

THE MOVE 9: DELBERT ORR AFRICA , WILLIAM PHILIPS AFRICA , EDWARD GOODMAN AFRICA, CHARLES SIMS AFRICA, MICHAEL DAVIS AFRICA, DEBBIE SIMS AFRICA, JANINE PHILIPS AFRICA, JANET HOLLOWAY AFRICA, AND MERLE AFRICA

Over many years Philadelphia's power structure earned itself a reputation for brutal treatment of radical and revolutionary Black movements. In 1966 the Philadelphia police, under their notorious chief Frank Rizzo, raided four meeting places of the civil rights organization SNCC, planting dynamite in one of the locations to justify further repression. In 1970 Rizzo's men raided three offices of the Black Panther Party. Many people still remember with anger how Philly police beat the arrested Panthers, then forced them to strip off their clothes and line up naked in public.

In the 1970s then-Mayor Rizzo attacked a new organization, MOVE, that was emerging from Philadelphia's Black community. MOVE refused to respect present-day America and its prevailing values. Its members openly defied official power and tirelessly preached against a system that they considered utterly corrupt, enslaving, and destructive of life on this planet, particularly through the use of modern technology. When threatened and confronted by the authorities, they did not back down. MOVE has always exposed the rulers of this society for the liars, racists and murderers that they are.

1978: Confrontations escalated between MOVE and the Philadelphia power structure. MOVE members were constantly arrested and harassed. In late 1977 the police launched a siege of the MOVE house in the neighborhood called Powelton Village. After ten months of continuous conflict, 600 police attacked MOVE's house. Gunfire erupted. MOVE members were brutalized and arrested.

On August 8, 1978 at about five in the morning, MOVE members awoke by unfamiliar sounds and voices. Several hundred police officers had surrounded their Powelton Village home in an attempt to permanently evict the MOVE from their home. By the time MOVE members gathered children and pets into the basement, the police had already begun smashing windows and yelling over a loud speaker. Before they knew it, water was coming through the holes where the windows used to be. The police then began shooting tear gas and bullets into the MOVE home. The police (who had surrounded the house) were firing into it while telling MOVE members to come out. When MOVE members started to surrender, a Philly police officer had been shot (from above and behind) and killed.

All five MOVE men were beaten badly, several times, but only Delbert's beating was caught on camera. There were 7 women and 5 men arrested. Four MOVE women and five MOVE men were convicted and sentenced to 30-100 years each. None of the MOVE 9 had weapons charges and witnesses testified that the only people with weapons were the cops.

In 1981 the authorities attacked Mumia Abu-Jamal, a well respected radio reporter and MOVE supporter. Mumia was shot, beaten, and framed for murder by the police.

In the face of all this repression, MOVE continued to fight to free Mumia and its imprisoned family members, the "MOVE 9." After MOVE moved into a new house on Osage Avenue, police agents worked with conservative elements in the surrounding community to create a new confrontation with MOVE.

The Bombing in West Philly: By dawn, May 13, 1985, after months of planning, hundreds of police armed with automatic weapons had surrounded the MOVE house at 6221 Osage. Police Commissioner Sambor shouted through a bullhorn: "Attention, MOVE! This is America! You have to abide by the laws of the United States." During the hours that followed, the police pounded the MOVE house with thousands of bullets. Then, at 5:25 in the early evening, a police helicopter dropped a bomb onto MOVE's roof---packed with C-4 military explosive provided by the FBI. The explosion ignited a firestorm. The MOVE house burned, and flames spread to the surrounding row houses. Firefighters were ordered to let the fire burn.

The surrounding block of homes--61 houses in all--were destroyed. Over 200 people were suddenly homeless. It was a hard lesson for neighborhood residents who had collaborated with the police against MOVE.

Only two MOVE family members survived: Ramona Africa, age 30, and Birdie Africa, age 13. Intense police sniper fire stopped the other MOVE members from escaping. Several were shot. Those forced back in the building were incinerated.

The MOVE 9 have been in prison since 1978 and have been forced to watch their loved ones being attacked by the state.

On March 13, 1998, Merle Africa died in prison under questionable circumstances.

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**Please do what you can to spread the word to help the surviving MOVE prisoners get out and get Mumia off of death row!**