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In the literature on the United States and the world in the twentieth century, Coca-Cola, as both an object of overseas consumerist desires and a globetrotting corporation, has assumed a kind of talismanic presence. Among other things, it has taught historians about the cultural Cold War in Europe; postwar French resistance to modernization in the guise of Americanization; and decolonization and nationalism in Egyptian politics.[1] The company's global ambitions and reach have helped historians think about the role of multinational corporations in the making of U.S. foreign relations beyond policymaking, while its production and consumption, and the resistance, negotiation, and acquiescence to them, provide opportunities to consider how significant processes like Americanization, Westernization, and globalization have played out around the world.

Charles Kraus's article, "More than Just a Soft Drink: Coca-Cola and China's Early Reform and Opening," might be the most determined article-length effort yet to tease historical explanations for major twentieth-century phenomena out of the company's ambitions and archival footprint. Kraus accomplishes his goal of placing Coke at "the center of a bilateral relationship whose significance is hard to overstate" (110) with admirable success, offering not just a look into an iconic U.S. firm's overseas push but, more importantly, how that effort was received and negotiated at various bureaucratic levels in China during the era when the world's largest country implemented the dramatic economic reforms that would create the rising superpower we know today.

[1] Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Richard F. Kuisel, "Coca-Cola and the Cold War: The French Face Americanization, 1948-1953," *French Historical Studies* 17:1 (Spring 1991): 96-116; Maurice Jr M. Labelle, "De-Coca-Colonizing Egypt: Globalization, Decolonization, and the Egyptian Boycott of Coca-Cola, 1966-68," *Journal of Global History* 9:1 (March 2014): 122-142. See also Bartow J. Elmore, *Citizen Coke: The Making of Coca-Cola Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015).

Of Kraus's several important contributions in this article is a simple one of clarifying the historical narrative: scholars studying Sino-American relations have assumed that the establishment and expansion of trade followed the normalization of relations between Washington and Beijing under the auspices of the Carter administration in January 1979. Kraus demonstrates that in fact firms like Coca-Cola had begun aggressively lobbying the Chinese government years in advance of this turning point, prompted instead by President Richard Nixon's 'opening' in 1972, and that they did so without the help, or even knowledge, of U.S. foreign policymaking institutions. The confidence the company displayed—one might even call it hubris—in its outreach to a nominal Cold War rival reveals not only the extent to which multinational firms could operate independently of state aims or power by the 1970s but also how nimble they could be in contrast to U.S. government agencies. When, in December 1978, Coke announced a deal with the Chinese government for production and distribution two days before the Carter administration announced the forthcoming normalization of relations between the two countries, it was the product of several years of dogged work.

Refreshingly, in this account Coca-Cola's aspirations take a back seat to an even more fascinating story: the reception of the company's entreaties in various locations and at different bureaucratic levels of the Chinese government and Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The article's tight narrative, focused on Shanghai, really shines, introducing assorted actors who will be unfamiliar to scholars outside of China studies but nevertheless making sense of a bewildering array of bureaucratic and political layers. In the hands of a historian who is comfortable working in local Chinese archives, Coca-Cola's return to the Chinese market becomes a vehicle for understanding the implementation of Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping's reform initiatives after 1978. Kraus finds that "China's economic engagement with the United States and other Western countries was driven by bottom-up processes as much as by top-down decisions" (116), by which he means that it was various lower- and mid-level bureaucrats in the Chinese government or the CCP who made many of the decisions that opened China's doors to Coca-Cola. Kraus highlights one CCP bureaucrat, Tong Zhiguang, who cared less for Coke's consumer appeal and more for the modernization of production technologies Coke-producing facilities would bring to China. In this format Kraus does not have the space to bring the reader up to the present but the contemporary echoes of accusations of China stealing U.S. intellectual property—the company insisted Chinese manufacturers import the syrup concentrate, made from its secret recipe—are audible.

Not all Chinese officials were eager to welcome Coca-Cola, however, as this was, after all, the most iconic of U.S. trademarks, as much a symbol of the United States' postwar imperial ambitions as a B-52 bomber. In Chinese archives Kraus finds "the frustrations and anxieties that Coca-Cola and other material symbols of Western capitalism elicited" in the People's Republic (122). Coke had, in fact, established itself in prewar China, with Shanghai in 1933 producing more Coke than anywhere else in the world outside the United States. That made it a target, of course, for nationalization by the CCP when it came to power in 1949. Three decades later, even after Chairman Mao Zedong's death, anti-Coke sentiment remained powerful, as "refusing Coca-Cola… was a foremost means of protecting national sovereignty" (114). Top CCP leaders, most notably Chen Yun, stoked fears of Coke draining China's foreign currency reserves and bringing Western imperialism and foreign exploitation with it. Meanwhile, local beverage manufacturers, like Shanghai Soft Drink, manufacturers of *Xingfu kele* (Lucky Cola), framed arguments against Coke to CCP officials in terms of nationalist competition. In the end, though, China's bureaucrats "willingly traded access to the China market for the sake of obtaining advanced technology and production techniques" (128).

Drawing lessons for historians broadly interested in U.S. foreign relations, Kraus concludes that "food is an essential ingredient in the study of the United States' relations with the world, often for reasons other than

taste and nutrition" (129). If anything, this is a conclusion that sells his article short. It demonstrates one valuable way for historians to interrogate the histories of globetrotting private firms, like Coca-Cola, that have no obligation to open their archives to curious historians. It is no small irony that Kraus is able to provide such insight on an iconic U.S. company only by sifting through Chinese archival sources. Historians of the future will wrestle similarly in trying to tell the global histories of firms like Google or Apple.

"More than Just a Soft Drink" is the single most useful article I have read on Sino-American relations during the era of China's great reforms, a period that ought to occupy greater attention from historians in the years to come. Kraus's article should be of value to all historians of U.S. foreign relations, especially those interested in culture and the transnational activities of non-state actors like corporations. And because it is so clearly written and concise, it will prove a useful reading for undergraduate courses in U.S. foreign relations.

Andrew C. McKevitt is associate professor of history at Louisiana Tech University. He is the author of *Consuming Japan: Popular Culture and the Globalizing of 1980s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017) and the recipient of the 2011 Stuart L. Bernath Scholarly Article Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.