

Barnard College, Columbia University

“To the Workers of the Republic:” María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, Dora  
Mayer de Zulen, and the Intersection of Indigenous, Labor, and  
Feminist Activisms, 1909-1925

By  
Kate Iida

Senior Thesis  
Department of History  
Thesis Advisor: Professor Dorothy Ko

New York, New York  
April 2019

# *Acknowledgements*

Thank you to my parents, for supporting me through Barnard and life. I couldn't have written this thesis without you.

Thank you to my senior thesis advisor Professor Dorothy Ko for helping and guiding me throughout the year. Thank you for reading and editing my drafts, even when I sent them in late, for answering my questions when I felt lost, for always encouraging me to keep writing (and for the cookies!), and for inspiring me to keep studying history. Thank you also to Professor Joel Kaye, for giving me the motivation to choose this topic, and for encouraging me to conduct research in Lima.

Thank you, in no particular order, to Raji Ganapathy, Ayana Renoldi-Bracco, Shiloh Cleveland, and Arraxid Ugalde Hernandez, for reading and commenting on my early drafts, and for putting up with me talking about twentieth century Peru non-stop for a year. Thank you also to my aunt Rita and my uncle Fico for housing me in Lima for an extra month as I conducted research for this thesis.

I also could not have completed this thesis without the help and advice of the people I met along the way. Thank you also to the researcher I met in the library of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru, who asked me what I was researching and then gave me the location and name of another important archive, to the PhD student I met in the Biblioteca Nacional in Lima who gave me a list of the best sources on the Asociación Pro-Indígena, and to the librarian at the Casona Riva Agüero, who gave me copies of books with inscriptions by Dora Mayer, and then showed me where those inscriptions were when I couldn't find them.

Last of all, thank you to María Jesús Alvarado Rivera and Dora Mayer de Zulen, for leading lives interesting enough to fill sixty pages and more.

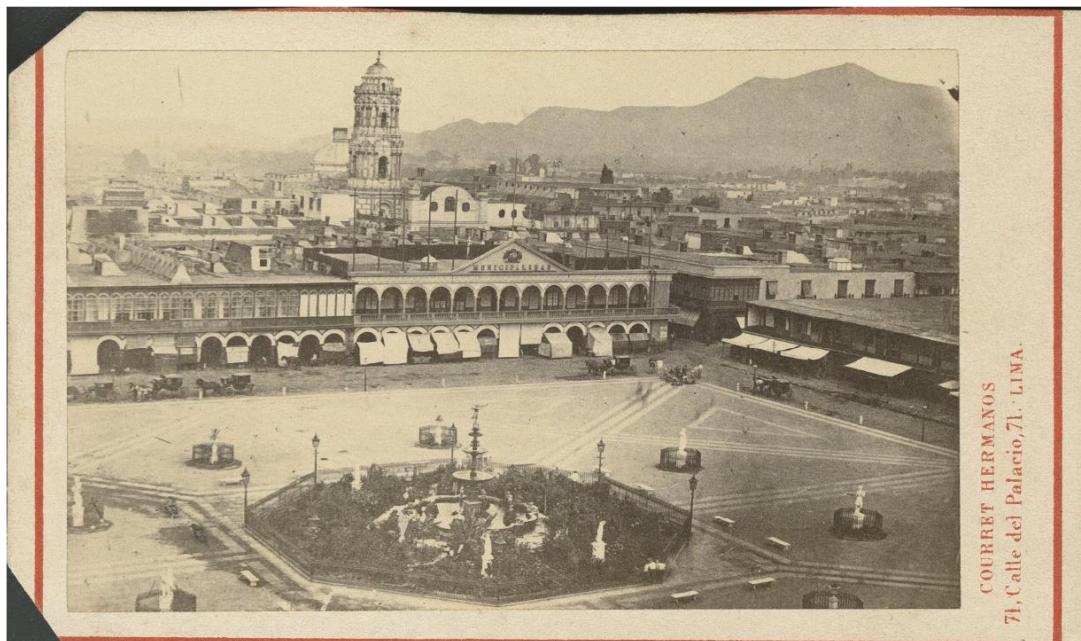
# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	4
.....	
<b>Chapter One</b>	
Setting the Stage for Radicalism, 1881-1940	11
.....	
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
The Immigrant and the Suffragette, 1912-1917	19
.....	
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
Labor Activism in the Andes: The Case of Cerro de Pasco, 1913	37
.....	
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
“Denounce Her Like a Man:” Scandals and Disintegration, 1919-1925	48
.....	
<b>Epilogue</b>	57
.....	
<b>Bibliography</b>	59
.....	

*“We undertake with faith and constancy the work of changing the dominant mentality, dominated by error; we illuminate the path and make visible that justice and good are riches for everyone, and create a country where... everything is coherent, meaning progress and happiness.”*

Joaquín Capelo (1852-1928), “El deber proindígena,” Lima, 1912<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION



*Main square in the historical center of Lima, 1869-1885<sup>2</sup>*

In 1909, Lima faced a period of political, social, and economic turmoil. Responding to the crisis, a small group of activists, the feminist María Jesus Alvarado Rivera (1878-1971),<sup>3</sup> the journalist Dora Mayer de Zulen (1868-1957),<sup>4</sup> and the philosopher Pedro Zulen (1889-1925),<sup>5</sup> came together for a period of sixteen years, and worked towards their vision of a

<sup>1</sup> Joaquín Capelo was one of the principal members of the Asociación Pro-Indígena, authored its Manifesto, and served as a Senator in Peru's congress.

Joaquín Capelo, “El deber proindígena,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, Oct. 1, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> *Main Square*, 1869-1885, carte-des-visite, The Latin American Library, Tulane University Digital Library Early Images of Latin America, New Orleans, LA, <https://digitallibrary.tulane.edu/islandora/object/tulane%3A11132>.

<sup>3</sup> Elsa M. Chaney, “Old and New Feminists in Latin America: The Case of Peru and Chile,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 35, no. 2, 1973:334.

<sup>4</sup> Soledad G. Gelles, “Escritura, género y modernidad: El trabajo cultural de Clorinda Matto de Turner y Dora Mayer de Zulen.” Palo Alto: Stanford University, 2002: 36.

<sup>5</sup> Gerardo Leibner, “Pedro Zulen: Del indigenismo paternalista al humanismo radical.” *Revista europea de estudios latinoamericanos y del caribe /European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, no. 63 (1997): 30.

reimagined Peruvian society. As writers, journalists, and activists, they agitated for a new society which would prioritize the interests of indigenous, working class, and female Peruvians. With this goal in mind, Dora Mayer and Pedro Zulen founded the Asociación Pro-Indígena in 1909, the organization in which all three of these activists would participate until it dissolved in 1916.<sup>6</sup> Their collaboration, however, fell entirely apart by 1925. This senior thesis presents the complexity of their visions and actions, primarily in their own words, as a window into the larger histories of the Peruvian nation during its formative years.

Of these three people, María Jesus Alvarado Rivera and Pedro Zulen are the most well-known and researched. Since the 1970s, María Jesus Alvarado Rivera has been celebrated as the primary founder of the Peruvian women's suffrage movement.<sup>7</sup> Incredibly controversial during her lifetime, even within her own movements, Alvarado's activism did not succeed in helping women obtain the vote.<sup>8</sup> Peruvian women received the right to vote in 1955, while Alvarado remained in exile in Argentina.<sup>9</sup> Pedro Zulen is similarly well known, researched, and respected in Peru today. He is credited as one of Peru's foremost philosophical thinkers of the early twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> Though deeply involved in this movement, Dora Mayer, for the most part, remains relatively unresearched. She appears as an example in several texts about female activism in early twentieth century Lima, and a novel written by José B. Adolph fictionalizes her life.<sup>11</sup> Likely this is because she, as a historical figure, is difficult to place in any type of traditional box. Being a German immigrant to Peru, Dora Mayer cannot be used by nationalist scholars as a token of homegrown Peruvian

---

<sup>6</sup> Zegarra Flórez, Margarita, "Dora Mayer, los indígenas y la nación peruana a inicios del siglo XX/ Dora Mayer, the Indian People of Peru, and the Peruvian Nation in the Early Twentieth Century," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, vol. 66 (2009): 286.

<sup>7</sup> Chaney, "Old and New Feminists in Latin America," 334.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 335-336.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 336. As Chaney discusses in her text, the dictator General Odría granted women the right to vote in 1955 and says that it surprised most Peruvian women since they had not at the time been participating in much feminist organizing.

<sup>10</sup> Leibner, "Pedro Zulen," 30. Recently, the Universidad Mayor de San Marcos, Peru's most prestigious public university and Pedro Zulen's alma mater, renamed their library after him as well, which I found out while in Peru looking for sources in an email correspondence with the library of San Marcos.

<sup>11</sup> José B. Adolph, *Dora: novela*. (Lima, Perú: PEISA, 1989).

activism.<sup>12</sup> Though involved in the feminist movement, she focused primarily on labor and indigenous activism, so scholars cannot place her purely in the feminist context. Including her in this discussion, however, helps to create a more in depth understanding of the different aspects of activism at this time.

These three activists lived and worked in a time of massive change and volatility. Peru was still a relatively young country, having gained its independence from the Spanish empire only in 1824. During the early years of the republic, Peruvian leaders had difficulty unifying the country or creating a sense of national identity. This often had to do with the vastly different microregions and climates which make up the country. Of the twenty different environmental zones that make up Peru, three stand out: the highland Andean mountain region; the Amazonian rainforest region; and the coastal desert region.<sup>13</sup> In the Andes, peaks rise over 22,000 feet high, second in height only to the Himalayan mountain range. The Andes, though difficult to access, also possess some of the richest mineral deposits in the country, and the region of Cerro de Pasco lies in the Andes.<sup>14</sup> This region would become an important area for Dora Mayer's labor mobilization. The Amazon rainforest region is the largest of the three regions but the least populated.<sup>15</sup> The capital city of Lima resides in the coastal desert region. Alvarado, Mayer, and Zulen lived and worked in Lima and Callao, a neighboring city on the coast. This region's primary economic export was guano, bird feces used as fertilizer, often harvested in brutal conditions by immigrants to Peru.<sup>16</sup> Guano plantations were also one of the primary sites of labor organization in the early twentieth century.

---

<sup>12</sup> Dora Mayer de Zulen, *Memorias, vol. 1*, (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Seminario de Historia Rural Andina, 1992), 4-5.

<sup>13</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-5.

These activists lived in a time of massive political volatility. Between 1909 and 1925 democratically elected presidents were ousted twice in military coup d'états. The political leanings of the presidents in power had important implications for the activists as well. Populist Guillermo Billinghurst's (1851-1915) sympathies towards the labor movement allowed for the expansion of the movement in 1912, and dictator Augusto Leguía's (1863-1932) hostility led to the disintegration of the movement.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of this instability, elite Peruvians entertained and debated competing ideological visions of the ideal Peruvian state. Some intellectuals believed Peru should modernize faster, which to some, meant an inherently racist and eugenicist project. As Margarita Zegarra Flórez explains in her article, "Dora Mayer, los indígenas y la nación peruana a inicios del siglo XX,"

... intellectuals from these sectors (the traditional elite and the modernizing elite) conceptualized the indigenous population as an inferior race... (and) a pernicious influence on the national character.<sup>18</sup>

Intellectuals in twentieth century Peru often discussed the "Indian problem."<sup>19</sup> Some, such as Limeñan elite Clemente Palma (1872-1946), believed that the best option would be "crossover with superior races," or in simpler terms, encouraging white Europeans to immigrate to Peru to "whiten" the overall society.<sup>20</sup> Some Europeans did end up moving to Peru during this period, though they arrived in smaller numbers than to Argentina and Brazil.<sup>21</sup>

These racist ideas had real consequences for indigenous Peruvians. The government restricted voting to men literate in Spanish, effectively disenfranchising many indigenous Peruvians who spoke their traditional languages like Quechua but could not read and write in

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., xxi.

<sup>18</sup> Zegarra, *Dora Mayer*, 255.

<sup>19</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 96.

<sup>20</sup> Zegarra, *Dora Mayer*, 255-256.

<sup>21</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 104.

Spanish. Because of this, the authorities who gained political power were primarily white, urban, and from the coastal cities, usually Lima and Callao. These urban elites had little interest in overseeing the *gamonales* (local authorities) in the provinces in Peru. “The abuse (by the *gamonales*) and the abandon of the state led to indigenous uprisings, such as the *indigenista* movement,” Florez explains.<sup>22</sup> The *indigenismo* movement that Florez mentions encompasses a large group of scholars, intellectuals, artists, and activists, primarily from larger urban centers like Lima and Cusco. As part of *indigenismo*, these groups of people “set out to revalue Indians’ history and culture,” Hunefeldt describes in her book, *A Brief History of Peru*.<sup>23</sup> The Asociación Pro-Indígena represents only one of the many forms which this movement took during the early twentieth century.

Within this context of urban elite racism, the Asociación Pro-Indígena took a very different approach to the question of reimagining the Peruvian nation. Through the Asociación, Alvarado, Mayer, and Zulen hoped to support indigenous Peruvians, end the abuses and corruption of the *gamonales*, and encourage greater indigenous participation in the central government. Above all, they hoped to

expose the fiction of Peru as a modern country, showing that which Peruvian citizens did not want to see: the condition of indigenous Peruvians as second-class citizens, exploited by the *gamonales*, rubber plantation owners, police officers, and local authorities... (and) the weakness and corruption of the state.<sup>24</sup>

They brought legislation to the Peruvian central government, published letters they received from indigenous Peruvians around the country denouncing the corruption of local authorities, investigated unethical practices of industrial companies, and participated in the organization of labor strikes.

---

<sup>22</sup> Zegarra, *Dora Mayer*, 256.

<sup>23</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 179.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.



The Asociación Pro-Indígena and its members, however, are complex and flawed, as complicated and contradictory as the times in which they lived and worked. On the one hand they voiced an alternative vision for reconstructing the Peruvian nation. This reimagined state would prioritize the rights of indigenous, working class, and female Peruvians. The organization also gave positions of power in the central committee to two women, María Jesús Alvarado Rivera and Dora Mayer, an uncommon gender balance in early twentieth century Peru.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the organization and its members dealt with many of the same complexities which accompanied this time in Peruvian history. Alvarado and Mayer grappled with their own prejudices and racism, the perception of their personal lives and beliefs within the context of Peruvian society, and moral questions about endorsing violence.

Chapter one of my thesis explores the background of the movement and the larger historical trends taking place when these activists worked in Lima. From the War of the Pacific, through the history of immigration, labor organization, and economic denationalization, chapter one places these activists within their context. Chapter two delves more deeply into María Jesús Alvarado Rivera and Dora Mayer's early collaborations in the independent newspaper *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, published as part of the Asociación Pro-Indígena. I analyze the articles written by both women and discuss what these written works display about their preoccupations. Chapter three discusses the case of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company, one of the primary locations where the Asociación Pro-Indígena intervened on behalf of indigenous workers. I use Mayer's book, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, as the primary source through which to view labor activism and foreign economic intervention between 1910 and 1920. Chapter four addresses the later collaborations between Alvarado and Mayer in the feminist movement, and then charts the

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 258.

disintegration of the feminist movement, the Asociación Pro-Indígena, and the collaboration between these two women.

Exploring the lives, ideas, and motivations of these activists afford an important glimpse into life in Lima during the early twentieth century. Alvarado, Mayer, and Zulen engaged with many different aspects of the changing society. They not only confronted the economic, political, and social structures but also hoped to set them on a different path. Mayer and Alvarado stand at the intersection of several different currents of activism: the labor movement; the indigenous movement; and the women's suffrage movement. Through the lens of their story, an image of a nascent Peruvian nation amidst transformation comes into focus.

*“When man leaves behind his atavistic ferociousness, war will be remembered as a prehistoric barbarity, and famous and admired warriors of today will figure in the sinister gallery of the devil’s children, by the side of assassins, executioners, and butchers.”*

Manuel Gonzalez Prada (1844-1918) on the War of the Pacific, 1894.<sup>26</sup>

## CHAPTER ONE

### Setting the Stage for Radicalism, 1881-1940



*The port of Callao shortly before Chilean invasion, 1881<sup>27</sup>*

In 1881 Chilean troops entered Peru and marched through Lima, battling their way through the seaside district of Chorrillos before capturing the capital.<sup>28</sup> This invasion and occupation of Lima, which took place two years after the beginning of the war, was just one event in a long and bloody conflict which took its toll most heavily on the Peruvians and Bolivians who allied to fight against Chile.<sup>29</sup> Their combined efforts were no match for the politically and economically stable Chile, which possessed substantially stronger weaponry

---

<sup>26</sup> Anarchist and labor organizer Manuel Gonzalez Prada is one of the older members of the Peruvian *indigenismo* movement. Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 147.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>28</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 87.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

and a more organized military and navy.<sup>30</sup> Beginning as a naval battle in the Pacific and then continuing to the desert, the war dealt Peruvian troops many devastating defeats.<sup>31</sup>

After occupying Lima, Chilean soldiers installed a “puppet government” in Peru to sign a truce with Chile and give them several regions rich in natural resources.<sup>32</sup> Dora Mayer recalled the war and Chilean occupation briefly in the first volume of her autobiography, *Memorias*.

Bustamente<sup>33</sup> died in 1881, during the ill-fated time of Chilean occupation. I had gone with some friends one afternoon to take useful material from the abandoned batteries in Punta and Chucuito; the Chilean police gave us a run and, injured by the agitation and the heat of the day I fell down in the street with an attack to the head...<sup>34</sup> This short section, included almost as an afterthought within the larger discussion of her neighbors, shows the reality of living in Lima during the Chilean occupation. Chilean police occupy the streets, chasing and attacking local citizens. The destruction from the war appears evident; city occupants scavenge the abandoned sites for useful items. This section also shows how the war became normalized for Limeñan residents. Mayer does not place much emphasis on the occupation and spends much more time describing her house and relationships with her neighbors.

Though neither Alvarado nor Mayer place specific importance on the War of the Pacific in their writings, the destruction and instability in the wake of the war set the stage for the conditions which both women would later protest. Peru’s economy suffered greatly in the wake of the war. Revenues fell from 35 million soles per year to just 1 million soles by 1883, the year the war ended.<sup>35</sup> Peru also lost provinces rich in natural resources, like the desert region of Tarapacá, to Chile, and the fighting destroyed mines and other important economic

---

<sup>30</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 144.

<sup>31</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 83-86.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-88.

<sup>33</sup> Bustamente was one of Mayer’s neighbors growing up who she discusses at length in her first volume of *Memorias*.

<sup>34</sup> Mayer de Zulen, *Memorias*, 37.

<sup>35</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 90.

regions.<sup>36</sup> Because of this, in the decades following the war, Peru began to denationalize the mining industry and receive more direct foreign investments.<sup>37</sup> President Augusto Leguía, who served between 1908 and 1912, and then again between 1919 and 1930, encouraged this. Leguía expanded Peru's political and economic ties to the United States and adopted a pro-business model.<sup>38</sup> One of the corporations that gained power during this period was the American owned Cerro de Pasco Mining Company, which operated silver and copper mines in the Sierra.<sup>39</sup> Founded in New York in 1901, several of the richest families in the United States invested and helped to operate it, including the Vanderbilts, the Hearsts, and the Morgans.<sup>40</sup> This company soon came to control nearly all the Peruvian mining industry, with little to no governmental oversight.<sup>41</sup> Within the first decade of the twentieth century, this company became a major target of the labor activists.

In its first years of operation, the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company began to expand its power and influence, often engaging in questionable practices to do so. In the *denuncio* "Charges Against the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company," written by Pedro Zulen as a letter in both Spanish and English, he lists a series of abuses perpetrated by the company, including several examples for each one.

Carelessness in preventing labour accidents at the copper mines of Cerro de Pasco and the coal mines of Goyllarisqueziga. Incompliance with the dispositions regarding indemnization contained in the Peruvian Labour Act of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1910...Illegal and uncalled-for use of provisional bills or coins instead of ready money for paying the workmen, through which means these are obliged to make their purchases at the Company's warehouse, the "Mercantile" and submit to the most scandalous usury...Unjust economy in the wages...Corruption through bribery of the local judicial authorities in order to obtain the impunity of delinquents of North-American nationality.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 90-91.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-117.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-117.

<sup>39</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 99-100.

<sup>40</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 160.

<sup>41</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 99-100.

<sup>42</sup> Pedro Zulen, "The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company," 6 August 1912, Lima, Box XPZ-FN43, Folder 2000027146. Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Peru, Lima, Peru.

Conflict between rural villagers, workers, and powerful international corporations like the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company became common in the early years of the twentieth century, leading to protests, strikes, and labor organizing in the regions where they held power. The degree of freedom these international corporations gained would leave a lasting impact on Peru for decades to come.

For all their freedom, the corporations would not have been profitable if not for the continuous influx of migrant workers who came to seek their fortunes in Peru. Beginning in 1849, the first boat bringing Chinese immigrants to Peru landed in the port of Callao. From then until 1874, between 80,000 and 100,000 Chinese immigrants arrived in Peru, following the guano boom and the growing strength of Peru's economy. Early Chinese immigrants for the most part found work in the sugar and cotton plantations on the coast, in the construction of the trans-Andean railroad lines, but most significantly in the guano beds in the coastal desert.<sup>43</sup> This work, above all else, was the most brutal and difficult, and Chinese immigrants were often trapped in the work by an inhumane system of contract labor.<sup>44</sup>

In 1899, the first Japanese immigrants arrived in Peru.<sup>45</sup> Japanese immigrants (who called themselves "Nikkei") also often worked in agriculture, usually sugar plantations. Many Nikkei arrived in Peru with the intention of returning to Japan within a few years, however fewer than fifteen percent were able to return.<sup>46</sup> Working conditions on the plantations were difficult, however despite harsh conditions, Japanese immigration to Peru continued in large numbers through the beginning of the 1930s.<sup>47</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both Chinese and Japanese immigrants moved in large numbers to Peruvian cities, contributing to the urbanization of the country. This influx of immigration coincided with

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 75-76.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 102-104.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 102-104.

other large-scale demographic changes. Peru had entered a period of population growth, and the overall population of the country increased from 2.6 million to 6 million in the period between 1876 and 1940. At the same time, large cities, especially Lima, were expanding as Peruvians living in rural regions moved into urban centers.<sup>48</sup>

Chinese and Japanese workers organized strikes on guano, sugar, and cotton plantations, participating in a large-scale labor movement which took shape across the country. Textile workers led the first general strike in Lima in 1911, the largest and most successful action undertaken by organized labor at the time.<sup>49</sup> The upsurge in labor activity following the strike spurred the government to pass pro-labor legislation. Not all strikes ended so well, however. Much more common were violent crackdowns against the strikers, where corporations or state officials brought in local police or the army.<sup>50</sup> Often documented in newspapers, these struggles became increasingly visible to the public as media circulation increased.

The increase in the circulation of mass media was part-and-parcel of a heightened visibility of the labor movement, as the early activities of Dora Mayer and María Jesús Alvarado Rivera attest. Between 1911 and 1926, workers unions in Peru produced newsletters for their members, which helped in the organization and consolidation of the labor movement. Artistic endeavors, especially plays and novels, also often addressed working conditions and themes related to the labor movement.<sup>51</sup> Both Mayer and Alvarado wrote and published plays which dealt with issues of indigenous, feminist, and labor organizing. Dora Mayer published hers, called “Drama of the Jungle,” in *El Deber Pro- Indígena*, in installments throughout 1917.<sup>52</sup> The play dramatizes the life of indigenous Peruvians living in the Amazonian

---

<sup>48</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 172.

<sup>49</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 105-112.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-112.

<sup>51</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 175.

<sup>52</sup> Mayer, Dora. “La Drama de la Selva,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, December, 1917.

region.<sup>53</sup> While in exile in Argentina, María Jesús Alvarado Rivera wrote a play, “La perricholi,” detailing the struggles of feminists in Peru.<sup>54</sup> These two women contributed their own written works during an era when the distribution of printed works was increasing rapidly. Between 1918 and 1930, the number of publications in Peru almost tripled, from 167 to 443.<sup>55</sup>

In both her art and activism, Dora Mayer espoused a mixture of pro-labor and pro-indigenous activism, a popular advocacy among leading Peruvian intellectuals at the time. One such thinker was José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930), a close collaborator of hers. Though lacking in formal education, Mariátegui became one of the most influential Marxist thinkers of early twentieth century Peru. His publications and writings combined a discussion of *indigenismo* with a Marxist critique of Peruvian society. He argued that Peru should base its socialist future on indigenous community organization in the Andes. He looked to the *ayllu* system, a type of social organization predominant during the Inca Empire which some rural Andean villages still practiced, as a model for future Peruvian socialism. Since over 80% of Peru’s working class was indigenous, any form of Peruvian socialism must ground itself on indigenous practices, Mariátegui argued. Mariátegui focused on land reform in the Sierra and advocated for better education in the rural regions of the Andes.<sup>56</sup> He also collaborated with labor activist and *indigenista* Victor Raul Haya de la Torre (1895-1979), the leader of the Peruvian Populist Party Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), a Populist political party founded upon organized labor, specifically workers in the sugar plantations.<sup>57</sup> Haya started out as a student organizer at the University of San Marcos, the most prestigious public university in Lima. Claiming to have a direct, spiritual connection with the pre-

---

<sup>53</sup> Mayer, “La Drama de la Selva.”

<sup>54</sup> Alvarado Rivera, María Jesús. “La perricholi: novela histórica dramatizada en treinta jornadas,” 1946.

<sup>55</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 175.

<sup>56</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 108-111.

<sup>57</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 107-108.



Columbian civilization that built the ruins of Chan Chan, near where he grew up, Haya combined his radical labor activism with a perceived personal connection to Peru's indigenous past.<sup>58</sup> APRA represented one of the most powerful arms of the labor movement in the early twentieth century, when Mayer and Alvarado participated in it.

The Asociación Pro-Indígena worked closely with Mariátegui as they sought to enact many of the changes he advocated.<sup>59</sup> From writing *denuncios* about abuses of indigenous Peruvians by government bureaucrats, the police, and international corporations, Mayer, Zulen, and Alvarado sought to bring awareness and help support movements countering these abuses.<sup>60</sup> “In the mountains of Peru, despotism lives and is fortified, oppressing the Indian,” Joaquín Capelo, one of the primary members, wrote in the Manifiesto of the Asociación Pro-Indígena.<sup>61</sup> They also supported projects to bring greater education to populations in the rural sierra.<sup>62</sup> Mayer collaborated closely with Mariátegui on several of his projects, including his journal *Amauta* (teacher in Quechua), a journal of both literary criticism and social commentary where Mariátegui voiced his critiques of Peruvian society. Labor activism, *indigenismo*, and the early feminist movement remained interconnected movements through the first decades of the twentieth century, and thinkers involved in each of these crossed paths and collaborated with each other in their visions for an all-encompassing utopian reform of society.

Another group of fellow travelers of Mayer and Alvarado is the Tawantinsuyo movement. Founded in Lima in June of 1920, the Tawantinsuyo movement demonstrated perhaps the largest and most influential grassroots pro-indigenous movement of the early

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 107-108.

<sup>59</sup> Soledad G. Gelles. “Escritura, Género y Modernidad: El Trabajo Cultural de Clorinda Matto de Turner y Dora Mayer de Zulen.” (Order No. 3048530, Stanford University, 2002), 159-207.

<sup>60</sup> Gelles, “Escritura, Género y Modernidad”, 159-207

<sup>61</sup> Typescript of the Manifiesto de la Asociación Pro-Indígena by Joaquin Capelo, Jan. 1 1912, Box XPZN255, Folder 2000027415, Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Peru, Lima, Peru.

<sup>62</sup> Gelles, “Escritura, Género, y Modernidad,” 159-207.

twentieth century.<sup>63</sup> It also drew much of its inspiration from the Asociación Pro-Indígena.<sup>64</sup> The movement hoped to pressure the government into protecting indigenous communities against exploitation and to unify oppressed communities throughout the country; in the mid-1920s, it elected several delegates to the national congress.<sup>65</sup>

The political instability, economic changes, and social upheaval of early twentieth century Peru ushered in a period in which intellectuals became aware of their ability to alter politics and society. Through the labor movement, the *indigenismo* movement, and the feminist movement, Limeñan activists reimagined the present with different social hierarchies, political organizations, and economic involvement. Thinkers like Mariátegui and Haya, the founders of the Asociación Pro-Indígena, the Tawantinsuyo movement and the feminist movement all used the volatility of early twentieth century Peru to their advantage, allowing them to imagine alternate Peruvian presents.

---

<sup>63</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 111-112.

<sup>64</sup>This movement took place four years after the Asociación Pro-Indígena became illegal. *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-112.

*“Let us liberate the woman who is the citizen, let us liberate the Indian who makes wealth and makes up the army, let us liberate thought, profess the greatest tolerance... and we will reconstruct the Nation.”*

María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, “In Full Slavery,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, 1912<sup>66</sup>

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Immigrant and the Suffragette, 1912-1917



*María Jesús Alvarado Rivera*<sup>67</sup>



*Dora Mayer*<sup>68</sup>

In October of 1912, a politician, a philosopher, a priest, an historian, an immigrant, and a suffragette met together in the port of Callao.<sup>69</sup> Though all with differing perspectives, backgrounds, and reasons for attending, they all agreed on one thing, namely that they should found and publish their own newspaper. Eventually named *El Deber Pro Indígena*, the newspaper became a monthly publication in which these authors and several others detailed the injustices they saw perpetrated against Peru’s working class.<sup>70</sup>

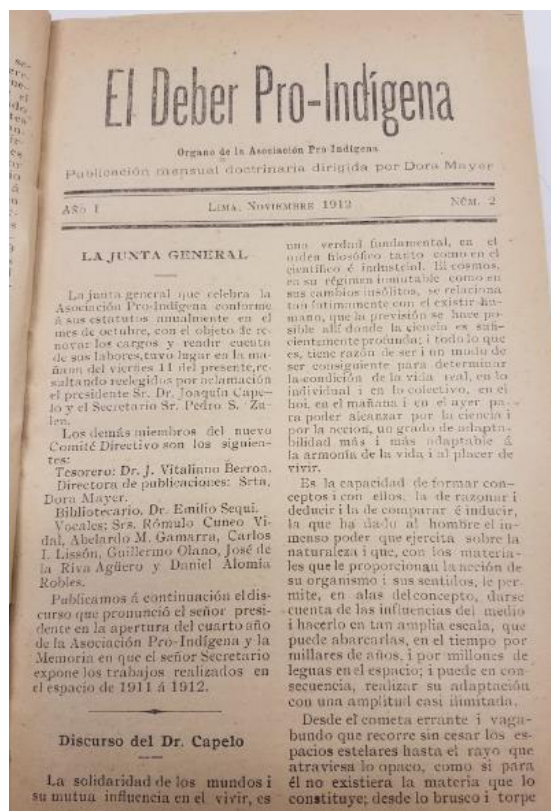
<sup>66</sup> María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, “En plena esclavitud,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, February, 1913.

<sup>67</sup> Carla Jiménez, “María Jesús Alvarado Rivera: Una feminista a ultranza,” Flora Tristán: Centro de la Mujer Peruana, [http://www.flora.org.pe/web2/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=389:maria-jesus-alvarado-rivera-una-feminista-a-ultranza&Itemid=70](http://www.flora.org.pe/web2/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=389:maria-jesus-alvarado-rivera-una-feminista-a-ultranza&Itemid=70) (accessed April 13, 2019).

<sup>68</sup> Pluma y Tinta, “Joel Rojas: Dora Mayer fue una genuina representante del indigenismo,” *Lima en Escena: Magazine Cultural*, Feb. 4, 2019.

<sup>69</sup> *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, October, 1912.

<sup>70</sup> Dora Mayer “Aviso Editorial,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, October, 1912.



Title page of *El Deber Pro-Indígena*<sup>71</sup>

Through this newspaper, which dedicates its Manifesto to “all the workers of the Republic,”<sup>72</sup> these members sought to connect the struggles of organized labor to the contemporary struggles for indigenous rights and, for some authors, the struggle for women’s rights as well.<sup>73</sup> “Indigenous people are the first Peruvian workers,”<sup>74</sup> the Association’s Manifesto reads, “... the first victims of abuse and negligence of industrial companies.”<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Kate Iida, “Title Page of *El Deber Pro-Indígena*,” 2018 (digital photo).

<sup>72</sup> Typescript of the Manifiesto de la Asociación Pro-Indígena by Joaquín Capelo, 1/1/ 1912, XPZN255, Folder 2000027415, Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, Lima, Perú.

<sup>73</sup> María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, “En plena esclavitud,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, February, 1913.

<sup>74</sup> Typescript of the Manifiesto de la Asociación Pro-Indígena by Joaquín Capelo, 1/1/ 1912, XPZN255, Folder 2000027415, Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, Lima, Perú.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* In the early 1900s, especially beginning during the regime of the dictator Augusto Leguía, international corporations began to gain more power in the economic and political landscape of Peru. Leguía’s government adopted a very pro-business model and especially hoped to open their borders to international trade and stay on friendly terms with the United States. As a result, the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company, a company owned by citizens of the United States, gained a stronghold in the Peruvian Andes. Today, as a result of actions taken during this time period, the region of Cerro de Pasco in Peru is one of the most polluted regions in the world: an open pit copper mine contaminates the surrounding town and water, and most children born in the area suffer from mercury poisoning, because of the process used by the open pit copper mine. Both in the early 1900s as well as now, the company hires the equivalent of “goon squads” to beat up, intimate, and harass any opponents of the mine, making the control of the operations of the mine difficult to oversee from the outside. Though the mine is currently owned by Peruvian businesspeople, the legacy of environmental and labor abuse in this area can be traced back to the origins of the company in the 1900s.

Through the Asociación Pro-Indígena, members hoped to reform Peruvian society by prioritizing the rights of workers, indigenous Peruvians, and women, and create a society in which these three groups could hold power. This group of activists saw a direct link between “the most complete and depressing slavery,” of the working class, wherein “towns and villages are slaves to the authorities” to the situation of indigenous Peruvians working for industrial corporations which “...exterminate the indigenous race, and exploit our riches without any benefit for the country.”<sup>76</sup> They hoped for a labor movement in which indigenous workers served as the base and most fundamental activists. They hoped to combine all three of these strands of activism in order to create a strong, cohesive, and potentially revolutionary labor movement in Peru.

The most prominent members of the Asociación Pro-Indígena founded were the primary contributors to *El Deber Pro-Indígena*. The politician, Joaquin Capelo, at the time a senator in Peru’s congress, built much of his platform on reforms that would protect indigenous Peruvian workers against the abuses of industrial corporations, especially in the Sierra.<sup>77</sup> The philosopher, Pedro Zulen, the son of a Chinese immigrant to Peru and a mestizo woman, graduated from the University of San Marcos.<sup>78</sup> During his time in the Asociación he wrote several of his most important philosophical treatises, focusing specifically on the philosophy of “humanism” as it pertained to Peru. Unfortunately, a bout of tuberculosis led to his early death at the age of 35.<sup>79</sup> The priest, J. Vitaliano Berroa, originally from the provinces of Tacna and Arica, which had both suffered in the War of the Pacific, wrote for the newspaper from a Catholic perspective.<sup>80</sup> Perhaps the violence he witnessed firsthand during

---

<sup>76</sup> María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, “En plena esclavitud”, *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, February, 1913.

<sup>77</sup> Thomas M. Davies, “Indian Integration in Peru: A Half Century of Experience. 1900-1948,” PhD. diss., University of New Mexico, 1969.

<sup>78</sup> Gerardo Leibner, “Pedro Zulen: Del Indigenismo Paternalista Al Humanismo Radical.” *Revista Europea De Estudios Latinoamericanos Y Del Caribe / European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, no. 63 (1997): 29.

<sup>79</sup> Leibner, “Pedro Zulen,” 29.

<sup>80</sup> “Arbitration Between Peru and Chile: Appendix to the Case of Peru in the Matter of the Controversy Arising out of the Question of the Pacific” President of the United States as Arbitrator, January 15, 1923, Washington D.C., 788.

the war, including his own forcible removal by the Chilean military after the provinces came under Chilean rule, spurred him into more radical activism.<sup>81</sup> The historian, Emilio Gutiérrez de Quintanilla (1858-1935), also a writer, literary critic, painter, and archaeologist, came to the organization from an academic background and went on to found Lima's Geographic Society and the Historical Institute of Peru.<sup>82</sup> All these contributors, accomplished men in their varied fields, came together to contribute their perspectives to the newspaper.

Among these founders and primary contributors to the newspaper, the immigrant and the suffragette were the only two women. Dora Mayer, who later took on the name Dora Mayer de Zulen after a highly publicized alleged affair with Pedro Zulen,<sup>83</sup> arrived in Callao on a boat from Germany when she was five years old; her adoptive mother educated her at home.<sup>84</sup> Already forty-four years old, she had worked as a columnist for the Peruvian newspaper *El Comercio* but had yet to become involved in much radical activism.<sup>85</sup> María Jesus Alvarado Rivera, primarily self-educated and thirty-four years old at the time of this meeting, had also worked as a journalist at *El Comercio* before joining the Asociación Pro-Indígena.<sup>86</sup> Though interested in the struggles of labor, indigenous rights, and anti-capitalism, she primarily focused on women's rights.<sup>87</sup> This group of people, with their differing backgrounds, interests, professions, economic and social statuses, ages, and situations in life, all came together in October of 1912, because they felt drawn towards the writing and publishing of this newspaper.

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Esteban M. Cáceres, "España en el Perú." Biblioteca Virtual Miguel D. Cervantes. Oct. 12, 1923 (Accessed Feb. 11, 2019).

<sup>83</sup> Soledad G. Gelles "Escritura, Género y Modernidad: El Trabajo Cultural De Clorinda Matto De Turner y Dora Mayer De Zulen." Palo Alto: Stanford University, 2002, 183.

<sup>84</sup> Dora Mayer de Zulen, *Memorias*, vol 1. Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Seminario de Historia Rural Andina, 1992, 1-75.

<sup>85</sup> Gelles, "Escritura, Género y Modernidad," 35-92.

<sup>86</sup> Lady Rojas Benavente, "María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, Primera Feminista Peruana," *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos* 32, no. 1 (2007): 149-63.

<sup>87</sup> Elsa M Chaney, *Significado de la obra de Maria Jesus Alvarado Rivera* (Lima: Cendol-Mujer, 1988), 5-6.

The two primary women contributors to the newspaper, Mayer and Alvarado, had important similarities as well as differences in their motivations for contributing to the newspaper. Both had a background in journalism, and had written for the same newspaper, *El Comercio*. Both, as city women living in Lima, had a grounding in the culture which dominated women's involvement in politics and activism, specifically the cultural ideal of the "luchadora social," (female social fighter) or the "moralizadora feminista que se identifica con la movilización obrera" (the feminist moralizer or critic who identifies with worker's mobilizations".<sup>88</sup> This cultural ideal for women's activists, which began to take shape in the mid to late 1800s, especially in female activist figures like Clorinda Matto de Turner (1852-1909),<sup>89</sup> placed women's activism in the social context of their "natural" place as "moral influences." This cultural ideal for women perceived them as more moral, caring, and empathetic, due to their roles as mothers and raisers of children and so women's activism represented an extension of this "natural" impulse. Women's activists, especially labor activists, extended motherly love, empathy, and care beyond their families and to the workers and groups suffering and in need. Many women activists used this cultural ideal to their advantage to assert their authority as activists. In her article "In Full Slavery," Alvarado writes, while arguing against women's exclusion from male dominated spheres, "(women) are excluded from the consideration of good society, although they profess the most pure morality."<sup>90</sup> This ideal of female purity and morality allowed women activists like Alvarado and Mayer to claim authority from the standpoint of their purer feminine morality.

Furthermore, within popular discourse as the time, European feminists represented the "antithesis of the ideal of the Limeñan woman," Soledad G. Gelles writes in her dissertation, "Escritura, Género, y Modernidad."<sup>91</sup> Alvarado and Mayer negotiated the hostility to

---

<sup>88</sup> Gelles, "Escritura, Género y Modernidad," 168.

<sup>89</sup> Gelles, "Escritura, Género y Modernidad," 47-159.

<sup>90</sup> María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, "En plena esclavitud," *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, February, 1913.

<sup>91</sup> Gelles, "Escritura, Género, y Modernidad," 172.

feminism, even within their own movement. Even left-wing activists like Manuel Gonzalez Prada and Mariátegui wrote against feminism. Mariátegui wrote that feminism “wants to rob women of the natural enchantment of their frivolity and grace and turn them into austere book holders or pompous public speakers.” Gonzalez Prada, another member of the *indigenismo* movement famously said the only suitable role for women was as mothers.<sup>92</sup> While Mayer and Alvarado used some of the stereotypes and ideas associated with Limeñan women, they also challenged them.

Both working, professional women, Alvarado and Mayer personally pushed for the integration of women into public and professional arenas. In this way they represented the “antithesis of the hegemonic fantasy of femininity of the middle and elite classes.”<sup>93</sup> Later in their lives, both Mayer and Alvarado pushed this image further, helping to create a new image of a Limeñan female activist, that of the “moralizadora escandalosa” (the scandalous moralizer or critic). “Their cultural visibility arose precisely because of their public identification with workers and farmers,” Gelles explains.<sup>94</sup> Both Mayer and Alvarado helped to open new possibilities for Limeñan women activists to define themselves. Analyzing these early written works helps to understand the trajectories of these two women, what motivated them, and what ideas, issues, and problems angered, drew, and fascinated them.

Both women contributors had important personal differences, however, which shaped the ways in which they approached their work for *El Deber Pro-Indígena*. Mayer primarily demonstrated interest in the Asociación Pro-Indígena and *El Deber Pro-Indígena*. Along with writing for the newspaper, she also directed and edited it, organizing the content and deciding which articles to include and which not to include.<sup>95</sup> For the Asociación Pro-Indígena, she

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>95</sup> “Aviso Editorial,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, October, 1912.



served as the Director of Publications.<sup>96</sup> Labor organization represented a concern of Mayer's, and she hoped to create a large-scale labor movement with indigenous workers as the primary participants and members.<sup>97</sup>

In her articles for *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, Mayer addresses many disparate themes, often focusing on politics and government. She critiques the Peruvian government and Peruvian democracy, stating in her article "Wish for the New Year," "we wish for the country a good government; a government that does not think about concentrating capital, that probably would not be from the country and certainly not from all Peruvians."<sup>98</sup> In this section of her article, Mayer critiques the Peruvian government, which she sees as focusing too much on "concentrating capital" in a way that does not benefit of the majority of the country, instead of trying to create an "ambience of general prosperity."<sup>99</sup> This critique represents one of her primary preoccupations in her articles. She also criticizes the Peruvian democratic system, pointing out what she views as the absurdity of leaders who "represent" their constituents.

Still more impossible is that a man could be the representative of a million heterogenous individuals, and that by being placed as a monarch on the throne or as a democratic politician on the presidential seat, the nation is represented.<sup>100</sup> In this article, Mayer argues the absurdity of the idea of a representative government, which she believes does not better represent the complexities of the Peruvian population than a monarchy. She believes that no one person can adequately represent these disparate identities and complex social groups present in Peru. In the system of "democratic representation," some groups receive more representation, while others remain unrepresented.

---

<sup>96</sup> "La Junta General," *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, November, 1912.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>98</sup> Dora Mayer, "Deseo de Año Nuevo," *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, January, 1913.

<sup>99</sup> Mayer, "Deseo de Año Nuevo."

<sup>100</sup> Dora Mayer, "Representación nacional," *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, July, 1915, 51.

Mayer's critique of representative government makes more sense within the context of the Peruvian political system of the time. During the early years of the Republic, Peru's government changed the constitution five times between the years of 1821 and 1840. During this time, politically powerful groups debated two basic models of government: that of a constitutional monarchy versus a republic. These two groups had distinct ideas about incorporating indigenous Peruvians into the nation. Those in favor of a constitutional monarchy argued for the exclusion of indigenous Peruvians from the electorate and from citizenship, because they believed indigenous Peruvians were too "ignorant" and did not have enough "free will" to vote.<sup>101</sup> Those in favor of a republic said that indigenous Peruvians should have voting rights, because they, like other Peruvian citizens, paid taxes. Between 1843 and 1844, General Mariano Ignacio Vivanco (1806-1873) organized, for the first time in the history of the republic, a national budget, a national judicial system, and an educational system. In 1860, however, Peruvian leader Ramón Castilla (1797-1867) introduced yet another constitution. In this new constitution, which governed the country during the time Mayer wrote this article, only taxpayers, property owners, literate men, and workshop owners had the right to vote or hold public office. The constitution established an indirect democracy: each 500 voting men in each province would elect a member of the Electoral College, and this member would then vote on the Congressmen and the President. Senators represented different regions, or "departments" in the Congress, while deputies represented the provinces. This indirect democracy, however, was explicitly classist and sexist. Only men who earned more than 500 pesos a year could become deputies, while Senators needed to earn more than 1,000 a year.<sup>102</sup> In this way, the Peruvian government shut out poorer citizens from

---

<sup>101</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 112-114.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-114.

participation. Mayer's critique of government, therefore, attacks the classism inherent within the constitution.

In another article she says she wishes that "the majority of the candidates (for elected office) would be rural landowners or miners, and that the majority of the rural landowners or miners were *gamonales* (the name for town authorities in Peru, called *caciques* in the Spanish colonial period)." <sup>103</sup> Mayer disliked the limited range of background of elected Peruvian officials. She would prefer elected officials to come from more diverse backgrounds, specifically from the working class and rural regions of Peru. She wants "miners" and "rural landowners" to run the country. Through her pieces, Mayer makes it clear that she aspires to a different political organization in Peru, one in which members of the working class have political power while wealthy elites occupy a lower status.

Mayer also addresses land reform, especially for indigenous Peruvians living in the Andes, as well as her desires for economic reform. In a long section in her article, "The Question of Land," Mayer discusses the history of appropriation of indigenous lands in Peru.

In principle, indigenous communities have an indisputable right to the land they claim. No one, except for them, were the original owners of the ground, whose property was snatched by title of conquest by the Spanish or by the force of usurpation by the ranches in the Republican era. Very little property has passed through legitimate sale from the power of the communities to the hands of an individual owner. Indigenous communities have lost their heritage, their estates through the method of thirst, like in Huaylas, by arbitrary demarcation, like in Beños or by simple and brutal abuse, like in Azangaro y Chucuito, aside from the small thefts committed by unscrupulous lawyers against helpless and defenseless women, like María de la Paz Chanini and others. <sup>104</sup> Only the most radical wing of the *indigenismo* movement ever espoused land reform ideas like the ones mentioned by Mayer in this article. The primary, racist viewpoint which pervaded Peru at this time said that indigenous Peruvians represented an "inferior race," and that they should only participate in the country doing manual labor, as serfs, or in the army. <sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Dora Mayer, "Hacia la democracia," *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, April, 1915.

<sup>104</sup> Dora Mayer, "La cuestión tierras," *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, October, 1913.

<sup>105</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 179.

For the most radical members of the *indigenismo* movement, however, land reform was a common theme. Mariátegui and Haya both advanced similar land reform ideas, saying that it was perhaps the most important issue of the time. They believed the best way to redistribute land would be by destroying the *latifundia* system in the Andes.<sup>106</sup> Mayer's support of land reform in this article marks her as one of the most radical members of the *indigenismo* movement at the time.

In the article "The Question of Land," Mayer primarily voices her support for María de la Paz Chanini, who communicated with the Asociación Pro-Indígena and came to Lima to present her case to the President of Peru. She hoped to regain control of lands she argued were unlawfully taken from her. Earlier in this article, Mayer states that María "had suffered imprisonment for a motive and pretext that we do not remember" and upon being released came to the capital to plead her case.<sup>107</sup> Mayer voices her strong support for María de la Paz Chanini, and for returning land to indigenous owners which, as she explains, rarely "passed through legitimate sale," as Spanish and Republican era elites forced indigenous communities off their lands. Her emphasis on indigenous land reform ties in with her larger view of the interconnection of indigenous rights and labor rights. Returning lands to indigenous Peruvian communities, their rightful and historical owners, will also help to reorganize class society in the way Mayer hopes for.

Though Dora Mayer argues for land reform to benefit indigenous communities, her writing also often reinforces stereotypes about indigenous Peruvians common during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This type of hypocrisy was also often common in the *indigenismo* movement. Some participants in the movement went further than Mayer, simultaneously writing articles in support of indigenous Peruvians while keeping other

---

<sup>106</sup> In this system, property owners held large amounts of land; it also included the *haciendas*. Ibid., 179.

<sup>107</sup> Mayer, "La cuestión tierras."

indigenous Peruvians in debt working on their lands.<sup>108</sup> In her articles, Mayer often refers to indigenous communities using imagery which has much in common with the idea of the “noble savage.” In one of her articles she writes “the son of Manco Capac does not participate in the rights of citizens, nor in the luxuries of civilization, but instead in compensation for such prejudice, also does not participate in dishonors and capitulations, nor in the sad negotiations of the class that boasts of being intellectual.”<sup>109</sup> Several important issues arise in this section, which highlight the ways in which Mayer’s work stereotypes indigenous Peruvians.

She begins the section by talking about indigenous Peruvians as “the son of Manco Capac.” Manco Capac, in both history and legend, founded the city of Cusco, the capital of the Inca Empire.<sup>110</sup> In referring to indigenous Peruvians as the “son of Manco Capac,” Mayer alludes to the impressive history of the Inca Empire, yet in so doing places indigenous Peruvians in the past of a glorious and powerful empire, and not in their present situation. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, Peruvian scholars and intellectuals, while attempting to create for Peru a strong sense of a unified Republic in the wake of Peru’s independence from Spain, looked back to the Incan empire as a type of glorious past which could put Peru on similar levels to European countries like Greece or Italy.<sup>111</sup> Dora Mayer, by using this reference, looks to the past in order to establish a strong nationalistic present. These intellectuals, however, often glorified the Incan past while simultaneously degrading and discriminating against contemporary indigenous Peruvians.<sup>112</sup> Mayer’s reference to “Manco Capac” in this section makes use of this tradition of glorification of the past Inca Empire at the expense of contemporary indigenous Peruvians. While trying to demonstrate respect for

---

<sup>108</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 182.

<sup>109</sup> Mayer, Dora. “Una canta a la raza indígena,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, January, 1915.

<sup>110</sup> Brian S. Bauer, “Pacariqtambo and the Mythical Origins of the Inca.” *Latin American Antiquity* 2, no. 1 (1991), 10.

<sup>111</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 90-112.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-112.

the history and culture of indigenous Peruvians, she also simultaneously simplified the complexities of that history.

The rest of this section of her writing continues to draw upon and reinforce stereotypes about indigenous Peruvians common in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She says that indigenous Peruvians do not “participate in the... luxuries of civilization” but that indigenous Peruvians also do not “participate in the dishonors or capitulations” of the intellectual class.<sup>113</sup> Mayer’s rhetoric in this section strongly evokes the image of the “noble savage;” the idea that indigenous communities both “lack” technology and “civilization” but also at the same time are more “honorable” or “moral” people because of it. This stereotype overly simplifies indigenous Peruvian communities, negates and overlooks the complexity, diversity, and differences in ways of life for indigenous Peruvians, and refers to indigenous Peruvians in a childlike manner. Rhetoric such as this exists throughout Mayer’s writing, and shows how, though collaborating closely with indigenous communities in her work and activism, Mayer still could not see beyond her prejudiced perspective shaped by her identity as a Limeñan city dweller and a white European immigrant.

In her articles Mayer also addresses social issues, both in Peru and abroad. In one long article titled “Miscegenation,” Mayer critiques the academic work of an American professor at Harvard University, Webb Hardie, who argued that, though all races are equal, different races should maintain strict “eugenic separation” from each other.<sup>114</sup> Mayer says the idea is absurd and hypocritical because “the author wants to avoid miscegenation not so much to conserve intact the black race but instead the white race.” At the end of her article she argues that racial segregation and ideas of racial superiority remain inherently linked. In this article, she also seeks to distance herself and the Asociación Pro-Indígena from organizations like the

---

<sup>113</sup> Mayer, “Una canta a la raza indígena.”

<sup>114</sup> Dora Mayer, “La miscegenación,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, July, 1915.

London Anti-Slavery Society, which advocated racial segregation<sup>115</sup> This perspective ties in with her larger ideas about the importance of uniting the labor movement and the indigenous rights movement. Mayer wants to create a labor movement which would break down traditional barriers between people, including racial barriers.

Throughout her articles for *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, Mayer demonstrates the complications and contradictions of her own ideas as well as of her time. Her radical political rhetoric, describing the hypocrisy in the Peruvian democratic system and among elected officials, shows a level of mistrust, anger, and feeling of alienation between herself and elected political officials. Many Peruvians felt anger and mistrust of elected officials in 1912, as the country verged on political instability and military dictatorship.<sup>116</sup> Mayer's charged rhetoric regarding corporations and land reform also reflect changes happening in the Peruvian economic landscape, with the increase in power held by international industrial corporations and their impact on rural Andean communities.<sup>117</sup> Her "noble savage" rhetoric, which stereotypes and infantilizes indigenous Peruvian communities, shows her internalized prejudices and limitations due to her identity and position within Peruvian society. Mayer's complicated ideas are symptomatic of the contradictions in Lima during this time.

Though she also wrote for *El Deber Pro-Indígena* during the same years as Dora Mayer, María Jesus Alvarado Rivera demonstrates very different preoccupations. Primarily, Alvarado focuses on women's social conditions and rights throughout her articles. In her first article, "In Full Slavery," Alvarado uses charged rhetoric to talk about the social position of women in Peruvian society, relating it directly to the position of the working class.

Women suffer the horrible disgrace of being the slave of the slave, and carry chains heavier than this, well, the prejudices that weigh on her are larger: orphaned and

---

<sup>115</sup> Unlike countries such as the United States, post-revolutionary Peru never had legally imposed racial segregation. In fact, the original constitution of the Republic of Peru, written in 1823 after Peru gained independence from Spain, explicitly stated that racial separations would not exist in Peru (the constitution of 1823 also outlawed slavery and the slave trade).

<sup>116</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 90-112.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-112.

unmarried she cannot live alone without looking for the guardianship of a family, although they may be strange, and she suffers there resigned to the well known martyrdom of living in someone else's home; she cannot go without spiritual direction; she cannot neglect religious practices; she cannot open her spirit to the freeing revelations of science, because she is excluded from the consideration of good society, although she professes the most pure morality.<sup>118</sup>

In this section, Alvarado critiques contemporary Peruvian society, especially the difficulties unmarried women face. She critiques the inability of single women to live alone or gain access to higher education, but also, interestingly, the way in which many Peruvian women believe strongly in religion. In this way, the women's movement which Alvarado advocates does not represent a feminism for "every" Peruvian woman but a feminism which, from the beginning, she defined in opposition to conservative religiosity. Interestingly, Alvarado considers that "she cannot go without spiritual direction; she cannot neglect spiritual practices" a type of female "slavery." This section demonstrates that Alvarado viewed religion as an instrument of women's oppression. The tension between Alvarado and the conservative wing of the Peruvian Catholic Church would escalate throughout her time as a feminist activist.

Alvarado also discusses issues of abuse against indigenous Peruvians in her articles, but she often finds ways to bring women's issues into the discussion. In her article "A Letter from Saman," Alvarado recounts the details of a letter the Asociación Pro-Indígena received from Avelino Sumi, one of its members from the district of Saman.<sup>119</sup> The article begins by recounting the trip Sumi took to Lima to present to the Peruvian Supreme Court about abuses committed by the authorities in his town.<sup>120</sup> Alvarado recounts that, after presenting to the court, Avelino Sumi remained in Lima for a year, because he feared for his life after presenting evidence against his town authorities. Upon returning to Saman, Sumi sent a letter to the leaders of the Asociación Pro-Indígena in Lima. He said the abuses and "persecution"

---

<sup>118</sup> María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, "En plena esclavitud," *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, February, 1913.

<sup>119</sup> María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, "Una carta de Saman," *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, February, 1915.

<sup>120</sup> Alvarado, "Una carta de Saman."



had not changed despite his presentation to the court.<sup>121</sup> The letter also discussed the case of Rafael Medina, charged with murder and “condemned to spend most of his life in prison,” despite the fact that the murder occurred when “Medina was in Lima with the commission of indigenous peoples that came to ask for justice from the first magistrate of the Republic.” Throughout these sections, Alvarado shows her preoccupation with the issues recounted in the letter. “We are now in an era of full conquest,” she writes. Yet, even within this discussion, Alvarado inserts a mention of the impact on women. The governor and soldiers “mistreated the women (in the town) who they tied to the horse’s girths and were dragged along for half a block,”<sup>122</sup> Alvarado writes. Her focus on this detail specifically shows her preoccupation with the impact of abuses on women.

Like Mayer, Alvarado also used racist and prejudiced rhetoric while advocating for progressive women’s rights. In her article “The Protest,” she uses racist rhetoric when discussing newly arrived Chinese and Japanese immigrants in Peru. The article as a whole endorses violent protest; Alvarado begins with the statement, “protest has always been a powerful weapon for the liberation of the oppressed man (and) of the subjugated villages.”<sup>123</sup> She goes on to give examples, writing “the protest of the proletariat in strikes modifies their condition as beasts of burden, unconscious and weighed down by the intelligent, dignified and respected associate of their ancient exploiter.... And finally, the haughty protest of feminism liberates women from her secular slavery and returns to her the dignity and autonomy of the human person.”<sup>124</sup> In the first section, Alvarado writes that strikes help the working class, or proletariat, to fight against the “associate of their ancient explorer,” or the capitalists and owners of factories who currently exploit them, but who also remain part of the larger systemic exploitation of the class system.

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 107-108.

<sup>123</sup> María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, “La protesta,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, May, 1913.

<sup>124</sup> Alvarado, “La protesta.”

From this endorsement of protest, Alvarado goes on to support race riots which broke out against newly arrived Asian immigrants in Lima.<sup>125</sup>

When hundreds of Chinese people arrived, gravely damaging the Peruvian in small industry and causing other ills of greater importance still, the discontent was general, they murmured it incessantly... and the yellow race continued to invade us... One day in a popular meeting an impassioned speaker pronounced a violent discourse against Chinese immigration... (later) there was a clash with the police... Soon a supreme decree imposed a strong tax on the Chinese immigrants freeing us from their pernicious invasion.<sup>126</sup>

In this section, Alvarado endorses race riots against Asian immigrants.<sup>127</sup> She draws a direct comparison between these anti-Asian race riots and other types of collective protest such as labor strikes and the feminist movement. Certainly, anti-Asian racism and the Peruvian labor movement often went hand in hand during the early twentieth century, and it especially increased close to World War II. On the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of May in 1940, riots broke out in the streets of Lima. Rioters looted 600 Japanese-Peruvian businesses, ten Japanese-Peruvians died, and many more lost their homes in the assault. Haya's organization APRA fanned the flames of anti-Japanese racism and potentially helped start the riots.<sup>128</sup> Alvarado's racism, therefore, demonstrates some of the deep complexities in the history of the Peruvian feminist and labor movements.

These early articles by Alvarado demonstrate the complexities and contradictions inherent in the Peruvian labor and feminist movements. From the outset, Alvarado's writing illustrates an important tension between her desire to support and liberate Peruvian women, while at the same time criticizing Peruvian women who practiced religion. Religious women represented a significant population within Peru. Alvarado both tries to include Peruvian women in her movement while also alienating many at the same time. Perhaps this tension sheds light into why Alvarado's feminist movement failed to gain enough support to help

---

<sup>125</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 90-112.

<sup>126</sup> Alvarado, "La protesta."

<sup>127</sup> Racist Peruvians during the early twentieth century did not differentiate between Chinese immigrants, who arrived for the most part in the mid-1800s and the new arrival of Japanese immigrants in the early twentieth century, calling all immigrants from Asia "Chinese." Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 90-112.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-133.

women gain the vote. Peruvian women only received right to vote in 1955 under the Dictator General Odría, because he hoped conservative women would help him win re-election.<sup>129</sup>

Interestingly, women gained suffrage not through Alvarado's radical left-wing activism but because of the political strength of conservative women.

Alvarado's anti-Asian racism also demonstrates important tensions within the Peruvian labor movement. Chinese immigrant workers on guano plantations, as well as more recently arrived Japanese immigrants were certainly invested in labor organizing and striking for better conditions and pay. When the Nikkei arrived in Peru, they usually came with labor contracts to work in the sugarcane fields on the north coast.<sup>130</sup> These contracts, while they usually specified they would work for 10 to 12 hours at a time for approximately \$12 per month, were usually broken once the immigrants arrived in Peru.<sup>131</sup> Nikkei workers also suffered from tropical diseases, especially malaria, as well as the abuses of hostile plantation owners.<sup>132</sup> Because of these hostile conditions, Japanese immigrant workers began holding strikes on plantations, especially in the regions of Cayaltí and San Nicolás. Soldiers from the Peruvian armed forces often came in to break strikes on these militantly organized sugar plantations.<sup>133</sup> While Japanese immigrant workers held strikes on plantations, however, labor organizations like APRA fanned the flames of anti-Asian racism in their supporters. This racism perhaps also gives some insight into the fall of the Peruvian labor movement into greater violence and chaos, especially in the 1930s and 40s.<sup>134</sup>

These early articles written by the two female contributors to *El Deber Pro-Indígena* show important insights into the preoccupations of these women as well as of Limeñan society at this time. Their charged rhetoric demonstrates the volatility of this time in Peruvian

---

<sup>129</sup> Chaney, "Old and New Feminists," 336.

<sup>130</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru.*, 102-104.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-104.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-112.

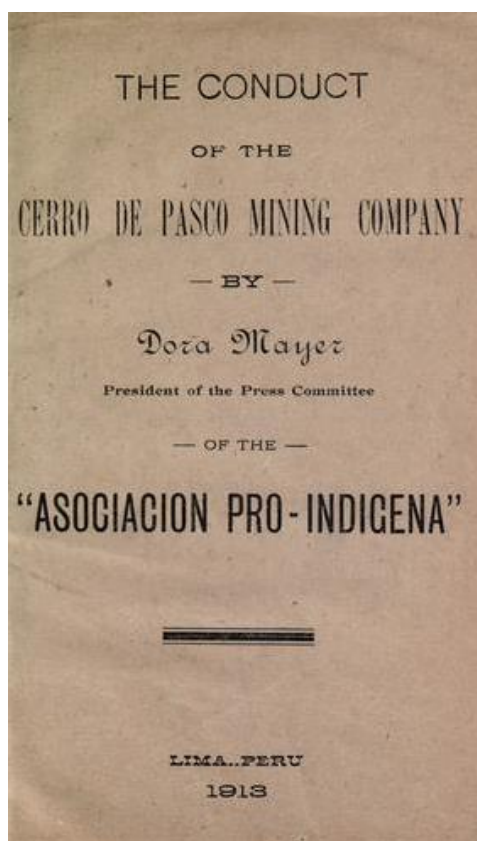
history and the intensity with which different groups of people intellectually battled for a say in Peru's future. Mayer and Alvarado, through their writings for *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, certainly made their voices heard.

“...The great nations will simply be the supporters of savagery in the world, whilst they continue protecting, as their citizens, those people who do not adhere in foreign countries to the principles of civilization which have been their rule at home.”

Dora Mayer on the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company, 1913.<sup>135</sup>

### CHAPTER 3

#### Labor Activism in the Andes: The Case of Cerro de Pasco, 1913



*English version of Dora Mayer's book<sup>136</sup>*

Perhaps Dora Mayer's most sustained activist endeavor was her campaign to publicize the illegal actions of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company. Under Augusto Leguía's first term as president, from 1908 to 1912, the mine had gained substantial power and political influence in the region, due to Leguía's campaign to further open Peru to business, deregulating industries in order to encourage more foreign investment.<sup>137</sup> Dora Mayer, through a campaign of investigative articles published in the newspaper *El Comercio*, as well as a book, *The*

---

<sup>135</sup> Dora Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company* (Lima, Asociación Pro-Indígena, 1913), 46.

<sup>136</sup> Dora Mayer, "The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company," Lima, 1913 (paper and ink).

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-117.

*Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, published in both Spanish and English,<sup>138</sup> became the primary person to bring to light the large-scale labor abuses in the mine, as well as the company's disregard for Peruvian mining safety regulations. Based largely on firsthand accounts written by employees of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company and their families, Mayer researched and compiled the complaints into several investigative works, meant to exert pressure on the Peruvian government. She hoped they would step in to halt the illegal actions taken by the mine.<sup>139</sup> *The Greenwood Histories of Modern Nations: The History of Peru* cites the Cerro de Pasco Mine as one of the most important examples of the increase in power of industrial corporations in early twentieth century Peru.<sup>140</sup> This shows that Mayer's work has influenced the way in which modern day historians think about this period in Peruvian history.

For Dora Mayer, nothing exemplified her desire to unite labor and indigenous struggles more than the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company. Mayer begins her book, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, by explaining the origins of the company. "The Cerro de Pasco Mining Co. began its operations in Peru in 1901. By its magnitude, the enterprise was destined to revolutionize industrial life in this country," Mayer writes.<sup>141</sup> She intends to make it clear that all the incidents involving the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company are inherently tied to the structural changes taking place in Peru in the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

---

<sup>138</sup> Mayer hoped that by translating her book to English readers in the United States would find out about what was going on and help to put a stop to it since the company was headquartered in the US.

Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, 1913.

<sup>139</sup> The Archivo Pedro Zulen in the Biblioteca Nacional del Peru in Lima has many of these firsthand accounts stored in the folders of the archive, including a *denuncio* written by Pedro Zulen which cites Dora Mayer's previous journalistic work. "As recent examples we cite the case: 1<sup>st</sup>. of Juan de la C. Enriquez, which was amply treated in the articles of Pedro S. Zulen, published in "El Comercio" of 19<sup>th</sup>. Of June last, and of Dora Mayer, published in "El Comercio" of 30<sup>th</sup>. June and 2<sup>nd</sup>..." I do not, however, personally know if Mayer herself ever visited the Cerro de Pasco Mine herself to conduct research. Pedro Zulen, "The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company," 6 August 1912, Lima, Box XPZ-FN43, Folder 2000027146. Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Peru, Lima, Peru.

<sup>140</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 99.

<sup>141</sup> Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, 5.

Arriving in the aftermath of the War of the Pacific, the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company began its operations at a time when Peru's economy was fragile.<sup>142</sup> It also brought large amounts of capital directly into Peru. "The North-American company spent about sixteen million dollars before it started the work of smelting ore," spending "six million...(for) the purchase of mines," Mayer states.<sup>143</sup> As part of this initial investment, the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company also built railway systems to Oroya and Gollarisquisga, the infrastructure needed to transport their goods but also an important addition to the nascent Peruvian railway system, which for the most part had been developed by way of contracts granted to wealthy foreign businessmen.<sup>144</sup> The Grace Contract, signed in 1889 by the President Andrés Cáceres (1836-1923) and a British businessman Michael Grace, contributed significantly to the creation of the railroad. Grace publicly represented a group of British bondholders who together "held much of Peru's debt." This group, called the Peruvian Corporation, negotiated with Cáceres and, in exchange for cancelling the debts, they gained control of the Peruvian railway system for sixty-six years, along with several other large payments.<sup>145</sup> Though Leguía increased the denationalization of industries during his terms in office, it had truly begun in these immediate years following the War of the Pacific.

Mayer explains, therefore, that in its beginning the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company would likely have been viewed as a helpful addition to both the Peruvian economy and Peruvian infrastructure. Mayer herself concedes that "the first proceedings of the Company were legitimate," however notes that soon afterwards, the company "entered fully into the

---

<sup>142</sup> Masterson says of the aftermath of the War of the Pacific "All elements of society from wealthy hacendados to the poorest serrano peasants suffered severe financial losses... Most of Peru's banking institutions did not survive the conflict. The north coast sugar estates suffered from the double calamities of the Lynch column's destructive forays and the loss of manpower as Chinese contract laborers escaped. In 1878, Peru derived 26% of its national revenue from nitrates. With the loss of Tarapacá, this revenue was completely gone."

Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 90.

<sup>143</sup> According to an online inflation calculation, 16 million dollars in 1901 has approximately the same purchasing power as 400 million dollars in the United States today. Taking into account Peru's fragile economy at this point, this would have been a very significant investment in Peru's economy at this time.

Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, 5.

<sup>144</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 152-154.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

ways of fraud, bribery, and violence.”<sup>146</sup> In her book, Mayer goes on to document the ways in which the company had transgressed both ethical and legal boundaries in its operations in Peru and calls for greater governmental oversight and sanctions to enforce ethical standards.

Mayer also points out the hypocrisy of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company’s unethical actions in the light of the United States’ claims of superiority over Peru.

We would make no remark upon this easy corruption of the businessmen who arrived here, if the Anglo-Saxon peoples did not brag so much about their moral superiority over the South-Americans and started in their diplomacy from the idea that, whilst protecting their countrymen in the exterior, they were defending the cause of civilization and morality.<sup>147</sup>

Much of Mayer’s work, both in this book and in her articles, criticizes the United States’ condescending attitudes towards Peru. Mayer did not want Peru to acquiesce to the desires of United States corporations. In this way, Mayer connects the actions of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company to a long tradition of hypocritical colonialist US interventions in South America.

Mayer also emphasizes the ways in which race and nationality enter into the encounters between the management of the Cerro de Pasco Mine and its workers. Mayer explains that the employees of the Company “are recruited amongst the inhabitants of the Andes region, who are originally peasant farmers and are brought away sometimes from long distances.” Miners in Peru are “a class furnished almost exclusively by the aboriginal race,” Mayer points out in an early section on the workers of the Cerro de Pasco Mine.<sup>148</sup> This allows for relations of race and nationality to shape employer-employee relations in the mine. Mayer details in the section of her book, “The Partiality of the Authorities,” the stories of two homicides committed against indigenous employees of the mine. Basing her information on

---

<sup>146</sup> Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, 5.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.



records of court cases from the municipality of Cerro de Pasco, Mayer recounts the murder of the worker Heriberto Mansilla,

who was made a victim of the alcoholic fury of two North-Americans, a crime which the parties concerned intended to leave unpunished. Mansilla was ill-treated for an insignificant reason in a way that left him dead on the spot, in the presence of many witnesses, yet notwithstanding, the Company obtained that the only one of the two culprits who was caught, Thomas A. Barton, should enjoy an order of release, issued by the judge of peace, Bernardo Cueto, in the very face of the medical certificate of Dr. Valentine, which proved the homicide. A few years before, a similar case occurred, the culprit being young Mr. M'Kune, the son of the first negotiator of the Cerro de Pasco mining enterprise, who, of course, escaped from justice.<sup>149</sup>

Mayer points out in this section the way the Company blatantly privileged their workers from the United States above their Peruvian indigenous workers. Mayer also documents the discrimination in salaries and hiring practiced by the mine. Only two Peruvians occupy positions of higher management in the mine, she writes. Most of the managers of the mine, however, were foreigners from the United States. She also points out the salary difference between Peruvian employees of the mine and American employees in the same positions.<sup>150</sup> All these incidents point towards the existence of a racial hierarchy in the Cerro de Pasco Mine that prioritized the foreign, American employees at the expense of local, indigenous workers. For Mayer, the actions of the mine indicated the need to change class and racial hierarchies in Peru. Foreigners should not receive priority over Peruvians; the indigenous working class should gain power and authority in their traditional lands.

Mayer also showed how little control independent authorities in the Peruvian government had over the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company. Indeed, it seemed to be the only real local political as well as economic authority in the region. Mayer describes how the mine owners often interfered to influence the outcome of elections. In her chapter "Elections and Public Manifestations," Mayer recounts how the Company used their employees to harass and

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 17. This is also supported in letter sent from Pedro Zulen, the secretary general of the Asociación Pro-Indígena, to a member of the justice department in Lima, V.D.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 42.

intimidate voters during local elections into voting for candidates with favorable opinions toward the mine.<sup>151</sup> She quotes two letters in support of her argument. The first one was a telegram sent from the Major of the region of Cerro de Pasco,<sup>152</sup> Juan Azalia, to the director of the central government in Lima. It describes how the managers of the Cerro de Pasco Mine purposely made their employees drunk, and then sent them out to harass and intimidate voters.<sup>153</sup> The second telegram Major Azalia sent to the Prefect of the Department of Junín.<sup>154</sup> This letter described the upper management of the Cerro de Pasco Mine arming its employees and creating a mob to harass local authorities.<sup>155</sup> These letters show the management of the Cerro de Pasco Mine using tactics of intimidation and harassment against local authorities and population. Neither Mayer nor the mine employees who sent letters documenting the behavior could create much change, however. President Augusto Leguía, in his two terms as president, maintained a consistently pro-business policy which favored corporations like the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company.<sup>156</sup>

Mayer also criticized the Company's system of paying employees. As she explains, the Company paid employees principally in provisional money, a type of voucher system. Instead of paying them in actual currency, the managers paid them in metal coins, which the

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>152</sup> The Major was the highest town authority in Cerro de Pasco.

<sup>153</sup> The full text of the telegram reads: "To the Director of Government. Lima. Yesterday, the Board of Register was grossly insulted by a mob of workmen intentionally made drunken by the American Company, under the leadership of its lawyer, Carlos Gomez Sanchez, who paraded through the streets, pronouncing invectives against the Town Council and hurrahs for the Prefect. I have just sent an official letter to the Sub-Prefect, requiring the help of the police for the purpose of maintaining order. The Town-Council and citizens of Cerro de Pasco ask Government for ample protection. Azalia Major." Ibid., 20.

<sup>154</sup> Junín is the province in which the town of Cerro de Pasco is located.

<sup>155</sup> The full text of the second letter reads: "Cerro de Pasco, October 20<sup>th</sup> 1908. To the Prefect of the Department. Mr. Prefect: As this Major's Office has been received intelligence that the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company prepares a numerous troupe of employees and workmen in its service, with the purpose of making them concur armed, at the act of the demarcation of limits between this town and the estate 'Paria,' property of the Company. This measure can only be deemed an act of direct provocation towards the citizens who are interested in the demarcation affair and therefor I have the honour to appeal to your Honour, that Your Honour may dictate the most efficient orders to avoid any conflict and preserve the public peace. Gob preserve Your Honour. Juan Azalia." Ibid., 21.

<sup>156</sup> Even today, though Peruvian businessmen now own the Cerro de Pasco Mine, mine managers continue to engage in similar behavior. They continue to hire mobs to intimidate and harass local authorities and voters. A direct line can be drawn between the modern actions of the mine, and these early years, when these unseemly activities were already evident. Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 112-117.

employees had to change to cardboard, which they then changed to bonds only valid at the company stores. The store sold food, medicine, and other necessary goods above the market rate. These bonds, furthermore, only remained valid for a week after the exchange. This entire system, Mayer explains, seems set up to make it as difficult and confusing as possible.<sup>157</sup> These unethical and illegal actions of the Company help Mayer illustrate her opinions that Peru's working class had entered a type of "slavery." Furthermore, "it is really impossible to understand why the Peruvian Government is so tolerant with the arbitrariness of the North-American Company, moreover when taking into account that the gigantic enterprise leaves hardly any benefit for the state," Mayer states, to conclude her chapter.<sup>158</sup>

The system of payment in provisional money in the Cerro de Pasco mine certainly recalls the system of *encomiendas* and indigenous labor slavery in colonial era Peru. In the *encomienda* system, implemented by the Spanish government in their American colonies, Spanish immigrants or *creoles* received large amounts of rural land from the Spanish government, along with power over the indigenous inhabitants of the land.<sup>159</sup> These *encomiendas* were plantations or large-scale farms, and the indigenous inhabitants of the land forcibly worked for the *encomenderos* in exchange for protection and Christianization.<sup>160</sup> Although eventually stopped by the Spanish government, the *encomienda* system involved most indigenous Peruvians in labor slavery.<sup>161</sup> Important differences exist between the system

---

<sup>157</sup> Mayer further argues that provisional money is illegal in Peru, and also uncalled for under the circumstances, since the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company was within a day's train ride from Lima, so there was no reason they wouldn't be able to obtain currency to pay their employees.

Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, 8.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>159</sup> Creoles were the descendants of Spanish immigrants born in the Americas.

Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 43.

<sup>160</sup> Encomenderos were the Spanish inheritors of the land.

Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 43.

<sup>161</sup> During the Spanish colonial period, debates raged in Spain about whether or not the *encomienda* system was ethical. During the Valladolid Controversy, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda debated Bartolomé de las Casas about this system. While Sepúlveda argued that it was ethical, given his viewpoint that indigenous North Americans were "natural slaves," Las Casas took the opposite viewpoint, saying that it was unethical and that indigenous North Americans could therefore accept Christianization. Las Casas eventually won the debate, and the *encomienda* system fell out of practice. Bartolomé de las Casas, *Apologética Historia Sumaria, 1550-1555* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas), 1967.

of labor in the Cerro de Pasco mine and the *encomienda* system of the 1500s, however. The Spanish primarily put the *encomienda* system in place in order to organize their control over the colonies as well as the indigenous inhabitants of the land, who the Spanish crown viewed as their vassals.<sup>162</sup> It also helped diversify power in the colonies, so that one colonist would not gain power over a substantially larger portion of the land than the others. Furthermore, *encomiendas* could be inherited, first by two heirs and then only by one.<sup>163</sup> The *encomienda* system, therefore, was intrinsically tied in with the Spanish crown's management of the colonies. This makes it different from the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company and twentieth century industrial corporations, which were not part of a monarchist colonial project but instead in Peru to make a profit.<sup>164</sup> Mayer did, however, draw parallels between the type of labor abuses in both systems. Later in her book, Mayer states that she believes international industrial corporations like the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company represent the modern equivalent of colonialism. "The industrial syndicates come like an avalanche of conquest upon a primitive country," she writes.<sup>165</sup> Mayer sees an explicit link between the period of Spanish conquest in Peru, and the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company. She hopes to support an indigenous labor movement which fights against what she views as the new colonialist enterprise in Peru.

Mayer also criticized mismanagement in the mine which led to major accidents. She begins by referencing an article from the newspaper *Minero Ilustrado*, a local paper in the Cerro de Pasco region. The article stated that, as of July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1911, more than a thousand employees of the mine had been injured or killed in accidents. This took place over the ten

---

<sup>162</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 43.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>164</sup> Of course, the Spanish crown hoped to make a profit in their colonies as well, but there is a substantial difference in ideology between a plantation set up as part of a colonial monarchy and the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company which was participating in the globalizing economic system of the twentieth century.

<sup>165</sup> Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, 25.

years since the mine began operating.<sup>166</sup> Mayer goes into detailed explanations of the most tragic accidents. She discusses an accident in the mine shaft of Noruega, one in the coal mine Gollarisquisga, and one when an employee, Felipe Salcedo died because of a malfunction in the central shaft of the mine.<sup>167</sup> In the mine shaft of Noruega on November 16<sup>th</sup>, the engine driver, who oversaw operating the cage which pulled miners out of the mine, let the brake loose by accident. A collision occurred; five men fell from the cage, while two held on. The five who fell from the cage were killed. This accident occurred due to unsafe mine management, Mayer says. To cut labor costs, the head manager of the company decided to let the same person operate two winding engines at the same time; one of these engines was used to pull up the workers. Engine drivers also usually worked between 16 and 32 hours at a time without rest. Unsafe company policies, Mayer argues, led to this accident, and the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company should be held accountable for its unethical practices.<sup>168</sup>

Mayer makes a similar argument when discussing the other major accidents at the mine. She recounts the details of the accident in the coal mines of Gollarisquisga on August 10, 1910. Mine managers ignited dynamite while workers remained inside the mine. While the official count registered that 67 deaths, Mayer says eyewitnesses saw at least 72 people dead, and that 143 workers were lost on that day. Members of the company buried many of these people secretly, eyewitnesses reported. Mayer references Peruvian mining labor laws, that state that it is illegal to light dynamite while workers are still in the mine. The Cerro de Pasco Mining Company also used “Hercules dynamite,” also illegal under Peruvian mining laws.<sup>169</sup> Mayer includes external documentation and shows the extent of her research in these sections. She quotes and extensively summarizes a report written by Carlos a Portella, the

---

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 22-27.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 22-23

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 25-26.

Mining Delegate of Cerro de Pasco. Portella presented it to the Director of Public Works in the central government in Lima. One important passage from this report reads

accidents in mines are not owing to unforeseeable and inevitable circumstances. On the contrary, they happen in consequence of the neglect and inhumanity of the managers of the business, and the sacrifice of the poor workmen is crowned by the contemptuous disobedience shown to the measures dictated by the Mining Delegation. The other accidents that Mayer discusses seem to support this assessment. Due to lack of safety measures, a 12-year-old child died under the ruins of part of a collapsed mine; Felipe Salcedo, an employee of the mine, died in an accident with the central shaft of the mine. At the end of her section, Mayer includes her own commentaries. She states the importance of government oversight and supervision of the mine and argues for more labor regulation and labor protections. She also proposes fining the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company for any illegal or unethical actions taken.<sup>170</sup> Mayer wants the Peruvian government to step in and hold the company accountable for mismanagement which jeopardizes their workers.

To conclude her book, Mayer talks about labor organization and strikes in the Cerro de Pasco Mine. In 1908, workers held the first strike because of an explosion in the Peña Blanca mine. Workmen from that region refused to work there again. In 1909, firemen who worked for the Cerro de Pasco railway company declared a strike in order to reduce their working hours to nine a day and raise their salary. The nonviolent strike ended when the managers of the company put Washington Oviedo, the leader of the strike, in jail. In April of 1912, a group of workers organized a strike because they had to pay for the carbure, a type of chemical used in mining lights.<sup>171</sup> These details show the importance Mayer placed on highlighting the workers' own activism. She hoped to help them to disseminate information and achieve the changes they desired. Mayer takes on the role of an investigative journalist in this instance and helps spread the stories of the mine employees. The accidents which Mayer describes

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 24-25.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 40-42.

paint a broader picture of the economic and labor situation in Peru during this period, especially for indigenous workers. In her “Conclusion” section, Mayer brings in a shocking statistic: most miners died within five years of beginning to work in the mines.<sup>172</sup> This paints a grim picture of the situation for industrial workers, and perhaps helps explain why Mayer felt reform was incredibly important.

The Cerro de Pasco Mine is a microcosm of the societal issues Mayer saw in early twentieth century Peru. During this period, three international corporations dominated the Peruvian economy. W.R. Grace controlled sugar, shipping, and textile production, I.P.C., a subsidiary of Standard Oil based in Canada controlled the petroleum industry, and The Cerro de Pasco Mining Company dominated the mining industry.<sup>173</sup> These three companies did not represent the only foreign economic influences in Peru, however. Leguía gave many long-term contracts to foreign companies. As part of these contracts, the companies paid few taxes and gained almost complete autonomy in their sectors. He also appointed U.S. citizens to high level positions within the government. As Masterson explains, Cerro de Pasco represents only one example of the “economic power and ruthlessness of these economic giants.”<sup>174</sup> Cerro de Pasco, therefore, demonstrated the power of international corporations, which prioritized foreign economic interests over the Peruvian people. They gained so much political and economic power that the Peruvian government could not stop them, and, under Leguía, had no desire to.

---

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>173</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 114.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 114.

*“In May of 1911, Dora Mayer realized that she was in love with Zulen. (a feeling) which increased, of course, as everything which has vitality develops...The woman made a declaration of her sentiments to the man.”*

Dora Mayer in “A Necessary Declaration,” 1916<sup>175</sup>

## CHAPTER FOUR

### “Denounce Her Like a Man:” Scandals and Disintegration, 1919-1925



*María Jesús Alvarado Rivera and other women's activists in Lima at a meeting*<sup>176</sup>

On May 25, 1919, Limeñan women staged the first strike for the rights of working-class women in Peru. Held in the Parque Neptuno, a small park located far from any governmental administrative centers, the strike was a “movement of ...protest against the disinterest of the liberal state to provide for the basic necessities (of working-class women).”<sup>177</sup> The leaders called the strike “Meeting monstruo del hambre,” which roughly translates to “a meeting about the monster of hunger.” Dora Mayer de Zulen was one of the

<sup>175</sup> Dora Mayer, “Una declaración necesaria,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, April, 1916.

<sup>176</sup> Carla Jiménez, “María Jesús Alvarado Rivera: Una feminista a ultranza,” Flora Tristán: Centro de la Mujer Peruana, [http://www.flora.org.pe/web2/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=389:maria-jesus-alvarado-rivera-una-feminista-a-ultranza&Itemid=70](http://www.flora.org.pe/web2/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=389:maria-jesus-alvarado-rivera-una-feminista-a-ultranza&Itemid=70) (accessed April 13, 2019).

<sup>177</sup> Gelles, *Escritura, género, y modernidad*, 203.



principal organizers of the strike; María Jesus Alvarado Rivera wrote positively about it, saying that the strike was “reclaiming (women’s) right to life.”<sup>178</sup> In April of 1919, Dora Mayer and others had formed a women’s labor activist organization, called the Committee for the Fight for Lowering the Price of Subsistence (Items).<sup>179</sup> The strike, however, quickly turned violent: the Peruvian army broke the strike, and opened fire on the women protesting there. Many of the women present died; the police and military detained even more of them afterwards.<sup>180</sup>

This tragic event highlights several important aspects about the way in which women’s activism evolved in Peru during the first decades of the twentieth century. First, eight years after the first general strike in Lima, led by textile workers in 1911, women workers began to organize around their own issues.<sup>181</sup> The Peruvian feminist movement began using the tactics of the labor movement, but for their own purposes. Dora Mayer’s participation in the organization of this strike is hardly surprising, especially considering her background and interest in the Peruvian labor movement. That she and others banded together to promote labor organization from a purely feminist perspective, however, shows that her perspectives had shifted in the years since her writing for *El Deber Pro-Indígena*. Now she was interested in not just labor organization in general, but labor organization from a specifically feminist perspective.

Another interesting facet of the women worker’s strike of 1919 is the way in which it changed the discourse around Peruvian feminism at the time. While previously, Peruvian women activists conformed to the “moralizadora feminina” stereotype, now Peruvian women participated in radical, public displays of protest for their own causes. As Gelles explains in

---

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>181</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 105.

*Escritura, Genero, y Modernidad*, this protest frightened Limeñan elites because for the first time, radical women agitated publicly in their own city.<sup>182</sup> This event highlights one of the important shifts in women's public activism in Lima in the twentieth century. Women shifted from moral commentators to scandalous ones. Other aspects of the work of Dora Mayer and María Jesus Alvarado Rivera demonstrate this shift as well. As both women became more actively involved in organizing public events, so too did their public personas shift, and help change the way the Peruvian public perceived Limeñan women activists.

The violent strike of 1919 illustrates only one of the many problems the Peruvian women's movement would face in the years following the dissolution of the Asociación Pro-Indígena in 1916. In 1924, only five years after the strike, Alvarado was tried and imprisoned in the Santo Tomás Women's Prison for three months in solitary confinement.<sup>183</sup> In 1915, as she neared the end of her work for the Asociación Pro-Indígena, Alvarado founded the first Peruvian women's organization, *Evolución Feminina*, with another feminist María Irene Larragoytia. Outsiders demonstrated hostility towards the organization. Newspapers in Lima said it would "provoke a war between the sexes and take women out of the home, which would cause anarchy and dissolution of the family." Others accused the organization of being "Protestant," a profound insult in a deeply Catholic country. Because of external hostility, few members were publicly open about their membership in the organization. In one of the few photos of a group of female activists, who had come together to hear a talk given by Alvarado, many of the women cover their faces with hats, so that the public would not know their identities.<sup>184</sup>

*Evolución Feminina* and other Peruvian women's activist groups also dealt with internal challenges regarding the extent of their radicalism. Many members only wanted the

---

<sup>182</sup> Gelles, *Escritura, género, y modernidad*, 204.

<sup>183</sup> Chaney, "Old and New Feminists," 335.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

organization to endorse women's suffrage, while Alvarado continually espoused radical views that encompassed more far reaching social reforms. For example, many members resisted her proposal to reform Peru's civil code to give married women legal equality to men. At the time, women lost many of their individual rights upon entering marriage. When newspapers publicized the proposal, a conservative group of Catholic Women, the *Unión Católica*, came out strongly against it. Many conservative men in power as well believed that Alvarado had gone too far with this proposal.<sup>185</sup> Likely as a result of this and similarly radical proposals, she was tried and sentenced to jail time in the Santo Tomás prison.<sup>186</sup> She remained there as a political prisoner for three months in solitary confinement, and then was exiled to Argentina for twelve years.<sup>187</sup> An article published in the newspaper *La Crónica* in 1925 said she was a dangerous influence for several reasons, first because she "offended by the passion which she defended the most advanced feminist doctrines," but also because she had printed and distributed many pamphlets deemed inflammatory.<sup>188</sup> Alvarado described these pamphlets in the *Tribuna Nacional de Buenos Aires* in 1925, saying they addressed many disparate themes such as

the eight-hour day; on fascism; ... one critical of the "Vial" law... through which all Peruvians are obliged every six months to work *gratis* on the public roads for six days. But in reality the law exists for the Indians, victims of the most vicious exploitation. Others denounced and accused President Leguía of bloody assassinations, or arbitrary actions and misconduct of every kind. We didn't put any identification of the press on the folders, but one day they found out the truth and I was imprisoned.<sup>189</sup>

---

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 335.

<sup>186</sup> Sources debate the true reason María Jesús Alvarado Rivera was imprisoned. Chaney's article, which I have referenced here, states that her radical participation in the feminist movement was the primary cause. Other sources give different reasons, however. Carla Jimenez, who wrote the article on María Jesús Alvarado Rivera for the Centro de la Mujer Peruana, says that she was imprisoned because of some of her indigenous and labor activism work, specifically because she printed and distributed a memorial written by a group of workers who were protesting the Ley de Conscripción Vial y los Humos de la Fundación de Oroya. Leguía saw that she had published this memorial and imprisoned her for disseminating dangerous and inflammatory information. Other sources advance different versions of these two theories as well. Since Alvarado was a political prisoner, it is likely that perhaps some version of each of these theories was indeed correct, however, the court documents from the trial of María Jesús Alvarado Rivera no longer exist, as the archive that held them burned down in a fire.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 335.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 336.

It seems that Alvarado's imprisonment and exile was not purely related to her feminist activism so radical that it caused dissension within the feminist community of Peru. Her imprisonment also seems tied to the diversity of radical causes she became involved in, as well as her explicit criticisms of Leguía. What seems to have been most threatening about Alvarado, however, is that she moved from writing and commenting on societal issues to actually organizing strikes and participating in what the Limeñan public considered scandalous public behavior.



*María Jesús Alvarado Rivera speaking to a crowd*<sup>190</sup>

Though Dora Mayer, unlike María Jesus Alvarado Rivera, was neither imprisoned nor exiled for her activism, she also engaged in her own publicly scandalous behavior which was met with hostility and anger. Mayer published several *cartas abiertas*, open letters in the newspaper which revealed the details of an extramarital affair with co-founder of the Asociación Pro-Indígena, Pedro Zulen. These letters “scandalized the Limeñan public.”<sup>191</sup> The publication of these letters “marked Mayer as a deviant public subject...From this place

---

<sup>190</sup> Jiménez, “María Jesús Alvarado Rivera: Una feminista a ultranza,” Flora Tristán: Centro de la Mujer Peruana.

<sup>191</sup> Gelles, *Escritura, género, y modernidad*, 159.

of messy love they (people, or academics) continue mobilizing her figure... to condemn or exonerate her “eccentricity,” which is to say, her speaking of the “intimate” in the public space.”<sup>192</sup> It is unclear, however whether Mayer and Zulen were in fact ever romantically involved, and Mayer could have possibly invented the affair. While Mayer published articles documenting the affair and connected herself to Pedro Zulen, Zulen denied her allegations for the rest of his life.

Whether or not the affair took place, Zulen and his friends seem to have been very preoccupied with it at the time, especially with the impact the letters would have on his external image. In several letters sent to Pedro Zulen, from friends and family, saved in the Archivo Pedro Zulen in the Biblioteca Nacional in Lima, they discuss Dora Mayer. In a letter from a man P. Weile, a friend of Pedro Zulen’s, Weile mentions Mayer, saying that he has seen in a newspaper that she went to “I don’t know which Feminist Congress in New York or Washington.”<sup>193</sup> Weile continues, urging Zulen to “denounce her” if necessary and conduct himself “like a prudent and forceful man.”<sup>194</sup> From these letters, it is clear that Mayer’s decision to publicize the letters had a profound impact on Pedro Zulen, one which he was quite uncomfortable with, if only because of the way the publication of the letters impacted his public persona.

Mayer seems to have ignored Zulen’s discomfort with her publicization of the supposed affair. In fact, she continued to publicize their relationship, choosing to take on his last name, legally changing hers to “Dora Mayer de Zulen” in 1922.<sup>195</sup> At the same time, she alleged that he had proposed engagement to her, and that he had also taken money from her after convincing her to have a sexual relationship with him. Pedro Zulen denied both

---

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>193</sup> P. Weile to Pedro Zulen, 11 September 1916, Box XPZ-FN166, Folder 2000027302, 1915-1917, Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Peru, Lima, Peru.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Gelles, *Escritura, género, y modernidad*, 183.

claims.<sup>196</sup> Mayer also published two books seeming to solidify the closeness of their relationship: *Zulen y yo: testimonio de nuestro desposorio ofrecido a la humanidad*<sup>197</sup> and *La poesía de Zulen*, a collection of Pedro Zulen's poetry compiled by her and published after his death.<sup>198</sup> Whether or not the affair took place, Mayer seemed eager to publicly connect herself with Pedro Zulen.

As Gelles points out, many academics have separated the content of Mayer's social reform and activism: her involvement in the Asociación Pro-Indígena, and her organization for women's rights and worker's rights, from this more personal, publicly scandalous side.<sup>199</sup> Yet Mayer chose to publicize the affair with Pedro Zulen, likely knowing well what effect it would have on the Limeñan public. Just as she published her book *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, her articles in *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, and her investigative journalism articles in *El Comercio*, Mayer knew exactly what effect the publication of the letters would have and made that choice for a specific reason. Mayer, throughout her life, shows a strong belief in the power of the press and publication to enact the changes she desires. Like her other political publications, Mayer likely intended the publicization of her affair to have an explicit political impact as well. Therefore, these two seemingly different aspects of her work should instead be viewed as different lenses into the way in which Mayer hoped to influence social change in Peru. Just as Mayer hoped that the publication of *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company* would help to galvanize outrage and encourage the Peruvian government to stop unethical practices, Mayer published the letters with Pedro Zulen to make a statement about women's place in Peruvian society. Perhaps she

---

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>197</sup> Dora Mayer de Zulen, *Zulen y yo: testimonio de nuestro desposorio ofrecido a la humanidad* (Lima: Imprenta Garcilaso, 1925).

<sup>198</sup> Dora Mayer de Zulen, *La poesía de Zulen: in memoriam* (Lima: Lux de E.L. Castro, 1927).

<sup>199</sup> Gelles, *Escritura, género, y modernidad*, 159-160.

engineered her own public scandal to publicize her own beliefs about women's equality: that society should permit women to express their relationships publicly.

One interesting note to add about Mayer's public self-representation regards her autobiography, the three volume *Memorias*, published posthumously in 1992 by the Universidad Mayor de San Marcos in Lima. In this text, Mayer begins the story of her life not with her birth but with her move to Lima as a five-year-old child, in this sense implicitly arguing that she, though an immigrant, is in fact a true Limeñan.<sup>200</sup> Mayer did embrace this identity wholeheartedly in her writings throughout her life. She also places significant influence on demonstrating her own respectability: the respectability of her family, her mother's strictness, her own religious faith, and the comfortable middle-class life she lived as a child.<sup>201</sup> From the outside, this emphasis on respectability might seem at odds with her choice to publicize an affair that caused a large-scale public scandal. Perhaps, however, this juxtaposition demonstrated another part of Mayer's social argument. Perhaps, in showing her own respectability in her autobiography, Mayer hoped to argue that women can publicly discuss their romantic relationships and desires, even beyond the institution of marriage, yet remain respectable members of society. Only Mayer herself, however, could answer these questions about her motivations with certainty.

Alvarado's imprisonment and exile in 1924 and Mayer's public scandal, as well as Leguía's clampdown on activist activities,<sup>202</sup> likely all contributed greatly to the decline of the Asociación Pro-Indígena and the Peruvian women's suffrage movement. In 1916 Leguía had outlawed the Asociación Pro-Indígena, likely due to a perceived connection between it and the Rumi Maki rebellion of 1915-1916, a rebellion in rural Peru which linked indigenous

---

<sup>200</sup> Mayer, *Memorias*, vol. 1, 4.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

<sup>202</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 183-184.

communities with their Incan past.<sup>203</sup> In 1925 Pedro Zulen died, shortly after returning to Peru after a several years stay in the United States as a visiting student at Harvard.<sup>204</sup> No one single factor led to the disintegration of this activist movement, which combined calls for greater indigenous rights, worker's rights, and women's rights into different facets of one overarching vision for a reformed Peruvian society yet the movement fell apart by the mid-1920s, accomplishing few of its overall goals. Women did not receive the vote; Peruvian society did not change in the way these activists hoped; a new hierarchy which prioritized the rights of women and indigenous workers did not replace the existing social system. What is important and interesting about this movement and these activists is not, however, the extent to which they were successful in accomplishing their goals. What is important about them is the way in which they revealed an important aspect of Peruvian intellectual thought at this specific place and time. Mayer and Alvarado, with all their personal complexities and contradictions, in their radical engagement in political life, give a window into life in Lima during this complicated time.

---

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 111-112.

<sup>204</sup> Liebner, "Pedro Zulen," 29.



## EPILOGUE

By 1925, the Asociación Pro-Indígena had completely fallen apart. María Jesús Alvarado Rivera lived in exile in Argentina, Pedro Zulen had passed away, and Dora Mayer de Zulen lived as a disgraced individual in Lima. After Alvarado's exile, the Peruvian women's suffrage movement slipped into the background.<sup>205</sup> The feminist movement in Peru would again gain prominence only in the late twentieth century in response to the violence perpetrated against women during the military dictatorships of the 1970s, and by the domestic terrorist organization *Sendero Luminoso* in the 1980s.<sup>206</sup> While the feminist movement lost traction, however, the labor movement, especially APRA, became increasingly radicalized. In the wake of the 1929 stock market crash, dictator Luis M. Sánchez Cerro took power from Leguía in a military coup.<sup>207</sup> Between 1931 and 1933, members of APRA engaged in a civil war with Sánchez Cerro, violently mobilizing in regions of the desert and the Andes. The government met these rebellions with increased violence, at one time executing 5,000 members of APRA by firing squad in Trujillo, a town in the mountains.<sup>208</sup>

While the Peruvian labor movement must deal with the difficult legacy of APRA's violence, the *indigenismo* movement must negotiate its own complicated legacy. In 1928, three years after the dissolution of the Asociación Pro-Indígena, José Carlos Mariátegui, one of the primary intellectuals of the *indigenismo* movement, founded the Socialist Party of Peru. Shortly after his death in 1930, Mariátegui's Socialist party became the Communist Party of Peru.<sup>209</sup> In the 1980s, a faction of this group would break from the others to form *Sendero Luminoso*, which terrorized Andean communities and nearly gained control of the nation.<sup>210</sup>

---

<sup>205</sup> Chaney, "Old and New Feminists," 335.

<sup>206</sup> Jane S. Jaquette (ed), *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Participation and Democracy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

<sup>207</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 196.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>209</sup> Masterson, *The History of Peru*, 111.

<sup>210</sup> Hunefeldt, *A Brief History of Peru*, 241-242.

Set against this backdrop, the early collaborations between María Jesús Alvarado Rivera and Dora Mayer de Zulen seem at once both remarkably hopeful while also foreshadowing the violent destinies of these movements. In their writings for *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, their investigative articles, and public demonstrations, both women clearly believed that they could create change. They believed in the power of their work to “liberate thought” and “reconstruct the Nation.”<sup>211</sup> In a time of so much instability, this seems a truly hopeful proposal. At the same time, however, their writing foreshadowed the violence and dissolution which would come. Mayer’s prejudice and Alvarado’s racism prefigure the violence which became the legacies of these movements.

Both women demonstrate remarkable radicalism which helped to expand the roles available for Peruvian women. Both played active public roles and confronted authority within a patriarchal context. These two women also highlighted social problems and contradictions in Peru that continue to this day. Mining abuses in Cerro de Pasco continue, damaging both the environment and the health of the inhabitants.<sup>212</sup> Indigenous Peruvians continue to face discrimination and racism. Especially in the Amazonian region, governments often consider the indigenous people living there obstacles to the extraction of oil and other economic projects.<sup>213</sup> In their complexities and contradictions, Alvarado and Mayer revealed an important combination of social issues which continues to be relevant today.

---

<sup>211</sup> Alvarado Rivera, “En plena esclavitud.”

<sup>212</sup> Ricardo Martínez, “Centuries of Mining Take a Toll on Health in Peruvian Communities,” *Public Radio International*, Dec. 26, 2017. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-12-26/centuries-mining-take-toll-health-peruvian-communities>.

<sup>213</sup> Adrian Gonzalez, “How Peru Excludes Indigenous Voices in its Quest to Develop the Amazon,” *The Conversation*, Feb. 8, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/how-peru-excludes-indigenous-voices-in-its-quest-to-develop-the-amazon-91449>

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

“Aviso Editorial,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, October, 1912.

“La Junta General,” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, November, 1912.

Alvarado Rivera, María Jesús. “En plena esclavitud.” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, February, 1913.

Alvarado Rivera, María Jesús. “La perricholi: novela histórica dramatizada en treinta jornadas.” 1946.

Alvarado Rivera, María Jesús. “La protesta.” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, May, 1913.

Alvarado Rivera, María Jesús. “Una carta de Saman.” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, February, 1915.

Arbitration Between Peru and Chile: Appendix to the Case of Peru in the Matter of the Controversy Arising out of the Question of the Pacific” President of the United States as Arbitrator, January 15, 1923, Washington D.C., 788.

Capelo, Joaquín. “El deber proindígena.” *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, Oct. 1, 1912.

de las Casas, Bartolomé. *Apologética historia sumaria: Cuanto a las cualidades, dispusicion, descripción, cielo y suelo destas tierras, y condiciones naturales, policías, republicas, manera de vivir e costumbres de las gentes destas indias occidentales y meridionales cuyo imperio soberano pertenece a los reyes de Castilla. 1550-1555.* México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1967.

*El Deber Pro-Indígena*, October, 1912.

*Main Square, 1869-1885, carte-des-visite*, The Latin American Library, Tulane University Digital Library Early Images of Latin America, New Orleans, LA.

Mayer de Zulen, Dora. *La poesía de Zulen: in memoriam.* Lima: Lux de E.L. Castro, 1927.

Mayer de Zulen, Dora. *Memorias, vol 1*. Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Seminario de Historia Rural Andina, 1992.

Mayer de Zulen, Dora. *Zulen y yo: testimonio de nuestro desposorio ofrecido a la humanidad*. Lima: Imprenta Garcilaso, 1925.

Mayer, Dora. "Aviso Editorial." *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, October, 1912.

Mayer, Dora. "Deseo de Año Nuevo." *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, January, 1913.

Mayer, Dora. "Hacia la democracia." *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, April, 1915.

Mayer, Dora. "La cuestión tierras." *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, October, 1913.

Mayer, Dora. "El drama de la selva." *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, December, 1917.

Mayer, Dora. "La miscegenación." *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, July, 1915.

Mayer, Dora. "Representación nacional." *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, July, 1915.

Mayer, Dora. "Una canta a la raza indígena." *El Deber Pro-Indígena*, January, 1915.

Mayer, Dora. *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*. Lima, Asociación Pro-Indígena, 1913.

P. Weile to Pedro Zulen, 11 September 1916, Box XPZ-FN166, Folder 2000027302, 1915-1917, Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Peru, Lima, Peru.

Typescript of the Manifiesto de la Asociación Pro-Indígena by Joaquin Capelo, 1/1/ 1912, XPZN255, Folder 2000027415, Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Peru, Lima, Peru.

Zulen, Pedro. "The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company," 6 August 1912, Lima, Box XPZ-FN43, Folder 2000027146. Archivo Pedro Zulen, Biblioteca Nacional del Peru, Lima, Peru.

### Secondary Sources

Adolph, José B. *Dora: novela*. Lima, Perú: PEISA, 1989.

- Bauer, Brian S. "Pacariqtambo and the Mythical Origins of the Inca." *Latin American Antiquity* 2, no. 1 (1991): 7-26. doi:10.2307/971893.
- Benavente, Lady Rojas. "María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, Primera Feminista Peruana," *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos* 32, no. 1 (2007): 149-63.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27764181>.
- Cáceres, Esteban M. "España en el Perú." Biblioteca Virtual Miguel D. Cervantes. Oct. 12, 1923 (Accessed Feb. 11, 2019).
- Chaney, Elsa M. 2006. "Old and New Feminists in Latin America: The Case of Peru and Chile." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 35, no.2 (1973):331-43.  
 doi:10.2307/350663.
- Chaney, Elsa M. *Significado de la obra de Maria Jesus Alvarado Rivera*. Lima: Cendol-Mujer, 1988.
- Davies, Thomas M. "Indian Integration in Peru: A Half Century of Experience. 1900-1948," PhD. diss., University of New Mexico, 1969.
- Gelles, Soledad G. "Escritura, Genero y Modernidad: El Trabajo Cultural De Clorinda Matto De Turner y Dora Mayer De Zulen." Order No. 3048530, Stanford University, 2002.  
<http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/305582718?accountid=10226>.
- Gonzalez, Adrian. "How Peru Excludes Indigenous Voices in its Quest to Develop the Amazon." *The Conversation*, Feb. 8, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/how-peru-excludes-indigenous-voices-in-its-quest-to-develop-the-amazon-91449>
- Hunefeldt, Christine. *A Brief History of Peru*. New York: Facts on File, 2004.
- Iida, Kate. "Title Page of *El Deber Pro-Indígena*," 2018 (digital photo).
- Jiménez, Carla. "María Jesús Alvarado Rivera: Una feminista a ultranza," Flora Tristán: Centro de la Mujer Peruana,

[http://www.flora.org.pe/web2/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=389:maria-jesus-alvarado-rivera-una-feminista-a-ultranza&Itemid=70](http://www.flora.org.pe/web2/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=389:maria-jesus-alvarado-rivera-una-feminista-a-ultranza&Itemid=70) (accessed April 13, 2019).

Jaquette, Jane S. (ed). *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Participation and Democracy*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994.

Leibner, Gerardo. "Pedro Zulen: Del indigenismo paternalista al humanismo radical." *Revista europea de estudios latinoamericanos y del caribe /European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, no. 63 (1997): 29-47.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25675751>.

Martínez, Ricardo. "Centuries of Mining Take a Toll on Health in Peruvian Communities." *Public Radio International*, Dec. 26, 2017. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-12-26/centuries-mining-take-toll-health-peruvian-communities>.

Masterson, Daniel. *The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations: The History of Peru*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 2009.

Pluma y Tinta, "Joel Rojas: Dora Mayer fue una genuina representante del indigenismo." *Lima en Escena: Magazine Cultural*, Feb. 4, 2019.

Zegarra Flórez, Margarita. 2009. "Dora Mayer, Los Indígenas y La Nación Peruana a Inicios Del Siglo XX 1 / the Indian People of Peru, and the Peruvian Nation in the Early Twentieth Century." *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 66: 251–88.