

Union Council October 18th 2007: Motion to boycott Coca-Cola from the student Union

The Union Believes:

- In January 2006 a group of student societies launched a campaign to boycott Coca-Cola products from the Union following perpetual human rights abuses in Columbia and India. By the end of the campaign over 1000 student signatures had been collected and presented to the then President Chris Yorke.
- Since 2003 the Coca-Cola Corporation has been implicated in human rights abuses in Colombia, including the death and disappearances of trade union activists at Coca-Cola bottling plants. In June 2003 the SINALTRAINAL trade union leader was executed on the factory floor in front of his colleagues. The following evening witnessed the kidnap and murder of his family, so began a campaign of intimidation, kidnap, torture and murder across Columbia by Coca-Cola funded paramilitaries. To date this campaign has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Coca-Cola employees. The corporation has also adopted union-busting tactics in a wide range of other countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, Russia, Peru, Chile, Guatemala and Nicaragua. In 2006 I met a worker from Bolivia who testified to the atrocities being committed by the corporation in bottling plants across the country.
- In India, there exists a major breach of international law concerning pesticides and other harmful chemicals in bottled products of Coca-Cola. In 2003, the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a non-governmental organization in New Delhi, said the Coca-Cola company distributed pesticide containing toxins including lindane, DDT, malathion and chlorpyrifos — pesticides that can contribute to cancer and a breakdown of the immune system. CSE found that the product had 30 times the level of pesticide residues permitted under European Union regulations. These pesticides were distributed to farmers creating crop failure and mass famine across the poverty stricken rural areas of the subcontinent. In the Indian state of Kerala, sale and production of Coca-Cola, along with other soft drinks, was initially banned before being reopened this year.
- Since 2003 various student unions and university institutions across the country have joined the world wide boycott of Coca-Cola products. The most recent institutions to vote through a boycott include Manchester, Sussex, Cardiff, Trinity Dublin and Edinburgh.
- In Portsmouth there is a local provider, Hartridges, which currently provides a full range of Coca-Cola products to venues such as *the registry*, *the honest Politian* and *the one eyed dog*, all popular student venues. This company can provide a cheap and ethical alternative should this motion be approved.

The Union Resolves:

- To opt out of buying Coca-Cola products from NUSL
- To investigate viable, ethical alternatives such as those provided by Hartridges