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THE HOUSTON POLICE MURDERED

CARL HAMPTON



FFII brothers guard center.

Photo by Ravi Arya/Couger

Note how the noble swine men
To demonstrate their might
Lay still like snakes in heat of day
And then attack at night.

The Peoples Party Building
In racist Houston-town
Is held by pigs who smiled while Carl
Lay dying on the ground.

—Oh yes sir I do see your gun
Its steel so shiny blue
I see your badge I see your club
I guess it's really true
That you are brave and bold and strong
And red and white and blue.

Oh yes O valiant pig-face

I'll keep my hands in sight
Oh no I won't resist arrest
I won't put up a fight
OK I'll keep my mouth shut
I won't try any trick
(Like hell I won't you killer hog).
Though you tell us we are sick
You are a raving madman
You should be put away
In maximum security
You should be made to stay
With your politician counterparts
And military freaks
And psycho Wall Street Businessmen
And news-reporting geeks
And those who scream like fascists
And those so filled with hate

By Victoria Smith

"It's not because I'm in People's Party 11 that I'm oppressed, it's because I'm black and in the United States."

Carl Hampton made that statement in a speech shortly before his death early Monday morning, July 27.

The 21-year-old chairman of People's Party 11, a revolutionary black organization, was killed, not because he was in People's Party 11 but because he was black and in the United States, because he was a revolutionary whose interests resided in his people, the oppressed people of the world.

Carl was shot down by police snipers in an ambush Sunday night, July 26, near the People's Party 11 headquarters at Dowling and Tuam streets. He died in Ben Taub General Hospital about four hours later.

Several others were wounded in the battle, including other members of People's Party and a man from the John Brown Revolutionary League (JBRL), a white organization. (People's Party 11, JBRL and the Mexican-American Youth Organization formed a Rainbow Coalition several months ago.)

Carl was murdered, shot down in cold blood. The leadership he exerted, the ideas he represented and the practice he engaged in so threatened the power structure of the city that Carl could not be permitted to live. The police wasted no time. The People's Party Center had been functioning for less than a month when Carl was killed.

We want to make this clear from the start, because there is no doubt in our minds Carl's death resulted from premeditated murder. Our facts, our knowledge of Carl and People's Party 11, our understanding of the nature of repression in Amerika lead us to believe that the "first shot" that police claim started the gun battle that occurred Sunday night did not come from a People's Party or JBRL gun.

The events surrounding Carl remain somewhat unclear at this point. But we think that the Houston police department, as represented in the local commercial media, has lied to Houstonians about the incident. Maybe we can clear things up a little.

Around 5 p.m., Sunday, two brothers were arrested on weapons charges inside a church just around the corner from the Center.

Police had harassed people at the Center continually for more than a week before Carl's death, beginning with an incident Friday, July 17, in which pigs and People's Party members and supporters held guns on each other for about 30 minutes.

We talked with Carl Sunday afternoon, only several hours before his death, and he told us that two Party members had been busted that week,

that police had warrants out for the arrest of him and two others, that police surveillance helicopters had hovered continually over the headquarters, that police were spreading false rumors in the Third Ward community about People's Party.

Later that evening People's Party held an impromptu rally outside the Center to gather support for the Party and for the brothers in jail.

A man who has related to People's Party but is not a member gave Space City) the best account we have of the events surrounding Carl's death.

As Carl was addressing the group of some 150 people. Ovide Duncantell, of the Central Committee for the Protection of Poor People, another militant black group, approached Carl and told him that an unmarked police car was parked in a lot at St. John the Baptist Church, a building some 300 yards north of the Center.

Carl relayed the message to the crowd. Two black men, armed with shotguns, ran toward the vicinity of the church.

Some minutes later, Duncantell reported that there were two pigs on the roof of St. John's Church. Duncantell's next message was that someone had shot at the pigs.

Our witness said he heard a shot, but he recognized it as the unmistakable sound of a .22-caliber weapon, not a shotgun. The obvious conclusion is that the brothers who had left for the church could not have fired the shot, since they were armed only with shotguns. (People's Party policy, like that of the Black Panther Party, forbids firing on police unless in self-defense.)

Carl and another man ran down the street to check out the scene. Apparently, they moved into the street or into some position in which they were exposed. So they evidently crossed the street to hide in an alley near a business building.

Gunshots rang out. Most of the crowd in front of the People's Party Center dispersed and the rest, including members of JBRL and People's Party, moved inside the Center to get their weapons.

The first shots were apparently the ones that felled Carl.

Our witness moved across the street where he stationed himself with Carl's wife, Maggie. He said he saw JBRL member Bartee Halle dash out of the center.

Bartee later told KPFT-FM, Pacifica radio, that three or four men were running toward the church. Bartee, who was trying to get to Carl, hid behind a parked car. Others with guns moved up behind him. There was an exchange of gunfire and Bartee was shot in the arm.

"The same sniper that got Carl hit me," he said. It is also possible, however, that Carl, because of his apparent location, was hit from a window in the church.

Bartee, bleeding profusely, ran back to the Center, all the way dodging bullets that were bouncing on the sidewalks.

As to who started the shooting, Bartee said, "I don't for any moment believe that People's Party 11 members and supporters went down there and opened up on snipers who had such a superior firing angle on them."

The logic of this situation is virtually inescapable, although the Houston Police Department and the commercial media managed to ignore it.

People's Party 11 and JBRL members are not trigger-happy romantics looking to die glorious deaths in the streets by provoking armed confrontation with the pigs. They have guns, they know how to use them and they have used them only for self-defense.

The police claim that some "black militant" opened fire on them. J.O. Norris, of the Criminal Intelligence Division (Red Squad) who says he was on top of the church, was quoted in the Houston Chronicle as saying that one man shot at him and his buddy. "We didn't return the fire then. Two Negro males ran across the street and started shooting at us again." At this point Norris claimed he and the other policeman shot the men. This report makes no sense.

St. John's church is the tallest building in the vicinity. There is no way that a person on the street 30 feet below could "snipe" at police virtually hidden on a rooftop, with a strategically useful parapet.

The shooting started sometime after 10 p.m. and lasted less than an hour.

Artice "Cboy" Vaughn, writing in the *Forward Times*, claims a call went out over the police radio saying, "We got eight under fire. Put some more light on that building because we are going to do some killing."

"Hey, we got two of them. Wait a minute, I think that we got the leader. Yes we got the leader."

An unidentified person in a Volkswagen drove through a hail of bullets to rescue Carl. According to one report, the car was fired on in earnest and it wheeled away, leaving one man, who had been trying to get the wounded Hampton into the car, holding Carl over his shoulder.

The man escaped with Carl. Carl somehow arrived at Ben Taub hospital by car, shortly after 11 p.m., in very critical condition.

One thing should be abundantly clear. The pigs were out to get Carl and they apparently didn't care whether or not they killed any of the others, except possibly Bartee, who is also a marked man in Houston. (Bartee says he was fortunate not to have been shot in the heart. Gunshot hit his left arm, and he thinks the pigs were aiming for his

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Who would not give their fellowman
The crumbs from off their plate
Who are terrified of freedom
(But think they know the word).
They want two homes, four cars out back
And other things absurd.
Who say "Protect our nation
And keep this country free!
And jail those god-damn anarchists
And strike down tyranny!"

But hear us pig Houstonians
In the City of Pollution
You'll now be aware of *another* word
—We call it *REVOLUTION!!!*

—Anonymous
Submitted following the murder
of Carl Hampton July 27



Carl Hampton speaking at a rally in Hermann Park several months ago.

Photo by Tree

heart.)

Carl didn't have a chance. Space CityI learned that he was shot several times in the chest and once in the liver, which at a distance of some 200 feet required excellent marksmanship and intent to kill. The pigs who claim to have shot Carl have even admitted in the media that they shot to kill.

Several others were wounded, but none critically. One of the wounded, however, Johnny Coward, was shot in the ankle and has lost his foot. Coward had lost an eye in a battle with police two years ago. At least eight men were shot, possibly more.

Most of the people remaining in the Center escaped out the back. The injured were on their way to hospitals.

Police began to cordon off the area, and initiated a systematic occupation of the community which eventually extended over a 20 square block area. Two whirlygigs with spotlights hovered over the area.

The men that killed Carl were part of a special sniper unit. The sniper squad technique had not been used for three years, since the police riot May 6 and 7, 1967, at Texas Southern University. (At that time, police swept through the campus, shoving up a men's dormitory. The riot resulted in one death, that of a pig, who died out of the direct line of fire from student held territory. He was probably killed by a ricochet pig bullet. More than 300 rounds of ammunition were fired in that incident.)

After the shooting was over and the pigs had isolated the area for themselves, they entered the People's Party headquarters and gleefully trashed the place. They entertained themselves by drawing moustaches on posters of Chairman Mao and writing graffiti on the wall, like "Fuck Huey," and "Wallace in '72."

They confiscated a few arms and some literature.

After the police had secured the area north of Elgin on Dowling, a squad of at least 120, possibly more, formed at the corner of Dowling and Elgin.

A crowd of some 300 people began to gather in the area; one of whom was Don Gardner, former news editor and associate manager of KPFT-FM. Gardner was doing volunteer work for the station at the time.

"People weren't harrassing the cops," Gardner told us. He likened it to a crowd of people watching a wreck or a fire. The crowd was all black, except for two other KPFT reporters.

Suddenly, without any warning, or any apparent reason, a line of pigs started to move south down Dowling, bellowing "Move out the way!" and beating and arresting everyone they could get their hands on.

Police arrested more than 50 people, all black

except for Gardner, who said he was grabbed by the hair, jabbed in the head with a rifle butt, handcuffed and thrown into a waiting paddy wagon.

All those arrested in this sweep were charged with loitering and failure to move on. Bond is set at \$200 apiece. Many still remain in jail.

Some 30 People's Party members and supporters, including a number of Space City people, arrived at Ben Taub Hospital to ensure that Carl and the others received adequate treatment. A large contingent of police was also there to ensure that there would be no trouble when Carl died.

Besides Carl, Barbee Haile, Johnny Coward, Fred Sparkman and Gregory Clarke had been admitted to Ben Taub. Since then we have learned that other injured were admitted to other hospitals.

Barbee was charged Tuesday, July 28, with assault and attempted murder, while he was still recuperating from the gunshot wound.

The scene at Ben Taub was tense. We were worried, angry and confused. Some of us spent hours trying to get a good, cool doctor to come to the hospital, declare he was Carl's doctor and be admitted to surgery where he could keep an eye on the operation.

We put a call in to Switchboard at the Space City office and learned that pig cars had virtually

surrounded the place. Anyone coming from or going to the office was stopped and questioned.

The regular pigs at the hospital, we understand, had been talking and joking for two or three days prior to the shooting about how they were looking forward to busting up Dowling street.

Carl's surgery was guarded by heavily armed police who, we have been told, exchanged hearty pats on the back after it was all over.

Carl died shortly before 3 a.m.

It was strange. We had just talked with Carl that afternoon, and suddenly he was dead.

Carl did tell us some interesting things that afternoon. For one thing, the question of Duncantell's statement to City Council came up, the statement in which he claimed that the People's Party Center area was secured and that police would not be permitted to enter the area.

The commercial media played up Duncantell's statements as representative of the position of People's Party II. The publicity Duncantell received may have further antagonized the racist Houston police and lent credibility to their claim that they stationed themselves on Dowling Street Sunday night to prevent a disturbance.

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"A Trap," Says Hope

The Voice of Hope, a black community newspaper published in Houston's Fourth Ward, has published an editorial stating that Carl Hampton's death was a police conspiracy, possibly involving two well-known local black militants.

The Aug. 1 issue, which hit the streets as we were going to press, proclaims: "Several things occurred along the 2800 block of Dowling Street which clearly indicate that elaborate plans were made to 'efficiently' snuff out the life of the youthful, dynamic leader of Peoples Party II."

Voice of Hope points out several peculiarities about that evening: the usual traffic of prostitutes was absent from the street; several business, including Church's Fried Chicken across the street, closed early; and the usual Sunday night services at St. John's Church were not held. It was from the roof or interior of St. John's Church that Carl was shot.

But, according to *Hope*, "Arranging to have the street deserted...was only part of the scheme. What was still needed was somebody or somebodies to lead Carl Hampton into the trap."

One suspect, according to *Hope*, is Willie "Ice

Man" Ruid who "attempted to form a Black Panther chapter in Houston about one year ago, is rumored to be a long-time employee of 'the man.' He is reported to be highly suspected by Blacks in several major cities across the country."

The other suspect is Oside Duncantell. Duncantell was fired from his job with the local poverty program after promising to the local news media to off ten pigs for every black person murdered by the Houston police. "He also appeared before City Council and asserted that an eight-block area in Third Ward was occupied and off-limits to police."

According to the *Hope* editorial, "The situation is far too critical to have people who shock and give cause the death of those who are sincerely fighting for freedom for Black people. It is said that either Ruid or Duncantell or both led Carl Hampton down Dowling Street to the spot where he was fatally wounded. It is also reported that Duncantell and Ruid were observed leaving Dowling Street together, after Hampton had been shot."

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Remember Carl Get It Together

RALLY

Sunday, August 2, 4 p.m.
Emancipation Park
Elgin at Dowling

COALITION FOR THE DEFENSE OF PPII

SPEAKERS

James Aron, PPII
Yolanda Birdwell, MAYO
Bartee Haile, JBRL
Gene Locke, AABL
Maggie Hicks, PPII
and others

Cont. from 3

Carl was obviously critical of this statement and he reiterated the Party's position on the question of police in the black community. "If police act like police, we ain't going to bother them, we're going to go along with our work. When they start bothering us, it's going to be a different story. . . . If we're going to have police in our community, then they're going to act like police and protect the people; if not, they're not going to be in the community, that's all."

Carl was also concerned about the rumors spread by police about the Party, particularly the one that accused People's Party of putting little children out in front of the Center with guns. Carl said that this was just untrue. We ourselves had been by the Center several times during the week and never saw any children with guns.

Carl emphasized again and again that People's Party was not about to provoke a confrontation with the police, that the main business of the Party was to provide needed services for the black community people, from free breakfast for children programs to medical clinics to community control of police to the cooling of potential riot situations.

A potential riot situation did exist Thursday, July 23 in the area, Carl said. The community was getting frustrated, and People's Party organized a discussion to cool things down. The organization has maintained that riots are futile and self-defeating, that they result only in needless deaths.

Carl articulated his attitude towards self-defense, violence and the police pretty well in a statement he made Friday, July 17, the night of the first significant instance of police harassment of the Party headquarters. The statement lays out what happened that night, and it also clarifies what the Party does in such a situation.

"Basically, what happened is that a brother was standing in front of the office selling the Panther paper to cars passing by. Two patrolmen came by and told the brother, they asked him what we're doing selling those papers? The brother told them that he was selling them for People's Party.

"And by that time I walked out (of his car; Carl was just arriving at the center) and I asked the police officers, why was they harassing the brother, since he had a constitutional right to sell the paper. When I asked this policeman here, he got pissed off and he jumped out of his car. And he asked me, well, who am I? And at that time I was wearing a .45 revolver, you know, in a shoulder holster, and he looked at the gun and he asked me, well, what was I doing with that gun, you know?

"So I told him that I wasn't breaking any law. So he started coming toward me like he was going to grab me and get my gun or whip my ass or do something, so I stepped back and he went for his gun and I went at my gun and we were just at a stand-off. So then another brother got his shit and came out and told him that if he shot me he was going to get his ass blown away.

"The pig's partner was in the car and he called other pigs and it seemed like it was planned because it didn't take the pigs three minutes to get here. Sergeants here, lieutenants here, special cats who are experts, rifle experts. . . . you know they had everything.

"So they had to have this planned from the very beginning when they started harassing the cat. And this is all that went down, we defended ourselves. We told them that we would defend ourselves. So many people mobilized that, you know, they split. Some brother out there finally talked them into leaving.

"No law was broken, we didn't have any illegal weapons in here, just a brother out trying to sell papers for the organization and got harassed by the police. We said and we'll say again, if police act like police, we ain't going to bother them, we going to go along with our work. Dig? When they start bothering us, it's going to be a different story. We not going to let them ride peacefully in our community and continue to kick our ass. Because that's like giving them permission to kick our ass. . . . well, we're saying no more kicking our ass. If we're going to have police in our community, then they're going to act like police and protect the people, if not, they're not going to be in the community, that's all.

"These pigs were out there smiling and happy, they try to provoke you, this pig was going to shoot me. He went at his gun to shoot me. And there was 10 or 11 people, hell, there was 30 or 40 people who saw what was happening, from Church's Chicken, from a bus that was passing by. All a person have to do, well, there'd be a lot of witnesses to this thing, and he went at his gun first and I just protected myself, that's all that happened, I don't know whether they'll come back tonight or not. But if they do, like I say, we haven't broken any law so legally we're not going anywhere."

What Do We Do Now?

So this is the People's Party II. Its purpose has been simple, honest and totally revolutionary. Serve the people. Educate the people. Arm the people for their own self-defense, defense against a domestic military that has oppressed and murdered

millions of black people in Amerika for centuries.

What could be more reasonable and necessary? Yet, what could be more threatening to the rulers of this country, who fear the power of the people more than anything? Even when that power is just budding, as it is in Houston.

This is why Carl was killed. The pigs acted fast, in an attempt to destroy the bud before it blossomed.

It was a hard thing to realize early Monday morning that Carl was dead. It still is. But his death came as no big surprise to many of us. Carl himself knew it was coming, and soon. He just felt that the thing he was building transcended the importance of his personal security.

People's power is budding and blossoming all over this country, all over the world — in Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia, in Latin America, in downtrodden nations all over the world.

And when American imperialism tries to pick off the buds and blossoms, new ones will grow back. The people are perennial.

That's nice inspiration, maybe. But we should have the good sense to realize that the struggle won't be as gentle as the blooming of a flower. The war of the poor people of the world against the American Leviathan is now and will continue to be the most important, the most difficult and the bloodiest in history. Amerika will not relinquish control without a deadly fight.

Carl's death and the events of Sunday night have taught many of us some very sobering lessons. And I personally have been even more impressed with the seriousness of the whole thing in the process of writing this article.

You know, we really have a movement in this city and it's happened in little more than a year. Before that there was nothing, virtually nothing. It should be clear by now that the power structure in Houston doesn't want us around — any of us, black, brown or white. And don't doubt for a minute that the Houston pigs are ready and willing to kill any or all of us.

Right now the police are continuing to harass our people. Whirlpigs fly over our houses and offices daily. A number of movement organizations, including Space City I, have been under police surveillance.

If there was ever a time to get serious, it's now. If there was ever a time to get together, to suspend our ideological differences for a while, it's now. That does not mean that individuals or organizations need or should compromise their organizing style, or suddenly desert their constituencies. But we need to re-recognize our common struggle, if any of us are to long continue in that

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Peoples Party Rally, Wed., July 22. Photo by Cam Duncan

ORGANIZATIONS JOIN TO DEFEND PEOPLE'S PARTY II

Several Houston radical and liberal groups have joined together to form a Coalition for the Defense of People's Party II. The coalition has issued a statement claiming that Carl Hampton's slaying was a set-up, that People's Party members and supporters did not shoot first and that Hampton was singled out for assassination.

A rally is scheduled for 4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 2, at Emancipation Park, Elgin and Dowling, across the street from Peoples Party II headquarters.

As we go to press, the following groups have joined the coalition: Peoples Party II, Mexican-American Youth Organization, UH MAYO, John Brown Revolutionary League, Space City Collective, Houston Welfare Rights Organization, Cooperative High School Independent Press Service, Texas Southern University student body, UH Committee for a

Human Environment, UH Young Democrats, UH Young Socialist All men's Liberation Front, Houston Women's Liberation Study Group, International Party of Houston.

Another coalition, composed entirely of black groups including Africans for Black Liberation, Hope Development, Urban League, Harris Council of Organizations and NAACP, has formed to protest the murder of Hampton.

The group is demanding the firing of Police Chief Herman Short. It is organizing a boycott of downtown stores.

Wednesday evening, July 29, the Houston Welfare Rights Organization held a rally and expressed militant solidarity with Peoples Party II.

and another murder...

Two Houston police patrolmen vamped on the black community again Tuesday, July 28. This time they didn't even get the man they were looking for.

The cops spotted Archie Sayles of Brazoria, Texas walking down the street near the intersection of Scott and Holman. They thought that he resembled a suspect in a forgery case, and they tried to stop him on the street.

Sayles ran into a cafe, and tried to run out the back door. One cop ran through the front door and shot Sayles. Sayles then ran out the back door and was shot by the other pig.

Both patrolmen claim that Sayles was carrying a gun. Witnesses to the shooting, however, did not see Sayles with a gun.

The two cops were W.E. Reed, 25, and Paul Michna, 23.

TRAP...

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Because of their "highly questionable behavior," says *Hope*, they shouldn't be trusted. "Each of these characters have clearly demonstrated that he is either a damn fool or a pimp for the 'man', or both."

The Voice of Hope is published by Rev. Earl Allen, who is co-chairman of the Black Coalition, an amalgam of mostly moderate black groups who have been meeting in protest of Carl Hampton's killing.

What Now ...

Cont. from previous page

struggle at all.

Bartee Haile told KPFT radio Monday, July 27, "I feel that the movement in the city of Houston has to at this point fight for its life. And that means by any means necessary. John Brown will not be leaving this city. I'm sure People's Party will not be run out of town. I'm sure MAYO and other people won't. So at this point we must be prepared to fight for our lives. And it is a war."

"If people ask what am I for, I'm advocating our survival and getting the truth to the people. And more of us will be shot and more of us will be killed. But we *must go on*."

People's Party II may be having a hard go for a while. We can't let People's Party die as a result of Carl's death. We can't let things fizzle out the way they did after Lee Otis was put away. Anyone in this city who claims to be in the movement has to give People's Party time, money and if necessary, armed support. And our support for the Party must be total and unequivocal.

One thing that really hit me, something I have known for years but hadn't thought much about lately, is that if I, if we, don't live our lives fighting this American monster that killed Carl, that is killing people all over this world, that is destroying the planet, that is twisting people's minds — well, then our lives aren't worth shit.

The whole world is watching, the whole world is watching.



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