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The limits of solidarity:

Labor and transnational organizing against Coca-Cola

A B S T R A C T
In this article, I explore the concept of "solidarity" through an examination of the alliances and disjunctures that shaped a transnational campaign against the Coca-Cola Company. I consider how the balance of power within cross-class coalitions influenced the framing of issues and the development of tactics, and I examine the tensions that arose among diverse groups who chose to struggle together but shared different goals and perspectives. I argue that the labor philanthropy of northern activists on behalf of Colombian workers could not substitute for the labor solidarity that Colombian workers asked of their northern allies. My study suggests that transnational activists from the North focus on tactics that push states, as well as corporations, to protect labor rights and that they pay closer attention to the analyses and objectives of the working people with whom they claim solidarity. [*Colombia, solidarity, transnational activism, labor, neoliberalism*]

"Solidarity" is a frequently evoked, but rarely analyzed, concept that has been a fundamental component of workers' movements since 1864, when the founding Congress of the First International adopted it as a central principle. *Solidarity* refers to a horizontal, class-based relationship that extends beyond workers of one neighborhood or one nationality to other working people who may be total strangers, and it requires that these people recognize their common interests as workers under an exploitative, capitalist system. The importance of solidarity arises from a need to fight the social fragmentation created by the development of capitalism, through the establishment of relationships of trust and mutuality. Solidarity is thus the basis of collective action, which must be organized. Although international worker solidarity against capital is closely associated with the writings of Karl Marx, especially the Communist Manifesto, the concept of "solidarity" may encompass other kinds of relationships and alliances.

Many U.S. citizens from communist, socialist, and anarchist organizations joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to oppose fascism during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), and a variety of U.S. groups championed solidarity with African anticolonial movements, Cuban revolutionaries, and Central American insurgencies during the Cold War (Gosse 1993, 1996; Perla 2008; Smith 1996; Young 2006). These initiatives frequently involved cross-class relationships based on common interests other than class, such as antiracism and anti-imperialism. Following the Cuban revolution, for example, thousands of U.S. leftists, organized through the Venceremos Brigade, visited Cuba and gained firsthand experience with socialist revolution. They acquired new ideas about how to fight inequality, especially racial inequality, in the United States and linked their own domestic struggles to the Cuban revolution (Young 2006). Yet even as the Cuban revolution provided an important political education for young U.S. leftists and nurtured a broader sense of connection to people elsewhere, it reinforced homophobia and sexist stereotypes of men and women among U.S. heterosexual activists (Gosse 1993; Lekus 2007).[1]

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Such experiences raise questions about how diverse groups build connections and a sense of common purpose, how people who have chosen to struggle together deal with unequal relationships of power, and how they remain open to new adherents and project a broad appeal. The answers are not clear. "Solidarity"—the concept—has received less scholarly attention than "class," "empire," and especially "hegemony,"[2] and although numerous anthropologists have discussed the notion of a politically engaged anthropology and what it might look like, these discussions have focused less on the tactics, methods, and theories of organizing opposition than on professional and ethical considerations and the relations of anthropologists to their research subjects.[3] Nowadays, there are numerous theme- and site-specific forms of solidarity, but no common political project connects them, and structural transformation, anti-imperialism, and revolution have, in many instances, been erased from the meaning of solidarity. The Cuban revolution has lost its luster, the antiwar movement is moribund,[4] socialism is discredited in much of the world, and the World Social Forum—the newest international movement to oppose the status quo—appears to be floundering. Moreover, some contemporary observers question the very existence of a U.S. "Left."[5]

What does solidarity mean in the current historical moment, especially given the pressures toward fragmentation brought about by neoliberalism?[6] Capitalism has constantly reorganized the economy through, for example, industrialization, internationalization, the "flexibilization" of labor, and the aggravation of racial and gender inequalities, and this process continually changes working peoples' place in society and their ties to each other. It obliges them to reconstitute relationships and associational forms that once shielded them from the brunt of market forces and to develop new perspectives and organizations to replace old forms of struggle. Solidarity and fragmentation are thus part of the same process, one that poses an irresolvable paradox at the core of labor organizing.

One way to examine this paradox is to consider protests against global corporations that arose at the end of the Cold War, when leftist alternatives to capitalism were discredited and states around the world enacted free-market policies that opened the door to foreign investment and eroded living conditions. Resistance to the predatory behavior of global corporations has brought together diverse, transnational coalitions of activists to fight the harmful effects of unfettered capitalism (Brysk 2000; Edelman 1998, 2001; Klein 2000; Moody 1997; Nash 2005), and it captured global attention in 1999 when thousands of protesters marched against the policies of the WTO in the "Battle of Seattle." Yet, even though the anticorporate resistance has forced companies to modify their behavior in some instances, it has not challenged the larger workings of capitalism.[7]

In this article, I explore the rise and decline of a cross-border, cross-class coalition that waged a campaign against the Coca-Cola Company from 2001 to 2007.[8] The campaign, which unfolded primarily in North America and Europe, focused on human rights violations in the corporation's Colombian bottling facilities and combined anticapitalist and anticorporate perspectives.[9] My discussion illustrates how Colombian workers struggled to construct new alliances to contend with the chaos that political violence and neoliberalism wrought on their lives, and it examines the tensions and disjunctures that arose within emergent activist coalitions.

Activists alleged that the Coca-Cola Company colluded with illegal paramilitary organizations to murder and terrorize trade unionists, and they employed a range of interlocking tactics that included a lawsuit against the Coca-Cola Company in U.S. court, a consumer boycott, and an attack on Coca-Cola's branded image to force the soft-drink giant to change its behavior. After five years of pressure, they succeeded in pushing the multinational to the bargaining table, but 12 months of talks failed to produce an agreement. The negotiations collapsed in 2007, and erstwhile allies took different directions. An activist close to the case observed that "defeat was snatched from the jaws of victory" when Colombian trade union leaders rejected a tentative deal. Yet because U.S. activists and Colombian unionists did not share the same political visions, the definition of victory was the subject of intense debate.

Much of the scholarship on cross-border activism builds on Keck and Sikkink's (1998) analysis of "transnational advocacy networks" of densely connected individuals and organizations in multiple settings that share particular beliefs and press a collective goal. Although transnational networks are not new, cross-class networks acquired a renewed salience after the Cold War, when a period of revitalized capitalist accumulation, the reconstitution of elite power, and the dispossession of ordinary people through a variety of mechanisms, including debt, privatization schemes, outsourcing, and the flexibilization of labor relations, intensified social fragmentation.[10] Left-wing parties, political movements, and guerrilla insurgencies that had organized to demand the structural transformation of society either declined, demobilized, or lost credibility in many areas of the world. As wealth was redistributed upward, NGOs emerged to partially fill the void left by retreating states and, according to their proponents, to better represent the needs of an amorphous "global civil society" than elected government did. In addition, the development of new technologies, especially the Internet, created new communication possibilities (e.g., Castells 1996; Ronfeldt et al. 1998). Yet as research has shown, NGOs generated new forms of clientelism, frequently lacked accountability to claimed constituencies, and accepted many of the tenets

of neoliberal capitalism (e.g., Brooks 2007; Fischer 1997; Gill 2000).

Much of the analysis of advocacy networks does not contextualize their emergence within the context of shifting class relationships, especially the changing composition of the working class. Scholars do note, however, that the network analysis of transnational collective action assumes a level of connection and coordination among actors that does not always exist. Activists do not necessarily share the same political agendas, languages, and definitions of success, even when they seek to hold a corporation or government accountable for its behavior, and they may have different degrees of knowledge about and connection to the multiple scenes where transnational campaigns play out (e.g., Aiyer 2007; Collins 2006; Edelman 2005). Although activism is presumably driven by domestic concerns in the countries that are the target of activist initiatives, this is not always the case. External actors often become the driving force in transnational movements, and they may press their claims in isolation from or in opposition to allies on whose behalf they claim to be fighting (e.g., Brooks 2007; Collins 2006). It is therefore important to explore changing class relationships and the shifting balance of power between the groups that make up cross-border coalitions as well as among these same groups. It is also necessary to examine the militant traditions and organizing processes that animate transnational alliances. By so doing, scholars can better understand the shifting relationships of power within coalitions stretched across space and how these relationships shape the ways that diverse activists frame the issues, develop protest tactics, and understand victory and defeat.

I argue that even though Colombian unionists and some northern activists understood that corporations were fundamental in the production and maintenance of class inequality in Colombia and the United States, anticorporatism failed to adequately describe the injustice and inequality experienced by an increasingly dispossessed and disposable Colombian working class. This new working class was most evident in Colombian cities, where ruined peasants, downsized workers, and the marginalized urban poor contended with each other for diminishing returns in the informal economy and had become ever more superfluous to capital accumulation under neoliberalism (Gill 2009). The anticorporate inclinations of the northern activists overlapped to a considerable degree with the anticapitalist sympathies of the Colombian trade unionists; indeed, as Liza Featherstone notes, "Anticorporatism translates admirably into union solidarity, and like 'globalization' . . . corporations provide a euphemism for capitalism, which few Americans want to talk about—after all, who wants to be taken for a glassy eyed, sectarian-newspaper pusher?" (2002:34). Yet fighting abusive corporate practices could not encompass the more complicated problem of the dispossession and reconfiguration of the working class and the reemergence of the state in defense of class privilege under neoliberalism in both Colombia and the United States.[11] Anticorporatism neglected the continuing importance of states for protecting workers' rights locally and nationally.

Furthermore, the anti–Coca-Cola campaign, like other transnational labor campaigns, targeted the branded image of a large corporation and focused on extreme violations—the murder of trade unionists—rather than the quotidian abuses suffered by Colombian workers under neoliberalism.[12] Moral outrage at the antiworker violence in Colombia motivated middle-class, student consumers to take action against the Coca-Cola Company, and it shaped the campaign's demands, which were framed in terms of human rights and the victimization of Colombian workers. This kind of labor philanthropy on behalf of Colombian workers could not substitute for the labor solidarity that trade unionists requested of northern activists,[13] in which the latter struggled with them to advance workers' interests vis-à-vis the state and global corporations, nor could it replace what Colombian unionists called "class struggle."[14]

The anti–Coca-Cola campaign highlights the unequal power relations that characterize transnational activism and the disjuncture between the goals of Colombian trade unionists and northern activists. It emphasizes the importance and the difficulty of coordinating the diverse objectives of transnational social movements. It suggests that transnational activists consider the development of tactics to push governments, as well as corporations, to protect labor rights and formulate better understandings of the different analyses, tactics, and objectives of the working people with whom they claim solidarity.

The genesis of the "Killer Coke" campaign in the United States

The transnational campaign against Coca-Cola brought together militant Colombian trade unionists, U.S. college and university students born during the Reagan presidency, human rights groups, U.S. labor lawyers, and veteran labor activists. The coalition aimed to hold the Coca-Cola Company accountable for colluding with right-wing paramilitary organizations to murder and terrorize Colombian workers, and it wanted to force the corporation to negotiate in good faith with the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de Alimentos (SINALTRAINAL), which organized workers in the Colombian bottling plants. SINALTRAINAL unionists brought to the campaign a working-class culture steeped in the teachings of Marx and Lenin and animated by old-Left beliefs about the centrality of the industrial working class in the process of societal transformation. They belonged to a sector of the Colombian labor movement known as "clasista," which argued that militant struggle, rather than patient negotiations with corporate officials, was more likely to produce concessions from giant

global corporations. Yet, for SINALTRAINAL, even more important than extracting concessions from Coca-Cola was the broader process of "struggle" against corporate capitalism and the capitalist state through bonds of solidarity with other working people. "The struggle," as they understood it, gave them their militant credentials.

The cross-border campaign against the soft-drink giant emerged out of the extreme political violence that wracked Colombia in the 1990s. Right-wing paramilitaries, financed by profits from the illegal cocaine traffic and backed by the state's security forces, targeted workers, peasants, students, journalists, left-wing political parties, and human rights defenders in a brutal dirty war that left thousands dead, disappeared, and displaced.[15] Coca-Cola workers found themselves caught up in a wave of violence that resulted in the deaths of several thousand Colombian workers between the mid-1980s and the end of the 20th century, and Colombia acquired the dubious distinction of being the most dangerous country in the world in which to be a trade unionist. The violence weakened or destroyed trade unions at a time when the enactment of neoliberal economic reforms was generating opposition from broad sectors of Colombian society. The reforms undermined labor protections and made it easier for corporations to hire temporary laborers at lower pay and with few, if any, benefits, and they generated increased unemployment, as domestic firms lost out to foreign competition and state enterprises passed into private hands. SINALTRAINAL trade unionists and many other Colombian workers claimed that company managers worked together with the paramilitaries to rid workplaces of both troublesome workers who resisted neoliberalism and the unions they led.[16]

The 1996 paramilitary murder of SINALTRAINAL local union leader Isidro Gil in the northeast Colombian town of Carepa and the displacement of the entire union directorate became the centerpiece of the campaign against the company. Prior to Gil's murder, workers had observed company managers conversing with known paramilitaries in the cafeteria of the Coca-Cola plant. When paramilitaries subsequently took over the factory, they forced SINALTRAINAL workers to write letters of resignation from the union on company computers and then faxed the letters to the union's national headquarters in Bogotá (Gill 2007). These events took place as the mercenaries, with the collusion of the armed forces, were tightening their grip on northern Colombia, and they arose within a context of escalating antiunion violence and complete impunity for the perpetrators. The Carepa case dramatized the dangers faced by Coca-Cola workers and raised questions about the relationship of the Coca-Cola Company to an illegal armed organization.

Because of the Coca-Cola Company's repeated denials of culpability, its refusal to act vigorously to protect the lives of its workers, and the failure of the Colombian state to hold perpetrators accountable for human rights crimes, SINALTRAINAL leaders believed that they were unlikely to get any relief from the violence in Colombia, where their efforts to build a broad-based union movement were failing. They were therefore eager to press their case in a wider, international forum and welcomed the support of U.S. Steelworkers' attorney Daniel Kovalik, who traveled to Colombia in 2000 and learned of the events in Carepa from an activist priest who was familiar with SINALTRAINAL. Kovalik had recently helped put together a case against the Union Oil Company of California (UNOCAL) for human rights violations in Myanmar, where villagers accused UNOCAL of torture, rape, and forced labor during the construction of a gas pipeline. He was interested in developing other cases in which he could use a little-known, 18th-century statute known as the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) to hold multinational corporations accountable for their labor practices.[17] After discussing the possibility of an ATCA case with SINALTRAINAL leaders, Kovalik and the U.S. Steelworkers, along with the Washington-based International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF), agreed to represent the Colombian union. In 2001, they charged the Coca-Cola Company with gross human rights violations in a lawsuit filed in U.S. federal court.

The case against Coca-Cola provided SINALTRAINAL with a means to bring international pressure on the Coca-Cola Company, its Colombian bottlers, and the Colombian state by calling attention to the antiunion violence and the impunity that sustained it. The lawsuit arose at a moment when terror and widespread impunity for the perpetrators of torture, extrajudicial executions, and wholesale massacres were creating the political conditions necessary for the neoliberal transformation of the economy. The threat of violence and job loss hung over anyone who challenged plant closures, forced retirements, the rise of labor subcontracting, and the reduction of hard-earned wages and benefits or who opted to join SINALTRAINAL. With the influx of young, temporary workers into the Coca-Cola bottling plants, the strike became an ineffective means of resistance, and the union's membership dropped by more than half. Organizing new workers was an imperative, but the rise of part-time work, constant harassment from company supervisors, and the pervasive threat of violence made expanding union membership very difficult. In its weakened state, SINALTRAINAL could not mount a serious challenge to the neoliberal transformations of labor relations and the repeated firings of temporary workers—especially those who joined SINALTRAINAL. All of this, in turn, hastened the implementation of neoliberal policies, the further fragmentation of the work force, and the erosion of working conditions (Gill 2007).

Despite their vanguardist conceptions of the industrial working class, SINALTRAINAL leaders understood that the industrial proletariat no longer played the leading role in

societal transformation that they had once envisioned. Full-time workers like themselves were rapidly disappearing in the wake of subcontracting, and downsized workers, ruined peasants, and impoverished urbanites—all increasingly superfluous to neoliberal capitalism—were swelling the informal economy. Every SINALTRAINAL unionist could recount the social, economic, and emotional travails of former workmates who struggled to survive as taxi drivers, street vendors, or the proprietors of mostly unprofitable "microenterprises." In addition, they had friends and neighbors who had lost jobs when local industries closed and state enterprises passed into private hands, and they had witnessed the influx of dispossessed peasants to their towns and cities. To build solidarity, it was therefore important to reach out to other potential allies—unions, grassroots groups, social movements in Colombia and other countries—and build a broad-based opposition to neoliberal capitalism and the Colombian state.

To do so, SINALTRAINAL leaders used the freedom from work in the bottling plants that union leadership provided them to organize, and they urged members of the rank and file to "drop the worker discourse" and find other ways of talking to people and constructing alliances with them. This eclectic philosophy was evident during my numerous visits between 2004 and 2008 to SINALTRAINAL's national headquarters in Bogotá, where on any given day displaced peasants and indigenous people, trade unionists, Colombian students, and an occasional European volunteer met in meetings, over lunch, and in casual conversations. Yet organizing nonunion workers and building horizontal alliances with other groups demanded enormous discretion, person-to-person contact, the cultivation of local leaders, and, frequently, the creation of clandestine networks. This base-building work opened unionists to constant charges that they collaborated with leftist guerrillas and that their organizations were little more than guerrilla fronts. In Colombia, such charges, innuendos, rumors, and suggestions could have lethal consequences. The perilous process of organizing in Colombia, however, developed with little connection to the U.S.-based, anti–Coca-Cola campaign, which focused on consumers.

In the United States, the ATCA lawsuit was only the first in an array of tactics deployed against the corporation. In 2003, U.S. labor activist Ray Rogers joined forces with the Steelworkers and the ILRF and officially launched the "Killer Coke" campaign with an English-language website of the same name. Rogers had built his reputation on shaming powerful companies through attacks on their branded images. He refined the "corporate campaign" tactic in the 1970s, during a successful union drive against the J. P. Stevens corporation, a southern clothing manufacturer that opposed the unionization of its workforce. By expanding the focus beyond shop-floor, bread-and-butter issues to include social and moral concerns about corporate behavior, Rogers mobilized supporters beyond the factory gates of J. P. Stevens and demonstrated that extracting concessions from powerful corporations was possible, even when recourse to labor's traditional weapon of resistance, the strike, was not an option.[18]

He developed similar tactics, especially negative publicity, against the Coca-Cola Company and drew attention to the disparities between the iconic vision of Coca-Cola as the quintessential American soft drink and the allegations of murder and collusion with right-wing paramilitaries in the corporation's Colombian bottling plants. His website served as a clearinghouse for news about the Coca-Cola Company's practices and provided information about how to become involved in the campaign. Rogers advocated "cutting out" Coca-Cola's markets by convincing large institutions, such as universities and labor unions, to sever or not renew contracts with the beverage giant. He employed these pressure tactics as a means to force company officials to stop the violence against SINALTRAINAL, to respect collective bargaining agreements with the union, and to push the corporation to compensate the victims and survivors of the violence.

Although the "Killer Coke" campaign found backers among some U.S. trade unionists, the Teamsters Union, whose members distribute Coca-Cola, was less enthusiastic about the boycott than about condemning the human rights violations addressed in the court case. Its leaders felt that if the boycott succeeded in reducing the company's share of the soft-drink market, Teamsters who bottled and distributed the beverage would be the most likely to suffer. It is therefore not surprising that the campaign's biggest support came from college and university students. Students were outraged by the human rights violations in Colombia and by the sale on their campuses of beverages and an array of corporate clothing lines manufactured under dangerous and unjust working conditions.

Many student groups worked closely with Rogers, and campus organizing intensified with the involvement of the United Students Against Sweat Shops (USAS)—a national network of student groups that grew out of reformist initiatives in the AFL-CIO and campus antisweatshop campaigns in the 1990s. USAS emerged from a series of summer internship programs known as "Union Summer," initiated in 1995 by John Sweeney after he assumed leadership of the AFL-CIO and pledged to reform the labor movement. Alarmed by the decline in union membership, which had sunk to 15 percent of the workforce by the mid-1990s, Sweeney sought to draw more students into the labor movement to revive labor organizing. The first USAS organizers interned with the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), and in subsequent years, the ties between the growing student group and the labor movement, especially UNITE, remained strong.

For USAS, the "Killer Coke" campaign became part of a wider initiative to push campus administrators to practice "ethical contracting" by shunning corporations with abusive labor practices and to require the companies that produce university goods to pay a living wage and not repress democratic labor unions. By late 2005 and 2006, campus-based anti–Coca-Cola protests were popping up across the United States to such an extent that the movement against the multinational surpassed the capacity of Rogers and USAS to either lead or control. For most of the white, middle-class students who became involved with it, the campaign expressed their general desire for "social justice," understood as an end to antiunion violence in Colombia.

The campus organizing also relied on the work of a handful of first- and second-generation Colombian immigrants, some of whom were exiles from the violence in Colombia. Members of this "immigrant Left," in addition to organizing in their own communities around labor and immigration issues, focused their efforts on U.S. citizens who could influence the behavior of the Coca-Cola Company and other multinational corporations that operated in Colombia. They addressed campus audiences about the horrific violence against trade unionists, recounted their harrowing personal experiences in Coca-Cola's bottling plants, and provided an important connection between the U.S.–based campaign against the soft-drink giant and SINALTRAINAL's struggles in Colombia. Yet the ability of this small group of activists to develop a U.S.–based campaign synchronized with the overall strategies of SINALTRAINAL remained embryonic.[19]

Cross-border coalitions and human rights

Between 2003 and 2007, the campaign gained traction on college campuses and became what *The Nation* magazine described as "the largest anti-corporate movement since the campaign against Nike" (Blanding 2006: 3). By 2006, there were active student groups on 130 campuses, and several colleges and universities had severed or renegotiated their contracts with Coca-Cola. The campaign, however, was hardly a seamless alliance of activists marching together against the corporation. Although the focus of the campaign was Coca-Cola's labor practices in Colombia, the campaign itself unfolded almost completely in Europe and North America. In the United States, anti–Coca-Cola protesters, who were mostly white citizens without direct ties to SINALTRAINAL, drew on workers' heart-wrenching testimonies and harrowing experiences to frame a moral argument about the unethical practices of the soft-drink giant and the necessity of boycotting Coca-Cola products until the corporation recognized workers' right to free association. Although they understood themselves to be acting in solidarity with SINALTRAINAL, U.S.–based activists played a key role in defining the anticorporate nature of the protest movement and in focusing the campaign on consumption. Their initiative raised questions not only about the balance of power within the alliance and the way issues were framed but also, more importantly, about the importance of rank-and-file organizing in a labor protest.[20]

Following the initiation of legal proceedings against the Coca-Cola Company, SINALTRAINAL's lawyers, the U.S. Steelworkers, and SINALTRAINAL leaders in Colombia decided to initiate a boycott of Coca-Cola products. The boycott began with a series of public meetings that were launched in Atlanta—the world headquarters of Coca-Cola—Bogotá, and Brussels, where SINALTRAINAL leaders and a small group of supporters condemned Coca-Cola for conspiring with right-wing paramilitaries to murder unionists and asked consumers not to purchase Coca-Cola. The purpose of the boycott was to call attention to the lawsuit and sustain pressure on the corporation by denouncing the violence against Colombian workers.

The lawsuit framed acts of terror and antiunion violence as human rights abuses (i.e., the violation of individual civil and political rights) rather than as a political tactic to destroy unions, dispossess workers, and redistribute wealth to global corporations and national elites. It reflected how, in the aftermath of the Cold War, the fall of authoritarian governments, and the collapse of socialist projects, political struggle increasingly played out on the terrain of "rights" and moved into the legal realm. The lawsuit addressed individual cases of recent human rights violations, beginning with the 1996 murder of Isidro Gil. Although the case offered potential benefits to the plaintiffs and threatened to deal a blow to Coca-Cola's branded image, it did not examine why being a trade unionist in Colombia had become so dangerous. Because of a justifiable fear of diluting the lawsuit, lawyers did not contextualize human rights crimes within the long history of class struggle between workers and the company, the rise of a unified labor movement in the mid-1980s, or the intensification of antiunion violence after the Colombian government enacted neoliberal reforms in the 1990s (Gill 2007). Moreover, by treating workers as individuals, the lawsuit precluded any collective expression of grievances or demands for structural transformation, and it empowered lawyers to make important decisions about the campaign because of their legal expertise and assessment of the evolving status of the case in court.

SINALTRAINAL appreciated the limits of legal activism, and union leaders never understood the lawsuit as an end in itself. They saw the lawsuit as one tactic in a broader struggle against Coca-Cola and the neoliberal policies of the Colombian state. It was, they felt, a desperate attempt to build international solidarity at a moment when right-wing violence was decimating popular organizations, especially trade unions. Unionists also hoped that the negative

publicity would make it harder for the corporation and its shadowy allies to murder workers with impunity.

Sustaining the campaign's momentum in the United States was difficult, as the union's lawyers had neither the time nor the manpower to promote activist efforts, and by the end of the first year, the campaign had stalled. Rogers then joined forces with the sputtering movement and assumed the task of keeping the human rights abuses in the public eye and broadening the campaign's base of support. He and SINALTRAINAL's lawyers believed that his expertise in "corporate campaigns" could help to defeat the Coca-Cola Company, and the mobilization of shame—also a classic tactic of traditional human rights activism—was an important component of his anticorporate arsenal. Rogers, who was moved by the stories of Colombian trade unionists, became the public face of the anti–Coca-Cola campaign in the United States, even though he never visited Colombia and had only brief, intermittent contact through an interpreter with exiles and Colombian labor leaders when they came to the United States. Nevertheless, Rogers professed an understanding of the Colombian situation because, he explained, "it was all neoliberalism," just like the situation in the United States. Not surprisingly, there was little direct contact or coordination between Rogers and Colombian labor leaders, who never fully grasped the outsized role that he played in the campaign and who never trusted him because of their perception that he had an undisclosed personal agenda.

Through the Killer Coke website, speaking engagements, and media contacts, as well as protests outside Coca-Cola corporate headquarters and at the corporation's annual meeting for shareholders, Rogers built public pressure against the Coca-Cola Company, and he was joined by a growing number of students on university campuses across the country. Together, activists used exemplary cases, especially the events in Carepa, to demonstrate to consumers how a company intimately related to "the American way of life" terrorized and abused its Colombian workers. In this way, they appealed to consumers' sense of moral outrage and urged them to boycott Coca-Cola products until the company changed its labor practices and agreed to negotiate in good faith with SINALTRAINAL.

The tactic worked well among U.S. university students, who understood their efforts to remove Coca-Cola from college campuses as an act of solidarity with SINALTRAINAL. Yet the focus on consumption privileged the behavior of U.S. consumers and the locus of activism in the United States while downplaying workers' ongoing battles against the erosion of living and working conditions in Colombia.[21] That the politics of consumption made so much sense to students was hardly surprising. Students lived in a country in which personal consumption accounted for the lion's share of the gross domestic product, and the food courts and bookstores on their campuses were outlets for all manner of corporate paraphernalia. Few U.S. activists directly addressed capitalist exploitation in the workplace, even when they were critical of it, and they accepted capitalism more or less as the only game in town.

Many student activists associated radicalism with lifestyle politics, such as vegetarianism (Ross 2004:263–265), and had turned to anarchism because of their disillusionment with the political process in the United States and deep suspicions about overarching forms of power, especially the state.[22] All of this complicated the process of making common cause with Colombian workers. Meat was an important and irreplaceable component of the workers' diet. And trade unionists did not reject all forms of centralized government and authority; they had a sophisticated understanding of the importance of labor unions and political parties in the broader process of struggle. Moreover, anti-imperialist nationalism and working-class militancy at the point of production had shaped the life experiences of many Colombian workers and were common in various Colombian locales. Nevertheless, struggles in these settings remained divided from each other and, unlike those in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, could not overcome the power and the violence of a well-organized, ruling right-wing coalition. If the anti–Coca-Cola campaign had formed part of a broader antiwar or anti-imperialist movement in the United States, more room might have existed for U.S. activists to nurture a politics that reached beyond liberal anticonsumerism and connected more effectively to progressive political currents in Colombia.

Yet, with few exceptions, campus activists generally had little understanding of Colombia, beyond media portrayals of the country as a land of drug trafficking and criminality and reports from international human rights organizations that documented widespread violence but offered little explanation for it. They were outraged by the violence but lacked the analytic tools to think about its causes. Although USAS's ties to the reformist wing of the U.S. labor movement put more students in touch with labor issues at the point of production, campus activists had no personal stake in labor struggles unfolding in Colombia, and most did not come from working-class families with a history of union participation or labor militancy.[23] They had come of age in a period of campus identity politics, the decline of trade unions, and the rise of free-market fundamentalism. Consequently, the incipient revitalization of the U.S. labor movement had not yet convinced them that they could get social justice through the methods and goals of a movement that many still considered obsolete. The resurgence of a militaristic, right-wing agenda within the United States after the September 11 attacks further constrained the limits of the possible.

The student focus on Coca-Cola and its iconic image was a manifestation of the identity politics that intensified under neoliberalism and that, with episodic

exceptions, such as the 1930s, have informed political debate in the United States.[24] Unlike SINALTRAINAL, for whom the Coca-Cola Company represented a synecdoche of capitalism, for U.S. students, the singular corporation constituted the enemy. Campaign literature, T-shirts, and posters, for example, took aim at Coca-Cola's image with slogans such as "Unthinkable Undrinkable," "The Taste that Represses," and "Ban Killer Coke," and most students had only vague notions about how the anti–Coca-Cola campaign might form the starting point for a more broadly focused struggle. Many immigrant exiles and Colombian labor leaders associated with the campaign already envisioned such a struggle, but given the circumstances in the United States and Colombia, they felt that anticorporatism was the best way to support the Colombian Coca-Cola workers at a particularly dire moment. They understood that formulating their arguments in the language of the anticapitalist Left would have seriously limited their organizing efforts in the United States, whereas articulating an anticapitalist argument never even occurred to the majority of rank-and-file student supporters.

Drawing on their considerable charisma, SINALTRAINAL leaders stoked the flames of moral indignation with moving testimonies about assassination attempts, death threats, kidnappings, and torture that they and their family members experienced. Their stirring accounts of horrific personal experiences often moved audiences to tears. Yet their presentations remained decontextualized, containing little of the incisive analysis that workers had developed to explain the dramatic political and economic transformations taking place in Colombia. SINALTRAINAL leaders had, in fact, learned what worked with U.S. audiences and how to mobilize them.

For SINALTRAINAL leaders, however, human rights discourse was considerably more nuanced and complicated than the simple demand for individual and political freedoms. Colombian human rights activism had emerged from communist-influenced organizations and progressive sectors of the Catholic Church, and beginning in the 1980s, groups on the Colombian Left hotly debated the concept of "human rights." Many critics, especially trade unionists, found it inadequate to describe their struggles; human rights, they believed, was a bourgeois distraction from the fight for the collective, class-based concerns of working people (Tate 2007:101). SINALTRAINAL leaders were sympathetic to this critique and had always believed that international solidarity with oppressed people was more important than lobbying foreign governments and international organizations to pressure the Colombian government to improve its human rights record. Yet as the violence intensified against them and the labor movement in general, it eliminated the most dynamic leaders, ruptured the social relationships and organizational forms through which working people channeled their demands, and opened the door for radical, free-market restructuring. SINALTRAINAL leaders understood the connections between political violence and neoliberalism, and it should come as no surprise that they infused the human rights frame with their own understandings of class-based politics.[25] Several Coca-Cola workers participated in local human rights groups, and they saw no conflict between this work and their involvement with a militant trade union. For these workers, human rights discourse had become part of what William Roseberry calls "the language of contention," that is, part of a "meaningful framework for living through, talking about and acting upon social orders characterized by domination" (1994:361).

In the United States, however, the concept of "human rights" had not absorbed the leftist critique to the same extent as in Colombia. The human rights frame privileged individual civil and political rights violations, and it downplayed SINALTRAINAL's quotidian battles against the erosion of living and working conditions in both the bottling plants and working-class neighborhoods. There was no conceptual or political link between the goal of policy makers in Washington and Bogotá to enact a neoliberal agenda in Colombia and the ways that political violence, perpetrated by right-wing mercenaries tied to the state, local elites, and global corporations, was prying apart social relationships and incorporating vulnerable working people into new relationships of inequality. None of this surprised SINALTRAINAL leaders, but they discovered that if they spoke about human rights with a U.S. accent, they could bring U.S. citizens on board to support their cause. One Coca-Cola worker, who was initially skeptical about how U.S. audiences would receive him, concluded after a speaking tour of the United States that, even though U.S. citizens were not as "open" as their European counterparts, "if you give them the right facts and figures about human rights violations, they will support you."

SINALTRAINAL's opposition to worsening labor conditions in Colombia, especially subcontracting, had made union leaders the targets of paramilitary violence in the first place, but this resistance became blurred within the U.S. human rights frame, which voided references to capitalists and the working class, or the rich and the poor, and simply asserted that Colombian trade unionists had the right to free association without the threat of constant terror. In the absence of an analysis that linked political violence to neoliberalism, it was difficult to understand the human rights crimes against SINALTRAINAL leaders as more than just the immoral practices of a shameless corporation and the bloodthirsty mercenaries linked to it.[26] The long, conflicted history of company–union relations as well as the widespread opposition to neoliberalism and the growth of a vulnerable, disposable workforce with few rights or protections in Colombia were either downplayed or eliminated from view, and SINALTRAINAL leaders and U.S.–based

exiles became little more than valiant victims for their U.S. audiences.

Such was not the case in Colombia, where union representatives were viewed through various lenses and pulled in numerous directions. Some rank-and-file Coca-Cola workers were skeptical about SINALTRAINAL's confrontational style and worried that it would produce little more than the deaths of more workers like themselves; they also harbored suspicions that persistent rumors about union leaders' ties to left-wing guerrillas might be true. Some SINALTRAINAL members also took a dim view of the international campaign, because they were concerned with immediate bread-and-butter issues. These workers saw the campaign as a distraction from leaders' primary responsibilities to unionists in Colombia, where the arbitrary behavior of plant managers, the dismissal of part-time workers, forced retirements, and Coca-Cola's refusal to abide by previously negotiated agreements were facts of daily life. Some even suspected union representatives of using international travel to pursue a lifestyle beyond their reach in Colombia, a proposition also voiced by Coca-Cola management to discredit the SINALTRAINAL leadership to the rank and file. And, finally, SINALTRAINAL leaders had to constantly address criticism from other sectors of the Colombian labor movement that questioned the international campaign's exclusive focus on Coca-Cola, when paramilitaries and state security forces were terrorizing thousands of other workers. They found themselves forced to juggle an array of concerns: the competing demands of the rank and file and the labor movement, the pressure to organize locally, the latest affronts by corporate management, the unwillingness of the Ministry of Social Protection to act on workers' behalf, and the requirements of the growing international campaign.

Toward the middle of 2006, however, the campaign reached a crucial juncture when several developments obliged SINALTRAINAL's lawyers to reassess it. The lawyers harbored growing doubts that the case against the multinational would ever come to trial. In 2003, a U.S. court had dismissed the lawsuit against the Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Company but had allowed it to proceed against two Coca-Cola bottling companies—Bebidas y Alimentos de Urabá and PANAMCO. This ruling was a setback to the lawsuit, which had argued that the Coca-Cola Company and the bottling firms were, in fact, the same entity, or "alter egos," in the language of the legal document. By advancing this argument, lawyers had presented the corporate practice of subcontracting as a strategy to deny responsibility for the well-being of workers. Although SINALTRAINAL's lawyers appealed the ruling in 2004, with an amendment to the initial complaint, the court would take years to deliver a ruling.

At the same time, however, anti–Coca-Cola activism on college campuses had surged. New student groups were popping up everywhere, making opposition from Coca-Cola more difficult, but there was a growing sense among the lawyers and some activists that, despite the campus protests, the campaign could not continue indefinitely. It had turned four years old in the summer of 2006, and SINALTRAINAL's lawyers began to feel pressure to reach a settlement. The lawyers wondered how much longer students would stay focused on Coca-Cola when war was raging in Iraq, but perhaps more importantly, they were concerned that financial donors would not continue to back a campaign built around a lawsuit that appeared unwinnable in court. Moreover, key student organizers were either graduating or moving on to other matters. Assessing the situation and making the decision to seek a negotiated settlement was a process that took place almost entirely among U.S. activists; indeed, the analysis of SINALTRAINAL's lawyers, whose organizations—the ILRF and the U.S. Steelworkers—had bankrolled the campaign, played a determining role in the decision to settle, demonstrating the power exercised by attorneys in campaigns involving legal activism.

Corporate officials also decided that the moment to cut their losses had arrived. They had seen Coca-Cola's image battered in the media and on campuses, where an important sector of the youth market lay, and for four years, they had dispatched retinues of public relations specialists to university campuses to parry charges that the company maintained ties to paramilitary death squads. Union leaders, however, were suspicious of a settlement. In the absence of an outright victory that held Coca-Cola publicly accountable for the murder of trade unionists, the possibility of a settlement opened up a new gray area of confidential talks and high-stakes give-and-take with company representatives whom SINALTRAINAL leaders deeply mistrusted. Trade unionists had learned from bitter experience that the corporation did not always respect agreements that it negotiated with the union, and some suspected that the company would attempt to buy them off without acceding to any of their demands, such as an end to subcontracting and the reinstatement of fired workers. Moreover, at least a few influential leaders never wanted to see the case resolved, as the lawsuit provided a convenient club to continually bludgeon the company. Despite these reservations, the unionists accepted the advice of counsel and agreed to seek a settlement, but, not surprisingly, the different goals and perspectives that had always informed the anti–Coca-Cola coalition came into more overt conflict in the ensuing talks.

Buying labor peace

Beginning in August 2006, SINALTRAINAL's lawyers and union representatives met with company officials in a series of meetings that took place in the United States and Colombia, and before long the meetings began to take on a predictable form: Negotiators would meet and agree on

certain basic propositions; Coca-Cola lawyers would then write up the points of agreement and attempt to recover negotiating ground by burying changes in legal jargon; union lawyers tried to correct these "mistakes" and then passed a Spanish version along to SINALTRAINAL leaders, who could not understand what had happened to points that they thought were clear. Constant debate over discrepancies between Coca-Cola's version and what activists thought they had talked about slowed the negotiations. SINALTRAINAL leaders grew increasingly disillusioned with the process, and their relationship with Coca-Cola negotiators did little to instill confidence. One SINALTRAINAL representative recounted his disgust with corporate lawyers who would not look the unionists in the eye and even thumbed through newspapers and passed notes to each other when the workers spoke.

Yet tensions between the company negotiators and union leaders were nothing new. A more disturbing problem developed during the talks as the relationship between the union, its lawyers, and Rogers became strained. Labor leaders increasingly felt that their lawyers were not advocating key issues that SINALTRAINAL considered important, such as subcontracting, and that they failed to understand the situation faced by workers in Colombia. The lawyers, for their part, became ever more confused about what the union wanted, or whether it even wished to settle, and they complained that the union was not speaking with one voice. Rogers, who did not play a direct role in the negotiations, came to be viewed by SINALTRAINAL and its lawyers as a loose canon. He advanced his own demands for what he required to end the campaign, demands that not only included a tougher stance toward Coca-Cola management but also a large monetary settlement to compensate his organization—Corporate Campaign Inc.—for the time and energy that it devoted to the campaign. These demands, however, only earned him the mistrust of union leaders, who felt that he sought to exploit the suffering of victimized Colombian unionists for personal gain and who tended to view U.S. institutional allies as limitless sources of financial support. Despite the tensions, the lawyers managed to cobble together a tentative deal that they believed got the union most of what it wanted, and Rogers eventually agreed to go along with it. Although the outline of the proposed agreement was never publicly disclosed, the settlement reportedly included financial compensation for victimized families and the union. The lawyers presented the deal as a victory for the union and urged labor leaders to accept it.

Trade union leaders, however, did not see the proposed deal as either a victory or a solution to SINALTRAINAL's problems, which had continued to worsen. As the talks had dragged on and the corporation won time at the bargaining table, Coca-Cola continued to fire Colombian workers who affiliated with SINALTRAINAL, arguing, in the case of temporary workers, that they had no right to unionize because they worked for a subcontractor, not the Coca-Cola Company. Such was the case in April 2007, when 17 truck drivers in Villavicencio lost their jobs for joining SINALTRAINAL. The company also attempted to shut down local SINALTRAINAL affiliates in several towns, and renewed death threats against union leaders, including some on the negotiating team, came with demands that the union stop denouncing the Coca-Cola Company.

SINALTRAINAL leaders saw the hand of Coca-Cola behind the death threats, but workers were precluded from speaking out against the corporation during the negotiations because of a binding arbitration agreement that included a "nondisparagement" clause. Yet it was the possibility to denounce the violence and hold the corporation accountable in the court of public opinion that had drawn the union into the lawsuit in the first place; indeed, some union leaders believed that they were still alive because of the pressure that international condemnation had placed on the company. As unionists grew alarmed at what was happening around them and their inability to do anything about it, one worker expressed the concerns of others when he snapped that "we can't just wait around while they [the Coca-Cola Company's lawyers] screw us."

SINALTRAINAL leaders concluded that the settlement failed to offer a solution to the continuing violence, the ongoing erosion of working conditions, and the weakening of SINALTRAINAL. In their opinion, the settlement amounted to little more than a corporate effort to buy off the union. It also created other problems. SINALTRAINAL leaders claimed that the settlement limited their ability to mount future protests against the company, and they worried that the union as well as victimized workers and their families who received financial compensation would become targets of extortion demands by a range of armed groups. Some workers believed that they would have to leave the country if they received a financial settlement. Leaders also feared that, without any political victories to show for their negotiating efforts (e.g., the reinstatement of fired workers, an end to subcontracting, the unionization of temporary workers), critics within SINALTRAINAL and the broader Colombian labor movement would accuse them of selling out to the multinational in a corrupt move to win monetary benefits for a small clique of supporters. Because of these worries and considerations, union members decided to reject the proposed agreement and cut off settlement talks with the Coca-Cola Company.

In the aftermath of the failed settlement negotiations, the groups that formed the anti–Coca-Cola alliance moved in different directions. SINALTRAINAL sought new ways to build on its international contacts and restart the campaign, overestimating, perhaps, the availability of funding and resources from northern institutions that no longer perceived a campaign with a clearly defined end point or

a union that would ever compromise with Coca-Cola. This time, however, union members decided to cast a broader net and denounce several of the multinational companies that operated in Colombia. They did so by organizing a series of explicitly anti-imperialist Permanent People's Tribunals, or alternative judiciaries established outside state authority, that evaluated the behavior of global corporations on the basis of the testimony presented by working people and the refusal of the Colombian state to protect its citizens. The tribunals then issued public reports based on the assessment of international participants who served as judges.[27] Activists argued that they were an important way to denounce global corporations for violating the collective rights of Colombian working people and to gather documentation against the corporate giants. SINALTRAINAL also undertook a renewed effort to send delegations of union members to visit trade unionists and sympathetic groups in other Latin American countries in the hope of building stronger regional alliances.

Meanwhile, in the United States, Rogers was unaware of SINALTRAINAL's initiative to "restart" the campaign, as he had never stopped campaigning in the first place. He continued to push the consumer boycott of Coca-Cola products in the United States on behalf of the Colombian union, and campus-based student groups continued to express interest in booting the soft-drink giant from their schools. SINALTRAINAL's lawyers, for their part, looked for other ATCA cases in Colombia to prosecute, having grown frustrated and disillusioned with SINALTRAINAL.

Conclusion

The campaign against Coca-Cola demonstrates the disjunctures that shape cross-class, cross-border alliances. It underscores the difficulty of synchronizing diverse activist agendas in the context of unequal power relations, and it also elucidates the limits of what was possible in early 21st-century Colombia and the United States. In Colombia, the anti–Coca-Cola campaign offered SINALTRAINAL leaders one of their few remaining options to pursue worker protections. The paramilitary assault against trade unionists had attained its maximum intensity, and the antiworker violence was bolstering the aim of the Colombian government and global firms to restructure the labor force in accord with neoliberal principles. At stake for SINALTRAINAL leaders and their rank-and-file supporters was more than just the continued existence of SINALTRAINAL; their lives and livelihoods hung in the ever more one-sided balance of power. The campaign constituted a last-ditch effort to draw international attention to their plight and to find new allies who could operate without the constraints imposed on workers in Colombia. On many U.S. campuses, it raised awareness of antiworker violence in Colombia, and it pushed several college and university administrations to cut or reevaluate their ties to the Coca-Cola Company, which was briefly placed on the defensive.

Yet building a cross-class, transnational alliance bumped up against several problems. The campaign was, for all intents and purposes, led by northern middle-class activists, even though it focused on antiunion violence in Colombia, and these activists were not fully engaged either with the labor struggles taking place in Colombia or with the immigrant activists who offered a link to SINALTRAINAL and a broader vision of social change. Many rank-and-file student activists did not grasp the connections between the political violence against trade unionists and the labor battles waged by SINALTRAINAL against subcontracting, arbitrary dismissals, plant closures, and a host of other issues. They also did not fully comprehend the ideas about class struggle that inspired the unionists or the ways that workers were retooling these beliefs in light of the dramatic reconfiguration of the Colombian working class. The frequency and depth of the contacts between white, middle-class anti–Coca-Cola campaigners in the United States and Colombian trade unionists also varied considerably, and in some cases, there was little or no contact at all. And even when there was contact, Colombian labor leaders chose to emphasize a U.S.–accented conceptualization of human rights, which they knew could mobilize supporters but did not do enough to educate U.S. audiences about the consequences of neoliberal state policies in Colombia and the role of the U.S. and Colombian governments in enacting them.

Well-organized consumer boycotts have considerable potential insofar as they involve worker and community organizations and pressure governments and corporations to change abusive labor policies.[28] Yet, if a goal of transnational activism is solidarity with working people rather than labor philanthropy, activists would be well advised to seek ways to broaden alliances beyond college students to include immigrants, trade unionists, and people of color and to better coordinate the diverse goals of groups in the North and the South. Northern activists should also attend more closely to the analyses, tactics, and sensibilities of working people to strengthen unions and expand the rights of working people in Latin America. Some trade unions, such as SINALTRAINAL, still offer organizational resources, and various social movements provide ties to more numerous, less well-organized members of the working class. It is in Latin America where the roots of Marxist-inspired, working-class internationalism and community organizing continue to nurture contemporary resistance, where protests against the predations of multinational corporations carry a strong anticapitalist message, and where talk of "socialism" is again capturing the imagination of those who have been dispossessed by neoliberalism. The histories, organizing traditions, and political agendas of domestic activists in the countries targeted by transnational campaigns

offer important lessons to northern allies, and finding ways to support and broaden these struggles, with all of their imperfections and contradictions, is a high priority.

Notes

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1. According to Ian Lekus (2007), the homophobia among Venceremos Brigade members prompted a major controversy between gay and straight supporters of the Cuban revolution, and the Cuban government's treatment of homosexuals ultimately alienated U.S. gays who had once supported the revolution. Similarly, Van Gosse (1993) argues that the perceived exoticism and machismo of the bearded, cigar-smoking Cuban revolutionaries provided a masculinist, bohemian role model for young, straight males who sought an escape from the cultural conservatism of the mid-20th-century United States.

2. *Solidarity* does not appear as an entry in either Raymond Williams's widely cited *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976) or Tom Bottomore's edited *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (1991).

3. See, for example, Hale 2006, 2008; Scheper-Hughes 1995; and Speed 2006. For exemplary studies that highlight organizing, see Edelman 1999 on a transnational peasant movement, and three historical monographs—Palmer 1998, Freeman 2001, and Payne 1995—that explore the plans, strategies, and tactics of organizers. These studies demonstrate, respectively, that peasants, rural Mississippians, and urban workers did not revolt spontaneously against oppression and succeed because of the justness of their demands. They first developed a series of tactics and organizational strategies to confront power holders.

4. See Cockburn 2007 for a discussion of the post–September 11 antiwar movement and its decline.

5. On the question of the existence of a U.S. Left, see Wypijewski 2007.

6. *Neoliberalism* refers to the thinking and policies that advocate rule of the market and the unrestrained movement of capital and that champion the centrality of the individual and individual entrepreneurialism. Proponents of neoliberalism support deregulation, privatization, deunionization, "flexible" labor regimes, and the withdrawal of the state from social service provision.

7. See, however, the case studies in Bronfenbrenner 2007 for a discussion of cross-border, anticorporate struggles that tried to challenge capitalism.

8. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink define a campaign as "sets of strategically linked activists in which members of a diffuse principled network . . . develop explicit visibilities and mutually recognized roles in pursuit of a common goal" (1998:6).

9. The campaign was weakly linked to anti–Coca-Cola protests in India that targeted environmental issues and water rights. For more on the Indian protests and the issues at stake, see Aiyer 2007, Raman 2005, and Vedwan 2007.

10. See Harvey 2005 for a discussion of these processes.

11. For more on the changing contours of contemporary class relationships see, for example, Kasmir and Carbonella 2008, Davis 2004, and Gill 2007.

12. The transnational campaign against child labor in Salvadoran sweatshops tied to Cathy Lee Gifford's clothing line is typical in this regard (see Brooks 2007; Ross 2004:223–236).

13. I borrow the term *labor philanthropy* from Sakhela Buhlungu (2008:353–358).

14. See Seidman 2007 for a useful discussion about the shift from labor rights to human rights in transnational labor campaigns.

15. For more on the late 20th-century violence in Colombia, see Dudley 2004, Hylton 2006, and Palacios 2006.

16. In 2007, for example, Chiquita Brands was fined $25 million by the U.S. Justice Department for paying Colombian paramilitaries $1.7 million.

17. ATCA permitted the citizens of foreign countries to bring suit against U.S. corporations for gross human rights violations.

18. See Minchin 2005 for more on the campaign against the J. P. Stevens company. The notion of a "corporate campaign" built on the California farmworkers' successful boycott of grape growers that was led by Cesar Chávez in the late 1960s.

19. Hector Perla Jr. (2008) notes that in academic discussions of the 1980s Central American Peace and Solidarity Movement (CAPSM), U.S. analysts have underrated the participation of Central Americans because of a tendency to view the movement as a national, rather than a transnational, phenomenon. Although he correctly characterizes the CAPSM as a transnational movement, he does not take the next step and examine the relationships between Central American and North American activists.

20. The same questions arose in a consumer-focused campaign on behalf of Central American garment workers documented by Ethel C. Brooks (2007; cf. Foster 2008:202–209).

21. Brooks 2007 raises similar concerns about a consumer-focused campaign on behalf of Central American garment workers in the United States.

22. See Graeber 2004 for a discussion of contemporary anarchism and social movements.

23. The recent move by several U.S. trade unions to recruit students as staffers has raised problems, however. Steve Early, for examples, observes that "over-reliance on former students often goes hand-in-hand with underutilization of workers themselves—both organized and unorganized—in union campaigns. It avoids the hard, politically challenging work of creating a new organizing culture rooted in local unions and their communities" (2003:6).

24. See Davis 2007:43–60 for more on the enduring nature of identity politics in U.S. society.

25. Because of their association with sectors of the Left, human rights defenders, like trade unionists, were one of the major groups targeted by paramilitaries.

26. See, for example, some of the reports about Colombia published by Human Rights Watch (e.g., 1996, 2001).

27. The prototype for these events was the 1967 Russell tribunal, convened by Bertrand Russell to judge the United States for war crimes in Vietnam.

28. The successful, five-year consumer boycott of grapes waged by the United Farm Workers in the 1960s involved workers and the community. It significantly reduced corporate profits while simultaneously sparking a public reaction against grape growers that led to the passage of the Agricultural Labor Relations Act, the first law in U.S. history that protected agricultural workers (see Voss 2008).

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