

Cuban exile leader murdered

By Wendy Lin
Staff Writer

A leader of a moderate group of Cuban exiles was shot to death near his Union City home early yesterday, apparently a victim of an escalating campaign of violence by right-wing exile factions.

Jose Negrin, an activist in a group negotiating for the release of political prisoners in Cuba, was shot five times as he entered his car at 711 10th St., police said. Negrin was killed in full view of his 12-year-old son, Richard.

Men who said they were members of a militant group of Cuban exiles, Omega Seven, claimed responsibility for the slaying of Negrin in calls made to The Associated Press and United Press International late yesterday. "We will contin-

ue with these executions until we have eliminated all the traitors living in this country," one caller said.

Negrin, who had received numerous death threats and was a target of bombings earlier this year, was shot three times in the head and twice in the body with a semiautomatic weapon by two masked gunmen in a silver car, police said. He was pronounced dead at Riverside General Hospital in Secaucus shortly after 10 a.m.

The slaying was apparently the latest foray in the battle between Cuban moderates who favor a rapprochement with their homeland and militant groups committed to toppling the 20-year-old Castro regime.

See MODERATE, Page A-4



Jose Negrin

Moderate Cuban exile leader slain

FROM PAGE A-1

Negrin, 37, was a member of the Committee of 75, a group of Cuban exiles who traveled to Havana in December 1978 to negotiate the release of political prisoners with Cuban officials, including Premier Fidel Castro. It was the first time the Cuban leader had received a party of exiles.

In March, Omega Seven claimed responsibility for the bombing of Negrin's New Jersey Cuban Social Club in Weehawken, an organization that seeks to reunite Cuban families; the Almasen Farmacia in Union City, a group that sends medical supplies to Cuba; and a Trans World Airlines jet bound for Los Angeles. The jet bombing injured four baggage handlers.

Sources in the Union City Cuban community said in March that the main objective of the attack on the Cuban Social Club was to silence Negrin, coordinator of the club.

"They're not going to close me down," said Negrin after the bombings.

He was the second member of the Committee of 75 killed this year. Committee member Carlos Muniz, a travel agent, was shot to death last May in San Juan, Puerto Rico, while he was arranging a trip to Cuba.

The day after Muniz's death, Commando Zero, a Cuban exile group, took credit for his killings. "One down," said a voice in a call to a Miami newspaper, "sev-

enty-four to go."

Both Negrin and Muniz were part of a growing group of moderates whose animosity toward the Castro regime has decreased in recent years as longing for old friends and family on the island has grown.

Their change in attitude has been met with violence from the right-wing, militant anti-Castro faction. The terrorists' principal centers of operation are Puerto Rico, Miami, and the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area. In those areas, they have claimed responsibility during the past two decades for hundreds of bombings, seven assassinations, and thousands of acts of harassment.

In the United States, Union City's community of 38,000 Cubans is second in size only to Miami's exile population. Union City is believed to be the center of operations for Omega Seven, a group of about 20 rightists.

Omega Seven's members, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) suspects, include many highly visible businessmen. Sources knowledgeable about the Union City Cuban community say that terrorist leader Orlando Bosch and several Bay of Pigs veterans set up the Omega Seven and Commando Zero terrorist organizations. Their combined strength is estimated at between 30 and 40. Omega Seven was begun in New Jersey, FBI sources believe, during a visit by Bosch in 1976.