

“Public Eye Awards 2006”

Nomination form A

(for companies that have excelled in socially and environmentally irresponsible behaviour)

Nominated company or corporate group

Name: The Coca-Cola Company

Headquarters: Atlanta, Georgia U.S.A.

Turnover/net profit: 2004 annual revenue – \$21.96 billion
2004 net profit – \$4.84 billion

Branch of trade: Soft drinks

Number of employees: 49,000

CEO: Neville Isdel

Further information/data on the company/corporate group: see below and attached corporate profile

Nominated in the category:

Social rights (human and labour rights)

Reasons for the nomination:

General information on the case and characteristics of irresponsible corporate behaviour:

Coke paints itself as a wonderful corporation that produces amazing life enhancing products for the whole world to enjoy. In reality, however, the corporation is concerned with one thing, profit, and will stop at nothing to achieve this goal through universal expansion. Coke is an aggressive corporation that will jump at any opportunity to flog its products in its continuous push for global domination of the beverage industry. Examples from their dealings with the Nazis in Germany to shameless marketing to school children in the United States, to their theft of scarce water resources in India and its bottlers' involvement with the anti-union activities of Colombia's right-wing paramilitaries, show how Coke is not the clean generous and healthy corporation it claims to be. The company has proven, however, that the power of its brand recognition along with its constant aggressive marketing, public relations and advertising campaigns succeed in shielding its reputation from the spotlight.

The following excerpts from the Polaris Institute's corporate profile of the Coca-Cola Company show how this corporation consistently behaves irresponsibly. Despite the large number of allegations levied at Coke over its operations in Colombia and India, the company continues to arrogantly deny any wrongdoing. Please refer to the attached copy of the entire corporate profile for more detailed information on Coke's operations and political connections. All of the cases listed below make Coke a perfect nominee for a 2006 Public Eye Award (information for the organizers can be found at the end of this document):

Social track record

This section profiles three cases that demonstrate what Coke is capable of doing to protect its bottom line. Coke's complicity with the actions of right-wing paramilitary groups in Colombia along with massive ground water takings in India and their landmark racial discrimination settlement in the United States challenge the notion that this corporation practices a high standard of corporate social responsibility. Below are three specific cases followed by sections exposing Coke's labour and environmental track record.

Colombia: *"Our human rights as workers are systematically violated, with assassinations, disappearances, targeting, torture, exile, terrorism, mass sackings, and death threats as part of a bloody policy to eliminate the union and rob the workers' rights."* SINALTRAINAL statement, 18th May 2005

Coke has extensive bottling operations in Latin America. The Latin American market has long been lucrative for the corporation who has bottling agreements with over 20 bottlers throughout Mexico and South and Central America. Ten percent of Coke's \$21.96 billion 2004 revenue was generated from sales in Latin America (excluding Puerto Rico), while over 25 percent of their unit case volume is consumed in the region. The Latin American country pages on Coke's website outline the locations of each bottling company Coke uses in region with one exception: Colombia. The Colombia page states only that Coke has "bottler agreements with independent companies that own and operate bottling plants that manufacture and distribute Coca-Cola products", while the other country sites disclose the number and names of the bottling companies used by Coke to manufacture their products.²

That Coke would be reluctant to disclose who they have bottling agreements with in Colombia but not in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela may be related to the corporate links with its bottlers' associations and paramilitary groups in Colombia.

The US based Stop Killer Coke campaign group cites that since 1989, seven union leaders and one friendly plant manager employed at Coca-Cola bottling operations have been murdered by right wing paramilitary groups in Colombia. Hundreds of other Coke workers and their family members have been tortured, kidnapped and/or illegally detained by violent paramilitaries, often working closely with plant managements.³ As of July 2005, the situation for Coke workers and their family members remains dangerous.

Union organizers at Coca-Cola bottling plants are not alone in a country where hundreds of union leaders have been assassinated over the last decade by right wing paramilitary groups, widely known to be linked to the army and the Colombian government.⁴ What makes the plight of Coke workers stand out is that one of the world's largest corporations is complicit in this inhumane treatment. For Coke the repression of organized labour helps cut production costs by dismissing thousands of workers and minimizing salaries while increasing production and profits. Regarding the attitude of the corporation towards the actions of paramilitaries at Coke's bottling facilities in Colombia, United Steelworkers of America (USWA) lawyer, Dan Kovalik said that "if any of these plants make a mistake in applying Coca-Cola's formula or in delivering Coke, they would be there to correct it, but in cases where they kill union leaders, they do nothing".⁵

Colombia's National Union of Food Industry Workers (SINALTRAINAL), president Javier Correa says that "the paramilitaries have graffitied threats and accusations against us on the walls of bottling plants. These plants have become like concentration camps. The army patrols the buildings. There is so much repression that union workers are even followed into the toilet. One

¹ "The anti-coke manifesto", Colombia Solidarity Campaign, 2005,

http://www.polarisinstitute.org/polaris_project/water_lords/campaigns/anticokefinal1.pdf

² Coca Cola website, http://www2.coca-cola.com/ourcompany/cfs/cfs_colombia.html

³ <http://www.killercoke.org/crimes.htm>

⁴ Human Rights Watch website, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/01/21/colomb6978.htm#3>

⁵ Lobe, J., Coca-Cola to be Sued for Bottlers' Abuses, Inter Press Service, July 20, 2001, <http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/headlines01/0720-01.htm>

worker killed himself. In his suicide note he blamed Coca-Cola." On the attitude of the corporation, Correa says that "Coca-Cola has turned from a time of exploitation to a time of slavery. Because the workers continue to resist this oppression the paramilitaries now try to kidnap family members, they've burnt union headquarters and destroyed whatever evidence they can so we are unable to bring a case against them. If SINALTRAINAL is dissolved," adds Correa "we face assassinations".⁶

The links between Coke and actions of Colombia's paramilitary groups can be traced to the corporation's bottling agreements with companies in Colombia. As explained on page 1 of this report, Coke franchises its bottling operations to various bottling companies who purchase syrups and concentrates from the corporation, mix them with water, and package and sell the final product to retailers.

While different Coca-Cola bottling operations in Colombia have been involved in violence towards union organizers, one case in Carepa during the mid-1990s showcases how closely Coke is associated to paramilitary action in the country.

In July 2001, the Colombian labour union, SINALTRAINAL, along with the United Steel Workers Union and International Labor Rights Fund filed a lawsuit in a federal court in Miami against Coke and two of its bottlers, Bebidas y Alimentos and Panamerican Beverages, INC. The lawsuit charges that Coke and its associates are responsible for "the systematic intimidation, kidnapping, detention and murder of trade unionists" working at Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia.⁷

The suit alleges that Coke's Colombian bottlers maintained open relations with right wing paramilitary death squads as part of a strategy to intimidate union leaders. One portion of the case covers the 1996 murder of union organizer Isidro Segundo Gil who worked at the Coca-Cola bottling plant owned by Bebidas y Alimentos in Carepa Colombia.

Violence and intimidation towards SINALTRAINAL members at the plant began in April 1994 when paramilitary forces murdered Bebidas workers, Jose Eleazar Manco David and Luis Enrique Gomez Granada. Paramilitary forces then began to intimidate other SINALTRAINAL members and threatened local union leadership with violence if they did not resign. Many members left the bottling plant and moved from Carepa due to the threats. Paramilitaries had full permission to enter the plant to deliver the threats to the leadership.⁸

Very soon after the union elected a new executive, including Isidro Gil, to replace the one that had fled, Bebidas y Alimentos began to hire members of the paramilitaries who had threatened the first union board to work at the plant. In September 1995 Richard Kirby Keilland, the American owner of the bottler with his father Richard Kirby, hired Ariost Milan Mosquera to become the plant Manager. Ariost Milan Mosquera proceeded to illegally fire members of the SINALTRAINAL executive and threatened to destroy the union. He announced in public that he had given orders to the paramilitaries to carry out the task and bragged that he would sweep away the union.⁹

From the beginning of 1996 until December of the same year, the paramilitaries stepped up their threats against union members and executives, forcing members to flee Carepa fearing for their lives. During the same time period the suit claims that SINALTRAINAL members witnessed Bebidas manager Ariost Milan Mosquera socializing with paramilitaries and providing them with coca-cola products for their social functions.

⁶ Williams, M., "Coca Cola Genocide", Colombia Solidarity Campaign, <http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk/Solidarity%209/cocacolagenocide.html>

⁷ Complaint filed against The Coca Cola Company in the United States District Court Southern District of Florida, page 1, <http://www.laborrights.org/projects/corporate/coke/index.html>

⁸ *ibid*, page 18, <http://www.laborrights.org/projects/corporate/coke/index.html>

⁹ *ibid*, page 19, <http://www.laborrights.org/projects/corporate/coke/index.html>

SINALTRAINAL was meanwhile negotiating a new labour agreement at the plant which included proposals for increased security at the plant for threatened union members and a cessation of Ariost Milan Mosquera's threats against the union and his collusion with paramilitaries. Richard Kirby Keilland was present at the negotiations and refused the unions requests.

As a response to these events, SINALTRAINAL began a national campaign in August 1996, calling upon Bebidas, as well as Panamco Colombia and Coca-Cola Colombia to protect union leadership and members in Carepa. In November 1996, the union presented a labour contract to Bebidas which included a provision which would have required the bottler to provide security in the plant to protect workers from the paramilitaries. Ariost Milan Mosquera took the letter to Bogotá to discuss it with Richard Kirby Keilland.

On December 5th, 1996, two paramilitaries approached Isidro Gil, who was then involved in negotiations with the Bebidas, and shot him to death at the entrance to the Carepa plant. The same day paramilitaries approached other members of SINALTRAINAL's board telling them that they had murdered Gil and would do the same to them if they did not leave Carepa. They also said that they would hold a meeting the next day at the plant with all members of the union to tell them that they would have to resign from the union or face death. That night the paramilitaries went to the SINALTRAINAL office in Carepa and burned it down.

The paramilitaries held their meeting as planned on December 7 where they explained to the workers that they had 3 options: 1 resign from the union; 2 leave Carepa; 3 be killed. The workers were then directed to the manager's office where they signed resignation papers prepared by Bebidas y Alimentos. As a result of the threats, workers resigned en masse from the union thus destroying the SINALTRAINAL local in Carepa. The lawsuit says that after Gil's murder and the forced resignation of union members at the plant, Bebidas y Alimentos paid the paramilitaries for their efforts.¹⁰ On December 26 the paramilitaries killed another Bebidas worker and then later in 2000 the wife of Isidro Gil.

In 1997 Richard Kirby and Richard Kirby Keilland asked Coke if they could sell the Bebidas y Alimentos along with the Carepa plant. Coke denied the request and they continue to own the Carepa plant.¹¹

At Panamco's plant in Bucaramanga, the lawsuit claims that five members of the union executive were falsely accused in 1996 of planting a bomb in the plant during a labour dispute. The union members were badly beaten by police and then three were thrown in jail for six months only to be released after regional prosecutors found that the charges were groundless. At the bottler's Cucata and Barrancabermeja plants, union members were forced into hiding after receiving death threats from paramilitaries beginning in 1999. In a similar story to the Carepa plant, the manager in Barrancabermeja openly collaborated with and supported paramilitaries, according to the lawsuit.

This well documented case illustrates how the management at Bebidas y Alimentos, colluded with paramilitaries to commit murder and destroy the SINALTRAINAL union local in Carepa. But how are these bottling plants such as Bebidas y Alimentos and Panamco linked to Coke's corporate headquarters in Atlanta?

In the case of Bebidas, it receives its supply of Coke products from Coke Colombia – Coke's subsidiary in Colombia – which are then bottled and distributed throughout Colombia. Coke Colombia monitors and controls all aspects of Bebidas' bottler's agreement with Coke, including Coke's requirements for product quality, presentation, marketing and bottling.¹² The union sponsored lawsuit claims that the bottler's agreement gives Coke control over small details of

¹⁰ *ibid*, pp 22-23

¹¹ *Ibid*, p 23

¹² *Ibid* 11

production and distribution including: approved containers, boxes, stamps; the right to inspect the products; the imposition of standards concerning employee qualification and appearance; the monitoring of labour relations and practices of its subsidiaries and bottlers; the right to terminate bottler's agreements for noncompliance with their terms and conditions; the right to conduct inspections and monitor day-to-day compliance with the bottler's agreement through frequent reports.¹³

Due to the extent of Coke's influence over its bottlers through bottler's agreements, the lawsuit states that Bebidas is "subject to the ultimate control of Coke because the business exists solely at the pleasure of Coke", and that Coke has complete control over "Panamco and Bebidas y Alimentos because these companies exist solely to bottle and distribute Coke products".¹⁴ One striking example of Coke's control over Bebidas is their refusal to let Richard Kirby and Richard Kirby Keilland sell the company in 1997.

In the case of Coke and Panamco the two companies are linked both financially and through Coke executives serving on Panamco's Board of Directors. In 1996 Coke owned a 13% interest in the Panamco bottling company while two Coca-Cola Company executives sat on Panamco's Board of Directors.

A judge in Miami ruled these links were insufficient and removed Coke from the lawsuit in March 2003 saying that the company does not set labour policies at independently owned bottling plants. In April 2004, SINALTRAINAL filed an amendment to the lawsuit in the Miami Federal Court claiming that due to recent restructuring of Coca-Cola's bottling network in Latin America, where Coca-Cola Femsa purchased Panamco¹⁵ (May 2003), the company's main bottler in Colombia, Coca-Cola can be held liable.¹⁶ According to witnesses quoted in a Colombia Solidarity Campaign report, Panamco is explicitly linked to paramilitary leaders through financial donations. The report states that Panamco official Jhon Ordonez makes monthly payments to paramilitary leaders in Cucuta.¹⁷

Meanwhile, union leaders who work at Coca-Cola bottlers continue to live in fear for their lives. After exhausting all legal avenues in Colombia, SINALTRAINAL began a worldwide boycott of Coke products in July 2003. The campaign has brought worldwide attention to victims of Coke's complicity with assassination, harassment and displacement of many workers in their bottling facilities in Colombia.

Some other incidents of violence and harassment against Coke workers and their families in Colombia:

June 2005 – On June 3rd paramilitaries in Barranquilla kidnapped 5 students who were working with SINALTRAINAL on Coke's environmental record. The students were threatened with death if they ever protested outside a Coke plant again. They were released the same day.¹⁸

April 2004 – On April 20th, a number of armed men entered the house of Coke worker and union activist Efrain Guerrero's brother-in-law in Bucaramanga and opened fire at the family. The gunmen killed Guerrero's brother-in-law, Gabriel Remolina, his wife Fanny Remolina and one of their children, Robinson Remolina.¹⁹

¹³ *ibid*, 12

¹⁴ *ibid*, pp. 13,14

¹⁵ The merger was actually orchestrated by The Coca-Cola Company, for more information visit: <http://www.killercoke.org/pdf/collmerg.pdf>

¹⁶ Liu, B., "Colombian Union Renews Coke Suit", Financial Times, April 17, 2004.

¹⁷ "The Anti-Coke Manifesto", Colombia Solidarity Campaign, 2005,

http://www.polarisinstitute.org/polaris_project/water_lords/campaigns/anticokefinal1.pdf

¹⁸ "The people vs Coke", Colombia Solidarity Campaign,

<http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk/cocacolacampaign/peoplevscoke.html>

¹⁹ Communique between SINALTRAINAL and the Colombia Solidarity Campaign, April 20th, 2004, <http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk/UA%20Apr-Jun%2004/UA04.04.20.html>

November 2004 – On November 17th, paramilitaries delivered death threats to the regional headquarters of the CUT (a Brazilian labour federation) in Bucaramanga. The letter read as follows:

"This threat is directed towards those trade unionists who oppose the governor, the mayor and those private companies who are supporting the policies of the government of Dr Alvaro Uribe Velez. We inform you that we have made a military judgment to force you from the areas under our influence, or to kill you. We will show no mercy to those trade unionists who have initiated legal proceedings against government of private company officials. For this reason we have declared the following as military objectives:

David Florez
Martha Diaz
Teresa Baez
Efraín Guerrero
Carlos Castro
Javier Jiménez
Rafael Ovalle

Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), Santander."

All of the people mentioned in the letter are members of the CUT. Efraín Guerrero works at Coke's Bucaramanga plant and is the leader of SINALTRAINAL at the facility. This is the second time that Guerrero has received death threats.²⁰

October 2002 – On October 2nd, a known paramilitary, Saul Rincon, along with another man were seen monitoring a union protest at the entrance to Coke's plant in Barrancabermeja. The men entered the plant and spoke with the managers. Three days later Rincon warned that local SINALTRAINAL leader Juan Carlos Galvis was an assassination target. Rincon was later seen spying in Galvis' neighbourhood. Close to a year later in August 2003, Galvis was shot at by a number of paramilitaries, but managed to escape with his life.²¹

August 2001 – The AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia – paramilitary units) published death threats against two Coke workers and union activists in the Barrancabermeja publication *La Noticia*. On Christmas Eve of the same year both men found AUC greeting cards in their lockers.²²

For more information on Coke's human rights abuses please visit the following websites:

Campaign to Stop Killer Coke - <http://www.killercoke.org/>
Colombia Human Rights Network - <http://colhrnet.igc.org/>
Colombia Solidarity Campaign - <http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk>
SINALTRAINAL - <http://www.sinaltrainal.org/>

India: *"Without access to clean and safe water, natural systems are threatened, economies sputter, and communities wither. For companies like ours, continuing success depends on ensuring adequate water for both ourselves and for the communities where we operate. We are committed to benefiting and refreshing consumers and their communities, and being an active*

²⁰ "Bucaramanga: More death threats against Coca Cola worker and trade unionists", Colombia Solidarity Campaign press release, November 17, 2005, <http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk/UA%20Oct-Dec%2004/UA04.11.22.html>

²¹ "The Anti-Coke Manifesto", Colombia Solidarity Campaign, 2005, http://www.polarisinstitute.org/polaris_project/water_lords/campaigns/anticokefinal1.pdf

²² *ibid*

*partner in addressing water challenges is a crucial part of that commitment.*²³ From Coke's website

Coke has had a long and volatile relationship with India. The company originally began selling its products during the 1950s but was eventually kicked out of the country in 1977 for violating investment laws. Coke refused to abide by India's Foreign Exchange Regulation Act which required Multi-Nationals to sell 60% of their equity to an Indian interest. Coke refused, and was forced to leave the country. In 1993, in a new political and economic climate of liberalized trade and investment policy, Coke was allowed back into the country where they promptly purchased the leading domestic soft drink brand.²⁴ Since then, Coke has invested more than \$1 billion in India. The company operates 27 wholly owned bottling plants and another 17 franchise owned bottling operations and is constantly looking to expand its presence in a country where it sees a huge market for its products.²⁵

However, all is not well for Coke in India. In 2002 Since 2002, Coke has come face to face with strong resistance to their ongoing water takings, their environmental pollution and the discovery of high levels of pesticides in their products. One community, after a long and bitter struggle, has been successful in shutting down production at a local bottling plant. The fight against Coke has spread to other parts of the country, beginning a movement that could bring about a repeat of 1977.

Plachimada – Coke meets its match

Coke opened its plant in Plachimada in 1998, digging 65 wells with the capacity to extract 1.5 million liters of water each day from the aquifer.²⁶ The company received 15% cash back on its investment in the Plachimada factory by the government of Kerala, in return for moving into an impoverished region within the state.²⁷ In Kerala, the desire of the provincial and national governments to attract investment from multinationals like Coke has meant that communities are losing control of their natural resources.

Since Coke set up shop in Plachimada and began extracting vast amounts of water and adding polluting sludge to farm fields, local farmers have seen their wells dry up and crop yields shrink forcing many to abandon their farms. In June 2005, the state Water Resources Department found that in 16 wells around the plant water levels dropped significantly in nine of them while one dried up completely between 2002 and 2004. The study also found that between May 2003 and May 2004 ground level dropped in 11 of the 16 wells.²⁸ Despite the region's extended droughts, Coke continued to extract water from their boreholes, while 2000 families in the area were being adversely affected by the lack of water. Due to low water levels, families would walk long distances twice a day to find suitable drinking water while others were forced to try alternative crops. Salination and residues from bottle washing had rendered what little water remained useless.²⁹ One local farmer commented that his irrigation pump "used to run for 12 hours throughout the night; now it runs dry after 30 minutes...Coke managed to acquire all the lowest lying land in the area and after digging a series of deep wells they took all the water. Its downright theft."³⁰ The worst affected are the 10,000 landless labourers who relied on working on these farms for a livelihood. The shortage of water became so severe at one point that Coke itself was trucking water from outside the region as their boreholes had dried up.

²³ The Coca Cola Company, Website, <http://www2.coca-cola.com/citizenship/water.html>

²⁴ Multinational Monitor, "Backwash: Coke Returns from India Exile", An Interview with George Fernandes, July August 1995, Vol. 16, No. 7&8

²⁵ Ranjith, K.R., "Holy Water From the West", Altermedia: Thrissur, 2004, p. 48

²⁶ Vidal, J., Coke on trial as Indian villagers accuse plant of sucking them dry, The Guardian, November 19, 2003

²⁷ Stuart, L., "Multinationals should face the same rules no matter where they set up shop", The Guardian, August 11, 2003

²⁸ "Ground water level down in Plachimada", The Economic Times, July 6, 2005

²⁹ Ranjith, K.R., "Holy Water From the West", Altermedia: Thrissur, 2004, 58

³⁰ Clarke, J., Stuart, L., "Coke Adds Life? In India, Impoverished Farmers are Fighting to Stop Drinks Giant Destroying Livelihoods", The Independent, July 25, 2003

When the suffering of the people in Plachimada reached a limit, farmers and community members began to organize resistance in order to regain control of their rights to the water and soil which was being used extensively by Coke. A non-violent protest began outside the plant in April 2002. A powerful group of local people began the protest sitting stoically under a Samarapanthal or thatched shed and have maintained their presence for over two years. Even though major political parties in Kerala province distanced themselves from the protests the struggle against Coke grew. The people demanded that Coke should work to restore groundwater resources and ensure a continuous water supply for the affected area, or leave Plachimada forever.³¹

The protests continued despite counter efforts by the corporation and repression from the police who have arrested hundreds of protestors. The sustained determination of the resistance combined with a BBC documentary exposing how Coke was selling contaminated 'fertilizer' to local farmers, finally gained the attention of the mainstream media. Coke responded with vehement denials of any wrongdoing and has hired a public relations firm to improve their image in India.³²

In April 2003, the Village Council asserted their right to the self-determination of natural resources and revoked Coke's license. After arguing before the Kerala High Court, Coke managed to reverse the decision. The Village Council filed another petition in High Court and on December 16, 2003, the Court historically declared that the local self-government body has the right to control the water exploitation by Coke's Plachimada plant.³³ The judgment rejected Coke's claims and forced the company to stop exploitation of water reserves and find alternative water resources within one month.

Since the December order came down, a seesaw battle has ensued between the Village Council, Coke and the Kerala state government. Coke was given reprieve by the state government on the decision not to renew their license. However, on April 7, the court stayed the original order on a petition filed by the president of the Village Council who says that the state government has been interfering with the Village Council's constitutional power to issue or suspend a license or impose conditions on an industry³⁴.

While the legal battle continues, a February 21, 2004 order is preventing the plant from drawing ground water until June 15 when monsoon rains are expected to arrive. The order will not prevent production at the plant, but stops the withdrawal of water from local groundwater. Meanwhile, the protests, which passed the 2 year mark on April 22, continue.

Dirty Coke and the spread of resistance

In January 2004 the Indian parliament banned the sale of Coke as well as Pepsi products in its cafeteria after tests found high concentrations of pesticides and insecticides, including lindane, DDT, malathion and chlorpyrifos, in the colas, making them unfit for consumption.³⁵ Some test samples showed toxin levels 30 times the standard allowed by the European Union. Adding to Coke's problems in India, Villagers living in Mehdiganj near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Kudus, in the Wada taluka of the Thane district and Sivaganga in TamilNadu - all regions experiencing acute water crises - have begun protests at local Coke plants.³⁶

³¹ Ranjith, K.R., "Holy Water From the West", Altermedia: Thrissur, 2004, p. 60

³² Srivastava, A., "Coke with Yet Another New Twist: Toxic Cola", India Resource Center, January 31, 2004, <http://www.indiaresource.org/campaigns/coke/2004/coketwist.html>

³³ Ranjith, K.R., "Holy Water From the West", Altermedia: Thrissur, 2004, p. 63.

³⁴ Surendranath, C., "Coke vs People: The Heat is on in Plachimada", India Resource Center, April 14, 2004, <http://www.indiaresource.org/campaigns/coke/2004/heatison.html>

³⁵ Srivastava, A., "Coke with Yet Another New Twist: Toxic Cola", India Resource Center, January 31, 2004, <http://www.indiaresource.org/campaigns/coke/2004/coketwist.html>

³⁶ Ranjith, K.R., "Holy Water From the West", Altermedia: Thrissur, 2004, p. 68, 69.

Some recent updates from India:

June-July 2005, Kerala

- **July 22** – The State Government of Kerala moved to take Coke to the Supreme Court of India challenging the company's right to extract groundwater. The announcement made by Local Self-Government Minister Kutty Ahmed Kutty, challenges the April 7 Kerala High Court ruling.³⁷
- **June 13** – The Panchayat (village council) rejects Coke's application for a two-year license.³⁸
- **June 9** – Coke files an application with the Panchayat for a two year license.³⁹
- **June 6** – The Panchayat issued Coke a three month conditional license on June 6th. Coke rejected the temporary license saying that it was in violation of the April 7th High Court order entitling the company to draw 500,000 litres of groundwater a day at its plant in Plachimada.⁴⁰
- **June 1** – The High court of Kerala directed the Panchayat to renew Coke's license within a week.⁴¹

April 2005, Kerala

- On April 28, the Panchayat of Kerala rejected Coke's application for the renewal of its license for the company's plant in Plachimada. The Panchayat claims that Coke did not supply the required documents with its application, including a clearance from the state pollution control board.⁴²
- On April 7th The Kerala High Court entitled Coke to draw 500,000 litres of groundwater a day from its plant in Plachimada under normal rainfall conditions. The court ruled that the Panchayat did not have the authority to cancel the license issued to the company. The court also directed the company to ensure regular water supply for residents and to prepare an action plan to cover villager's social security and healthcare.⁴³

March 2005, Palakkad – Thousand of people demanding the closure of Coke and Pepsi factories in the Palakkad district formed a human chain between Pepsi's bottling plant in Kanjikode and Coke's operation in Plachimada. Protesters included political leaders, students, environmentalists and community members.⁴⁴

March 2005, Kaladera, Rajasthan – The village council (Panchayat) of Kaladera adopted a resolution that it would issue a notice to Coke demanding that it close down its bottling plant in the village. The demand will be issued because of what they say is Coke's 'indiscriminate exploitation' of ground water reserves that has led to a sharp decline in the water table. The resolution states that "the extraction of colossal amounts of water by the Coca-Cola factory has destroyed agriculture in Kaladera and nearby villages."⁴⁵

January 15, 2005, Plachimada – January 15, 2005 marked the 100th day of struggle against Coke for the people of Plachimada.

November 2004, Mehdiganj, Varanasi – On November 24, over a thousand community members adversely affected by Coke marched to the Coca-Cola factory in Mehdiganj, near Varanasi. The rally brought an end to a 10-day, 250km march from the site of another Coke plant

³⁷ "Indian State takes Coca-Cola to court; Sales drop 14% in Summer", India Resource Center, July 22, 2005, <http://indiaresource.org/news/2005/1086.html>

³⁸ "Panchayat rejects Coke's plea for a two year licence", The Press Trust of India, June 13, 2005

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ "Coke rejects conditional licence, files another plea", The Hindu, June 10, 2005

⁴¹ "Kerala HC asks Panchayat to renew Coca Cola licence", The Press Trust of India, June 1, 2005

⁴² "This Kerala village wants Coke out", Hindustan Times, April 30, 2005

⁴³ "Coca-Cola firm gets nod for drawing groundwater", The Hindu, April 8, 2005

⁴⁴ "Thousands form Human Chain for Closure of soft drink units", The Hindu, March 30, 2005

⁴⁵ "Rajasthan village council wants coca-cola out", India Resource Center press release, March 15, 2005, <http://www.indiaresource.org/news/2005/1009.html>

in Ballia to Mehdiganj, bringing attention to Coke's negative impacts on communities across India. Marchers who decided to approach the factory gates, which were heavily guarded by armed police, were met with a brutal baton (*lathi*) charge. Over 350 people were arrested and approximately 100 injured.⁴⁶

For more information on Coke's ongoing abuses in India please visit the India Resource Center's website: <http://www.indiaresource.org/>

Racial discrimination in the workplace: Class action lawsuits and multi- million-dollar settlements

In April 1999, a group of Coke employees filed a class-action lawsuit accusing the corporation of systemic racial discrimination against African Americans. The lawsuit was brought by four current and past employees on behalf of themselves and almost 2000 other former and current Coke employees. The class action lawsuit brought together a damning list of corporate behaviour. The list of racially discriminatory workplace practices was split into the following 6 categories:

- **Discrimination in evaluations:** The suit claimed that performance evaluations system implemented by managers, made biased and inconsistent determinations on evaluation scores, which permitted racial discrimination. The evaluation scores decided who would receive raises or promotions. The lawsuit stated that "because of the undue discretion of managers, African-Americans receive lower evaluation scores than Caucasians and fewer high scores".⁴⁷
- **Discrimination in compensation:** Dramatic differences between salaries paid by Coke to African Americans and White employees at the company's headquarters and throughout the corporation were revealed in the lawsuit. In 1995 the average African-American employee in the corporate headquarters received \$19,000 less than the average white employee, while in 1998 the disparity had risen to \$27,000.⁴⁸
- **Discrimination in promotions:** Promotions opportunities were not posted and occur through management nominations, which amounted to little more than word of mouth recommendations and closed procedures. "Jobs are filled without being posted, candidates are handpicked in advance, and supervisors who make hiring decisions disregard the results of panel interviews and manipulate scores in order to ensure that their favorites are chosen. As a result of this kind of discrimination, African-Americans are denied the opportunity to advance to the same level and at the same rate as equally qualified Caucasian employees."⁴⁹
- **Glass ceiling:** African-American employees at Coke experience a glass ceiling, blocking equal opportunity advancement to top level positions at the company. Compared to the significant number of salaried African-American employees at Coke, very few make it to senior levels in the company. While African-American employees make up 15.7 percent of the employees at corporate headquarters, they are underrepresented at top pay-grade levels.⁵⁰
- **Glass walls:** The suit also found that organizational barriers segregate the company into divisions where African-American leadership is acceptable, and divisions where it is not.

⁴⁶ "Police attach Coca-Cola protest, over 350 arrested", India Resource Center press release, November 25, 2004, <http://www.indiaresource.org/press/2004/mehdiganjattack.html>

⁴⁷ United States District Court Northern District of Georgia, Civil Action No. 1-98-CV-3679, <http://www.essentialaction.org/spotlight/coke/complaint.html#IV>

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ *ibid*

African-Americans in senior positions are concentrated in less powerful and non-revenue generating areas.⁵¹

- **Terminations:** According to the lawsuit, African-American employees at Coke are involuntarily terminated at a much higher rate than white employees. In 1997, there were 62 involuntary terminations at Coke's corporate headquarters, and African-American employees accounted for about 37% of those, or 23 people. Whites, who make up over 77% of the employees in the corporate office, accounted for fewer than 50% of the terminations in 1997.

The lawsuit also outlined cases where white Coke executives and managers had been discriminatory. In one case a white Vice President of Advertising told an African-American advertising agency that "I don't hire you to do good advertising, I hire you to do black advertising...it's not my fault you are black – it's yours". In another case, Coke's marketing strategy succumbs to racial stereotyping. For example, during a presentation about ethnic marketing in 1998 a white brand manager showed a picture of an inner city neighborhood and said "this is where black people live" and then stated that American musician L.L. Cool J featured in a Coke commercial should be sitting in the ghetto instead of on the steps of an attractive suburban house.⁵² In another situation, one of the plaintiffs received a low evaluation after making comments about racial discrimination, even though she had always received positive evaluations. Such examples were not simply from a few isolated incidents; rather the lawsuit argued they represented a company-wide pattern.

As the trial proceeded, Coke denied any wrongdoing. Coke initially responded to the lawsuit saying that actions toward the four African-American plaintiffs "were in no way motivated by race...but instead were based solely on legitimate, nondiscriminatory business reasons."⁵³ The CEO at the time, Douglas Ivester, sent an email to all Coke employees a week after the suit was filed saying that the suit had "significant errors of fact" and that the company does not systematically discriminate against African-Americans.⁵⁴ Coke's manager of share-holder affairs sent a similar letter to all share-holders trying to soothe investors over the lawsuit. The letter stated that "while we [Coke] believe the lawsuit is without merit, I wanted to write and assure you that our management team takes these allegations seriously. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated."⁵⁵ The Company continued to deny any wrongdoing In December 1999 when a Coke spokesperson, commenting on the ongoing lawsuit said that the company "will demonstrate that Coca-Cola has not, does not and will not tolerate discrimination of any kind."⁵⁶ In July of the same year, the company said that "we're confident it will be determined that Coca-Cola does not discriminate."⁵⁷

After a long legal battle, a settlement was reached in principle in June 2000 and was finalized in November 2000 when Coke agreed to pay out a record \$192.5 million, the largest settlement in a US race discrimination lawsuit. Despite denying any wrongdoing for months, Coke agreed to pay \$113 million in direct compensation and another \$43.5 million towards the elimination of pay disparities.⁵⁸ Twenty three people who were covered in the suit opted out of the settlement to pursue their own settlements against the company. The settlement also ordered the establishment of a task force designed to monitor the company's progress in complying with the settlement guidelines.

⁵¹ ibid

⁵² ibid

⁵³ Unger, H., Hosendolph, E. "Coke, plaintiffs in court today", Atlanta Journal and Constitution, May 13, 1999

⁵⁴ Unger, H., "Coke chief: Suit wrong but serious", Atlanta Journal and Constitution, April 30, 1999

⁵⁵ Unger, H., "Coca-Cola tries to soothe investors on suit", Atlanta Journal and Constitution, May 7, 1999

⁵⁶ McCarthy, M., "Racial bias suit at Coke awaits CEO New chief must tackle diversity issues", USA Today, December 13, 1999

⁵⁷ Unger, H., "Class-action part of Coca-Cola suit is not dismissed", Atlanta Journal and Constitution, July 16, 1999

⁵⁸ Unger, H., "Coke to Settle Racial Suit with \$192.5 Million Deal", Atlanta Journal Constitution, November 17, 2000

After the settlement was finalized, Coke's new CEO Doug Daft sent a contrite e-mail to all of Coke's employees worldwide saying that "Today we are closing a painful chapter in our company's history...The settlement is meaningful, constructive and equitable to all parties and allows us to move forward. . . . In fact, we will not rest until we have reclaimed our position as the best of the best in these matters and restored the confidence of every person who touches the Coca-Cola Co."⁵⁹

In 2002, two years after the settlement was reached, the court appointed panel in charge of monitoring Coke's human resources practices, found that minority employees at Coke continue to have issues with fairness in career advancement, pay decisions and the company's commitment to equal opportunity.⁶⁰ An April 2002 report in the Washington Post quoted one Coke employee who opted out of the settlement saying that "Coca-Cola has done a wonderful job of fooling the public into believing that the racial discrimination lawsuit is over...It's not over. And I'm not interested in settling. The only way to expose the racism at Coca-Cola is to have our day in court."⁶¹

The second of the four annual reports to be submitted to US district judge by the bias task force found in December 2003 that the company had failed to implement a number of planned changes and that the North American restructuring of the company has led to a disproportionate number of executive positions filled by white men. The report also said that the company failed to make recommended changes to its interview process or to develop a diverse candidature for executive positions.⁶² Minority employees negatively rated the company's record on diversity in the report.

Labour track record

This section will outline a selection of strikes, walkouts and labour negotiations that have taken place at various Coke bottling plants since 1994.

Australia – In September 2001, 140 employees at a Coca-Cola Amatil bottling plant and warehouse in Melbourne went on strike after the company moved to cancel a bargaining agreement. The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union claimed the company was clearing the way to introduce individual contracts.⁶³

Australia – In December 2004, Coca-Cola Amatil was ordered to pay AUS\$3 million compensation for failing to protect a former contractor who was shot five times while loading a vending machine. Craig Douglas Pareezer sued the company in the New South Wales Supreme Court for negligence after he was shot in the head, chest, stomach, leg and hand. The attack occurred in 1997. After being attacked in the same area in 1995, Pareezer returned to work only after the company promised he would not have to go back to the neighbourhood. However, when another worker was injured, Pareezer reluctantly made a trip there and was attacked in a robbery attempt. The Justice in the case ruled in September 2004 that the company was liable for Pareezer's injuries, saying that it failed to protect him when it knew drivers were a target of robberies.⁶⁴

Canada – In November 2003, 50 workers at a Coke bottling plant in Cobourg, Ontario went on strike over wages, shift premiums, uniform allowance, better language for temporary workers and

⁵⁹ Unger, H., "Coke to settle racial suit with \$ 192.5 million deal", Atlanta Journal and Constitution, November 17, 2000

⁶⁰ Day, S., "Anti-Bias Task Force Gives Coca-Cola Good Marks, but Says Challenges Remain", New York Times, September 26, 2002

⁶¹ White, B., "Black Coca-Cola Workers Still Angry", Washington Post, Thursday, April 18, 2002

⁶² Newkirk, M., "Bias Report Criticizes Coke: Planned Changes Fell Short , Judge Told", Atlanta Journal And Constitution, December 18, 2003

⁶³ "Coke workers walk off job", Herald Sun, September 5, 2001

⁶⁴ "Coca-Cola 'knew of danger at venue' \$3m compo for shot contractor", The Mercury, December 24, 2004

severance packages. After over a month on the picket lines, a deal was finalized in December 2003.⁶⁵

El Salvador – A 2004 report by Human Rights Watch found that sugar used in drinks for domestic consumption in El Salvador is regularly processed from Sugar Cane harvested by child labourers. The report found that El Salvador's largest sugar mill, which supplies Coke with one of its main ingredients, is supplied with sugar cane from at least four plantations that regularly use child labour. The report stated that: "In Coca-Cola's case, child labor helped produce a key ingredient in its beverages bottled in El Salvador. In that sense, Coca-Cola indirectly benefits from child labor."⁶⁶

Guatemala – In 2002 PANAMCO, Coke's biggest bottler in Latin America now owned by Coca-Cola FEMSA, used questionable tactics during a difficult collective bargaining situation with Guatemala's food and beverage workers' federation FESTRAS. PANAMCO's demands would have eroded conditions protected by an existing collective agreement. In order to sway the negotiations in their favour, PANAMCO pursued legal action to dismiss eight union representatives from the plant who were taking approved leave to participate in the bargaining. They also filed a court order alleging that the workers' vote authorizing strike action should have included confidential and management employees essentially asking the court to declare unconstitutional a section of the labour code that specifies that confidential and management employees are not included in this type of voting.⁶⁷ A collective bargaining agreement was reached in December 2002 that provided for general wage increases of 3% effective 1 March 2001, 4% on 1 March 2002, 5% on 1 March 2003 and 6% on 1 March 2004. In addition the union retained full paid union leave for elected executive committee members.⁶⁸

Coke has a horrible record of labour abuses in Guatemala dating back to the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1976, workers at a Coke bottling plant in Guatemala began a nine year struggle against their employer. During that time three general secretaries of their union were assassinated while members of their families, friends and legal advisors were threatened, arrested, kidnapped, beaten, tortured, shot or forced into exile. After a long battle combined with the support of international solidarity campaigns, STEGAC, the Coke workers union, won its fight against the corporation.⁶⁹

Russia – In August 2001, the administration of Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company Eurasia plant in Moscow fired the chairperson of the local trade union after being informed of the union's existence. In October, the Moscow labour inspectorate declared the dismissal illegal and ordered the worker reinstated.⁷⁰ It was not until August 2003 that the worker was reinstated after plant management announced it would respect the court's decision as well as provide the worker 350,000 rubles to cover two years' back pay. As of September 2003 the worker had only received 15,000 rubles while Coca-Cola HBC Eurasia Moscow filed an appeal for the reconsideration of

⁶⁵ United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Locals 175/633 Press Release, "At Last, Cobourg Coca-Cola Workers Win a Fair Settlement", December 11, 2003

⁶⁶ "Turning a Blind Eye: Hazardous child labor in El Salvador's sugarcane cultivation", Human Rights Watch, June 2004, <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/elsalvador0604/elsalvador0604simple.pdf>

⁶⁷ International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) Press Release, "Trade Union Rights at Risk at Coca-Cola Guatemala, September 24, 2003, http://www.iuf.org.uk/cgi-bin/dbman/db.cgi?db=default&uid=default&ID=487&view_records=1&ww=1&en=1

⁶⁸ International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) Press Release, "Coca-Cola Bottler And IUF Affiliate STECSA Sign New Collective Agreement In Guatemala", December 23, 2002, http://www.iuf.org/cgi-bin/dbman/db.cgi?db=default&uid=default&ID=656&view_records=1&ww=1&en=1

⁶⁹ For more information on this case please refer to, Gatehouse M., Reyes, M.A., "Soft Drink Hard Labour: Guatemalan Workers Take On Coca-Cola", London: Latin American Bureau, 1987

⁷⁰ International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) Press Release, "Coke Fights Unions in Russia", November 26, 2001, http://www.iuf.org/cgi-bin/dbman/db.cgi?db=default&uid=default&ID=71&view_records=1&ww=1&en=1

the July agreement that reinstated the worker.⁷¹ Coke HBC has a history of actively fighting the unionization of its operations in Russia.

Russia – Approximately 20 Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company Eurasia employees picketed a St. Petersburg plant on May 20, 2005, demanding management index their salaries to inflation, adhere to labour laws and observe the rights of trade unions. The Chair of the plant's trade union, Vladimir Okhrimenko, said that employees are sometimes ordered to work six or seven days a week as well as long working hours. He said salaries at the plant, which employs 300, have not been indexed to inflation for several years. Coca-Cola has 11 bottling plants in Russia.⁷²

United States – In April 2004, 470-500 production, warehouse employees, Drivers and maintenance workers at Philadelphia's Coca-Cola Bottling co. went on strike over pay, benefits and respect at work. Workers believed that a strike was the only way they would gain respect on the job. After a week-long strike workers won a 35-cent per hour pay raise increased pension benefits and a bonus of up to \$900.⁷³

United States – On May 23, 2005, workers at Coca-Cola bottling and distribution facilities in Hartford Connecticut and Los Angeles went on Strike. The workers are striking over the breakdown of contract negotiations and Coke's continuing push to have workers pay more for their healthcare benefits. In Connecticut Approximately 345 production workers, drivers and merchandisers at a Coca-Cola Enterprise (CCE) bottling plant were on strike while In California close to 1,700 workers at six Southern California CCE locations.⁷⁴ All of the workers were members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters union. The strike ended the two-week strike on June 7 after the union approved a five-year contract giving workers improved health-care benefits and an 85 cent-an-hour annual pay raise.⁷⁵

Layoffs – In January 2000, Coke laid off 6,000 workers from its global workforce. A large scale job cut had not happened at Coke since 1988 when the company terminated 200 jobs. In 2003 Approximately 3,700 employees were laid off by Coca-Cola and its subsidiaries.

Public relations

*"Helping people all over the world live healthier lives through beverages"*⁷⁶, From Coke's Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness website

Coke invests millions of dollars each year in order to passionately convince the consuming public that their product is good for you, or at least harmless. Coke looks to public relations firms, strategic alliances, targeted donations and the creation of research institutes as tools that can downplay the risks of tooth decay or weight gain that results from consuming their products. In fact, the corporation goes to some lengths to convince the public that their product is actually good for you. The following exposes some of the public relations firms used by Coke as well as some of the corporation's own PR campaigns and initiatives.

Coke's PR initiatives:

- **The Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness** – In March 2004 Coke created a research institute with the goal of countering criticism about their role of soft drinks in

⁷¹ International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) Press Release, "Coca-Cola Continues to Oppose Union Organization in Russia", September 18, 2003, http://www.iuf.org/cgi-bin/dbman/db.cgi?db=default&uid=default&ID=1057&view_records=1&ww=1&en=1

⁷² "Workers picket Coca-Cola bottler in Russia over pay, labour rules", Associated Press, May 20, 2005

⁷³ Von Bergen, J., "Coca-Cola Bottling workers end strike", The Philadelphia Inquirer, April 30, 2004

⁷⁴ Spano, J., "Coca-Cola plant workers go on strike", Los Angeles Times, May 23, 2005

⁷⁵ White, R., "Teamsters' Coca-Cola contract includes better pay, benefits", Los Angeles Times, June 7, 2005

⁷⁶ The Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness, <http://www.thebeverageinstitute.org/>

the obesity epidemic. Coke claims that the institute will support nutrition research with a primary focus on beverages. Coke claims that the institute “will support consumer and health professional education on a variety of topics, such as hydration, sweeteners, micro-nutrient deficiencies, weight management and physical activity.”⁷⁷ The institute is clearly a public relations initiative with the goal of convincing the public that Coke cares about health issues. Meanwhile the company continues to target young people with advertisements for their sugary caffeinated drinks. The institute reports directly to Vice President Donald Short.⁷⁸

- **Coke’s Website** – Coke uses its website to highlight many of its strategic programs and initiatives around the world. Many of these programs serve as public relations campaigns designed to boost the corporation’s image. For example, Coke’s website claims that In South Africa the corporation is introducing “model workplace programs aimed at raising awareness of HIV/AIDS for our 1,200 employees and their dependents”.⁷⁹ However, as Health Gap, a US based Aids and human rights group claimed late 2003, Coke has been slow to implement the South Africa program.⁸⁰ In India, where the corporation has been taking vast amounts of water from local water tables with devastating results to the lives of villagers and farmers, the website claims that Coke is “committed to helping protect and preserve this resource in the communities and watersheds where we operate throughout the world.”⁸¹

Public relations firms:

- **Perfect Relations** – Coke hired the Indian public relations firm, Perfect Relations, to rebuild the corporation’s tarnished image in India after years of resistance from groups protesting Coke’s use of large amounts of water in their bottling operations and the fact that Coke products in India were found to contain pesticides.⁸²
- **Lexis PR** – This UK firm is in charge of helping Coke recover from the disastrous launch of Dasani in England in February 2004.
- **GCI Group** – Coke is a client of GCI, of one of the United States’ largest public relations firms.
- **Cohn, Overstreet & Parrish** – Formed in 2003, Cohn, Overstreet & Parrish, made up three former GCI executives, claims Coke as one of their clients.

Strategic funding:

- **Australian Sports Commission** – In September 2004 the Australian Sports Commission released a report on children and sport⁸³. The report was funded by Coke, which poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the research. The report barely mentions dietary intake and its impact on obesity. Instead, the report states that children’s obesity was more likely to be linked with declining physical activity than diet. The findings are troublesome for health and obesity experts who say that there is not enough evidence to say that diet has little to do with child obesity. More disturbing is

⁷⁷ ibid

⁷⁸ Coca Cola Company Press Release, “Coca-Cola Unveils Plans For Institute Dedicated To The Role Of Beverages In Healthy Lifestyles”, March 1, 2004, http://www2.coca-cola.com/presscenter/nr_20040220_beverages_healthy_lifestyles.html

⁷⁹ The Coca Cola Company Website, http://www2.coca-cola.com/citizenship/africa_program.html

⁸⁰ Health Gap Press Release, “12 Months and Counting: Coke’s HIV/AIDS Treatment Program in Africa Still Just a Public Relations Ploy”, October 27, 2003, http://www.healthgap.org/press_releases/03/102703_HGAP_PR_KO_12mos.html

⁸¹ The Coca Cola Company Website, http://www2.coca-cola.com/citizenship/critical_global_resource.html

⁸² Srivastava, A., “Coke with Yet Another New Twist: Toxic Cola”, India Resource Center, January 31, 2004, <http://www.indiaresource.org/campaigns/coke/2004/coketwist.html>

⁸³ Read the report here: <http://www.ausport.gov.au/research/youthandsport04.asp>

how studies on health issues are being funded by the likes of Coke who have much to gain from distracting people from looking at the diets of young people.⁸⁴

- **American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry** – In 2003 Coke donated \$1 million dollars to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD). The Center for Science in the Public Interest, who started a campaign to end the partnership, commented that the AAPD, by partnering with Coke, “is burnishing the reputation of a company whose products cause tooth decay, obesity, and other health problems in children”.⁸⁵ Coke’s partnership with the AAPD gives them incredible influence over an organization that should support a reduction in the consumption of soft-drinks.
- **American Council on Science and Health** – The American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) is a self-described “consumer education consortium concerned with issues related to food, nutrition, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, lifestyle, the environment and health.”⁸⁶ The group is funded by a large number of corporations who all have an interest in presenting themselves as healthy and harmless. The ACSH has not published a list of corporate donors since 1991, in the past Coke was included as one of their funders.⁸⁷ The ACSH takes an unapologetic stance regarding many health and environmental hazard produced by modern industry. In one case, ACSH President Elizabeth Whelan, suggested 1999 that reports claiming that Coke was making European children ill were based on mass hysteria: “Coke should simply announce: ‘There is no health hazard at all from our product. It is a figment of your imagination’”.⁸⁸

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⁸⁴ “Health studies increasingly funded by food companies”, Transcript from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, PM, Broadcast September 6, 2004, <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2004/s1193417.htm>

⁸⁵ Center for Science in the Public Interest Press Release, “Pediatric Dentists Accused of Selling Out to Coke”, March 4, 2003, <http://www.cspinet.org/new/200303041.html>

⁸⁶ American Council on Science and Health Website, <http://www.acsh.org/about/index.html>

⁸⁷ Gumbel, A., “The man who ate McDonalds”, The Independent, June 19, 2004

⁸⁸ Thurston, S., “Coca Cola: Struggle in Europe”, Atlanta Journal and Constitution”, June 22, 1999