

We Will No Longer Be Servile: *Aprismo* in 1930s Ayacucho*

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Abstract. This article challenges the notion that the APRA party's poor electoral showings in Peru's southern sierra during the 1930s reflected regional lack of interest in the party and that APRA held little appeal for indigenous peasants. Focusing on two rural districts in the department of Ayacucho, the article reveals that APRA was indeed a formidable presence in rural Ayacucho during the 1930s. With its calls for regional inclusion and decentralisation, APRA appealed to progressive *hacendados*, schoolteachers and even wealthy peasants, who linked APRA's national discourses to their local struggles for political power and land.

Tipping his hat and smiling, Don Marcelino Lizarbe told me, 'I was an Aprista then. There were many Apristas here.'¹ An elderly Ayacucho campesino from the indigenous peasant community of Carhuanca, Don Marcelino shared with me his memories of APRA mobilisation in the 1930s. Like many men and women in Peru during that decade, Don Marcelino had believed that APRA (the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) would bring about comprehensive economic, political and social change. Such change seemed especially necessary in a national context of increasing urbanisation and industrialisation, and in an international context of severe economic depression. A fundamentally populist party, APRA promised both socio-economic justice and a national political transformation that would wrest power from the hands of the aristocracy and turn that power over to the masses. Don Marcelino's words invite a reconsideration of the APRA's early history, as they run counter to two general assumptions about the party: that APRA's poor electoral showings in Peru's southern sierra reflected a

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¹ Interview with Marcelino Lizarbe* (24 Sept. 2003). All names followed by an asterisk in the footnotes are pseudonyms. This article draws primarily on interviews and on materials from the Archivo Regional de Ayacucho (hereafter cited as ARA). While additional materials are located in the Ministry of the Interior files at the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), they were not consulted for this article.

regional paucity of sympathy for the party, and that APRA held little appeal for indigenous peasants during the 1930s.²

This article begins such a reassessment, situating Ayacucho's APRA in its comparative national context and examining the party's emergence and popularity in two rural districts in the department, Luricocha and Carhuamarca. Taking a regionalised and localised view of the party, it becomes clear that APRA was indeed a formidable presence inside rural Ayacucho during the 1930s. With its calls for regional inclusion and decentralisation, APRA appealed to a group of progressive *hacendados* and schoolteachers in Luricocha. In Carhuamarca, in contrast, the party drew sympathy and staunch support from the district's most powerful campesinos who connected APRA's national discourses to their local struggles for political power and land. Uniting these diverse strains of Ayacucho *Aprismo* was a strong migrant movement that helped to consolidate a regional *ayacuchano* identity during the 1930s.

As Peru's strongest and most enduring political party, APRA has received considerable attention from scholars. Yet, while there are enough books about *Aprismo* to crowd many library shelves, much of this work is staunchly partisan in tone, celebrating or attacking the party and its founder, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. And while Haya de la Torre's words, actions and ideas have been documented and analysed in impressive detail, only a few works have looked past the leader to consider how the party emerged and operated in regions where Haya failed to tread. As such, we still have only a fragmented knowledge of the party's history across Peru's many distinct regions, and we still lack a synthetic, historically grounded understanding of APRA in its early days as a truly *national* party. The potential for such a synthesis is growing. Several works have considered the emergence of *Aprismo* in other regions of Peru. In the early 1980s Steve Stein traced APRA's popularity among Lima's working classes, while some years later David S. Parker examined the emergence of *Aprismo* among Lima's white-collar employees. Lewis Taylor has provided an excellent analysis of *Aprismo* in Cajamarca, showing how APRA gained support from middle-class sectors like lawyers, schoolteachers and cattle dealers, while simultaneously establishing ties with rural and urban labourers, women and students. David Nugent, in turn, has considered APRA's appeal to rural smallholders, students, artisans and civil servants in Amazonas. All of these studies are deeply indebted to Peter F. Klarén's classic examination of APRA's rise among Trujillo intellectuals, merchants, artisans, white-collar workers and, especially, sugar plantation labourers. While the party's founder, Haya de la Torre, his teachings and his

² The suggestion that APRA held little appeal in the south and to indigenous populations appears in Geoffrey Bertram, 'Peru: 1930–1960,' in Leslie Bethell (ed.), *Cambridge History of Latin America* (Cambridge, 1991), vol. 8, p. 396.

platforms were always at APRA's core, these studies suggest that APRA's regional branches differed considerably from one another in terms of their membership, their priorities and their actions. It was precisely the diversity and flexibility of this otherwise unified party that made APRA so successful across Peru. The party was essentially able to be many things to many distinct groups of people. This article establishes that this diversity and flexibility was present not only *between* regions, but *within* them as well, as *Aprismo* looked quite different in Luricocha and Carhuanca, the two rural districts of Ayacucho that are treated here.³

Aprismo in Peru, Aprismo in Ayacucho

Like other populist and/or radical political parties such as the Peruvian Communist Party and Unión Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Union), APRA's formal political role inside Peru began with the sudden end of Augusto B. Leguía's eleven-year presidency in 1930. Responding to widespread anti-Leguía sentiment and economic desperation triggered by global depression and financial crisis, the largely unknown army colonel, Luis M. Sánchez Cerro, led a military rebellion against Leguía in August 1930, triggering a national revolt that forced him from power. A short, slight and phenotypically dark man from the northern coastal city of Piura, Sánchez Cerro immediately won the adoration of many impoverished Peruvians, especially in Lima, who identified with the clearly non-white, non-aristocratic leader, casting him as 'a *cholo* like us'. Sánchez Cerro went on to head the Unión Revolucionaria party and win the presidency in the 1931 election, an election famous for its unprecedented inclusion of the working-class masses, who were no longer disenfranchised by elitist property requirements. Although the electoral system still excluded the illiterate national majority, and while many *Apristas* made angry denunciations of electoral fraud, the 1931 elections were by far

³ Key works on Haya de la Torre include Fredrick B. Pike, *The Politics of the Miraculous in Peru: Haya de la Torre and the Spiritualist Tradition* (Lincoln, NE, 1986) and Pedro Planas, *Los orígenes del APRA: el joven Haya (mito y realidad de Haya de la Torre)* (Lima, 1986). Studies providing a synthesis of APRA include Liisa North, 'Orígenes y crecimiento del Partido Aprista y el cambio socio-económico en el Perú,' *Desarrollo Económico*, vol. 38 (July–Sept. 1970), pp. 163–214; Percy Murillo Garaycochea, *Historia del APRA, 1919–1945* (Lima, 1976); Imelda Vega-Centeno, *Aprismo popular: cultura, religión y política* (Lima, 1991); Mariano Valderrama et al., *El APRA, un camino de esperanzas y frustraciones* (Lima, 1980). Regional analyses include Steve Stein, *Populism in Peru: The Emergence of the Masses and the Politics of Social Control* (Madison, 1980); Peter F. Klarén, *Modernization, Dislocation, and Aprismo: Origins of the Peruvian Aprista Party, 1870–1932* (Austin, 1973); David S. Parker, *The Idea of the Middle Class: White-Collar Workers and Peruvian Society, 1900–1950* (University Park, 1998); David Nugent, *Modernity at the Edge of Empire: State, Individual, and Nation in the Northern Peruvian Andes, 1885–1935* (Stanford, 1997); Lewis Taylor, 'The Origins of APRA in Cajamarca, 1928–1935,' *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, vol. 19 (Oct. 2000), pp. 437–59.

the broadest and most popular elections in the country's history to that date. Sánchez Cerro governed Peru with a mix of liberalised social legislation and conservative economic policies, ruling the country until his assassination in April 1933.⁴

The young man who shot President Sánchez Cerro was a partisan of APRA. Founded in exile in the 1920s by a middle-class native of Trujillo, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, APRA espoused a broad political programme emphasising social justice and alliance between the middle and working classes. By the time of the 1931 elections, Haya had already established his popularity, having participated in the university reform efforts of the early 1920s, a 1923 protest in favour of the separation of Church and state (a protest that led to his exile), and the Popular Universities established during the decade. It was especially through these popular universities – informal classes that provided education, political instruction, and some social services, taught by progressive university students and attended by workers – that Haya built his ties to Lima's working and middle classes, and he retained those ties throughout his years in exile.⁵ On founding his APRA party in Mexico in 1924, Haya outlined a five-point political platform that called for resistance to North American imperialism, Latin America's political unity, the nationalisation of private property and industry, the internationalisation of the Panama Canal and the alliance of the world's oppressed peoples. Haya returned from exile in 1931 and began campaigning for the presidency, leading the party that his allies had launched inside Peru after the fall of Leguía the previous year. Although Haya won the adulation of tens of thousands of men and women who crowded his rallies as he travelled from Piura down to Lima, he could not beat the more electorally popular Sánchez Cerro. Haya's loss of the presidential election as well as his (largely unfounded) claims of electoral fraud triggered numerous political uprisings across Peru, uprisings that continued until Sánchez Cerro's successor, President Oscar Benavides, outlawed APRA in 1934.⁶

While APRA lost the 1931 election – and could not compete legally in presidential elections for decades to come – the party gained much more popular support in Peru's many regions than the rival *sánchezcerroista* party, the Unión Revolucionaria, or the newly emergent Peruvian Communist Party. With a highly developed party structure, regional flexibility, and creative political programmes – crucial political assets that both the Communist Party and the Unión Revolucionaria lacked – APRA was able to win adherents throughout Peru. Strong *Aprista* movements emerged not only in Lima, but

⁴ Stein, *Populism in Peru*, pp. 83–128.

⁵ Jeffrey L. Klaiber, 'The Popular Universities and the Origins of Aprismo, 1921–1924,' *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 55 (Nov. 1975), pp. 693–715.

⁶ Klarén, *Modernization, Dislocation, and Aprismo*, p. 129.

also in Haya's home province of Trujillo on the northern coast, inside the northern department of Cajamarca, in the northern sierra province of Chachapoyas, in central sierra departments like Junín, and in southern sierra departments like Huancavelica and Ayacucho.

Ayacucho is not a region traditionally known for its *Aprismo*, as APRA consistently had much weaker electoral showings in southern sierra departments than on the coast or in the departments of the 'solid *Aprista* north'. Ayacucho is instead much better known for its later connection to the PCP-SL (Sendero Luminoso), as it was in this department that PCP-SL militants launched their armed struggle in 1980, and it was the region that suffered the most deaths in the uprising that followed. While Ayacucho's late twentieth-century political history is notorious, therefore, few are aware that earlier in the century the department was home to a series of vibrant and diverse political movements. Those political predecessors included the Tawantinsuyo indigenous rights association of the 1920s, radical Trotskyist organisations and the reformist party, Acción Popular, in the 1960s, and a prominent *Aprista* movement in the 1930s and early 1940s.⁷

Inside Ayacucho, the *Aprista* movement focused on regional inclusion in the Peruvian nation state. Under the leadership of a lawyer and deputy, Aristides Guillén, Ayacucho's *Apristas* pushed for regional political solidarity, action and national recognition. In Ayacucho, as in other departments in the southern sierra like Puno, Huancavelica, Apurímac and Cuzco, an emphasis on regional rights, decentralisation, inclusion and power defined *Aprismo*. A piece of Ayacucho *Aprista* propaganda pushed this point: 'Ayacuchanos, we will no longer be servile! We will no longer be unworthy sons, tyrant's pupils! For Ayacucho's moral greatness and progress! Viva Peru! Viva Ayacucho!'⁸ Similar regionalist sentiment was present in other southern departments. A 'Decentralist Party' emerged in Arequipa at this time and *arequipeños* twice turned their anti-centralist, anti-*limeño* thought into armed action, rebelling against Leguía in 1930 under Sánchez Cerro, and soon thereafter rebelling against Sánchez Cerro's plans to circumvent fair elections for 1931. The latter rebellion briefly forced Sánchez Cerro from power, obliging him to participate as a civilian candidate in the 1931 elections. Jorge Basadre has deemed such broad anti-centralist sentiment 'the subversion of the provinces', and argued that, 'throughout the country, the flag of decentralisation was propagated without resistance'.⁹ *Apristas* played a major role

⁷ José Luis Rénique proposed a comparison of APRA and the PCP-SL in *La voluntad encarcelada: las luminosas trincheras de combate* (Lima, 2003). A consideration of Ayacucho's twentieth-century history appears in the author's doctoral dissertation, 'By Other Means: Politics in Rural Ayacucho before Peru's Shining Path War, 1879–1980,' University of Wisconsin, in progress.

⁸ ARA, Prefectura, legajo 19 (10 March 1932).

⁹ Jorge Basadre, *Perú, problema y posibilidad*, 4th ed. (Lima, 1994), pp. 207–8.

in this ‘provincial subversion’. An *Aprista* named Luis Heysen, for example, organised the Regional *Aprista* Congress for Southern Peru in 1931. The congress’s promoters actively advocated decentralisation, and congress delegates deliberated how their regions’ specific problems could be incorporated into the national party’s programme. APRA also promised an end to the sense of abandon and neglect which was common in the southern sierra, and that promise does much to explain the party’s popularity.¹⁰ The party was also able to build upon the strength and reach of the 1920s pro-indigenous Tawantinsuyo movement. Not only had many *Apristas* of the 1930s belonged to the Tawantinsuyo movement in the 1920s, but the Tawantinsuyo Committee itself had also promoted and worked alongside Haya de la Torre’s Popular University movement. While APRA never became the dominant political force in the southern sierra – Sánchez Cerro won significantly more votes than Haya de la Torre in the 1931 elections and APRA consistently had its weakest electoral showings in the south – the party was nonetheless an important political actor, and its stress on regional identity and its *indigenista* reputation help to explain the party’s power.¹¹

The best-known branch of APRA in Ayacucho was its base in the departmental capital. Although APRA had been officially outlawed following the assassination of Sánchez Cerro, with its members jailed or forced into hiding, its publications shut down and *Aprista* congressmen deported, Peru’s *Apristas* continued their political activities unabated. Indeed, as Thomas M. Davies has argued, the repression ironically served to unify the party and heighten feelings of party loyalty.¹² *Apristas* in Ayacucho were no exception. Following the example of the activists who launched a massive revolutionary uprising in Trujillo in 1932, *Apristas* started a rebellion in the city of Ayacucho in November 1934, seizing the prefecture of the department of Huamanga, storming the headquarters of the Guardia Civil, and calling for national revolution. Although the rebellion intentionally coincided with other *Aprista* uprisings in Huanta, Lima, Huancayo and Huancavelica, it was neither prolonged nor successful. Military forces brutally and definitively quashed the uprising after only four days of rebellion, and APRA was further repressed in Ayacucho and throughout Peru. With a brief interlude in 1936, the party would remain illegal until 1945. This facet of APRA’s history is

¹⁰ José Luis Rénique, ‘State and regional movements in the Peruvian highlands: the case of Cusco, 1895–1985,’ unpubl. PhD diss., Columbia University, 1988, p. 107; Dan Hazen, ‘The Awakening of Puno: Government Policy and the Indian Problem in Southern Peru, 1900–1955’ (PhD diss., Yale University, 1974), p. 291.

¹¹ Hazen, ‘Awakening of Puno,’ p. 154; Wilfredo Kapsoli, *Ayllus del sol: anarquismo y utopía andina* (Lima, 1984), p. 161.

¹² Thomas Davies, *Indian Integration in Peru: A Half Century of Experience, 1900–1948* (Lincoln, NE, 1974), pp. 112–13.

relatively common knowledge inside Ayacucho: university students have written theses on the 1934 urban uprising, senior citizens reminisce about the rebellion, and the local APRA branch still celebrates this 1934 ‘revolution’. Yet the fact that *Aprismo* existed not only in major urban centres like Ayacucho and Huanta, but in the department’s peasant communities as well, is almost unknown, even within the department.¹³

The remainder of this article focuses on APRA’s emergence in two rural districts in Ayacucho: Luricocha in the northern province of Huanta, and Carhuanca in the eastern province of Cangallo. At first glance, these districts appear quite similar. Both are impoverished rural areas with largely indigenous populations, and both districts stretch across a differentiated terrain, having warm, well-irrigated valleys where fruits like oranges, *tuna* (prickly pear) and avocados grow; higher and cooler terrains better suited to corn and wheat; and high, cold zones where only potatoes, grass and tubers grow. But while the districts of Luricocha and Carhuanca seem fairly similar at first glance, on closer scrutiny the similarities fade and differences emerge. One of the most striking is political as *luricochanos* and *carhuanquinos* had dramatically different responses to *Aprismo*. In Luricocha *Aprista* activity was limited to a handful of progressive *hacendados* and teachers, while the district’s campesinos proved largely uninterested in the party. Luricocha’s *Apristas* were vocal, but they were not particularly active in the rural areas of the district, focusing their political energies and actions instead on the nearby urban centre of Huanta. *Aprismo* in Carhuanca, in contrast, was considerably more raucous and popular. Carhuanca’s *Apristas* came from the ranks of the district’s wealthiest campesinos and these men used *Aprismo* to fight local political and land battles. Their actions and successes made Carhuanca a centre of *Aprismo* inside Ayacucho.

These socio-political differences mapped on to two key differences regarding land. Luricocha was a district dominated by several large haciendas including Huayllay, Atalambra, Atocpuquio, Pampay I, Pampay II, Iribamba, Huanchacc, Vado, Cedro Huerta and Meccayra, with only a few scattered campesino smallholdings. Most of these haciendas were held in usufruct: *hacendados* divided up their estates among tenants (*arrendires*), who worked the land in exchange for a yearly rent paid in cash and/or in kind. Carhuanca, in turn, was largely free from hacienda control. The district’s three haciendas were located in Carhuanca’s lower valleys, distant from the district capital,

¹³ *El Pueblo* (28 Nov. 1934; 4 Dec. 1934; 11 Dec. 1934), and Miguel Gaspar Rojas, ‘La insurrección del Partido Aprista Peruano en Huamanga, 1934,’ Bachelor’s thesis, University San Cristóbal de Huamanga, 1982. The first academic work to consider APRA in Ayacucho’s countryside is Luis Miguel Glave and Jaime Urrutia, ‘Radicalismo político en élites regionales: Ayacucho 1930–1956,’ *Debate Agrario*, vol. 31 (Aug. 2000), pp. 1–37. On the simultaneous rebellions, see Pike, *Politics of the Miraculous*, p. 176.



Map 1.

and none of these estates endured past the 1940s. Campesino smallholdings far overshadowed Carhuanca's weak hacienda presence; families owned several tiny private plots of land, usually well under one hectare in size, and eked out their livings from these holdings. The other difference regarding

land involved geography: Luricocha was relatively close to two major urban centres, while Carhuanca was extremely isolated geographically. Located only seven kilometres from the provincial capital of Huanta and around thirty kilometres from the departmental capital, Ayacucho, Luricocha was tightly articulated with these urban centres. Luricocha *hacendados* usually lived and even worked in these cities, visiting their haciendas only occasionally. The district of Luricocha was also relatively close to Huanta's *montaña* regions, and like most Huanta campesinos, Luricocha's peasants regularly migrated there to provide seasonal agricultural labour. Contrasted against Luricocha, Carhuanca was geographically remote. Located in the easternmost corner of central Ayacucho, Carhuanca was approximately fifty kilometres away from the city of Cangallo and over 100 kilometres away from Ayacucho. Without a highway connecting Carhuanca to either of these cities until the end of the 1960s, Carhuanca had few connections to urban Ayacucho. Indeed, Carhuanca's articulation to urban Ayacucho was so weak that most *carhuancuinos* who migrated out of the district travelled all the way to Lima. Both despite and because of Carhuanca's geographical isolation, *Aprismo* flourished in the district.

Hacendados, *Campesinos* and *Aprismo* in *Luricocha*

Sprouting in cities, towns and villages across Peru, *Aprismo* found its way into the Huanta district of Luricocha. Writing to Ayacucho's prefect just weeks after the 1934 uprisings in the cities of Ayacucho and Huanta, the commander of the Civil Guard in Luricocha, Eloy G. Espino, cast his district as an *Aprista* haven. Espino told the prefect that Luricocha's 'Revolutionary *Aprista* Leaders' had burned down his home and threatened to kill him and his family, all because of his well-known opposition to APRA. Espino also alleged that *Apristas* in Luricocha were hoarding money, revolvers and considerable amounts of ammunition as part of their plan to incite campesinos to violent revolution. Not only did Commander Espino single out eight well-known *luricochanos*, including two teachers, as *Apristas*, he also reported that numerous *Aprista* revolutionaries and leaders were hiding out on the haciendas Iribamba and Huanchacc.¹⁴

Commander Espino's claims were no doubt exaggerated. He used them to demand his own reappointment as governor of Luricocha, having been demoted from that position four years earlier. Writing 'I beg you to name me Governor ... to make them feel my heavy hand, to capture them', Espino probably knew that the more heated his claims, the better his chance of

¹⁴ ARA, Pref. leg. 14 (9 Dec. 1934).

winning the reappointment. Moreover, court documents prove that Espino had a long history of lying, of abusing his authority and of slandering others. The subprefect of Huanta himself cast doubt on Espino's words, tempering Espino's claims in his own letter to the prefect in Ayacucho. The subprefect stated that he saw absolutely no need to replace Luricocha's current governor, and saw no sense in naming Espino to that position. Further, upon close investigation of the haciendas Iribamba and Huanchacc, the subprefect and his police officers found nothing: no fugitives and no weapons. Given Espino's careerist self interest, his past history, and the subprefect's counterclaims, we must approach Espino's charges with much scepticism. That said, there was a basis of truth in Espino's political hyperbole. The subprefect reported that most of the *Aprista* leaders whom Espino had named 'are all fugitives, and are being pursued with utmost effort'. The subprefect added that both he and the governor of Luricocha had already taken action against the two *Aprista* teachers whom Espino had denounced, and he noted that one of the named rebels had 'direct and prominent participation in the revolutionary movement'. Later letters from other officials, political demonstrations, and *Aprista* propaganda all supported Espino's claims that Luricocha was home to a significant number of *Apristas*.¹⁵

The *Aprista* presence in Luricocha shows that APRA did indeed have a meaningful political place in rural Ayacucho despite the party's dismal electoral showing at the departmental level, and that APRA's allure was not limited to the urban and/or industrialised realm of middle-class employees, working-class labourers and salaried plantation workers. Inside Luricocha, APRA appealed to a rather different group of individuals: the *hacendados* of the district. The individuals whom Commander Espino and the Huanta subprefect named as *Apristas* all ranked among the district's most prominent landowners and professionals. The men on Espino's list included the former governor and *Jefe de Plaza*, Apolinario Fajardo; former governor Arístides Flores; two teachers; and some of the area's wealthiest *hacendados* such as Carlos La Torre, David Urbina and José Salvatierra.

APRA's appeal to district authorities and *hacendados* might seem peculiar on first consideration. As they were among the wealthiest and most politically powerful individuals in Luricocha, these men were members of the local elite rather than the impoverished and excluded masses APRA claimed to represent. The allure of *Aprismo* to such men becomes considerably easier to understand with a shift of focus away from the local and toward the national: while such men were part of district elites, they often felt as ignored

¹⁵ ARA, Pref. leg. 14 (9 Dec. 1934, 18 Dec. 1934). Earlier charges against Espino appear in ARA, Corte Superior de Justicia (CSJ), leg. 478, cuaderno 20; CSJ, leg. 405, cuad. 4; CSJ, leg. 490, cuad. 14; CSJ; CSJ, leg. 428, cuad. 11; CSJ, leg. 466, cuad. 9.

and abandoned by national authorities as did their poorer neighbours. Such a sense of exclusion is reflected in the comment from one Ayacucho newspaper that dubbed the department's capital 'Huamanga, banished; Huamanga, forgotten; Huamanga, pitied'.¹⁶ Furthermore, Luricocha's *Aprista hacendados* were part of a longstanding tradition of progressive elites in Huanta. Like the *hacendados* who sided with the province's campesinos in the anti-Chilean battles of the War of the Pacific (1879–83) and the subsequent effort to support Andrés Avelino Cáceres in his efforts to attain and retain presidential power, the *Aprista* hacendados of the 1930s saw themselves as the protectors and defenders of the area's indigenous campesinos. These progressive *hacendados* also had a more immediate predecessor, the Huanta Liga de Defensa de los Derechos del Hombre (the Rights of Man Defence League) of the 1920s. That league worked for 'the sacred principles of solidarity and the defence of individual and collective rights', and included an executive committee, a pro-worker commission, a complaint commission, and a pro-Indian commission.¹⁷ While the district of Luricocha and the province of Huanta had an especially strong tradition of progressive *hacendados*, such men were not altogether unusual. Luis Miguel Glave and Jaime Urrutia have shown that Ayacucho's provincial elites were often far from the stereotypical image of the exploitative feudal *gamonal*, and many comprised an important sector of the *Aprista* party in the 1930s.¹⁸

The *Apristas* whom Commander Espino named stood out not only because of their class, but because of their gender as well. Nested within Espino's letter came a reference to a surprising group: women. Espino charged that the local teachers, Artemia Prado and Vitaliana Medina, aided and abetted the APRA movement and the district's *Aprista* leaders. Not only did these two women yell out '*vivas*' to APRA and call for the national government's downfall with '*mueras*', they also presented Luricocha's *Aprista* leaders with crowns and bouquets of flowers. Whether Espino's comments were true, exaggerated or apocryphal, there was indeed a significant female presence among Ayacucho's *Apristas*. There was a Women's *Aprista* Cell – the *célula femenina aprista* – in the city of Ayacucho, and several Huanta women faced arrest because of their public support for APRA.¹⁹ Further, Ayacucho's female *Apristas* identified themselves as an important and distinct group of APRA supporters, the loyal and long-suffering *compañeras* (partners or comrades) of APRA militants. A piece of *Aprista*

¹⁶ *Ayacucho*, 25 April 1940, p.1. ¹⁷ ARA, Pref. leg. 12 (21 Jan. 1923; 22 Jan. 1923).

¹⁸ Glave and Urrutia, 'Radicalismo político'. In addition, many former supporters of Leguía joined APRA's ranks: see Thomas Davies, 'The Indigenismo of the Peruvian Aprista Party: A Reinterpretation,' *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 51, no. 4 (1971), p. 635.

¹⁹ ARA, Pref. leg. 14 (9 Dec. 1934); ARA, Pref. leg. 104 (11 Dec. 1935; 12 Dec. 1935).

propaganda confiscated in Huanta stresses this point. Dotted with capitalised words, this tiny sheet of paper read:

Great causes are always nourished by GENEROUS BLOOD, and this time, the blood that has poured out from our fallen brothers in SAN LORENZO, TRUJILLO, HUARAZ, CAJAMARCA, SAN CRISTÓBAL, CUSCO, HUANCAMELICA, AND AYACUCHO is teaching us which route we must travel, tirelessly and resolutely. On this path, the APRISTA WOMAN knows that she must always be the honourable COMPAÑERA of party militants and of the struggle. As much in painful losses as in victory, she will always be at her brothers' side, arm in arm in this INCESSANT AND TENACIOUS struggle, a struggle that demands all of our efforts, all of our energy, and all of our sacrifices ... In this holy task, the APRISTA WOMAN marches reliably and radiantly on the precipitous route that leads toward the Conquest of SOCIAL JUSTICE, armed with the unbreakable FAITH that ONLY APRISMO WILL SAVE PERU.²⁰

APRA's appeal to relatively wealthy and educated women in Luricocha and across Peru is understandable. Women could sympathise with the party's discussions of the disempowered majority: on account of their sex, all women regardless of age, wealth and literacy were disenfranchised in Peru until 1955. While APRA did not actively press for women's enfranchisement, its leader, Haya de la Torre, repeatedly referred to women and their unfair political exclusion in his speeches. Complimenting his words with actions, Haya even extended a prominent party role to the feminist political activist, Magda Portal. Portal's arguments for women's rights and for APRA received wide attention, especially after the publication of her book, *El aprismo y la mujer*, in 1933. As teachers, Luricocha's two female *Apristas* could sympathise with calls for women's empowerment: they were literate professionals excluded from formal political participation solely because of their sex.²¹

Although Ayacucho's *hacendados* and *campesinos* were too far removed from national and international capitalist markets to suffer the effects of global economic depression as deeply and as severely as Peruvians living in the country's export-oriented centre and coast, most *ayacuchanos* still felt a pressing need for socio-economic and political change.²² Luricocha's *Apristas* regularly asserted that APRA was the only possible salvation for their country, their department, and their district. Their actions inside Luricocha, however, were not nearly as exalted as their words. *Luricochano Apristas* spoke a lot, thought a lot, and met a lot, but they did not *do* a lot. They had only

²⁰ ARA, Pref. leg. 14 (Nov. 1936).

²¹ Magda Portal, *El aprismo y la mujer* (Lima, 1933). Taylor analyses APRA's appeal to women in 'Origins of Apra', pp. 456–7.

²² For the impact of the depression on the coast and in the central highlands, see Klarén, *Modernization, Dislocation, and Aprismo*, pp. 145–6; Florencia Mallon, *The Defense of Community in Peru's Central Highlands: Peasant Struggle and Capitalist Transition, 1860–1940* (Princeton, 1983), pp. 268–307.

a brief spurt of activity during the 1934 rebellion: one *luricochano* took an active part in the 1934 Huanta uprising and two others simultaneously tried to capture Luricocha's mayor and seize control of the district capital. But after the rebellion's quick and brutal defeat, and the more generalised repression of APRA nationally, the *Apristas* in Luricocha limited their political efforts within the district – and inside Huanta, Ayacucho and Peru – to organising and promoting their party.²³

Such a lack of interest in continuing to pursue violent rebellion is understandable. The 1934 uprisings in Ayacucho and Huanta failed so miserably and were repressed so violently that continued pursuit of rebellion would have been foolhardy. But Luricocha's *Apristas* did not show much interest in non-violent protest, either. They did not pen letters of political complaint; did not initiate court cases to push for social justice; they did not mobilise the area's peasants to denounce local injustices; and they did not visit local, regional or national authorities to demand social, economic or political change. Mostly, they just talked to one another. Official reports had little to denounce beyond the activists' party affiliation and political meetings, and although authorities called for careful surveillance of the *Apristas'* activities, their investigations uncovered little. Probably the most significant of the *Apristas'* actual actions was their participation in the Sociedad 'Unión Obrera' de Huanta (the Huanta 'Workers' Union' Society). Much like the Rights of Man Defence League of the 1920s, the Sociedad Unión Obrera brought together *huantino* elites who wanted to assist and defend their province's impoverished masses. Indeed, the *luricochano* *Apristas*, Arístides Flores and Apolinario Fajardo, had belonged to both the Rights of Man Defence League and the Sociedad Unión Obrera. Almost as much a social as a political organisation, the Sociedad Unión Obrera's members were wealthy and educated landlords, professionals, and merchants who self-identified as white, or perhaps as mestizo, but never as Indian. These men wanted to rescue indigenous campesinos; they did not want to invite them into their club or recognise them as equals. Through the Sociedad Unión Obrera, Luricocha's *Apristas* lobbied for political change, but only in the most general of ways: denouncing injustice and calling for economic and social reforms. The limited actions of these *Aprista hacendados* had significant economic underpinnings. For all their progressive ideas, these men still made their livelihoods on the backs of campesino labourers. They needed peasants' land rents and their labours, so they had no interest in actively mobilising campesinos to pursue the sort of comprehensive socio-economic justice that would jeopardise the class interests of the *hacendados*.²⁴

²³ ARA, CSJ, leg. 562, cuad. 9.

²⁴ ARA, Pref. leg. 14 (8 Oct. 1936; 25 Sept. 1941).

While the presence of *Aprista hacendados* in Luricocha is easy to document, it is much harder to gauge campesino attitudes toward the party. There is no surviving evidence to suggest that campesinos in the district assumed the political identity of *Apristas* or even sympathised with the party. Provincial and departmental authorities hostile to APRA commented extensively on the actions of the *Aprista hacendados*, but those authorities made no reports of campesino support for *Aprismo*. There was not even an infusion of *Aprista* political language into campesinos' court testimonies or petitions. While campesinos in Luricocha engaged in much political action in the 1930s, writing letters, lobbying authorities, and launching court cases to express their worries about locusts, decrepit bridges, negligent teachers, and abusive authorities, they did not make any references to *Aprista* activities, leaders or ideals.²⁵

It is not especially surprising that the campesinos proved largely uninterested in *Aprismo*. Not only did the district's *Aprista hacendados* make no concerted effort to mobilise or actively defend peasants, these *Apristas* also included men pointedly despised by many campesinos. The former governor, Arístides Flores was one such man. Back in 1929, two campesinos denounced the then governor Flores to the prefect of Ayacucho, claiming that the governor 'has declared himself enemy of all the residents in his jurisdiction, and he keeps us in a state of constant alarm'. The campesinos charged that Flores had subjected *luricochanos* to arbitrary arrest and random acts of violence, 'abusing our sad condition of being defenceless Indians'. That Governor Flores later became one of Luricocha's most vocal *Apristas* surely turned some campesinos away from APRA. The same can be said of Apolinario Fajardo. Campesinos had levied many complaints against Fajardo during his tenure as district governor in the late 1920s, and Fajardo's later conversion to *Aprismo* probably soured many campesinos' attitude toward the party.²⁶ But the disinterest in *Aprismo* shown by campesinos in Luricocha was not the rule throughout rural Ayacucho, as the Carhuanca case will show.

Campesinos, Apristas and Migrants in Carhuanca

APRA had only limited influence in Luricocha, bound by the attitudes and actions of its elite partisans, and restricted by the generalised indifference of campesinos towards *Aprismo*. In contrast, APRA politics in the eastern Cangallo district of Carhuanca dominated district life. Penning a letter to the

²⁵ ARA, Pref. leg. 14 (6 Dec. 1934; 25 Nov. 1936; 6 July 1937; 16 Nov. 1938; 30 Jan. 1939; 28 June 1940); Pref. leg. 13 (7 Oct. 1929).

²⁶ ARA, Pref. leg. 13 (22 Feb. 1929; 15 July 1929; 24 July 1929).

Cangallo subprefect one March 1932 day, Governor Maximiliano García assured the subprefect that there was absolutely no *Aprista* activity and no *Aprista* propaganda within the district of Carhuanca.²⁷ Governor García's words may have been comforting, but they were hardly truthful given that he himself was one of the most prominent and militant *Apristas* in a rural district with a strong *Aprista* presence. Those Carhuanca *Apristas* had been meeting and planning for several months before Governor García wrote his letter, but it was in the days, weeks, and months following his reassuring note to the subprefect that APRA activity came to dominate Carhuanca's political life. Easter 1932 brought a political eruption in the district. During this holiest of Catholic holidays, Carhuanca's *Apristas* rallied before their district's city hall. Pedro Félix Guillén, Miguel and Moises Estrada, Teobaldo García, Augusto Cárdenas, Lieutenant Governor Lázaro Gómez, Governor Maximiliano García, Municipal Mayor Dionisio Alfaro, and all of the district's *varayocs* (indigenous authorities), denounced the subprefect's choice for a new governor, Crisóstomo Romaní. Yelling at the top of their lungs, the *Apristas* charged that Romaní was unfit for the job, both because he was a *forastero* (a migrant into Carhuanca) and because he was a *sánchezcerrista*. The municipal mayor, Moisés Estrada, added to the denunciation by proclaiming that, 'as long as APRA exists in this town, no other party can rule'.²⁸ APRA's dominance in Carhuanca would continue throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s and 1950s, winning the district a reputation as an *Aprista* stronghold.

Although Carhuanca had a number of *sánchezcerristas*, those men were significantly outnumbered by *Apristas* and often felt themselves under attack, whether directly or indirectly. The day after their Easter 1932 protest, a group of *Apristas* physically assaulted their *sánchezcerrista* rivals, firing volleys of stones and gunshots. 'We had to retreat to our homes to save our lives', a number of them claimed.²⁹ Other attacks drew on longstanding personal rivalries and hatreds. The best example comes with Carhuanca's most contentious and most protracted personal feud: that between a *sánchezcerrista*, Luis Allende Ayala, and an *Aprista*, Pedro Félix Guillén. Both men claimed ownership of a small plot of land called Ñeccercca, and would continue to claim it in court cases, petitions, and even physical fights through much of the twentieth century. Not surprisingly, both men brought politics into their highly personal fight. Luis Allende wrote to the subprefect in March 1932, claiming that Guillén had killed his mother, stolen thirty-six of his cows, and attempted to steal his Ñeccercca terrain, actions all undertaken with local *Aprista* backing. In letter after letter and frequent appeals to the courts,

²⁷ ARA, Subprefectura Cangallo (SC), Caja 23 (16 March 1932). Unless otherwise noted, all Cangallo subprefecture documents are found in booklets labelled 'Carhuanca'.

²⁸ ARA, SC, Caja 23 (28 March 1932). ²⁹ *Ibid.*

Allende denounced Guillén and his *Aprista* allies, supporting his claims with the testimony of his fellow *sánchezcerristas*. Guillén, in turn, did exactly the same, denouncing Allende and the *sánchezcerristas*, and backing up his charges with testimonies from *Apristas*. While Guillén never won his longstanding battle against Allende, Carhuanca's *Apristas* enjoyed a more generalised success over the district's *sánchezcerristas* by the mid 1930s, monopolising Carhuanca's formal political posts.³⁰

Carhuanca's *Apristas* shared many common traits. Almost without exception, they were male; held at least a primary school education; owned multiple tracts of land on which they laboured directly; and had the social and cultural flexibility to identify themselves sometimes as indigenous, and sometimes as non-indigenous. Certainly, there were status differences between these *Apristas*. As the son of a former subprefect, a relatively large landowner, and the town's local teacher, Augusto Cárdenas ranked higher on Carhuanca's informal socio-economic ladder than, say, Pedro Félix Guillén, a man who worked as the *mayordomo* (administrator) on a local valley hacienda. But regardless of the differences of social and economic capital between Carhuanca's *Apristas*, it is nonetheless certain that these *Aprista* men were all among the town's wealthiest and most powerful peasants.

Yet while Carhuanca's *Apristas* ranked among their district's elite, they enjoyed no such status inside their country. Herein lay the fundamental attraction of APRA. Although *carhuanquinos* and Andean campesinos in general had long been well aware of their race and class-based exclusion from national political life and priorities, that exclusion had grown considerably harder to ignore by the 1930s. The reason why was migration. Migration had long been an economic necessity for many Carhuanca peasants, and Lima was their favoured destination. When I asked 88-year-old Don Emiliano Muñoz why he had left Carhuanca to work in Lima, his short answer said much: 'Because of poverty, of course.'³¹ *Carhuanquinos* were hardly the only Peruvians to make such migrations. From 1919 to 1931, around 65,000 individuals from across Peru moved to Lima, and by 1931 recent provincial migrants comprised almost 20 per cent of Lima's total population. This sort of prolonged economic migration was regularly coupled with short trips to the capital city from rural and urban provincial folk who wanted to lobby national politicians and bureaucrats.³²

Growing connections with Lima through migration gave *carhuanquinos* a painfully clear sense of their secondary status in their country, as people who

³⁰ ARA, SC, Caja 31 (7 June 1942; 6 July 1942); SC Caja 44 (6 Feb. 1930; 18 Jan. 1930; 12 April 1934); SC, Caja 23 (7 March 1932; 28 March 1932; 23 June 1932). Those posts included governor, municipal mayor, and justice of the peace.

³¹ Interview with Emiliano Muñoz* (19 Oct. 2002).

³² Stein, *Populism in Peru*, pp. 65, 70.

passed as mestizos in Carhuanca could not do the same in Lima, and as the very relativity of economic relations that cast *carhuano* elites as wealthy inside their district cast them as impoverished inside the nation's far richer capital city. That jarring realignment of racial and class status was no doubt communicated back to migrants' home communities, whether by return migrants themselves or by their letters and messages. APRA capitalised brilliantly on this onslaught of migration to Lima. Not only did party leaders and members pledge to assist and empower the country's seemingly forgotten and abandoned masses, *Apristas* also worked to extend migrants tangible material support. Two *Aprista* congressmen lobbied for support for migrants in 1936, writing of the 'great quantity of Indians who come to Lima to make complaints against the abuses of *latifundistas* (large landholders) and authorities ... Generally, the Indians who travel to the capital to file their complaints are poor and find themselves in a predicament, unable to satisfy their basic necessities.'³³

APRA's promise of national political inclusion reached Carhuanca through the words of migrants and through direct political propaganda. Through their connections with *Apristas* in both Lima and Ayacucho – including close ties with Ayacucho's *Aprista* leader Aristides Guillén Valdivia, owner of an hacienda near Carhuanca, and connections to the prominent Cangallo *Aprista* and (later notary) Ángel C. Arones – Carhuanca's APRA sympathisers gained access to propaganda that pledged such a realignment of national political power. Flyers seized by authorities across Ayacucho show the kinds of ideas and demands that Carhuanca's *Apristas* were most likely to be expressing and reading. An APRA booklet confiscated by police in the nearby city of Huancapi offered straightforward explanations of what APRA entailed. Addressed to the 'Worker Citizen, Campesino Citizen', the booklet read:

WHAT IS THE APRISTA PARTY? It is a political party formed by the People (principally peasants and workers) to get involved and ensure the enforcement of their rights inside the Peruvian Nation. It is also known as the People's Party and the Popular Alliance (Partido del Pueblo, Alianza Popular).

WHO BELONGS TO THE APRISTA PARTY? All working citizens, regardless of their trade or activity (artisan, worker, farmer, merchant, clerk, professional), whose interests have never been defended by the Government.

WHO DOES NOT BELONG TO THE APRISTA PARTY? Peruvian citizens who have never worked, and who only by virtue of being ARISTOCRATS FROM LEADING AND UPSTANDING FAMILIES have spent the Nation's life and wealth at their pleasure. Among these PRINCIPAL FAMILIES there are also merchants, farmers, and professionals, but they are rich, powerful millionaires.

WHAT IS THE MAIN GOAL OF THE APRISTA PARTY? It is to meet the needs and realise the aspirations of this group of workers who form Peru's majority

³³ AGN, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Indígenas leg. 3.13.2.1 (29 May 1936).

and whose legitimate interests have never been recognised by past governments. This main goal is called Social Justice.³⁴

This document called for a radical transformation of power inside Peru, following the classic populist lines of an ‘us and them’ ideology that promised to seize power from undeserving elites. Other materials confiscated in the city of Cangallo said much the same. While there is no direct evidence proving that Carhuanca’s *Apristas* acquired these particular flyers and booklets, various documents make reference to the possession of party propaganda by local *Apristas*, and *carbuanquinos* received multiple visits from Ayacucho *Apristas* who came to the district to advertise their party and its aims.³⁵ It is reasonable to assume, then, that *Apristas* in Carhuanca read, heard and even espoused the kinds of claims seen in the excerpt above. Carhuanca’s *Apristas* wanted what APRA sympathisers across Ayacucho and across Peru wanted: for APRA to rule Peru.

Carhuanca’s *Apristas* fought the battle for national political power at the local level, trying to wrest control of their district from non-*Aprista* authorities. The Easter 1932 uprising described above was only one instance of a prolonged and often bloody fight for political control of Carhuanca. While the end of political control is not surprising, the *carbuanquino Apristas’* means to that end were rather more novel. Nationally, APRA benefited enormously from its leaders’ and supporters’ agility with political performance. From Haya de la Torre’s days as a student leader heading a massive 1923 demonstration in Lima against Leguía’s attempt to consecrate Peru to the Sacred Heart; to APRA’s party symbols, songs and salutes; and especially to various ultimately successful efforts to assassinate President Sánchez Cerro, the *Apristas’* audacity was one of their strongest political assets. That audacity won them tremendous national political attention and put APRA at the very centre of Peru’s political imagination.

Apristas in Carhuanca undertook similar initiatives of and for power. Their methods included a paper campaign: they flooded the provincial sub-prefecture with inflammatory letters and petitions denouncing their *sánchezcerrista* governor, Crisóstomo Romani, and calling for his overthrow. On the day of the Easter protest, nearly 30 *carbuanquinos* sympathetic to or overtly allied with APRA signed a petition calling for Romani’s removal. The signatories charged that Romani was an itinerant and a thief, who acted in conjunction with local *gamonales* ‘accustomed to living at the expense of the poor Indians and disturbing the public order’. Numerous other letters soon followed. Governor Romani was well aware of the many petitions against

³⁴ ARA, CSJ, leg. 577, cuad. 9 (23 Dec. 1933).

³⁵ ARA, Pref. leg. 19 (10 March 1932); ARA, SC Caja 44 (3 Sept. 1934).

him, complaining to the subprefect about ‘these ridiculous and malicious denunciations’.³⁶

Aprista methods in Carhuanca also included daring denials of non-*Aprista* authority. Governor Romaní charged in April 1932 that ‘this town’s *Aprista* group’ was busily politicking against him, telling the district’s *varayocs* and lieutenant governors to ignore all instructions from both himself and the subprefect on the fictitious grounds that both of these authorities were soon to be replaced. According to Romaní, the *Apristas* asserted that the former governor and *Aprista*, Maximiliano García, was bound to be reinstated as governor, and they even tried to seize the town hall’s archive on that pretext.³⁷ Their most audacious denial of the authority of their political opponents took the form of jailbreaks. One June 1932 day, an *Aprista*, Salomón Zárate, approached Carhuanca’s jail, frightened away the *varayoc* who stood guarding the prison, and opened the jail’s door with his own duplicate key to free one of his local supporters. This jailbreak was not an isolated act; only eight months earlier, Zárate and several other *Apristas* had attacked the district jail and freed their ally, Pedro Félix Guillén, from the prison.³⁸ Such jailbreaks were not only highly practical, allowing district *Apristas* full liberty to continue politicking freely, but they were also tremendously symbolic. Short of killing, imprisonment was a district authority’s most powerful method for punishing local wrongdoers and/or political opponents. By perpetrating jailbreaks, the *Apristas* in Carhuanca showed that they were politically stronger than the non-*Aprista* authorities who tried to persecute them, and they cast those local authorities as unable to control the very institution that best represented their power: the district jail.

The *Apristas*’ political performances had a definite gendered edge, promoting an image of radical masculinity. Certainly, their jailbreaks, public displays of violence, and highly vocal protests fit a familiar image of swaggering and courageous rebels. But the district’s *Apristas* also invoked gender matters directly, overtly stressing their own manliness and explicitly challenging the masculinity of non-*Aprista* authorities. A complaint from Governor Romaní reveals such a challenge. Romaní related that on the afternoon of 21 June 1932, an *Aprista*, Salomón Zárate, walked up to the governor’s office and spat out insults from the doorway. Boasting that he had freed a prisoner from jail ‘like a man’, Zárate made threats against Romaní’s life and then left the office. That afternoon passed into evening, and shortly after midnight, Zárate and a group of his fellow *Apristas* went to Romaní’s

³⁶ ARA, SC, Caja 23 (26 March 1932; 18 Aug. 1932; 20 Aug. 1932).

³⁷ ARA, SC, Caja 23 (17 April 1932).

³⁸ SC, Caja 23 (20 June 1932); ARA, CSJ, leg. 520, cuad. 14 (11 Nov. 1931; 14 Nov. 1931).

home. These men fired shots from a revolver, yelled out ‘vivas’ to APRA, and then charged Romaní’s house. Bolting and then blocking his door from the inside, Romaní did his best to stop the men from breaking down the door with their kicks and gunshots. He told the subprefect that, ‘they kept yelling at me, saying that if I were really a man and really an authority, I would come out that instant and face them’.³⁹ The *Apristas* thus deemed their bravery and audacity masculine, and their governor’s responses unmanly. Their casting had a larger national precedent. Haya de la Torre regularly emphasised male virility, calling on *Aprista* men to be physically strong and healthy, and stressing male fraternity. As Haya phrased it, *Apristas* were: ‘In the struggle, brothers; in suffering, brothers; in victory, brothers.’⁴⁰

With their letters, their denials of authority, and their violence, Carhuanca’s *Apristas* got the end they so clearly wanted: control of the district. Romaní submitted his resignation in August 1932, asking the subprefect to install a military governor ‘who could show more zeal in administering this damn town (*pueblo maldito*) whose inhabitants are a bunch of criminal bandits who do not and will not respect their governors’.⁴¹ After the subprefect refused Romaní’s resignation, he simply abandoned his post and fled the district, tacitly leaving the governorship to his father-in-law. Carhuanca’s *Apristas* then penned yet another petition, beseeching the subprefect to name someone from their ranks to the gubernatorial post. Their request did not go unanswered. An *Aprista*, Pedro García, became Carhuanca’s new governor and Salomón Zárate became the new municipal mayor.⁴²

By the end of the 1930s the *Apristas* had achieved political hegemony in Carhuanca. Although they did not maintain a consistent hold on district government, *Apristas* held positions of authority more often than not, leading the subprefect of Cangallo, Pedro C. Cárdenas, to assert in 1937 that ‘Carhuanca is the centre of *Aprismo* in this province’.⁴³ And unlike the Luricocha *Apristas*, who did little more than promote their party and talk among themselves, Carhuanca’s *Apristas* engaged in considerable political action. When non-*Apristas* won positions of power in Carhuanca, the town’s *Apristas* worked hard to subvert their rivals’ authority. Governor Inocencio Ochoa complained in 1937 that an *Aprista*, Pedro J. García, and several *varayocs* were wandering in the town’s streets, yelling out that García was Carhuanca’s rightful governor and that all *carhuanguinos* should gather the following Sunday, armed and ready, and oust Ochoa from the city hall.

³⁹ ARA, SC, Caja 23 (23 June 1932; 9 Aug. 1932); ARA, CSJ leg. 1061 (13 Oct. 1932).

⁴⁰ Jeffrey Klaiber, *Religion and Revolution in Peru, 1824–1976* (Notre Dame, 1977), p. 162.

⁴¹ ARA, SC Caja 23 (5 Aug. 1932).

⁴² ARA, SC Caja 23 (17 Oct. 1932).

⁴³ ARA, SC Caja 29 (Oficios Despachados: 13 Jan. 1937).

Apristas also wrote countless petitions to provincial and departmental authorities, launched numerous legal suits, and testified on one another's behalf, pushing their own material and political interests, and fighting their political and personal enemies.⁴⁴

Although the *Apristas'* main goal was the attainment of political power in the district, they also led a much-remembered effort to acquire one of Carhuanca's only haciendas from its owner, the district priest Father Carlos M. Cárdenas.⁴⁵ While the relationship of Peruvian *Apristas* to the Catholic Church was tense during this era, tension that dated back to the 1923 protest against the consecration of the country to the Sacred Heart, and that repeatedly saw APRA's opponents deride the party as anti-clerical and anti-Catholic, Carhuanca's *Apristas* were driven less by ideology than by a nationwide trend in which peasant communities fought their local churches and *hacendados* for land. Their leadership role in the efforts to acquire the Hacienda Champacancha from its ecclesiastical owner further explains APRA's appeal in Peru's countryside, as *Apristas* throughout Peru regularly took such a leading role in local land issues.⁴⁶

The efforts to acquire the Hacienda Champacancha began in 1933. Three district authorities travelled to Ayacucho in March of that year, meeting with the Bishop of Ayacucho in an attempt to acquire the terrain from its religious owner, the Convent of Santa Clara. Many *carhuanguinos* believed that the Champacancha property was essentially their own: they had long occupied and worked the land as tenants (*arrendatarios*) and subtenants (*subarrendatarios*), cultivating and harvesting the terrain that legally belonged to the convent. The *Apristas* headed the effort for the hacienda's acquisition. Men like Maximiliano García urged Champacancha's tenants to withhold their rent payments and even uprooted the crops of the most loyal renters. *Apristas* also convened weekly meetings inside Carhuanca, bringing the district's campesinos together each Sunday to discuss the acquisition of Champacancha. Those efforts, though, came to naught: in 1935 *carhuanguinos* learned that the convent had already sold Champacancha in a secret sale. Worse still, Champacancha's new owner was himself a *carhuanguino*: he was Carlos Cárdenas, the district's priest. Deeming Father Cárdenas a

⁴⁴ ARA, SC Caja 29 (Oficios Despachados: 10 April 1937).

⁴⁵ Despite their shared surnames, Father Carlos Cárdenas and Subprefect Pedro C. Cárdenas were not related. Nor was either man related to local *Aprista* siblings, Vidal and Augusto Cárdenas.

⁴⁶ Mallon, *Defense of Community*, pp. 276–7; Klaiber, *Religion and Revolution*, p. 142; Vincent Peloso, *Peasants on Plantations: Subaltern Strategies of Labour and Resistance in the Pisco Valley* (Durham, NC, 1999), p. 137; Alejandro Diez Hurtado, *Comunes y haciendas: procesos de comunalización en la Sierra de Piura (siglos XVIII al XX)* (Piura, 1998), p. 200.

traitor and a scoundrel – one man remembered him as ‘Carhuanca’s Judas’ – *carhuanquinos* began political and legal action against the priest.⁴⁷

The men who organised and mobilised the campesinos to take this action at the provincial, departmental, and even national level were Carhuanca’s most prominent *Apristas*. After a large public meeting convened by local *Apristas*, fifty *carhuanquino* men left their families and their fields in May 1935 to make the long trip to the department capital. The *Apristas*’ leading role in this effort was certain. Cangallo’s subprefect complained that the known *Apristas*, Pedro Félix Guillén, Dionisio Alfaro, Augusto Cárdenas, Inocencio Ochoa, Fidel Gómez and Fidel García, were ‘leading Carhuanca’s Indians to believe that the Champacancha estate belongs to the community of Carhuanca’, and many elderly *carhuanquinos* alive today similarly remember these same men as the leaders of the movement for the acquisition of the hacienda.⁴⁸

Advancing their protests to the national level of government, *carhuanquinos* made appeals to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, winning a 1937 meeting with bureau staff. They repeated their requests the following year, when the *Apristas* Fidel Gómez and Salomón Zárate presented a second appeal to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The *Apristas* worked hard to mobilise state support for the acquisition of the hacienda, but that support was not forthcoming. Deciding not to wait for state intervention, *carhuanquinos* gathered up sparse financial resources and enlisted the services of an Ayacucho lawyer. With this lawyer’s help, the campesinos made plans to purchase Champacancha from Father Cárdenas. The *Apristas* again took a leadership role in the effort, collecting money from the community’s campesinos, making an offer to the priest, and bringing the Bureau of Indian Affairs into the equation as an arbitrator. While they first took this step shortly after Father Cárdenas’s 1935 purchase of the hacienda, disagreements over the hacienda’s selling price slowed the process and led to a five-year lawsuit against the priest. However, on 3 June 1940 Father Carlos Cárdenas finally sold Champacancha to Carhuanca’s campesinos, agreeing to the price of 8139.18 soles.⁴⁹

While *Apristas* were central to the hacienda acquisition effort, another group assumed an equally important role: Lima migrants. Although *carhuanquinos* had begun migrating to Lima well before the 1930s, their activities in previous years had been confined primarily to mutual aid. To

⁴⁷ ARA, SC Caja 28 (30 March 1933; 25 Jan. 1933; 23 Feb. 1933); SC Caja 54 (26 April 1935); ARA, Not. (Notary Celso Bustios) leg. 238 fol. 1144 (1 Dec. 1934); Interview with Hernán Carrillo* (17 Feb. 2003).

⁴⁸ ARA, SC Caja 54 (26 April 1935; 27 June 1935); interview with Marcelino Lizarbe* (24 Sept. 2003); Interview with Emiliano Muñoz* (13 Oct. 2003).

⁴⁹ ARA SC Caja 51 (3 Aug. 1938); ARA, Pref. leg. 20 (24 Sept. 1937; 2 June 1938); SC Caja 13 (20 March 1939); ARA, Notarial (Notary Francisco Mavila), leg. 455 libro 2 folio 328 (1 June 1940).

provide each other with some material assistance and a sense of belonging in a huge and often hostile city, migrants from Carhuanca formed the Centro Mutualista de la Villa de Carhuanca in 1921. This society was a social organisation above all else, allowing *carhuanquinos* to gather in a set locale and to celebrate important district holidays like the August fiesta for Carhuanca's patron saint, the Virgin of Asunción.⁵⁰

With the start of the Champacancha struggle, however, migrants gave a political bent to their existing economic and social activities. Finding their way to the Lima home of one migrant, a number of *carhuanquino* men living and working in Lima gathered on 16 March 1936 to form a second migrant society, the Sociedad Mutualista Progresista de la Villa de Carhuanca y Anexos. The men who met that day drew up a 32-point statement of purpose, outlining the group's structure and the reasons for its existence. Stretching across numerous pages, this lengthy statement pledged that the new migrant society would safeguard Carhuanca's moral and material interests, promote social assistance between its members, and strengthen *carhuanquino* solidarity. The last article of the Sociedad's statement of principles pledged to work for the acquisition of Champacancha and ensure the just distribution of its terrain.⁵¹

Following through on this final pledge to aid the acquisition of the hacienda, Sociedad members donated over 400 soles to the purchase, they sent letters and petitions to support the purchase effort, and they gave moral and material aid to the peasants who travelled from Ayacucho to Lima to press for the hacienda's purchase. The ties between this new migrant club and the struggle for Champacancha were so strong that many *carhuanquinos* remember the two as mutually formative: the migrant club emerged precisely because of the effort to acquire Champacancha and Champacancha ended up in *carhuanquino* hands partly because of the migrant club's efforts. Even the subprefect, Pedro C. Cárdenas, recognised the tight relationship between the Champacancha effort and the migrant society. He informed the prefect of the Sociedad's formation, urged his superior to refuse to recognise its existence, and charged that the society was nothing more than a group of trouble-makers 'who exploit the ignorance of Indians with deceptions about the acquisition of the Champacancha estate'.⁵² The Sociedad Mutualista

⁵⁰ Antonio Carbajal Quijano, *La población migrante carhuanquina en Lima en el proceso festivo patronal de la Virgen de Asunción* (Ayacucho, 1982); Jorge Cárdenas Palomino, 'Reseña histórica del Centro Mutualista del Distrito de Carhuanca y Anexos,' *El Retorno: Boletín de la Comisión Pro-Retorno del Distrito de Carhuanca*, vol. 1 (1999).

⁵¹ AGN, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Indígenas leg. 3.13.2.1 (29 May 1936).

⁵² ARA, SC Caja 29 (Oficios Despachados 1937: 3 May 1937); SC Caja 6 (22 Oct. 1936); ARA, Pref. leg. 20 (11 Oct. 1938). See also ARA, Pref. leg. 20 (11 Jan. 1937, 23 Dec. 1938). Interview with Emiliano Muñoz* (21 Oct. 2003).

Progresista's political efforts began with the Champacancha struggle, but by no means ended there. Sociedad members repeatedly intervened on behalf of *carbuanquinos* still living in the district, lobbying Lima-based authorities to take action against abuses committed in Ayacucho.

Although Andean migrants in Lima retained strong communal identities, there began to emerge in the 1930s a broader regional identity among these migrants. More than ever before, Lima migrants began to identify not just as members of their home communities and districts, but also as members of specific provinces, departments, and/or regions. Put differently, Carhuanca migrants in Lima began to see themselves not just as *carbuanquinos*, but also as *ayacuchanos* and *serranos*. *Apristas* from Ayacucho resident in Lima played a major role in promoting such a regional identity, creating and distributing propaganda specifically addressed to the *pueblo ayacuchano* and urging *ayacuchanos* to rally around their department's *Aprista* congressman, Aristides Guillén. The efforts of migrant *Apristas* to create a regional identity were complemented by the emergence of the newspaper, *Sierra*. Founded in 1936 by and for Ayacucho migrants, *Sierra* originally cast itself as the '*Vocero Fajardino*', the mouthpiece for residents of the Ayacucho province, Víctor Fajardo. The newspaper's popularity and audience expanded rapidly, and the paper changed its subtitle to '*Vocero Departamental Ayacuchano*' after just four issues. In the newspaper's own emphatic words, 'tens of thousands of Ayacuchan citizens, unified in this capital, endorse our acts, because ours is not an anonymous voice, but instead the VOICE of the AYACUCHAN majority.' The paper added that 'our denunciations and campaigns in defence of the general interest correspond to our journalistic mandate to labour for departmental progress. It was for that progress that we founded *Sierra*'.⁵³

The newspaper quickly became an important political tool both for highland migrants and for campesinos who remained in their home communities: both migrants and non-migrants read (or heard) the newspaper's stories, and both regularly sent letters to the paper's editor. *Carbuanquinos* wrote to the paper not only to denounce abusive authorities, but also to publicise fiestas, push for the Champacancha acquisition, call for more and better schools and innumerable other ends.⁵⁴ Unlike the many regional newspapers that disappeared almost as quickly as they appeared, *Sierra* proved enduring; the newspaper continued publishing until the 1960s. The newspaper's existence and its large readership showed both its political power and its popular appeal, but even more revealing of that power were the complaints made against it. Governor Primitivo Mayhua, for example,

⁵³ *Sierra* (15 June 1936), p.1. Emphasis in original. Propaganda from Ayacucho *Apristas* residing in Lima appears in ARA, Pref. Leg. 19 (10 March 1932).

⁵⁴ *Sierra* (15 April 1936), p. 2; *Sierra* (3 March 1938), p. 2; *Sierra* (16 Aug. 1938) p. 2.

levied blame on the newspaper for problems inside Carhuanca. Asking the Prefect to install a military governor to sanction the *Apristas* who were using the Champacancha question to raise havoc in the district, Mayhua singled out *Sierra's* editor Moisés Vizcarra as the 'direct agent of the *carbuanquino Apristas*'.⁵⁵

Though impressive in scope, the political efforts of Carhuanca's *Apristas* and migrants were hindered by the frustrations of Peruvian political life. While *carbuanquinos* attained legal right to the Champacancha estate in 1940, the sudden death of the community's *personero* (legal representative) meant that fights over access to the estate continued unabated. Without the *personero's* record books, it was impossible for Carhuanca's authorities to know who had paid for how much land. The national government offered no assistance on the matter. In 1951 *carbuanquinos* were still asking the national government to aid them in parcelling up Champacancha. Another twenty years later Champacancha's parcelisation remained a pressing matter for *carbuanquinos*, a matter that district residents would tell representatives of the 1968–1980 Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces was Carhuanca's primary problem.⁵⁶ For *carbuanquinos* both in Lima and in Carhuanca during the 1930s and beyond, life in Peru remained life in a state of neglect. Ayacuchans writing in the newspaper *Sierra* objected to their department's political neglect, describing their department as '*Ayacucho siempre abandonado*', Ayacucho always abandoned.⁵⁷ *Carbuanquino Apristas* tried to fight that neglect, but ultimately, they were unable to change it.

APRA Reconsidered

Decentralisation was one of APRA's principal tenets, with the party calling for a more equitable distribution of power throughout the country. Suitably, then, scholarly understanding of APRA requires that we decentre our vision of the party in order to appreciate fully the party's regional diversity, complexity, and strength. While most scholars have focused on *Aprismo* in regions where the party enjoyed considerable electoral success, namely Peru's coastal and northern departments, this article shows that APRA also had a significant presence in southern sierra departments like Ayacucho where its formal electoral showings were usually poor. Inside the rural Ayacucho district of Luricocha, *Aprismo* was the domain of progressive *hacendados* and teachers. However, few campesinos in the district showed interest in APRA, preferring instead to pursue their political ends without party affiliation.

⁵⁵ ARA, Pref. leg. 20 (25 Nov. 1938).

⁵⁶ AGN, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Indígenas, leg. 3.13.2.2. (10 Feb. 1951); Proyecto Especial de Titulación de Tierras, Ayacucho (Carhuanca: 12 May 1971).

⁵⁷ *Sierra* (1 April 1947), p. 2.

Aprismo enjoyed a much broader base of support in Carhuauca, where a number of the district's wealthiest and most educated campesinos actively affiliated with the party. With the active support of migrants in Lima, the district's *Apristas* managed to purchase the Champacancha estate and established their own political hegemony in Carhuauca.

Several conclusions emerge from such a decentralised consideration of APRA. By taking a regionalised and localised view of APRA, we can revisit the old debate about APRA's *indigenismo*. Many scholars have questioned party leader Haya de la Torre's commitment to *indigenismo*, calling APRA's support for the country's rural indigenous populations more rhetorical than real. Thomas M. Davies, for example, asserted that APRA's 'Indian programs were lacking in both design and in execution' and that Haya's proposals for indigenous populations were 'vague to the point of being useless'.⁵⁸ This criticism, however, misses two key points. First, *Apristas* often had strong *indigenista* credentials. Many *Apristas* had been active in the Comité Pro-Derecho Indígena Tawantinsuyo of the 1920s or other indigenous rights organisations, and many had penned important *indigenista* writings in the 1910s and 1920s. This was as true of *Apristas* in Ayacucho as it was of their counterparts in Cajamarca and Puno. Perhaps more importantly, a regionalised consideration of APRA shows that many indigenous campesinos embraced the party and believed its programmes and platforms relevant for their lives. Such was the case in the indigenous communities of Carhuauca district, and it was similarly true for peasants in the northern Andean department of Cajamarca.⁵⁹ Whether or not Haya was committed to Peru's indigenous campesinos, many indigenous campesinos were deeply committed to Haya and his party.

A second major conclusion about APRA involves its strength. Recognition that the party varied between and within regions suggests that one of APRA's greatest political assets was its malleability. The party's founder, Haya de la Torre, recognised the importance of such flexibility. During his 1931 campaign visits to towns and villages from Piura down to Lima, Haya altered his speeches so that he could address both APRA's larger anti-imperialist tenets as well as pressing local matters specific to each visited area.⁶⁰ This article further reveals that APRA proved most successful in areas where *Apristas* could articulate their extremely local concerns with APRA's larger regional and national agendas. Such was the case with Carhuauca, where district *Apristas* directed their party identity and power toward local

⁵⁸ Davies, 'Indigenismo of the Peruvian Aprista Party,' pp. 626–7.

⁵⁹ Taylor, 'Origins of APRA,' 441; Hazen, 'Awakening of Puno,' p. 291.

⁶⁰ Klaren, *Modernization, Dislocation, and Aprismo*, p. 129.

struggles for land and political control, while sharing in APRA's larger concerns for regional autonomy and national inclusion.

Although flexibility was the party's greatest asset, APRA maintained a core cohesion throughout Peru. Comparing the Ayacucho case to other APRA experiences nationally, similarities emerge. Several historians have stressed the importance of APRA's party structure, arguing that APRA firmly implanted itself into Peruvian life by establishing party cells and cadres at the local and regional levels, by creating social and cultural organisations, and by building links with a broad cross section of civil society. Consideration of the Ayacucho case highlights how gender further cemented APRA's structural strength as the party extended a gendered sense of political inclusion and power. At the most basic level, APRA allowed women a political role that no other party did. Women's cells, *células femeninas*, emerged not only in Ayacucho but in Cajamarca and other departments as well, and women were prominent in APRA debates and congresses. While APRA did not press for women's enfranchisement, women still enjoyed more opportunities in APRA than in any other Peruvian political party of the period. APRA's gendered politics, however, stretched well beyond women alone. This article has shown how in Ayacucho *Apristas* articulated a radical masculinity and sense of manly brotherhood, while David Nugent and Lewis Taylor have demonstrated how *Apristas* in Amazonas and Cajamarca created a gendered sense of belonging by articulating visions of a 'labouring family' and an '*Aprista* family'.⁶¹

Comparative considerations of APRA also point to the broad significance of migrants to the party's history. Scholars have focused primarily on the role of migrants as both targets and disseminators of APRA ideology. Peter Klarén noted that most of Trujillo's *Aprista* sugar workers were migrants from neighbouring Andean departments, and Vicente Peloso has shown that *Aprista* cadres actively appealed to *serrano* migrants labouring on Pisco Valley cotton plantations. Lewis Taylor, in turn, has explored how migrant labourers from Cajamarca were exposed to *Aprismo* on coastal sugar, cotton and rice plantations, and then spread *Aprista* ideas upon their return to their home communities.⁶² The Ayacucho case shows that migrants were also active ideological *creators*, developing and promoting a regional Ayacucho identity that became central to *Aprismo* in the department. With their travels, their clubs and their newspapers, Ayacucho migrants articulated a regional identity that imagined the department's migrants as a community, as *ayacuchanos*. *Apristas* in Ayacucho and in Lima helped shape and were shaped by this

⁶¹ Nugent, *Modernity at the Edge of Empire*, pp. 237 and 251; Klarén, *Modernization, Dislocation, and Aprismo*, p. 124; Taylor, 'Origins of APRA,' p. 457.

⁶² Nugent, *Modernity at the Edge of Empire*, p. 237; Klarén, *Modernization, Dislocation, and Aprismo*, p. 142; Peloso, *Peasants on Plantations*, pp. 137–43; Taylor, 'Origins of APRA,' pp. 452, 457.

regional identity, and they made decentralisation, regional autonomy, and regional solidarity central to *Aprismo* in Ayacucho.

Perhaps the most striking similarity between all of Peru's early APRA movements was the importance of nationalism. Peter Klarén showed the centrality of APRA's nationalist platforms, platforms that called for the regulation of foreign imperialism and limits on imperialist capitalism. Klarén argued that APRA's anti-imperialist nationalism greatly impressed people living and working in and around Trujillo, where foreign-owned sugar companies had long dominated the coastal plantation economy. Much the same held true throughout other areas of Peru. While Ayacucho's distance from foreign export markets meant that APRA's anti-imperialist message was less compelling there than elsewhere, APRA's nationalism was nonetheless crucial to its success in Ayacucho. Here, we must employ a more expansive understanding of nationalism than Klarén's, one that utilises Florencia Mallon's definition of nationalism as 'a broad vision for organizing society, a project for collective identity based on the premise of citizenship – available to all, with individual membership beginning from the assumption of legal equality'.⁶³ Read this way, nationalism was at the heart of all the Peruvian *Aprista* movements, as APRA promised to remake Peru along inclusive political, economic, and social lines, empowering the previously excluded masses. APRA's nationalist vision for an inclusive Peru appealed to men and women across class, race, regional and gender divides: Lima's middle classes, Trujillo's sugar plantation workers, Chachapoyas university students, Ayacucho *hacendados* and Cajamarca peasants all felt themselves excluded from political power, wealth and social status inside their country, and all looked to APRA to end that exclusion. While all these groups differed in their formulations of their oppressors, all felt themselves denied social, economic and political equality in their country, and all looked to APRA to bring about that equality. APRA's programme for national inclusion tied all its diverse regional manifestations together. When *Apristas* in Ayacucho proclaimed, 'We will no longer be servile! We will no longer be unworthy sons, tyrant's pupils!', they were voicing a dream for change, equality and inclusion that resonated with men and women across Peru.

⁶³ Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 4.