

MOVE



a couple streets away from the squat was osage avenue, and you could walk by all the wreckage, the burnt up buildings, the lot wherethe MOVE house use to stand. it's pretty hard to believe what happened there - hew the cops came on may 13, 1985, and did their best to destroy MOVE. they shot over 10,000 rounds of ammunition into the house - usis, m-16's, shot guns, automatics, a 20mm anti-tank gun. flooded the place with fire truck hoses, flooded the place with tear gas. tried to blast through the walls wick military explosives, and when none of that worked, they went up in a helicopter and dropped a bomb on the house. stood by while the whole block burned to the ground. and when MOVE members did try to leave the house, they were shot at. 8 adults and 5 kids died. the medical examiners office helped cover it all up - leaving the bodys unrefridgerated. and all the tests were delayed so everything was inconclusive - no one knew the cause of death, no one could be blamed. years later when there was a reexamination, and i guess they must have dug the bodys up, there were bullet fragments found in the bodies that had never been reported. there were limbs that had been cut off and were missing. john africa, the leader of MOVE, had his head cut off - it wasn't burried with him.

i don't really understand exactly what MOVE's politics were or why the phili police force was so dead set on their obliteration. MOVE started in the '70's as a sort of revolutionary, urban, back to nature group, with a really strong focus on family and community, natural life styles and a reverance for all life. they were trying to wake people up - show how unjust and oppressive this society is - get people on the move, get people off their asses, get people fighting to be free.

they had an in your face, loud, direct style - and held protests at pet shops, political rallies and media offices. they didnt advocate violence, but believed in self defence. and the phili police force gave them plenty of reasons to need to defend themselves.

philadelphia cops had a national reputation for racism and brutality. and when MOVE started speaking out against the police force and the hypocrisy of the judicaal system - holding demes that





were so successful, other community groups started asking MOVE for help in planning demos in their neighborhoods - when that happened the cops began making a real effort to arrest MOVE members as often as possible.

the cops brutality toward MOVE wasn't confined to breaking up demos, they'd harrass them randomly on the street, like in '74 they stopped 2 pregnant MOVE women who were walking to the store, stopped them and questioned them and beat them up, slamming one stomach first into the cop car, stuck them in jail overnight without water or food, both women miscarried.

in '75 they arrested another pregnant MOVE woman, dragged her from the holding cell, held her spread-eagle and kicked her in the stomach and crotch. she miscarried too.

in '76 the cops came to the MOVE house one time when people were being noisy or something, they dragged one guy off the porch and beat him so bad they broke a night stick in half over his head, they pushed this one woman to the ground with her baby in her arms, and stomped on her until she was nearly unconscious and the baby was dead. later the cops said they had never been to the house that night, they said the broken night stick, which had been left there, was stolen property, and they refused to admit the baby even existed - since it had been born at home and had no birthcertificate no legal documentation.

this was just some of the shit that happened. by '76 there were hundreds of MOVE cases in the philadelphia court system. MOVE defended themselves and fought a pretty successful battle, but the police harrassment kept getting worse and worse, and MOVE started worrying that the same kind of campaign that was waged against the Black Panthers would be waged against them, they put boards over their windows, stood on their porch holding guns, (which is legal by the way) and staged a major demonstration from their house, calling for the release of their political prisoners and an end to police harrassment.





police set up a 24 hour watch around the MOVE house, and eventually sealed off a four block area around the house in an attempt to starve MOVE members out - the justification was that there were supposedly people inside who had warrants out and hadn't shown up for court. after 2 months of this blockade, they negotiated, ended the barricade searched the house, and found nothing incriminating. MOVE was suppose to leave the house, and the city was suppose to help them find a new place to live within 90 days.

after 90 days, MOVE was still in the house and the cops came in full force and ordered them to surrender. the cops bulldozed the porch off. MOVE barricaded themselves into the basement. the cops pried the basement windows off and turned on the water cannons.

i've seen the police movie footage of people crawling out the basement windows, soaked with children in their arms. there were gunshots fired, cops say it came from the MOVE house, but most other witnesses say it came from across the street. a cop was killed. police opened fire. tear gas was thrown into the house and more people poured out. there's footage of this one guy coming out of the house with his hands up over his head, and getting beat up so badly - kicked full force in the head. kicked so hard his body raises up off the sidewalk, dragged by his hair, hit with the butt of a gun.

the cop that

was killed had been shot in the back of the neck, the bullet entering his body at a downward angle. it seems pretty unlikely that the bullet could have come from the MOVE house, since they were all in the basement - couldn't have shot from that angle at all. but 9 MOVE members were pronounced guilty for the thing. given 30 to 100 years in jail. no cops or officials were ever indicted for any of this shit and even the 1985 bombing wasn't considered excessive force. the federal grand jury declared that civil rights hadn't been violated, and there are still 5 MOVE members in prison.

if you want more info you can write to move at: pob 19709, phili, pa. 19143. they've got a pamphlet, newsletter, movies

