

'Bama Cops Slay Former Preacher

BIRMINGHAM, (ANP)—Police bullets last Saturday morning, June 5, cut down a 53-year-old retired Baptist minister who dug coal for a living to ring up the seventh Negro citizen killed by police in the Birmingham area within 70 days. Policemen have now killed a Negro every 10 days in Jefferson County.

The latest victim was the Rev. C. L. Butler, age about 53, two years ago pastored the First Baptist church of Gary-Ensley. He worked in the Edgewater Coal mine and lived on Route 6 in the community known as Capstown. He has 13 children, the oldest over 30 years.

But the story carried in the Birmingham News, June 5, described the victim as a "young Negro" and charged that he was killed in the presence of four officers after he "drew a pistol" when the officers sought to investigate a complaint that he had been "molesting a young Edgewater girl."

Puru Butler, brother of the slain minister, said that Rev. Butler never in his life carried a pistol. He further asserted that he did not know the facts in his brother's death. The NAACP said that it could not furnish any facts but that a member of its executive committee had been conducting an investigation. The slain man's brother is an Ensley barber.

The account of the tragedy told by Chief Deputy Clyde W. Morris of the Bessemer Cut-Off said that after several complaints had been received at the office that a man had been hanging around the girl's home several mornings molesting her, four officers were dispatched to investigate. They went to the girl's home, Deputy Morris' account said, and about 6 a. m. the minister appeared. He said that when the officers sought to question the minister, "the Negro drew a pistol. The Negro was then shot," the account reported in the NEWS said.

The NEWS added: "Officers pres-

ent at the shooting were Sheriff's Deputies Robert Saunders and J. W. Thompson from Bessemer and Special Officers Paul Thomas and J. W. Vanderford, of Edgewater."