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As the marchers returned to Bel Air, Haitian SWAT units appeared. Journalists had to call the UN who were 30 yards behind the protestors when the SWAT unit emerged. Finally, UN troops arrive but appeared to be coordinating with their counterparts in the Haitian police SWAT unit. They seemed unconcerned that similar units have been responsible for murdering unarmed demonstrators on several occasions. *May 4, 2005*

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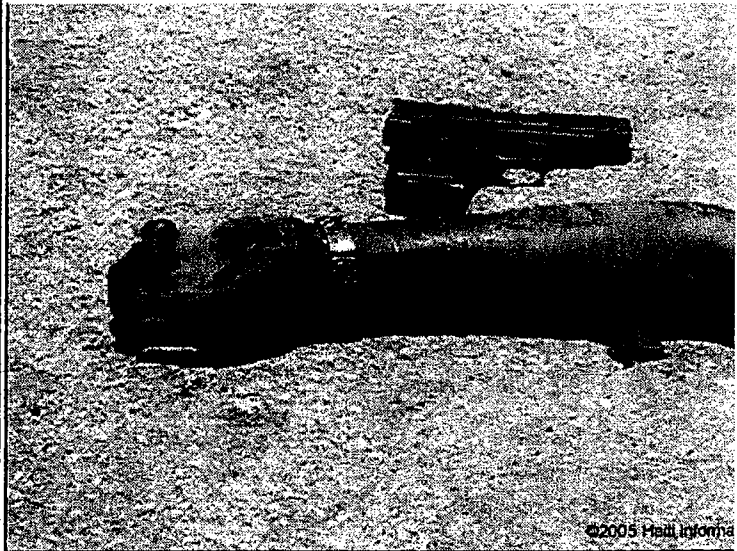
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(HIP) Port au Prince – The images of the killings by the U.S.-armed and U.N.-trained Police Nationale de Haiti (PNH) are stark and undeniable. Peaceful demonstrators slaughtered in cold-blood as the U.N. pontificates and postures to justify its role in legitimizing the coup in February 2004 against the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

On February 28, 2005, the first anniversary of the coup against the constitutional government, the PNH fired at unarmed demonstrators as the U.N. stood by. Video footage and photographs from that day show the U.N. was close enough to see the police open fire on peaceful demonstrators, yet unexplainably, not close enough to do anything about it.

Following the carnage of Feb. 28 the U.N. representatives from Chile and Brazil, Juan Gabriel Valdes and General Heleno Ribera, tell the world they will intervene to stop the police from shooting at peaceful demonstrations. The world believes the UN when they object to the killings by the police on Feb. 28 as the corporate media and their pundits begin to spin images of the impartial and dauntless humanitarian role the U.N. continues to play in Haiti. The UN bars the Haitian police from security duties during demonstrations the next week but finally cave in to objections raised by Justice Minister Bernard Gousse. Gousse claims that the limits placed on the police by the UN are illegal and usurp the rights of the Haitian state. The U.N.'s sound bites challenging the PNH for killings peaceful demonstrators were never taken seriously by the US-installed regime in Haiti. How could they be since the U.N. mission to "restore" democracy to Haiti has never resolved its own dysfunctions and contradictions? How can they move to challenge the brutality and abuses of the Haitian police when their mandate includes training and bolstering the very same forces? How could they challenge Gousse's assertion of the right of the Haitian police to kill demonstrators when their mandate is to protect the unpopular US-installed regime at all costs?

Valdes and General Ribera's promise to intervene to stop the PNH from killing unarmed demonstrators is tested when Lavalas organizes yet another massive demonstration on April 27, 2005. In the wake of the UN bowing down to Bernard Gousse's intervention asserting the policing rights of the PNH, the force strikes again on cue. An innocent bystander's leg was blown to bits by the PNH as he was leaving a local pharmacy in the vicinity of the demonstration after buying insulin for his ailing mother. After killing unarmed demonstrators the PNH then tries to plant guns



This is the deceitful image the Haitian police wanted the world to see after planting a handgun on the corpse of an unarmed demonstrator on April 27, 2005



Bodies of three victims gunned down by Haitian police on April 27, 2005. Note: there is no gun in the hand of the demonstrator on right as a police vehicle enters the frame

in the hands of the corpses. An anonymous journalist declared, "I filmed the dead bodies of demonstrators killed by the police. The police put a gun in the left hand of one of the corpses. After they saw me filming they asked me to come and film the gun in his hand. I couldn't believe it." An anonymous source close to the UN mission commented, "The attempts to cover-up these killings and the feeble justifications of the Haitian police are unbelievably stupid and transparent. The UN mission is well aware of the unacceptable pace of recruitment of former military into the Haitian police, as well as the parallel emergence of death squads within the institution."

Haitian police spokeswoman Gessy Cameau Coicou, who is by now widely ridiculed for always claiming that civilians killed by the Haitian police are all "bandits", declared that "only 2 persons were seriously injured during a gun battle with a police patrol" on April 27. She added the laughable notion that Lavalas activists who were killed "were not shot during a demonstration since police authorities had received no notice of a demonstration." Standing by her side to lend credence to the farce was Canadian UN-Civilian Police spokesperson Dan Moskaluk, who called the march an "unauthorized, illegal demonstration". Moskaluk at least had the decency to admit to finding five corpses despite the corroboration of nine killed after UN peacekeepers finally showed up on the scene. The truth is the march was announced for several days before it took place on radio stations throughout the capital. What Coicou and Moskaluk failed to disclose was that the courier with the official request for the permit to demonstrate on April 27 was beaten and arrested by the Haitian police when he tried to deliver it.

All of this leads to May 4, 2005 when yet another large demonstration by Lavalas takes place. The leaders of the demonstration were photographed and videotaped by the U.N. and a Haitian police officer wearing a UN blue helmet before they left the Aristide stronghold of Bel Air. After a brief and symbolic protest in front of the U.N. headquarters on Rue Pan-Americain (Avenue John Brown), the demonstration continued down the same street. At a certain point the U.N. forces stop and allow the protestors to continue without



Nearly 10,000 demonstrators hit the streets on May 4, 2005 demanding the return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide and freedom for political prisoners.



February 28 - Protesters flee as PNH fires into the crowd.

them for about 100 yards. Suddenly, the PNH appears with M-14 and M-16 military weapons and points them towards the crowd. Without the presence of a few press cameras and journalists to dissuade them, it is clear the police would have opened fire on the crowd. When questioned on camera, the U.N. military officers on the scene refused to answer questions and later dismissed the incident as yet another coincidence.

After the Lavalas demonstration on May 4, U.N. troops drive by as sharpshooters of a Haitian SWAT unit enter Bel Air with high-powered telescopic rifles. The U.N. leaves the scene as if it is "business as usual" as Haitian police began pointing their weapons, meant to kill specific targets, at residents of the neighborhood. The presence of a news camera makes them angry but keeps them from shooting at the population. Given that the UN and the international community have tolerated the abuses of the Haitian police thus far, journalists and photographers have to wonder how long it will be before they become victims of trigger-happy Haitian policemen or made deliberate targets? The presence of journalists naturally places constraints upon the behavior of the police and, if their reactions on May 4 are any indicator, they are not happy about it.

To date, no serious investigation of the Haitian police for shooting unarmed demonstrations or well-documented cases of murder sprees into poor neighborhoods of the capital, has been undertaken. The UN has done little more than make noise while not one single name of a policeman or SWAT team member who committed these acts has been made public. This can only send a message to the Haitian police that they have free reign to commit murder and tell tall-tales about it. They now assume the UN will keep supporting them by remaining silent because no one in the Haitian police is being held accountable. For many observers on the ground this gives the appearance that the UN mandate to "restore democracy" to Haiti is providing the police with cover to commit murder with impunity. In the absence of any public investigation it can certainly be argued this has been the reality thus far.

The UN relationship to the US-installed Latortue regime and the human rights



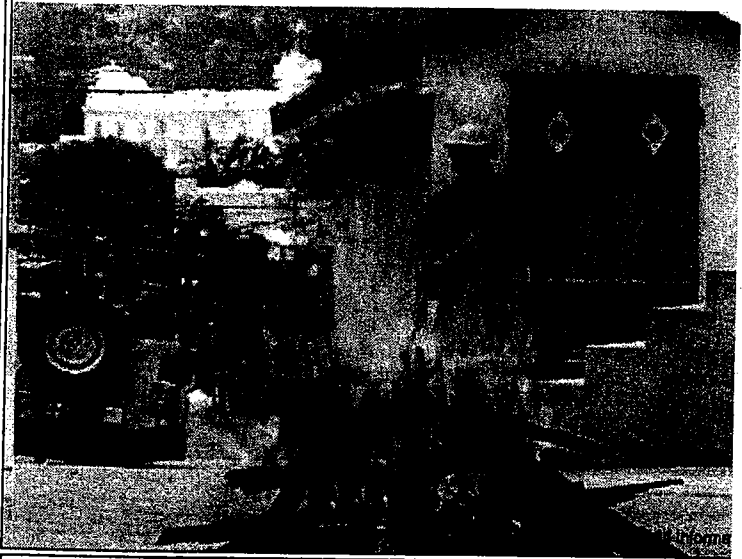
Before protestors leave from Bel Air on May 4 to go to UN headquarters on Rue Pan-Americaine, a cameraman with Chinese police unit takes video of the leadership of the march.



This participant in the May 4 march was shot in the head by US Marines on March 12, 2004. When asked how much they try to legitimize this coup, he replied, "Because no one is being held accountable, we voted for our president and what they are doing is immoral and wrong. We will not stop until our elected president returned!"

violations committed by the Haitian police has done little to inspire confidence for the much-touted elections scheduled to begin in October. Many people in Haiti are asking how the UN can seriously expect Lavalas candidates to participate in the next elections when they might expect the same treatment from the Haitian National Police during a campaign rally? How can the masses of poor Haitians who continue to support Lavalas despite more than 13 months of repression and brutality be expected to feel secure enough to register or cast their ballots in the next elections?

Putting the question of the legitimacy of the upcoming elections aside, the climate for change in coming years is bleak with a UN special mission that offers lofty words about elections and democracy but fails to hold the Haitian police accountable for documented human rights violations.



A Brazilian soldier stands behind symbolic bonfire started by Bel Air residents before the marchers assembled on May 4.

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