

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CMU STUDENTS STAGE COKE-DUMP, RAISE ON CAMPUS AWARENESS OF COCA-COLA ABUSES

On Thursday, the Carnegie Mellon Progressive Student Alliance staged a ‘coke-dump’ and spoke with students throughout the day in order to raise awareness of Coca-Cola’s complicity in the murder of Colombian union organizers. The action coincided with an event sponsored by Entropy, a school run convenience store, which featured Clear Channel employees distributing free Coke to students. Beginning at 10:30am representatives of the Progressive Student Alliance distributed information explaining charges brought against Coca-Cola by the Colombian bottler’s union SINALTRAINAL and encouraging students to avoid Coke products. Throughout the day concerned students donated their free Coke product to these representatives, who, in the early afternoon, proceeded to dump the collected drinks into a storm drain in front of Entropy and the central Coca-Cola distribution table.



SINALTRAINAL organizers in Colombia have suffered at the hands of right-wing paramilitary groups who have acted to suppress union activities at Coca-Cola bottling plants since 1989. Torture, threats, murders, and in at least one case an attempt to force plant workers to sign union resignation forms prepared by plant managers have all been attributed to paramilitary groups operating near bottling plants. SINALTRAINAL has brought charges against Coca-Cola’s South American partners Panamco Colombia (now Coca-Cola FEMSA) and Bebidas y Alimentos. In conjunction with the International Labor Rights Fund SINALTRAINAL brought charges against Coca-Cola and its bottlers in U.S. District Court. However, last April Coca-Cola was separated from the case, an action the union intends to appeal. Coca-Cola maintains that it cannot be held responsible for the actions of Coca-Cola FEMSA/Panamco, despite its ownership of 46.4% of the voting stock and the presence of six Coca-Cola executives on the Coca-Cola FEMSA board, and ownership of 100% of Panamco’s Series C preferred stock and 25% each of its class A and B shares.

“Evidence is mounting that Coca Cola has looked the other way or tacitly encouraged their bottling facilities to intimidate, harass, torture and even murder hundreds of union organizers in Colombia since 1989. Ninety years ago, the union movement in the United States coalesced right here in Pittsburgh in the Battle of Homestead. Coca Cola can’t turn

back the clock on union rights by bottling in Columbia.”, said Quinten Steenhuis, Senior Logic and Computation and Political Science double major

“Only yesterday [Sept 10], the son of SINALTRAINAL’s national director, Limberto Carranza, was kidnapped and tortured. Carranza was later told by phone “Unionist son of a bitch; we are going to break you. And if you won’t break, we will attack your home”. When Coca-Cola faced a similar situation in Guatemala in the early 80’s it responded to consumer pressure by ending its relationship with an abusive bottler. We need to start helping to create that pressure again today”, said Stuart Anderson, Senior Computer Science and Physics double major.

"In addition to Coca-Cola's abuses in Colombia, the company has deprived its bottlers in Africa access to desperately needed AIDS medication. Coca-Cola is the largest private sector employer in Africa, but despite the \$621 million in Revenues and 42% profit margin the company made in Africa in 2001, it refuses to provide treatment and prevention programs for its 100,000 bottling plant workers who live in countries where as much as 25% of the population suffers from HIV or AIDS. Coke does, however, provide treatment to its mostly-white middle class management in Africa while neglecting the bottling plant workers. Coke has also refused to treat their workers in India and Thailand.

We demand that Coca-Cola treat all of its workers with the human dignity that they deserve.

-Matt Toups of the Progressive Student Alliance (PSA) and People for Workers' Rights (PWR)

"Hindustan Coca-Cola has set up bottling plants in villages in India and are running down water supplies. In these areas where drinking water is already scarce, Coca-Cola's Indian subsidiary is buying up what little water there is. This deprives villagers of an opportunity to obtain clean and affordable drinking water.

-Daniel Papasian, Progressive Student Alliance member and sophomore ECE major.

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