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Policeman Dies; Separatists Charged

JACKSON, Miss., Aug. 19 (UPI) — A policeman wounded in a gun battle with members of a black separatist group died today and murder charges were filed against 11 Negroes.

The policeman, Lieut. W. L. Skinner, 36 years old, was an intelligence officer with the Jackson Police Department. The authorities said he died of head wounds early today.

An agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and another policeman were also wounded in the gun battle, which occurred early yesterday when policemen seeking a fugitive went to the building serving as the temporary headquarters of the Republic of New Africa, the black separatist group.

Preliminary Hearing Set

District Attorney Jack Travis of Hinds County announced the filing of formal charges of murder against the 11 blacks, all members of the group, who were arrested at two separate locations. He said the charges were filed under a Mississippi law providing that those who "aid, abet, assist or encourage a felony" are as "guilty as the principal."

The District Attorney said that the defendants would face a preliminary hearing on the charges tomorrow.

Mr. Travis said that his office would ask the Hinds County Circuit Court to convene a special grand jury on the first Monday in September to consider the charges. He said that the 11 blacks would be held without bond.

Patrolman Billy Crowell, 45, received a shoulder wound and William R. Stringer of the F.B.I. was wounded in the shootout. Both were reported to be in satisfactory condition.

The Republic of New Africa had announced plans to establish a new "black nation" in five Deep South states.

The defendants consist of eight men and three women. Seven members of the separatist goup involved in the shootout were arrested at the house th served as the group's headquarters. Four others were arrested at another house several blocks away.

None of the blacks were wounded in the 20-minute exchange of gunfire.

The 11 separatist were also charged with assaulting a Federal officer and held on $25,000 bond each on the Federal charges.

Mr. Travis said he had asked the Justice Department that "state court charges take precedence" over any Federal charge against the members of the group.

The Republic of New Africa has been the center of controversy here since it moved into Mississippi in the spring and announced that it had acquired a 20-acre site near Jackson for the "capital" of its black nation. A dispute over the property developed, however, and a state court injunction was issued to prohibit members of the group from coming into the site.