



Dear Mayor Bloomberg: *Don't Carry a Torch for Killer Coke*

INSIDE GRACIE MANSION, Mayor Bloomberg is co-hosting a reception “in honor of the New York City Torchbearers” for the 2004 Olympics in Athens. Like tomorrow’s 34-mile run through all five boroughs, it’s co-sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company — one of Coke’s many attempts to tidy up its badly tarnished image as well as sell more soda.

Two days ago, a *New York Times* editorial expressed disapproval of Coke’s “lackluster” market performance, colossal cash giveaways to “departing executives” (including three top executives who recently resigned) and “coziness” between the company and its not-very-independent directors. What the *Times* failed to mention was Coke’s scandalous lack of oversight of its “bottling partners” in Colombia, El Salvador and elsewhere.

In January, City Council Member Hiram Monserrate led a fact-finding delegation on a 10-day visit to Colombia to examine allegations of **union-busting and collaboration with armed paramilitaries** by Coke bottlers. The labor and student participants retraced a bloody trail where at least seven leaders of the Coke workers’ union, Sinaltrainal, had been murdered and dozens of workers kidnapped, tortured or harassed. The delegation’s report said: “Shockingly, company officials admitted to the delegation that they had never investigated the ties between plant managers and paramilitaries... The conclusion that Coca-Cola bears

responsibility for the campaign of terror leveled at its workers is unavoidable.”

On June 10, as reported by Bloomberg News, Human Rights Watch cited Coke’s “complicity in the use of hazardous **child labor**” in El Salvador, where thousands of children as young as eight years old use machetes and other sharp knives for up to nine hours a day to harvest sugarcane in the hot sun. Coke buys sugar from at least four plantations that use child labor, HRW discovered.

Such horrific events occur amid reports that New York City Marketing — instigator of the Snapple “partnership” that City Comptroller William Thompson exposed as the result of a “tainted process with a predetermined outcome” — is planning a multi-million dollar deal to allow one company to monopolize the sale of carbonated drinks in city facilities. Mayoral appointee Joe Perello, the city’s Chief Marketing Officer, advocates slapping corporate logos all over “bus stop shelters, phone booths, ferry boats and light poles [to exploit the] broad appeal of the City of New York...[and] sell more soda...or whatever you happen to need to sell at the moment.”

Is the Mayor callous and crass enough to allow the city’s good name to be linked so prominently with Killer Coke, a company whose reputation for criminality is so richly deserved? Mr. Mayor, say it isn’t so!

CAMPAIGN TO STOP *Killer Coke* • www.killercoke.org

E-mail: stopkillercoke@aol.com

LABOR DONATED