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Who are the MOVE 9?

Marpessa Kupendua

7 December 1997

The MOVE 9 are innocent men and women who have been in prison since 1978, following a massive police assault on MOVE Headquarters in Powelton Village, Philadelphia (seven years before the gov't dropped a bomb on MOVE, killing 11 people, including 5 children).

MOVE's belief is in Life. MOVE members follow the teachings of their founder, *JOHN AFRICA*. MOVE members have an uncompromising commitment to their belief. It is that commitment which makes them a strong, unified family despite years of hardship.

The August 8, 1978 assault on MOVE was a major military operation enacted by the Philadelphia Police Dept. under the direction of then-mayor Frank Rizzo. The assault followed years of police brutality against MOVE, Rizzo's reputation for racism and abuse of citizens is well documented.

During the assault, heavy equipment was used to tear down barricades surrounding the house, and police moved in while SWAT teams staked out every possible exit. MOVE members retreated to the basement, where they withstood fire hoses and water deluge guns. As the basement flooded, they held children and dogs above the rising water.

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<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/117.html>

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Suddenly shots rang out and bullets immediately filled the air as police throughout the area opened fire. Officer James Ramp was struck and killed by a single bullet.

MOVE adults came out of the house carrying their children through clouds of tear gas and were immediately taken into custody. MOVE never fired any shots and no MOVE members were arrested with any weapons. All were viciously beaten. TV cameras filmed police brutally beating and kicking Delbert Africa (Three of the four police were brought to trial and *ACQUITTED* despite irrefutable photographic evidence). The city bulldozed and leveled the house *immediately* that day, thereby destroying evidence.

The MOVE 9 were sentenced to 30-100 years *EACH* allegedly for the death of Officer James Ramp. Autopsy reports show *clearly* that the bullet that hit Ramp travelled in a *downward* direction, MOVE members were in the basement of their house *below* the street making it ballistically impossible for them to have fired the shot.

In reality, the MOVE 9 were sentenced *because* they were MOVE members. The murder charges were preposterous. Twelve adults were arrested; among them were two MOVE sympathizers who disavowed MOVE and were released. At a preliminary hearing, the judge told one, "There has been no evidence that you are a MOVE member" and let her go free. (Consuewella Dotson refused to disavow MOVE; she was tried separately and sentenced to 10-20 years. She was paroled in 1994 following steady public pressure.) (NOTE: Consuewella Doston Africa's two daughters were among the children murdered by the gov't bombing of MOVE people May 13, 1985.)

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