



*Tools to Confront Power with Power*

February 28, 2013

Members of Board of Trustees  
Office of Secretary of Board of Trustees  
City University of New York  
535 E. 80<sup>th</sup> Street, 3rd floor  
New York, NY 10075

Dear Board Members:

We are writing you with regard to a very serious issue that CUNY will be dealing with this year.

It has come to our attention that The Coca-Cola Company is seeking a CUNY-wide exclusive beverage contract. Given Coca-Cola's horrendous history and current record on racial discrimination, human rights abuses and environmental degradation, we hope you will deny Coca-Cola any such opportunity on CUNY campuses.

Right here in the New York City-Metro area, The Coca-Cola Company is currently embroiled in racial discrimination cases at two local bottling plants. Workers at these plants have been dubbed The Coke 16 by New York's *Daily News*. They have suffered from biased work assignments, unfair discipline and retaliation and a caustic work environment.

Coca-Cola's criminal rap sheet is long and I would urge you to visit [http://www.cocacola.com](#) for detailed information about Coca-Cola's record of racial discrimination and the conditions under which minority Coke workers must labor at these and other local Coca-Cola facilities.

Those of us who signed this letter have been terminated by The Coca-Cola Company for standing up to the constant abuse that we and other black and Latino workers endured for too long. We are attaching a leaflet, side 1 entitled: "Coca-Cola's Work Places Called 'Cesspools of Racial Discrimination' " and side 2 entitled: "Coca-Cola Victims Tell Their Stories & Fight Back." This flyer highlights the harmful impact that racial discrimination has had on our families and us.

We are aware that the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY is on record along with New York State United Teachers and the United Federation of Teachers to ban all Coke beverages from their union's facilities and functions.

These teachers' unions took this action because of the well-documented evidence that the Company has gone to extreme measures to hide and cover-up complicity in the systematic intimidation, torture and murder of union leaders working at their bottling plants in Colombia, which continues to this day.

Since taking that action, lawsuits have been filed charging Coke and its operations in Guatemala with complicity in murder, attempted murder and gang rape of family members of union leaders in efforts to stop their union activities. Human Rights Watch and a nationally-televised documentary in the UK highlighted Coca-Cola's sugar processor's use of illegal child labor in the dangerous harvesting of sugar cane in El Salvador. In India, the Company has devastated entire communities by depleting and polluting scarce water resources. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

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Coca-Cola's dismal record on human rights has been well-documented in the website, [www.KillerCoke.org](http://www.KillerCoke.org), and in numerous publications, television news programs, books like "Belching Out the Devil" by Mark Thomas and "The Coke Machine" by Michael Blanding and documentary films like "The Coca-Cola Case" which premiered in 2010 despite the threats of lawsuits from The Coca-Cola Company.

A new film, "[Coca-Cola et la formule secrète](#)" (Coca-Cola and the Secret Formula), premiered on French national television on January 8, as well as in Belgium and Switzerland. The film highlights a meeting of The Coke 16 in New York. Two million people watched the film in France — the largest audience during the past year at that hour.

As a result of Coca-Cola's human rights violations, colleges and universities have taken the lead in demanding justice. As a result of protests, large local campuses like Rutgers and SUNY Stony Brook took action to become Coke-free and ended their exclusive beverage contracts with Coca-Cola. Dozens of other campuses facing protests, such as DePaul and the University of California, Berkeley, have also ended exclusive contracts and cut ties with The Coca-Cola Company. At CUNY, CUNY School of Law, Queensborough Community College and CUNY's Joseph A. Murphy Institute ended their ties with Coke and removed vending machines and fountain service.

Beyond the Company's unethical behavior and horrible worldwide abuses, is the high price of these beverages, costs that serve as a tax on students from which comes the payments that the University receives from Coke. A bottle of Dasani (tap) water or a can of unhealthy Coca-Cola can be purchased much cheaper off-campus.

We hope you, the CUNY Board of Trustees, will "take a leadership role in the immediate community and across the nation," as the Mission Statement of The City College of New York states, and block any attempt by Coca-Cola to gain a beverage contract with CUNY.

In order to get our story out to CUNY's faculty, staff and students, we are being represented by [Corporate Campaign, Inc.](#)

We would like you to reply to us at [info@corporategamecampaign.org](mailto:info@corporategamecampaign.org) and let us know what the Board of Trustees position is regarding Coca-Cola's participation in any process to secure a CUNY-wide exclusive contract. Also, please contact Corporate Campaign if you have any questions or would like to meet.

Respectfully,

Yvette Butler

Freddy Estrada

Oral Forbes

Sandra Walker

Ian Hoffmann, Organizer  
Corporate Campaign, Inc.  
John Jay College Alumnus (AS '06, BA '09)

Ray Rogers, Director  
Corporate Campaign, Inc.