the cops drew a gun, and Carl responded by pulling out his own gun. The cops called for help, and there was a stand-off between the police and a gathering crowd of 400 blacks, browns and whites, some of them armed. No shots were fired, and the police were finally persuaded to leave.

The most stunning aspect of Carl's murder is the swiftness with which the Houston pigs have moved in on the People's Party. The organization has existed since February, but the People's Community Center has been functioning only for a few weeks.

The center was designed as an information headquarters for the community. People's Party also planned to coordinate several programs through the center—free breakfasts for children, clothing drives and community control of the police. The organization is much like the Black Panther Party in its structure and program.

There has been nothing like the People's Party in Houston before, and it is clear that the pigs want to return to those good old days. People's Party II and JBRL members are not trigger-happy romantics seeking death in the streets by provoking armed confrontations with the pigs. They have guns, they know how to use them, and they use them only in self-defense.

Houston's ghetto—niggertown, as the police call it—defies description. The poorest blacks, of which there are many, live in tiny wooden shacks crowded 20 feet apart, and surrounded by narrow dirt roads—a few blocks from the mansions where Houston's ruling whites make their homes. In many areas of the city, black people can see Houston's super Los Angeles-style freeway system from their shacks. The virtually non-existent public transportation system here quite literally keeps black people in their place.

During the past seven months, 24 alleged robbers have been shot to death by Houston cops. Twenty were black. A few months ago, Houston pigs literally beat to death a young black man named Bobby Joe Connor.

Houston's establishment press has simply repeated the police story of Carl Hampton's killing. Two *Houston Chronicle* reporters were explicitly forbidden by their paper's management to talk to any "black militants." They were to talk only to the police.



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