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**A Revolution Remembered, a Revolution Forgotten:
The 1932 Aprista Insurrection in Trujillo, Peru**

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La insurrección de Trujillo, en 1932,
bárbaramente reprimida, sembró
rencores y desconfianzas que
ensombrecieron la vida política del
país por décadas.

Comisión de la Verdad y
Reconciliación, Informe Final, 2003

On the morning of July 7, 2005, under a cloudy winter sky, hundreds of people stood in the main square of the city of Trujillo in Northern Peru for a commemoration.¹ Speeches were given, a band played,

¹ I would like to thank Samuel Brunk, Ken Hammond, Dwight Pitcaithley and particularly Andrea Orzoff, as well as the anonymous readers, for their helpful comments. I also thank my colleagues in the “Publish and Flourish Workshop” of the New Mexico State University Teaching Academy for their comments on early drafts of this article, and Tito Agüero for his comments on a lecture based on material in this article.

and for hours, a long parade of government bureaucrats, civic associations and school children marched past the official bandstand carrying colorful banners.² The peaceful setting stood in stark contrast to the violent nature of the events being commemorated: on July 7, 1932 a group of rebels connected to the recently founded Peruvian Aprista Party had taken over the city of Trujillo in an attempt to spark a national revolution.³ The government had mobilized army, navy and air force against the uprising and taken back the city after 3 days of intense fighting.⁴ Trujillo became one of the first cities in the world in which civilians were bombed by military planes. The final death toll, product of both the fighting for control of the city and of executions of prisoners by both of the fighting sides, was never officially calculated.

One of the guest speakers at the memorial events, Carlos Roca, faced a difficult task: how to commemorate an event whose memory had for decades been enmeshed in contestation and political conflict. As a high-ranking representative of the Peruvian Aprista Party whose members had staged the uprising, how could he publicly commemorate one of the most divisive events in the country's twentieth century history?

The Trujillo insurrection and its aftermath had generated two clashing political myths that lived on for decades.⁵ On the one hand,

² I use the term Revolution in this article, a term that has survived within the Aprista memory of the events, although strictly speaking this failed uprising that lasted only a few days cannot be classified as a revolution. I use it because it reflects the perspective of the party, which at the time was planning a national revolution.

³ The Peruvian Aprista Party was founded in 1930 as a branch of APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance), an international party founded by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre and other Peruvian exiles during the 1920s. Although the official name of the party is Partido Aprista Peruano, it is commonly referred to as APRA in Peruvian politics. Throughout this article, I will use both terms interchangeably.

⁴ Trujillo, the birthplace of APRA's founder Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, has traditionally been an APRA stronghold in the heart of what is referred as the "Sólido Norte"—the Northern region of Peru which historically supported the party. For an study of APRA as a party that grew out of the economic conflicts on Peru's Northern coast see Peter Klaren, *Modernization, Dislocation and Aprismo: The Origins of the Peruvian Aprista Party, 1870-1932* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973).

⁵ Christopher Flood defines political myth as "an ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a set of past...political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group." Christopher Flood, *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 44.

Apristas emphasized the government's excessive use of force and commemorated the dead, referred to as martyrs, whom the military executed after the insurrection, in the ruins of the pre-Columbian city of Chan Chan, just outside Trujillo. This memory helped to perpetuate the myth of APRA as a party only of political martyrs persecuted by repressive regimes. On the military side, yearly pilgrimages to the tombs of the soldiers buried in Lima's Presbítero Matías Maestro cemetery kept alive the memory of a massacre of government soldiers that occurred in Trujillo's jail as the Aprista insurgents were losing control of the city. This memory contrasted the military as protector of the country with the violent and even savage Apristas, a kind of "Black Legend" of Aprismo. Each institution even had a different name for the events: Apristas recalled the "Trujillo Revolution" while the armed forces referred to the "Trujillo Massacre." So powerful was the memory of Trujillo for both parts, that the eventual conciliation between the military and APRA, half a century later as part of a gradual transition back to civilian rule, included an official decision in 1976 by both APRA and the Peruvian Armed Forces to stop commemorating the Trujillo events.⁶

At one point in his speech, Roca attempted to bridge the gap between former enemies by paying tribute to both the fallen Aprista insurgents and to the government soldiers: "I have come here to Trujillo to pay homage not only to the Aprista dead, I come also to pay homage to the officers and soldiers who fell in the revolutionary areas, because they too were sons of the people, unfortunately driven by their leaders to fight against their own brethren."⁷ Yet despite the reference to common bonds of social class among the fallen "sons of the people" Roca returned to the Aprista narrative that cast the heroic Apristas as champions of the lower and middle classes, and the military as defenders of Peru's oppressive oligarchy.⁸

⁶ The full incorporation of APRA into the political system occurred under the government of General Morales Bermúdez (1975-80). Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre presided over a constituent assembly in 1978 that ushered the country back toward democratic rule.

⁷ Speech by Carlos Roca Cáceres at commemorative ceremonies for the Trujillo Revolution, Trujillo, Main Square (Plaza de Armas), July 7, 2005.

⁸ This narrative of Peruvian political history draws on decades of historiography, influenced by the dependency theory of the 1960s, which has

The 2005 ceremony at which Roca spoke formed part of a new and short-lived cycle of official commemoration, organized during the tenure of Homero Burgos, the Aprista Regional President of La Libertad, the region where Trujillo is located. Burgos used his status as an elected authority to attempt to revive and make public a tradition so historically conflictive, that an official decision had been made to keep it silent.⁹ He declared the day a regional holiday, and even attempted to play to the international stage by petitioning UNESCO to declare Trujillo a “Martyr City.” Burgos had reopened an uncomfortable chapter not only in national history, but also in the history of his own party. He represented a radical sector in APRA that had been historically marginalized as the party moved to the right in its quest for legality and power. The party’s rejection of its revolutionary roots had allowed it to regain full legal status. Now Burgos had raised an uncomfortable topic: how to commemorate an earlier chapter during which armed violence had been considered a legitimate road to power.¹⁰ He attempted to reinvigorate a tradition that had remained subdued or dormant.

His need to do so spoke to the contested nature of the “tradition” still being worked out, as are the historical and political relationships around and underlying it. Although this public commemoration ended when Homero Burgos left office in 2006, a number of individual voices have continued to keep the memory alive through smaller scale commemorations at the level of district-party headquarters, internet

presented the twentieth-century history of Peru as a struggle by a small oligarchy to remain in power. As Klaren has pointed out, while the existence of the oligarchy, consisting of a small group of powerful families, is undeniable, “what may be questioned about this early twentieth-century oligarchical formation is not its existence, but the range of its reach and the extent of its political dominance.” Peter Klaren, *Peru* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 214.

⁹ The notion of invention of tradition was made popular by Ranger and Hobsbawm. See Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁰ Burgos also publicly reinstated the memory of Luis de la Puente Uceda, an ex-Aprista who left the party and then led a failed rural guerrilla uprising in 1965. He lost his life in the process, and is also a symbol of APRA’s difficult relationship with its revolutionary past. See Rénique, Jose Luis : “De la 'traición aprista' al 'gesto heroico'—Luis de la Puente Uceda y la guerrilla del MIR—3”, en *Ciberayllu* [on-line], 23 February 2010. http://www.andes.missouri.edu/andes/Especiales/JLRLaPuente/JLR_LaPuente3.html > (Consulted: 23 February 2010).

publications and list-servs, poems and songs and even a book by an Aprista historian, Blasco Bazán Vera, now in its second edition. The numerous individual voices point to what John Gillis has described as a “democratization of the past”:

Today everyone is her or his own historian, and this democratization of the past causes some anxiety among professionals, most of whom still write in the nationalist tradition...Most people have long since turned to more heterogeneous representations of the past. In fact, there is good evidence to show that ordinary people are more interested in and know more about their pasts than ever before, though their knowledge is no longer confined to compulsory time frames and spaces of the old national historiography.¹¹

This article analyzes the memories of the 1932 Trujillo insurrection during the eight decades that followed, and relates them to the changing place of APRA in Peruvian politics. What is interesting and complicated for the present-day scenario is the following question: how does a party that has hidden its revolutionary roots both as a result of internal struggles and as a result of a broader strategy to gain power, commemorate an event that clearly points to its revolutionary origins? The Aprista memories of the Trujillo revolution highlight both the ambiguities underlying the official memory of the revolution, and the changing and unfinished nature of these memories. Given APRA's status as Peru's most important twentieth-century political party, the interaction between memory, history and politics has broader implications for understanding Peruvian political culture. Long periods of political persecution put an end to APRA's early attempts at public commemoration. As the party struggled to gain legitimacy, the memory of an armed uprising remained uncomfortable. The events of 1932 soon lost their specificity and the Trujillo dead became subsumed into a broader political mythology of martyrdom and persecution. As APRA moved toward the center in its quest for power, the commemoration of an armed uprising did not seem to serve the party's political strategy. Furthermore, the commemoration of an event marked by the breaking of party discipline, an uprising that went against central party's orders was also problematic for a party in which discipline was a

¹¹ John Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 17.

prime factor. Yet the memory of Trujillo belonged not only to Apristas. As Peru moved back toward electoral politics in the 1950s, the party's political enemies used the 1932 events as a reminder of APRA's violent past, and the military commemorations of the fallen soldiers became increasingly public and politicized, an expression of continued resistance within the military to the possibility of an APRA-led government. As the political spectrum expanded with the emergence of new parties, there was even an attempt by voices on the Left to claim the Trujillo dead as their own

Latin American historiography has developed a growing interest in the study of memory. Some studies have addressed the memory of specific individuals who have attained a mythical status, such as Emiliano Zapata, Eva Peron, and Che Guevara.¹² But relatively few studies have dealt with broader social events like the Trujillo uprising—there is certainly a need for further studies along these lines given the pattern of state violence during this period that ranged from violent repression of strikes in Colombia and Argentina to full-scale massacres in El Salvador and the Dominican Republic.¹³ Studies of historical memory in Latin America, like their counterparts in other regions, have drawn inspiration from seminal works by Maurice Halbwachs and Paul Ricoeur, which helped to validate memory as a legitimate topic of historical inquiry.¹⁴ Numerous studies on different

¹² See Lyman Johnson, ed. *Death, Dismemberment, and Memory: Body Politics in Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004). See also Samuel Brunk, "Remembering Emiliano Zapata: Three Moments in the Posthumous Career of the Martyr of Chinameca," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (Aug., 1998): 457-490.

¹³ The 1932 massacre of peasants in El Salvador has recently received scholarly attention: see Lindo-Fuentes, Erik Ching and Rafael A. Lara-Martínez, *Remembering a Massacre in El Salvador: The Insurrection of 1932, Roque Dalton, and the Politics of Historical Memory* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), and Jeffrey L. Gould and Aldo A. Lauria-Santiago, *To Rise in Darkness: Revolution, Repression and Memory in El Salvador, 1920-1932* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008). Considering the scale of the deaths, the 1937 Haitian massacre ordered by Trujillo in the Dominican Republic has also remained an understudied subject. See Richard L. Turits, "A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed: The 1937 Haitian Massacre in the Dominican Republic," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 82:3 (August 2002): 589-635.

¹⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

regions of the world have now delved into the ways in which remembrance and forgetting correlate to changing political circumstances over time.¹⁵

Within Peru, the memory of the Trujillo events is all the more significant in the context of an ongoing public national debate on the memory of the latest episode of violence in Peru, the civil war between the Shining Path and the Peruvian state during the 1980s and early 1990s, with a death toll of over 70,000.¹⁶ This theme echoes throughout Latin America where Truth Commissions over the past decades have investigated human rights abuses resulting from similar conflicts between the state and insurgent groups. The Truth Commission in Peru appointed by President Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) examined documentary and forensic evidence, and conducted thousands of interviews with witnesses and survivors. A Memory Museum, currently under construction with funding from the German Government, has generated renewed debate, as well as controversy about whether those belonging to groups that engaged in armed violence ought to be remembered. There will be no “Trujillo Truth Commission;” yet the memory of those killed in Trujillo in 1932 raises a similar issue of how to commemorate the victims of an internal conflict between a national state and a rebel group, and thus sheds light on present-

¹⁵ The Nazi epoch and the Holocaust have generated an enormous literature on this topic. For a study on the complex process of incorporating the Holocaust into historical memory see Jeff Herf, *Memory Divided The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) and Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for Useable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For a study of memory and politics in China see Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories : History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). For changing memories of the Russian Revolution in the context of post-revolutionary efforts to legitimize the revolution see Frederick Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2004). Michel Rolph-Trouillot raises compelling questions about the role of archives in contributing to historical silences. See Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995). The literature on commemorations includes Gillis, *Commemorations*, and Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith, *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

¹⁶ In her essay “Liminar. Verdad y memoria: escribir la historia de nuestro tiempo,” Anne Perotín-Dumon points to the strongly moral and political connotations of the term “memory” in the context of the violence that has characterized the last quarter of the twentieth century in many parts of Latin America where repressive states fought wars against insurgent groups. This essay introduces a series of studies on recent political violence in Argentina, Chile and Peru as well as other parts of the world, *Historicizing the Living Past*. http://www.historizarelpasadovivo.cl/en_home.html

day issues by “historicizing the living past.” The work of anthropologist Catherine Verdery is particularly relevant. Verdery focuses on the power of dead bodies to become loci for commemoration and political contestation.¹⁷

The politically contested nature of the memories, the ambivalence towards its revolutionary roots within APRA, and the decision to cease official commemorations have all had repercussions for the broader public understanding of these events. Peruvian school textbooks do not address this event. This chapter in Latin American history with one of the continent’s most important populist parties as protagonist barely figures in Latin American history college textbooks used in the United States.¹⁸ As for the visible memories, memorials in Trujillo are restricted to a street named “7 de Julio” and to tombs with the inscription “7 de Julio” in the Trujillo cemetery. One of the major civilian insurrections in twentieth-century Latin America thus remains mostly forgotten and shrouded in myth.

The Trujillo Insurrection

The Trujillo insurrection fits into a larger pattern of political violence in Peru and many parts of Latin America during the early decades of the twentieth century. Within Peruvian politics, the insurrection was not an isolated incident but part of a larger wave of insurrections during the years 1931 to 1934.¹⁹ Throughout the continent, the advent of mass politics during this period undermined the liberal orders that had originated in the nineteenth century. Armed violence against ruling oligarchies came from a variety of different social groups including workers, peasants, students, and the military. While the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) was the largest

¹⁷ Catherine Verdery, *The Political Life of Dead Bodies: Reburial and PostSocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

¹⁸ The only study written by a historian outside of APRA is Margarita Giesecke, “The Trujillo Insurrection, the APRA Party and the Making of Modern Peruvian Politics,” (PhD Dissertation, London University, 1993), whose translation will be forthcoming as a book to be published by Peru’s National Congress.

¹⁹ Giesecke, “Trujillo Insurrection,” 137-194. Tito Livio Agüero suggests that the insurrectionary process began as early as 1928 with the Aprista “Plan de México” to overthrow the Leguía dictatorship. Agüero also offers a list of some of the main sources for studying the 1932 insurrection. Tito Livio Agüero, “Bibliografía reciente acerca de la Revolución de Trujillo del 7 de julio de 1932: un análisis comparativo.” Lecture at “II Encuentro Nacional Aprista ‘77 años de la Revolución del Pueblo 7 de julio de 1932,” organized by the Células, Grupos de Trabajo, Talleres y Círculos de Estudio (Trujillo, July 11 and 12, 2009) and at the Miraflores District Committee, August 4, 2009.

example of violent political change, numerous countries saw their share of violence. In 1924, a Brazilian army officer Luis Carlos Prestes took over the city of São Paulo but was routed by the Brazilian military and forced to leave the country. From 1927, Augusto Sandino's guerrilla war challenged the Nicaraguan government and the U.S. Marines stationed in that country. In 1932 in El Salvador, Farabundo Martí led a peasant uprising that ended in a massacre, "La Matanza." In 1933, Cuban students, workers, and sectors of the military staged a revolution that overthrew the dictator Machado.

The Mexican Revolution in particular provided a model for violent political and social change that directly influenced APRA's founder Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. Haya de la Torre arrived in Mexico in 1923, expelled from his country by the dictator Augusto B. Leguía (1919-1930) who was pursuing an aggressive modernizing project based on foreign investment, public works, and restricted political freedoms. During his years in exile in Mexico, Central America and Europe, Haya founded APRA as an international party that called for a continent-wide anti-imperialist political movement and for the creation of national states truly representative of peasant, working and middle class interests.²⁰ The first Aprista engagement in Peruvian politics was a 1928 attempt to launch a coup against the dictatorial regime of Leguía, following a blueprint for revolution known as the Plan de México put together by Peruvian exiles living in that country. A Peruvian captain, Felipe Iparraguirre actually landed in Talara and began to disseminate propaganda among workers there, but was eventually captured by the Leguía government. The intention had been to proclaim Haya de la Torre president as head of a party given the name of Partido Nacionalista Libertador.²¹

²⁰ The founding of APRA is also a topic shrouded in myth. While Apristas claim May 7, 1924 when Haya de la Torre gave a speech in Mexico as the party's founding date, scholars have questioned this chronology as part of the party's mythology. Mariano Valderrama, "La evolución ideológica del APRA 1924-1962," in Mariano Valderrama et. al., *El APRA: un camino de esperanzas y frustraciones* (Lima: Ediciones el Gallo Rojo, 1980, 9; Pedro Planas, *Mito y realidad de Haya de la Torre (Orígenes del APRA)* (Lima: Centro de Documentación e Información Andina, 1985), 28-9.

²¹ Jorge Basadre, *Historia de la República del Perú* (Lima: Editorial Universitaria, 1970), vol. 13, 342-4. According to Aprista historian Percy Murillo Garaycochea, Iparraguirre had been exiled by the Peruvian government and was living in El Salvador. Percy Murillo Garaycochea, *Historia del APRA, 1919-1945* (Lima: Imprenta Editora Atlántida, 1976), 71. Nelson Manrique questions the

Two years later, the Leguía regime was overthrown not by Apristas, but by a mestizo army colonel, Luis Sánchez Cerro, who staged a successful coup in 1930. A brief period of political opening occurred in 1931 when elections were held. The two main candidates, Sánchez Cerro and Haya de la Torre, held huge political rallies unlike any seen in Peru. Sánchez Cerro won, thanks both to his successful coup against a dictator, his mestizo background, and his ideological conservatism that allowed him to receive the support of Peru's elites connected to the Civilista Party, against the much more radical Haya de la Torre.

APRA rejected the election results as fraudulent and the party initiated a decades-long strategy of pursuing power through both violent and democratic means.²² In 1931, while APRA gained some representation through its congressional delegation of 27, other members of the party embarked on the path of armed revolution. The months following the elections initiated an escalation of violence throughout the years 1932 and 1933 which historian Jorge Basadre has called a civil war. Apristas, with the help of dissatisfied units in the army and police, attempted to prevent Sánchez Cerro's December 8th inauguration with a series of unsuccessful uprisings that were put down by the government. Sánchez Cerro's government immediately began to persecute APRA. On Christmas Eve 1931 government troops attacked the party's headquarters in Trujillo, attempting to capture Haya de la Torre. In February 1932, APRA's congressional delegation was removed from Congress and its members jailed or sent into exile. On March 6, a young Aprista unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate President Sánchez Cerro while he was attending mass. In May a group of sailors who sympathized with APRA staged a failed coup that ended with their executions. That same month, Haya de la Torre, who had been hiding, was eventually caught and put in jail.

veracity of many details of this insurrectionary plot. See Nelson Manrique, *¡Usted fue aprista!: bases para una historia crítica del APRA* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2009), 79. Further research on this incident is certainly needed.

²² Jorge Basadre considered the elections to have been fair, although he recognizes that irregularities occurred, such as the elimination in the final tally of votes from Cajamarca where APRA had strong support, and states that it is ultimately impossible to verify whether fraud occurred on a large scale. Basadre, *Historia*, vol. 14, 169-72.

Following the election of Sánchez Cerro, party leaders had been planning to overthrow his government. However, the revolt was postponed from its original December date to July 15 of 1932, apparently because information had been leaked.²³ Further postponements appear to have occurred due to organizational problems.²⁴ The original plans included participation by Aprista sympathizers within the military, such as Colonel Gustavo Jiménez. Haya himself had been involved in these plans until he was jailed.²⁵ Murillo Garaycochea, an Aprista historian, claims that Haya's imprisonment encouraged his followers to take the revolutionary initiative.²⁶ The party leadership eventually lost control of the rank and file members who embarked on the path of armed violence. According to Klaren, "with each successive post-ponement of the revolt, it thus became more difficult for PAP [Partido Aprista Peruano] officials to restrain the civilian elements involved in the movement."²⁷

In the darkness of the early morning hours, on July 7, 1932, a group of Apristas staged a daring attack on the O'Donovan military barracks outside the city of Trujillo. They were led by the heavily-built Manuel Barreto, nicknamed Búfalo, a car-mechanic and union organizer. Barreto was shot and killed in front of the main entrance. Over the course of the next hours, the Apristas took over the garrison and armed themselves with what weapons and munitions they found. Sixteen other Apristas lost their lives, while 14 government soldiers were killed.²⁸ By morning, the Apristas triumphantly marched into Trujillo with captured soldiers and officers and Krupp cannons, and began to take over positions within the city.²⁹ Although they had at first opposed the timing of Barreto's actions, APRA

²³ Klaren, *Modernization*, 139.

²⁴ David Werlich, *Peru: A Short History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 197.

²⁵ Klaren, *Modernization*, 139.

²⁶ Percy Murillo Garaycochea, *Historia del APRA 1919-1945* (Lima: Imprenta Editora Atlántida, 1976), 210.

²⁷ Klaren, *Modernization*, 139.

²⁸ Alfredo Rebaza Acosta, "La Revolución de Trujillo," in *Trujillo 32*, (Trujillo: Trinchera de Mansiche, 1978), vol. 2, 57. A total of 12 Apristas and 16 soldiers were wounded in the attack.

²⁹ The rebels freed prisoners from jail, including the writer Ciro Alegría. See Ciro Alegría, *Mucha suerte con harto palo: Memorias* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1976), 113.

party leaders in Trujillo were now forced to become involved.³⁰ Agustín Haya de la Torre, the brother of APRA's leader Víctor Raúl, was named Prefect, the main authority in the city. He in turn named Captain Leoncio Rodríguez Manffaut as the military authority in charge of the revolutionary troops (Jefe Militar de la Plaza y Director de las Tropas Revolucionarias). Speaking to a large crowd in Trujillo's main plaza, Agustín Haya de la Torre emphasized that all Apristas should now "give an example of order and discipline," thus reflecting the concern of the party with keeping control of its followers.³¹

There seem to have been divergent plans about what to do next. Aware of the difficulty of defending Trujillo, located on Peru's coastal plain, the revolutionaries planned to move the resistance east to the Andes where the mountainous terrain would provide greater cover. Yet in the confusion of the moment, communications may have been poor, and Manffaut claimed in a later statement to be unaware of this plan, and ordered that trenches be built to defend the city.³² This turned out to be an unfortunate decision: the trenches would end up trapping many Aprista defenders inside the city and prevent them from spreading the rebellion to the countryside.

Meanwhile, efforts to spread the insurrection met with mixed success. On July 7th, small battalions were sent forth from Trujillo, and Apristas took over some nearby towns such as Moche, Quiruvilca, Ascope, and Huamachuco, where party sympathizers pledged their support for the movement. They also succeeded in taking over the port of Salaverry (one Aprista and one soldier were killed in the process). The Aprista attempt to take over the strategically important Casa Grande hacienda—Peru's largest sugar estate belonging to the Gildemeister family—met with failure from the outset. A group of 12 Apristas commandeered a train to take over Casa Grande, but the cannon they brought with them fell off the train. The

³⁰ The Secretary General of Trujillo's Aprista Committee, Haya de la Torre's brother, Agustín, sent an emissary to dissuade Manuel Barreto, a car-mechanic and union organizer, from starting the revolution. See Roy Soto Rivera, *Víctor Raúl: el hombre del siglo XX* (Lima: Instituto 'Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre', 2002), vol. 1, 188-9.

³¹ Rebaza Acosta, "La Revolución de Trujillo," 65.

³² *Ibid*, 81.

incident reflected the combination of bad luck and the amateurish nature of the revolutionaries. Casa Grande would subsequently be used by government troops to direct some attacks against Aprista insurgents in Trujillo.

The government responded to the uprising with a disproportionate use of military power, sending out the army, the airforce, and the navy. 746 troops were sent to Trujillo, some from Lima, others from cities in Northern Peru as well as the warship "Almirante Grau" and 2 submarines. On July 8, a squadron of seven airplanes and hydroplanes began to bomb the city, using the nearby port of Chimbote as a base. The newspaper *El Comercio* described the bombing in the following terms: "The bombing intensified by air and land and the bombs would accelerate and descend, turning in a closed curve, indicating the falling of a bomb or of a round of machine gun fire. A number of airborne bombs fell on the Trieste Hotel, located on Progreso Street. Another bomb fell on the Colón Theater."³³ The Belén Hospital was bombed, even though its roof had the Red Cross flag.³⁴ While the aerial bombing continued, army forces were able to retake the port of Salaverry on July 9th, and began to attack Trujillo by land.

The insurgents gradually lost ground as more government troops arrived on July 9th.³⁵ That morning, the Apristas gained the upper hand at a mock barricade they had set up at a housing complex called La Floresta.³⁶ Led into the trap by an Aprista prisoner, government soldiers of the Seventh Infantry Regiment attacked and found themselves surrounded by insurgents. The government troops quickly retreated in a disorderly way; Apristas failed to take advantage of the situation and allowed them to get away. In a second attack, government troops entered the city through the

³³ *El Comercio*, July 15, 1932, cited by Felix Echague, "Lo que vi y lo que sé de la revolución de Trujillo" in *Trujillo* 32, vol. 2, 239.

³⁴ Giesecke, "Trujillo Insurrection," 223.

³⁵ The role of women in the uprising is referred to by Magda Portal, a high-ranking party member and propagandist who wrote that with "their delicate and multicolored purses" the Aprista woman "instead of rouge and makeup, transported ammunitions for those who were fighting in the barricades, and even put on modest overalls and with a rifle against her shoulder, went to the trenches, to defend together with her brothers, her sacred cause of liberation and justice." Magda Portal, *El aprismo y la mujer* (Lima: Editorial Cooperativa Aprista "Atahualpa," 1933), 36.

³⁶ The Peruvian term is *quinta*, referring to a group of houses that are all off a central passageway or courtyard.

Portada de la Sierra, the city gate facing the mountains, where the rebels had set up the Santa Rosa barricade. The rebels defended their position for two hours, but ran out of ammunition and retreated. The army troops followed, entering Trujillo through Unión Street, and advancing to the train tracks on the corner of Bolognesi and Ayacucho streets. Here they were stopped by artillery fire. The troops took refuge in a square, the *plazuela de la capilla*, from where they sustained an attack from rebels led first by Remigio Esquivel, who was killed, and then by Gregorio Piscocoya. The Apristas succeeded in forcing the government troops to retreat, leaving behind munitions, a machine gun and another piece of artillery. Despite the momentary victory, the rebels knew that they were gradually being surrounded by government forces. Disarray was beginning to take over the city's defenders who now regrouped at another barricade, the Trinchera de Mansiche. Here Aprista insurgents were able to ward off government troops for almost two hours, until their ammunition ran out. Many of the combatants had now begun to flee toward the mountains. Agustín Haya de la Torre had moved out of Trujillo to the Laredo hacienda; by this point the only remaining leader in the city was a schoolteacher, Alfredo Tello Salavarría.

On July 10th, the warship "Mantaro" brought 140 troops from the 7th Regiment. That same day the government forces surrounded the city and attacked the remaining Aprista barricades. Simultaneously, airplanes and hydroplanes dropped bombs on a series of targets outside the city. The warship "Almirante Grau," located off the shore, fired its guns at the city of Trujillo. By nightfall, the government forces, led by Gen. Manuel Ruiz Bravo had taken back most of the city. The following day, July 11th, four days after the uprising began, government troops were able to take the remaining points of resistance in Trujillo. They attacked and recaptured the O'Donovan barracks, where the revolt had begun and which remained in Aprista hands. The government forces also recaptured all remaining Aprista positions, including the *Prefectura*, some church bell towers, the telegraph office and other public buildings. Although the scale of the intended revolution had stretched far beyond Trujillo, uprisings in other

Northern cities such as Cajamarca and Huaraz were also put down.³⁷ Aprista fighters who escaped the city to surrounding towns with the hope of continuing the insurgency in the mountains were forced to go into hiding.

Two sets of contentious events began to unfold toward the end of this saga and would cast a long shadow over APRA-military relations for decades to come. The first was the discovery of a massacre in the city jail. When the military retook Trujillo they found the bodies of 35 army soldiers and officers in the city jail. Civilians were also killed in the jail.³⁸ Held as prisoners during the uprising, they had been brutally murdered in the early morning hours of July 10, after the Aprista leadership had abandoned the city. Some of the bodies were disfigured beyond recognition. The body of one officer had had the heart ripped out; another's genitals had been removed. It remains unclear who committed the murders, and APRA and the military have opposite versions. Aprista versions attributed responsibility for the killings to people outside the party who engaged in violence once APRA authorities had relinquished control of the city. The military attributed responsibility for the murders directly to the APRA party. Historian Jorge Basadre has tended to agree with the APRA version that the killings were not the direct responsibility of Aprista insurgents, but rather of rogue elements within APRA.³⁹ The prison massacre would become central to feeding the myth of Aprista barbarism.⁴⁰ In a fictionalized account of the events, *El año de la barbarie* (The Year of Barbarism), written many decades later, journalist Guillermo Thorndike refers to stories that depict Apristas desecrating the bodies of soldiers and tearing out their hearts.⁴¹

³⁷ In Cajamarca 30 men staged an insurrection, led by the Otoyá Porturas brothers. One of these brothers, Enrique had been frustrated in his attempt to become a congressional representative after winning the election of 1931 and having the Cajamarca results annulled.

³⁸ Thirty-five soldiers were murdered in the city prison in murky circumstances as the rebels fled the city. To this figure, Margarita Giesecke adds 23 civilians, bringing the total number to 58, although it is not clear what source she uses to come up with this figure. Giesecke, "Trujillo Insurrection," 229.

³⁹ Basadre, *Historia*, vol. 14, 236.

⁴⁰ Felix Echague refers to it already in his account "Lo que vi lo que sé de la revolución de Trujillo," 242.

⁴¹ Guillermo Thorndike, *El año de la barbarie: Perú 1932* (Lima: Editorial Nueva América, 1968), 18. Thorndike attributes these stories to anti-aprista propaganda by Sánchez Cerro; however, one cannot rely on Thorndike for factual

The second set of events that would be perpetuated in memory began to unfold in the following days when government forces rounded up anybody suspected of having participated in the insurgency. As soldiers searched for rebels, any evidence on the hands or shoulders of having fired a weapon was taken as a sign of guilt.⁴² Military tribunals hastily imposed the death sentence on 97 people. Forty four were executed; 53 others were sentenced in absentia. Others received prison terms. In addition, under cover of darkness, many more men who received no trial were taken in trucks to the pre-Columbian ruins of Chan Chan that lie on the outskirts of Trujillo. Here amidst the walls of what remains the largest pre-Columbian adobe city in the hemisphere they were executed. According to some accounts, men were forced to dig their own tombs before being shot and thrown into them.⁴³

The precise number of people killed in Chan Chan remains unknown; a public investigation was never undertaken. Giesecke ventures some estimates in the hundreds, based on British government documents (which reflect the observations of the British vice-consul at the time).⁴⁴ As for those court martialled, Giesecke refers to 48 people shot on July 27, based on documents in the archive of the Ministry of Defense.⁴⁵ However, as she points out, “unfortunately the volume with the complete records of the trial is not available to the public” and speculates that it was either destroyed, is in private hands, or is being held by the military.⁴⁶ At the time, the Peruvian Lawyers Association (*Colegio de Abogados*) publicly denounced these extrajudicial executions. Scholars both inside and outside

information because of the lack of citations in what is a work of historical fiction. According to Giesecke, his novel was based primarily on the 1934 book by Aprista historian Rebaza Acosta, *Historia de la Revolución de Trujillo*.

⁴² The rifles when fired left a mark on the shoulder of the person firing them.

⁴³ Imelda Vega Centeno, *Aprismo popular. Cultura, religión y política* (Lima: Tarea, 1991), 303.

⁴⁴ Giesecke offers the following numbers: between 400-450 men executed between July 13 and 16, based on her research at the British Public Records Office.

⁴⁵ 48 shot on July 27 as a result of a Court Martial hearing on July 26 in which 262 had been tried, and 102 given the death sentence—many of these were tried in-absentia. See Giesecke, “Trujillo Insurrection,” 242-6.

⁴⁶ Giesecke, “Trujillo Insurrection,” 245.

of APRA agree that the killings by both Apristas and the military have never been fully investigated.⁴⁷

In coming years, the number of dead itself would become the object of myth. Some of the earliest Aprista accounts, such as that by the poet, Serafín del Mar had referred to the official government figure of forty-four dead:

Into the red trenches of Trujillo
The morning has poured its sobs,
And the valley palpitates like a tattooed heart
44 silent hearts lie silently
Cold like the volcanoes of the mountain ranges,
Lie in the ground, each life submerged in blood.⁴⁸

In a manifesto issued on November 12, 1933, Haya de la Torre put the number of Apristas who fell in Trujillo at four thousand.⁴⁹ The number continued to grow, and eventually became fixed in popular memory at 6000 dead, the figure given in the publication *Acción Aprista* in 1934.⁵⁰ As Klaiber states, “undoubtedly the figure became inflated in direct proportion to the growth of the martyrdom cult within the party.”⁵¹ Whatever the numbers, the Aprista insurgents executed in Chan Chan were either thrown into mass graves or their corpses left to rot above ground. The anonymity that marked their final resting place amidst the vast adobe ruins of Chan Chan, stands in stark contrast to the very public and individual nature of the remembrance of the dead soldiers who would be taken for burial to Lima’s cemetery.⁵²

The soldiers fallen in Trujillo were transported to Lima on the battleship “Mantaro” on July 16. In Lima, official delegations and large crowds accompanied the bodies to Lima’s Presbítero Maestro cemetery,

⁴⁷ For a non-Aprista view see Jeffrey Klaiber, *Religion and Revolution in Peru, 1824-1976* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 228; for an Aprista view see Bazán, *Revolución de Trujillo*.

⁴⁸ Reprinted in Mariano Alcántara la Torre, *Arte y Revolución: Trujillo 1932: De pie ante la historia* (Trujillo: Secogensa, 1994). The date and place of publication of this poem is not given. It was probably published during the early 1930s.

⁴⁹ Basadre, *Historia*, vol. 14, 237.

⁵⁰ Klaiber, *Religion and Revolution*, 229.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² However, a few of those killed during the uprising are buried in the Trujillo cemetery, although they were probably those who died during the fighting in the city. 16 tombs in the Trujillo cemetery bear the inscription “7 de Julio 1932.”

where they were buried as national heroes. The newspaper *El Comercio* reported on Thursday July 21 on the funeral mass at the Cathedral of Lima, attended by members of the Constituent Assembly, of the military, and even foreign representatives such as the members of the United States naval mission. The strongly anti-aprista newspaper explained that the fallen soldiers were victims of the “a pro-communist massacre.”⁵³ Two days later, two fallen aviators, Captain Víctor Montes and sergeant major Héctor Castilla Baca, were buried with great honors. Funeral carriages brought their remains to the Ministerio de Marina, and subsequently were driven to the cemetery, followed by a number of vehicles. The caskets were draped with Peruvian flags and were accompanied by a number of government officials, including a number of government ministers

A Revolution Remembered: The Early Years

The attention paid by Apristas to the events of 1932 during the years following the uprising suggested that July 7th might live on as an important date on the party calendar. Speeches, narrative accounts, poetry and art all recalled the Trujillo events. In December 1933, the party’s founder, Haya de la Torre, visited the ruins of Chan Chan to pay homage to those killed there. Haya had recently been released from jail after Sánchez Cerro was assassinated (by a young man claiming affiliation to APRA) and the new president General Oscar Benavides (1933-9) declared a brief period of amnesty toward APRA. On December 19, Haya spoke at Trujillo’s Teatro Popular. A brilliant orator, he spoke of the need “for our dead to sacrifice themselves so that their stirrings would enliven our spirit... Hence our party demands of us Apristas that we become giants, that we transform ourselves, purify ourselves, cleanse ourselves, bathe in our own blood, be clean and good, be great and strong because we are the fathers of a new period in History.”⁵⁴ The references to the dead and to the redemptive

⁵³ *El Comercio*, July 21, 1932, 3.

⁵⁴ Haya de la Torre, “La oración admirable: a los héroes y mártires de la Revolución,” (December 19, 1933), *El Norte*, December 23, 1933, No. 3347, reproduced in *Trujillo 1932*, 315. For an account of spiritualist inclinations as a dominant feature of Haya’s thought see Frederick Pike, *The Politics of the Miraculous in Peru: Haya de la Torre and the Spiritualist Tradition* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

power of the blood of the deceased pointed to a theme that was quickly becoming central to the party's identity during the 1930s: the theme of martyrdom.

During these early years martyrdom was one of many themes portrayed in relation to the uprising. In July 1934 a set of prints by artist Mariano Alcántara in the newspaper *Acción Aprista* illustrates this multiplicity of themes. The image of the Apristas shot in Chan Chan appears together with that of Barreto leading his men in the takeover of the barracks.



Figure 1. "Barreto," by Mariano Alcántara (1934)

With time, the image of Barreto (fighting valiantly, but also disobeying party orders) would be forgotten while that of the Chan Chan executions would live on as a party symbol. The cover of *Acción Aprista* shows an image that clearly attempts to associate the revolution with all of the political values represented by the young Aprista movement. The image is that of a worker (with a hammer), a farmer (with a pick axe), and an

intellectual (with a book)—symbolizing APRA’s alliance of manual and intellectual workers—holding up a map of Peru labeled “Perú Aprista.”⁵⁵ Across the top, a waving banner reads “7 de Julio. Día Símbolo de la Libertad.” It seemed, at this early stage, that July 7 might yet become an important date in APRA’s foundational mythology.



Figure 2. “El día símbolo,” by Mariano Alcántara (1934)

That same year, the first official account of the uprising was published in 1934 by Alfredo Rebaza Acosta and titled *Historia de la Revolución de Trujillo*. It emphasized the bravery of those who fought and resisted the military, offering vivid descriptions of the Aprista combatants in action: “The curtain of fire was dense on both sides, the fighting intense. The Apristas continued to encircle the area, and with cries of Long Live

⁵⁵ Reproduced in Alcántara, *Arte y Revolución*, 18.

APRA! Fire, fire again! They push back the forces of the 7th [Infantry Regiment].”⁵⁶ Rebaza Acosta portrays the people of Trujillo with similar heroic strokes: “The entire population breathed airs of victory. All of Trujillo celebrated one of the most glorious partial triumphs of that epic encounter: the victory of La Floresta.”⁵⁷ Yet despite his obvious sympathies, Rebaza Acosta included less heroic and more realistic scenes, details such as that of Aprista leaders finding it difficult to make their nervous men obey orders once the planes had started to bomb the city.⁵⁸ There is also suspense as the narrative tells of a man named Vázquez who was able to escape the firing squad at the very last minute and flee into the sugar cane fields.⁵⁹ Rebaza affirms the Aprista explanation of the uprising as one against Sánchez Cerro, considered an illegitimate ruler.

The indigenismo typical of this period appears as another prominent theme. Aprista ideologue and poet Antenor Orrego published a poem in the party journal *APRA* in 1933 titled “Trujillo.” He attempted to identify the fallen with Peru’s indigenous population that APRA was seeking to represent.⁶⁰ This poem presented the events not in terms of current political conflicts, but rather painted them with broader historical strokes as part of a more ancient epic struggle between Spaniards and Indians in Peru:

TRUJILLO, YOU HAVE REMADE YOUR HISTORY!
 With the blood of your martyrs and the arm of your heroes
 You have, once again, forged the chain-link of your progeny
 That chain-link that was broken in Cajamarca

Glorious and luminous dead of Chanchán, greet the great
 Shadow of Pachacutec and tell it that his race had awakened
 And may his spirit become reincarnated in the next great battle of
 VICTORY
 ¡Greetings, for centuries and centuries, Glorious Dead of Chanchán
 and Trujillo!.⁶¹

⁵⁶ *Trujillo 1932*, vol. II, 86.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 124-5.

⁶⁰ A working and middle class party, APRA never had much success in establishing a political base among rural indigenous peasants.

⁶¹ Reprinted in Alcántara, *Arte y revolución*, 45-6. Cajamarca was the city where the last Inca ruler, Atahualpa was ambushed and defeated by Francisco

This indigenista discourse is part of a broader intellectual trend that had gained strength both in Peru and other parts of Latin America during the 1920s. Other references within Aprismo point to the influence of indigenista rhetoric, such as Haya de la Torre's coining of the term "Indoamerica" to refer to the continent or the fact that when Haya remained in hiding in Lima, he and others referred to his secret location as Incahuasi—the House of the Inca.⁶²

In addition to the official history, sanctioned by party leaders, a number of individual accounts of the events often highlight themes that would be mostly absent from official accounts, themes such as human error and lack of discipline. The authors of these accounts were already aware of the dichotomy between official history and individual histories, demonstrating that even at this early stage party leaders were beginning to exercise control of information and define official propaganda. For example, in 1933, an Aprista named Elías Alvarado published a brief account with the following disclaimer: "Despite the fact that I belong to the Partido Aprista Peruano and am proud to have spread its doctrines...the present work does not have the authorization of the Party, because I have not requested it of the respective Secretariat. Thus, I wish to take the accompanying responsibilities."⁶³ Likewise, in 1934, two participants in the events, Germán Muñoz Puglisevich and Otilio Chavez Romero published an account titled "Crónicas de la revolución de Trujillo" with a similar disclaimer.⁶⁴

The author of another unofficial account (published under the pseudonym "Félix Echagüe") claimed to be a Venezuelan officer who happened to be in Trujillo at the time. Aprista historian Blasco Bazán identifies him as an Aprista named Federico Echeandía, who wrote the

Pizarro. Pachacutec was the Inca ruler who significantly expanded the frontiers of the Inca Empire.

⁶² For a critical discussion of APRA's indigenismo see Thomas Davies Jr. "The Indigenismo of the Peruvian Aprista Party: A Reinterpretation," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Nov., 1971): 626-645.

⁶³ Elías Alvarado, *Episodios de la revolución Aprista* (Lima: Editorial El Sol, 1933).

⁶⁴ Germán Muñoz Puglisevich and Otilio Chavez Romero, *Crónicas de la Revolución de Trujillo* (1934) in *Trujillo 1932*.

account with the help of the writer Nicanor Alejandro de la Fuente.⁶⁵ The reason for the pseudonym is not clear, but it may have been intended to protect him from the government during times of persecution. It also may have served to lend greater credence to the account, as one allegedly written by an outside observer. Or it may also have allowed him to be critical of his own party. His account is mostly sympathetic, emotional, and even lyrical at times, but not devoid of criticism. The author describes the heroic fighting and compares the Trujillo Revolution to the French Revolution and to the Paris Commune. He described the men who had just taken over the O'Donovan barracks and were now marching into Trujillo, in the following terms: "The combination of dust and sweat painted their faces with a tragic makeup. They wore clothes, sometimes torn, sometimes stained, as well as officer and soldier caps. Almost all carried rifles. They inundated the city with an air of divine heroism. It was an image from the Commune. It was a tangible and wonderful scene from the French Revolution."⁶⁶ The criticism pertains to the military tactics used to defend the city. The author points to the mistaken decision to build barricades, which eventually became a trap for those defending the city. He was quite forthright, criticizing even the highest-ranking civilian Aprista figure in Trujillo, Agustín Haya de la Torre, for his leadership during the revolution.⁶⁷

The account written by the military commander of the rebels, Captain Rodríguez Mannfaut highlights the theme of discipline as a central concern during the revolutionary days. Rodríguez Mannfaut's account of the uprising returns again and again to the importance of imposing order and maintaining discipline in the rebel ranks, and the author presents himself as an agent of such order and discipline. Rodríguez Mannfaut claims he had not been aware of the coming uprising and was only asked the evening of July 7, at 7 pm by Agustín Haya de la Torre to become military commander. He thus sheds light on the important role of

⁶⁵ De la Fuente used the pseudonym Alejandro Nureña de la Flor. See Blasco Bazán Vera, *La Revolución de Trujillo (Asalto al Cuartel O'Donovan en 1932 Primera Insurgencia Civil del Siglo XX)* (Trujillo: ABC Publicidad S.A.C, 2003), 82..

⁶⁶ *Trujillo 1932*, vol. II, 180.

⁶⁷ *Trujillo 1932*, vol. II, 196

people sympathetic to APRA, but not fully committed to this young political party

Rodríguez Manffaurt casts himself in the role of pacifier and claims that he accepted this responsibility “because all of my earlier work involved calming people and claiming the most significant guarantees for the interests of society.”⁶⁸ At one point he describes the scene in the following terms, as the men who had taken over the O’Donovan barracks prepared to go further and take over the Prefectura of the city: “the masses were not only nervous, but saturated with hatred, vengefulness and alcohol: a single shot would have brought the beginnings of a complete catastrophe with hundreds of innocents and curious onlookers killed.”⁶⁹ Rodríguez Manffaurt claims that he accepted leadership primarily as a way of imposing discipline and avoiding the bloodshed that would result from letting the unruly masses take control of the situation. Referring to himself in the third person, he writes: “It was then that Captain Rodríguez Manffaurt, aided by Divine providence, achieved what few men would have been able to do, that is, that the multitude not advance, that it not take action, that it not becoming violent, that it not fire a single shot. Thus the Prefectura was taken without firing a single shot.”⁷⁰

Although Rodríguez Manffaurt exaggerated his role as pacifier, probably in an attempt to clear his name and distance himself from the most violent aspects of the uprising, his account points to an issue that was inherently problematic in celebrating this uprising for APRA: the issue of discipline. For a party that would pride itself on its discipline and where detractors were routinely expelled from the party in the name of keeping discipline, an uprising that had begun as an act of insubordination by a rank and file member of the party, Manuel Barreto, was inherently problematic.

Official APRA accounts by contrast, emphasized party discipline, heroism and above all, martyrdom, which quickly became the dominant theme in the memory of the revolution. In its issue commemorating the

⁶⁸ Leoncio Rodríguez Manffaurt, *Actuación del capitán Don J. Leoncio Rodríguez Manffaurt durante el movimiento revolucionario de Trujillo: julio de 1932* (Trujillo: Tipografía H. Cuba, 1932), 24-5.

⁶⁹ Rodríguez Manffaurt, *Actuación*, 15.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

first year of the uprising, the newspaper *La Antorcha* wrote: “Never had such a good example of discipline been seen in a mass movement.”⁷¹ It went on to discuss the heroism of those who fought against the better equipped forces of the Peruvian military, and the martyrdom of those killed: “Hundreds of adults and children augmented the aprista martyrdom, all reaffirming their profound conviction at the moment of death.”⁷²

The prologue to Rebaza Acosta’s official history, written by Luis Alberto Sánchez, a high-ranking member of the party, deliberately highlights the theme of martyrdom.⁷³ That Sánchez wrote the prologue indicates that this version had received official party approval.⁷⁴ In the prologue, Luis Alberto Sánchez says little about the fighting and mainly emphasizes the executions of Apristas. The details of an unauthorized revolution, after all, could be a source of discomfort for the young party as it tried to assert discipline and gain power in the Peruvian political scenario. He frames the Trujillo events in terms of martyrdom, and does so in a way intended to give the Trujillo events a national significance:

The memory of all of Aprismo’s martyrs, among whom are workers and students, teachers and peasants, officers and soldiers, sailors and policemen, old and young, employees and indigenous people, women and children; the memory of these fallen martyrs in Trujillo, Lima, Huaraz, San Lorenzo, Cajamarca, Apurímac, Tacna, Iquitos, Cuzco; the memory of these martyrs commits us and guides us, like them, toward the definitive hour. We repeat the aprista cry of all our great days, the ritual of our decisive hours: TOGETHER IN STRUGGLE, BROTHERS; IN PAIN, BROTHERS; IN VICTORY, BROTHERS!! S.E.A.S.A.P.⁷⁵

⁷¹ “Siete de julio,” *La Antorcha*, Julio 1933.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ The themes of sacrifice and of blood with their deeply religious echoes combined with the theme of patriotism to give meaning to the military deaths. In his speech at the cemetery, sergeant major Bernabé Carrasco interpreted the deaths in terms not so different from those used by Haya de la Torre to make sense of Aprista deaths: “The sacrifice of new and valuable lives consumed in a holocaust on the altar of the fatherland. It was also necessary for the air force to offer its contingent of generous blood.” *El Comercio*, July 23, 1932, 1

⁷⁴ Luis Alberto Sánchez, “Prólogo,” Alfredo Rebaza Acosta, *La revolución de Trujillo*. Sánchez would soon become one of the most prominent chroniclers of Haya de la Torre’s life. See Luis Alberto Sánchez, *Haya de la Torre o el político, crónica de una vida sin tregua* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Ercilla, 1936).

⁷⁵ *Trujillo 1932*, vol. II, 18. S.E.A.S.A.P. is the abbreviation for what would become a common Aprista expression: “Sólo el APRA salvará al Peru,” “Only APRA will Save Peru.”

This interpretation indicates an effort to build a nation-wide movement. The martyrs are no longer restricted to Trujillo and the other cities in the North that participated in the uprising. Rather they include cities throughout Peru such as Lima, Cuzco and Iquitos. The prologue also indicates that Aprismo transcends class, race, age and gender boundaries and that it brings together both civilians and the military.⁷⁶

During the subsequent period of political persecution, the theme of martyrdom intensely marked party identity. With clear religious connotations, Apristas have referred to these years as the “Catacombs”—a reference to the period of persecution of Christians during Roman times. The party’s ideology took on a quasi-religious character, with Aprismo as a kind of secular religion with its own martyrs. These religious themes connected with the popular Catholicism of most Aprista followers.⁷⁷ Hundreds of Apristas were jailed, numerous others killed, while others went into exile in various parts of Latin America: suffering, persecution, imprisonment, and death became badges of honor. Throughout this period Haya de la Torre remained in hiding in various Lima safe houses. This was a period of hidden printing presses that produced clandestine versions of the Aprista newspaper “La Tribuna” that came to be known as “el pan caliente” (the hot bread) because it was secretly distributed with the morning bread by Aprista sympathizers. Despite, or perhaps because of persecution, APRA continued to enjoy strong popular support.

In the Aprista narrative of events, those who died in Trujillo joined the larger group of APRA’s unnamed martyrs who would lose their lives over the course of the next decade and a half. The details of the revolution that included human errors and lack of discipline were forgotten in favor of the more glorious narrative of martyrdom. Even the heroism of the revolution gave way to martyrdom as a dominant theme: the visual memory was not that of Barreto, Tello Salavarría and others fighting in

⁷⁶ Luis Alberto Sánchez expresses his own feelings of guilt at not having been there himself, as he was exiled in Panama at the time of the insurrection. He refers to himself in self-deprecatory terms as an “egoistic intellectual” humbled by the sacrifices committed by working people.

⁷⁷ See Vega Centeno, *Aprismo popular*, 49-90; Klaiber, *Religion and Revolution*, 145-6. While this topic deserves further study, I believe that considering Haya de la Torre’s passion for propaganda, the cultivation of religious imagery may have been much more deliberate than Klaiber suggests.

Trujillo but that of the unnamed martyrs being shot at Chan Chan. Aprista writer and painter Felipe Cossio del Pomar captured this vision of martyrdom in an oil painting, inspired by Goya, of the Apristas being shot at Chan Chan. It showed a group of Apristas, fists high, mouth open (shouting in the name of APRA) in front of a firing squad. The painting would be reproduced on numerous subsequent occasions to commemorate the events.⁷⁸ It is significant that this vision of the revolution, rather than the earlier woodcut showing Barreto taking the barracks (Figure 3) would become emblematic of the revolution.



Figure 3. “Fusilamiento de Apristas” (Execution of Apristas), by Felipe Cossio del Pomar (date unknown)

Between Democracy and Revolution: A Memory Interrupted, 1934-1948

When Apristas attempted to commemorate the 2nd anniversary of their revolution during a brief period of legality, they soon discovered that the 1932 events had acquired strong political symbolism beyond the

⁷⁸ During the July 7, 2005 commemoration that I attended in Trujillo, a large reproduction of this painting, printed on a cloth banner, was carried by one of the groups marching in the main square that day.

confines of the party. In June 1934, the party began to organize public ceremonies in various parts of the country to commemorate July 7th. The Benavides government used the police to disrupt the Aprista rallies.⁷⁹ The brief period of legality during the first year of the Benavides government soon ended and a long period of persecution ensued. Whatever the party's official position, numerous armed uprisings demonstrated the persistence of a revolutionary wing within APRA. The negative image of APRA as a violent party was promoted by *El Comercio*, a newspaper representing the party's political enemies.⁸⁰

For the next nine years, the Trujillo Revolution went unmentioned in the official party newspaper *La Tribuna*, published clandestinely.⁸¹ When Trujillo was once again mentioned in 1941, it was in connection to the party's pursuit of democracy: "With the IX anniversary of the Trujillo Revolution, we pay heart-felt homage to the 6000 martyrs who, during that glorious struggle and the subsequent repression, knew how to fall valiantly in the heroic land of La Libertad...a day of remembrance of the People's Party, on July 7th we evoke all of those who, during these Ten Years of A Civic Crusade for Justice and Democracy, offered their blood and gave us an example and pointed to a course of action."⁸²

The memory of Trujillo over the course of the next decade correlates closely to APRA's status as a persecuted party engaged in an internal struggle between revolutionaries willing to use force, and moderates seeking compromise and electoral participation. As a persecuted party, APRA was hard-pressed to hold any kind of public commemoration, although Apristas in prison did manage to commemorate the July 7th

⁷⁹ Werlich, *Peru*, 208. See also NARA, APRA 810/43APRA 203, June 29, 1934, also referenced as NARA, RG59, 823.00/1098, June 29, 1934. (National Archives, College Park, Maryland).

⁸⁰ For an analysis the oppositional attitude toward APRA in *El Comercio* for these years, see Sönke Hansen, "New Political Options in Peru During the Great Depression: The Image of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) in *El Comercio* (1931-33)," Paper presented at LASA, Montreal, Canada, Sept 5-7, 2007 and Sönke Hansen, *Neue politische Optionen in Peru im Zeichen der Weltwirtschaftskrise. Das Beispiel der APRA in der liberalkonservativen Presse (1931-33)*, M.A. Thesis, University of Hamburg, 2006.

⁸¹ I was able to verify this in the available collection of *La Tribuna* at the Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, although this collection remains incomplete, and there may have been some commemorations in the years that are unavailable. This does not mean that the events were not commemorated informally.

⁸² *La Tribuna*, July 7, 1941.

date.⁸³ The persecution of Apristas that had begun during the Sánchez Cerro government continued with varying degrees of intensity over the course of the next decades. During the period from 1934 to 1945 Haya de la Torre remained in hiding, while high-ranking party leaders were either jailed or living in exile.

In addition to the difficulty of a public commemoration during a period of political persecution, the party's political strategy over the course of the next decade explains the absence of further commemorations of the Trujillo Revolution. Although the party never officially sanctioned violence, party members continued to stage insurrections and political assassinations.⁸⁴ On April 30, 1933 an Aprista shot and killed President Sánchez Cerro, although party leaders took distance from the crime.

Toward the end of 1934 and beginning of 1935, Apristas attacked the cities of Huancayo, Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Cajamarca and Cusco. In all cases, the attacks were put down by government forces. On March 15, 1935, Antonio Miró Quesada, the owner of *El Comercio*, and his wife were assassinated by a man named Carlos Steer who belonged to the APRA youth movement, the Frente Aprista Juvenil (FAJ). Although the party denied involvement in the assassination, the incident helped to solidify APRA's reputation as a violent revolutionary party.

Taking distance from its revolutionary roots was a sensible strategy for party seeking to regain its legal status and participate once again in democratic elections. APRA had been declared illegal by virtue of Article 53 of the constitution that prevented "international parties" from participating in national elections. Yet the party's popular support gave it tremendous clout behind the scenes. In 1936, APRA threw its support behind the left of center candidate Luis Antonio Eguiguren, leading President Benavides to cancel the elections and remain in power for three more years, out of fear of

⁸³ Although the date was commemorated in jail by Aprista prisoners. Based on Carlos Aguirre's presentation at the Round Table "Memoria, mito y política: el APRA en la historia peruana," Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, August 26, 2009.

⁸⁴ Most interpretations of tactics during this period have been formulated by APRA's political enemies accusing the party of pursuing a dual (and implicitly deceptive) tactic of both democratic participation and revolution. The most recent history of APRA by a non-APRA historian subscribes to this view. See Manrique, *iUsted fue aprista!*.

having a candidate that could be influenced by APRA. In 1939, still forbidden from direct participation, the party instructed its followers to support Manuel Prado.

The image of moderation was also pursued as Haya toned down his early and aggressive anti-imperialist rhetoric. His 1941 book *La Defensa Continental* advocated the idea of an interamerican union that would include the United States. At the 1942 party congress the term “Yankee” was dropped from the party’s position on “Yankee imperialism.” In the context of World War II, Haya de la Torre cast the Aprista struggle as one in favor of democracy and wrote extensively on the topic. The July 7 1940 issue of *La Tribuna* (a clandestine edition, since the newspaper was banned at this point) makes no mention of the Trujillo events and is concerned primarily with World War II. The issue published a long “Manifiesto del Partido Aprista Peruano” calling for national unity, for the creation of an economic congress to unite different economic groups, and for the defense of the American (broadly speaking) continent against the forces of fascism.⁸⁵

The strategy paid off and during the government of Manuel Prado (1939-1945) the persecution against APRA subsided. Although Haya de la Torre remained in hiding, the government apparently knew his hiding place. In 1942 and 1944, APRA was able to hold “clandestine” conventions in Lima with over 3000 delegates.⁸⁶ The party had gained favor with the U.S., which called on the Prado government to ease its restrictions on APRA. Successful negotiations by APRA leaders allowed them to regain the party’s legal status, and in 1945 APRA joined the coalition government of José Luis Bustamante y Rivero. Although the party remained barred from presenting a presidential candidate, it won government positions both at the congressional and cabinet level during the period from 1945 to 1948.

⁸⁵ The only reference to the dead is an item at the end of the newspaper informing that the national party secretaries, Luna, Orrego, Spelucín, Cox, Scao and Prialé “visited the illuminated chapel of *compañero* Leoncio Aldana Solano and expressed their condolences to the sons and daughters of the deceased.” *La Tribuna*, July 7, 1940. “Compañero” is the term used by apristas to refer to party members.

⁸⁶ Werlich, *Peru*, 222.

During the 1940s, the memory of the Trujillo events resurfaced intermittently in the party's public discourse, now firmly tied to the strategy of democratic participation. The July 7, 1946 issue of *Tribuna* ran an editorial titled "Una Etapa Superada," affirming democracy and rejecting violence: "We now all know that in Peru the democratic mandate is sacred. Violence, with all its followers, has been buried together with other anachronisms in the cemetery of yesterday's errors (...) The epoch of hatred and blood has been almost erased, and the educational imperatives of the People's Party are opening up a future of peace, understanding and coexistence."⁸⁷ It restated the argument that the Trujillo revolution had been legitimate because Sánchez Cerro had been a despot, and cited the nineteenth-century president Nicolás de Piérola as saying "when the doors of legality close, the doors of violence open."

By this time an important theme had clearly emerged in the way that the party officially remembered Trujillo: the events themselves had lost specificity and the Trujillo martyrs became part of a broader process of Aprista martyrdom that has lasted ten years. When APRA emerged in 1945 once again as a legal party, and Haya de la Torre gave his first public speech in over a decade, he referred "to our 6,000 [martyrs]...who died in the name of new world that they would never see."⁸⁸ Beyond the number, the speech made no direct reference to the Trujillo events. Haya was deliberately emphasizing his democratic rather than his revolutionary credentials as his party had been allowed to participate in elections for the first time in 14 years. By this time another date had overshadowed July 7th to become the party's main yearly commemoration: Haya de la Torre's birthday, on February 22nd, became the "Día de la Fraternidad" (Day of Fraternity). It began as an informal celebration while Haya was in prison in 1933, when supporters outside the prison came to wish him well on his birthday. In 1946, during a brief period of legality, the party declared it an official party commemoration. The date continues to be the most important yearly Aprista celebration, an indication of the central role that the cult of personality came to play in forging an Aprista identity.

⁸⁷ "Una etapa superada," *La Tribuna*, (July 7, 1946), 5.

⁸⁸ "El reencuentro," speech on May 20, 1945, in *Revolución sin balas: 15 discursos de Haya de la Torre* (Lima: Okura Editores, 1984), 66.

As the party sought to build a disciplined organization under the very difficult circumstances of persecution, the events of the Trujillo Revolution must have remained uncomfortable. The opening and closing chapters of the Trujillo Revolution illustrated a lack of coordination between party leaders and base, a lack of discipline at the base of the party. The insurrection had begun when Manuel Barreto took the initiative on his own, without party approval. And the massacre of officers in the Trujillo prison illustrated the fact that people in the party or connected to it could act on their own beyond the control of party leaders.

Together with martyrdom, discipline occupied a central place in APRA's identity. The party succeeded in becoming "the most disciplined political force in Peru." and retains this reputation in the present.⁸⁹ This discipline was fostered by a number of institutions such as the Discipline Committee, officially in charge of maintaining discipline and punishing dissent among party members. Over the years, expulsions were not uncommon. Víctor Villanueva compares APRA discipline to that within the military:

Aprista leaders have organized their party in a military fashion, vertically structured, with a central command, rigid discipline and a respect for hierarchy similar to that found in the military. The notion of unity so central to the Armed Forces, has also been vehemently embraced within Apra. Just as the army identifies itself with the fatherland and Apra with the people, going against the unity of either of these organizations is considered as a betrayal of the fatherland by the military and a betrayal of the people by the apristas.⁹⁰

The APRA youth also received special training to maintain discipline. In 1934, APRA founded its youth organization, F.A.J (Federación Aprista Juvenil) to recruit and instruct youngsters. The first rule for them to follow—"APRA Youth prepare yourself for action and not for pleasure"—was

⁸⁹ Masterson, *Militarism and Politics*, 46. Later, during the 1980s, the Shining Path showed a similar or even greater ability to discipline its followers.

⁹⁰ Víctor Villanueva, *Ejercito Peruano: Del caudillaje anárquico al militarismo reformista* (Lima: Editorial Juan Mejía Baca, 1973), 215-6. In Villanueva's judgement "the attempt at upholding political unity naturally fails both within Apra and the army." Villanueva participated in another failed Aprista insurrection in 1948 and subsequently became disenchanted with APRA. His personal involvement in both APRA and the military makes Villanueva seem well suited to make this observation. His writings are quite critical of the party.

indicative of APRA's attempt to cultivate an almost puritanical attitude of dedication to the party.

The discomfort with July 7th also reflected deeper tensions within the party between moderates and radicals about the path to power. The disagreement may have its roots in the Aprista ideology, as Harry Kantor in an otherwise sympathetic account of Aprista ideology claims when he states that "the Aprista ideology has its weaknesses, the most conspicuous being its neglect of a method of achieving power."⁹¹ Haya had been accused by detractors of a profound ambivalence toward the revolutionary path.⁹² Certainly July 7th symbolized a path to power—that of armed insurgency—which Haya de la Torre never seemed fully ready to embrace.

The progression of events during the Bustamante years brought fresh reminders of APRA's ties to violence. On January 7, 1947, the editor of *La Prensa*, Francisco Graña Garland, was assassinated by an Aprista sympathizer. On July 9 of that year, the Trujillo events made their way into public discourse when *La Prensa* ran an editorial titled "Aprismo Glorifies the Massacre of Officers in Trujillo." The newspaper accused the party of continuing to recall the Trujillo events. These events once again were intended to remind the reader of the party's violent past: "As in Trujillo, Aprismo has shown no respect for human life."⁹³ A new uprising in 1948 linked to APRA seemed to confirm *La Prensa's* accusations of the party's links to armed violence, and broke a fragile three-year period of legality during the Bustamante government.

The Problematic Legacy of Armed Violence: 1948-1976

On October 3, an APRA sympathizer, army major Víctor Villanueva and a group of navy officers led an uprising in Callao, Lima's port, against the Bustamante government. Sixty military men and 175 civilians were killed as the government suppressed this revolt. Although the exact role of the Aprista leadership within this uprising remains unclear, the party once

⁹¹ Harry Kantor, *The Ideology and Program of the Peruvian Aprista Movement* (New York: Octagon Books, 1977), 115.

⁹² Victor Villanueva, *La sublevación aprista del 48: Tragedia de un pueblo y un partido* (Lima: Editorial Milla Bartres, 1973). See Klaren, *Peru*, 296.

⁹³ "Glorifica el aprismo la masacre de oficiales y soldados en Trujillo," *La Prensa*, July 9, 1947

again lost its legal status.⁹⁴ A few weeks later, on October 27, General Manuel Odría staged a military coup that put an end to the Bustamante government. For the next eight years, APRA once again was forced underground.⁹⁵ Haya de la Torre remained secluded in the Colombian embassy for most of this period and party leaders once again were imprisoned or forced into exile.

These eight years proved a critical time of self-definition within APRA. The party officially took distance from the 1948 uprising and continued to move toward the center of the political spectrum in its quest for legality. Negotiations during the Odría dictatorship allowed the party to recover its legal status in 1956. The party forged an alliance with its former enemies and gave its votes to the conservative government of Manuel Prado, hence the term “convivencia.” This move paved the way for Haya de la Torre to finally be allowed to run for president in 1962, but also alienated the radical wing of the party and led many to leave APRA for other parties on the Left. When Haya won the 1962 elections by the slimmest of margins, the military staged a coup before congress was able to vote in order to settle the contest.⁹⁶ The following year, 1963, Haya lost the election to Fernando Belaúnde Terry, of the new party Acción Popular, which had claimed the mantle of reform from APRA.

The years leading up to 1962, and the possibility of an APRA electoral victory, helped to rekindle the politics of memory. This new cycle in the politics of memory began after the 1948 uprising when the Odría government commemorated this event with ceremonies not only in military settings but also in civilian locations such as the Municipality of Lima and the National Congress. In 1952 this program included an early morning

⁹⁴ Research on this uprising is sorely lacking. The lack of success of APRA’s armed insurgencies has been attributed in no small part to Haya’s “vacillating and indecisive” style of leadership. However, these accusations come primarily from Haya’s detractors like Major Villanueva, one of the leaders of the 1948 uprising, who distanced himself from the party. By the 1940s, there was also a clear division within the party between moderate and radical factions. See Klaren, *Peru*, 296.

⁹⁵ During most of this time, Haya de la Torre remained trapped in the Colombian embassy where he had sought political exile, which was denied by the Odría government. The incident became something of an international cause célèbre, making its way to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

⁹⁶ Haya de la Torre won the election with a very slight lead, which according to the constitution meant that the final decision would have to be made in Congress.

mass, a pilgrimage to visit the tombs of the fallen soldiers in Lima's cemetery, a luncheon, a series of speeches by officers, and a military parade. That year a statue was erected at the Real Felipe, a colonial fortress in Callao, which the rebel soldiers had attempted to take over during the 1948 uprising. The statue commemorated Dionisio Huamán Estrada, a soldier killed while defending the Real Felipe from the rebels.⁹⁷

A commemorative book issued by the military in 1952 left no doubt about the intentions to use these commemorations as a reminder of the party's violent past. The introduction to this volume portrayed APRA in the following terms: "Suddenly...a Party emerged with truly totalitarian programs, a party that interpreted the concepts of law and fatherland in ways that gave way to the all-encompassing will of its Leader, who had become a Man-God."⁹⁸ It claimed that the party applied "the methods of its forbearers in Italy and Germany, and that remain alive in Russia...its methods were the same and its purpose identical: trampling of the law, violent aggression, demagogic propaganda to fanaticize its youth; all intended to 'take over power'"⁹⁹ By linking APRA to both a fascism and communism, the military was playing not only to a national audience, but also the United States, now concerned about the spread of communism in Latin America.¹⁰⁰

As APRA made the new transition toward legality during the Convivencia with the Manuel Prado government (1956-62), the memory of the 1932 uprising became part of the political dueling of the period. A yearly military pilgrimage to the tombs of the soldiers killed in Trujillo in 1932 now gained greater public prominence.¹⁰¹ According to Werlich, after

⁹⁷ The elaborateness of the ceremonies and the search for military heroes can also be explained as a result of the fact that the 1948 incident had damaged morale within the military by undermining the institution's disciplinary and hierarchical structure. Villanueva, *Ejercito peruano*, 252.

⁹⁸ *Ceremonias Conmemorativas de la Gloriosa Jornada del 3 de octubre de 1948* (Lima: Ediciones del Ministerio de Guerra, 1952), 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁰⁰ APRA successfully countered such propaganda and portrayed itself to the U.S. government as a viable non-communist alternative for Peru.

¹⁰¹ The years following the 1948 uprising seem to have marked an important turning point in APRA-military relations. There is some indication that during the 3 years of democratic government under Bustamante, tensions between Apra and the military had subsided to the point that Haya de la Torre held open dialogue with officers at the Casa del Pueblo, APRA's headquarters. Víctor Villanueva goes

1948 “the army’s annual services commemorating the 1932 events became more elaborate than ever.”¹⁰² After a period of relative silence on these events, *El Comercio*, starting in 1957, began to give front-page coverage to the elaborate military commemorations of the Trujillo events. The photographs of the military’s top brass congregated before the tombs of the fallen Trujillo soldiers in Lima’s cemetery were impressive, and seemed to



Figure 4. Military ceremony on July 9, 1962 in tribute to victims of the 1932 massacre (*El Comercio*, July 10, 1962)

have become much more elaborate than in earlier years, reflecting a fear of an APRA electoral victory.¹⁰³

as far as to say that “The Trujillo massacre was forgotten.” Villanueva, *Ejercito Peruano*, 248.

¹⁰² Werlich, *Peru*, 249. The city’s newspapers still did not report on this event until 1957. 1948 appears to have been a key turning point, a date after which the military began to commemorate the events in a more visible way. Personal communication, General Hermann Hamman, May 29, 2006.

¹⁰³ Because these ceremonies were conducted informally, no documentation exists on them. The lack of newspaper coverage prior to 1957 (with

In 1962, for example, those present at the cemetery included top ranking generals including the Minister of War, General Víctor Tenorio Hurtado and the Minister of the Airforce, Lieutenant General Salvador Noya Ferré. Prayers were said and floral wreaths were laid on the tombs of the fallen soldiers. Present too was retired Colonel Antonio Silva Cáceda, whose brother Lieutenant Colonel Julio Silva Cáceda had been killed at the outset of the Trujillo insurrection. Each of the “committees” in charge of laying floral wreaths at the tomb of each fallen soldier was headed by General, a Colonel, and an assisting Captain.¹⁰⁴ The military ceremony was held on July 9th, to commemorate the date of the prison massacre.

By the 1960s, the “Trujillo Martyrdom” had taken on the status of an important foundational moment that exemplified the honor of the Peruvian military. In a speech on February 29, 1960, General Alfredo Rodríguez Martínez placed the Trujillo “martyrdom” together with the battle of Arica during the War of the Pacific, as formative moments for the Peruvian military: “I express my deepest conviction that...the Institution will remain faithful to its glorious traditions symbolized, among other actions, by the epic of Arica and the martyrdom of Trujillo which we must always remember as a rule of conduct and source of teachings.”¹⁰⁵ To place the Apristas alongside the Chileans as enemies of the nation was a strong statement considering how the memory of the Chilean as enemy also became perpetuated within Peruvian political culture. The Peruvian military’s honor was derived from struggles against enemies both external and internal. While by this point APRA had ceased to launch armed insurgencies, the logic of the Cold War helps to explain the military’s renewed sense of itself as a protector against insurgencies. The success of the 1959 Cuban Revolution spurred a number of Cuban-style guerrilla groups throughout the continent. In Peru, the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria staged an armed uprising in 1965 (quickly suppressed by the military) and stood as a reminder of the continued threat of violence from within, now in the Cold War context.

a few exceptions) has made it difficult to gauge changes in the ceremonies over time.

¹⁰⁴ “Ayer se rindió emocionado homenaje a víctimas de la masacre aprista de Trujillo,” *El Comercio*, July 10, 1962, 1, 16.

¹⁰⁵ Cited by Murillo Garaycochea, *APRA*, 249.

The party responded to this political use of the past not by attacking the military but by criticizing *El Comercio*. The July 7, 1958 issue of *La Tribuna* directly accused *El Comercio* of reviving the memories of Trujillo for political purposes: “Each time it has considered that Aprismo might constitute a danger to the peaceful enjoyment of its illegal privileges, [*El Comercio*] has dug with morbid pleasure into the pages of our civil battles to update the page on Trujillo, and with the clear intent of propaganda, used the events of 26 years ago.”¹⁰⁶ *El Comercio*’s anti-APRA stance can be traced back to the 1931 elections.¹⁰⁷ By the early 1960s, the newspaper would have more urgently sought to discredit APRA when faced with the prospect of Haya de la Torre becoming president.

The potential of a military veto of an APRA victory helps to explain the attempts by Apra leaders to frame the conflictive 1932 events in a more conciliatory perspective. In 1958, during the 26th anniversary of the revolution, the aprista leader Ramiro Prialé gave a speech in Lima marking 1932 as an important date on the party calendar. In his speech, Prialé, known as “the conciliator” within the party for his abilities to negotiate, clearly reached out to the military. Both the military and the Apristas were victims of the machinations of Peru’s oligarchy, he claimed: “The army and the people form part of an indissoluble pair.”¹⁰⁸ Prialé reiterated the Aprista interpretation of the events: the alleged fraud in the 1931 elections, the persecution of Apristas and the legitimacy of the uprising: “When the basic guarantees for which men have fought are made to shipwreck, when oppressive and violent regimes take over, this violence from above logically gives way to violence from below.”¹⁰⁹ In his description of the Aprista control of Trujillo during the uprising he emphasized the theme of discipline so cherished by the party: “Because order in the city is not altered, life and the property of all citizens is respected, because no bloody repression occurs and everything demonstrates that, notwithstanding the circumstances of an ongoing civil war, it is nonetheless possible to impose

¹⁰⁶ “7 de julio: recuerdo y sentido,” *La Tribuna*, July 7, 1958.

¹⁰⁷ Hansen, “New Political Options,” 16-20.

¹⁰⁸ Ramiro Prialé, “Homenaje a los Mártires de Trujillo,” in Ramiro Prialé, *Discursos Políticos* (Lima: Tipografía ‘El Ferrocarril’, 1960), 86.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 82.

discipline, a discipline that makes the movement truly grandiose.”¹¹⁰ He also referred to the individuals who fought in 1932: the survivors, some of whom were attending his speech, and two of the leaders, Barreto and Agustín Haya de la Torre, and expressed concern for the fate of the rebel bodies, pointing out that the remains of the bones of those killed at Chan Chan are no longer there—he claimed that these remains were discarded by other dictatorships, and thrown into the ocean.¹¹¹ Finally, he emphasized the fact that this violence pertained to an earlier period in the history of the party and called for the party’s enemies to cease using these events politically—he compared the persistent memory of these events to France constantly dwelling on the violence of the French Revolution.¹¹²

Aprista leaders continued to take a defensive stance during the following years. In a 1963 article, APRA party leader Andrés Townsend Ezcurra directly accused APRA’s opponents of using the Trujillo events to block APRA’s ascent to power: “they seek to use this painful episode of civil war to close the way for the Aprista Party which will congregate the largest electorate around its presidential and parliamentary candidates.”¹¹³ In a more conciliatory stance typical of his leadership style, Ramiro Prialé, in a January 27, 1963 speech at the Central Theater of Huancayo, used similar arguments to those he had used in his 1958 speech: APRA had not rebelled against the military, but rather against a dictatorship that represented Peru’s oligarchy. Prialé pointed out that the party had not used their memory to fuel hatred: “Are those thousands of dead not also dead? Are those thousands of martyrs not also fallen? We remember them and light our hearts in homage to them. But their death is nothing more than a source of pride for our movement: we never use them as a pedestal of

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 83.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 84. As with many other claims about this incident, there is currently no evidence available to corroborate this particular accusation.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 85.

¹¹³ Andrés Townsend Ezcurra, “Pueblo y Ejército: La Revolución de Trujillo,” *Revista Presente*, no 89, March 1963, reprinted in *Trujillo 32* (1978), 230.

hatred to maintain privileges.”¹¹⁴ Of course APRA had no privileges to maintain as it had yet to win a presidential election.

By this point, the alliance with its former enemies had seriously undermined the party’s revolutionary credentials and defections from the party occurred toward a series of new parties that appeared on the Left of the political spectrum. While most of the communist parties traced their roots back to José Carlos Mariátegui, some grew out of APRA as disillusioned Apristas left the party in search of more radical options.¹¹⁵ In 1958, Luis de la Puente Uceda created a splinter group that would subsequently become *APRA Rebelde*, and later the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR) which in 1965 attempted unsuccessfully to mimic the Cuban example of a rural guerrilla war. In a 1959 interview, when asked about the fact that he had been expelled from APRA, de la Puente answered: “Bastards...they do not know that now we are more Aprista than ever.”¹¹⁶ According to Rogger Mercado, de la Puente saw himself as “the link back with APRA’s insurrectionary traditions, and by extension with the civil caudillos of the nineteenth century.”¹¹⁷ During the 1980s, the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (MRTA) also had Aprista roots as one of its founders, Víctor Polay, came from an Aprista family and was an Aprista militant himself.

Although the Left inherited the path of armed insurgency now abandoned by the Apristas, the new communist parties showed little

¹¹⁴ Ramiro Prialé, “El APRA y las Fuerzas Armadas: fragmento de discurso pronunciado por Ramiro Prialé en Huancayo en el Teatro Central de esa ciudad el 27 de enero.” Frances Grant Papers, Rutgers University.

¹¹⁵ The notion that the party had lost its revolutionary identity can be traced back to the failed 1948 revolution. The 2nd APRA party congress in 1948 already revealed the existence of a rift between moderate and radical elements in the party. Following the failed 1948 revolution, one of the first leaders of the party to publicly denounce it was Magda Portal who in 1950 had written a pamphlet titled *¿Quiénes traicionaron al pueblo?*, in which she denounced party leaders for betraying their followers. That same year, 45 former members of APRA participated in what they termed the “III National Revisionist Congress of the Peruvian Aprista Party,” in which they denounced Haya de la Torre and other party leaders, and declared the party to be dead. For an account of the Peruvian left see Ricardo Letts, *La izquierda peruana* (Lima: Mosca Azul, 1981).

¹¹⁶ M.J. Orbegoso, “Luis de la Puente Uceda: Rebelde con causa,” in *MJO-Entrevistas* (Lima, 1989), 46-53, cited by Rénique, “De la traición aprista,” 6.

¹¹⁷ Rogger Mercado, *Las guerrillas del MIR, 1965* (Lima: Editorial de la Cultura Popular, 1982), 81, cited by Rénique, “De la traición aprista,” 25-6.

inclination to look back at the 1932 uprising.¹¹⁸ A notable exception can be found in a 1963 book about the Trujillo revolution that dissociated Trujillo's dead from APRA and incorporated them into a more broadly defined class struggle. Rogger Mercado, in his *La Revolución de Trujillo, 1932*, reinterpreted the revolution purely in class terms, thus undermining its connection to an APRA identity. He writes: "We have said before that the Trujillo Revolution was a worker-peasant revolution. That it has a social purpose. That it was carried out with a class consciousness, and not a racial or national one. It could not be, either in theory or in practice, an Aprista Revolution. Those who launched it and died for it were socially exploited men."¹¹⁹ Here the communist reading of Peruvian history as a class struggle of peasants and workers differed from the Aprista view of an alliance of "manual and intellectual workers" that included the middle class.

The most powerful indictment of APRA in Mercado's book is the appendix that includes a letter written by two of the children of "Búfalo" Barreto, the man who had led the attack on the O'Donovan barracks in Trujillo. Irma Barreto de Ormeño and Manuel Barreto renounced APRA and their allegiance to Haya de la Torre, accused the party of forging alliances with the members of the oligarchy, and accused Haya de la Torre of receiving money from the United States: "Now it [the U.S.] pays you, finances endless trips throughout the world. Now it supports you with money and with all its businesses to that you can become President of Peru.

¹¹⁸ When the Shining Path successfully launched an insurgency that would lead to over a decade of civil war its leader Abimael Guzmán saw himself as an heir of José Carlos Mariátegui, and as looked to Marx, Mao and Lenin. Within the Shining Path's discourse, the 1932 revolution was forgotten. Founded in 1970, the P.C.P.-S.L. (Partido Comunista del Peru, Sendero Luminoso) would eventually launch an armed insurgency that allowed it to control parts of Peruvian territory. The civil war fought between Shining Path and the Peruvian military (as well as another insurgent group, the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru) cost 69,280 lives according to the 2003 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The commemoration of those killed during this civil war has recently been a source of controversy following the building of a monument to the dead in the city of Lima. See Paulo Drinot, "El ojo que llora, las ontologías de la violencia, y la opción por la memoria en el Perú," *Hueso Húmero* 50 (2008): 53-74.

¹¹⁹ The accusation of sensuality, harkening back to the notion that Apristas must embrace discipline and renounce pleasure, may also be a reference to Haya de la Torre's alleged homosexuality. Rogger Mercado, *La Revolución de Trujillo 1932* (Lima: Fondo de Cultura Popular, 1966), 12.

And the fact is that age, Víctor Raúl, and sensuality—which you fought so hard against—have taken hold of you and deformed your moral conscience. You have betrayed us, Víctor Raúl. You have forced us to tear from our hearts the faith that we had in Aprismo.”¹²⁰ Barreto’s children claim that they must leave APRA to honor the memory of their father who died at the O’Donovan barracks defending “the sacred ideals of the people and the fatherland.”¹²¹ They warned that the dead would also be leaving the party, and in an explicitly political statement condemned APRA’s 1956 alliance with Prado:

The heroes and the martyrs are leaving with us. Our beloved and venerable dead. They are leaving with us so that you cannot continue to peddle with their memories. ¡Enough of using the name of the martyrs as decoys...! They did not die to bring Prado to the Presidency of Peru, nor for Beltrán to be the guide of our Economy and Agrarian Reform, nor for the International Petroleum Company to find its defender in the Party (...) Our heroes did not die for this. They fought for the people, they are of the people: the people will keep their memory. They are no longer heroes or “aprista” martyrs. You, the leaders of the Party, have sold the name that belonged to the popular masses, have sold it to the oligarchic-imperialist enterprise. But not the martyrs! They belong to the people!¹²²

The notion that Barreto and the other martyrs would now leave the APRA seems all the more powerful considering that they had initially broken ranks with the official party leadership to embark on their revolution.

While the Left never really incorporated the Trujillo martyrs into their political discourse, APRA and the Peruvian military finally reached a truce, with an official decision to forget these events. The truce came during the government of General Francisco Morales Bermúdez (1975-1980). His predecessor, General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975), whose government implemented a wide-ranging set of reforms that included nationalization of foreign companies and agrarian reform, had pushed traditional parties to the margins of the political system. Morales Bermúdez began to reach out to civilian political parties once again. The memory of the Trujillo events played an important role in the process. *El Comercio* reported that on April 30, 1976, during a trip to Trujillo (the heart of APRA

¹²⁰ Mercado, *Revolución*, 126.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 127.

¹²² *Ibid*.

territory) “speaking very energetically, President Morales Bermúdez stated today that it is now time to forget the confrontation that occurred 45 years ago in Trujillo, as the current Revolution fights according to its principles for the unity and fraternity of all Peruvians.”¹²³ APRA responded to the gesture. On July 7 of that year, the P.A.P announced: “Following the call for conciliation made by President Morales Bermúdez, today the Peruvian Aprista Party will not commemorate the events that took place during the Trujillo Revolution.”¹²⁴ The forgetting of these contentious events paved the way for the full incorporation of APRA into the democratic process under the Morales Bermúdez regime.¹²⁵

When a constituent assembly was elected in 1978, APRA won the largest number of seats, paving the way for its full entry back into politics. Haya de la Torre presided over the constituent assembly and managed to sign the new constitution before his death in 1979. The symbolism of Haya de la Torre, President of the Constituent assembly, flanked by two honorary guards (edecanes) provided by the Peruvian military, must certainly have been powerful in light of the preceding fifty years of enmity between these two institutions.

¹²³ Henry Pease García and Alfredo Filomeno, *Peru 1976. Cronología Política* (Lima: DESCO, 1977), vol. 5, 1932. The revolution he is referring to here is the one initiated by Velasco whose government labeled itself “The Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces.”

¹²⁴ Pease García and Filomeno, *Peru 1976*, vol. 5, 2050.

¹²⁵ The relationship between the Morales Bermúdez family and APRA remains unclear. Francisco’s father, Remigio Morales Bermúdez, was murdered in 1939 while he was Prefect of Trujillo. Opposite versions claim that the crime was committed by government forces for his Aprista sympathies, or by Apristas for not supporting their cause. In an interview after the end of his presidency, Morales Bermúdez admitted that there is a lack of evidence either way regarding his father’s murderers. Federico Prieto Celi, *Regreso a la democracia: entrevista biográfica al General Francisco Morales Bermúdez Cerrutti, President del Peru (1975-1980)* (Lima: Realidades, S.A., 1996), 71-4. Francisco’s son, Remigio Morales Bermúdez, was Minister of Agriculture during the Aprista administration of Alan García, 1985-90. In this interview President Morales Bermúdez claims that he took the step of reconciliation with APRA as an important move in the process of transition from military dictatorship to democratic rule. Celi, *Regreso*, 244.

Conclusions

Official party policy regarding the memory of the Trujillo events remains unchanged.¹²⁶ The past decades that have seen two APRA administrations in power, both led by Alan García Pérez. The first García government (1985-1990), embroiled in a civil war against the Shining Path, had little reason to revive the memories of the party's revolutionary roots. The second government has transpired in a generally peaceful setting. As president-elect, García visited Trujillo on July 8, 2006, but made no public mention of the distant events. Given APRA's trajectory, this official stance is not surprising. In Peru there would be no successful APRA-led revolution that could look back on July 7th as its founding moment.¹²⁷ In this sense, the date stands in contrast to a similar date in Cuban history, July 26, 1953 also a failed attempt to take over a military barracks. July 26 came to be seen as the foundational moment for the revolution that eventually brought Fidel Castro to power. By contrast, for APRA, which had renounced its revolutionary roots, July 7th seemed like a less and less relevant date to commemorate.

Yet over the past decades, individual voices within the APRA party have kept alive the memory of Trujillo.¹²⁸ On the fiftieth anniversary of the events, Aprista historian Percy Murillo Garaycochea published a brief

¹²⁶ In a recent article, Anahí Duran Guevara attributes this amnesia very directly to the nature of the alliances that brought APRA to power in the first place: "During neither of its two terms in the government has APRA implemented a "politics of memory" with respect to the events of the 1930s that would include truth, justice and reparations for those who were jailed, deported or had a relative killed by the State. Should this have occurred? Now that Truth Commissions have gained legitimacy, one could answer in the affirmative. However, with regard to such political issues there are always other interests at stake." Anahí Durán Guevara, "El martirologio y el antiimperialismo en el APRA fundacional y el de nuestros días," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (edición peruana), March 03, 2008.

¹²⁷ In a great ironic twist, revolution was finally staged by the military when in 1968 General Juan Velasco Alvarado began a process of reforms that many saw as implementing some of APRA's original ideas on nationalization and agrarian reform.

¹²⁸ As early as 1975 and 1978 two official APRA volumes edited by the Secretaría de Prensa y Propaganda del Comité Ejecutivo Departamental de Libertad, republished earlier accounts of the events. The prologue to this edition calls for the need to find out the truth of these events considering the fact that they have been distorted. Both editions are of poor quality. On the back cover of the second volumen is Felipe Cossio del Pomar's painting of the Chan Chan executions. The front cover shows a picture of Haya de la Torre paying tribute to another famous fallen Aprista, Manuel Arévalo—whose death was unrelated to the Trujillo events.

account titled *La Revolución de Trujillo, 1932* in which he stated the hope that one day all the dead could be equally remembered.¹²⁹ In 1989, during the presidency of Alan García, two editions of the 1934 Rebaza Acosta history of the Trujillo Revolution were published, one of them by a government agency.¹³⁰ The Aprista historian Blasco Bazán Vera has published two editions of his study of the Trujillo Revolution. Although his connection to the party has changed over the decades, Agustín Haya de la Torre (the son of the man who had been the civilian authority in Trujillo during the revolution) published an essay in 2003 titled “Trujillo 32: La Revolución Democrática” interpreting the insurrection as a democratic revolution.¹³¹

Most recently, a number of efforts have been directed to challenging the party’s official policy of forgetting.¹³² Although the public commemorations in Trujillo on such a large scale ended in 2006 when Homero Burgos left office, a number of other voices have spoken up to remember these distant events. In some cases, individuals and on-line publications have directly challenged the party leadership to commemorate July 7th. In 2008, the online journal *Vanguardia Aprista* highlighted the fact that there had been no official commemoration of the Trujillo Martyrs at the party’s main Lima headquarters, the Casa del Pueblo. On one Aprista email network, a member of the Miraflores branch of APRA, Ida Marquina, sent a proposal suggesting that July 7th be incorporated officially into the party calendar as the “Day of Reconciliation.” She has circulated via email a poem she wrote on the Revolution and has also put it to music and sung it during commemorations held at the Miraflores party headquarters.

¹²⁹ Murillo Garaycochea, *Revolución de Trujillo* (Lima: Editorial Nosotros, 1982), 7-8.

¹³⁰ The first has no information on the publisher while the second was published by CONCYTEC, the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación Tecnológica, admittedly an odd venue for such a publication. Alfredo Rebaza Acosta, *Historia de la Revolución de Trujillo* (Lima: CONCYTEC, 1989).

¹³¹ The essay was published in *Norte* (Trujillo, July, 2003) and republished in the book of essays by Agustín Haya de la Torre titled *Ensayos de sociología política* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2005). He was a militant of the radical left until the 1990s, but later returned to APRA and currently holds an important position within the Aprista administration.

¹³² These efforts are probably indicative of the presence of a left-leaning faction within the party.

Commemorations have recently been held in a decentralized way at party headquarters in some districts of Lima, such as Miraflores and Carabaylo, as well as the cemetery in Trujillo. In July 2007, the Web publication Pueblocontinente (www.pueblocontinente.com) founded in 1996, commemorated the revolution with an event that included speeches; its homepage includes a section commemorating Trujillo that reproduces the painting by Cossio del Pomar. Last year, APRA authorities in Trujillo held a ceremony at the cemetery with an accompanying mass at the cathedral.¹³³ Whether these efforts lead to an official recognition of the date will probably depend both on the persistence of individuals and on the future direction of the party as it continues to redefine its identity in the coming years.

Any further discussion of how to remember Trujillo will now occur against the backdrop of a national dialogue on the very issue of memory. Over the past years, a national debate has been taking place in Peru about how to remember the events of the country's most recent episode of political violence, the civil war between the Peruvian state and the terrorist groups Shining Path and MRTA. The debate began with the naming of a Truth Commission and its subsequent report. Most recently, construction has begun of a Memory Museum that will relate to the civil war of the 1980s and 1990s. Thorny issues have surfaced about whether and how to memorialize the victims of armed violence between a state and insurgent groups. The Trujillo dead will not be part of the Memory Museum: a cutoff date of 1980 has been established. But they will hopefully become a part of a conversation not only within APRA but also beyond on how to interpret and commemorate this long forgotten episode in Latin American history.

¹³³ <http://enlacenacional.com/2009/07/10/apra-recuerda-en-trujillo-a-martires-asesinados-en-la-revolucion-de-1932/>