A Peruvian *Indigenista* Forum of the 1920s: José Carlos Mariátegui’s *Amauta*

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During the decade 1920-1930 the sweeping reexamination of Peru’s Incaic heritage known as *indigenismo* (Indianism) dominated much of the nation’s intellectual and cultural life. Social scientists, jurists, educational reformers and political revolutionaries produced a spate of books, monographs, and essays dealing with the organization of social life under the Incas and with the contemporary native Peruvian. Simultaneously, *indigenismo* replaced Lima-based *criollismo* as the dominant style in Peruvian arts, both visual and literary. The shifting of national attention to the provinces implied by “Indianism” was, in turn, connected to profound changes in Peru’s social structure, notably to the massive migration of highland *provincianos* to the coast in the years immediately following the First World War. “Indianism” further played an important role in the nationalist rhetoric of the eleven-year regime (1919-1930) of President Augusto B. Leguía. During Leguía’s *oncenio* the figure of the Indian—frequently still a fanciful or semi-literary entity—dominated much of Peru’s ideological and artistic production. Nevertheless, *indigenismo* never succeeded in coalescing into a stable and coherent ideology.

The present study examines Peruvian *indigenismo* of the 1920s through the prism of José Carlos Mariátegui’s *Amauta* (Lima, 1926-1930), one of Latin America’s major “vanguardist” magazines of the decade. Until recently, the Peruvian magazines of the 1920s, especially the “little” publications devoted to literature and politics, have been largely neglected, although they constitute one of the most valuable sources of materials for the cultural history of the *oncenio.* Alberto Flores-Galindo has pointed out that the formation of an extra-university intellectual movement in Peru early in this century was tied to two phenomena: a rise in the number of readers, accompanied by the opening of new book stores and publishing houses, and a dramatic increase in the total number of newspapers and magazines published throughout the country. Mariátegui, clearly, occupies pride of place among Peru’s “extra-university intellectuals,” while his magazine *Amauta* continues to enjoy an international reputation for journalistic excellence. In addition, *Amauta*’s recent republication (1976) in a high-quality facsimile edition has greatly simplified access to the magazine.

The mid-1920s (especially 1926-1928) saw the appearance of a major cycle of Peruvian Indianist magazines, published both in the provinces and in Lima. Like the “vanguardist” magazines of the same decade, the Indianist journals generally had a small circulation and a short life span. Nevertheless, the impressive number of these publications attests to the strength of the *indigenista* movement. Major titles include Kosko (Cuzco), *Attusparia* (Huaraz), *Kúntur* (Cuzco), *Boletín Titiñaka* (Puno), *Chirapu* (Arequipa), *Inti* (Huancayo), *Puna* (Ayaviri), *La Sierra* (Lima, directed by J. Guillermo Guevara), and others. Collectively, the Indianist magazines published much of the work of the social scientists, land-reformers, educators and creative writers who dealt with aspects of the “Indian problem” of the 1920s. Only recently have such studies as Luis Enrique Tord’s uneven *El indio en los ensayistas peruanos, 1848-1948* and Marfil Francke Ballew’s excellent “El movimiento indigenista en el Cuzco (1910-1930)” made effective use of *indigenista* journals. Case studies of individual journals, however, have yet to appear, nor is a thorough study of the information network linking *indigenista* intellectuals through Peru yet available. *Amauta*, while perhaps most commonly remembered as “la primera revista socialista marxista” of Latin America, also ranked both artistic vanguardism and Peru’s “Indian problem” among its principal concerns. As Jesús Chavarría notes in his recently published *José Carlos Mariátegui and the Rise of Modern Peru, 1890-1930*, until 1923-1924 no mention of special concern for the Indian cause appears in Mariátegui’s writings. By the time of *Amauta*’s appearance in September 1926, however, Mariátegui had become a zealous *indigenista.* Although not devoted exclusively to Indianist themes, *Amauta* consciously adopted an Indianist artistic style, published large quantities of *indigenista* poetry and prose, and addressed itself to the multifaceted “Indian problem” during its four years of publication. Given *Amauta*’s relatively large circulation and its international reputation, it is indeed accurate to speak of the magazine as a major *indigenista* forum. It is, certainly, an excellent source of information for the novice beginning his examination of 1920s *indigenismo*.
The Origins of 20th-Century Indigenismo

The "discovery" of the Peruvian Indian by the middle-class intellectual (whether located in Lima or in a departmental-or provincial capital) had, to be sure, begun well before the inauguration of Augusto B. Leguía's "Patria Nueva" in 1919. In the wake of the War of the Pacific (1879-1883) a number of university professors collectively termed "neo-Positivists" by both Jesús Chavarría and Thomas M. Davies, turned their attention to the Indian as a result of their conviction that Peru's crushing defeat by Chile had been due to the failure to incorporate the Indian majority into national life. Figures such as Carlos Lissón, dean of the faculty at the University of San Marcos, sociologist Mariano H. Cornejo, Civlista professor-politician Manuel Vicente Villarán, and Joaquin Capelo (later an influential senator from Junín), vigorously stressed the need to do away with racial prejudice and to provide adequate education for the Indian.⁹

From outside the intellectual "establishment," Manuel González Prada (1818-1918), literary figure and anarchist pamphleteer, clamored against the state of servitude in which the highland Indian was held, and in his essay "Nuestros indios" (written in 1904, published only posthumously) stressed the need for armed rebellion against white oppression. In "Nuestros indios" González Prada advanced a thesis that would be echoed incessantly by the Marxist indigenistas of the 1920s: "La cuestión del indio," he asserted, "más que pedagógica, es económica, es social." ⁸

González Prada was among the first Peruvian writers to point out the economic bases of Indian servitude, a condition which, he asserted, could have only two possible resolutions:

La condición del indígena puede mejorar de dos maneras: 1. El corazón de los opresores se conduce al extremo de reconocer el derecho de los oprimidos, o el ánimo de los oprimidos adquiere la virilidad suficiente para escarnecer a los opresores. . . . 2. Al indio no se le predique humildad y resignación sino orgullo y rebeldía. ¿Qué ha ganado con tencientos o cuatrocientos años de conformidad y paciencia? Mientras menos autoridades sufren, de mayores daños se libera. (Horas de lucha, pp. 337-38)

González Prada concluded "Nuestros indios" by rejecting as impossible any humanitarian solution to the "Indian problem": "... el indio se redimirá merced a su esfuerzo propio, no por la humanización de sus opresores." He thus provided the indigenistas of the 1920s, notably the Marxists associated with magazines such as Amauta and Cuzco's Kuntur (1927-1928) with two main themes: first, the "Indian problem" was an economic and social struggle that could be resolved only by radical material changes; second, the Indian could be "regenerated" only through his own efforts, not through the good offices of philanthropic whites and mestizos.⁹

Despite González Prada's call for a revolutionary solution to the oppression of the Indian, most Peruvians who seriously concerned themselves with the nation's Quechua- and Aymara-speaking majority before (and after) World War I adopted reformist, educationist, and philanthropic stances. Novels such as Clorinda Matto de Turner's Aves sin nido (1899), while raising public consciousness abuses to which highland Indians were subjected, generally failed to examine the actual forms of servitude under which the Indian suffered. And as Dan Chapin Hazen points out, the great majority of reformist proposals relied overwhelmingly on the supposed redemptive powers of effective education.¹⁰

In 1909, the year of Matto de Turner's death in Argentine exile, Pedro S. Zulen and others founded in Lima the philanthropic "Asociación Pro-Indígena." The members of this association consisted primarily of educated Lima humanitarians, such as Zulen and the German-born Dora Mayer, who lacked direct political power. A major exception was Senator Joaquín Capelo from the department of Junin, who served as co-director of the "Asociación" and sponsored numerous pro-Indian bills in Congress during the 1910s. Zulen, who became professor of philosophy and librarian at San Marcos before his death in 1925, directed the "Asociación Pro-Indígena" until 1916, while Dora Mayer edited its journal, El Deber Pro-Indígena, from 1912 to 1916.¹¹ This monthly magazine reported the Putumayo rubber-gathering scandal in 1912, documented abuses by highland hacendados owners, demanded official pro-Indian reforms, and published articles on Indian life in an attempt to bring the plight of the indígena to public attention. Unlike González Prada and the Marxists of the 1920s, the members of the "Pro-Indígena" emphasized the education (or at least the literacy) of the Indian as a necessary first step in incorporating him into the national mainstream. Although it could point to a few concrete accomplishments at the end of its seven-year life, the "Pro-Indígena" was warmly praised by Mariátegui and other Amauta contributors as a precursor of their own revolutionary Indigenismo. Dora Mayer, by 1926 an elder stateswoman of the Indianist cause, was invited to collaborate in the first issue of Amauta and subsequently became a regular contributor.¹²

As Françoise Chevalier reports, in the first decade of the twentieth century the more concrete and practical aspects of the
Indian question began to attract the attention of a growing number of jurists, sociologists, and politicians based in Lima, Cuzco, and Arequipa. In 1911 Arequipa hosted the “First Regional Congress of Normal School Graduates” (Lima’s famous Escuela Normal de Varones, designed to produce Indian teachers, had been established in 1905), and in 1915 Arequipa’s Bar Association sponsored a contest for the preparation of “Indian tutelary legislation.” Numerous peasant uprisings in the South, especially in the altiplano department of Puno after 1914, made an examination of the “Indian problem” a matter of especially acute concern for provincial intellectuals. In Cuzco during the 1910s, the Revista Universitaria of the reformed Universidad de San Antonio Abad poured forth a series of studies on the Indian and on land tenure within the department of Cuzco.

The years immediately following the end of World War I witnessed a proliferation of sociological and juridical studies on the Indian and especially on the comunidad indígena, a “collective” landholding system which had survived since Colonial times. Some of the more important studies were Ricardo Bustamante Cisneros’s “Las comunidades indígenas en el Perú” (1919); José Antonio Encinas’s two monographs, Contribución a una legislación tutelar indígena (1918) and Causas de la criminalidad indígena en el Perú (1919); and especially Hildebrando Castro Pozo’s highly influential Nuestra comunidad indígena (1924). As Davies points out, much of the generalized interest in the Indian comunidad stemmed from an article authored in 1907 by San Marcos professor Manuel Vicente Villarán, in which Villarán argued for official protection of the comunidad against land-hungry hacendados.

Hildebrando Castro Pozo’s 1924 work on the comunidad was lent additional prestige by the author’s having held the position of head of the Section of Indian affairs in Leguía’s government between 1921 and 1923. Like many of the sociological studies produced in the 1920s, Nuestra comunidad indígena lacked methodological rigor, but it nevertheless achieved widespread popularity. Castro Pozo emphasized the continuing vitality of the comunidad despite a century of encroachments by hacendados and of indifference or official hostility on the part of Peru’s liberal republican regimes. He stressed, especially, the capacity of the comunidad for continued development along the line of the modern cooperative, exerting a substantial (and acknowledged) influence on José Carlos Mariátegui’s Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana (1928).

During the 1920s numerous other authors stressed the “communitistic” (or at least communal) tradition of land tenure among Peru’s Indians. Louis Baudin’s L’empire socialiste des Incas (1928) greatly popularized the notion of “Incan Socialism,” while Peruvian works in the same vein include César Antonio Ugarte’s Bosquejo de la historia económica del Perú (1926), Abelardo Solís’s Ante el problema agrario peruano (1928), and a triad of books by the University of Cuzco’s messianic cultural anthropologist, Luis E. Valcárcel (De la vida incaica, 1925; Del ayllu al Imperio, 1925; Tempestad en los Andes, 1927). The Peruvian writers predicted, from differing perspectives, an Indian “renaissance” based on the comunidades’ adoption of modern farming methods and the formation of agricultural cooperatives. Mariátegui and other Amauta contributors accepted without criticism three arguments which originated with Castro Pozo and were echoed by Valcárcel and other radical indigenistas: first, Peru’s Indians possessed a still-vital tradition of economic “communism”; second, the comunidades were a major key to national economic development, and should be converted into productive cooperatives; third, the Indian was a “natural” candidate for conversion to modern Socialism. A strong romantic vein, inspired by the rhapsodies of Valcárcel’s Tempestad en los Andes, runs through the “Indian problem” writings of almost all the members of the Amauta group.

On the literary scene, theoretical attempts were made early in the century to disengage Peruvian literature from the weight of Hispanic tradition. José de la Riva Agüero’s doctoral thesis, Carácter de la literatura del Perú independiente (1905), asserted that Peru’s literature up to that time had been merely “Castilian provincial literature,” and suggested that Peruvian writers choose other European models. José Gálvez’s Posibilidad de una genuina literatura nacional (1915) proposed a national literature, one which would constitute a “literatura de lo criollo.” Even Luis Alberto Sánchez, who was later to decry the excesses of artistic indigenismo, wrote in his bachelor’s thesis at San Marcos:

Nuestra literatura de hoy debe inspirarse en las tradiciones prehistóricas: debe ser QUECHUISTA; nuestra literatura de mañana fundará en un molde único y representativo toda la materia dispersa, todas las características, todas las modalidades de la realidad nacional: será NATIVISTA. El quechuismo es una “disciplina”, una gimnasia indispensable para la mejor asimilación de todos los factores de la sociedad peruana.

The 1920s saw the almost complete displacement of both criollismo and modernismo by an artistic “Indianism” accompanied by many of the features of a mass-culturefad. Luis
Monguí in his La poesía postmodernista peruana (1951), pointed to the year 1926 as the beginning of the Indianist “boom” in Peruvian literature. There had to be some antecedents in such works as Enrique López Alburú’s Cuentos andinos (1920) and, more remotely, Matto de Turner’s Aves sin nido, but poetic indigénismo was definitely launched in 1926 by a triad of books: Alejandro Peralta’s Ande. J. Mario Chávez’s Coca, and Emilio Armaza’s Falo. According to Monguí, the specifically “indógena” phase in poetry was brief (1926-1930) because of several inherent problems: a rapid exhaustion of themes, an equally rapid exhaustion of images, and an ideological and taste shift to another type of literary nativism—“cholismo”—which would dominate Peruvian literature in the decade 1930-40. After the publication of three more major collections of Indianist poetry in 1928—Guillermo Mercado’s Un chulllo de poemas, José Varallanos’s El hombre del Ande que asesinó su esperanza, and Nazario Chávez Aliaga’s Parábolas del Ande—the vogue of pure “indígena” faded as works such as the novels of Ciro Alegría came to dominate Peru’s national literature. Significantly, the years of Amauta’s publication (1926-1930) correspond precisely to the period marked by Monguí as the apogee of extreme literary “Indígenismo” in Peru.

In the field of the visual arts, the most striking phenomenon of the 1920s was the rise of José Sabogal (1888-1956), founder and long-time leader of the so-called “Peruvian School” of painting. After receiving training in Europe and in Argentina, Sabogal crossed the Andes from Jujuy to Cuzco in 1918 and began to paint the landscapes and human types of the sierra in splashy polychromes. In 1919 a Lima exhibition of his vivid indigenista oil paintings established him as one of Peru’s leading artists, despite the fact that traditionally-minded critics considered his work deficient in technique and cloying picturesque in its themes. Sabogal quickly made disciples of a generation of Peruvian artists, including Julia Codesido (b. 1892), “Camilo Blas” (José Alfonso Sánchez Urteaga, b. 1903), and Enrique Camino Brent (1909-1960). First as professor and then as director of Lima’s Escuela de Bellas Artes from 1920-1943, Sabogal established indigenismo as Peru’s major painting style, one which dominated the national art scene for three decades.

The “Official” Indigenismo of the “Patria Nueva” (1919-1930)

President Augusto B. Leguía, who came to power for the second time in 1919, represented the interests of the progressive sector of the Peruvian “oligarchy” and those of the middle-sector groups whose expansion had been inhibited by the policies of previous regimes. Chevalier (pp. 189-90) maintains that the middle-sector urban groups which had grown in size and power as the result of wartime (1914-1918) prosperity were more sympathetic to the complaints of the Indian than was the Partido Civil, whose leaders had ruled Peru from 1899 to 1919. More importantly, Leguía, a self-made “businessman President,” held national economic growth as his main (and publicly-stated) goal. The new President regarded the quasi-feudal land and labor relationships which predominated in the sierra as a hindrance to the development of an integrated capitalist economy, and considered the gomonal (petty highland hacendado) anachronism. He once declared:

... the gomonal is not bad by nature. He is rather diseased in his moral and civic sensibilities, and retarded in his business sense. ... The gomonal is retarded in his business sense for his failure to realize that the toll he forcibly exacts from the Indians would multiply a hundredfold if he worked to keep them well paid, well fed, and content, instead of squeezing out their very last energies. The gomonal seems to have a heart of stone for the Indians’ tribulations because he has a head of cement for the most elementary principles of modern economics.

Given Leguía’s concern for developing a national communications/transportation infrastructure and for rationalizing obsolescent modes of production, the oncenio, particularly in its first years, provided a more favorable climate for pro-Indian legislation than had previous regimes.

The oncenio was, in the words of conservative intellectual Víctor Andrés Belaúnde, an era of “bureaucratic Caesarian” characterized by autocracy and by the expansion of the governmental apparatus. Although Fredrick B. Pike correctly notes that the new constitution promulgated on January 18, 1920 was an “instrument to be used, ignored, or altered as he [Leguía] saw fit,” the document did mark a radical break with the hands-off policies of previous governments in the realm of social welfare. The new constitution pledged the state to improve the conditions of the working classes and to build primary schools, hospitals, and other facilities for all Peru’s needy. Although success was less visible outside the department of Lima, by 1930 the government could indeed point to substantial social-welfare accomplishments. It had constructed more than 800 new elementary schools, with the result that the number of primary school students in Peru had increased from 176,680 to 318,785 between 1921 and 1929. In addition, it had mounted campaigns against various childhood
diseases, and had greatly expanded clinical facilities within metropolitan Lima itself (Pike, pp. 180-81).

After taking office, Leguía substantially modified the policies of preceding regimes in regard to the Indian comunidades. Both the liberal governments of the nineteenth century and the recent Civilista regimes had, almost without exception, regarded the comunidades as an obstacle to economic development and had denied them the legal status they had held during the Colonial period. However, article 41 of the 1920 constitution explicitly recognized the legal existence of the comunidades, making them part of the state domain and thus inalienable and imprescriptible. Article 58 of the new constitution marked the end of the legal fiction that Perú’s Indians were in fact free and equal citizens of the Republic. It read: “The state will protect the Indian race and will dictate special laws for its development and culture in keeping with its needs. The nation recognizes the legal existence of the comunidades and the law will decide the rights that pertain to them.”

In a related move, on September 12, 1921, Leguía created a Section of Indian Affairs within the Ministry of Development and picked indigenista Hildebrando Castro Pozo to head it. By such moves Leguía hoped to defuse the tense situation in the southern sierra, where hacendado land-grabbing had sparked peasant revolts the central government had been obliged to extinguish at considerable cost.

Leguía, a politician well schooled in the use of public-relations techniques, took pains throughout his tenure to appear as the fatherly protector of Perú’s Indians, and exploited the trappings of popular-culture indigenismo to maintain his personal popularity. He also sponsored and subsidized a “Sociedad Pro-Derecho Indígena Tahuantinsuyo” (founded in Lima June 16, 1920), whose stated purpose was “to unify the race and explain its political, economic, and social rights . . . .” Never popular with Congress, this Society’s annual congresses managed to meet until 1926. Leguía also created (May 22, 1929) a Patronato de la raza indígena with a central committee under the chairmanship of the archbishop of Lima, for the purpose of settling the increasingly numerous and bitter disputes between comunidades and hacendados. The Patronato produced mountains of papel sellado and, like other ineffective institutions of “official” indigenismo, was bitterly criticized by anti-Leguía Indianists in the late 1920s.

Not all “official” indigenismo was limited to speech-making and the creation of paternalistic associations. A law of March 18, 1929 granted departmental courts jurisdiction over cases involving Indian questions, cases which had previously been settled in the local courts dominated by hacendados. In another action, on August 28, 1925 the Ministry of Development opened a record office for the registration of Perú’s comunidades indígenas; while only 321 communities (out of several thousands) had been registered by the time of Leguía’s fall from power in August 1930, this number compared favorably with that of communities registered in the following five-year period (Davies, p. 90, Chevalier, pp. 193-94).

Leguía’s government thus officially reversed the traditional non-interventionist policies of Perú’s post-Independence regimes, under which much of Indian community land had been lost to private ownership. However, Chevalier argues that the same forces of increased national prosperity and urban development which had created a new middle class more sympathetic to the problems of the Indian, also aggravated these problems by vastly increasing urban demands for highland agricultural products. To meet an increased demand for beef to feed Lima’s growing (and more affluent) population, many hacendados now found it profitable to drive their Indians off the previously marginal communal lands bordering their haciendas, a process described in fictional fashion in José María Arguedas’s novel Yawar Fiesta (1941). The expansion of a capitalist agricultural economy into previously remote areas of the highlands (although dating from the last decades of the nineteenth century and tied to wool rather than to beef) continued into the 1920s and caused many of Leguía’s reforms to remain dead letters. Chevalier writes:

Paradoxically, the same forces that had occasioned the rise of a new middle class sensitive to the ideas of indigenismo also worked against the movement’s goals by commercializing such products of the highlands as wool, leather, and cattle, which came into great demand in the capital, the coastal region, and abroad. The parallel commercialization of land then encouraged entrepreneurs and hacendados to new aggressions against the Indians. Meanwhile, the first legal obstacles to this despoliation instituted by the Leguía regime were too weak to control the forces at work. (Chevalier, p. 193).

Perú’s comunidades actually declined in size and prosperity during the onceicio because of increased hacendado pressure, and also suffered from Leguía’s institution of a program of conscripción vial (obligatory road labor) in order to modernize Perú’s communications/transportation system. Although in theory the law required all adult Peruvian males to work for either six or twelve days each year on the construction or maintenance of roads, Dan Chapin Hazen reports that, “In fact, only Indians and
urban poor did any work, while the scheme lent itself to unprecedented abuses" (Hazen, p. 206). Numerous contemporary writers, both radical and conservative, characterized conscripción vial as a new form of the Incaic nuna (obligatory labor for the state). During the 1920s, many serranos, unable to make even a subsistence living on their communal lands or individual minifundia, or lured by the relatively high wages paid on the northern sugar plantations, migrated to the coast. There, on the plantations and in the cities (especially in Lima), the serrano came, willy-nilly, to participate in Peru's mainstream culture. Forced out of his village by economic necessity, the serrano became "cholified" in a time far shorter than the members of the "Asociación Pro-Indígena" would ever have predicted.44

During the first two years of the "Patria Nueva" (1919-1921), Leguía received the support of almost all groups dissatisfied with Civilista rule, including the provincial members of the commerical and bureaucratic middle classes, who were no friends of the locally dominant gamonales. He also had the support of the students and intellectuals of socialist and indigenista leanings who grouped together to publish the university newspaper Germinal in 1918-1919; this group included not only Leguía's cousin Germán Leguía y Martínez, a disciple of González Prada, but also educators and social scientists such as José Antonio Encinas, Erasmo Roca, and Hildebrand Castro Pozo (Chevalier, pp. 190-92). During the early years of the oncenio, Leguía extended the considerable power of his patronage, multiplied by Peru's economic prosperity of the 1920s, to both coastal and highland middle-sector groups, as the increase in the size of the national budget made it possible to hire an increased number of government employees, teachers, and technicians. "Official" indigenismo served to consolidate middle-sector support during the crucial early years of the regime. After 1923, however, in order to maintain himself in office, Leguía aligned himself increasingly with the traditional "dueños del Perú," the owners of the coastal plantations and the large highland haciendas, splitting with his early indigenista supporters. By 1924, Encinas, Roca, Castro Pozo, Abelardo Solís, and others were in exile as declared opponents of Leguía's autocratic regime, although Indianist rhetoric continued to occupy a prominent place in the propaganda of the "Patria Nueva" (Chevalier, pp. 191-192).

Amauta, Revista Indigenista: 1

Amauta's first issue appeared in September 1926, its cover adorned by José Sabogal's engraving of the head of a resolute indígena, an engraving destined to become the unofficial logo of both the magazine and the "Sociedad Editora Amauta" which funded it. The Indianist title "Amauta" (in Quechua, "wise man," "scholar," or "counselor"), also proposed by Sabogal, was explained by Mariátegui in the magazine's "presentación:"

El título preocupará probablemente a algunos. Esto se deberá a la importancia excesiva, fundamental, que tiene entre nosotros el rótulo. Nos merece en este caso a la acepción estricta de la palabra. El título no traduce sino nuestro homenaje al Incaismo. Pero específicamente la palabra "Amauta" adquiere con esta revista una nueva acepción. La vamos a crear otra vez.35

As Mariátegui made clear in the following paragraph, Amauta's guiding spirit was by no means to be understood as an exclusive, nationalist Indianism; rather, the magazine had more ambitious aims:

El objeto de esta revista es el de plantear, esclarecer y conocer los problemas peruanos desde puntos de vista doctrinarios y científicos. Pero consideraremos siempre al Perú dentro del panorama del mundo. Estudiaremos todos los grandes movimientos de renovación—políticos, filosóficos, artísticos, literarios, científicos. Todo lo humano es nuestro. Esta revista vinculará a los hombres nuevos del Perú, primero con los de otros países de América, en seguida con los de los otros pueblos del mundo. (Mariátegui, "Presentación")

The problems of Peru (and, to be understood, the "Indian problem") could not be fruitfully considered outside the context of the contemporary world situation—which for Mariátegui and many other Amauta collaborators meant the realities of finance capitalism, economic imperialism, and the revolutionary labor movement. The magazine's grand design, expressed in its "Presentación," was to "create a new Peru in a new world" through the collaborative labors of progressive intellectuals.

By means of its promotion of indigenista graphic art, its publication of Indianist short stories and poetry, its editorial pronouncements, and its articles and essays by well-known social scientists, Amauta quickly established itself as a major "Indianist" forum. Although Mariátegui's editorial stance was consistently internationalist and Socialist, a close examination of the "Indian problem" necessarily formed part of any attempt to comprehend national (and Latin American) reality. And while its precise parameters varied considerably from contributor to contributor, indigenismo was rarely conceived in narrow national terms.

Many of Amauta's contributors, despite their professed Marxism, viewed indigenismo as a movement destined to bring
the *Siete ensayos* in 1929.\textsuperscript{42}

Valcárcel identified the “Indian problem” directly with that of agrarian reform. In *Amauta*, No. 6 (February 1927), he observed:

Indudablemente que el punto de vista económico es como el apoyito que pedía Arquímedes para mover el mundo. La Conquista consumó y despojo de la tierra y la explotación del hombre por el hombre. La República no es sino una prolongación del Coloniaje. Sólo hemos cambiado de etiquetas. El encomendero de ayer es el ganadero de hoy. En la sierra del Perú y en los valles de la costa el régimen feudal es una supervivencia. El problema indio está inseparablemente ligado al problema agrario.\textsuperscript{43}

The anthropologist also propagated the theory of the “communistic” nature of Incan society. In *De la vida incaica* (1925) he had written:

Ellos [los Incas] fundaron el Tawantinsuyu como una sociedad modelo de comunismo… imponiendo por doquier el triunfante arquetipo de una esencial cultura agraria.\textsuperscript{44}

Stressing the communistic “tradition” of Peru’s natives, Valcárcel claimed that the Indian was a “natural” convert to modern Socialism; under the influence of the works of Marx and González Prada, he sometimes spoke of the Indian as if he were a proletarian militant. In a lecture (1927) at the University of Arequipa which caused him a brief imprisonment, Valcárcel referred to a hypothetical “huelga general del proletariado andino” and wrote ominously: “la dictadura del proletariado indígena busca su Lenin.”\textsuperscript{45} In the sonorous prose of *Tempestad en los Andes*, Valcárcel painted an apocalyptic picture of a “socialist” Indian aroused from his lethargy of centuries and about to launch himself in a destructive war of revenge against the exploiting coast:

Un día alumbrará el Sol de Sangre, el Yawar-Inti, y todas las aguas se teñirán de rojo de Púrpura tornarán las linfas del Titikaka; de púrpura, aún los arroyos cristalinos. Subirá la sangre hasta las altas y nevadas cúspides.

Terrible Día de Sol de Sangre. (Valcárcel, *Tempestad*, p. 23)\textsuperscript{46}

Although few of *Amauta*’s contributors shared Valcárcel’s belief in the imminence of a massive Indian uprising, many did accept his assertion that the Quechua “race” was on the verge of a new flowering, and shared his harsh judgment on four centuries of unequal Indian-white relationships. Adopting the *gonzalezpradista* dictum that the Indian must redeem himself through his own strenuous efforts, Valcárcel wrote:

Pro-Indigena, Patronato, siempre el gesto del señor para el esclavo, siempre el aire protector en el semblante de quien domina cinco siglos. Nunca el gesto severo de justicia, nunca la palabra viril del hombre honrado, no vibraron jamás los truenos de bíblica indignación. Ni los pocos apóstoles que en tierras del Perú nacieron pronunciaron jamás la santa palabra regeneradora. (Valcárcel, *Tempestad*, p. 26)\textsuperscript{47}

Paternalism, however, was virtually inescapable for the *indigenista* reformer or revolutionary of the 1920s, and Valcárcel’s denunciation of previous “patronizing” attempts at improving the lot of Peru’s Indians did not prevent his founding in Cuzco a short-lived pro-Indian group whose first declared principle read: “Amparáral material y moralmente a los indígenas, a quienes considera como hermanos menores en desgracia.”\textsuperscript{48}

José Carlos Mariátegui, *Amauta*’s editor, showed himself heavily influenced by Valcárcel’s messianic *indigenismo*; although he did not share the anthropologist’s condemnation of mestizo culture as inherently inferior to that of the full-blooded and -cultured Indian. More frequently and consistently than did Valcárcel, Mariátegui linked the “Indian problem” with that of land tenure. The *Siete ensayos*, which begins with three intimately interrelated essays (“Esquema de la evolución económica,” “El problema del indio,” and “El problema de la tierra”) contains most of Mariátegui’s major observations on the Indian/land problems in Peru. This work (significant portions of which were serialized in *Amauta* before the appearance of the book in November 1928), however, must be omitted from direct discussion in the present essay.\textsuperscript{49}

Mariátegui’s mature position on the Indian and his relationship to Socialism was best summed up in his study “El problema de las razas en América Latina,” sent to the First Latin American Communist Congress held in Buenos Aires in June 1929. The same essay was published in *Amauta* with the title “Esquema del problema indígena” in the July-August 1929 issue.\textsuperscript{50} In “El problema de las razas” (p. 69), Mariátegui effectively reduced both the problem of the Indian and that of the land to “the liquidation of feudalism” in Peru. He denied that the Indian was racially inferior to any other group, and argued that he was perfectly capable of assimilating modern technology (p. 71). He cautioned *indigenistas* not to be carried away by a “le mesiánica” into an improductive reverse racism (p. 75), a clear reference to such intemperate Indianists as Bolivia’s “Tristán Marof” (Gustavo A. Navarro). The roots of the “Indian problem,” claimed Mariátegui, were economic ones:

Las posibilidades de que el indio se eleve material e intelectualmente dependen del cambio de las condiciones económico-sociales. No están
determinadas por la raza sino por la economía y la política. (Mariátegui, “El problema de las razas,” p. 71)

Mariátegui then proceeded to describe the economic realities under which Peru’s Indian population lived. Ninety percent of Peru’s Indians worked in agriculture, he claimed, and of these, ninety percent were serfs rather than proletarians (p. 75). Even the technically advanced coastal plantations conserved strong feudal traits in the treatment of their predominantly Indian work force (p. 77). In the highlands wage-labor was scarcely known outside the mines, and there the Indian campesino also suffered the abuses of conscripción vial. Racism, Mariátegui asserted, was indeed one component of the “Indian problem,” but that problem’s solution depended not on a change in attitudes toward race but on a transformation of the economic structure of the sierra.

Mariátegui proceeded to make specific, programmatic recommendations: in the highlands, individually owned latifundia should be expropriated and transferred to the comunidades, while on the coast small holdings should be encouraged and the property of absentee landlords given to the yanaconas (sharecappers) who worked it. At the same time, agricultural workers on the industrialized plantations were to fight for the freedom to organize unions, for the suppression of the enganche system of hiring, the eight-hour day, and the enforcement of Peru’s existing labor laws (p. 79). Propaganda and education work was to be carried out among highland Indians, preferably by native militants who had been converted to Socialism in Peru’s mining centers or towns before returning to their villages. Only native militants could break down the skepticism of Indians who trusted only those who spoke their own language, asserted Mariátegui (p. 80). In addition, the comunidades should organize themselves on a regional basis to defend themselves and their property, and militants should set up small libraries and study centers where the members of the comunidad could be instructed in Socialist doctrine (p. 80).

Despite Hugo Pesce’s energetic presentation of Mariátegui’s position paper in Buenos Aires, the delegates to the First Latin American Communist Congress paid little attention to “El problema de las razas en América Latina.” The Congress was more alarmed by Mariátegui’s unauthorized formation of a “multi-class” party in Peru (the Peruvian Socialist Party, like the rival APRA, did not exclude members of the petit bourgeoisie) at a time when the policy of the Communist International specifically ruled out political collaboration with the middle class. As the Congress drew to its close, its delegates voted a resolution condemning the heterodox stance of the PSP.35

Other articles published in Amauta shed light on Mariátegui’s Marxist variety of indigenismo. The desire to bring about a proletarian revolution in a country where a true proletariat barely existed frequently led Mariátegui (and his associates) to blur the class lines that separated campesinos from factory workers. And the desire to usher in Socialism in a largely Indian and peasant country led, as it did in the case of Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, to a peculiarly Leninist-flavored Indianism.34 By 1927, Mariátegui had managed to cast his own indigenismo in specifically Marxist terms. Rebutting Luis Alberto Sánchez’s claim that indigenismo (a national phenomenon) and Socialism (an international political doctrine) were incompatible, Mariátegui declared in Amauta’s No. 78 (March 1927):

El socialismo ordena y define las reivindicaciones de las masas, de la clase trabajadora. Y en el Perú las masas,—la clase trabajadora—son en sus cuatro quintas partes indígenas. Nuestro socialismo no sería, pues, peruano,—ni sería siquiera socialismo—si no se solidarizase, primeramente, con las reivindicaciones indígenas.35

In an article titled “Réplica a Luis Alberto Sánchez” (one of the exchanges in what has come to be known as the “polémica del indigenismo” between Mariátegui and Sánchez), reproduced in the same No. 7 of Amauta, Mariátegui emphasized that he was not interested in the re-creation of the Incan Empire or in the formation of an ideal Indian republic: “No es mi ideal el Perú colonial ni el Perú incaico sino un Perú integral.”36 His concern with the Indian, he stated, stemmed from the native Peruvian’s role as one of Peru’s primary producers, rather than as a member of a unique racial group. Despite the differences which separated them, campesino and proletarian could collaborate in building a new order in Peru because both were producers exploited by the existing political and economic system:


Disputing an assertion by Sánchez, Mariátegui declared that just as no contradiction existed between Socialism and indigenismo, neither were Socialism and nationalism opposed to each other in semicolonial countries such as Peru.
El nacionalismo de las naciones europeas—donde nacionalismo y conservantismo se identifican y consustancian—se propone fines imperialistas. Es reaccionario y anti-socialista. Pero el nacionalismo de los pueblos coloniales—si, coloniales económicamente, aunque se vanaglorien de su autonomía política—tiene un origen y un impulso totalmente diversos. En estos pueblos, el nacionalismo es revolucionario y, por ende, confluye con el socialismo. En estos pueblos la idea de la nación no ha cumplido aún su trayectoria ni ha agotado su misión histórica. (Mariátegui, “Replica,” p. 38)

It followed, stated Mariátegui, that in a colonial or semi-colonial society, it was permissible for the revolutionary proletariat to form alliances with peasant groups (the policy of the Third International before 1928), and even with progressive sectors of the middle class against the ruling oligarchy and their foreign partners. Showing his ideological debt to Haya de la Torre, Mariátegui cited the example of the nationalista Kuo Min Tang as one to be emulated by the working classes in other semicolonial countries. Mariátegui’s praise of the Kuo Min Tang (to which the APRA was regularly compared by both its supporters and its detractors) shortly proved to have been a faux pas. However, despite the Communist-Kuo Min Tang rupture in 1927 and the International’s subsequent condemnation of multi-class parties, worker-peasant collaboration was one of the guidelines of the Peruvian Socialist Party, formed by Mariátegui and others in 1928.37

Given the pre-1928 policy of the International, it would indeed have been surprising had Mariátegui not “discovered” the need to win the Indian to the Socialist cause. Lenin’s own blueprint for European revolution had placed great emphasis on the role of the peasantry, to the extent that worker-peasant collaboration was written into the “21 Conditions” adopted by the Second World Congress of the Communist International (1920) for membership in the Communist world organization. Condition 5 reads in full:

A regular and systematic agitation must be carried on in the country districts. The working class cannot achieve victory unless it is supported by the country proletariat and at least a part of the poorest peasantry, and unless it has assured itself by its policy of the neutrality of a proportion of the remaining inhabitants of the villages. At the present time Communist activity in the country districts is of the utmost importance. It must be pursued through the co-operation of revolutionary Communist workers who have friends and relations among the peasantry. An abandonment of this activity or the entrusting of it to unreliable and not truly revolutionary workers would be tantamount to an abandonment of the proletarian revolution.38

Under Mariátegui’s leadership, the Peruvian Socialist Party had no difficulty in subscribing to the “21 Conditions,” although it appears not to have formally affiliated with the International as a member party. On the surface, the agrarian policies of the International seemed highly applicable to Peru’s feudal highland society, so that to members of the PSP, Marxism-Leninism promised a political solution to the “Indian problem.”39

Mariátegui’s Marxist indigenismo set the tone for the majority of political pronouncements on the Indian question by both Socialist and aprista contributors. As Diego Meseguer Illán points out, Mariátegui’s opinions on the Indian/land questions were shared by Haya de la Torre in his writings of 1927 and 1928.40 Like Mariátegui, Haya de la Torre was aware that Peru’s economy was a colonial one, and that no industrial proletariat of any significance yet existed. However, from these facts Haya drew the conclusion that Peru’s revolution could not be a Socialist one. In El antieuimperialismo y el Apra (written in 1928 but published only in 1936) Haya wrote:

Los países de Indioamérica no son países industriales. La economía de estos pueblos es básicamente agraria o agrícola minera… El proletariado está en minoría, en completa minoría, constituyendo una clase naciente. Son masas campesinas las que predominan dando una fisonomía feudal o semi-feudal a nuestras colectividades nacionales. Un partido de clase proletaria únicamente es un partido sin posibilidades de buen éxito político en estos pueblos.41

Haya’s judgment proved correct for the short and medium runs, since for decades Peru’s voters (mainly coastal and mestizo, due to Peru’s literacy requirement for voting) showed a decided preference for the APRA’s multi-class nationalism over the proletarian Socialism of the PSP and the Communist Party. As a visible token of Peruvian nationalism, indigenismo also played an important role in the propaganda of the APRA during its first decades of existence.42

Amauta’s aprista collaborators uniformly agreed with Mariátegui’s assertion that the “Indian problem” was an economic one, that it could be resolved only by the “liquidation of feudalism,” and that the peasant masses had to be enlisted in the struggle against Peru’s capitalist regime. Carlos Manuel Cox, Trujillo-born party leader, wrote:

El problema indígena es el problema del 25% de los habitantes de nuestra América, de la América India tergiversada por el criollo y por el blanco latifundistas, herederos directos de los encomenderos españoles y de su sistema de feudalismo interior y de coloniaje económico externo.43
Manuel Seoane echoed Cox, stating in a letter to Cuzco’s “Grupo Resurgimiento,” “Circunstancias peruanísimas reducen, casi exclusivamente, el problema indígena a un problema campesino, problema de tierras, que se resuelve modificando el régimen de la propiedad agrícola.” In short, prior to 1928, the year of the personal and political break between Mariátegui and Haya de la Torre, Socialist and aprista pronouncements on the Indian question are indistinguishable.

Mariátegui’s writings on the “problema indígena” represent the first serious Peruvian attempt to examine the question within the framework of “scientific” Socialism. However, neither Mariátegui’s “scientific” pretensions nor the immensely favorable reception of his Siete ensayos ought to obscure a fundamental romanticism in his view of the Indian. As Robert Paris has pointed out, it is easy, from a reading of Mariátegui’s writings on the Incan Empire, to retain only “the idyllic idealization of the past, the effort to gloss over the embarrassing despotic aspects of the system in order to exalt its pure ‘communism’.” Further, to a very great degree Mariátegui, a limeño who was only once able to visit the sierra personally, was forced to rely on second- and third-hand accounts and on personal visits by informants such as Emilio Romero and Luis E. Valcárcel in his investigation of highland Peru. Indeed, given the tentative and literary nature of much of the material published in the 1920s on the Incanato and on the contemporary Indian, it is less surprising that Mariátegui’s writings show traces of romantic idealization than that they often show a degree of penetration unexcelled even by professional Indologists.

Amauta, Revista Indigenista: II

Amauta’s fifth number (January 1927) saw the first appearance of a section labeled “El proceso del gamonalismo,” and subtitled “Boletín de defensa indígena.” Strongly reminiscent in its intentions of the earlier publication El Deber Pro-Indígena, the new section’s appearance was accompanied by an editorial note by Mariátegui:

Nuestro boletín se propone únicamente la acusación documentada de los desmanes contra los indios, con el doble propósito de iluminar la conciencia pública sobre la tragedia indígena y de aportar una nueva serie de testimonios al juicio, al proceso del gamonalismo.

Mariátegui went on to explain that Amauta was disposed to print, free of charge, any denunciations of gamonal abuses which Indians wished to contribute. The complaints were to be signed and, if possible, notarized, and Mariátegui made it clear that Amauta in no way took responsibility in actions in the public courts. The magazine’s readers were also notified that Dora Mayer and other surviving members of the Asociación Pro-Indígena were collaborating in “El proceso del gamonalismo.”

The content of the section, which appeared in numbers 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, and 15 (1927 and 1928) with independent pagination, was heterogeneous, although its principal function was the exposure of crimes committed against Indians or against the comunidades. “El proceso del gamonalismo” publicized the formation of Cuzco’s “Grupo Resurgimiento” and reproduced its statutes (No. 5), reprinted two of Mariátegui’s Mundial articles from his “polémica del indigenismo” against Luis Alberto Sánchez (No. 7), and carried informative articles on the Indians of other Latin American countries, such as neighboring Bolivia. The quality of contributions was generally low, and the new section was obviously not considered a success by Mariátegui and business manager Ricardo Martínez de la Torre, since after issue No. 17, “El proceso del gamonalismo” was included in the more readable “Panorama Móvil” of the magazine.

The heart of “El proceso del gamonalismo” consisted of the letters of victimized Indians who directed themselves either to Amauta or to government officials in search of redress. The bulletin’s No. 2 (in Amauta’s issue No. 6), for example, carried a long letter from the jailed survivors of the Huancán (Puno) Indian massacre of 1923. This letter was addressed both to Amauta (“el grupo vanguardista del Perú”) and to President Leguía, and denounced the army action carried out on the pretext that the Indians of Huancán were in revolt against the central government. No. 6 (Amauta’s issue No. 15) contained a typical document, a letter directed to the Minister of Development and signed by three members of the comunidad “De todos los santos” in Jauja province. The signers of the letter described the incessant litigation caused the comunidad by one member who in 1910 had been bamboozled into signing over the lands of the entire community to an unscrupulous gamonal. The signers requested the Ministry of Development to designate a commission of engineers to survey the comunidad and to take its census, thus officially recognizing “De todos los santos” and placing it out of the reach of land-grabbers. Such letters formed the core of the contributions to “El proceso del gamonalismo.”

The bulk of Amauta’s readers were concentrated in Lima; its readership in the sierra was lower, and in the Indian comunidades, non-existent. The contemporary impact of “El proceso del
gamonalismo,” consequently, must be considered to have been minimal. Luis Enrique Tord is among those who have pointed out the lack of success enjoyed by this section of Amauta, noting the low quality of most of the contributions and surmising that it was difficult for Mariátegui to gather sufficient materials to maintain the section.89 “El proceso del gamonalismo,” in reality, served as a catch-all for articles related to the Indian Problem, including Mariátegui’s already-discussed “Esquema del problema indígena.”

Amauta’s indigenismo was expressed artistically as well as polemically. The magazine featured a copious amount of poetry and short stories by the leaders of Peru’s nativist literary movement: César “Atahualpa” Rodríguez, Mario Chávez, Alejandro Peralta, José Varallanos and Oscar Cerruto contributed their mixed indigenista-vanguardist poems. Amauta also published numerous short stories and other pieces of prose fiction on Indian themes, contributing to the growing reputation of “Gamaliel Churuta” (Arturo Peralta, like his brother Alejandro, from Puno), and the older Enrique López Albújar, author of Cuentos andinos. Such stories included J. Eugenio Garro’s “La hija de Cunca” (No. 5), Churuta’s “El gamonal” (No. 5) and “Tojirnas: parábola de la alegría” (No. 18), Serafin del Mar’s (Reynaldo Bolaños) “El perro negro” (No. 11), and López Albújar’s “El fin de un redentor” (No. 10). Ernesto Reyna’s novelized history of Peru’s last-scale Indian uprising, “El Amauta Atuspaya: historia de la sublevación indígena de Huarás en 1885,” was serialized in Nos. 26-28, while considerable portions of Luis E. Valcárcel’s novelized essay, Tempestad en los Andes, were featured in Nos. 1, 2, 8, and 9. In addition, Amauta’s bibliographical section “Libros y Revistas” carried numerous reviews of collections of indigenista poetry, including Peralta’s Ande, Chávez’s Coca, Mercado’s Un chullu de poemas, and Varallanos’s El hombre del Ande que asesinó su esperanza. Amauta’s reviewers, with Mariátegui himself among the most prominent, critiqued numerous theoretical works on Indian topics, including Abelardo Solís’s Ante el problema agrario peruano and Mexican philosopher/educator José Vasconcelos’s Indología and La raza cósmica.89

Like many other ‘vanguardist’ magazines of the 1920s, Amauta devoted considerable attention to the graphic arts, particularly to the work of contemporary Latin American painters. Each issue of Amauta dedicated from four to eight pages to the reproduction (on satin-finished paper) of paintings, sculptures, ceramics, and frescoes, together with commentary on the works or on the featured artists. The graphics selected for reproduction in Amauta show a marked indigenista style bias. The works most often featured were by members of the “Peruvian School” of painting and sculpture represented by José Sabogal (featured in seven issues), Julia Codesido (in three), Carmen Saco (in four), and Camilo Blas (in five). Mexican revolutionary and indigenista artists such as Diego Rivera and Carlos Mérida also made frequent contributions to the magazine’s art sections. While Amauta occasionally featured the works of such European “vanguardist” artists as Piero Marussig and Georg Grosz, its primary emphasis clearly fell on Peruvian indigenista painting.

José Sabogal, one of Mariátegui’s intimates, not only suggested the title “Amauta” for Mariátegui’s magazine, but also designed most of its covers.70 Mariátegui, for his part, while not a trained critic of the visual arts, was lavish in his praise of Sabogal’s “Indianist” work:

José Sabogal señala ya con su obra un capítulo de la historia del arte peruano. Es uno de nuestros valores-símbolos. Sólido, honesto, vital, un obra no reclamo los elogios que se prodigan, entre nosotros, tan barato y fácilmente... Sabogal es, ante todo, el primer “pintor peruano”. Antes de él, habíamos tenido algunos pintores, pero no sabíamos tenerlo, en verdad, ningún “pintor peruano”... Después de él, se ha propagado la moda del indigenismo en la pintura; pero quien tenga mirada penetrante no podrá confundir jamás la profunda y austera versión de lo indio que nos da Sabogal con la que nos dan tantos superficiales explootadores de esta veta plástica, en la cual se ceba ahora hasta la pintura turística.71

Mariátegui’s comments are revealing. They show, first of all, that his admiration for Sabogal’s work was based primarily on the painter’s thematics rather than on his technique; secondly, they show Mariátegui’s preference for representational art (in the same encomium he praised Sabogal for having rejected Europe’s “anarchic,” “individualist,” and “dehumanizing” trends); thirdly, they make reference to the kitsch-like excesses to which artistic indigenismo was carried in Peru during the 1920s. Whatever the limitations of Mariátegui’s evaluation of Sabogal, one of Amauta’s accomplishments was clearly that of cementing Sabogal’s position as Peru’s leading painter.

Conclusion

In its indigenismo, as in other areas of its concern, Amauta was by no means free of contradictorities. Perhaps most striking is the contrast between the magazine’s stated editorial position that the position of the Indian campesino could not be bettered by
education alone, and its frequent publication of major articles devoted to Indian education. Such articles as César Acuña’s and María Judith Arias’s “La escuela hogar: proyecto de un nuevo tipo de escuela indígena” (Nos. 23 and 24), Miguelina Acosta Cárdenas’s “Escuelas rurales ambulantes para la educación de los niños indígenas” (No. 12), and dean of indigenismo José Antonio Encinas’s “Algunas consideraciones sobre la educación del indio en el Perú” (No. 32, under Martínez de la Torre’s editorship) all attest to the strength of an “educationist” trend which coexisted with Mariátegui and others’ advocacy of a revolutionary solution to Peru’s Indian/land problem.

Further, Mariátegui’s marked editorial tolerance for divergent viewpoints led to the publication of radically differing opinions on fundamental facets of the “Indian problem.” In its eclecticism, Amauta printed not only Valcárcel’s declarations that “la sierra es la nacionalidad,” but also the articles of Abelardo Solís, who asserted that the only productive course open to the Indian was to adopt Western culture and technology outright and to discard his own inadequate language and customs. Stated Solís in an an article entitled “La cuestión del quechua:”

Y si se anhela que el Perú se modernice, si se ha de peruanizar el Perú, tal proceso implica la occidentalización, la europeización del Perú, de su actual estado social.72

Despite his denial that he assigned determining importance to racial factors, Solís seems at times to represent a throwback to the pre-indigenista days of Alejandro O. Deustua. Peru’s positivist exponent of the superiority of the white race. A radically different point of view was put forward by J. Uriel García, Cuzco lawyer/journalist who first presented in Amauta, in embryonic form, his theory of the “nuevo indio.”73

García’s “cholista” interpretation of Peruvian man was to replace Valcárcel’s assertion of Indian superiority as Peruvian nativism’s dominant myth of the 1900s, the same decade which saw (according to Monguí) the eclipse of “pure” literary indigenismo and the emergence of the predominantly mestizo APRA as Peru’s leading popular political force. For García, the true Peruvian was the “nuevo indio,” the modern heir of both Incaic and Spanish culture, a being shaped physically and spiritually by centuries-long contact with Peru’s mystically nurturing Andean landscape. The contemporary Peruvian, no matter what his biological race, qualified as a “nuevo indio” if he felt his Andean heritage, since the “historic nature” of the Andes, according to García,

... nutre la conciencia nacional de la raza sin que ésto se comprenda en el sentido darwiniano de la ‘especie’, del predominio del medio, sino sólo en el del influjo del paisaje sobre la actividad creadora de la conciencia, como un motivo y no como un fin. (García, “El nuevo indio.” p. 20)

The Andes, Peru’s dominant physical and psychological feature, formed the basis for what García viewed as the essential continuity of Peruvian culture, and constituted an unbroken chain that connected the Incario to twentieth-century Peru, despite the trauma of the Conquest. According to García, because of his consciousness of the unique Andean world he inhabited, the “nuevo indio,” whatever his actual race, superseded the unassimilated Indian as the genuine representative of the Peruvian nation. Armed with a full consciousness of his heritage and guiding his conduct by the rationality imported by the Spanish conqueror, the “nuevo indio” faced a world rich in opportunities (García, “El nuevo indio.” p. 25).

García’s formulation of Peru’s ethno-social “reality” appealed primarily to politically conscious mestizo, who saw themselves, and not the Civilista or leguista oligarchs as the legitimate heirs of Peruvian cultural tradition. Americanist and mestizo cultural theories were also propounded by Antenor Ortego, aprista ideologue from Trujillo, in Amauta articles that demonstrated the influence of Vasconcelos’s La raza cósmica and Indología.74 Clearly, as one can glean from an examination of the articles on national topics published in the last two years of Amauta, the question of Peruvian nationhood and culture was not to be reduced to the simple glorification of the Incaic past.

Amauta ceased publication in September 1920, several months after Mariátegui’s death. Although primarily a Socialist magazine (explicitly so after September 1928), Amauta published contributions from many of the leading artists and ideologues of the Peruvian indigenismo and served as a major Indianist forum. The political importance assigned to the “Indian problem” by José Carlos Mariátegui, Amauta’s editor, can be seen in the strategic position assigned to the chapters on the Indian and on land tenure in his Siete ensayos. At the same time, such features of Amauta as “El proceso del gamonalismo” show the very real concern of Mariátegui and his associates with the abuses to which the highland Indian continued to be subjected in the modernizing “Patria Nueva.” Despite the frequent idealization of the Incaic past by Amauta’s major contributors, these writers added a vitally important new dimension to the “Indian problem” by emphasizing economic rather than racial or educational considerations, and by linking the struggle for Indian liberation
with the struggle of the world's oppressed working classes against the capitalist system. *Amauta* also popularized the works of *indigenista* writers and graphic artists throughout the four years of its publication, although the years 1926-1928 mark the magazine's most emphatic "Indianist" phase. Finally, given the extreme heterogeneity of contributions to *Amauta*, it is hardly surprising that strikingly discrepant opinions coexisted in the same issue, or that "romantic *indigenismo*" persisted until the end.

*Amauta*, due largely to the intellectual leadership of Mariátegui, demonstrated that Socialism and *indigenismo* were in no way mutually exclusive doctrines, and channeled the debate on the "problema nacional" into a more objective course which owed much to Marx and much to a first-hand examination of Peruvian social and economic realities. Emilio Romero, Antenor Orrego, José Antonio Encinas, and other social scientists and educators attempted to examine the contemporary Indian as he actually lived, worked and produced, rather than in the racialist terms which had characterized the writings of positivists such as Alejandro O. Deustua. The majority of *Amauta's* contributors envisioned no idealized Indian republic as their goal, but recognized that both Indian and *costeño* had to be incorporated into a truly national modern state, in Mariátegui's words, a "Perú integral."

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**Notes**

1. François Bourricaud, in "The Adventures of Ariel," *Daedalus* (Summer 1972), points out the importance of the *indigenista* movement as a rallying point for discontented middle-sector intellectuals throughout Latin America during the 1920s (see especially pp. 116-12). He also, however, asserts that *indigenista* ideology had severe shortcomings, notably its inability to build upon a developed indigenous intellectual tradition. In addition, indigenous culture (generally alive only on the village level) "did not provide a convincing model of political and social organization for countries asserting their participation in the race for modernization" (p. 112).

2. Alberto Flores-Galindo, "Los intelectuales y el problema nacional," in Emilio Romero and others, *Siete ensayos: 50 años en la historia* (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1979), pp. 139-56. Flores-Galindo points out that while in 1918 only 167 newspapers and magazines were published in Peru, by 1929 the number had risen to 473, of which two thirds had been established since 1919 (p. 143).

3. *Amauta, Revista Mensual de Doctrina, Literatura, Arte, Polémica,* 6 vols. (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1976). Facsimile edition, contains an introduction by Alberto Tauro and a cumulative index by Violeta de Guerra-García, as well as facsimiles of numbers 1 and 2 of the magazine *Libros y Revistas* (Lima, 1926), *Amauta's* direct bibliographical antecedent. (Unfortunately, much of *Amauta's* original advertising is omitted, and there are occasional discrepancies in pagination.)


8. Manuel González Prada. “Nuestros indios,” in his *Horas de lucha*, 2nd ed. (Callao: Tipografía "Lux," 1924), pp. 334-38. The impact of this essay (originally written in 1904) on José Carlos Mariátegui can be gauged by the fact that it was included in its entirety in issue No. 16 of *Amauta* (July 1928), which was dedicated to González Prada.

9. Although González Prada did not regard formal education (specifically, literacy) as either a sufficient or a necessary condition for the liberation of the Indian, he did not deny, at least in principle, the value of education. Formal instruction, nevertheless, was of value only in so far as one’s will and strength made it possible to act in one’s best interest. He asserted:

La instrucción puede mantener al hombre en la hazaña y la servidumbre. Los sacerdotes fueron los eunucos y gramáticos de Bizancio. Ocupar en la Tierra el puesto que le corresponde en vez de aceptar el que le designan: pedir y tomar su bocado; reclamar su techo y su pedazo de trecho, es el derecho de todo ser racional. (*Horas de lucha*, p. 336).

Over twenty years later, in his essay “Proceso de la educación pública,” José Carlos Mariátegui would echo González Prada’s words on the education of the Indian, affirming:

El problema del analfabetismo del indio resulta ser, en fin, un problema mucho mayor, que desborda del restringido marco de un plan meramente pedagógico. Cada día se comprueba más que alfarberizar no es educar. La escuela elemental no redime moral y socialmente al indio. El primer paso real hacia su redención, tiene que ser el de abolir su servidumbre.


11. On Zulen, Mayer, and the “Pro-Indigena,” see Haze, pp. 90-95, and Davies, pp. 54-56.

12. Dora Mayer published numerous articles in *Amauta*, beginning with “Lo que ha significado la Pro-Indigena” in the magazine’s first issue (September 1926), pp. 20-22, in which she provided a resumen of the “Pro-Indigena’s” history and criticized the ineffectiveness of the governmental Patronato de la raza indígena. Note: all mentions and citations of articles published in *Amauta* utilize the pagination of the facsimile edition. For the sake of convenience, citations from *Amauta* will specify number and month, but not the inconsistently used volume number.


17. See, for example, comments on the Incas and on the contemporary Peruvian Indian by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, in “Nuestro frente intelectual,” *Amauta*, No. 4 (December 1926), pp. 3-1,7-8, and in “Sentido de la lucha anti-imperialista,” *Amauta*, No. 8 (April 1927), pp. 39-40; also by Manuel Seoane, “Carta al Grupo ‘Reanudajo,’” *Amauta*, No. 9 (May 1927), pp. 37-39.


21. The degree of the “escuela indigenista’s” dominance can be gauged by Grace L. McCann Morley’s 1942 book, *An Introduction to Contemporary Peruvian Painting* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art). Morley’s introduction to Peruvian painting omits any painters not associated with Sabogal’s “Indiansm School” at Lima’s Escuela de Bellas Artes. For an extensive discussion of painterly indigenismo and its sociohistorical context, see Mirko Lauer, *Introducción a la pintura peruana del siglo XX* (Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1976), pp. 73-120.


23. Gamonal, derived from the name of a parasitic plant, is the Peruvian term used to refer to the small highland haciendado. Martha Hildebrandt, in her *Peruanismos* (Lima: Francisco Moncloa Editores, 1969), pp. 191-93, points out that gamonal as a synonym for cacique is generalized throughout numerous regions of Spanish America.

24. *La Prensa* (Lima), February 19, 1930, cited in Haze, p. 196. For a full discussion of the Indian legislation of the oncenio, see Davies, pp. 68-95. Davies suggests that Leguía’s break with the policies of preceding administrations was in fact less...
and Southern sierra. During the 1920s some 65,000 provincianos flooded to the capital; the 1931 (Department of Lima) census showed that 19 percent of the capital’s population had moved there within the preceding eleven years (p. 165), and that the vast majority of these migrants occupied “working class” jobs.


38. Mariátegui, in his essay “Esquema del problema indigena,” stressed the necessity of using Indian militants who had already been converted to Socialism to propagate it. He organized in its statutes to appear at one time or another, and al que la ciudad corrompe, se convierte regularmente en el auxiliar de los explotadores de su raza. Pero en la ciudad, en el ambiente obrero revolucionario, el indio empieza ya a asimilar la idea revolucionaria, a apropiarse de ella, a entender su valor como instrumento de emancipación de esta raza, oprimida por la misma clase que explota en la fábrica al obrero, en el que descubre un hermano de clase.” Amauta, No. 25 (July-August 1929), p. 74.


41. Valcárcel authored thirteen separate Amauta entries, several of them feature articles. He was also the subject of a highly flattering interview by Carlos Manuel Cox, transcribed as “Con Luis E. Valcárcel,” Amauta, No. 6 (February 1927), “Libros y Revistas” section, pp. 1-2.

42. Luis E. Valcárcel, “Un libro de Mariátegui,” Amauta, No. 23 (May 1929), pp. 83-86. In this generally superficial review, Valcárcel characterized the Siete ensayos as “... el primer estuero serio y sistemático para ‘comprender’ la realidad peruana” (pp. 83-84).


45. Valcárcel, Tempestad en los Andes, pp. 127, 129. This portion of Tempestad stemmed from a lecture delivered virtually at the University of Arequipa, January 22, 1927, and reproduced in Amauta as “El problema indigena,” No. 7 (March 1927), pp. 24.

46. Also in Amauta, No. 1 (September 1926), p. 3.

47. Also in Amauta, No. 1 (September 1926), p. 4.

48. “Estatutos del Grupo ‘Resurgimiento,’” Amauta, No. 5 (January 1927), p. 2 of the separately numbered section “El proceso del gamonalismo.” The “Grupo ‘Resurgimiento’” managed in its statutes to appear at once overly idealistic and patronizing, announcing that it was inspired in “principios de ABNEGACION, radical than it seemed, since the President took care not to overly antagonize large hacendados in the process of mollifying his pro-Indian supporters.


27. Cited in Davies, p. 70.

28. Twentieth-century revolts in the Department of Puno (including the “Rumi Maqui” uprising) are discussed by Hazen, pp. 128-51, 170-78. Also of value is Wilfredo Kapolsi, Los movimientos campesinos en el Perú, 1879-1965 (Lima: Delva Editores, 1977).

29. For example, a decree of May 1930 established June 24 as “Día del Indio,” while Leguía was often pictured greeting Indian delegations in the government palace, and official propaganda transcribed his indigenista declarations in both Spanish and Quecha (see Hazen, pp. 195-96). Davies (p. 91) quotes from a 1928 presidential address, in which Leguía declared: “The Indians are all the past and all the future. They made the great past and now ... are building, as if they were craftsmen of bronze in the volcanic bowels of the Andes, the glorious future of Peru.”

30. On the “Sociedad Tahuantinsuyo” see Hazen, pp. 151-59.


32. Recent studies have made it clear that the hacendado “offensive” against Indian lands dates from the late nineteenth century and resulted directly from the high prices Peruvian wool commanded abroad. See especially Alberto Flores Galindo’s Aretquipa y el sur andinos: ensayo de historia regional (siglos XVI–XX) (Lima: Editorial Horizonte, 1977), Chapters II and III, as well as Hazen, pp. 18-23.

33. Highway construction was one of the major goals of the Leguía government and, indeed, one of its major successes: the total length of roads in use in Peru jumped from 10,615 kilometers to 19,465 kilometers between 1926 and 1930 alone. For a thumbnail sketch of conscripción vial, see Stephen Jay Stein, “Populism and Mass Politics in Peru: The Political Behavior of the Lima Working Classes in the 1931 Presidential Election,” Ph.D. Diss. Stanford Univ. 1974, p. 151-53, or Hazen, pp. 205-08. A very negative view of the effects of Leguía’s forced-labor program is provided by Wilfredo Kapolsi, “El campesino peruano y la ley vial,” Campesino (Lima), 1, No. 2 (May-August 1969), 1-17. Kapolsi documents the abuses to which Indian laborers were subjected and concludes that the groups which received the greatest benefits from the conscripción vial program were: a) foreign road-construction firms, who obtained virtually free labor; b) owners of large haciendas who managed to have roads constructed to their estates, thus better linking them to markets; and c) local political authorities.

34. The most synthetic account of Peruvian rural-urban migration in the 1920s is provided by Stein’s “Populism and Mass Politics.” Stein points out (pp. 159-60) that the largest number of migrants came from regions with a) the best road systems, and b) the most intense concentration of latifundia; approximately 60 percent of all migration to Lima between 1920 and 1931 originated in the Central
VERACIDAD, HONRADEZ I SOLIDARIDAD” [sic], and placing great emphasis on the cultural betterment of the Indian. On the history of the organization, see Francke Ballvé, p. 141-45.

49. For a discussion of how Maríategui’s articles for the magazines Vareidades and Mundial (articles written over the space of four years) were assembled into the Siete ensayos, see Jorge Falcón’s polemical Anatomía de los Siete ensayos de Maríategui (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1978). A number of the same articles were reprinted in Amauta before the appearance of Siete ensayos in November 1928. Among them is the key essay, “El problema de la tierra en el Perú,” Amauta, Nos. 10 and 11 (December 1927 and January 1928), pp. 9-15 and pp. 5-8, 13-15.


51. Peter F. Klarén offers an excellent description of the enganche (literally, “hooking”) system of hiring in his Modernization, Dislocation, and Aprosismo: Origins of the Peruvian Aprista Party, 1870-1932 (Austin, Tex.: Univ. of Texas Press, 1973), pp. 25-30. Typically, the enganchador advanced the Indian laborer sufficient money to make it virtually impossible for him to pay off his debt in the time period stipulated by his contract. Enganche thus led directly to debt peonage.

52. The Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, meeting in Moscow in 1928, declared that a “third period” had begun in the international revolutionary movement. The first phase, from 1917 to 1923, had been one of direct armed struggle against the capitalist regimes, while in the years 1925-1928 official policy had been that of a united front of Communists, Social Democrats, and anarchists against fascism. In the “Third Period,” which lasted from 1928-1934, any form of collaboration with the Social Democrats was ruled out, and national Communist Parties were instructed to step up their revolutionary activities. For a discussion of “Third Period” Communism in Latin America, see the introduction of Luis E. Aguilar’s Marxismo en Latin America, revised ed. (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 20-27.


54. For a schematic delineation of the revolutionary positions adopted by Maríategui and Haya de la Torre, see César Germanán, La Polémica Haya de la Torre-Maríategui: reforma o revolución en el Perú. Cuadernos de Sociedad y Política, 2 (Lima: Delva Editores, 1977). Also published in Análisis Cuadernos de Investigación (Lima), 1, Nos. 2-3 (1977), 143-81.


57. For the text of the program of the Peruvian Socialist Party, drawn up by Maríategui in late 1928, see Martínez de la Torre, Apuntes, II, 398-402, or Maríategui, Ideología y política (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1969), Vol. XII of the OC, pp. 159-64.


59. For a discussion of Maríategui’s evaluation of the revolutionary potential of the Peruvian campesino, see Harry E. Vanden, “The Peasants as a Revolutionary Class: An Early Latin American View,” Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 20 (1978), 191-209. Vanden credits Maríategui with having developed a revolutionary theory similar to that originated in the same years by Mao Tse-Tung. For a useful diachronic survey of evaluations of Maríategui’s Marxism, see Vanden’s “Maríategui: Marxismo, Comunismo, and Other Bibliographic Notes,” Latin American Research Review, 14, No. 3 (1979), pp. 61-86.

60. Mosseger Illán, pp. 193-94.


62. For a critical view of aprista Indianism and of the party’s failure to carry through on its promises of reform, see Thomas M. Davies, Jr., “The indigenismo of the Peruvian Aprista Party: A Reinterpretation,” Hispanic American Historical Review, 51 (November 1971), 626-45.


66. The late Guillermo Roullón, in La creación heroica de José Carlos Maríategui, Vol I (Lima: Editorial Arica, 1975), p. 227, mentions a three-week trip made by Maríategui to Huancayo in 1918. This was Maríategui’s only direct contact with the sierra. Physically immobilized by the amputation of a leg in 1924, he received in his house in Lima’s Washington Street a stream of visitors whose task was to inform him of social and economic conditions in the highlands. Written testimonials by informants include Emilio Romero, “El siglo de Maríategui,” in Emilio Romero and others, Siete ensayos: 50 años en la historia (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1979), pp. 14-15, and Luis E. Varcácel, El problema del indio, by Valcárcel and others (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1976), p. 13.


68. Luis Enrique Tord, El indio en los ensayistas peruanos, 1848-1948 (Lima: Editoriales Unidas, 1978), p. 157. In a related article, “Amauta y el indigenismo,” La Prensa (Lima), September 25, 1976, p. 11, Tord comments on “el escaso o ningún conocimiento sólido y real que había sobre el indio y lo indio entre los mismos que habían levantado banderas por su reivindicación.”

69. Maríategui’s critical stance in regard to literary indigenismo continues to attract scholarly attention (largely focused on his essay "El proceso de la