

Transnational Solidarity Networks in the Era of the Catacombs, 1933–1939

The consolidation of the Peruvian APRA party (PAP) as a populist force in Peru during the 1930s and early-to-mid 1940s, took place amidst recurrent waves of political repression. The period of political opening that ensued from the passage of the Amnesty Law in August 1933 began to wane by January of the following year. In the face of growing social unrest across the country, the Benavides government resumed persecution against labour organizations and political opponents, cracking down on APRA leaders with particular resolve. PAP's activities were once more restricted and closely monitored, and eventually they were banned altogether. Things took a turn for the worse toward the end of 1934. When the Benavides government cancelled the holding of the parliamentary elections that were scheduled to take place in the spring of 1934, different factions of PAP found themselves exasperated with the impossibility of ever participating openly in Peruvian politics. As a result, they reverted to violence to express their political will and launched a series of uprisings on November 25, 1934, in the departments of Lima, Ayacucho, Huancayo, and Huancavelica.¹ But the party did not have sufficient

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¹ Nelson Manrique, "*¿Usted Fue Aprista! Bases para una historia crítica del APRA*," Lima: Fondo editorial PUCP, 2009, pp. 99–100.

means to sustain its insurrectionary line: a combination of poor planning and inexperience led to a complete fiasco.²

These failed rebellions of November 1934 marked an important tipping-point in the history of *Aprismo*. PAP relapsed into full outlawry shortly thereafter. APRA militants were soon imprisoned or sent into exile. As for those who remained in Peru, they looked for hiding places and quickly retreated into underground activity. It took eleven more years before PAP retrieved legal status and was authorized to openly participate again in Peruvian politics. This new spate of repression marked the beginning of what has come to be known in the Aprista lore as the “Era of the catacombs.” This expression, especially used by the historians and activists of APRA, describes the historical period that spanned the years from 1934 to 1945, during which APRA followers in Peru suffered unremitting state persecution, first under the military regime of Oscar R. Benavides (1933–1939), and then under the presidency of civilian Manuel Prado Ugarteche (1939–1945).³

As a result of this ongoing state persecution, the question of survival for APRA remained intimately connected with the necessity of finding communities of support abroad. Chapter 5 explores the roles and the workings of these solidarity networks during the 1930s. It shows that throughout this period, the survival of PAP hinged on its capacity to remain connected to the external world. Communities of APRA exiles stationed abroad connected with non-Latin American allies, especially with past Christian and pacifist allies like Anna Melissa Graves, to create and sustain solidarity networks that worked in favour of the persecuted PAP in Peru. Chapter 5 first turns to the role that communities of exiled Apristas adopted to sustain the integrity of their movement in Peru. It then studies the contribution and collaboration of foreign intermediaries

² Armando Villanueva and Pablo Macera, *Arrogante Montonero*, Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 2011, pp. 113–114; Armando Villanueva and Guillermo Thornlike, *La Gran Persecución, 1932–1956*, Lima: s.n., 2004, pp. 44–52.

³ The election of José Luis Bustamante y Rivero in 1945 hallmarked an era of democratic hopes in Peru. For the first time since 1931, the head of the Peruvian state was freely elected. In May 1945, the APRA party achieved legal status in Peru and prepared for forthcoming elections. Several Apristas were elected to Congress shortly thereafter. The Peruvian “Democratic Spring,” however, was rapidly undermined by a spiral of governmental crises that rocked the country and ultimately led to the return of military and authoritarian rule in October 1948. Harry Kantor, *The Ideology and Program of the Peruvian Aprista Movement*, New York: Octagon Books Inc., 1966. Peter Flindell Klarén, *Peru: Society and Nationhood in the Andes*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

and allies of the party and highlights their significance for the cohesion and political survival of APRA in Peru.

EXILES DEFEND APRA ON INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS

On June 29, 1935, during an interview with agents of the United Press in Buenos Aires, the Peruvian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carlos Concha, voiced his outrage at the continental campaign of shame that the APRA movement was fronting against the Peruvian government. “No es cierto,” Concha told the group of Argentine journalists and foreign correspondents who stood before him, “que el Gobierno peruano haya organizado sin motivo ni justificación una campaña de persecución política contra el Apra.”⁴ Concha explained how, in contrast to recent allegations from Aprista followers, the use of repressive methods in Peru had become a necessary evil in the face of radical elements unwilling to cooperate. Their lack of respect for the law, despite the passage of the Amnesty Law and the return of civil liberties in August 1933, substantiated his self-absolving narrative: APRA followers had refused from day one, argued Concha, to rally behind Benavides’ call for national conciliation.⁵ “Se hace, pues, necesario decir de una vez toda la verdad,” he stated, thanking his international audience for giving him the opportunity to tell the truth and set things right once and for all.⁶ Two short seasons had passed since the return of PAP into full outlawry, and already jostling for public opinion outside Peru was a common feature of the war opposing Apristas to Peruvian authorities.

Throughout the 1930s, the communities of exiled Apristas came to play a crucial role in the defence of the Peruvian APRA on international platforms. They organized protests and published articles in the foreign press that condemned the undemocratic regime of Benavides. From Chile and Argentina to Mexico and the United States through France, anti-Benavides propaganda mushroomed in local newspapers and political flyers, carrying APRA’s resentment against national politics, as well as its drive to survive as a thriving political movement in Peru and across the Americas. APRA leaders in exile, as well as those who remained in hiding in Peru, were very much attuned to the necessity to cultivate

⁴ “It is not true that the Peruvian Government has organized without reason or justification a campaign of political persecution against APRA.” “Hizo declaraciones en Buenos Aires el Canciller peruano Dr. Carlos Concha,” *El Comercio*, June 29, 1935, Folder 2, Box 5698, Central Files, Record Group 59 (RG 59), 1930–1939, US National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (NACP).

⁵ *Ibid.* ⁶ “It is therefore necessary to tell the whole truth at once,” *ibid.*

public opinion in order to build support both within Peru and, crucially, internationally. The success of this liberation campaign persuaded a large swath of the party leadership that appealing to international public opinion was an efficient strategy for the suppression of state persecution in the homeland.⁷ International public opinion, the party leadership concluded, had the power to beget change when used strategically.⁸ Thus, as the noose tightened on Apristas in Peru at the end of 1934, wooing international public opinion and censuring Peruvian authorities in the foreign press became the central axis of PAP's political actions.

During the 1930s, Apristas published hundreds of articles and flyers condemning the Benavides government for depriving Peruvian citizens of their constitutional rights, and specifically for exacting state persecution against the APRA party. The communiqué that Víctor Peralta, the imprisoned APRA leader in Peru, addressed to the foreign press on June 12, 1935, exemplifies these attempts to publicly shame the Peruvian authorities in an effort to sway continental public opinion in APRA's favour.⁹ Peralta was the Secretary General of the Executive Committee for the Political and Social Prisoners (Secretario General del Comité Ejecutivo de Presos Políticos y Sociales) detained in el Frontón, the infamous detention centre where Apristas were carted off to in Peru.¹⁰ "Hacen ya más de 7 meses," decried Peralta in the communiqué, "que más de 2000 apristas nos encontramos viviendo en el presidio como en los días más negros de la persecución durante el gobierno del Sr. General Luis M. Sánchez Cerro, sin haber cometido otro delito que el exigir se respete nuestro derecho a la ciudadanía."¹¹ Peralta further condemned the

⁷ Hector A. Morey to Jane Addams, Lima, September 21, 1933, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.8, AMGC; Luis E. Heysen to Anna Melissa Graves (AMGC), México, DF, April 27, 1933, SCPC, AMGP (1919-1953), Reel 74.8.

⁸ Dr. Giesecke, "Memorandum: The Apra Party from Day to Day," August 28, 1933, p. 1, Folder 4, Box 4696, RG 59, 1930-1939, NACP.

⁹ Víctor Peralta, Secretario General, El Comité de Presos Políticos - Sociales reclusos en El Frontón, "A todas las organizaciones revolucionarias y conciencias libres de Indo América y del Mundo," El Frontón, June 12, 1935, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Centro de documentación de ciencias sociales (CEDOC), Colección especial Arturo Sabroso Montoya, Correspondencia de LAS y VRHT y ASM: Importantes, B1, 933 al 951.

¹⁰ Guillermo Vegas León, "Las Torturas y los Crímenes de la Isla 'El Frontón'," *Claridad*, Buenos Aires, Año XVII, num. 324, April 1938. Armando Bazán, *Prisiones junto al mar, novela*, Buenos Aires: Editorial *Claridad*, 1943.

¹¹ "For more than seven months, more than 2000 Apristas have been living in prison like in the darkest days of persecution under the General Luis M. Sánchez Cerro, without having committed a crime other than demanding respect for our right to citizenship." Peralta, "A todas las organizaciones revolucionarias y conciencias libres de Indo América."

gruesome conditions that political prisoners endured in Peruvian jails. Many of the Aprista prisoners, he noted, were sick and fearing for their lives.¹² By way of this communiqué to the foreign press, Peralta claimed to be launching on behalf of all Aprista prisoners, “nuestro grito de condenación y protesta por el atropello de que somos víctimas,” specifically chiding Peruvian authorities for the spate of renewed injustices perpetrated against PAP in Peru.¹³

While evidence points to more attempts from within Peru to engage in this international war of words against the Peruvian military government, APRA exiles in fact bore the lion’s share of the organizing work in support of their persecuted peers in Peru. “Que sepan que no abandonamos un instante la vigilancia y que los puestos del destierro son puestos de incesante trabajo aprista,” wrote Luis Alberto Sánchez in 1936 to a peer detained in El Frontón, while living in Santiago de Chile.¹⁴ Ironically, the year-long cycle of deportations that came with the return to illegality in 1934–1935 auspiciously positioned APRA with players outside Peru who benefited from freedom of speech and expression. APRA leaders in exile had, therefore, more opportunity to court foreign allies. Deported leaders of the party promptly reinstated exile committees across the American continent. While archival evidence points to the presence of Aprista activists in Ecuador, Panama, Bolivia, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, France, and the United States, the growing scholarship on the transnational APRA has clearly established that three communities of APRA exiles were particularly active during the 1930s in these solidarity campaigns. They were the Comité Aprista de Santiago (CAP of Santiago), the Comité Aprista de Buenos Aires (CAP of Buenos Aires), and the Comité Aprista de México (CAP of Mexico).¹⁵ In these organizations lay the backbone of APRA’s international militancy.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “Our cry of condemnation and protest for the outrage of which we are victims,” *ibid.*

¹⁴ “Let them know that we do not abandon our watch for an instant and that the places of exile are places of incessant Aprista work,” Luis Alberto Sánchez to Arturo Sabroso, [Santiago de Chile], June 8, 1936, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Centro de documentación de ciencias sociales (hereafter cited as CEDOC), Colección especial Arturo Sabroso Montoya, Correspondencia de LAS y VRHT y ASM: Importantes, B1, 933 al 951.

¹⁵ Leandro Sessa, “Aprismo y apristas en Argentina: Derivas de una experiencia antiimperialista en la ‘encrucijada’ ideológica y política de los años treinta.” Ph.D. Diss., Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2013,” p. 91; Report of Louis G. Dreyfus to Secretary of State, “Recrudescence of APRA activities,” Lima, September 7, 1938, and Report of diplomatic staff Steinhardt, “Aprista letter from Mexico as a sample of anti-Benavides propaganda abroad,” Peru, April 4, 1938, Folder 1, Box 4697, RG 59, 1930–1939, NACP.

LIFE IN EXILE

Deportation came with its share of challenges, too, especially for the rank-and-file of the party. To begin, those who left Peru never fully escaped the spectre of state persecution. Arrest and deportation occasionally befell them in foreign countries as well.¹⁶ At other times, authorities of the host country intervened and pressured APRA exiles into ceasing their activities against the Peruvian government. After an agent of the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Relations threatened Carlo Alberto Eyzaguirre, Gerardo Alania, Jorge Valverde and Leoncio Muños, four representatives and leaders of APRA who lived in Santiago de Chile, they reportedly agreed to stop their work in July 1935.¹⁷ Also, exile was fraught with all kinds of emotional and material hardships, which eventually drove many to balk and withdraw from political activism. Starting in the mid-1930s, a considerable number of Peruvian apistas who lived in the Chilean capital initiated contact with the Peruvian ambassador to Chile to demand political amnesty. They promised to leave the APRA party and to cease all political activities in exchange for the right to return home.¹⁸

Various factors explain their defection from APRA. Some, like Gerardo Berrios, had grown disenchanted with their party for never feeling included in it. Berrios was part of the 84 Apristas deported from Peru between December 6, 1934, and August 20, 1935. Eight of them were sent to Ecuador, 16 to Panama, and 60, including Berrios, to Chile.¹⁹ Berrios told the Peruvian ambassador to Chile in January 1935 that he had joined APRA because he wanted to change things and make a difference for his country. But, to his dismay, the party leadership in the CAP of Santiago never agreed to give him any substantial role or responsibility. In Chile, Berrios was left without any means of subsistence

¹⁶ A pact of mutual assistance to better fight Communism in their respective countries was for example designed between Peru, Chile, and Argentina in the course of 1933. [Peruvian ambassador to Chile,] "Adhesión de Chile al Convenio peruano argentino sobre el comunismo," Santiago de Chile, June 13, 1933, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1933.

¹⁷ [Peruvian ambassador to Chile,] "Notificación a los líderes apistas," Santiago de Chile, August 5, 1935, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1935.

¹⁸ [Peruvian ambassador to Chile,] "Deportados políticos," Santiago de Chile, January 2, 1935, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Central, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1935. See also for more examples Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1936.

¹⁹ "Relación de deportados políticos," Lima, 11 de noviembre de 1935, Archivo General de la Nación, Lima (hereafter cited as AGN), Ministerio de Interior, Dirección de gobierno, Prefectura de Lima, Presos Políticos y Sociales, Legajo 3.9.5.1.15.1.14.7 (1932-1942).

and with nothing to do in terms of political activity. By January 1935, Berrios decided he had had enough of *Aprismo* and was ready to return home.²⁰ Many rank-and-file members of APRA were similarly left on their own, without a job or enough money to support themselves, “sin tener ni siquiera como alimentarse, ni donde alojarse,” highlighted a report penned by the Peruvian ambassador to Chile on January 11, 1935.²¹ For Pedro R. Iraola, family obligations convinced him to let go of APRA. He solicited Peruvian authorities in Chile in January 1936 for the right to travel back to Lima to take care of his sick mother.²²

In contrast, those who manned the committees and occupied positions of power within APRA’s exiled chapters were usually quick to acknowledge their favourable circumstances compared to those of their peers back home. In exile, most leaders of the party lived comfortable and generally enviable lives, away from the threat of persecution that Apristas in Peru suffered daily. Leaders like Luis Alberto Sánchez had time and access to resources, enabling them to develop prolific and internationally famed careers as men of letters. “Con ellos,” promised – somewhat guiltily – Sánchez to his peers in prison, “en su dolor, que es solo angustia en nosotros los privilegiados del exterior.”²³ Many APRA leaders felt compelled to compensate for this life of privilege with a steadfast level of activism in support of the Peruvian APRA party.²⁴ Others were simply following the instructions they received from the party leadership. Yet all worked together to defend the cause of APRA in an attempt to retrieve their legal rights in Peru.²⁵

²⁰ [Peruvian ambassador in Chile], “Solicitud de Gerardo Berrios,” Santiago de Chile, January 11, 1935, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1935.

²¹ “Without having anything to eat, or a place to stay.” [Peruvian ambassador to Chile], “Solicitud de dos deportados,” Santiago de Chile, January 11, 1935, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1935. For more similar cases see Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, in 1934, 1935, and 1936.

²² [Peruvian ambassador to Chile], “Deportado Pedro R. Iraola,” Santiago de Chile, January 17, 1936, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1936.

²³ “With them, feeling their pain, which is only anguish in us, the privileged in exile,” Luis Alberto Sánchez to Arturo Sabroso, [Santiago de Chile], June 8, 1936, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Centro de documentación de ciencias sociales (CEDOC), Colección especial Arturo Sabroso Montoya, Correspondencia de LAS y VRHT y ASM: Importantes, B1, 933 al 951.

²⁴ Alfredo Saco, “Nuestros Presos,” *Trinchera Aprista*, Mexico City, November, 1937, p. 1.

²⁵ Ricardo Melgar Bao, *Redes e imaginario del exilio en México y América Latina: 1934–1940*, Argentina: LibrosenRed, 2003, p. 99.

SHAMING THE BENAVIDES GOVERNMENT

A large part of APRA exiles' activism involved penning opinion and information pieces and organizing public protests in an effort to arouse sympathy for the APRA movement in international forums. Consider the virulent attack that the General Secretary of the CAP of Santiago, Alberto Grieve Madge, fired off against the Peruvian authorities in the pages of *La Opinión* on December 5, 1934. "Ni elecciones, ni garantías, ni prensa: solo persecuciones, prisiones y arbitrariedades," read the subtitle of his diatribe. Alberto Grieve Madge pilloried the so-called "democratic" regime of general Benavides, which lived and governed, he stated, with respect for neither the Constitution nor the Peruvian laws. "Se ha atropellado a los candidatos, se les ha perseguido, y por último, se conciben planes para eliminarlos," stressed another section, in reference to the twenty-three Aprista congressmen ousted by Sánchez Cerro in 1932 who had yet to be reinstated under Benavides.²⁶ APRA leaders continued to disseminate anti-Benavides propaganda in the Chilean press all through the 1930s and early 1940s. Their contributions appeared in *La Opinión*, *Hoy*, *El Diario Ilustrado*, *Tierra*, *El Mercurio*, *La Nación*, *La Hora*, and *Trabajo*.²⁷ They also used public conferences to openly condemn the Peruvian authorities and disturbed the peaceful running of diplomatic events to attract attention to their cause.²⁸

In similar fashion, the CAP of Buenos Aires customarily released press communiqués in the Argentinean press or disseminated political leaflets to denounce the injustices that PAP suffered in Peru. Toward the late 1930s, the *Boletín Aprista* served as a mouthpiece for the CAP of Buenos Aires, where a handful of leaders broadcasted political views and made

²⁶ "No elections, no rights, no press: only persecution, prisons and arbitrary rule." "Candidates have been treated with contempt, persecuted, and finally plans are being conceived to eliminate them," Alberto Grieve Madge, "Comunicado de Prensa del Comité Aprista Peruano," *La Opinión*, December 5, 1934.

²⁷ Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1934, 5-4-A, 1936, 5-4-A, 1937, 5-4-A, 1938, 5-4-A, 1939.

²⁸ Report of Pedro Irigoyen to Señor Ministro de Estado en el Despacho de Relaciones Exteriores, "Manifestaciones hostiles," Santiago de Chile, October 25, 1935, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1935. "Actuación aprista en la Universidad de Chile," Santiago, 2 de junio de 1937, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1937; Carlos Concha, "Manifestación aprista contra el Dr. Marañón," Santiago, March 24, 1937, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1937.

information on Peru available to APRA followers in Argentina.²⁹ In its third issue, dated March 4, 1937, *Boletín Aprista* indicted Peruvian authorities for the loss of the APRA leader Manuel Arévalo. His execution three weeks earlier had allegedly followed a week-long cycle of torture and abuse. The troubling circumstances surrounding Arévalo's death had left Aprista factions across the board blazing with anger and indignation. They shared these feelings with the continental public.³⁰

From their location in the Mexican capital, members of the CAP of México (officially reinstated in 1937) soon undertook an intense labour of promotion in favour of Peruvian and continental *Aprismo*. In the late 1920s the community of APRA exiles in Mexico City was impressed, and deeply influenced, by the thriving post-revolutionary scene they found in the Mexican capital. By the mid-to-late 1930s they were benefiting from the open-door policy toward political refugees afforded by the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940).³¹ Like its sister committees in Chile and Argentina, the CAP of Mexico engaged in the production of political propaganda that chastised the Benavides government. It did so by publishing articles in Mexican newspapers and magazines, such as the *Excelsior* and *Hoy*, which defended the political ideas of APRA and contributed to portraying Peruvian Apristas as victims of an unfair and cruel regime.³² To be sure, Apristas in Mexico also capitalized on their Mexican mouthpiece, *Trinchera Aprista*, to report on the various forms of abuses and violations that Apristas were subjected to in Peru. Like their peers in Chile and Argentina, their attacks followed a basic two-prong discursive strategy: that of shaming Peruvian authorities and advocating the return of individual liberties in Peru on one side, while on the other extolling the heroism and resilience of Aprista militancy.³³

²⁹ Report from Alexander W. Weddell to Secretary of State in Washington DC, "Activities in Buenos Aires of the Peruvian Aprista Party," Buenos Aires, September 18, 1936, Folder 3, Box 5698, RG 59, 1930–1939, NACP. "Arevalo asesinado," in *Boletín Aprista*, Buenos Aires, March 4, 1937, no. 3, p. 2, AMGC, Box 3, Folder 3.8, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

³⁰ "Arevalo asesinado."

³¹ Melgar Bao, *Redes e imaginario del exilio en México*, p. 36. Leading members of this committee in the mid-to-late 1930s included Guillermo Vaga León, Fernando León de Vivero, Alfredo Miro Quesada, José Bernando Goyburu, Carlos J. Meltor, Felipe Cossío del Polmar, Luis Eduardo Enríquez Cabrera (starting in 1939), Moisés Ochoa Campos, and César H. Lanegra.

³² Melgar Bao, *Redes e imaginario del exilio en México*.

³³ "Cruces, cruces y más cruces..." *Trinchera Aprista: Órgano del Comité Aprista de México*, México, October 1937, p. 2; Alfredo Saco, "Nuestros Presos," *Trinchera*

Though little is still known about the types of Aprista activism in the United States, pieces of evidence found in archives point to a considerable level of activity. In 1938, the diplomatic staff of the US embassy in Peru noted the increasing amount of anti-Benavides propaganda coming from Mexico and the United States, and California in particular.³⁴ *Trinchera Aprista* likewise reported on the growing activities of the Comité Aprista de California between 1937 and 1938.³⁵ We also know that Aprista exiles published in US newspapers *La Prensa* and *La Nueva Democracia*, both based in New York. Finally, archival evidence points to Aprista militants in France playing a role in channelling Aprista communiqués to European newspapers and allies stationed in Europe.³⁶

BROADCASTING POPULAR SUPPORT

No matter how finely crafted, indictments of the political situation in Peru could do little to attract sympathy from abroad without first convincing international public opinion that the PAP did not deserve the all-out repression it suffered back home. To that effect, in addition to shaming Peruvian authorities, the articles and editorials that Apristas in exile disseminated across the continent took pains to depict their political movement as a paragon of democracy in Peru and, critically, across the Americas as well. Alberto Grieve Madge's 1936 account of state persecution in Peru illustrates the meticulous portrayal of APRA as undeserving of its current fate. Faced with the Peruvian government's incapacity to detain "el triunfo aplastante del aprismo" in Peru, argued Madge before a Chilean readership, *civilista* forces had found no better remedy than to eliminate "a los candidatos del pueblo." The use of attributes like "candidates of the people," as statements, which implied that there was an intimate bond between APRA and the "mayorías

Aprista, México, November 1937, p. 1; Juan Torres, "Benavides: Sapo con galones," *Trinchera Aprista*, Mexico City, March 1938, p. 8, 10.

³⁴ Report of diplomatic staff Steinhart, "Aprista letter from Mexico as a sample of anti-Benavides propaganda abroad," Peru, April 4, 1938; Report of Louis G. Dreyfus to Secretary of State, "Recrudescence of APRA activities," Lima, September 7, 1938; Folder 1, Box 4697, Recored Group (RG59), 1930–1939, National Archiwews at College Park, MD (NACP).

³⁵ The CAP of California was headed in 1937–1938 by the Peruvian exile Alejandro Carrillo Rocha. See "No hay que ir más lejos. . .," *Trinchera Aprista*, no. 4, México, January 1938, p. 4.

³⁶ V. Delande, Secretario General, Comité de Paris, Partido Aprista Peruano, Paris, July 18, 1935, AMGC, Box 3, Folder 3.9.

ciudadanas” in Peru, was deliberate and carefully laid out.³⁷ As prisons overflowed with political prisoners and as attempts against the lives of APRA leaders continued to soar, crafting associations between the notion of popular support and the PAP gave the movement an air of legitimacy.

This political strategy not only affected the way that APRA portrayed its movement in Peru and abroad. It also significantly affected how the scholarship on APRA has reported the rise of this populist party, by regularly using as primary source material the political propaganda that APRA leaders in exile produced in their organization. Up until the early 1960s, Peruvians produced the bulk of Aprista scholarship. These works either correspond to Aprista celebrations of the group’s historical mission and leader, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, or, contrastingly, disparage the latter and APRA’s political program. By the late 1970s, North American scholars had in turn produced a number of analyses on APRA that fed into classic literature on Latin American mass organizations which emphasized the political awakening of the popular and middle sectors in the region. These studies largely brought into focus, and usually praised, the reformist and democratic character of post-Second World War APRA. Yet by giving prominent attention to APRA’s doctrine and discursive frames of analysis, early North American studies regularly ended up reproducing official Aprista histories.³⁸ These studies failed to contextualize the discursive production of a party that needed to appear strong in the face of recurrent persecution. They tend to take these claims at face value, rather than attempting to bring the complex origins from which they stem to light. One important, if controversial, conclusion to be drawn from this reasoning is to suggest that APRA’s scholarly fame as a major populist Latin American movement was in fact, to at least some degree, a product of its own making. Political survival in Peru became so

³⁷ “The overwhelming triumph of aprismo.” “the people’s candidates.” “citizens’ majorities,” Alberto Grieve Madge, “Comunicado de Prensa del Comité Aprista Peruano.”

³⁸ Liisa North, “The Peruvian Aprista Party and Haya de la Torre: Myths and Realities,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 17: 2 (May, 1975): 245–253; Harry Kantor, *The Ideology and Program of the Peruvian Aprista Movement*, New York: Octagon Books Inc., 1966 (1953); Frederick B. Pike, “The Old and the New APRA in Peru: Myth and Reality,” *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, 18 (Autumn, 1964): 3–45; Grant Hilliker, *The Politics of Reform in Peru: The Aprista and Other Mass Parties of Latin America*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971; Robert J. Alexander, *Aprismo: The Ideas and Doctrines of Victor Raul Haya de la Torre*, Kent: Kent State University Press, 1973.

closely intertwined with the necessity of a strong casting internationally that it affected the political writings and interpretations of Apristas.

Indeed, the need to appear strong in the face of state persecution partly explains the care with which Aprista propaganda underscored the strong popular support that the APRA enjoyed in Peru and internationally. “En todo el Continente no se oye más que un clamor de indignada protesta,” highlighted Juan Torrente in 1938 in *Trinchera Aprista*, suggesting that continental outrage against the crimes exacted by Benavides in Peru was rocking the Americas.³⁹ Similarly, the CAP of Buenos Aires touted the assassination of Manuel Arévalo in 1937 as an event that bore meaning not only for Peru but also for the democratic forces of the continent, suggesting that “toda la Prensa libre de América, ha unido su voz de protesta a la nuestra, ante el desborde de la sañuda persecución que el tirano Benavides, desata implacablemente contra el partido del pueblo.”⁴⁰ To better attract attention to the precarious situation of the APRA party in Peru, stirring compassion by insisting on the democratic nature of this organization quickly became crucial in these international forums.

According to sociologists Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, informational politics are the process through which non-state actors engage in a transnational advocacy campaign try to gain power by providing alternative sources of information. These actors “provide information that would not otherwise be available, from sources that might not otherwise be heard, and they must make this information comprehensible and useful to activists and publics who may be geographically and/or socially distant.”⁴¹ As such, engaging in informational politics outside Peru enabled PAP to destabilize the narrative monopoly that Peruvian authorities and the traditional elites associated with *civilismo* tried to enforce across Peru and the American continent. It offered alternative channels of information whose stories contrasted greatly with those disseminated in Peru by the

³⁹ “All over the continent you hear nothing but a single cry of outraged protest.” Juan Torrente, “Benavides: Sapo con galones,” *Trinchera Aprista*, México, March 1938, pp. 8, 10.

⁴⁰ “The entire free press of America has joined its voice of protest to ours, before the vicious persecution that the tyrant Benavides is implacably unleashing against the people’s party.” “Arevalo asesinado,” in *Boletín Aprista*, Buenos Aires, March 4, 1937, no. 3, p. 2, AMGC, Box 3, Folder 3.8, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

⁴¹ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998, pp. 18–19.

civilista press like *El Comercio*, the sworn enemy of PAP, and in the Americas by diplomats and government spokesmen. It likewise aimed to court democratic allies outside Peru, in the hopes that the latter group would mediate on its behalf and persuade governmental forces to reinstate civil liberties in the country.

To achieve this goal, the Aprista committees crafted their diatribes in the foreign press around two fundamental premises. First, they laid bare the inconsistencies of the Peruvian authorities before an international audience. This implied lifting the veil on the dysfunctional state of democracy in Peru, while in turn taking pains to compare this precarious national condition with the deceitful democratic label afforded to the Benavides regime. A spade had to be called a spade, pleaded these articles: the Benavides military regime couldn't be farther from democratic, and APRA exiles were poised to set the record straight. Second, APRA exiles shamed the Peruvian authorities for exacting state persecution against Apristas, but also for depriving, more broadly, Peruvian citizens of their most basic constitutional rights. They likewise took pains to convince their international audiences that APRA only used pacifist and democratic channels to lead its fight against governing authorities, and, moreover, that it garnered the favour of public opinion both in Peru and across the Americas.

GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES

Peruvian authorities did not remain indifferent to the attacks that communities of APRA exiles disseminated in the foreign press. Representatives of the Peruvian state felt the need to counter and respond to these charges before international audiences. Obviously, shaming the authorities wasn't enough to restore constitutional guarantees, as PAP remained outlawed until 1945. But, in the face of a transnational campaign of moral shaming, Peruvian authorities did feel enough pressure to heed the situation and attempt to downplay the claims of repeated human rights violations. In short, they addressed these claims not by changing their behaviour, but by trying to suppress the circulation of such narratives. They did so via two strategies. First, Peruvian authorities monitored the production of APRA propaganda not only in Peru but abroad as well, mainly through the work of Peruvian diplomats established in foreign countries. They tried to thwart the production of this propaganda. Outside Peru, they also published anti-aprista propaganda that sought to harm the legitimacy of the movement and banned foreign journals and

magazines – like the Chilean *Hoy* and the Argentinean *Claridad* – that were favourable to the cause of APRA from circulating in Peru.⁴²

Second, Peruvian authorities put official emissaries in charge of redressing the international image of Peru. In the speech that Concha gave to representatives of the foreign press on June 29, 1935, cited earlier in this chapter, persecution in Peru looked more like a measure of last resort than a deliberate instrument of terror. According to the Peruvian officials, persecuting the government's critics, especially APRA, was regrettable, but nevertheless necessary to counter a group poised to “subvertir el orden publico” and “perturbar la paz social” in Peru.⁴³ A false premise framed Concha's reasoning: either constitutional guarantee with national mayhem, or exceptions to the rule of law with the promise of social peace. As Haya de la Torre put it four years later, the long-running debate in which order and law fought for preeminence had no place in functioning democracies. A democratic government, he correctly argued, simply knew how to maintain social order within the confines of the law.⁴⁴

Interestingly, in 1935, the US ambassador Fred Morris Dearing concurred with Carlos Concha, not with APRA's reasoning. To be sure, he neither supported nor vindicated the Benavides government's use of repressive measures against APRA. But Dearing did censure Apristas for shaming the Benavides government in international publications. In the Peruvian Spring of 1935, similarly to the Peruvian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dearing anticipated nothing good for a political party whose strategies of survival involved doing, he stated, “everything possible from refuges abroad to discredit Peru and the present administration.”⁴⁵ His critique carried the insinuation that Apristas should focus exclusively on

⁴² “No. 45, Folletos sobre el ‘Apra,’” Santiago de Chile, 18 April, 1932, Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1932; Sessa, “Aprismo y apristas en Argentina. . .,” pp. 98, 112–113. Consult reports that the Peruvian ambassador in Chile sent to the Ministry of Foreign Relations in 1936: “Publicación en la Revista ‘Hoy,’” Santiago de Chile, January 7, 1936; “Publicación sobre el Perú en la Revista ‘Hoy,’” Santiago, March 4, 1936; “Editorial de ‘Hoy,’” Santiago, July 31 1936; “Recorte de la revista ‘Hoy’ – Luis Alberto Sánchez,” Santiago, October 3, 1936. Archivo Central del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Perú, Oficios de Chile, 5-4-A, 1936.

⁴³ “Subvert public order”; “disturb social peace.” “Hizo declaraciones en Buenos Aires el Canciller peruano Dr. Carlos Concha,” *El Comercio*, June 29, 1935, Folder 2, Box 5698, RG 59, 1930-1939, NACP.

⁴⁴ Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, “El Jefe del partido responde al General Benavides,” Lima, January 1939, p. 7, Folder 1, Box 4697, RG 59, 1930-1939, NACP.

⁴⁵ Report of Fred Morris Dearing to Secretary of State, Lima, September 29, 1935, p. 4, Folder 2, Box 5698, RG 59, 1930-1939, NACP.

national politics and limit themselves to organizing their movement in Peru rather than continentally. Dearing maintained that, unless its enemies decided to cobble together a coalition of conservative factions, the PAP would most certainly win the presidential election scheduled to take place the following year.⁴⁶ Of course, the accuracy of such a hunch was contingent on the PAP achieving legal status. It also depended on the implicit faith that the ability to exercise political rights and to participate in free and open elections would necessarily accompany the return of civil liberties in Peru, a faith which, rightly so, APRA leaders were nowhere near sharing. In fact, as we will continue to see in this and the following chapters, the more difficult it was to organize their movement in Peru in the 1930s and early 1940s, the more Aprista leaders laboured to expand their movement abroad, and the more they worked to strengthen their maximum program for the Americas.

COURTING FOREIGN ALLIES

Part of the reason why the communities of exiled Apristas successfully drew the attention of international public opinion to their cause is because many foreign allies worked in tandem with them to spearhead their transnational shaming campaign against the military rule of Benavides. The political and intellectual community revolving around the Argentinean cultural magazine *Claridad*, for example, was particularly proactive in spearheading international solidarity campaigns in favour of major Peruvian APRA leaders like Magda Portal and Serafín Delmar.⁴⁷ Thanks to the intense organizing work of Apristas in Chile, Argentina and Mexico, men and women of letters from all over Latin America joined their voices in protest at the undemocratic regime of Benavides. So did a number of key allies from the United States, which contributed toward the expansion of the scope of APRA's solidarity networks following the transnational advocacy campaign in favour of Haya de la Torre in 1932–1933.

Roger Baldwin, chairman of the International Committee for Political Prisoners, was first acquainted with the APRA movement in 1932, when

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ *Por la libertad de Serafín Delmar. Aspectos de su vida y su obra*, Buenos Aires, Editorial *Claridad*, 1936; *Magda Portal. Su Vida y su obra*, Buenos Aires, Editorial *Claridad*, 1935.

he was approached to partake in the solidarity movement with Haya de la Torre. This committee continued thereafter to monitor the Peruvian authorities and to side with APRA whenever asked to.⁴⁸ Upon Luis Alberto Sánchez's request, the International Committee for Political Prisoners sent a petition to the Peruvian Minister to the United States in July 1936 which censured the undemocratic proceedings underway in Peru in view of the forthcoming elections.⁴⁹ "As a committee of representative Americans we are shocked by the apparently authentic accounts of the arrests of over 3,000 prisoners, none of whom have had as yet the benefit of a legal trial," stated the document. Members of the committee specifically condemned the arbitrary arrests of Apristas in Peru "for purely political reasons." They furthermore decried cases of torture and ill-treatment in detention to which Aprista prisoners were allegedly subjected to, urging Peruvian authorities to immediately halt political persecution and to act "in accordance with the accepted practice of democratic countries."⁵⁰ Baldwin personally sent this petition to Rolland in Switzerland, where he lived at the time, in the hopes that the latter would sign and circulate it.⁵¹

While the main connection between US solidarity activists and APRA had thus far primarily been confined to Haya de la Torre, the former group was increasingly in touch with different APRA leaders. They began to adapt their political discourses in international publications to praise and defend not only Haya de la Torre but the APRA party as a whole. To be sure, Haya de la Torre continued to attract sympathy from these foreign allies. In 1936, Romain Rolland sent a number of protests to

⁴⁸ Roger Baldwin was for example amongst those from the Inter-American Association for Democracy and Freedom who, in 1953, spearheaded yet another solidarity movement with Haya de la Torre. Frances R. Grant, Norman Thomas, Roger Baldwin, Clarence Senior, Ernst Schwarz, Robert Alexander and Francine Unlavy S. Levitas, "To Free Haya de la Torre. United States' Efforts to Obtain Safe Conduct for Peruvian Urged," *The New York Times*, December 15, 1953, Inter-American Association for Democracy and Freedom, Letter to the editors of *The New York Times*, *The New York Times*, December 15, 1953, Box 89, Folder 12, BDWP, 1903-1999, Hoover Institution Archives

⁴⁹ Roger Baldwin to Romain Rolland, July 15, 1936, BNF, Fonds Romain Rolland, NAF 28400.

⁵⁰ [The international Committee for Political Prisoners] to Don Manuel de Freyre y Santander, Peruvian Minister to the United States, July 15, 1936, BNF, Fonds Romain Rolland, NAF 28400.

⁵¹ Roger Baldwin to Romain Rolland, July 15, 1936, BNF, Fonds Romain Rolland, NAF 28400.

President Benavides in an effort to specifically protect the life of this APRA leader (at the time in hiding in Lima and once more threatened by authorities).⁵² Shortly afterward, Luis Alberto Sánchez communicated with Anna Melissa Graves to enquire whether she could join Rolland's initiative: "Una intervención en el sentido de cablegrafiar continuamente al presidente Benavides interesándose por la vida de Haya," he pleaded in a letter dated May 13, 1937, "será una manera eficaz de salvaguardarla. Ojala tome Ud. Parte en ello."⁵³ Graves took part in this solidarity protest and in others as well, which suggests that the support of foreign allies became more inclusive of other APRA players. Graves helped to free Magda Portal from prison in 1936 by being personally in touch with Francisco García Calderón, the Peruvian ambassador to France, who was renown to hold sway over President Benavides.⁵⁴ In 1937, she attempted to foster support in her own solidarity networks for the liberation of Agustín Haya de la Torre, Víctor Raúl's brother and also a prominent APRA leader.⁵⁵

APRA leaders in exile very proactively sought out this international support. They became quite adept at disseminating the information on Peru they were able to collect from their peers back home to key foreign actors and encouraging them to join them in the defence of APRA. Furthermore, APRA leaders in Peru also efficiently mobilized to court foreign allies. When they heard that foreign journalists were in town, Apristas in hiding in Lima usually found a way to dodge police surveillance to greet them.⁵⁶ They organized clandestine meetings, during which they exposed in a favourable light their program and their political objectives, expressing their hopes that foreign journalists would return

⁵² Luis Alberto Sánchez to Graves, Santiago de Chile, May 13, 1937, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁵³ "An intervention in the sense of continuously cabled President Benavides taking an interest in Haya's life will be an effective way to save it. Hopefully you take part in it." Sánchez to Graves, Santiago de Chile, May 13, 1937, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁵⁴ Graves to Magda Portal, Geneva, April 18, 1936, Magda Portal Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box1, Folder 2.

⁵⁵ Alberto Ulloa to Graves, French Line, S.S. Île de France, October 21, 1937, Reel 74.8, SCPC, AMGP.

⁵⁶ Prefectura del Departamento de Lima, Sección Orden Político, [Testimonio de Dn. Jorge Eliseo Idiaquez Rios], Lima, September 22, 1939, p. 2, AGN, Perú, Ministerio de Interior, Dirección de gobierno, Prefectura de Lima, Presos Políticos y Sociales, Legajo 3.9.5.1.15.1.14.7 (1932–1942); Carleton Beals, "The Rise of Haya de la Torre," *Foreign Affairs*, 13:2 (1935): 242. Harry Kantor, *The Ideology and Program of the Peruvian Aprista Movement*, p. 139.

home, publicly embrace their cause, and denounce the lack of democracy in Peru. “The Apristas lose no opportunity to state their case, both at home and abroad,” remarked Carleton Beals in 1935, following a trip he had recently taken to Peru.⁵⁷

Yet throughout the 1930s, for lack of a better option, letter-writing and sweet-talking remained APRA’s prime political weapons. Having few recourses at hand but pen and paper, and occasional access to a typewriter as well, Apristas used the power of words and flattery to court those they needed most. The many letters that APRA leaders sent to Graves reveal that they recurrently and very gracefully complimented their allies, either for the many personal virtues they claimed to see in them or for their political commitments or both. They likewise patiently pandered to their respective emotional quirks, especially to Graves’ bad temper, since with these mood changes also came support for their cause. “I am sure all the apristas love you for your activity throughout Europe and the States,” assured, for example, Enrique Rojas, an APRA leader in exile in Argentina, in a letter he wrote to Graves in early January 1936.⁵⁸ “We frequently [*sic*] remember you as one of the best friends we have abroad,” stated the Aprista Eduardo Goicochea in a letter he wrote to Graves in June 1934.⁵⁹ Graves continued to be courted by Apristas throughout the 1930s as she maintained her dogged support for this political organization.

INFORMATION CONVEYOR

In addition to helping organize solidarity campaigns in favour of imprisoned APRA leaders, US intermediaries also assisted in the assembly and upkeep of channels of underground communication. Having access to intermediaries that were able to connect the Apristas in Peru amongst themselves and with the Peruvian population on one side and the communities of Apristas in exile on the other, was of paramount importance for the cohesion, let alone the survival, of the APRA movement. For one, the context of constant persecution in the 1930s caused many problems of coordination for the organization. Party leaders attempted to work together from the haven of dispersed groups in exile or from prison in

⁵⁷ Beals, “The Rise of Haya de la Torre,” p. 242.

⁵⁸ Enrique Rojas to Graves, Buenos Aires, January 7, 1936, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁵⁹ Letter from Eduardo Goicochea to Graves, Lima, June 1934; AMGC, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.9.

Peru. Interrupted correspondence found in archives and letters from uninformed party leaders, eager to receive fresh news from Peru, show that the burden of distance and outlawry foiled proper communication in the movement throughout the decade and beyond. Apristas needed help from external intermediaries to stay in touch with one another and to receive fresh news from Peru.

This reliance on external allies for communication partly explains why the number of Aprista correspondents with Graves swelled in the 1930s. During the 1920s, in addition to Haya de la Torre, Graves was in sporadic contact with a handful of APRA leaders only: Eduardo Goicochea, Manuel Cox, and Luis Heysen. By 1935, Graves regularly wrote and exchanged letters with some of the most prominent leaders of APRA at the time, including Magda Portal, Enrique Rojas, Felipe Cossío del Polmar, Luis Alberto Sanchez, Manuel Seoane, Manuel Vasquez Díaz, and Alberto Hidalgo. By the mid-1930s, Graves had become a go-to reference for anybody close to the movement who lived abroad and wanted to be kept abreast of the latest developments in Peru. “Le agradecería infinitamente si me pudiese dar noticias del Apra, pues yo carezco en absoluto de ellas,” Luis Dorich Torres wrote to Graves from Paris, France, on May 6, 1938. Though Dorich’s affiliation to the APRA party remains open to question, his letter to Graves makes clear that he craved news from Peru and APRA’s political project, and that Dorich knew that Graves was an important player to contact to learn more about the state of the APRA movement.⁶⁰ APRA leaders used Graves’ access to information to their own benefit. In their letters to Graves in the mid-1930s, Apristas like Enrique Rojas and Manuel Seoane showed eagerness to hear about the political situation in Peru. “Let me here of you soon,” Rojas wrote to Graves in November 1936, “with your opinion on the Peruvian situation as well as that of any Peruvian you have the opportunity of hearing.”⁶¹ In January 1935, Seoane wrote to Graves to scrape any piece of information he could about Haya de la Torre’s (he was then hiding in the Peruvian capital) situation.⁶²

Because of state censorship, Apristas also needed help from external allies to disseminate and circulate their political material. Bergel has

⁶⁰ “I would be infinitely grateful if you could give me some news of APRA, since I don’t have any at all,” Luis Dorich T. to Graves, Paris, May 5, 1938, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁶¹ Rojas to Graves, Buenos Aires, November 14, 1936, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁶² Manuel Seoane to Graves, Montevideo, January 30, 1935, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8; Rojas to Graves, Buenos Aires, March 8, 1935, SPCP, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

examined the contribution of young *canillistas*, or newsboys, to help the APRA party shun censorship and disseminate its newspapers to the largest possible audience in Peru.⁶³ Another important group of intermediaries were family members. For example, Haya de la Torre's sister visited him weekly during his detention in 1932–1933 and she took pains to keep the rest of the community abreast of his moods and physical health.⁶⁴ Children of imprisoned APRA leaders sometimes transported, without having a clear understanding of what they were doing, hidden letters and other forbidden material in their clothes and bodies when they visited a parent in prison. Since young children were usually dispensed from the mandatory body search, the party occasionally used them as messengers to communicate with Apristas in prison.⁶⁵ Foreign diplomats favourable to the cause of APRA also helped forward letters and material from one community to another from time to time. In 1932, Peruvian authorities accused the Mexican ambassador to Peru, Juan B. Cabral, of smuggling APRA propaganda into Peru by way of diplomatic suitcases.⁶⁶ Although Cabral vehemently denied this allegation, evidence in the work of historian Ricardo Melgar Bao suggests that Mexican diplomats similarly assisted APRA on more than one occasion in the 1930s.⁶⁷

Another addition to this list is the group of Christian intermediaries. During most of the 1930s, the small community of Christian missionaries to Peru, who revolved around the Colegio Anglo-Peruano, continued to play a crucial role in connecting APRA leaders in prison with their political community inside and outside the country. The letters that Graves exchanged throughout the 1930s with Margaret Rycroft and Maria Rosa Ribeiro and her son, Samuel Ribeiro Ibáñez, all members of the Protestant community in Lima, as well as with a growing number of APRA leaders, enable us to map out the extent of this support via two main branches.⁶⁸

⁶³ Martín Bergel, "De canillitas a militantes. Los niños y la circulación de materiales impresos en el proceso de popularización del Partido Aprista Peruano (1930–1945)," *Iberoamericana*, XV: 60 (2015): 101–115.

⁶⁴ Rycroft to Graves, Lima, 11 June 1932; Rycroft to Graves, Lima, 21 July 1932; Rycroft to Graves, Lima, September 5, 1932, AMGC, Series 3, Box 3, folder 3.5.

⁶⁵ Bergel, "De canillitas a militantes."

⁶⁶ "El entredicho peruano-mexicano," *La Gaceta*, Tucumán, May 18 1932, III-1-1-(1), Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, México.

⁶⁷ Melgar Bao, *Redes e imaginario del exilio en México y América Latina*.

⁶⁸ These leaders included Magda Portal, Enrique Rojas, Felipe Cossio del Polmar, Luis Alberto Sanchez, Manuel Seoane, Manuel Vasquez Díaz, and Alberto Hidalgo.

First, Graves' correspondence reveals that Christian intermediaries helped to circulate Aprista propaganda and other types of censored material (such as correspondence) inside and outside Peru. Thanks to her relations with Protestants in Peru, Graves was able to collect information about Peruvian affairs, which she then disseminated across different communities of exile. All scrambled to gather as much news as they could about the situation in the country, through correspondence by party members in hiding in Peru, foreign newspapers, or even at times hearsay, Graves included. These actors took pains to exchange this information within their respective networks, with specific individuals like Graves serving as the hub around which information passed.

Two informants in Peru were particularly useful to Graves and the APRA community in exile. The first was Margaret Rycroft, a Protestant missionary to Peru who helped direct the Colegio Anglo-Peruano with her husband and the director of the institution between 1922 and 1940, W. Stanley Rycroft. Graves and Rycroft had met during her stay in Peru back in 1922. In the early-to-mid-1930s, Rycroft regularly wrote to Graves to report on the political situation. Her letters to Graves provided detailed accounts of the persecution of the APRA party, with specific details regarding Haya de la Torre's activities. Graves requested that Rycroft keep her updated with the whereabouts of "her boy."⁶⁹ From their correspondence, we learn that Graves forwarded letters addressed to Haya de la Torre – and other APRA leaders as well – to Rycroft, who proceeded to distribute her letters to Apristas in hiding in Lima.

The other informant was Maria Rosa Ribeiro, a Peruvian Methodist and a staunch supporter of the APRA movement, with whom Graves began to correspond in February 1934 following Rycroft's recommendation. Ribeiro was particularly useful to Graves, and not just because she knew the whereabouts of party leaders in hiding in Peru. Archival evidence also suggests that she was in regular contact with several of them. Ribeiro sporadically wrote to Graves between 1934 and 1939. Her letters contained detailed accounts of the political situation in Peru and of the fate of the APRA party. Rycroft and Ribeiro were also in touch with one another and seem to have tried to coordinate their actions so as to assist the APRA against the "tyrannical" and "dishonest" Peruvian government.⁷⁰ Both used their connections in Peru to gather news about those

⁶⁹ Margaret Rycroft to Graves, [Lima], 9 March 1932; Margaret Rycroft to Graves, Miraflores, March 11, 1932, AMGC, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.5.

⁷⁰ Rycroft to Graves, [Lima], March 9, 1932, AMGC, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.5.

in hiding in Lima and to forward the correspondence sent by Graves to Haya de la Torre and others in the party. Rycroft and Ribeiro also served, via Graves, as intermediaries, forwarding letters penned by Apristas in prison or in hiding to contacts outside Peru.⁷¹

Second, Christian intermediaries in Peru likewise sent APRA members books and political material they wanted them to read in hiding or in prison. Confronted with scant resources and difficult communication avenues in diasporic networks, many APRA leaders initiated contact with Graves in the early-to-mid-1930s with specific requests and demands for favours. Some asked for books, publications and political material that were otherwise difficult to access while suffering persecution in Peru or trying to get by with the scant resources afforded by life in exile.⁷² “Please send me any journal or book you have at hand,” Enrique Rojas, the secretary of press and propaganda of the CAP of Buenos Aires, wrote to Graves on August 17, 1935. In January 1934, Eduardo Goicochea, the General Secretary of the Aprista Medical Syndicate, asked Graves to send from Brazil, where she travelled at the time, governmental brochures on the subjects of public sanitation, hospitals, and health cooperatives and all the publications that she could find issued by renown Brazilian state institutes.⁷³ Goicochea, who then resided in Peru, craved access to foreign literature to help define the party’s orientation on questions of public health.⁷⁴ Magda Portal enthusiastically welcomed the letters and the books that Graves sent to her during her stay in a Peruvian prison in 1935. Portal asked for more, as they helped fight the solitude of her detention and helped to develop her political thinking.⁷⁵

Graves complied with APRA leaders’ demands, sending along the material they requested, or else carefully choosing which information she thought would help them understand the virtue of absolute

⁷¹ Rycroft to Graves, Lima, March 26, 1932; Rycroft to Graves, [Lima], 5 April 1932; Rycroft to Graves, Lima, September 5, 1932, AMGC, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.5. For an example of letters penned by Apristas, which left Peru thanks to the intermediary of Margaret Rycroft, see AMGC, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.8.

⁷² Enrique Rojas to Graves, Buenos Aires, October 22, 1934, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁷³ Eduardo Goicochea to Graves, Lima, January 17, 1934; Goicochea to Graves, Lima, March 16, 1934; AMGP, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.9.

⁷⁴ Goicochea to Graves, Lima, March 29, 1934; AMGP, 1921–1948, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.9.

⁷⁵ Portal to Graves, St. Tomas, October 10, 1935, Graves to Portal, Geneva, September 10, 1935, Graves to Portal, [Geneva?], November 17, 1935, Magda Portal Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 1, Folder 1.

pacifism.⁷⁶ This point is crucial to understand Graves' commitment to supporting the APRA. Graves was a very stubborn woman. She was as determined in the 1930s to orient APRA's envisioned revolution for Peru and the Americas toward pacifism as she had been when shaping Haya de la Torre's political trajectory in the previous decade. As a result, Graves happily engaged with APRA leaders who asked for her assistance because doing so gave her the opportunity to influence them. For example, Graves sent APRA leaders in exile books like *The Conquest of Violence*, by Bart de Ligt, which studied the practice and theory of non-violence, as well as US magazines like *the New Leader*, which dovetailed with her liberal and anti-communist positions.⁷⁷ She also forwarded her own publications on pacifism, including "I Have Tried to Think," "Hate-Mongers Again," and "Some of the Causes of war and some ways of making those causes less potent."⁷⁸ When Apristas confessed to having a hard time reading the material she sent in English, Graves then wrote long and detailed letters in Spanish to party leaders, either in exile or in prison in Peru, encouraging them to advance their agenda of Latin American solidarity, rather than Peruvian nationalism, to the forefront of their current fight. Over and above everything else, she urged them to cling to absolute pacifism in their fight against Peruvian authorities.⁷⁹

Other important and recurrent demands involved asking intermediaries like Graves to distribute APRA's political material to their own networks. APRA leaders customarily shipped their latest work to Graves in the hopes that she might help promote APRA's ideas to her own contacts. To that end, in October 1935, Luis Alberto Sánchez sent Graves his latest publication, *Vida y pasión de la cultural en América*. "Tal vez podría interesar a otras personas que [carecen] de un panorama de nuestra América," Sánchez hinted.⁸⁰ This request for international

⁷⁶ See letters of Goicochea to Graves from January 17, 1934 to November 14, 1934 in AMGP, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.9; Graves to [Ribeiro?], Geneva, November 19, 1935, Magda Portal Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box1, Folder 1.

⁷⁷ Rojas to Graves, Buenos Aires, June 23, 1936; Rojas to Graves, Buenos Aires, September 8, 1938; SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8; SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8; Graves to [Ribeiro?], Geneva, November 19, 1935, Magda Portal Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box1, Folder 1.

⁷⁸ Dorich to Graves, Paris, May 5, 1938, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁷⁹ Graves to Portal, [Geneva?] November 17, 1935; Portal to Graves, Santo Tomas, January 16, 1936, MPP, Benson Latin American Collection, Box1, Folder 1; Dorich to Graves, Paris, May 5, 1938, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁸⁰ "Perhaps it might interest other people who [lack] an overview of our America." Sánchez to Graves, Santiago, October 28, 1935, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

publicity was not exceptional. When in 1934 Rojas learned from an Argentine peer that Graves was about to travel to Río de Janeiro, Brazil, he jumped on the chance and sent a letter of introduction along with ten copies of the edition of the *APRA* magazine published outside Peru. “Hemos de agradecerle la distribución de esos ejemplares,” Rojas wrote to Graves on May 28, 1934, “a fin de que muchos brasileros puedan ir enterándose de nuestro movimiento y decidan formar un Comité allí.”⁸¹ Furthermore, the letters and packages that Rycroft and Graves exchanged with one another sometimes contained party propaganda such as copies of *La Tribuna* or *El APRA*, which Graves wanted to read and disseminate in her networks.⁸²

SPREADING APRISTA IDEAS IN THE UNITED STATES

Scholars have marvelled at APRA’s continental presence, which in many ways reflects the success of APRA’s transnational organizing efforts. What is less known about the history of APRA as transnational movement, however, is that APRA leaders took pains to disseminate their ideas and their attacks against Peruvian authorities not only to Latin America but throughout the United States as well. Specifically, the promotion and circulation of APRA’s ideas north of the Río Grande was facilitated by the assistance of foreign allies who published and promoted the ideas of APRA in US publications. This helped APRA gain a continental presence both south and north of the Río Grande.

Liberals like Earle K. James, the *New York Times* correspondent to South America, and Carleton Beals, a writer-activist devoted to bettering Latin America–US relations, enthusiastically reported on the Peruvian APRA party in the US press. In a 1934 piece which appeared in *Current History*, James extolled the nationalist program of the Peruvian APRA party. He carefully and positively reviewed the program’s many features, from the need to better incorporate the Indigenous population of Peru into the Peruvian nation to the proposed industrialization of the country, to the recovery from foreign interests of key economic sectors. Interestingly, as he argued that APRA’s objective to “peruvianize Peru” was a good thing, he drew implicit parallels between APRA’s demands

⁸¹ “We thank you for distributing these copies, so that many Brazilians can learn about our movement and decide to form a committee there.” Rojas to Graves, Buenos Aires, May 28, 1934, SCPC, AMGP, Reel 74.8.

⁸² Rycroft to Graves, Lima, July 19, 1932, AMGC, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 3.5.

that the Peruvian state intervene more forcefully in the economy of the country, especially needed to better the fate of the “oppressed and exploited,” and the provisions of the newly passed New Deal increasing state intervention in the US economy.⁸³

APRA’s continental program also drew praise from these actors. In 1935, James opined in *Times* article that the continental APRA was a “vital force in South America today,” for it coherently combined influences from different American cultures and traditions in its groundbreaking attempt “to envisage a State that will crystallize the age-old aspirations of security combined with liberty.”⁸⁴ Carleton Beals argued that same year that “to understand the Apra movement and its leadership is to understand the probable evolution of Latin America in the years ahead.”⁸⁵ In the face of the “impending political crises,” which he correctly presaged would soon affect economic and political relations in the Western Hemisphere, Beals suggested that the APRA movement provided no less than “the key to Latin American developments for the next few decades.” In addition to praising “its remarkable discipline and remarkable leadership,” Beals was particularly enthused about APRA’s ability to harmonize different class interests and to promote social justice without rejecting capitalist property.⁸⁶

Throughout the 1930s, Christian social activists also published and promoted APRA’s ideas in publications that appeared in the United States. In 1932, John A. Mackay, as we have seen, used *The Other Spanish Christ* to publish a very positive appraisal of the leadership of Peruvian politician Haya de la Torre as well as the APRA party this leader commanded in Peru.⁸⁷ For his part, Stanley Rycroft extolled the attempts made by Luis Alberto Sánchez to construe a universal American civilization inclusive of its many parts, not just its Latin component.⁸⁸ Samuel G. Inman, the secretary of the Committee of Cooperation in Latin America (CCLA), wrote articles and published books that highlighted

⁸³ [Translation is mine] Earle K. James, “El llamado del Aprismo a la América Latina,” translated in Spanish and reproduced from *Current History in APRA: Revista Aprista*, Buenos Aires, January 1935, no. 9, pp. 13–14.

⁸⁴ Earle K. James, “South America Advances,” *The New York Times*, New York, January 20, 1935, p. XX3.

⁸⁵ Carleton Beals, “The Rise of Haya de la Torre,” pp. 236–246. Beals, *America South*, Philadelphia, New York: Lippincot Company, 1937.

⁸⁶ Beals, “The Rise of Haya de la Torre,” p. 246.

⁸⁷ Mackay, *The Other Spanish Christ*, 193–198.

⁸⁸ W. Stanley Rycroft, *On this Foundation. The Evangelical Witness in Latin America*, New York: Friendship Press, 1942, p. 10.

the significance of APRA's democratic and revolutionary nature for the Americas.⁸⁹ Furthermore, Inman sat on the editorial board of *La Nueva Democracia*, a New York-based monthly review and mouthpiece of the CCLA, which came to play an important role throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, advocating the views of APRA thinkers within its Christian readership in both the United States and Latin America.

La Nueva Democracia covered continental affairs from a Christian point of view. Since its foundation in the mid-1920s, this publication had served as a coveted platform for debates between thinkers, clerical and lay alike, from all over the Western Hemisphere.⁹⁰ *La Nueva Democracia* was distributed in the United States as well as in Latin America, reaching an influential and transnational audience (it had one limitation: its articles were all in Spanish). Thus, its very format contributed to the construction and, arguably, the imagination as well, of a Hispanophone community in the Americas. Significantly, and from the very beginning, this monthly review published articles that censured US foreign policy toward Latin America. Its editorial board wanted their magazine to voice "the spirit of appreciation of the liberal North American movement against imperialism."⁹¹ This commitment to fight US imperialism helps explain why many renowned Latin American anti-imperialists, including Apristas, published in the pages of *La Nueva Democracia* throughout the 1920s and beyond.⁹²

Significantly, this monthly review regularly advertised in the 1930s the latest *Aprista* publications in its "New Arrivals" section. One 1934 article even suggested a list of books that aimed to introduce the political project of APRA to a US and Latin American public. This list included the classics *Política Aprista* and *En Torno al Imperialismo*, respectively authored by

⁸⁹ Samuel G. Inman, "América Revolucionaria," *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, February 25, 1933, p. 15; Inman, *Latin America, Its Place in World Life*, Chicago: Willet, Clark, 1937.

⁹⁰ Rosa del Carmen Bruno-Jofre, "Social Gospel, the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, and the APRA: The Case of the American Methodist Mission, 1920-1930," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes*, 9: 18 (1984): 80; Kenneth Flint Woods, "Samuel Guy Inman - His Role in the Evolution of Inter-American Cooperation," Ph.D. Diss., The American University, 1962, pp. 95-98.

⁹¹ Virginia S. Williams, *Radical Journalists, Generalist Intellectuals, and U.S.-Latin American Relations*, Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001, p. 58.

⁹² Geneviève Dorais, "Missionary Critiques of Empire, 1920-1932: Between Interventionism and Anti-Imperialism," *International History Review*, 39: 3 (2017): 377-403.

APRA leaders Haya de la Torre and Carlos Manuel Cox, whose contents included criticism of US imperialism. “Read the following books so that you can stay informed about this extraordinary movement that progressed in recent years, particularly in Peru,” advised a note on top of the reading list.⁹³ Book reviews similarly highlighted the value of APRA’s program, not just for Peru but also for the entire American continent.⁹⁴ The editors of *La Nueva Democracia* also authored several articles that openly advanced the cause of APRA. They suggested that the APRA movement sparked interest not only in Latin America but throughout the United States as well, calling the attention of everybody who was interested in the fate of the “New World.”⁹⁵

In addition to advertising the work of prominent Aprista intellectuals, the editorial board of *La Nueva Democracia* was also committed to publishing their writings. The renown APRA leader Luis Alberto Sánchez, for example, disseminated in *La Nueva Democracia* the views of his political organization.⁹⁶ Some of his articles condemned the United States for having confined the countries of Indo-América to a subsidiary role in the global economy, presaging in many ways the touchstone argument of Dependency theory.⁹⁷ Others celebrated the authenticity and originality of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), or else highlighted the recent surge in Latin America of a ‘mystical, messianic generation’ in response to the material and spiritual crisis that afflicted the postwar world. Sánchez praised this new generation for being able to think for itself and by itself.⁹⁸ Whether they took the form of attacks on

⁹³ “Qué es el aprismo? ¿Cuáles son sus propósitos? ¿Quiénes son sus apóstoles?,” *La Nueva Democracia*, May 25, 1934, 20; [n.d], *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, December 1, 1922, p. 20.

⁹⁴ Augusto Arias, “¿A Dónde va Indoamérica?,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, February 1, 1936, p. 15.

⁹⁵ Alberto Rembao, “Editorial,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, March 1, 1936, p. 13; Ben Ossa, “Páginas de Fuego y Devoción,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, April 1, 1935, p. 9.

⁹⁶ Luis Alberto Sánchez, “El Anti-Rodó,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, January 25, 1934, 14; “La Mística de la Nueva América,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, October 25, 1934, 11; “Desesperación y Exasperación En la Juventud Indoamericana,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, January 1, 1935, 24; “Bolivarismo, Monroísmo y Aprismo,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, March 1, 1935, 8; “Religión no es Adversaria de Acción,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, April 1, 1935, 18.

⁹⁷ Luis Alberto Sánchez, “Para Que el Interamericanismo Sea... El Problema Esencial de Nuestra América,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, January 25, 1942, 11.

⁹⁸ Luis Alberto Sánchez, “El Anti-Rodó,” *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, January 25, 1934, 14.

US imperialism or appraisals of Latin American achievements, Sánchez's pieces all converged on a plea in favour of improved and more just relations between the United States and its southern neighbours. They also asserted the genuine and 'intensely' anti-imperialist nature of the APRA party.⁹⁹

Several more APRA leaders appeared in the pages of *La Nueva Democracia*. Julian Petrovick, Manuel Seoane, and Luis Heysen, for example, wrote about either their commitment to democracy and anti-imperialism or the specifics of APRA's program, or both.¹⁰⁰ They presented the doctrinal tenants of APRA in a simple fashion, bringing forth the importance for semi-colonial countries in Latin America of rooting their anti-imperialist struggles in nationalism rather than socialism or communism.¹⁰¹ Moreover, Apristas who wrote in *La Nueva Democracia* took pains to dissociate rigid, therefore objectionable, Marxist dogmas from APRA's dialectical Marxism, a philosophical position Aprista ideologues claimed to adopt to help them reveal the singularity of the American continent rather than to prepare for a class war they did not believe in. Apristas rejected Marxism the moment it either became a "dogma inmóvil" or was appropriated, like they argued it was in communism, "como ortodoxia congelada."¹⁰²

CONCLUSION

The deportation of party leaders in the early 1930s took a toll on the coordination of the APRA party in Peru, leaving for example many rank-and-file members without clear instruction regarding what to do or prioritize next. But, as Chapter 5 showed, it also paradoxically gifted their movement with political opportunities that were impossible to leverage otherwise. In exile, APRA leaders were free to come and go as they pleased. Resources sometimes ran scant, but they were able to resume

⁹⁹ Luis Alberto Sánchez, "Bolivarismo, Monroísmo y Aprismo," *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, March 1, 1935, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Manuel Seoane, "Socialismo, Nacionalismo, Aprismo," *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, July 1, 1935, p. 18; Julian Petrovick, "Aprismo y Democracia," *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, December 25, 1934, p. 11; Luis Heysen, "Restauración Vital," *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, August 1, 1936, p. 25.

¹⁰¹ Manuel Seoane, "Socialismo, Nacionalismo, Aprismo," *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, July 1, 1935, p. 18.

¹⁰² "Immobile dogma"; "like a frozen orthodoxy," Luis Pachacutec, "El Llamado del Apra a la América Latina," *La Nueva Democracia*, New York, January 1, 1935, p. 14.

their political work without having to circumvent censorship, let alone fear for their lives. As a result, party members in hiding in Peru largely relied on the propaganda work of their peers abroad to educate people about what was going on in their country. They hoped to expose the dictatorial nature of the Peruvian government, and more importantly they did everything they could to draw the attention of public opinion to the plight that the APRA party was suffering at the time. This helped to nudge APRA away from its earlier radical positions and engage with democracy in the mid-to-late 1930s, through the prism of individual and civil liberty.

Chapter 5 also highlighted the key role that foreign allies, specifically Christian intermediaries like Anna Melissa Graves, continued to play in securing the survival of the PAP during the 1930s. Christian intermediaries were not alone in this task, but they had one advantage over other clandestine networks which made them particularly valuable for *Apristas* in the midst of persecution: they had access to resources and publicity abroad. APRA leaders in prison in Peru, and especially those stationed abroad, learned to use this help to get access to material and to disseminate their ideas throughout the rest of the Americas. These US anti-imperialists and Christian intermediaries assisted APRA in a number of ways: they participated in solidarity campaigns with imprisoned leaders of the party; they helped circulate propaganda and other types of censored material (such as correspondence) inside and outside Peru; they published and promoted the ideas of APRA in US publications, thereby helping APRA gain a continental presence both south and north of the Río Grande; and they likewise sent to APRA members books and political material they wanted them to read in hiding or in prison. APRA's reliance on foreign allies to attract the favour of international public opinion continued to affect its ideological production well into the early 1940s, as further detailed in the next chapter.