

TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVIST: *Magda Portal and the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), 1926-1950*

In March of 1929, the young Peruvian poet and political activist Magda Portal departed from the Yucatan in Mexico to give a series of lectures in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia.¹ She traveled as an emissary of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance, APRA), a recently founded political organization that sought to transform Latin America by creating a united front against foreign imperialism. On July 14, in Santo Domingo she gave a lecture titled “Latin America Confronted by Imperialism,” at “the largest theater in town” to an audience of about 200.² Her presence as an intelligent, energetic, and beautiful woman, standing on stages normally reserved to men, enhanced the power of her words, and she was well aware of the striking effect on audiences of seeing a woman in the traditionally male role of political orator.³ A journalist reporting on Portal’s lecture at the University of Puerto Rico described her in the following terms:

This article has traveled almost as much as its subject, Magda Portal, and I thank colleagues in many different places for their helpful comments. I thank Cristóbal Aljovín, Sandra McGee Deutsch, Patricia Harms, Andrea Orzoff, Lise Sedrez, and Natalia Sobrevilla, and the two anonymous readers of *The Americas* for their careful comments on drafts of the article. I also thank my colleagues who commented on different versions of a conference paper presented at the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies (2007), at the Congreso de Americanistas (Mexico, 2009), and at the IV Jornada de Historia de las Izquierdas, CEDINCI (Buenos Aires, 2009). I thank my colleagues at the University of Texas, El Paso, for their comments during my presentation at their seminar series in spring of 2012. I thank Kathleen Weaver for helping me to obtain the photographs used in the article, and Jill Ginsburg for her skillful copyediting. I reserve my deepest gratitude for my family, for their patience, encouragement, and support.

1. Her point of embarkation may be quite significant, as the Yucatan was the locus of early feminist activity in post-revolutionary Mexico. See Stephanie J. Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution: Yucatecán Women and the Realities of Patriarchy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

2. John Cabot (Chargé d’Affaires) to the Secretary of State, Santo Domingo, July 15, 1929, U.S. National Archives, College Park, Maryland (hereafter NA), 810.43/APRA 39, Some of her lectures were for paying audiences; the proceeds may have gone to the APRA party.

3. Kathleen Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel: The World of Magda Portal* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), p. 146. According to Vicky Unruh, she “embrace[d] ... the performing woman as an integral part of her persona.” Unruh, *Performing Women and Modern Literary Culture in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), p. 170.

There are few times that such tough spirits as that of this woman, who embodies the perfect type of the woman of the future, have passed through our cultural centers in subordination to the noble apostolate of an idea or a social doctrine, sowing in the freshly dug furrow of inquisitive youth, the seed of a new way of feeling, a new way of thought, a new mode of action. Because Magda Portal, more than a poet of revolutionary art, more than a forceful essayist, more than a personality in emotional tension, is a force in action, a trembling fount of dynamism, a liquid metal in continuous fusion.⁴

The male imagery used by the journalist—"toughness," "sowing seeds," "liquid metal"—is indicative of the unusual role that Portal played in stepping boldly into a public sphere normally reserved to men.

Portal did not shy away from topics that had traditionally been the purview of male orators, such as political economy and a denunciation of U.S. imperialism in Latin America. In fact, the U.S. Department of State kept a close eye on Portal during her tour. Its report on her visit to the Dominican Republic included the number of attendees at her lecture and also pointed out that she had missed another lecture she was supposed to give at the Ateneo cultural center there because she had "apparently devoted her efforts to getting drunk instead."⁵ The life of a wandering revolutionary needed its lighter moments. Yet there was nothing light about Portal's anti-imperialist message, which had particular poignancy at a time when U.S. military invasions had become the norm in the Caribbean and Central America. *Aprismo* promised no utopias but rather set before its followers a concrete example of a Latin American revolution they could emulate: the Mexican Revolution, with its call for agrarian reform and nationalization of foreign property. *Aprismo* called for similar revolutions throughout Latin America. In her lecture on the Mexican Revolution, Portal stated that "the Mexican Revolution is a standard for the people of America."⁶ Her Caribbean tour made her one of the most visible proponents of a new political doctrine that was spreading quickly throughout the continent, influencing the development of political parties in Peru, Cuba, Costa Rica, Chile, and Venezuela.⁷

This article argues that Magda Portal attained the position of highest-ranking female leader of a political party in Latin America in her time. It demonstrates that, thanks to the APRA's unique nature and status as an international political

4. José Abad Ramos, [title unreadable] in *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, Magda Portal Papers, University of Texas, Austin [hereafter MP Papers] Box 13, undated clipping in album in box, This and other translations are my own.

5. Cabot to the Secretary of State, July 15, 1929, NA, 810.43/APRA 39.

6. Magda Portal, *América Latina frente al imperialismo y Defensa de la Revolución Mexicana* (Lima: Editorial Cahuide, 1931), p. 56.

7. See Robert Alexander, "The Latin American Aprista Parties," *The Political Quarterly* 20:3 (July 1949), pp. 236–247; and Paul Drake, *Socialism and Populism in Chile* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).

FIGURE 1
Magda Portal as a Young Woman



Source: Estate of Magda Portal. Photo undated.

movement, her association with the organization allowed her to escape many of the constraints of gender.⁸ The transnational networks that defined APRA during the first decades of its history freed Portal of the limits normally experienced by women within the male-dominated environment of Latin American national politics.⁹ As an *Aprista* writer and political activist, her voice was heard, her lectures and articles published, her life story admired. She appears in Figure 1.

From her position of power within APRA, Portal attempted to promote a radical agenda for incorporating women into politics. Yet, as APRA changed from an international movement to a more established institutional force within

8. In using gender as an interpretive framework, I follow the suggestion of Asunción Lavrín that “there is an inherent problem in any interpretation ... that stresses sex as the only variable worth considering in women’s history. The peculiar social problems of their sex did not seem to prevent many women of various ethnic groups and economic levels from engaging in activities that demanded personal assertiveness and strength of character.” Asunción Lavrín, ed., introduction, *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 17.

9. Writing about a much later period, and referring to more formalized events such as the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encuentros, Elizabeth Maier and Nathalie Lebon assert that “transnational processes ... have also markedly expanded the spaces for feminist and women’s movement activism and influence over the past two decades.” Maier and Lebon, eds., introduction, *Women’s Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean* (New Brunswick and Tijuana: Rutgers University Press and El Colegio de la Frontera Norte A.C., 2010), p. xiv.

Peruvian politics, she faced growing resistance and found herself increasingly marginalized. As APRA's most powerful female leader, Portal advanced the position of women in Peru by working to incorporate them for the first time into a political party, but she is not widely recognized for this contribution. Although a number of factors contributed to her eventual estrangement from APRA, gender figured prominently among them as she discovered the limits of women's power within the male-dominated structure of the party. Her participation in APRA sheds light on the tensions and contradictions of being a woman in a male-dominated public sphere.

While literary scholars have rediscovered Magda Portal, she has heretofore been largely neglected by historians. This neglect has something to do with the institutional stance of APRA regarding its own history. Aprista historians have downplayed her role in the party as a result of her departure, forgetting her and erasing her from official party history for having spoken out against its founder, Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre.¹⁰ Fortunately, a generation of feminist literary scholars has brought attention to Portal.¹¹ Two recent biographies have emphasized the importance of her political life. Daniel Reedy's biography *Magda Portal: la pasionaria peruana* reconstructs her political career and analyzes her life through her writings and poetry.¹² More recent is the biography of Portal by Kathleen Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel: The World of Magda Portal, with a Selection of Her Poems*, which places Portal in the context of Peruvian and Latin American political history. Both of these biographies help us to understand the complexities of Portal as an individual. This article adds to the contributions made by those works by focusing exclusively on Portal's political career and exploring the ways in which APRA provided the opportunities for her to rise to prominence as one of the most widely known female political figures of her time in Latin America. That she seized on these opportunities speaks to the strength of her personality and commitment to the political ideals for which she fought.

Political activity by Latin American women during the early decades of the twentieth century occurred primarily in the context of international feminist

10. Official histories are of a hagiographic nature and focus mostly on Haya de la Torre. The most complete of these studies, with much valuable information, is the three-volume work by Ruy Soto Rivera, *Victor Raúl: el hombre del siglo XX* (Lima: Instituto Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, 2002). Portal has begun to receive some attention recently from younger sectors of APRA who write on the Internet.

11. Cecilia Bustamante has been crucial in bringing broader recognition to Magda Portal in North American academic circles. See Bustamante, *Magda Portal y sus poderes* (Austin: Extramuros Editions, 2003). See also Mihai Gheorghe Grunfeld, "Voces femeninas de la vanguardia: el compromiso de Magda Portal," *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 25:51 (2000), pp. 67–82; and Myrna Iovonne Wallace-Fuentes, *Becoming Magda Portal: Poetry, Gender, and Revolutionary Politics in Lima, Peru, 1920–1930* (Ph.D. diss.: Duke University, 2006). Daniel Reedy recently published her complete poems. Reedy, ed., *Magda Portal: Obra poética completa* (Lima: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2010).

12. Daniel Reedy, *Magda Portal: la pasionaria peruana* (Lima: Ediciones Flora Tristán, 2000).

organizations fighting specifically for women's political rights. In this sense, Portal was unusual: her Caribbean lectures dealt not with women's issues but more broadly with revolution in Latin America. She drew strength from Aprismo, the new political ideology that called for the transformation of its adherents into revolutionary citizens, and also from her participation in international networks of intellectuals. Both the ideology and the intellectual context opened up new possibilities for women. As an exile from Peru between 1927 and 1930 and again between 1939 and 1945, Portal was free of many of the constraints that would have limited her scope of action there. While many women before her had broken into the public sphere through the medium of publication, few had attained so prominent a role as Portal did in Latin America. Portal was unique in rising to the top ranks of a political party through her own merits, rather than through a propitious marriage as did Eva Perón.

For Portal as a woman, the international arena proved liberating, opening up possibilities unavailable in the national scenario.¹³ As an exile, she was not as restricted in her behaviors as were activist women who were bound to operate within the framework of national institutions. Thus, she had an added measure of freedom to voice her opinions in print and in lectures such as the ones she gave during the Caribbean tour. The travel and the contacts, and the exposure to the cosmopolitan ferment of post-revolutionary Mexico City, helped to nurture her as a political activist. Her tour of the Caribbean put her in an unusual position of power as a woman lecturing on politics. According to Kathleen Weaver, "[Magda's] network of friends and acquaintances now extended over a number of countries such that she might now think of herself as an intrinsic and perhaps even a leading proponent of transcontinental struggle."¹⁴ Even after her return to Peru in 1930, she maintained her correspondence with friends abroad and continued to count on this network both professionally and personally, writing for journals outside of Peru.

For her Caribbean tour, Portal lectured and wrote about topics normally reserved to men, such as political economy and imperialism. Following the tour, she lived in San José, Costa Rica for a few months, where she wrote, lectured, and gave classes. Her lectures made an impression on Rómulo Betancourt, future president of Venezuela, who claimed that her classes on Marxism strongly influenced his political development.¹⁵

13. On the potential of the international arena to further women's agendas, see Francesca Miller, *Latin American Women and the Search for Social Justice* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1991), p. 82.

14. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 77.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS: FROM LITERARY TO POLITICAL

Recent historiography has begun to explore transnational networks and to give us a better understanding of the need to move beyond national entities in the analysis of the politics of this period. Scholars of Latin American politics are studying the importance of these networks in disseminating political ideas and sustaining a number of cultural and political organizations that crossed national borders.¹⁶ These networks consisted of personal connections among intellectuals in different countries who would embark on a common cultural or political project, such as a journal or an association. As Barry Carr describes it, “Radical print culture provided channels for communication among scattered activists and intellectuals as well as networks that were used to supply moral and material solidarity for popular struggles.”¹⁷ The personal connections forged through these networks proved crucial for exiled intellectuals to survive abroad. The connections provided economic and moral sustenance as exiled intellectuals waited to receive payment for their articles, and afforded them a sense of community with like-minded colleagues. The study of women in this context has focused primarily on international organizations that promoted women’s suffrage.¹⁸ The life of Magda Portal suggests the need to look more broadly at the role of women in the Latin American public sphere. Much work remains to be done on the significance of these networks in empowering Latin American women.¹⁹

In Latin America, unlike Europe, cultural and linguistic affinities facilitated communication across national borders. The existence of such a Latin American public sphere is more than theoretical. Political exiles moved across national boundaries to countries that offered greater political freedom, and those countries in turn became loci for political action against dictatorial regimes, as witnessed in cities such as Santiago, Chile, and San José, Costa

16. In relation to APRA, Ricardo Melgar Bao offers an excellent account of the importance of these transnational networks in the functioning of APRA, using the concept of exile networks. Melgar Bao, *Redes e imaginario del exilio en México y América Latina: 1934–1940* (Argentina: Librosenred, 2003). The most recent study of these networks, from the perspective of historical sociology, is Daniel Iglesias, *Reseaux transnationaux et dynamiques contestataires en exil: sociologie historique des pratiques politiques des dirigeants des partis populaires apristes (1920–1962)*, (Ph.D. diss.: Université de Paris–Diderot–Paris 7, 2011). Alejandra Pita González studies the connection between publications and the formation of these networks. Pita González, *La Unión Latino Americana y el Boletín Renovación: redes intelectuales y revistas culturales en la década de 1920* (Mexico and Colima: El Colegio de México and Universidad de Colima, 2009).

17. Barry Carr, “Radicals, Revolutionaries and Exiles: Mexico City in the 1920s,” *Berkeley Review of Latin American Studies* (Fall 2010), p. 29.

18. For an account of the importance of transnational organizations in the suffrage movement, see Ann Towns, “The Inter-American Commission of Women and Women’s Suffrage, 1920–1945,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 42:4 (November 2010), pp. 779–807.

19. See Kimberly Jensen and Erika Kuhlman, *Women and Transnational Activism in Historical Perspective* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Republic of Letters, 2010).

Rica.²⁰ National politics during this time can be more fully understood in an international context, taking exile communities into account as political actors. These networks contributed to create what Jussi Pakkasvirta has termed a “continental consciousness.”²¹ Precedents for such notions of continental unity can be traced back to the political philosophy of Simón Bolívar in the early nineteenth century and the writings of José Martí later in the century and José Enrique Rodó, near its end. By the early twentieth century, intellectuals exchanged ideas with one another in essays and articles and through new cultural associations, reflecting on questions of Latin American identity and modernity. They delineated a Latin American path that deliberately sought to differentiate the continent from Europe and the United States.

Those who participated in these networks came from middle-class backgrounds in their respective countries. This was the case with Portal. Her father had been in the construction business and following his untimely death her mother had remarried, thus assuring financial stability for the family, including an education for Portal. By the time she and her husband Serafín Delmar and daughter Gloria went into exile, to Cuba and then to Mexico, Portal and Delmar were recognized literary figures with the connections necessary to start a new life abroad. They thus traced a path familiar to many middle-class Latin American intellectuals who fled dictatorships and launched opposition to them from abroad in writing.²² The eventual Aprista leaders who found refuge in exile—Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, Luis Alberto Sánchez, Manuel Seoane, and many others—possessed the necessary connections to continue their lives and work abroad. In this, they stood apart from the majority of working-class members of the party—without the means to leave Peru, many suffered persecution and spent time in jail.²³

Magda Portal entered politics in the 1920s, at a time when the international cultural and literary networks of Latin American intellectuals were becoming increasingly political in nature.²⁴ Two seminal events contributed to this politi-

20. These networks thus help to expand earlier scholarly conceptions of politics based on national “imagined communities,” as described by Benedict Anderson, and public spheres, as described by Habermas. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 2006); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991).

21. Jussi Pakkasvirta, *¿Un continente, una nación? Intelectuales latinoamericanos, comunidad política y las revistas culturales en Costa Rica y Perú (1919–1930)*, (San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 2005).

22. The tradition can be traced back to seminal figures of the nineteenth century such as Simón Bolívar, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, and Eugenio María de Hostos.

23. For an analysis of the relationship between APRA and middle-class identity, see Iñigo García-Bryce, “A Middle-Class Revolution: The APRA Party and Middle-Class Identity in Peru, 1931–1956,” in *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History*, A. Ricardo Lopez and Barbara Weinstein, eds. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 235–252.

24. Pita González, *La Unión Latino Americana y el Boletín Renovación*, p. 19.

cization: the Mexican Revolution, and the University Reform Movement in Argentina. The first great social revolution of the twentieth century had occurred in Latin America. In the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, the Mexican state engaged in international propaganda efforts to promote its revolutionary agenda.²⁵ The 1919 University Reform Movement in Argentina, in which students pushed to democratize the structure of universities, inspired student movements in other countries. Both events had a direct impact on the genesis of Aprismo.²⁶ As a young student leader in Peru, Haya de la Torre traveled in 1922 to Uruguay and Argentina and met some of the leaders of the student movement. During his exile in Mexico in 1923 and 1924, Haya worked as secretary to José Vasconcelos, the energetic secretary of education who was seeking to create a new post-revolutionary culture through ambitious projects in the arts and education.

During the 1920s, these networks helped to sustain not only individuals but also a number of internationally oriented organizations that united intellectuals in different countries. For example, the Unión Latinoamericana, founded in Buenos Aires by José Ingenieros and Alfredo Palacios, published the journal *Renovación*.²⁷ The Liga Antiimperialista de las Américas (LADLA), formed in Mexico, first united communists from a number of Latin American countries including Cuba, Colombia, Guatemala, Argentina, and Chile, as well as some from the United States.²⁸ The key figure was the Cuban communist Julio Mella, who was assassinated in Mexico in 1929. LADLA raised consciousness across national boundaries about a number of political issues, for example, by protesting the U.S. presence in the Philippines.

APRA was the foremost example of the politicization of these cultural networks. The notion of continental unity was central to the organization's political platform—hence the lack of reference to any particular nation in its name: American Popular Revolutionary Alliance. As a new generation of scholars explores APRA's international dimension, they have brought into focus a fuller

25. For Mexican propaganda efforts, see Pablo Yankelevich, *Miradas australes. Propaganda, cabildeo y proyección de la Revolución Mexicana en el Río de la Plata, 1910–1930* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1997). On the Comintern, see Manuel Caballero, *Latin America and the Comintern 1919–1943* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

26. Tracing some of Haya de la Torre's ideas back to the Argentinean University Reform Movement, Carlos Altamirano writes: "El APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) ... es solo el ejemplo más logrado, pero no el único, de esas vanguardias políticas que estimuló a lo largo de América Latina el movimiento de la Reforma Universitaria." Altamirano, general introduction, *Historia de los intelectuales en América Latina, v. 1., La ciudad letrada, de la conquista al modernismo*, Jorge Myers, ed. (Buenos Aires: Katz Editores, 2008), p. 10.

27. Pita González, *La Unión Latino Americana y el Boletín Renovación*.

28. Daniel Kersfeld, "La Liga Antiimperialista de las Américas: una construcción política entre el marxismo y el latinoamericanismo," *Políticas de la Memoria* 6/7, (Summer 2006/7), p. 145.

view of the organization.²⁹ This approach complements the existing historiography on the APRA as a national party in Peru.³⁰ APRA's founder and main ideologue, Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, founded the party as a Latin American alternative to the international communism supported by the Comintern in the Soviet Union. He accused the Comintern of being out of touch with Latin American reality, and turned Lenin's dictum on its head by claiming that in Latin America imperialism represented not the last stage of capitalism but the first. In response to this reality, APRA called not for the elimination of capitalism but rather for the formation of strong national governments to defend the interests of the working, middle, and peasant classes in the face of imperialism.³¹

Thus APRA's internationalism must be understood against the backdrop of the activities of the Comintern in Latin America. During her lecture tour, Portal referred to the Comintern, warning of the dangers of "faraway internationalisms."³² "From the beginning of the twenties," writes Manuel Caballero in his study of the Comintern in Latin America, "the entire Left had to define itself with regard to the Comintern, and the ideological struggle with the 'Cominternianos' presided over the birth of such important non-Communist parties as the APRA in Peru and Democratic Action of Venezuela."³³ Within this constellation of organizations, APRA was the most ambitious in its attempt to forge a continent-wide political movement, and it has also been the longest-lasting in the sense of its continued existence as a political party in Peru today.

Marked by exile and political persecution in Peru during its early history, APRA relied heavily on its outside networks to disseminate political propa-

29. The panel on APRA organized by Ricardo Melgar Bao and Steven Hirsch at the Congreso de Americanistas, Mexico (2009), offered an international perspective. See also Martín Bergel, "Manuel Seoane y Luis Heysen: el entrelugar de los exiliados Apristas peruanos en la Argentina de los veinte," *Políticas de la Memoria* 6/7 (Summer 2006/7), pp. 124–142.

30. A number of scholars have explored the history of APRA in Peru. The classic book on the origins of APRA is Peter Klaren, *Modernization, Dislocation, and Aprismo: Origins of the Peruvian Aprista Party, 1870–1932* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973). A more recent monograph on APRA is Nelson Manrique, *Usted fue aprista: bases para una historia crítica del APRA* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2009). See also Paulo Drinot, "Creole Anti-Communism: Labor, the Peruvian Communist Party, and APRA, 1930–1934," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92:4 (November 2012), pp. 703–736; David Nugent, *Modernity at the Edge of Empire: State, Individual, and Nation in the Northern Peruvian Andes, 1885–1935* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Lewis Taylor, "The Origins of APRA in Cajamarca, 1928–1935," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 19:4 (October 2000); Jaymie Patricia Heilman, "We Will No Longer Be Servile: Aprismo in Ayacucho," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38:3 (August, 2006), pp. 491–518; and Jaymie Patricia Heilman, "To Fight Soviet Agents in the Fatherland: Anti-Communism in Ayacucho's APRA, 1945–1948," *A Contracorriente* 9:3 (Spring 2012), pp. 94–120. On the anarchist roots of APRA, see Steven Hirsch, *The Anarcho-Syndicalist Roots of a Multi-Class Alliance: Organized Labor and the Peruvian Aprista Party, 1900–1933* (Ph.D. diss.: George Washington University, 1997).

31. As he defined Aprismo as distinct from communism, Haya de la Torre engaged in polemics with two of Latin America's most prominent communist thinkers, José Carlos Mariátegui and Julio Antonio Mella.

32. Magda Portal, *América Latina frente al imperialismo*, p. 49.

33. Caballero, *Latin America and the Comintern*, p. 9.

ganda. In fact, APRA began as an act of transnational propaganda in 1926 when Haya de la Torre published the article “What is APRA?” in *The Labour Monthly*, a journal linked to the British Labour Party. The article was republished in Spanish in various Latin American countries at a time when APRA consisted of a handful of exiles who formed “cells” in European and Latin American cities: Paris 1925 (or early 1926), Buenos Aires (1927), and Mexico City (1928).³⁴ Anecdotaly, Luis Alberto Sánchez recalled that the members of the Paris cell could all fit on one sofa. Exiled Apristas published in now-legendary journals with a continental readership such as *Amauta* (Peru) and *Repertorio Americano* (Costa Rica), as well as in smaller ephemeral Aprista-leaning journals such as *Indoamérica* in Mexico, and *Atuei* in Cuba.³⁵ The publication networks allowed this small group of Apristas to magnify their impact by disseminating their political propaganda in print. The networks also provided personal contacts and a crucial source of livelihood for political exiles.

Aprismo looked toward these international networks for more than just political propaganda. In 1928, the Mexico cell formulated the Plan de México, an unsuccessful attempt to instigate an armed uprising in Peru to overthrow the regime of Augusto Leguía. On March 11, 1932, just a couple of years after the founding of the Partido Aprista Peruano, Rómulo Betancourt wrote to Luis Alberto Sánchez, exiled in Panamá, offering to put him in contact with a whole network of Venezuelan intellectuals living in different parts of the continent (and one in Europe) who could help with the publication of articles or “any other task.” The list included Mariano Picón Salas in Chile, Francisco Antonio García in Colombia, and Simón Betancourt in the Dominican Republic.³⁶ In light of the fact that APRA was planning a national uprising at the time, the reference to “any other task” most likely refers to assistance with tasks associated with an armed action.

As they attempted to build a Latin American political movement, Apristas influenced parties throughout the continent, and at the same time succeeded in building Peru’s most successful mass political party. From the 1930s through the 1950s, the party continued to be tied into this transnational public sphere. Persecuted in Peru during most of those years, exiled Apristas corresponded and published propaganda intended to keep the party alive.

34. Soto Rivera, *Victor Raúl*, p. 86. Regarding the origins of APRA, there is a very early reference to APRA in Haya de la Torre’s letter to José Carlos Mariátegui dated November 2, 1926, one month prior to the appearance of the *Labour Monthly* article. See Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, “Nuestro frente intelectual,” *Obras Completas*, vol. 1 (Lima: Editorial Mejía Baca, 1984), p. 115.

35. Pakkasvirta links *Repertorio Americano* to the formation of a continent-wide consciousness. Pakkasvirta, *Un continente*, p. 146.

36. Rómulo Betancourt to Luis Alberto Sánchez, March 11, 1932. The Papers of Rómulo Betancourt, Virginia Betancourt Valverde, ed. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2003), Reel 1.

Melgar Bao writes that “Apristas started to build a very modern propaganda strategy that operated from Peru and from abroad, based on the responsible secretariats.”³⁷ They even had their own news service, the Agencia Columbus. In addition to disseminating news and propaganda in and outside Peru, Aprista exiles worked to raise funds, as when Aprista exiles in Chile attempted to sell bonds to support a future APRA government in Peru.

PORTAL AS INTERNATIONAL APRISTA ACTIVIST, 1928–1931

A talented poet, Portal was the first female recipient, at age 23, of a prize at the prestigious Juegos Florales poetry competition in 1923, organized by the University of San Marcos. During the following years she helped to edit various short-lived avant-garde journals that connected her to the ideas of international movements in the arts. She was drawn into a circle of politically active intellectuals that revolved around José Carlos Mariátegui and his legendary journal *Amauta*, which published the writings of internationally renowned intellectuals. Portal published some of her own poetry in *Amauta*, and by 1927 she was teaching classes to workers at Lima’s popular universities. Her personal life was also unconventional: she had earlier left her husband Federico Bolaños, father of her daughter Gloria, for his younger brother Reynaldo, whose pen name was Serafín Delmar.³⁸ She never took either brother’s surname, but kept her own: Magda Portal.

Still, she found herself slotted into female roles. Greater female participation in intellectual and political circles had not eliminated the traditional gender categories and expectations that dominated social discourse. Male intellectuals like José Carlos Mariátegui highlighted the feminine qualities of a writer like Portal and called her “the earth woman as primal force,” recasting her as “a source of artistic renewal and national energy.”³⁹ His essay *El proceso de la literatura* includes a section on Portal, to whom he refers as a ‘*poetisa*’ who “creates a feminine poetry.”⁴⁰ He distinguished her from the “woman of letters,” linking the term *poetisa* to a category of women that included Gabriela Mistral, Juana de Ibarbourou, Delmira Agustini, and Blanca Luz Brum—women who were renewing “the somewhat aged poetry written by men.”⁴¹

37. Melgar Bao, *Redes del exilio*, p. 34.

38. Kathleen Weaver speculates that the couple’s brief stay in Bolivia in 1925–1926 may have been motivated not by politics but by a need to escape the scandal created when Magda left Federico for his younger brother. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 28.

39. Unruh, *Performing Women*, p. 180.

40. José Carlos Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1959), p. 281.

41. Ibid. We certainly see some idealization of women in this judgment, as there were a number of men also acting as forces of renewal in the world of poetry.

He tied Portal's poetry to social trends and saw it as the voice of truth in an age of decadence.⁴²

Women in the nineteenth century lived within a framework of national discourse that relegated them to the home. However, a long line of prominent women writers in Peru, going back to the nineteenth century, had found ways to challenge traditional gender roles. The novelists Juana Manuela Gorriti, Clorinda Matto de Turner, and other women fiction writers and journalists had begun to break down the traditional barriers to women's participation in the sphere of public opinion. They hosted literary salons that transformed the traditionally domestic sphere of the home into a space for the discussion of public issues. They also made their voices heard through their writings.⁴³ Yet, even as they advocated for labor rights and education, they did not advocate for full equality for women. Many of these women are best known for upholding the rights of indigenous people. For example, Dora Mayer de Zulen helped found the Asociación Pro-Indígena (1908), which undertook the legal defense of indigenous people.

By the early twentieth century, women had begun to take a more active role in new political organizations that were dedicated to women's rights and to operate in an international context. In 1914, María Jesús Alvarado founded Evolución Femenina, a women's rights organization in Peru. Alvarado had attended the Primer Congreso Femenino, held in Buenos Aires in 1910. Their efforts to further legal equality for women drew heavily on transnational settings in which they wielded more power than they did in their home countries, where they remained disenfranchised and excluded from political power.⁴⁴ Organizations such as the Pan-American Women's International Committee fostered a Latin American identity. Although Portal would fight for the rights of women, she never became involved with women's organizations and always framed the struggle for women's rights as part of a broader class-based struggle to transform the situation of both men and women in society.

During her initial years in APRA Portal seems to have been treated as an equal by men. Ironically, this equality of treatment with the men around her in the political realm was confirmed by President Leguía himself when in June 1927 he ordered the deportation of Portal and a group of other alleged conspirators

42. Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos*, p. 282.

43. Francesca Denegri, *Damas escritoras: las ilustradas del diecinueve* (Lima: Recreo, 2007). The tradition continued into the twentieth century with a number of women journalists who wrote directly about political issues. These included Angela Ramos, Angélica Palma, María Wiesse, and Doris Gibson. Aída Balta, *Presencia de la mujer en el periodismo escrito peruano* (Lima: Universidad San Martín de Porres, 1998).

44. Francesca Miller, *Latin American Women and the Search for Social Justice* (Hanover, N.H., and London: University Press of New England, 1991), p. 82.

accused of participating in a communist plot. Another woman, the poet Blanca Luz Brum was also among those deported. Together with her husband, Portal traveled to Cuba and from there to Mexico. The environment of post-revolutionary Mexico continued to open Portal's mind to new possibilities. She contrasted the combativeness of Zapata and his followers to that of Peru's indigenous population, which had not experienced a revolution.⁴⁵ She also experienced the cosmopolitanism of Mexico City, which attracted artists and intellectuals from abroad.⁴⁶

With a large number of exiled revolutionaries gravitating to Mexico, post-revolutionary Mexico City became an important hub for the transnational networks.⁴⁷ Mexico had not only been the locus of the twentieth century's first social revolution, but it was also home to revolutionaries, both Mexican and foreign, including artists like the muralist Diego Rivera and his wife the painter Frida Kahlo, the Italian-American photographer and communist Tina Modotti, composers Carlos Chávez and Aaron Copland, and the Cuban communist Julio Antonio Mella. The Russian revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai was Soviet ambassador to Mexico during 1926 and 1927, and although Portal never met her, Kollontai's writings on women strongly influenced her. In 1928, still in Mexico, she helped to found the Mexican cell of APRA after hearing a series of lectures by Haya de la Torre.⁴⁸ (see Figure 2). Her conversion to Aprismo, as she told it, led her to frame her life in terms of the core Aprista value of sacrificing the personal for the political, a hallmark of other revolutionary parties of the period. Portal claims that Haya de la Torre asked her to turn away from poetry to study political economy. She complied, and during a picnic with a group of friends, took a book of poems she had written, ripped it up, and threw it into a river.⁴⁹ Although she continued to write and eventually publish, her two-decade career with APRA distanced her from her poetry.

45. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 42.

46. As Barry Carr has pointed out, the focus in historiography has been mainly on the influx of North American and European intellectuals and much less so on the movement of Latin American intellectuals between countries. Barry Carr, "Radicals, Revolutionaries, and Exiles," pp. 26–30. See Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1992).

47. Carr, "Radicals, Revolutionaries, and Exiles," p. 29.

48. Magda Portal first met Haya de la Torre in 1923 when he was a student and labor organizer in Lima. She and her husband Serafín Delmar helped to organize his lectures in Mexico in 1928 on his return from years of exile in Europe. Weaver comments that Magda's title as secretary general was "perhaps a euphemism for typist," thus indicating the very incipient and uncertain nature of these early cells, constituted as they were by only a handful of Peruvian exiles. Weaver refers here to the second founding of the Mexico APRA cell, after an earlier attempt foundered. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 51.

49. For a discussion of various interpretations of this moment, see Myrna Iovonne Wallace Fuentes, "Becoming Magda Portal: Poetry, Gender, and Revolutionary Politics in Lima, Peru 1920–1930" (Ph.D. diss.: Duke University, 2006), pp. 336–343.

FIGURE 2

Magda Portal, with Daughter Gloria and Members of the Mexican Aprista Cell



Source: Estate of Magda Portal. *Left to right:* Esteban Pavletich, Serafín Delmar, Manuel Vásquez Díaz, an unidentified man, Magda Portal and Gloria, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, Carlos Manuel Cox.

With the fall of the Leguía dictatorship in 1930, most Aprista exiles returned to Peru and there opened a new chapter in APRA history. Many now saw the opportunity to put their ideas into practice—to challenge the oligarchic order and build a party that would fight for the rights of the majority of Peruvians. Portal joined other exiled Apristas in the return to Peru and became the only woman co-founder of the Partido Aprista Peruano, the Peruvian branch of APRA, on September 20, 1930.⁵⁰ Over the next two years APRA underwent a remarkable transformation, from a network of intellectuals scattered across three continents to a party with a grassroots following strong enough to make Haya de la Torre a serious contender in the 1931 presidential election. APRA became the first party in Peruvian history to recruit women into its ranks.

During this new phase, Portal once again placed herself in a role normally assigned to men, as she traveled around the country campaigning for Haya de

50. In 1930, Portal returned to Peru via Chile where she and other intellectuals had intended to meet José Carlos Mariátegui prior to his untimely death that year. In Chile she was incarcerated, then released and allowed to travel to Peru.

la Torre. The contact with crowds of men and woman helped fuel her political passion. By her own account, the presence of a woman on the campaign trail was remarkable. In some autobiographical notes that remain unpublished she wrote that “the very presence of a woman had a great impact since this phenomenon had not occurred before, as women were always restricted to domestic functions.”⁵¹ She even suggested that she was as well known as Haya de la Torre during these early years, claiming that “with time, the people recognized me and discovered me during the large popular marches, chanting my name—the name of a woman—as much as they chanted that of V. R. Haya de la Torre.”⁵² Yet she was still campaigning for Aprista men, as women had neither the right to vote nor to run for office. The 23 Apristas elected to congress that year would all be men.

FOR WOMEN: REVOLUTION BEFORE SUFFRAGE

As secretary general of the Feminine Section of the Peruvian Aprista Party and Foreign Representative of its National Executive Committee, Portal became the most powerful woman in the party.⁵³ Her seat on that committee was the only one held by a woman. Serving as national secretary for women’s affairs, she played an important role in recruiting women. “In the process of building from the ground up a national organization of Aprista women,” writes her biographer Kathleen Weaver, “Magda established for herself an independent power base and realm of autonomy within the Partido Aprista Peruano.”⁵⁴ She worked closely with Haya de la Torre and other party leaders in Peru and continued to correspond with APRA supporters abroad. In 1931, Rómulo Betancourt wrote to Portal and her husband, offering to promote the APRA cause in other parts of Latin America. “Keep me informed of everything,” he wrote. “Tell me how to orient propaganda abroad; in addition to *Repertorio* [*Repertorio Americano*, published in Costa Rica], which is unconditionally ours, I have a few decent newspapers in Colombia and other countries, which we can mobilize to support the Peruvian struggles.”⁵⁵ The political struggle was now clearly focused on bringing APRA to power in Peru.

Portal’s works were published in the party newspapers *La Tribuna* and *APRA*, and her Caribbean lectures were published as a pamphlet. She wrote on a wide range of topics, often on key Aprista themes such as anti-imperialism, the injus-

51. Autobiography Manuscript 10, unnumbered box, MP Papers.

52. Ibid.

53. Reedy, *Magda Portal: la pasionaria peruana*, p. 162.

54. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 100.

55. Rómulo Betancourt to Serafín Delmar and Magda Portal, August 23, 1931, Rómulo Betancourt Papers, Reel 1.

tice of the class structure in Peru, the importance of a Latin American culture not derivative of Europe, and the importance of the Latin American middle class.⁵⁶ For example, her October 1930 article “Hacia nuestro propio conocimiento” (*Toward Understanding Ourselves*) develops a theme central to Aprismo and to this period in Latin American intellectual history: the need to define a Latin American tradition as separate from European traditions. Portal argued that “it is only during this century, and not even at its outset, that more American mentalities yearn to differentiate this land from others, and not just out of snobbism, but because the reality of America faces us with the need to discover it, as a Marxist would say, and not to invent it.”⁵⁷ Her reference to Marxism indicates some degree of political independence from Haya de la Torre, who sought to distance himself from communism.

In her writings, Portal made a unique contribution to Aprismo and to gender politics in Peru by defining a clear role for women in the broader process of transforming Peruvian society.⁵⁸ Putting class struggle at the heart of her analysis, she believed that APRA needed to transform women into revolutionaries before they could be allowed the vote.⁵⁹ She feared that if suffrage were extended to all women, those of the upper and middle classes would cast a conservative vote. In essence, Portal saw the struggle of women as part of a broader revolutionary process. In line with APRA’s views, she considered class as the central category of analysis and she “resisted inclinations to place women’s experiences at center stage.”⁶⁰ In her essay *Hacia la mujer nueva* (Toward the New Woman), published in Peru in 1933, she framed the woman’s struggle in terms of the broader effort undertaken by APRA to transform Peruvian society. Like the Apristas’ new revolutionary man, so too a “new woman” would have to be forged through education and the inculcation of revolutionary values. The essay proclaimed that “the Aprista call, with its broad program to vindicate people’s rights, with its realistic conception of our social and economic situation, needs to find in women enthusiastic and decisive mil-

56. Magda Portal, “El momento peruano,” *APRA* 1, October 12, 1930; Portal, “La lucha social en el Peru desde el punto de vista del Aprismo,” *APRA*, 2da época 1, March 10, 1931, pp. 14–15.

57. Magda Portal, “Nació nuestro propio conocimiento,” *APRA* 3, October 26, 1930.

58. The early twentieth-century push for greater political rights for women sets the stage for historical inquiry regarding the extent and the ways in which Latin American women defined their status as citizens. In a classic article, Sandra McGee Deutsch analyzes the extent of social change in various Latin American countries, paying particular attention to the degree to which new political movements defined new roles for women. Deutsch, “Gender and Sociopolitical Change in Twentieth-Century Latin America,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71:2 (May 1991), pp. 259–306. For a study of how women began to redefine citizenship after the Mexican Revolution, see Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).

59. Magda Portal, “El voto femenino deber ser calificado” *APRA*, 2da época 15, December 31, 1931, p. 7.

60. Unruh, *Performing Women*, p. 193.

itants, as women are among the most committed to the task of destroying a social system based on the most flagrant inequality that so cruelly subjects them to despotism and humiliation.”⁶¹

Her views appeared in articles both in and outside Peru. She published extensively on the topic of women in the party journal *APRA* with articles titled “Definición de la mujer Aprista: el voto femenino,” “Las mujeres y el APRA,” and “El voto femenino debe ser calificado,” which stressed that the female vote must be conditional. In 1935 she published an article on the advances in women’s rights in Peru in the Argentinean journal *Claridad*: “Las mujeres peruanas avanzan hacia la conquista de sus derechos” (Peruvian Women Move Toward Taking Their Rights); there was another on the status of women’s progress in *Repertorio Americano*: “Rumbo femenino, apuntes para un juicio sobre la mujer” (The Female Way: Notes for a Judgment on Women) in 1936.⁶²

Portal was closer to many European activist women than to the suffragist movements of the English-speaking world. The priority she gave to revolutionary transformation in preference to women’s issues was common to women socialists over roughly the same period in Europe, in particular the insistence that “class could not be separated from sex nor personal relations divorced from politics and that the only successful revolution would be a total one.”⁶³ Like Alexandra Kollantai in Russia and other women socialists, she rejected feminist movements led by women of the upper middle class, although she did recognize contributions of individual feminists in Peru. According to Barbara Alpern Engel, women in Russia had for some decades subsumed the women’s question into broader social questions; she writes that “the ‘woman question’ addressed the oppression they faced as individuals, helped to free them from ‘domestic servitude,’ but it offered nothing to alleviate other social inequalities.”⁶⁴ Thus Portal’s approach resembles that of other revolutionary women of her period in Europe for whom “women’s issues became secondary to the more important goal of working-class revolution because solution of the ‘woman question’ supposedly would accompany the revolutionary transformation of society.”⁶⁵

61. Magda Portal, *Hacia la mujer nueva. El Aprismo y la mujer* (Lima: Editorial Cooperativa Aprista Atahualpa, 1933), p. 11.

62. The list of articles is from Reedy, *Magda Portal: la pasionaria peruana*, p. 166.

63. Marilyn Boxer and Jean Quataert, eds., introduction, *Socialist Women: European Socialist Feminism in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Elsevier North-Holland Inc., 1978), p. 13.

64. Barbara Alpern Engel, “From Separatism to Socialism: Women in the Russian Revolutionary Movement of the 1870s,” in *Socialist Women*, Marilyn J. Boxer and Jean H. Quataert, eds., p. 66.

65. Jane Slaughter and Robert Kern, *European Women on the Left: Socialism, Feminism, and the Problems Faced by Political Women, 1880 to the Present* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 6.

In her private writings, Portal commented on the disadvantages faced by women in Peru, and looked abroad for examples of countries where women had fought for their rights. In a 1935 letter to her friend Anna Melissa Graves, a widely traveled teacher and writer who corresponded with a number of Apristas, Portal refers in very strong terms to the fact that women in America “suffer the prejudices of the Middle Ages” and are seen as “white slaves, toys for pleasure.” She writes that women like herself therefore have two sets of enemies: social injustices, and “the prejudices of the environment, the seeds of which can still be found amongst our own *compañeros*! Difficult, my dear friend, but we do what we can.”⁶⁶ While rejecting any feminist label, Portal claimed that women could change the world drastically. “I believe,” she wrote to Graves, “that if women took an active part in the affairs of the world, they would drastically change the face of humanity.” Curiously, her argument reverts to a more traditional view of women as politically important because of their role as mothers: she argues that through the love of the children they have created, women will be a force for peace. Portal wrote to Graves that women in Italy, Germany, and Russia enjoyed certain freedoms, but she also asked Graves about the situation of women in the rest of Europe.⁶⁷ Clearly, she found the international arena a source of encouragement in her political work with women in Peru.

Portal’s correspondence with Graves also demonstrates her degree of commitment to the party at this stage in her life. Graves was preoccupied with the personality cult that had begun to develop around Haya de la Torre, but Portal defended it as a necessary evil, given the nature of Latin American politics and the love of people for *caudillos*. Later, after she had left the party, Portal would change her views and become very critical of the personality cult of Haya de la Torre. Portal also defended the party’s attempts to come to power through insurgency.

POLITICAL PERSECUTION, 1932–1938

Over the course of the following months, a new political reality overshadowed the limitations that Portal might have felt as a woman in a male-dominated party: open political persecution began to define the lives of Apristas, both men and women. The months of legal campaigning and political work ended with Haya de la Torre’s defeat and Colonel Luis Sánchez Cerro’s rise to the presidency. A wing of the party committed to armed violence challenged the legitimacy of the election, and as the government responded with increased repres-

66. Magda Portal to Anna Melissa Graves, October 10, 1935, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 1.

67. Ibid.

sion the cycle of violence intensified. In early 1932, Sánchez Cerro expelled the Apristas from congress and passed a law declaring the party illegal on the grounds that it was an international party rather than a national one. In May, Haya de la Torre, who had been in hiding, was arrested and imprisoned. In July, Apristas captured the city of Trujillo and other towns in northern Peru; the government responded with a full-fledged military campaign that left hundreds dead and created tensions in APRA-military relations that lasted for decades to come.⁶⁸ Following the assassination in 1933 of Sánchez Cerro at the hands of an Aprista sympathizer, the government of General Oscar Benavides declared a period of amnesty. But after a failed Aprista armed uprising against Benavides on November 26, 1934, the party was banned and forced to operate underground until 1945.

Forced to deal with the realities of persecution and eventually imprisonment at home, Portal retained her international stature as one of APRA's most prominent leaders. She was in constant flight from the police, and in 1932 narrowly escaped arrest in connection to an earlier plot to assassinate Sánchez Cerro. In November 1934, the government finally arrested Portal and she spent over a year in the Santo Tomás women's prison. Whatever the hardships of prison, her time in Santo Tomás enhanced her status within the party. During these years (referred to by Apristas as "the catacombs," a clear reference to the persecution of Christians by the Romans), APRA identity was shaped in important ways by that very persecution and by a cult of martyrdom.⁶⁹ Prison time and death became badges of honor—signs of sacrifice and commitment to the party—whereas exile came to be regarded negatively as an evasion of the harsh political realities in Peru.

Portal's incarceration prompted an international campaign to influence public opinion for her release, and she became something of an international revolutionary hero. While she was in jail, a 1935 special issue of the Argentine journal *Claridad* was dedicated to her as part of the publicity effort. The issue began with the following description of Portal as heroic revolutionary exemplar: "Her tenacity during times of strife, her enlightened mentality, her unshakeable faith in the popular cause and her capacity for work and organized action, make the life of Magda Portal a lesson for men and women throughout the continent.

68. The number of Apristas killed has never been known, but soon grew within Aprista mythology to 7,000. See Iñigo García-Bryce, "A Revolution Remembered, A Revolution Forgotten: The 1932 Aprista Insurrection in Trujillo, Peru," *A Contracorriente* 7:3 (Spring 2010), pp. 277–322.

69. A number of scholars have analyzed the quasi-religious nature of Aprista identity. See for example Jeffrey Klaiber, *Religion and Revolution in Peru* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977); and Imelda Vega-Centeno, *Aprismo popular: cultura, religión y política* (Lima: CISEPA-PUC, TAREA, 1991).

Nothing has been able to diminish her heroic composure. Not prison, not exile, not the persecution against her family, nor the unabated poverty.”⁷⁰ Gabriela Mistral, the Chilean poet who would later win the Nobel Prize in Literature, wrote to ask for Portal’s release. The Argentine intellectual and senator Alfredo Palacios wrote directly to President Benavides, calling for her freedom.⁷¹

The publicity campaign on Portal’s behalf highlights her relatively privileged status as one of APRA’s middle-class intellectuals. Other prominent Apristas from similar backgrounds, including her husband Serafín Delmar, received similar publicity, as had Haya de la Torre when he was jailed in 1932. Meanwhile, hundreds of other prisoners without Portal’s international connections remained anonymous. Despite Portal’s international fame and the letter-writing campaign, it was ultimately her personal connections to Peruvian politicians and intellectuals that led to her release. In particular José Gálvez, a high ranking diplomat for the Benavides government, and the conservative intellectual Francisco García Calderón helped to assure her release.⁷² García Calderón had also apparently intervened on Haya de la Torre’s behalf in August 1933. Anna Melissa Graves also lobbied for Portal in conversation with García Calderón, pointing to Portal’s bravery and the shame of incarcerating a woman for so long and appealing to his “reputation and goodness of spirit.”⁷³ Graves framed her argument in terms of a traditional view of women as weak and in need of special protection.

Following her release in early 1936 after more than a year in prison, exiled Apristas in Chile wrote Portal a letter that demonstrates her international reputation. “We exiled Apristas,” the letter reads, “have always thought of you and have determined that worse than the pain of imprisonment which could not damage your courageous soul, is the fact that the party was deprived of your valuable support.”⁷⁴ Yet even after her release, the government security forces (*soplones*) continued to spy on her. “I am a half prisoner whose steps are watched,” she wrote to Graves.⁷⁵ For security reasons, Portal did not keep her Remington typewriter at home and would leave her house when she needed to write. It was common at this time for government security forces to raid homes in search of Aprista activity and propaganda. Her economic situation also

70. Magda Portal and Salvadora Medina Onrubia, *Magda Portal: su vida y su obra*, special issue, *Claridad* 294 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1935), p. 3.

71. Reedy, *Magda Portal: la pasionaria peruana*, p. 202.

72. Anna Melissa Graves to Magda Portal, April 18, 1936, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 2.

73. Ibid.

74. Carlos Alberto Izaguirre to Magda Portal, April 4, 1936, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 2.

75. Magda Portal to Anna Melissa Graves, May 29, 1936, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 2.

remained precarious; she described it as one of “Franciscan poverty.”⁷⁶ In a May 1936 letter to Graves, she alluded vaguely to steps taken by the Benavides government to impede Apristas from searching for employment.⁷⁷ Thus Portal turned to Aprista contacts abroad to seek work. She wrote to Luis Alberto Sánchez in Chile asking for publishing contacts, “even if it were about purely literary issues.”⁷⁸ Her comment indicates the degree to which her focus had shifted to political writing, with literature as a secondary endeavor.⁷⁹ Portal decided to leave Peru again in 1938, this time with her daughter Gloria, for Chile. She was arrested when crossing the border into Chile, and she and her daughter traveled for many months through Bolivia, Argentina, and Uruguay, until in November 1939 they finally reached Santiago, Chile.

CHILEAN EXILE, 1939–1945

Portal was now at the height of her fame as an Aprista combatant. She had all the right credentials, having suffered persecution and imprisonment in Peru, and she retained the distinction of being APRA’s most prominent female member. Her gender was certainly no hindrance at this stage of her life as she lectured to workers and students on the problems of indigenous America in La Paz, Bolivia, and there were journalists eagerly awaiting interviews when she arrived in Buenos Aires.⁸⁰ Her Uruguayan writer friend Blanca Luz Brum urged her to travel from Buenos Aires to Chile. “Your arrival here,” wrote Brum, “will shake the dust off many things and together we will shake up the conscience of many peoples, as in other beloved and distant times.”⁸¹ The “beloved and distant times” reference is most likely to the mid 1920s when Brum and Portal had participated in the circles of intellectuals around Mariátegui in Lima.

During the 1930s, Santiago de Chile became a hub in the Aprista transnational networks and an important locus for the dissemination of APRA propaganda.⁸² The publishing house Editorial Ercilla published Aprista books, including the long-delayed first edition of Haya de la Torre’s *El anti-imperialismo y el APRA* (1936). Even before leaving Peru, Portal had been involved in discussions about propaganda in Chile. In a letter written from Lima shortly after her release from prison, Portal encouraged Luis Alberto Sánchez, then living in

76. Magda Portal to Luis Alberto Sánchez, April 21, 1936, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 2.

77. Magda Portal to Anna Melissa Graves, May 29, 1936.

78. Magda Portal to Luis Alberto Sánchez, April 21, 1936.

79. On June 3, 1939, *La Voz del Interior* in Argentina offered to pay her 28 pesos for articles on literature. [Name unreadable] to Magda Portal, June 6, 1939, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 3.

80. Reedy, *Magda Portal: la pasionaria peruana*, p. 207.

81. Blanca Luz Brum to Magda Portal, August 3, 1939, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 3.

82. The Chilean scenario and its importance for Aprismo is a topic that remains to be studied.

Chile, to expand Ercilla's propaganda work. She held up the Spanish publishing house Cenit, known for its publication of Marxist works, as an example. She also referred to the need to distribute books without political constraint, a difficult task in Peru given the government's persecution of APRA.⁸³

Portal was able to find somewhat greater financial stability in Chile. Her contacts with the Socialist Party, which she joined, included Salvador Allende and his wife Hortensia Bussi Allende.⁸⁴ Her Chilean connections helped her to get employment with the Chilean Ministry of Education.⁸⁵ One of her tasks at the ministry was writing radio plays for the Radio Escuela Experimental, affiliated with the Chilean Ministry of Education's Dirección General de Educación Primaria. Her radio work ranged from historical topics such as Tupac Amaru II to talks on social mores, such as the effects of modernity on the traditional family. While in Chile, she also returned more deliberately to her own poetry. She also maintained her interest in women's issues, joined the Asociación de Mujeres Socialistas, and published a book on Flora Tristan, the nineteenth-century French socialist and feminist, who had Peruvian family roots.⁸⁶

While her role within APRA in Chile was not as prominent as that of exiled leaders Manuel Seoane and Luís Alberto Sánchez, Portal represented the party at a number of public events.⁸⁷ Her correspondence demonstrates that she remained active and in touch with leaders in Lima. As in all of her correspondence with men, her tone is one used between equals. In an exchange with Sánchez prior to her arrival in Chile, she ends her letter with the wish that he "receive a strong handshake from your compañera and friend."⁸⁸ He seemed likewise to value her opinion on party strategy, asking for her advice and support. "I believe we must stop the attacks from the sidelines to concentrate our fire on the fascism of Benavides, the antidemocratism of Concha and his group, etc. ... not waste ammunition," wrote Sánchez, and then added, "Don't you agree? I believe that agreement on these issues is essential for a good campaign to come."⁸⁹ A 1945 telegram to Benavides requesting permission to return to Peru for the coming elections is signed by all three Aprista leaders: Seoane, Portal, and Sánchez.⁹⁰

83. Magda Portal to Luis Alberto Sánchez, April 21, 1936.

84. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 135.

85. The links between APRA and the Chilean socialist party have yet to be fully explored. The topic is an important one. See Paul Drake, *Socialism and Populism in Chile 1932-1952* (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).

86. Magda Portal, *Flora Tristán: precursora* (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Nueva, 1944).

87. See Reedy, *Magda Portal: la pasionaria peruana*, p. 213.

88. Magda Portal to Luis Alberto Sánchez, April 21, 1936.

89. Luis Alberto Sánchez to Magda Portal, February 28, 1939, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 3.

90. Telegram from Manuel Seoane, Magda Portal, and Luis Alberto Sánchez to Benavides, January 8, 1945, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 7.

Throughout her time in Chile, Portal remained engaged in strategic discussions about furthering APRA's Latin American presence. In October 1940, she was on the organizing committee of the First Congress of Democratic and Popular Parties of Indoamerica, sponsored by the Chilean Socialist Party in Santiago with participation by exiled Apristas. In a letter to Haya de la Torre, she informed him that the Chilean Socialist Party had accepted the resolutions of the Congress affirming continental unity.⁹¹ In his reply on July 7, 1941, he criticized her for not having sent enough propaganda to Lima about the activities of the congress. He reproached her, sometimes harshly, for not promoting APRA's continental program more forcefully, suggesting that she should have tried to hold a similar congress in Mexico. "You, the ex-delegates of that Congress," wrote Haya de la Torre, "should have protested against the postponement of the second congress. You should have said that no national issue is worth as much as the continental issue that the Congress would confront. Say something to indicate that exiled Apristas are not only involved in routine, personal, and casual tasks, but that they are preoccupied with maintaining the continental meaning of our work."⁹² He expressed disappointment that exiled Apristas such as Luis Alberto Sánchez and Manuel Seoane were not sufficiently dedicated to the continentalist mission.

Portal responded with equal forthrightness. She remained committed to the work of forging continental unity, but her life experience and in particular her two and a half years outside Peru had helped her gain a better understanding of the international scene than Haya de la Torre's. To begin with, she argued, the cause of Apristas outside Peru had reached a low point: people were tired of hearing about their persecution and about the fact that they were in jail. Her insights stemmed from her recent letter-writing campaign to release her husband from prison in Peru. The Aprista cause had become like the complaints of a beggar that may move people on the first day, she wrote, but bore them on the second day, and by the third day lead people to kick him out the door. She also warned that the United States would much rather see a divided Latin America than a united one. She was not alone in thinking that Haya de la Torre had become isolated from issues outside Peru during the seven years that had been living in hiding. Gabriel del Mazo, the Argentinean student leader who corresponded extensively with Portal, worried also about Haya de la Torre becoming isolated: "His continentalist view seems diminished, after he pro-

91. Magda Portal to Haya de la Torre, June 20, 1941, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 5. In his memoirs, party leader Armando Villanueva relates that the Congreso de Partidos Democráticos y Populares de Indoamérica was one of two such meetings organized by Manuel Seoane, at the time an exiled Aprista leader in Chile. Armando Villanueva and Guillermo Thorndike, *La gran persecución (1932-1956)*, (Lima: Empresa Periodística Nacional, 2004), p. 272.

92. Haya de la Torre to Magda Portal, July 7, 1941, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 5.

moted it strongly during his youth. The lack of contact prevents him from being stimulated and from assessing the experiences of other peoples.”⁹³

Portal admonished Haya de la Torre that remaining in Peru would mean that he could not understand the bigger picture. She urged him to leave the country in order to reinvigorate the party’s continentalist program: “I am convinced that you are the only person who can promote a New Indoamerican Policy, effectively moving toward the union of the 20 republics.”⁹⁴ The party was strong enough in Peru and did not need him there. Besides, Portal wrote, he must be exhausted and in need of contact with different people and points of view. During that period Haya de la Torre was still in hiding, traveling from one safe house to another. He replied firmly in the negative, arguing that it was his enemies who wanted him out of Peru and claiming that President Prado had offered him up to one million (he doesn’t specify the currency) to leave—and that his doing so would weaken the party. He claimed to be neither exhausted nor isolated, but his series of justifications indicates that he took Portal’s critique seriously. The exchange also reveals a growing tension between them.

Portal wrote to other friends about the task of creating a united Latin America. Rómulo Betancourt replied, supporting the idea of a second Congress of Popular and Democratic Parties.⁹⁵ She also wrote to Charles Thomson of the Cultural Relations Section of the U.S. State Department on the importance of contacts among Latin American intellectuals to help foster unity. He replied sympathetically. “I agree with you,” he wrote, “that there is no more propitious method to contribute to the rapprochement that we all desire than the establishment of more intimate relations among the active intellectuals of our countries.”⁹⁶ As an officer of the State Department, Thomson’s reply reflected the U.S. policy of Pan-Americanism. While it appeared to support Portal’s arguments, the radicals in Latin America saw the policy as merely an instrument for furthering U.S. interests in the region.

The additional time Portal gave herself for her own writing while in Chile led to the publication of her book of poems, *Costa Sur*, by the end of her stay there. On August 17, 1945, the chief sales representative of Editorial Ercilla assured her that the company was promoting *Costa Sur*.⁹⁷ The letter also dealt

93. Gabriel del Mazo to Magda Portal, May 26, 1940, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 4.

94. Magda Portal to Haya de la Torre, June 20, 1941, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 5.

95. Rómulo Betancourt to Magda Portal, December 19, 1943, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 5.

96. Charles Thomson to Magda Portal, August 22, 1941, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 5.

97. [Name unreadable], Jefe de Ventas, Editorial Ercilla, to Magda Portal, August 17, 1945, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 7.

with party business and informed Portal that the Lima representative of the publishing house had received a few thousand copies of the works of Haya de la Torre, Manuel Seoane, and Luis Alberto Sánchez and would be traveling with their books and hers to provincial cities in Peru as well.

THE LIMITS OF DEMOCRATIC POLITICS, 1945–1948

The APRA internationalism to which Portal was committed received a blow when the party negotiated its way back to power in 1945 as part of a coalition government led by the moderate lawyer José Luis Bustamante y Rivero. To regain APRA's legal status as a party, Apristas had moderated their ideology to reassure both the conservative sectors in Peruvian politics and the United States. Haya de la Torre was now downplaying the anti-imperialist message that had earlier been so central in promoting a continental alliance. In his 1942 *La Defensa Continental* he reframed the role of the United States as a beneficial force in promoting a united Latin America. The term "Yankee imperialism" was officially dropped from the party ideology. Haya de la Torre also flaunted his anticommunist credentials as a way of earning the trust of the United States. To avoid any possible connection to the internationalism associated with communism, he even changed the party's name in 1942 to El Partido del Pueblo. In his first public speech after a decade in hiding he told thousands of listeners in Lima's Plaza San Martín that redistribution of property would not mean expropriation—a comment obviously intended to reassure the business community.

APRA's new stance meant that Portal was returning to a political scenario radically different from the one that had led her into exile. Now Apristas faced the task of working as part of a coalition government, rather than fleeing persecution. A letter from Betancourt, who had just become president of Venezuela, expressed hope for the good to come from the new position of power in which both APRA and Acción Democrática found themselves. "The time for creative action—anticipated during our beautiful days as wandering exiles—has arrived; and we must take advantage of it with an American sense, with a continental vocation," wrote Betancourt.⁹⁸ Yet in an earlier letter, Betancourt had conveyed to Portal his fear that the national struggles would undermine APRA's continental project—that the party would now focus exclusively on Peruvian concerns. He added that such a change "would be a great mistake."⁹⁹ His fears were justified: both the Peruvian and Venezuelan organizations were now forced to focus on the demands of national politics. Democratic politics proved

98. Rómulo Betancourt to Magda Portal, December 9, 1945, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 7.

99. Rómulo Betancourt to Magda Portal, August 7, 1945, MP Papers, Box 1, Folder 7.

messy, and the years of APRA's participation in the coalition government were marked by stalemate and an inability to carry out meaningful reform.

Ironically, the new democratic scenario proved in many ways to be more limiting to Portal than the years of exile and persecution that had granted her prestige and international influence. At an institutional level, in both party politics and national participation, women's rights remained restricted. In the slow-paced daily work of democratic politics, her position as a woman no longer gave her the advantage she had had as a young transnational revolutionary. Out of favor with the male party leaders, Portal encountered only frustration in her efforts to advance women's rights within the party. The frustration must have been particularly acute for a woman habituated to operating on an equal footing with male party leaders. It was clear that Portal now lacked the power and prestige she had once held within the party.

A number of factors contributed to her new situation. The fact that she had been outside Peru for six years diminished her clout within the restructured and highly vertical party that was still solidly dominated by Haya de la Torre. He controlled both APRA's congressional delegation—from which women were excluded—and a paramilitary force within the party known as the *búfalos*. Within this party structure, Portal had by this time been relegated to a more marginal position. She continued to attract crowds when she traveled around the country giving political speeches and lectures, and continued to hold high-level positions as a member of the party's national executive committee, as secretary of women's affairs and director of the National Movement for Women's Education. But she now faced the daunting task of incorporating women into the institutional structure of both the party and the nation—a task that would ultimately defeat her.¹⁰⁰ Women still did not have the vote, and would not get it until 1955, during another cycle of dictatorial rule under General Manuel Odría.

In November 1946, Portal presided over the First National Congress of Aprista Women. The congress attracted representatives from throughout the country, and she publicly described the occasion as an opportunity for women to have a voice in defining their own affairs. Yet she was angry when Haya de la Torre, addressing the congress, referred to a woman's primary role as being in the home.¹⁰¹ Her disappointment with APRA's attitude toward women grew even greater at the Second Aprista Party Congress in 1948, where her request that women be given a vote within APRA was ignored. Following a

100. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 142.

101. Magda Portal, "Afirmación de la democracia," *APRA* 14, March 8, 1947; Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 147. As Weaver points out, this was a time of retreat for feminist movements worldwide.

public clash with Haya de la Torre, who shut down debate on the issue, Portal walked out of the congress. Two years later, after leaving the party, she publicly recriminated the party leadership: "They agreed on what I considered to be the greatest disloyalty for the Aprista woman," she wrote in a political pamphlet, "denying her the right to be a member of the Party as long as she lacked political rights' and restricting these rights in the future. [By party statute, women could vote at 24 years of age, and men at 18 years of age.] In this way the Party of the People rewarded women for more than 20 years of loyal commitment—women who had not made any distinctions in age or sex to fight for the conquest of liberty, justice, and democracy for all Peruvians."¹⁰² APRA's caution with respect to women mirrored its moderate position on other fronts.

While APRA's shift to the right may have contributed to Portal's estrangement from the party during these years, it must be remembered that she was no longer a fiery revolutionary in her twenties but a woman in her fifties, with a more mature understanding of the workings of political life. Her column titled "La raíz del pueblo" in the party newspaper *La Tribuna* expressed concerns about the need for popular education and the erosion of certain traditional values as a result of modern life. In an article titled "El piropo callejero," she complained of how the once-chivalrous custom of publicly flattering a woman for her beauty had degenerated from flirtation into lewd exclamations.¹⁰³ She may have been following *La Tribuna's* now more-moderate editorial line, but the series also expressed a more critical assessment of social change than did her earlier writings.

In 1947, Portal's growing disappointment with the party was compounded by a terrible personal tragedy: her daughter Gloria committed suicide by shooting herself with her mother's gun on January 3. It was rumored that the suicide may have been related to Gloria's involvement with an older, married party member. Portal's relationship with Haya de la Torre had by this point become strained, and he did not attend the wake for Gloria Portal. For a few months Portal cut herself off from party life, spending time first at a hacienda outside of Lima and then traveling to Venezuela to stay with her friend Rómulo Betancourt, who was president at the time.¹⁰⁴

The already strained relationship between Portal and APRA finally broke off in 1948. A stalemate between the APRA-controlled congress and the Bustamante government created a political crisis that erupted on October 3 into an armed

102. Magda Portal, *¿Quiénes traicionaron al pueblo?* (Lima, 1950), p. 27.

103. Magda Portal, "El pueblo y su raíz: el piropo callejero," *La Tribuna*, February 24, 1946, p. 12. Piropo has no real English equivalent; it is a flattering comment of a man to a woman on the street.

104. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, p. 154.

uprising by a group of APRA sympathizers within the navy. Repression quickly followed. APRA was once again declared illegal, and Peru entered a new period of dictatorship under General Manuel Odría, to last until 1956. Accused by a military tribunal of participating in the failed 1948 Aprista uprising, Portal now publicly left the party and denounced Haya de la Torre in a pamphlet titled *¿Quiénes traicionaron al pueblo?* She accused the APRA leadership of having betrayed the cause of the people and publicly reclaimed the party's revolutionary rhetoric, defending those who had risen up in arms over the course of the past two decades. She attacked the party members who had failed in that defense: "Traitors and cowards—Judases of the People—who at the last hour abandoned and negated those who bravely and romantically attempted more than one tragic adventure—San Lorenzo, Huarás, Cajamarca, Loreto, Trujillo, Huancavelica: Callao—to bring their party to power and to fulfill the postulates of social justice that had been inscribed in its fighting banners."¹⁰⁵ Thus, she cleared her own name of direct participation in the 1948 uprising and at the same time affirmed the party's revolutionary tradition.

She also criticized the cult of martyrdom that had become part of Aprista identity, a kind of culture of victimhood. "Once again," she wrote in an accusatory tone, "they adopt the discredited approach of martyrdom, persecution, and clandestine existence. The posture of victims seems to be what best suits the Aprista gentlemen, both those persecuted as well as those jailed and deported."¹⁰⁶ And, she notes, the party's martyrs were all men. Referring to the 1948 party congress she wrote: "Its greatest success was to build a cenotaph for the martyrs—males—of the Party!"¹⁰⁷ In her break from APRA, Portal displayed the same rhetorical boldness that had characterized her earlier writings and lectures. She was among the earliest of a wave of Apristas who left the party and publicly accused it of having abandoned its most radical traditions.¹⁰⁸ The bitter tone of Portal's subsequent public statements about the party suggest that substantive disagreements about politics and ideology were mixed with personal feelings and recriminations against Haya de la Torre and other party leaders. This bitterness is manifest in an autobiographical novel, *La Trampa* (1957), which focuses on a female leader, Mariel, who becomes increasingly disillusioned and isolated, and a party characterized as corrupt and

105. Portal, *¿Quiénes traicionaron?* p. 29.

106. Ibid., p. 27.

107. Ibid., p. 20.

108. In this break with the party, Portal is also emblematic of a trend in APRA history: the bitter departures with subsequent publications denouncing APRA for abandoning its original radicalism. See Luis Changuí, *El APRA por dentro: lo que hice, lo que vi, lo que sé, 1931–1957* (Lima: Copias e Impr., 1988); Eduardo Enriquez, *Haya de la Torre: la estafa más grande de América* (Lima: Pacífico, 1951); Victor Villanueva, *La sublevación Aprista del 48: tragedia de un pueblo y un partido* (Lima: Milla Bartres, 1973). This trend is obviously not unique to APRA. Fissures and vocal splits are part of the history of all revolutionary movements.

self-serving. By the time the novel was published, APRA in its quest for legality had made a compromising political alliance, known as “*La convivencia*,” with its former enemy, the conservative President Manuel Prado. This shift to the right pushed many more Apristas out the party.

CONCLUSION

In breaking with APRA, Portal lost access to the Aprista networks that had sustained her for two decades of her life, including powerful friends abroad such as Rómulo Betancourt and Salvador Allende. Fearful of reprisal from a party that did not hesitate to exercise violence against detractors, she left Peru in 1951 once again, this time for Argentina, but she stayed for only a few months before returning to Lima.¹⁰⁹ After working as a secretary for a few years, she was asked in 1961 to establish a bookstore, the Peruvian affiliate of the Mexican publishing house Fondo de Cultura Económica, which she managed for a number of years. In this prestigious position, Kathleen Weaver writes, “Magda enjoyed nearly twelve years of personal stability, prosperity, and intellectual edification as a purveyor of high-quality books and director of a vital cultural institution.”¹¹⁰

During the 1960s, the political landscape changed dramatically in Peru. The Cuban Revolution reinvigorated the Peruvian left, and a military government led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–1975) implemented a wide-ranging set of reforms—many of them taken from the original Aprista program—including nationalization of foreign companies and agrarian reform. Portal expressed support for some of the more hard-line positions of the military, such as the nationalization of the press. With her ties to APRA now completely severed, she Portal turned to the communist left in search of a political home. In 1967 she joined the Peruvian Communist Party, and in 1978 ran unsuccessfully for political office for the Partido Acción Revolucionaria Socialista. She publicly supported the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, and in 1980 defended the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Her affiliation with the Communist Party, as well as with the left-leaning Asociación Nacional de Escritores y Artistas, led her to travel between 1982 and 1985 to the Soviet Union, some Soviet bloc countries, and Cuba. But the period of her complete devotion to politics had already ended.¹¹¹

Portal obtained a limited measure of international fame once again during the later decades of her life, thanks to a new set of transnational connections: feminist literary networks. She received recognition from Peruvian feminists, and

109. Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel*, pp. 163–164.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

111. *Ibid.*, p. 176–178.

in 1977 became president of the Center for Peruvian Women Writers, where she began promoting women's literature. In 1983 she published a new version of her study *Flora Tristán: precursora*.¹¹² As president of the National Association of Writers and Artists in Peru (1981–1986), she traveled and received recognition for her literary career. At the Fourth Inter-American Congress of Women Writers in Mexico City in 1981, Portal was named Escritora de las Américas. In the years before her death in 1989, she was faced with ongoing economic hardship and eventually sold her personal papers to the University of Texas at Austin. There is perhaps an ultimate irony—or congruence—in the fact that some of her personal papers are held not in Peru but abroad.¹¹³ The life of exile continues.

New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico

IÑIGO GARCÍA-BRYCE

112. Now available in English. Magda Portal, *Flora Tristán: A Forerunner Woman* (Bloomington, Ind.: Trafford Publishing, 2012).

113. A recent announcement states that part of her personal papers are to become available at the Biblioteca Nacional, Lima, Peru.