

A BLACK MILITANT SLAIN IN HOUSTON

Police and Negroes Trade Gunfire, Wounding Four— Site of Shooting Tense

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HOUSTON, July 27—Carl Hampton, the 21-year-old leader of a black militant organization in Houston, was fatally shot by the police early this morning in an exchange of gunfire that left four other persons wounded.

Mr. Hampton, chairman of the Peoples Party 2, a group similar to the Black Panther party, died in a hospital after having been hit by a policeman's bullet that was fired from atop a church.

Late today, about 200 young Negroes milled in crowds along Dowling Street in the southeast section, near the site of the gunfight, which began last night following a rally by the militant blacks. The rally had been called to protest the arrests of two Negro youths.

Urged to Go Home

Small-business men in the black ghetto were jeered today

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couldn't see us. They thought it was their snipers on top of that church, but it wasn't."

After exchanging gunfire with followers of Mr. Hampton for several minutes, the police swept through the area in massive numbers. Fifty - two Negroes, many of them Peoples Party members, were jailed. Most were charged with entering but a few were being held for carrying firearms.

The confrontation with the police had been building since

Peoples Party was formed seven months ago. On July 17, a crowd of young Negroes with drawn weapons faced the police for almost an hour outside the party headquarters, two miles from downtown Houston. No shots were fired in that incident and the police withdrew without making any arrests.

Last week, Ovide Duncantell, a former antipoverty worker, told the Houston City Council that black militants had "secured" the 2800 block of Dowling Street and that policemen who ventured into the area would be shot.

At the Scene

At the beginning of last night's incident, Mr. Duncantell was at the scene but left before the shooting began.

"Duncantell is all mouth and heels," a police sergeant said. "The first time a shot is fired he has to run."

In reply to last week's apparent challenge from the black militants, Police Chief Herman Short had said that the 1,800-member Houston Police Department could not accept the situation as described by Mr. Duncantell.

"There's no place in Houston that the police cannot and will not go," Chief Short had said. Houston, a city of 1.25 million population, covers about 600 square miles.

The newest incident began about 6 P.M., when two policemen met a 19-year-old youth and a 15-year-old boy, both Negroes, who were carrying weapons in the block behind the Peoples Party headquarters.

The policemen reported today that, when they tried to stop the two, the youth pointed a pistol at them and then fled into a church nearby. Three men attending Sunday night worship services disarmed the youth and turned him over to the police.

The 15-year-old boy, who had a shotgun, surrendered his weapon, the police said, saying that he had been told that policemen were coming to shoot Negroes and that a large crowd of armed black men

were in the Peoples Party headquarters. The rally began after the arrests.

The police moved into the area in force, apparently to search the headquarters.

Firing From Church

About 10 P.M., two members of the Criminal Intelligence Division of the Police Department climbed atop the St. John Baptist Church, a three-story structure that overlooks Dowling Street.

Chief Short said that four shots had been fired at the police before the men atop the church fired themselves.

"The Police Department made every effort to prevent this," Chief Short said. "We made it quite plain we will not tolerate lawlessness of this type. I think it has been made amply clear to all the citizens of this city what these people intended to do."

"Duncantell in his own words before the City Council claimed the Peoples Party had taken over the area and intended to hold it. Their people appeared in public with shotguns and rifles in a threatening manner."

J. O. Norris, one of the policemen stationed atop St. John Church, said that he and his partner had fired at two men who were shooting at them from the sidewalk.

Member of S.D.S.

One of these was apparently Mr. Hampton; the other, a white man, Roy B. Haile Jr., 24, who was identified by the police as a member of the Students for a Democratic Society.

Mr. Hampton, who was hit in the abdomen, was taken to Ben Taub Hospital where he died before dawn. Mr. Haile, taken to the same hospital, was listed as being in fair condition.

Three other Negroes, who, according to the police, came from inside the Peoples Party headquarters, were also wounded and retreated to the building.

One of those injured was Gregory Clarke, a 22-year-old Airman First Class on leave from Air Force duty in Germany. The police said that Airman Clarke might have been a bystander.

Another of those wounded was Johnny Coward, 19, who had accused the police of almost beating him to death last summer after he was arrested. He lost an eye in the beating.

Two policemen were indicted for aggravated assault in Mr. Coward's beating, but a state judge dismissed the charges last week at the request of the prosecutor, who said there was not sufficient evidence to convict.

The third wounded Negro was identified as Fred Sparkman Jr., 23.

Statement by the Mayor

After last night's gun battle ended about 3 A.M., two police helicopters played searchlights on the Peoples Party headquarters and policemen raised it. The Police Department said that several firearms and a quantity of ammunition had been confiscated. The occupants of the building fled through a rear opening in the brick building before the police came in, police officials said.

Mayor Louie Welch, vacationing in Europe, sent a statement from Switzerland that said:

"I am sorry that an incident such as this has occurred but I am pleased by the restraint which the police have shown over the past two weeks as the situation built up. From intelligence reports I received before leaving and from those relayed to me while traveling, it was obviously a matter of time before these revolutionaries would go too far and leave the police no alternative but to move in."

Although Peoples Party was known in the Negro community as a "Black Panther" organization, the Police Department said it did not consider it to be one. "That was the reputation they were trying to build up," a police spokesman said.

List of Demands

The organization's demands include black juries and judges for Negroes charged with crimes; reparations from whites for past mistreatment; freedom for all jailed Negroes; exemption of Negroes from military service and decent housing and jobs for blacks.

The Peoples Party and black leaders in Houston have repeatedly accused Police Chief Short and the Houston Police Department of police brutality.

Friends said that Mr. Hampton, the slain party leader, was not related to Fred Hampton, the Black Panther leader who was killed in a police raid in Chicago last December.