

Officer Killed as Philadelphia Radicals Are Evicted: Dies in Hospital ...

By GREGORY JAYNES Special to The New York Times

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United Press International

A member of the Move group taking children out of house in Philadelphia after shootout with the police

Officer Killed as Philadelphia Radicals Are Evicted

By GREGORY JAYNES
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PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 8 — A policeman was shot to death and 18 other persons, 12 of them policemen and firemen, were injured here this morning as law enforcement officers stormed a barricaded house of self-styled revolutionaries with a bulldozer, fire hoses and tear gas.

A gun battle that lasted one full minute erupted at 8:14 A.M., roughly four hours after hundreds of police officers surrounded the house and demanded that members of a group that calls itself Move surrender. For more than 15 months, city authorities and Move members had been

at each other's throats — initially over health-code violations and later over weapons violations, their differences resulting in a long, tense siege during which the members holed up in the house and refused to come out.

The group had been under court order to vacate the house by last Wednesday.

Dies in Hospital

Officer James Ramp, who was 52 years old and a 23-year veteran on the Philadelphia force, was shot in the head and died in the emergency room of a local hospital shortly afterward. Seven other policemen were injured, two seriously, and five firemen were treated for minor injuries. One

Move member was shot in the arm, and others were treated for tear gas inhalation.

When the shooting ended, Mayor Frank L. Rizzo called the entire Move affair "amazing," a word the local press had employed heavily in describing how a tiny knot of radicals, never thought to number more than 30, had virtually held the authorities at bay for months.

Though the group's origins have never been satisfactorily explained — nor have members chosen to say what the name stands for — it first came to public atten-

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Firemen and policemen dived for cover in shootout with radical group that left one officer dead and several injured

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tion here seven years ago when members picketed the zoo and visiting circuses for "cruelty to caged animals." More than anything, members said, they were a "back to nature" movement.

Complaints From Neighbors

About two years ago, neighbors of the tumbledown, Victorian-style house that Move occupied on 33d Street in the Powelton Village section of West Philadelphia began to complain of noise and stench coming from the house. The complaints said human waste was dumped in the backyard and that a pack of dogs that Move kept as pets posed a public nuisance.

City health inspectors were refused admittance. On May 20, 1977, when inspectors once again tried to enter the house, the police said members shouted threats and displayed weapons. After that, the city set up 24 hours police surveillance while the members barricaded themselves inside.

The standoff lasted until last May 3, when the city, Move and a local court reached a 10-point agreement under which the group agreed to vacate the house within 90 days. The members, some of whom are black and some of whom are white and most of whom share the surname "Africa," also turned themselves in on charges of health code and weapons violations.

Last week, the court ordered deadline

to leave the house passed with members still on the premises. At that time, Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge G. Fred DiBona issued warrants for the members. Since then, three members were arrested away from the house.

Orders to Vacate

This morning, the authorities moved in. At 5:30 A.M., parked vehicles were towed out of the area. At 6:04 A.M., the first of several orders to vacate were made to the members through a bullhorn. At 6:14, a bulldozer, driven by a policeman in a blue riot helmet, knocked down a heavy wooden barricade built by Move members out in front of the house, as well as part of the porch. At 6:26, a cherry picker was used as a battering ram to punch out boarded-up windows to knock holes in the sides of the building.

Twice, thousands of gallons of water were blasted into the house through high pressure hoses. Children were heard screaming. Through a bullhorn of their own, Move members shouted, "Baby killers." At 8:14, according to Police Commissioner Joseph O'Neill, Move members fired four shots, the first shots fired. Then there was the gun battle.

Reporters across the street insisted that shots were fired from a sniper in a second-story window in a neighboring house, but police discounted the story, though nearby houses were searched.

Tear Gas Used

After the firing, tear gas was used to further hurry the surrender. Twelve adults were arrested and 11 children, ranging in ages from 18 months to 12 years, were taken from the building. None of the children was harmed.

All 12 adults were charged with one count of murder and lesser counts of aggravated assault and conspiracy. The Police Commissioner also said authorities are "actively seeking" seven other members.

Mayor Rizzo, at a news conference late in the day, called Move "an uncivilized foe we were forced to deal with with civilized rules." The Mayor also said, "There is no question that Move fired the first shot." The rest of the Mayor's remarks took the form of a harangue at reporters for "glorifying criminals" while "putting the police on the defensive. (One local television station this evening broadcast film taken this morning that showed several officers repeatedly kicking a Move member in the head.)

The police confiscated 15 weapons, including pistols, rifles and carbines, and 1,600 fired and unfired cartridges from the house. Then a wrecking crane leveled the structure, leaving a pile of rubble 14 feet high on the sycamore-lined street.

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Associated Press

A young girl ran out of the house screaming, "Don't shoot, don't shoot!"