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Anti-Politics Becomes Politics: The 1931 General Strike and the *Federación de Obreros Panaderos*

***Estrella del Perú*¹**

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The early 1930s in Peru have been the object of substantial historical and sociological enquiry. A first wave of scholars, writing in the late 1970s and early 1980s, concentrated on establishing the revolutionary nature of the period.² Two questions were debated. First, had a revolutionary situation existed? Second, if so, as was generally agreed, why did the revolution not occur, and, more specifically, what role had the working class played in this? Although no consensus was reached, most agreed that a combination of poor leadership by the Communist Party and an immature and/or 'falsely conscious' working class put a brake on the revolutionary process.³ A second wave of scholars shifted attention to other avenues of enquiry. Class-based analysis, which had featured prominently in the first wave, either gave way or made room for other analytical categories including gender, race, and culture, while greater emphasis was put on constructing an accurate image of living and working conditions.⁴ The political, which had been reduced to class antagonism, was reopened as a field of study as more subtle analyses

¹ Conference draft, please do not cite. I am grateful to Patience A. Schell and Alan Knight for comments on earlier versions.

² In the Constituent Assembly elections of 1978, the united Left vote amounted to almost 30 percent, despite it being divided into a myriad of small parties. It was in this context that the debate concerning the 'revolutionary situation' of the 1930s arose in Left academic and political circles. It is no coincidence that the debate occurred at that particular conjuncture; for some parties of the Left the question was not purely academic but of immediate political (revolutionary) relevance. Indeed, according to Nigel Haworth, 'The MIR [Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria] and the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers' Party-PRT) ... chose to participate in the 1978 elections on the basis of exposing their fraudulence, thereby making revolutionary circumstances more likely to arise. In addition, the VR [Vanguardia Revolucionaria] and some Trotskyists participated in the firm belief that a revolutionary conjuncture lay ahead and that the electoral process was merely useful agitation'. 'Radicalisation and the Left in Peru, 1976-1991' in Barry Carr and Steve Ellner, *The Latin American Left*, Westview, Boulder, 1993; p. 47.

³ See Dennis Sulmont, *El movimiento obrero en el Perú 1900-1956*, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, 1975; José Deustua and Alberto Flores Galindo, *Los comunistas y el movimiento obrero*, in Alberto Flores Galindo, *Obras Completas I*, Fundación Andina/Casa de Estudios del Socialismo, Lima, 1993 [1977]; Baltazar Caravedo, *Clases, Lucha política y gobierno en Perú 1919-1933*, Retama Editorial, Lima, 1977; Anibal Quijano, *El Perú en la crisis de los años treinta*, Mosca Azul editores, Lima, 1985 [1978]; Carmen Rosa Balbi, *El Partido Comunista y el APRA en la crisis revolucionaria de los años treinta*, G. Herrera Editores, Lima, 1980; Adám Anderle, *Los movimientos políticos en el Perú entre las dos guerra mundiales*, Ediciones Casa de las Américas, Havana, 1985.

⁴ See the articles in Steve Stein (ed.) *Lima obrera, 1900-1930*, vol. 1 and 2, Ediciones el Virrey, Lima, 1986-1987; Wilma Derpich, José Luis Huiza and Cecilia Israel, *Lima años 30: Salarios y costo de vida de la clase trabajadora*, Fundación Friedrich Ebert, Lima, 1985; Luis Tejada, *La cuestión del pan: el anarcosindicalismo en el Perú, 1880-1919*, Instituto Nacional de Cultura/Banco Industrial

of state-labour relations, and of the emergence of 'mass politics' were put forward.⁵ The shift in emphasis coincided, indeed perhaps resulted, from a more general 'turn' in labour history (and, for that matter, historical enquiry).⁶

This paper addresses some of the issues raised by both waves of enquiry. It uses the participation of the Federación de Obreros Panaderos 'Estrella del Perú' (FOPEP)⁷ in the 1931 General Strike as an optic through which to study the politicisation of the working class in this period. In doing so, it re-examines the nature of *sindicalismo*, as well as labour's perception of the state's role in labour-capital relations, the Communist Party's relations with labour during and after the strike and finally, labour's incorporation into emerging 'mass' political parties.

The Crisis and the FOPEP

In the early 1930s, Peru was hit by the combined effects of the Wall Street Crash and Sánchez Cerro's 'revolution' against the Leguía regime.⁸ Both these crises had important consequences for the bakery workers. In the 1920s, the rapid growth of Lima, in addition to state-sponsored road construction, had stimulated internal migration. Lima's working-class almost doubled from 66,000 in 1920 to 110,000 in 1931. The greatest growth was registered in unskilled and poorly paid occupations. These food vendors, peddlers and small merchants formed what Stein has called 'a kind of lumpenproletariat'. 'Modern' labour groups, such as textile workers, exhibited more modest growth. The problems generated by the excess labour supply were heightened by the slump. Although figures are anything but accurate, by November 1931, slightly over 30,000 men were unemployed, or in other words, 25 percent of Lima's population.

del Perú, Lima, 1988; Cynthia Sanborn, 'Los obreros textiles de Lima: Redes sociales y organización laboral, 1900-1930', in Aldo Panfichi and Felipe Portocarrero, *Mundos Interiores: Lima 1850-1950*, Universidad del Pacífico, Lima, 1995.

⁵ See particularly Steve Stein's, *Populism in Peru: The Emergence of the Masses and the Politics of Social Control*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison and London, 1980.

⁶ See Emilia Viotti da Costa, 'Experience versus Structures: New Tendencies in History of Labor and the Working Class in Latin America - What Do We Gain? What Do We Lose?' and responses by Barbara Weinstein, Perry Anderson, Hobart A. Spalding and June Nash in *International Labor and Working Class History*, No. 36, Fall 1989, pp. 3-24; and Lenard R. Berlanstein, *Rethinking Labor History: Essays on Discourse and Class Analysis*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1993.

⁷ Unlike most unions of this period, the FOPEP still exists. Its libros de actas are preserved for most the period. I have consulted the photocopies of the Libros de actas held in the social science faculty at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

⁸ On the impact of the Depression see, Rosemary Thorp and Carlos Londoño, 'The Effect of the Great Depression on the Economies of Peru and Colombia', in Rosemary Thorp ed. *Latin America in the 1930s: The Role of the Periphery in World Crisis*, St Antony's/Macmillan, Oxford, 1984; Heraclio Bonilla, *Las crisis económicas en la historia del Perú*, Centro Latinoamericano de Historia Económica/Fundación Friedrich Ebert, Lima, 1986;

Unemployment was particularly strong in certain industries such as construction, and less so in others, such as textiles. *Provincianos*, internal migrants, were particularly affected by unemployment.⁹

These general trends were reproduced in the bakery industry. The number of bakery workers, almost exclusively male, rose from 892 in 1920 to 1,512 in 1931. According to Tejada between 1922 and 1937, the FOPEP had approximately 755 members. Slightly over half the members were *provincianos*. Another three were Italian and 37 Japanese.¹⁰ Martínez de la Torre, however, puts the number of FOPEP members in 1929 at 365.¹¹ According to the census, in November 1931, 32 percent of bakery workers, or 490 persons, were unemployed. In Callao, another 31 percent, or 118, were unemployed.¹² In April 1932, the FOPEP claimed that only 300 of the 800 federados were working.¹³ However, unemployment was only the start of the FOPEP's problems, some of which, it had faced for a considerable time.¹⁴ As early as 1921 the FOPEP newspaper had pointed out:

Cuánto esfuerzo, cuánto sacrificio nos costó el conquistar la jornada de ocho horas. Sin embargo algunos patronos (sic) abusando de la mansedumbre de algunos compañeros, violan ese horario haciendo trabajar a sus operarios dos o tres horas de sobretiempo. Verdad es que se paga ese sobretiempo; pero con esa especulación de los patronos se quita trabajo a otros compañeros que podían hacerlo en las horas del día. Además, los que trabajan el horario reglamentario dan muestra de su inconciencia, de su cobardía y de su afán de esclavizarse en el taller a beneficio del patrono. Y lo peor de eso es que son los maestros, son los buenos operarios los que se someten y apoyan las especulaciones del patrono. ¿Hasta cuando?¹⁵

By creating a reserve labour force, unemployment increased the *industriales'* (bakery owners)¹⁶ capacity to act arbitrarily towards their workers, demanding extra hours of work and firing those who did not comply.¹⁷ In 1912 the *industriales* founded the *Sociedad de Industriales en Panaderías* which was re-

⁹ This section draws on Stein, *Populism in Peru*, p. 49-82.

¹⁰ Tejada, *La cuestión del pan*, p. 103-104.

¹¹ Martínez de la Torre, *Apuntes para una interpretación marxista de historia social del Perú*, Vol III, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 1974, p. 41.

¹² Piedad Pareja, *Anarquismo y sindicalismo en el Perú*, Ediciones Rikchay Perú, Lima, 1978, p. 34.

¹³ FOPEP, Libros de actas, 6 April 1932.

¹⁴ Indeed, according to the workers' testimonies unemployment had begun to appear as early as 1927. See Wilma Derpich and Cecilia Israel, *Obreros frente a la crisis*, Fundación Friedrich Ebert, 1987, p. 14-16.

¹⁵ *La Voz del Panadero*, Año I, No 8, August 1921.

¹⁶ It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the *industriales* in any depth. For further information see, Tejada, *La cuestión del pan*, p. 67-98.

¹⁷ On 26 September, for example, a bakery worker complained to the FOPEP that he had been fired from his job in the bakery *La Fama* because he tried to get the eight hour day law respected. FOPEP, Libro de actas, 26 September 1930.

organised in late 1929. It appears however that unlike the bakery workers they were significantly more united and therefore capable of acting in a coherent way.

However, as the 1921 article suggested and as the *federados* recognised, the gremio itself was largely responsible for the problems it faced. In the bakery industry a strict division of labour existed. There were four distinct categories of worker, from the *tablero* or apprentice, through the *operario*, the *hornero* and finally the *maestro*. Both experience and age separated each category: the average age of a *tablero* was 21, whereas *maestros* had an average age of 43. As we will see below, there was little solidarity between the different categories of workers, and often the *maestros* exploited the other workers, especially the *tableros*.¹⁸ At the same time, *maestros* were subject to the same pressures as the other workers. As was pointed out during a debate: there were *maestros*, especially the new ones, who would simply not respect the eight hour day so as not to lose their jobs.¹⁹ Echoing the newspaper article written nine years before, *compañerismo*, or the lack of it, was singled out as the cause of the problems.²⁰ The depression simply provided further opportunity for the bakery owners to exploit this lack of solidarity, by pitting workers against workers. However, the problem did not end there. For many bakery workers membership of the FOPEP had become both impractical, as bakery owners increasingly sought to employ non-federated workers at lower wages, and financially difficult, as the worsening economic situation precluded their payment of union dues. This would have severe repercussions on the FOPEP, which increasingly found itself incapable of fulfilling its mutualist functions.

The FOPEP was a labour organisation *a base multiple*; it combined the granting of insurance benefits in sickness, injury or death with fighting for labour legislation. We discuss its 'ideology' below. The FOPEP was run by a relatively small staff (not more than twelve people). It was funded by the payment of a registration fee of 3 soles upon entry and by weekly subscriptions of 50 centavos.²¹ However, throughout the early 1930s the FOPEP was continually in crisis due to lack of payment. Continuous attempts were made to get the debtors to pay their dues, including drafting a list of debtors to

¹⁸ The semi-artisan nature of the bakery industry added a further facet to working relations, perhaps absent in other industries. Many bakery owners were ex-workers and would occasionally help out in the bread making process either because it was necessary or simply out of enjoyment, and often strong feelings of solidarity, as well as paternalistic dependence, developed between industriales and workers. Tejada observes that such feelings were stronger among the *maestros*, who unlike other bakery workers, could often aspire to eventually becoming bakery owners themselves. Tejada, *La cuestión del pan*, 110-118.

¹⁹ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 25 September 1930.

²⁰ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 30 September 1930. The heading says 30 October, but given that the following page indicates 1 October, it is likely that this was a mistake made by the *secretario de actas*.

²¹ *Estatutos y reglamentos de la Federación de Obreros Panaderos 'Estrella del Perú'*, Imprenta El Billeto, Lima, 1928, p. 8.

be circulated in all bakeries (presumably both to humiliate and to discourage the bakery owners from hiring them) and taking the debtors to court.²² The everyday running of affairs became extremely difficult. Attempts to purchase a locale for the FOPEP, discussed at length on several occasions, were consistently foiled by the realisation that it was financially impossible. In September 1930 the FOPEP owed eighteen *cuotas* (monthly rent payments). The payment of contributions to the widows of members were constantly delayed, and the sick stopped receiving help.

The economic problems faced by the FOPEP were exacerbated by the consequences of the political changes which followed Leguía's overthrow. At first, the FOPEP joined in the general enthusiasm which greeted the new government. At an assembly in early September 1930, and despite vocal opposition from some delegates who pointed out that political matters were banned from debate by the FOPEP's rule book, a point we shall return to below, 'the majority of participants agreed to congratulate the Junta Militar de Gobierno'.²³ Sánchez Cerro's overthrow of Leguía inaugurated a brief political 'spring' not unlike that which followed Leguía's own accession to power in 1919. At the time labour had made significant gains, including the eight hour working day legislation and a minimum wage.²⁴ Moreover, Leguía, bereft of a power base to start with, had created a series of institutional channels to the subaltern as a means of incorporation into his 'Patria Nueva'. These included an employee law,²⁵ the Patronato de la Raza Indígena, and in the case of workers the Sección del Trabajo, a dependency of the Ministerio de Fomento.

The Sección gathered statistical material on labour, had the faculty to officially recognise labour organisations, to inspect industrial establishments, and to settle both *reclamos individuales* and *reclamos colectivos*. Procedure in dealing with disputes was standard. The claimants presented a *pliego de reclamos* to the Sección del Trabajo. A Junta de Conciliación would then be called within 48 hours, to be attended by the claimants and the industrialists. If no agreement was reached, then the matter was left to be decided by an *arbitro*, usually the Jefe de la Sección del Trabajo. If either of the parties disagreed with the ruling, then a Tribunal Arbitral was convened, composed of an *arbitro* for either side and a third

²² FOPEP, Libro de actas, 6 September 1930.

²³ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 13 September 1930.

²⁴ The success of the eight hour day strike is revised, correctly, by DS Parker, 'Peruvian Politics and the Eight-hour Day: Rethinking the 1919 General Strike' in *Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d'histoire* XXX, December 1995, p. 417-438.

²⁵ See DS Parker, *The Idea of the Middle Class: White-Collar Workers and Peruvian Society, 1900-1950*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 1998, especially chapter 5.

(usually the President of the Tribunal Arbitral) designated by the Judiciary. After having listened to both sides' case and having called all the required evidence, the Tribunal Arbitral would then emit its *fallo* (ruling). Failure to comply was, in principle, to be punished with a fine of between 5 and 20 Peruvian pounds or 10 to 30 days in prison (although this rarely happened).²⁶.

In its early days, the Sección del Trabajo appears to have been successful in contributing to a general improvement in labour conditions. It was manned by competent and young pro-labour intellectuals such as Hildebrando Castro Pozo and Agustín Haya de la Torre. Many labour unions were able to gain official recognition and secure 'pactos' regulating working conditions and setting wages, including the FOPEP. By 1923 however, relations between the Leguía regime and labour had become sour. Labour leaders were imprisoned or exiled. By 1927 all union activity was banned. We have little information on how the Sección del Trabajo functioned in the mid-1920s.²⁷ As we will see, certainly by the 1930s, there was a feeling among workers that the Sección had acquired a pro-capital bias and was incapable or unwilling to enforce either the legislation or the 'pactos'.

Nevertheless, in the early 1930s workers still turned to both the Sección and their 'pacto' as instruments of legitimation in their claims.²⁸ Both were seen as part of an implicit social contract based on social justice.²⁹ Indeed, throughout late 1930 and early 1931, the FOPEP sought the intervention of the Sección del Trabajo in its conflict with the *industriales* over the eight hour day legislation and the more general problem of unemployment. However, the FOPEP was beginning to perceive the Sección as a lame duck. Indeed, the economic crisis in combination with the political 'spring' had produced an avalanche of labour demands which in some cases, like in the mining areas of the Central Andes and in

²⁶ See 'Memoria que el Ministro de Fomento, Dr D Julio E. Ego-Aguirre presenta al Congreso Ordinario de 1920', Imprenta Torres Aguirre, Lima, 1921; 'Decreto superior ampliando el decreto reglamentario de la Sección del Trabajo, 9 de abril de 1920'. Humberto Nuñez Borja, *Legislación social peruana*, p. 140.

²⁷ The documents of the Sección del Trabajo are held at the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) in Lima. The series appears to be incomplete, there are a number of expedientes from 1920 to 1922, and many more for the 1930s. However there are only very few documents from the mid to late 1920s, and most of these concern reclamos individuales by employees. There is a general dearth of 'good' secondary literature on the Leguía period, indeed 'el Oncenio de Leguía continúa siendo un período de mitos, de opiniones polarizadas e incluso de especulaciones oportunistas'. Marta Irrozqui, 'El Perú de Leguía. Derroteros y extravíos historiográficos' in *Apuntes* 34, 1994, p. 85-101.

²⁸ According to the 'Summary of the Presidential message to the Peruvian Congress of July 28 1930' drafted by the British Minister: 'The labour office had completed its first decade to the benefit of labour and capital. During the year 64 labour societies had been re-organised and *this was a sign of the labour organisations to work in keeping with the laws of the land*. A study was made with a view to incorporating the conventions of the International Labour Organisation'. Public Record Office (England) (PRO)/Foreign Office (FO)/371/14253. Emphasis added.

²⁹ The role of social justice in the FOPEP is discussed below.

the oilfields of the far north, turned into violent confrontations with the authorities.³⁰ Perhaps it is not surprising that the Sección del Trabajo was unable to cope.³¹ By late 1930 the bakery workers had begun to seek the support of the Prefect of Lima and of the Ministro de Fomento in their grievances.³² Yet even these higher and in principle more powerful state institutions fell short of the workers' expectations. At one assembly, the Prefect was accused of disregarding the eight hour day law.³³ By November 1930, a motion was tabled to send a commission to inform the President of the Government Junta of the wage cuts planned by the *industriales*.³⁴ In quick succession, one level of government after the other was seen to fail. In other words, from the point of view of the FOPEP, the legal negotiation channels had broken down. Further evidence perhaps can be found in the unemployment statistics released by the Ministerio quoted above. According to documents from Ministerio de Fomento only 56 people had registered in a category which included bakery workers, pasta makers and cake makers in April 1931.³⁵ This grossly underestimated figure can be interpreted in two ways: either the unemployed did not register with the Ministerio or the Ministerio was more concerned with hiding unemployment than with attempting to deal with it. The general situation of unrest was heightened by the often exaggerated reactions to labour unrest of the Sánchez Cerro regime and the Junta which replaced it in 1931.³⁶ At the same time, labour, prodded by the Communist Party, took an increasingly radical stance.

In this sense, the decision to strike, which we will turn to shortly, fits neatly into a 'moral economy' argument. The bakery workers were not prompted to strike by a Pavlovian reaction to economic stimuli; the FOPEP had faced severe financial problems for at least a decade, although clearly the depression accentuated the crisis within the *gremio*. Rather, it was the (perceived) breakdown of a pre-existing equilibrium in the relations between the FOPEP and the *industriales*, prompted by the state's failure to

³⁰ See Alberto Flores Galindo, 'Los Mineros de la Cerro de Pasco, 1900-1930', in *Obras completas I*, Fundación Andina/SUR, 1993; and Dilma Davila Apolo, *Talara, los petroleros y la huelga de 1931*, BA dissertation, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1976.

³¹ One newspaper editorial complained of the inefficiency of the Sección del Trabajo in dealing with reclamos and urged less bureaucracy: 'Impresionan fuertemente el animo esa larga cola de reclamantes enpotrados en los pasajes de espera y en las oficinas mismas, donde se ventilan las reclamaciones'. The editorial suggested that the Sección move to a larger locale. *Libertad*, 3 January 1931. The Prefect of Lima, noting 'las reclamaciones obreras que, con frecuencia, se vienen formulando ante este Despacho', requested that the Sección's fallos (rulings) be transcribed to him. AGN-Ministerio del Interior (MI)-Legajo 311-Lima, Prefecto del Departamento to Director de Gobierno, 26 May 1931.

³² FOPEP, Libro de actas, 23 September.

³³ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 25 October 1930.

³⁴ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 1 November 1930.

³⁵ *El Comercio*, 7 April 1931.

³⁶ As the British vice-consul recognised during the general strike in May 1931: 'The country is certainly in a very serious state of unrest and we do not appear to get over one difficulty before starting on another, but the 'paro' of yesterday could have been avoided had it not been for the abuses of authority committed by the sub-prefect and the lack of tact on the part of the Prefect in defying the labour institutions'. PRO/FO/371/15108, Blaisdell to Balfour, 14 May 1931.

fulfil its role as mediator, which led the bakery workers to seek redress through direct action. The reverse argument can, of course, be made to explain the relative quiescence of the Leguía period. Indeed, the quiescence of the 1920s cannot be wholly attributed to coercion.

The 1931 General Strike

The FOPEP struck at the behest of the Federación de Choferes.³⁷ Indeed, the FOPEP declared that the strike had been called ‘para solidarizarnos con la Federación de Choferes en su conflicto actual’ and ‘protestar públicamente por los abusos de la policía contra los compañeros choferes en huelga’.³⁸ However, the strike was not merely a sympathy strike: by claiming solidarity with the drivers’ strike the FOPEP’s strike became part of a larger protest movement legitimated, as we will see, by the explicit support of public opinion, instead of an isolated and therefore vulnerable act of defiance of authority. This is not to say that genuine feelings of solidarity with the labour movement were totally absent within the FOPEP. In fact, such feelings were frequently aired in the assemblies. However, the FOPEP’s decision to strike had less to do with solidarity than with the belief that there remained no other way to force the authorities to take their claims against the bakery owners seriously. In the event, the decision proved to be a grave mistake.

I have no space to address the nature of the Lima taxi drivers’ strike of May 1931, which evolved into a general strike, in any detail. The strike began as a protest against what was considered an unfair monopoly which had negative consequences for Lima’s population.³⁹ The strike was considered legitimate, even by the official press. However, the CGTP, under pressure from the Communist Party, attempted to transform the strike into a catalyst for anti-state action. The CGTP was certainly successful in mobilising the vast majority of organised labour and the general strike was originally greatly successful.⁴⁰ However, as it became clear that it was the Communist Party which was pulling the strings, opposition to the CGTP’s handling of the strike flared both within the labour movement and without. It is not clear to what extent the Communist Party thought the strike could lead to a revolutionary situation. However the presence of Comintern agents in Lima, the repeated attempts to provoke armed

³⁷ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 8 May 1931.

³⁸ *El Comercio*, 9 May 1931.

³⁹ For a day to day account of the strike see Martínez de la Torre, *Apuntes*, Vol I, p. 130-190.

confrontations between the strikers and the authorities⁴¹, and polarising the situation by referring to the government Junta as 'fascist' point in such a direction. And yet, as had happened previously, the Communist Party failed to bring about anything other than brutal repression on itself. Additionally, the CGTP lost control of the strike, as the *Federación de Choferes* turned to arbitration to find a solution. In the months that followed, the *Federación de Choferes* and the CGTP were involved in a vitriolic confrontation in the columns of Lima's newspapers.⁴² As the drivers and the Junta came to a settlement, the government unleashed a wave of repression on the Communist Party. A national state of siege was declared.⁴³ In the months that followed, those communists not already in jail were captured and sent to jail, and from there to prison camps in the Amazon.

While the CGTP and the *Federación de Choferes* fought out their differences via pamphlets and on the columns of Lima's newspapers (and occasionally face to face), the FOPEP was soon facing an internal conflict of its own. Almost as soon as the strike was declared, opposition flared up within the FOPEP. It was argued that the strike had been declared too precipitately and that no 'pliego de reclamos' had yet been drafted, thus undermining its legitimacy. Indeed, the strike was abysmally organised and no real contingency plan was elaborated. Further, many felt that the strike should be partial rather than general, i.e. restricted to those bakeries which were not respecting the 'pacto'. A discussion of the drafting of the 'pliego de reclamos' ensued. Whereas some argued that it should be limited to demanding that the agreements of 1920 be respected, others suggested that new demands should be included.⁴⁴

The FOPEP's *cúpula* decided to send their *pliego* directly to the Fomento Minister, thus bypassing the Sección del Trabajo. The *pliego*, they pointed out, was much the same as that of 1920, albeit with a few modifications. However, they had been forced to draft the new *pliego* because the majority of the industriales 'se vienen burlando del pacto desde hace tiempo'.⁴⁵ Additionally, a commission was set up to lobby all the bakeries to obtain the support of some bakery owners.⁴⁶ However, by 16 May opposition to the leadership's decision to strike was growing. Moreover, as one delegate pointed out, it

⁴⁰ More than 30 sindicatos, including the *Federación de Estudiantes del Perú* and the *Confederación de Artesanos Unión Universal*, joined the strike. Martínez de la Torre, *Apuntes*, vol I, p. 159.

⁴¹ See *El Comercio* and *La Crónica*, 13 May 1931.

⁴² See *La Tribuna*, 3 June 1931.

⁴³ Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, Manuscritos, E1128: 'Decreto Ley No 7187 expedido por la Junta nacional de Gobierno declarando el estado de sitio en toda la República, Lima, 11 Junio 1931'.

⁴⁴ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 9 May 1931.

⁴⁵ AGN-Ministerio de Fomento (MF)-Reclamos Colectivos (RC)-Caja 5: Expediente 106, Jorge R Gutiérrez and Alejandro Antón, FOPEP, to Ministro Fomento, 11 May 1931.

was becoming clear that whether the strike was partial or general mattered little since bread could be easily obtained anywhere in Lima. This view was confirmed by an article in *La Prensa*, which claimed that 'in some establishments bread was produced in great quantities'.⁴⁷ Another delegate argued that bread was being produced by apprentices 'ciegos y malogrados', but delegate Ramírez corrected him: those who worked were professionals. Further, Ramírez noted that many of the people in the assembly were 'amarillos' who had worked the previous evening. It was becoming clear to the FOPEP that the principal obstacle to the success of the strike was its failure to get the bakery workers, especially the *maestros*, to adhere to the strike call.⁴⁸ The reason was simple. As the *maestro* of the *Lugón* bakery told a *federado* who tried to convince him to join the strike: he did not recognise the FOPEP because 'it did not give him a single loaf for his children'.⁴⁹ The more senior *federados*, no doubt feeling that many were losing hope, called on the assembly not to give up the struggle. One delegate claimed that victory was near after eleven years of 'tyranny on the part of the *industriales*'. Despite a growing disillusion with the Sección del Trabajo, it appears that for bakery workers the *industriales*, and their intransigence, and not the state, were to blame for the conflict.

When the commission sent to the Ministerio de Fomento returned with the devastating news that the bakery owners rejected all the demands, it became clear that the strike was unsuccessful. Again traitors were blamed. Greater militancy was urged. Significantly, some argued that it was now necessary to take their grievances directly to the President of the Government Junta, a further indication that the FOPEP had lost all hope of obtaining justice from either the Sección del Trabajo or the Ministerio. It was a sign too, of the bakery workers' belief that, ultimately, justice, or in any case victory, lay with the head of state. Meanwhile, the *cúpula* tried to close ranks. Earlier that day, one delegate had been expelled from the FOPEP, in front of 514 delegates, following the revelation that he had worked the previous day. What was perhaps a harsh decision, especially since in all likelihood many of the FOPEP's members had worked recently, nevertheless followed a clear logic: the punishment, expulsion from the FOPEP, would frighten other members into obeying the strike. However, as will become evident, such reasoning was based on the premise that expulsion from the FOPEP would be considered punishment, which was false.

⁴⁶ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 9 May 1931.

⁴⁷ *La Prensa*, 13 May 1931.

⁴⁸ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 17 May 1931.

⁴⁹ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 18 May 1931.

In an attempt to find new ways of keeping the strike alive, it was suggested that a more public campaign should be waged, and in particular that it should be made clear to consumers that the *industriales* had reduced the weight of bread, and that they were using the strike to ‘exploit the public’. Letters asking for support were sent to several labour organisations, although, as was later pointed out, few were ever answered.⁵⁰ A pamphlet was distributed, claiming:

Ha llegado el momento de sacurdinos de todo temor y proceder con toda energía a hacer respetar las ocho horas de trabajo y el sueldo reglamentario y con más ahinco ahora que contamos con el apoyo de las autoridades, quienes estan dispuestas a atender toda queja que hagamos en demanda de justicia. Tened presente que esta declaración ha dado el señor Prefecto a nuestra comisión de reclamos nombrada el sabado 17 del presente.⁵¹

It is worth noting the emphasis placed on ‘the support of the authorities’. These were legitimate grievances and justice was on the strikers’ side. Fear could be safely shaken off, the ‘authorities’, the ‘prefect’, in other words the state, representing order and power, were on the FOPEP’s side. Not surprisingly perhaps, the Jefe de la Sección del Trabajo’s suggestion that the FOPEP attend the Tribunal Arbitral was rejected. Whether the bakery workers reading the pamphlet were convinced to shun the Tribunal Arbitral or not is difficult to say. However it does appear that the cúpula of the FOPEP believed this rhetoric. On 20 May, one member claimed that it was because of the ‘tyrannical government’ that the bakery owners could do what they were doing, but this is the only recorded instance throughout the dispute when the government is described so negatively.

On the same day, the FOPEP debated whether to approach the Municipality and request the free re-sale of bread, with one federado arguing that this would result in the *industriales* ‘having to kneel in front of us’.⁵² Again, the FOPEP agreed to stand firm by its demands, and voted to turn to the Government Junta if no satisfactory agreement was reached in the Ministerio.⁵³ As delegate Antón told a journalist from *La Tribuna* who visited the olla común (literally a common cooking pot) set up by the strikers, the bakery workers still hoped that the public authorities and all the honest bureaucrats would discern the reasons for their grievances and that a verdict of justice would help calm the worries

⁵⁰ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 19 May 1931.

⁵¹ AGN-Ministerio de Fomento-Reclamos Colectivos-Caja 5: Expediente 106, Pamphlet: ‘Al gremio de panaderos’.

⁵² The re-sale of bread, usually in adapted tricycles or on street corners, had been banned by the Municipality of Lima in 1925. Tejada, *La cuestión del pan*, p. 83.

generated among the working class by the *industriales*' disregard for social legislation. He added: 'all that we ask is specifically consigned in our respective laws so that it is only a question of abiding by the law to accede to our grievances'. This prompted *La Tribuna* to ask 'what can the working class expect from the Sección del Trabajo if the latter is not strong enough to make the industriales comply [with the law]?'⁵⁴

By then, however, concern was being voiced in the FOPEP at the general 'desaliento'. In effect, on 22 May, after five minutes of recess, during which the 447 members discussed whether the strike should continue, one delegate, speaking on behalf of the assembly, declared that most wanted the strike to be suspended.⁵⁵ That feeling was echoed by another delegate on the following day, who argued that 'most compañeros want to work because they are feeling hungry.' Ironically, that same day, following a lengthy discussion in the Sección del Trabajo, the bakery owners agreed to all but one of the FOPEP's demands. The rejected demand, point one, was left to be decided upon separately. Moreover, it was agreed that in bakeries owned by foreigners, 70 percent of the workforce would have to be made up by Peruvians.⁵⁶ Two days later, the FOPEP voted to suspend the strike, 176 voting for and 28 against.⁵⁷ The following day a nine point declaration, announcing the suspension of the strike, appeared in *La Tribuna*, the APRA newspaper.⁵⁸

Negotiations at the Sección del Trabajo

For the *cúpula* of the FOPEP, the result of the strike had been a severe defeat, despite the fact that only one of their grievances had not been settled. This grievance, 'el primer punto' as it appears in the *libros de actas*, referred to the FOPEP's right to hand out the membership carnets to its members and thus effectively control who could work as a bakery worker. The bakery owners wanted the Ministerio de Fomento to take over this function. As the *cúpula* recognised, such a change would reduce the FOPEP's capacity to influence and control the membership of the gremio, and would probably lead to its dissolution.

⁵³ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 21 May 1931.

⁵⁴ *La Tribuna*, 22 may 1931.

⁵⁵ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 22 May 1931.

⁵⁶ AGN-MF-RC-5:106, Junta de Conciliación, 23 May 1931.

⁵⁷ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 24 May 1931.

⁵⁸ *La Tribuna*, 25 May 1931.

However, on 24 May, Gutiérrez defiantly announced to the FOPEP that if the Sección del Trabajo's ruling on point one went against them, a general strike would be called. By 10 June, no ruling had been issued and a letter of complaint was sent to the Ministerio de Fomento. Repeatedly, the representatives of the *industriales* failed to show up to the Sección de Trabajo, prompting strong protests from the FOPEP which criticised the Sección's bias towards the *industriales* and for failing to impose fines.⁵⁹ Soon enough, the criticism had spread to newspaper editorials and *La Tribuna* was first on the scene, decrying that after two months of conflict no solution had yet been reached to the bakery workers' strike:

Esta censurable somnolencia en un despacho llamado a ser ejemplo de celeridad y firmeza, innumeradas veces la hemos criticado pero con un espíritu que pueda fomentar su reforma eficiente y plenamente respetable. Lejos de eso, tolerando el gobierno la burla de tal o cual personaje influyente, no habrá hecho sino sumir en el más triste marasmo a este despacho regulador de los conflictos sociales cuya misión controladora aún no ha sido tomada en debida cuenta por su personal ni por los que se afanan de tomar gran interés en los conflictos sociales.⁶⁰

On 10 July delegates from the FOPEP finally met with the *industriales* at the Sección del Trabajo to begin discussing point one. The bakery workers argued that what they demanded was simply 'el cumplimiento de un derecho conquistado el 17 de octubre de 1919' and 'la única cuestión que se planteaba era el cumplimiento del pacto de 1919 y de 1920 en el punto materia de controversia'. According to the *industriales* the pact of 1920, which supplanted and therefore nullified the pact of 1919, contained no clause to the effect that bakery workers had to be members of the FOPEP. Indeed they would later argue: 'hubo de derogarse el laudo de 1919 en vista de la imposibilidad que se encontró para su cumplimiento y en el (sic) clamoroso mal uso que los favorecidos hicieron de la concesión que se les hizo'.⁶¹ The FOPEP argued that both the 1919 and the 1920 pacts granted them the right to designate workers. The FOPEP's perceived right to impose a closed shop, which in practice it had never been able to exercise, was at stake. No doubt, in the context of the crisis, with the balance of power firmly on the *industriales'* side and as increasing numbers of bakery workers severed links to the Federation, the

⁵⁹ *La Tribuna*, 14 June 1931.

⁶⁰ *La Tribuna*, 10 July 1931.

⁶¹ AGN-MF-RC-5:106, Representatives of *industriales* to President of the Tribunal Arbitral, 30 August 1931.

closed shop was seen as the one chance of survival for the FOPEP. No agreement was reached, and a Tribunal Arbitral was called.⁶²

The transcripts of the sessions at the Tribunal Arbitral and the letters sent to its President by both parties constitute an invaluable source for our understanding of how negotiations took place and how and what arguments were made. Of course, they need to be treated critically, especially in relation to the workers' statements. These are the 'official transcripts', the mediated discourse of the subaltern. Yet official and mediated as they may be, they are nevertheless relevant: this is how the FOPEP chose to speak in the circumstances. As we will see, at least in this case, the official transcript was not all that different from the (semi-)hidden transcript of the *libro de actas*.⁶³

The industriales based their argument on the question of freedom, the freedom to work and to contract, which they claimed was the 'greatest' of all freedoms, so great that no public authority, owners or labour association had ever attempted against it. To grant the FOPEP control over who could be employed as a bakery worker would be to grant it a monopoly. Moreover, there was no fundamental reason to do so: 'el obrero panadero es un obrero como cualquier otro, no es un profesional, no tiene preparación alguna, es un simple trabajador que adquiere los conocimientos rudimentarios en un taller; que con la actual mecanización, por incipiente que aún sea entre nosotros, ya no desarrolla esfuerzo ni mental ni muscular alguno, pues sólo ejecuta una simple acción mecánica del trabajo'. Indeed, the work could be carried out by 'muchachos' (young boys). Yet, they continued, the wages of these workers were the highest in Peru and the bakery industry was poor: 'no se trata de grandes establecimientos industriales, dirigidos por altos jefes, sino de simples amasijos en los cuales el patron vive al lado de sus obreros compartiendo con ellos sus afanes y fatigas'. Indeed, they argued, the majority of industriales took an active part in the *faena* (everyday work) of the bakeries. The dangers faced by the industriales were the same dangers faced by the workers. This point is indicative of how the industriales perceived the bakery workers and their industry or perhaps more precisely of how they wanted them to be perceived by others, and particularly by public authorities. Indeed, by presenting workers as mere automatons, or appendages to machines, they could argue that workers could not be given the responsibility to decide

⁶² AGN-MF-RC-5:106, Junta de Conciliación, 10 July 1931.

⁶³ Clearly the *libro de actas* is home to an official transcript of its own, the labour union jargon. Moreover, it is likely that much went unrecorded, perhaps even for security reasons. The *libros de actas* were often confiscated by the police, so it is fair to assume that

on matters such as who could and could not work in the industry. By presenting themselves as little more than workers, the industriales presented an image of an industry where both owner and worker were equals, where no exploitation could occur for it would affect the owner as much as the worker.

However, the industriales' strongest argument was that to grant the FOPEP a monopoly would constitute a defiance of authority. Indeed, if the Tribunal ruled in favour of the FOPEP: 'no sólo caería bajo la autoridad de un gremio siempre apasionado y violento, la libertad y los capitales de la industria panificadora sino también la respetabilidad y el prestigio de la autoridad'. Indeed, if the monopoly was granted, only the small group adhered to these 'ideas utópicas y demoleadoras' would be able to work. At the same time, they pointed to the illegitimacy of the workers' reclaims: they had struck seconding the drivers' strike so as to take advantage of the social upheaval at the time. Most workers, they argued, were peace and work loving, as borne out by the fact that during the strike bread supplies were never undermined. In other words, and thus the political argument took shape, to grant a monopoly would be to grant power to a small band of trouble makers, thus undermining not only the industry and its owners but the state itself: 'los que patrocinan esta imposible reforma social, son los agitadores de oficio, los perturbadores del orden social, los que proclaman ideas contrarias a la Patria y a sus instituciones, son en fin, los que explotando la buena fe de nuestro pueblo y de sus propios camaradas, tienen en constante agitación y zozobra al país'. Indeed, they warned:

Esta reclamación desprovista de todo fundamento legal, moral y social, que solo tiende a entablar y sostener una injusta, innecesaria e inhumana lucha entre el capital y el trabajo, perturbaría hondamente la vida industrial del país, toda vez que como ya lo dejamos expuesto, esta imposible conquista no se quedaría reducida en la pobre industria panificadora, sino que ella sería el principio de una sustancial transformación en el actual sistema y organización del trabajo y de las industrias del Perú.

In a nutshell, to grant a monopoly to the FOPEP would be the first step towards communism.⁶⁴

Jorge Gutiérrez, the bakery workers' representative, made a strong argument of his own. Gutiérrez rejected the industriales claim that the FOPEP did not represent the gremio on two counts.

any incriminating speech went purposefully unrecorded. Nevertheless, there is little to indicate that anything radical or 'sinister' was left out of the FOPEP's libro de actas, and labour jargon notwithstanding, they are as close to the hidden transcript as one can get.

⁶⁴ AGN-MF-RC-5:106, Representatives of industriales to President of the Tribunal Arbitral, 30 August 1931 and 10 September 1931.

First, only very few bakery workers were not members: 'bien es sabido que en todo apostalado no falta un Judas y hasta en la mesa del divino Rey de Galilea compuesta sólo de trece personas existió Judas que vendió a su señor. Que de extraño tiene que de una colectividad de 869 individuos, existan 30 que no formen parte de ella?'. The second argument perhaps held more weight: the FOPEP was recognised by all government institutions, both national and municipal. However, the originality and perhaps the strength of Gutiérrez argument lay elsewhere. He argued that what they demanded was not a monopoly, they too were in favour of freedom of work, 'siempre y cuando no vaya esa libertad hasta el extremo de oponerse a las buenas costumbres y a la salud pública que son precisamente las mismas restricciones impuestas por la Constitución del Estado'. How else to avoid both morally and physically 'tarados', such as 'tuberculosos', 'sifiliticos', 'sarnosos', assassins and thieves from working in bakeries? Not only was the FOPEP vetting a public health necessity, it also coincided with the Constitution, and therefore the state.

Yet, the argument went even further. Gutiérrez pointed out that the FOPEP demanded that workers be 'sindicalizados' not only for general welfare but also because individually, syndicalisation resulted in private welfare, in other words, 'la disciplina, el orden, la metodización y la culturización del hombre por el hombre'. The FOPEP, Gutierrez noted, had a valuable mutualist function: it protected workers in an industry characterised by unhygienic conditions and mortality, where workers were exposed to illnesses which were not even 'indemnizables'. Moreover, syndicalisation was necessary not only in order to improve the organisation of work but also to avoid 'desviaciones de carácter político o de otro matiz que no sea el referente al trabajo y sólo al trabajo'. In other words, Gutiérrez turned the industriales argument on its head: the FOPEP was not a group of trouble makers; on the contrary, it was indispensable protection against communism. By the same token, it was a sign of progress. Indeed, Gutiérrez stressed that the League of Nations had agreed to recommend to governments of 'los estados civilizados del mundo, la constitución de las corporaciones o gremios de trabajadores, en los distintos ramos de actividad humana'. Again, Gutiérrez turned the industriales' argument on its head. The FOPEP was not an obstacle to progress, but progress itself, and if the country wanted to form part of the modern world, it would have to support the FOPEP.

Gutiérrez went on to claim that the real monopoly was held by the industriales, who restricted competition by imposing a minimum distance between bakeries. Indeed, Gutiérrez stressed, competition

would benefit the consumer. Moreover, he ridiculed one industrial's claim that the industry was in crisis, pointing out that the price of flour had fallen from 17 soles per *quintal* in 1919 to 9.50 soles, wages had not been raised since 1920, demand had grown considerably and owners had become rich enough to purchase fincas for themselves. In proto-Keynesian style, Gutiérrez remarked: 'no hay duda que el principio económico-social de que a mayores salarios, mayor volumen de consumo, es fundamental y básico, declarado así por la Federación Americana del Trabajo en su última reunión'. But the pinnacle of Gutiérrez argument were his concluding remarks:

Hoy por hoy la evolución social está en marcha, nada ni nadie la podrá detener i las relaciones del estado con las organizaciones obreras, constituyen no ya un credo político, sino una convicción de carácter sociológico, profundamente socialitario. Hoy el estado no es la figura abstracta ni la entidad sin contenido. Hoy el estado es una concreción viviente, es el resumen i el compendio del modo de pensar i de sentir de la clase productora. Hoy el estado es el mismo pueblo dándose las leyes en pro de su mejoramiento y de sus legítimos derechos de vida. Hoy el estado es el conjunto de gremios i sindicatos en los cuales se compendian todas las actividades lícitas humanas. Nada ni nadie podrá destruir estas agremiaciones i nada ni nadie podrá impedir que ellas regulen el trabajo, dentro del respeto mutuo i reciproco, dentro de la libertad i dentro de la armonía social.

In effect, Gutiérrez argued that the interests of the FOPEP were the same as those of the state (or indeed of international organisations), much as the *industriales* had argued. Clearly, the decisive factor would be the state: it was through the state's support, or patronage, that victory could be won. Whether this corresponded to a belief in the state's legitimacy or awareness of its coercive power to enforce sanctions on the losing side cannot be satisfactorily addressed with the available evidence. The truth no doubt, lies somewhere in between.

What emerges from these debates in the Tribunal Arbitral is a clearer idea of how the FOPEP perceived power relations. For all the Peruvian state's weakness and illegitimacy elsewhere, especially in the more marginal regions of the country, in the relations between the FOPEP and the *industriales* the state equated power (in this case control of the labour supply in the bakery industry) and to obtain power it was necessary to woo the state to one's cause. As such, both parties played on the illusion of danger,

the fear of communism, and the aspiration of progress. Both pointed out to the state the benefits of an implicit alliance. Both were aware that negotiations were not directed at or conducted with the opposing party but at/with the state, the real arbiter. Indeed, Gutiérrez sought to show that an outcome favourable to the FOPEP was equally favourable to the state. The same argument was made by the industriales representatives. As such, both played to the state's tune. It is noteworthy that the FOPEP, or Gutiérrez in any case, were particularly good players.

A little over four months after the Tribunal Arbitral was installed, on 16 November 1931, the judge announced his verdict against the FOPEP.⁶⁵ In his *fallo* (ruling), Judge García, accepting the *industriales'* case, declared that the workers' demand 'rompe el necesario equilibrio y las cordiales relaciones que deben existir entre patronos y obreros, con perjuicio evidente para ambos igualmente interesados en la producción' and 'se halla en pugna abierta con el principio universal de la amplia libertad del trabajo, garantía establecida en el artículo cuarentiseis de la Constitución Política del Estado y en el artículo cincuenta de la misma, que prohíbe los monopolios en forma absoluta'. Moreover, he noted that not all workers were in favour of the demand, referring to a letter sent to the Ministro de Fomento on 26 May 1931 by a number of bakery workers (four pages of signatures) who had continued to work during the strike so that 'no le faltase el principal artículo de alimentación diaria, ni al vecindario, ni a las instituciones de asistencia social.....'. The authenticity of the document was not discussed, but it is not impossible that the *industriales* had a hand in it.⁶⁶ For the *industriales* the ruling was a significant victory, with deep implications, as borne out by the prominence given to it in the newspaper of the Sociedad de Industriales en Panificación as late as 1944.⁶⁷

Of course, the legal reasons for the Tribunal Arbitral's *fallo* were fairly clear. However, they were at odds with the debates, which as we have seen were of a definite political and even moral nature. It is fair to speculate that the *fallo* was a legally worded political statement. Indeed, in his summing up the judge noted 'que conceder a la buena o mala voluntad de la Federación el derecho de voto en la designación de los laboristas, rompe el necesario equilibrio y las cordiales relaciones que deben existir

⁶⁵ AGN-MF-RC-5:106, Tribunal Arbitral, 16 November 1931.

⁶⁶ AGN-MF-RC-5:106, Several 'operarios de panadería' to Ministro de Fomento, 26 May 1931. According to Dr Baglietto Cisneros, the FOPEP's *arbitro*, who had voted against the President's *fallo*, these workers were a small minority of the total 300 bakery workers, and their letter should not have been taken into consideration 'cuanto porque es un expediente muy manoseado por los Capitalistas el dividir a los trabajadores a fin de hacerlos aparecer como que no proceden de acuerdo en sus reclamaciones de carácter colectivo' AGN-MF-RC-5:106, Enrique Baglietto Cisneros to Presidente Tribunal Arbitral, 19 November 1931.

entre patrones y obreros con perjuicio evidente para ambos igualmente interesados en la producción'. A ruling in favour of the FOPEP would have set a precedent for other unions, perhaps not as moderate as the FOPEP itself. Moreover, it could have been read as a licence for further demands. In short, it was not politically expedient.

Although some protests at the *fallo* were made by the FOPEP in the local press,⁶⁸ the defeat in the Tribunal Arbitral, indeed the whole process of negotiation, featured less than prominently in the assembly proceedings of the FOPEP. As was clear to most within the *cúpula*, the fundamental defeat incurred by the FOPEP concerned not the negotiations with the industriales but the FOPEP's evident lack of control over the gremio. As early as May, when the strike had been lifted, some in the executive claimed a victory. They argued that they had obtained recognition of their right to an eight hour day and of the mandatory wage (which stood at 5.30 soles) among other things and claimed that 'no se levanta la huelga, se suspende', 'es un descanso'. Others, however, were far clearer about the situation. Virgilio Racchumi pointed out that bread had been easily available throughout the strike and that most of Lima had been simply unaware that a strike was going on. As was made clear in the meetings throughout June, much of the blame lay with the *maestros* who continued to work despite the strike calls from the FOPEP. Consecutive attempts to bring the *maestros* to the FOPEP's locale had resulted in failure. It seems apparent that the FOPEP's control of its members had been much reduced, not so much by the relative defeat in the Sección del Trabajo, but by its incapacity to enforce compliance with its own resolutions. The latter is not altogether surprising. Little material support was provided for strikers because, as we saw, the FOPEP was insolvent. An olla común was organised, a feature also of the drivers' strike. *Obolos* (gifts in specie) were received from a few labour organisations, in particular the bakery workers in nearby Miraflores, Barranco and Chorrillos, as well as from some sympathetic industriales. Yet, overall these measures amounted to very little. As the strike entered its third week, many had returned to work. It no doubt began to dawn on the workers that if the bakery owners agreed to most of the FOPEP's demands in the negotiations at the Sección del Trabajo, which included that 70 percent of workers be *nacionales* and that no apprentices be employed, it was precisely because they knew that the FOPEP was in no position to impose these agreements on them. Further, in the weeks

⁶⁷ *Panificación*, Año VIII, No. 1, June 1944, 5-7.

which followed the strikes, the FOPEP received numerous complaints from its members that the bakery owners were in many cases refusing to take back those workers who had gone on strike. In some cases the bakery owners took advantage of the FOPEP's attempts to provide employment for the unemployed. One of the agreements reached in the Sección de Trabajo had been to establish a rotation system. Several formulas appear to have been discussed although the FOPEP eventually settled on a cycle of three work days followed by two rest days during which the unemployed would be given work.⁶⁹ In some cases this led to bakery owners making some workers rest more than others, the latter typically were those who had worked during the strike.⁷⁰ Again, the FOPEP used the usual channels of protest, writing to the Ministerio de Fomento. However, there is little evidence that the letters were successful in halting the practice.

The FOPEP proved incapable of either effectively disciplining its members or forcing the bakery owners to comply with their agreements. Little or no assistance could be expected from the Sección de Trabajo, which as we have seen was perceived as both unwilling and unable to enforce the pacto. Moreover, the bakery owners on the whole could rely on the support of the *maestros* while the other workers could easily be replaced from the vast pool of unemployed labour available in the city. All in all, the FOPEP had become both financially bankrupt and redundant in its functions. The decision to join the general strike had clearly been a serious mistake.⁷¹ The FOPEP was not financially capable of sustaining a long strike nor of forcing its members to observe the strike. The strike had therefore played directly into the hands of the bakery owners. As it became clear that neither negotiation nor direct action were sufficient on their own to achieve their goals, it is not surprising that an alternative solution was sought.

The FOPEP, the CGTP, and the Communist Party

Throughout this period, the FOPEP's opposition to the CGTP was a recurring theme in assembly discussions. On 7 November 1930, the FOPEP failed to discuss a motion to recall its delegate to the CGTP's Plenum⁷² when the locale was closed by the police.⁷³ In March 1931, the FOPEP agreed with

⁶⁸ *La Tribuna*, 26 November 1931 and 4 December 1931.

⁶⁹ *La Tribuna*, 25 May 1931.

⁷⁰ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 28 May 1931.

⁷¹ Indeed, the choferes were at one point blamed for the FOPEP's defeat. FOPEP, Libros de actas, 1 August 1931.

⁷² According to one newspaper, the Plenum was attended by 105 delegates representing 60,000 'obreros organizados'. *Vanguardia, Tribuna de la Izquierda Universitaria*, No 4, December 1930.

Gutiérrez's argument that the CGTP 'eleva por mal camino a la masa trabajadora' and voted not to send delegates.⁷⁴ In April, in the midst of a discussion on unemployment, one member opposed the sending of delegates on the grounds that the FOPEP should not get involved in political questions, and that in any case the CGTP was very 'separada de nuestra institución'. Finally he argued, somewhat mysteriously, that there were no unemployed in the FOPEP. Another federado immediately replied that there were many unemployed, and that the CGTP was trying to find ways to give employment to them. After further discussion, the FOPEP voted not to send delegates but agreed to send a letter to the CGTP explaining why the FOPEP had taken such a decision.⁷⁵ It is clear that the FOPEP was divided over the CGTP, and further, that the majority, if we assume that the voting was representative, was more against affiliation than for it. The net result is that when on 7 May the FOPEP declared itself on strike, it did so independently of the CGTP.

Indeed, unlike the drivers, the bakery workers never turned to the CGTP for guidance or help during their strike. Yet both the Federación de Choferes and the FOPEP were strongly criticised for their 'amarillaje' at the CGTP congress held on 31 May 1931. The CGTP claimed now to represent 36 labour organisations.⁷⁶ Although weakened by the outcome of the general strike and the increased state repression, it remained a significant force, not least from the point of view of the number of unions it claimed to represent. Following the strike, the CGTP sent letters to the FOPEP on several occasions. Although these were often read at the assemblies, they were seldom commented on and unfortunately their content was not reproduced in the *libro de actas*. However, it is likely that the CGTP was trying to bring the FOPEP back into its ranks: it believed, or in any case wanted to give the impression, that the

⁷³ FOPEP, Libros de actas, 7 November 1930. According to Julio Portocarrero, a textile worker and Communist Party cadre, the Plenum was inaugurated by Eudocio Ravines, the Communist Party's leader with the following speech: 'En nombre del Partido Comunista. En nombre de ese partido que fundara Vladimir Ilich Uliánov, Lenin! En nombre de ese partido que condujera a los batallones de hierro del proletariado soviético hacia la conquista y el triunfo de la revolución! En nombre de ese partido, saludo al Plenum de la Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú!'. *Sindicalismo Peruano*, Gráfica Labor, Lima, 1987, p. 213. Indeed, one aprista newspaper noted: 'El Plenum limeño ha transcurrido así en un ambiente de teatralidad y de inconsistencia. Nada sino palabras de odio y de risible confucionismo, son las que se han producido. Entre gritos agrios, se han dado muchas vivas a las futuras y proximas republicas soviéticas aimara, quechua y de la costa!' Moreover, it pointed to the surprising quiescence of the political authorities, speculating that a communist-civilista plot was at hand to destroy aprismo, 'y lo que ello más temen, (...) hayismo'. It warned: 'Y juegan con fuego'. *APRA*, No 5, 9 November 1930.

⁷⁴ FOPEP, Libros de actas, 21 March 1931.

⁷⁵ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 25 April 1931. Unfortunately, this document has not been found.

⁷⁶ Martínez de la Torre, *Apuntes*, Vol III, p. 299.

CGTP had been strengthened by the general strike and probably expected that the FOPEP would only be too willing to re-join.⁷⁷ However, the FOPEP repeatedly refused to have anything to do with the CGTP.

The CGTP claimed, and this has been repeated by certain scholars,⁷⁸ that this was because the bakery workers remained under the influence of anarchosyndicalism. Undeniably, the FOPEP considered itself syndicalist and apolitical, or perhaps, anti-political: as we have seen, the debates which took place on whether to affiliate to the CGTP were marked by calls to reject affiliation on the grounds that the *central* had become a political rather than a syndical institution. However, the 'anti-politicism' of the FOPEP was only indirectly linked to anarchism. Certainly, the FOPEP had been host to leading anarchists, most notably Manuel Carraciolo Levano and his son Delfín Levano.⁷⁹ By the early 1930s however, the influence of anarchism within the FOPEP was minimal.⁸⁰ Moreover, the FOPEP's 'anti-politicism' referred not to the state but rather to party politics. As such it was a reaction to the political interference and cronyism which characterised many of the worker societies earlier in the century⁸¹. According to the FOPEP's *reglamento*, members were quite within their rights to join a political party. However, politics, and political discussion, were banned in the FOPEP and in most if not all sindicatos and federaciones of this period.⁸² In its rhetoric, the FOPEP adhered to 'sindicalismo' or 'sindicalismo revolucionario'. According to Arturo Sabroso, a textile worker turned Aprista in the 1930s:

El Sindicalismo Revolucionario, nacido de una inminente necesidad proletaria es el medio por excelencia que propende a la organización perfecta de los trabajadores. Surgió en hora feliz, cuando los obreros para agruparse tenían el imperativo de afiliarse a sectas discrepantes. Frente al anarquismo, bolchevismo y demás 'ismos' habidos y por haber, la estructura sindical resuelve el problema unionista de clase, por haber dentro de este sistema todas las tendencias ideológicas: el anarquista como el socialista, el creyente como el ateo, encuentran en el

⁷⁷ A CGTP communiqué claimed: 'Como resultado de la huelga general, en todo el país han crecido no sólo las simpatías hacia la CGTP, sino que sus cuadros se han robustecido considerablemente'. *La Tribuna*, 22 May 1931.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Sulmont: '[La CGTP] encontró resistencia en algunos gremios como la Federación de Panaderos, principal representante de los anarquistas puros', *El movimiento obrero en el Perú*, p. 119.

⁷⁹ On the Levanos, see Tejada, *La cuestión del pan*, esp p. 195-209; Pareja, *Anarquismo y sindicalismo*, passim, and Guillermo Sánchez Ortiz, *Delfín Levano, Biografía de un líder sindical (1895-1941)*, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, 1985.

⁸⁰ After the end of the strike, Manuel Carraciolo Levano returned to the FOPEP; why he had been absent is not clear. However, his presence did not significantly change the FOPEP's character, and while he was listened to and apparently respected, it is more likely that this was because of his seniority and experience as a 'luchador' than because he was one of the stalwarts of anarchism. Throughout this period, Delfín was in hospital recovering from a long stint in prison.

⁸¹ See Blanchard, *Origins of the Peruvian Labor Movement*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1982.

⁸² According to Luis E. Gómez, 'Los sindicatos no pueden banderizarse con ninguna tendencia política, porque de la parcialización política deviene la discrepancia y por consiguiente el divisionismo que traería por consecuencia la desilusión del frente único y, por

sindicalismo la defensa común de sus intereses; sus principios: Libertad y Justicia Social, lo han hecho brújula de las masas asalariadas... El término revolucionario explica nuestra ansiedad por todo lo que sea innovación progresista, nunca por la adopción de medios terroristas que producen la desolación y la muerte.⁸³

Of course, the FOPEP's statutes contained the usual *anarquisant* rhetoric 'que la Sociedad humana, por su defectuosa actual, divide fatalmente a los miembros que la componen, en capitalistas y trabajadores; Que hay antagonismo de intereses entre capitalistas y trabajadores, dada la forma como se desarrolla la industria, basada en la explotación del hombre por el hombre'.⁸⁴ To an extent, sindicalismo shared with anarchism a belief in a future proletarian utopia. However, sindicalismo promoted gradual negotiation with the state rather than violent revolution as a means to achieve it. Indeed, the FOPEP sought not to destroy the state, but rather:

La reducción de las horas de labor, la higienización de los talleres, la abolición del trabajo nocturno, el auxilio a los envejecidos en el trabajo, por parte de los industriales; y la mutualidad entre los compañeros ... luchar por que los jornales esten en relación con el costo de la vida; procurar el mejor trato a la personalidad del asociado, la seguridad en el trabajo, la limitación en la labor, y que en los accidentes del trabajo los patrones indemnizen a los accidentes, y salir en defensa de estos.⁸⁵

These objectives were all part and parcel of the notion of *Justicia Social*. Indeed, according to Alan Dawson:

The notion of *Justicia Social* was central to the thinking of most workers societies in Lima and Callao before the First World War. Within its terms class differentiation was accepted but not class warfare. The State, far from being seen as an instrument of class, was conceived of as a benevolent, interventionist body guaranteeing certain minimum standards for the less privileged classes. The latter was not to be achieved by any means of any scheme based on the doctrines of exaggerated socialism, to the impossible extreme of redistributing the wealth of the rich among the poor, but principally by means of firm action to prevent exploitation by employers and to

ende, el desmenbramiento de la lucha por nuestras reivindicaciones inmediatas de las cuales se aprovecharían nuestros eternos explotadores'. *Sindicalismo*, pamphlet, n/d, p. 13.

⁸³ Arturo Sabroso, *Replicas Proletarias*, Editorial Minerva, Lima, 1934, 55-56.

⁸⁴ *Estatutos y reglamentos*, p. 3.

curtail the activities of 'monopolisers' and 'speculators' who were invariably responsible for any adverse alteration to the 'just price'.⁸⁶

Pragmatism, rather than ideology, characterised the sindicalistas' dealings with the state.⁸⁷ Indeed, sindicalismo was considered above ideological squabbling,⁸⁸ it was a moral stance, and a path to proletarian redemption. The FOPEP's objectives included: 'Elevar el nivel moral e intelectual de sus asociados, creandoles amor al estudio y despejando su mente de prejuicios y absurdos convencionalismos' and 'Fomentar la ilustración y mayor cultura de sus asociados, por medio del establecimiento de una biblioteca, o de conferencias y veladas de carácter científico, artístico (sic) o sociológicos'.

If anarchism was not to blame for the FOPEP's desertion, perhaps APRA was the culprit. On 30 May, a delegate from the CGTP was sent to the FOPEP to inquire as to why it had dissociated from the *central*. Gutiérrez declared that there were 'political colours' within the CGTP. Again, it was decided not to send delegates to the forthcoming CGTP congress. Almost as a provocation, Gutiérrez announced that the FOPEP was supporting the re-organisation of the 'sindical obrera', i.e. the CGTP.⁸⁹ The same day, an article signed by Virgilio Racchumi appeared in *La Tribuna*. It declared:

La FOPEP consecuente con sus principios de organización sindical revolucionaria y con vista de la división que existe en la línea recta que deben tener trazada los trabajadores en general, división que nos lleva inevitablemente al abismo en la desorganización, la derrota y la lucha en nuestros sectores en su asamblea del 24 de los corrientes acordó nombrar un comité que se encargue de reorganizar la 'Central [Sindical] Obrera' que responda al anhelo de los trabajadores y en la cual se elimine los intereses de circulo que predominan en nuestro ambiente.⁹⁰

A few days later, an editorial, probably written by Arturo Sabroso and titled: 'El deber del momento: La reorganización de la Central Obrera', picked up the theme. It called for the sindicatos to send delegates for the re-organisation and declared:

⁸⁵ *Estatutos y reglamentos*, p. 5.

⁸⁶ Alan Dawson, *Politics and the Labour Movement in Lima, 1919-1931*, PhD dissertation, Cambridge University, 1981, p. 25. The quotations are from the newspaper *Ilustración Obrera*, 20 January 1918.

⁸⁷ Ruth Thompson has made a similar argument for Argentina. 'The Limitations of Ideology in the Early Argentina Labour Movement: Anarchism in the Trade Unions', in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 16:1, 1984. See also Thompson's article as well as the other articles for a comparative perspective in Marcel Van Linden and Wayne Thorpe (eds.), *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1990.

⁸⁸ According to Gómez, 'El sindicalismo en esta era contemporanea, no es ciencia ni ideologia'. *Sindicalismo*, p. 14.

⁸⁹ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 30 May 1931.

Las tendencias políticas afuera. Aunque sabemos que quienes toman a su cargo la labor tan ardua [of re-organisation of the CGTP] son elementos convencidos, no demás repetirlo: no debe admitirse la intromisión de partidos políticos dentro de la organización sindical. Traicionaríamos nuestras más caras convicciones si pensáramos en otra manera porque hoy militamos en un partido político y si usamos de este vocero principista para sentar expectativas de otro orden. El P[artido] A[prista] P[eruwano] comparte este criterio de los trabajadores sindicales. La organización sindicalista de clase debe desenvolverse alejada de todo contacto con los partidos políticos. Fuera de los sindicatos los trabajadores son libres de seguir sus inclinaciones políticas. Es por esto, precisamente, que el sindicalismo es el medio por excelencia que mejor responde a la organización formidable de las masas obreras. Seguiremos ocupandonos de las actividades tendientes a la reorganización de la Central. En tanto vaya nuestro aliento a los camaradas que cargan sobre sus hombros con tan pesada labor.⁹¹

The extent to which the re-organisation was directly coordinated by APRA is uncertain. Certainly, as early as November 1930, a campaign to rid the CGTP of its communist leadership had been waged in the columns of APRA's newspaper.⁹² The adherence to APRA of the leaders of three of the most powerful unions, including Sabroso, and their nominations as Aprista congressional candidates for Lima, was a clear signal that APRA's message was finding an enthusiastic response among key sectors of organised labour.⁹³ Moreover, APRA was beginning to organise its own unions, such as the Agrupación de Choferes Apristas and others.⁹⁴ However, as the editorial pointed out, the re-organisation was confined to the trade union movement and was anti-political in nature. Indeed, despite his involvement in the party, Sabroso was anxious to keep the unions separate from the party.⁹⁵ Moreover, as already mentioned,

⁹⁰ *La Tribuna*, 30 May 1931.

⁹¹ *La Tribuna*, 2 June 1931.

⁹² 'Es necesario, compañeros obreros, (...) liberar vuestra institución Central de la Internacional Comunista de Moscú a cuyo talón la han atado secretamente los trepadores que han asaltado los puestos directivos de la CGTP; es necesario, finalmente, formar la CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES, organismo libre, único, peruano hasta la medula'. *APRA*, No 6, 16 November 1930.

⁹³ The other two were Luis Lopez Aliaga of the Trolley Car Workers, and Samuel Vásquez of the Federación de Choferes.

⁹⁴ According to the Agrupación's Boletín No 1 written by Samuel Vásquez, each and everyone of its members 'tiene la obligación de ser su apóstol para sus hermanos de clase que han equivocado el camino. Vuestro deber es persuadirlos de su error y señalarles el sendero verdadero que ha de conducirlos al mejoramiento social que sin duda, también ellos, como proletarios, anhelan'. *La Tribuna*, 23 August 1931.

⁹⁵ Indeed, as he pointed out in a speech to an aprista assembly in the working class district of Rimac, by way of justifying his abandonment of the 'filas apolíticas' to join 'la vanguardia de un partido político', labour's relation to APRA was one of cooperation, not assimilation: 'Nuestra obligación de ayer fue la abstención, nuestra obligación de hoy es de cooperación, pero entiendese bien de cooperación con el APRA, no con la politiquería menguada y falaz que trafica con los más caros intereses del país, que es cosa diferente'. *APRA, Segunda Epoca*, No 10, 23 April 1931.

APRA was relatively cautious throughout this period, and tried not to appear too eager to woo the working class in the run-up to the elections in order not to alienate its middle class and non-*Civilista* upper class support.⁹⁶ It is not clear whether the FOPEP's adherence to the Central Obrera was politically motivated, or more to the point, whether it was aware of APRA's involvement. Nevertheless, as we will see below, Aprista sympathisers had begun to appear within the FOPEP.

Although much of the Communist propaganda in the run-up to the elections involved accusing APRA of social-fascism, the Communist Party seems to have been aware that its constituency was equally in danger from Sánchez Cerro. As the Party newspaper *Hoz y Martillo* recognised: 'We communists know that there are many workers who are thinking of voting for Sánchez Cerro. These workers sincerely believe that they will improve their situation by doing so'.⁹⁷ Although the Communist Party fielded a candidate for the elections, it did not take the electoral process at all seriously. It continued to believe that a revolutionary situation was imminent, and limited its actions to what amounted to insurrectionary propaganda. Particularly, it failed to recognise the extent to which the elections were mobilising the urban working classes.⁹⁸

Despite the intense repression which followed the general strike, the CGTP continued its activities throughout most of 1931. It successfully mobilised its members following the massacre in Talara when on 13 June striking oil workers were shot dead by the police and troops.⁹⁹ In Lima, a demonstration on 3 June escalated into clashes between Communists and Apristas and the police in the Plaza de Armas prompting the British Minister to ask: 'It would be interesting to discover what the 'communists' really want. (...) I suspect that mob law, and perhaps general rowdyism are what, if anything, many so-called communists in Peru have in mind'.¹⁰⁰ A little under a year later the British military attaché would write: 'the real number of members of the Confederación [General de Trabajadores del Perú] is not known, but the real communists as the term is understood in Europe do not appear to be numerous in proportion to the Peruvian population'; rather, 'the danger lies in the exploitation by this CGTP of the

⁹⁶ APRA's caution, and its success, are reflected in the US ambassador's perception of Haya de la Torre: 'I think that if Haya should become President of Peru we should have nothing to fear and on the contrary might expect an excellent and beneficent administration of strongly liberal tendencies', Department of State, 1 September 1931, quoted in BW Loveday, *Sánchez Cerro and Peruvian Politics, 1930-1933*, University of Glasgow Occasional Papers No 6, 1973, p. 11. The British minister was less enthusiastic: 'Although the [Aristas] are said to have been influenced by the British Labour Party, they would seem to me to resemble more closely the 'Nazis' of Germany'. PRO/FO/371/15108, Bentinck to Henderson, 25 July 1931.

⁹⁷ *Hoz y Martillo*, 27 July 1931.

⁹⁸ See Stein, *Populism in Peru*, especially chapter 8.

⁹⁹ Dawson, *Politics and the Labour Movement in Lima 1919-1931*, p. 274-275.

present unemployment and intense poverty in the big towns and mining districts'.¹⁰¹ But this danger repeatedly failed to materialise. The general strike called for 22 June 1931 proved a complete failure: 'Only a few omnibus drivers went out in the morning, and conditions were normal by the afternoon'.¹⁰² Thus, while the communists appear to have been relatively successful in organising isolated and small actions, they were totally incapable of organising and leading a coherent revolutionary movement, thus giving the impression that all they were achieving was 'general rowdyism'. As the Comintern itself noted: 'Los ejemplos de la huelga general de Lima y Callao de Mayo último ... y en general de todos los movimientos habidos, muestra que estos se han producido bajo la influencia de nuestra propaganda, pero que debido a nuestra debilidad orgánica, ellas no han podido ser debidamente aprovechadas'. Further, it pointed out that although the Party had gained the sympathy of the masses, it had not gained their confidence. In particular, the masses perceived the Party as incapable of finding solutions to their immediate problems, leading them to join the ranks of APRA and Sanchezcerrismo. Such a process was helped by the Party's belief that it existed only to make the revolution, thus failing to establish links at the grass-roots level. Generally, the Comintern criticised the Party for its 'desviaciones de izquierda'.¹⁰³ With regard to the CGTP the Comintern noted: 'el apoyo de la CGTP y de los sindicatos a las campañas de agitación general, electoral, etc., del partido, debe procurarse que sea dado a través del convencimiento de los obreros sindicados y no como una imposición de los comunistas'.

The Comintern's recommendation came too late. For important sectors in the labour movement, the Communist Party had simply taken over the CGTP. As Julio Osambela of the Federación de Choferes pointed out:

La razón de toda esta campaña [by the CGTP] contra nosotros [the Federación de Choferes] se debe a que no hemos querido afiliarnos al PARTIDO COMUNISTA (sic); y al temor de que descubramos su teje maneje dentro de las organizaciones sindicales (...) a lo que nosotros nos hemos opuesto y seguiremos oponiéndonos; a que se utilicen las organizaciones sindicales y

¹⁰⁰ PRO/FO/371/15108, Bentinck to Henderson, 16 June 1931.

¹⁰¹ PRO/FO/371/15853, L.H.G. Andrews, Major, to Director of Military Operations and Intelligence, War Office: 'Communism in Peru', 12 February 1932.

¹⁰² PRO/FO/371/15108, Bentinck to Henderson, 6 July 1931.

¹⁰³ *La Situación Revolucionaria del Perú y las Tareas del Partido Comunista Peruano*, Ediciones del BSIC, Buenos Aires, 1932, pp. 28-38.

sobre todo la central del proletariado peruano o sea la CTP (sic) como plataforma a partidos políticos inclusive el PARTIDO COMUNISTA.¹⁰⁴

Such a perception was shared by the FOPEP. On 20 June it received a letter from the CGTP calling on the union to attend a meeting (presumably to be held on the day of the strike, 22 June). A heated debate ensued. Manuel Caracciolo Levano opposed attending on the grounds that ‘todas estas masacres es (sic) debido a los colores políticos’. One delegate retorted ‘que no podemos cayarnos por las masacres habidas en Talara, Arequipa, Oyolo y otros lugares y que esto no es cuestión política y que la Federación debe hacer sentir su protesta por medio de los diarios, por supuesto que todos ellos son obreros como nosotros’. Racchumi agreed that a protest should be published, however he opposed the sending of delegates to the CGTP arguing that ‘en cuanto a la invitación esto es una tactica anti-constitucional y lo que se trata es hacer tumultos para que los obreros sean masacrados por el plomo y la metralla’. Gutiérrez pointed out that ‘la Confederación General de Trabajadores es una entidad comunista por motivo que allí se encuentran de todos colores políticos’.¹⁰⁵ Finally, it was decided not to answer the CGTP’s letter. A delegate was named ‘para que haga propaganda para la formación de la Sindical Obrera’ in Ica.¹⁰⁶ A week later a representative from the Talara oilfields union was present at the FOPEP. He declared that he was not a member of the CGTP. Again, Racchumi suggested that a delegate be sent to Talara to spread propaganda in favour of the Sindical Obrera.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ *La Tribuna*, 3 June 1931. Clearly these accusations were part of APRA’s, the party which Osambela joined, campaign against the Communist Party. However they also expressed a genuine rejection of the Party’s attempts to take over the CGTP. APRA learned a lesson from this experience, and while it sought the support of organised labour, at first it did not attempt to impose its own leadership on it. Rather it incorporated labour leaders, like Sabroso for instance. Indeed, at first APRA’s fuzzy ideology permitted the existence of anti-political syndicalism within the Aprista unions. As we will see below, this would begin to change by late 1931.

¹⁰⁵ Although ‘comunistas’ was used by newspapers, the government, the British minister, among others, interchangeably with ‘agitators’, ‘rabble-rousers’ and other such terms, there is no reason to suppose that the bakery workers did not understand what communism was understood to mean, or that they could not distinguish between communists and, say, Apristas and socialists. The Biblioteca Obrera de the Rimac district included books by Marx, Lenin, Trotsky as well as novels (especially Tolstoi, Zola and Victor Hugo but also Dante Alighieri, Maeterlinck, Baudelaire and D’Annunzio) and, an impressive collection of Darwin and Lamarck, and of course the obligatory anarchist texts by Kropotkin, Sorel, Reclus, Proudhon and others. See Wálter Huamani, ‘La Biblioteca Obrera de ‘Abajo del Puente’’, in *Revista del Archivo General de la Nación*, No. 11, Lima, 1995. Of course it is impossible to know whether the bakery workers ever ventured into the worker libraries, but then again it would be ingenuous to assume that they did not.

¹⁰⁶ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 20 June 1931.

¹⁰⁷ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 27 June 1931. In 1927, Virgilio Rechumí (sic) was arrested and accused of communism along with other more famous labour leaders like the *gráfico* Manuel Serpa (sic), the railway worker Avelino Navarro, and the textile worker Julio Portocarrero. AGN-MI-Legajo 268-Callao, El Coronel Prefecto del Callao to Director de Gobierno, 1 October 1927. However, there is little to indicate that he was a communist then, or, for that matter, in the 1930s.

The FOPEP's constant rejection of the CGTP, and its attempts to promote the creation of an alternative *central*,¹⁰⁸ were intimately linked to the perception that the CGTP was controlled by the Communist Party. The reasons for such a rejection are perhaps themselves linked to the FOPEP's 'ideology': its mutualist, anarchist and syndicalist traditions all rejected 'bolshevism'. However, it is more likely that the rejection had more eminently practical reasons. As we have argued, rather than seek to overthrow the state, the FOPEP sought its intervention and protection. As this suggests, the Communist Party's failure to bring about the revolution was not simply a question of tactical errors or APRA's doing. Among certain sectors of the labour movement, the communists' project found little sympathy. In a context in which the state was willing to be favourable to workers' demands in key conjunctures, such as in 1919, it is not surprising that the communists' discourse fell on deaf ears.

Significantly, the national election held on 11 October did not receive a single mention in the FOPEP assemblies. We need not go into the details of the election won by Sánchez Cerro.¹⁰⁹ Suffice to note that following the elections the CGTP rapidly lost ground as APRA initiated a concerted effort to take over the direction of the labour movement. By November, the CGTP newspaper *El Trabajador* was forced to admit the erosion of its support casting the blame upon repression, passivity, panic and the machinations of APRA.¹¹⁰ It is perhaps to these processes that the profound crisis which the FOPEP entered in the early months of 1932 can be traced back.

Anti-Politics becomes Politics

In November 1931, a polemic of sorts was briefly fought out in the columns of *La Tribuna* and *APRA*. One article, expressing no doubt the party *cúpula's* view of APRA's relation to labour, pointed out:

¹⁰⁸ The 'Sindical Obrera' re-appears in the columns of *El Obrero Textil*, 2a. quicena de Marzo, 1934. Its principles include: 'Rechazar toda intromisión de partidos o grupos políticos', 'Negar su afiliación a las centrales revolucionarias que pugnan por la representación internacional del proletariado'. The Federación Textil was by 1934 clearly under Aprista control. This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that APRA does not appear to have been seen primarily as a political party by its working class constituency. Secondly, to a large extent, the structure of APRA permitted its unions to maintain their 'anti-politicism' for most of the time. The situation is reminiscent of Peronism. According to Daniel James: 'Peronism [was perceived] as not primarily a political doctrine, nor a sectarian political party. Its quest for social justice and a recognition of the working class's rights as citizens and workers was viewed as beyond the pettiness of party-political strife'. *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988; p. 264. However, the overall influence of the Aprista sindical obrera seems to have been limited. According to James Payne: 'the importance of the [sindical obrera] was considerably less than that of the CGTP; even many of the Aprista labour leaders of that period could not, in 1961, recollect its existence'. *Labor and Politics in Peru*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1965, p. 46.

¹⁰⁹ See Stein, *Populism in Peru*, chapter 8.

¹¹⁰ Dawson, *Politics and the Labour Movement in Lima*, p. 284.

El aprismo, en tesis general, sostiene que el trabajador debe organizarse sindicalmente, cualquiera que sea su filiación política, porque en primer lugar tiene la obligación de defender sus intereses gremiales, mejor dicho, su propio interés económico. Pero el aprismo, en su nueva concepción sindical, supone la superación del sindicalismo. El sindicalismo apolítico solo cumple una función defensiva de los intereses de los trabajadores y, lo que hoy importa, es la transformación del régimen económico-social-político imperante, para realizar la liberación de las clases trabajadoras. No obstante la separación del sindicalismo en la tesis aprista, el aprismo no está en contra ni con el sindicalismo apolítico. Pero sí, los trabajadores apristas manuales e intelectuales tienen el ineludible deber de fortalecer sus propios organismos no sólo por razones de partidismo, sino porque reconocen en los organismos sindicales apristas los instrumentos eficaces para la liberación de las clases trabajadoras. No debe olvidarse de que el aprismo es una doctrina fundamentalmente económica, por eso requiere una organización también económica. El aprismo organiza la victoria de las clases productivas.¹¹¹

Indeed, if at an earlier stage APRA had been willing to incorporate labour on labour's terms, following the defeat in the general elections, it became increasingly necessary to fashion labour's incorporation to APRA's political needs. It is significant that the economic nature of Aprismo is emphasised in the article, when, for all intents and purposes, the change in attitude towards labour was politically motivated. Luis Lopez Aliaga was one labour leader who shared the cúpula's view. As evidenced by a rambling and confused article on Marxism titled 'Sindicalismo apolítico y sindicalismo socialista', he had come to the conclusion that anti-political syndicalism was no longer enough.¹¹² It is noteworthy that this conclusion had been reached in 1928 by one worker who went on to join the Communist Party: 'anarquistamente [ya] no se podía'.¹¹³ Arturo Sabroso, perhaps the most influential Aprista labour leader, disagreed: politics would weaken labour and ultimately divide it. Workers could join a party, preferably APRA, if they so

¹¹¹ Julián Petrovick, 'Sindicalización de las clases trabajadoras'. *APRA*, Tomo IV, No 11, 19 November 1931. Another article titled 'Porqué el trabajador debe intervenir en política', argued, 'si hasta ahora la política ha vivido contaminada, anacronizada y canallesca, hay que luchar tesorenamente propendiendo a la estructuración de una política científica, honesta y ponderable a fin de que responda a las necesidades hartamente respetables de las clases productoras, tal como lo propugna el P[artido] A[prista] P[eruan]o'. *APRA*, Tomo V, No 5, 14 December 1933.

¹¹² El aprismo no se quiere encallar en el criterio hermetico y acosado del sindicalismo neutro, apolítico y antiparlamentario que rechaza todo entendimiento social o por lo menos humano. Rompiendo esa orbita insalvable de la fuerza acorralada, el aprismo invade el inmenso campo de batalla del socialismo moderno y pugna por poner en manos de los proletarios de levita y casaca todas las armas capaces de ser esgrimidas en su defensa. De ahí que ofrezca teoría diáfona y afinque su acción en la fuerza efectiva de las masa productoras que día a día agigantan sus filas'. *La Tribuna*, 24 November 1931.

desired, but politics should be left out of the labour movement.¹¹⁴ Clearly, this debate is an indication of the degree to which the need for change had become a burning issue. In the event, Sabroso's position proved untenable.¹¹⁵

The consequences of the debate were soon felt in the FOPEP. Following the strike, the FOPEP had been left in considerable disarray. In September 1931 Gutiérrez was accused of corruption (of having received money from the Japanese) by delegate Antón and the FOPEP was plunged into crisis. On 19 September the executive of the FOPEP resigned *en masse*. The tensions which the strike had created within the FOPEP, between those who had supported the strike and those who had opposed it, now re-appeared as a struggle to gain control of the FOPEP. The instability created by the struggle was compounded by the FOPEP's ever worsening financial situation. On 7 October one delegate noted that 'de la pocas casas que cotizaban antes del conflicto entre Gutiérrez y Antón han paralizado en su totalidad por lo que no puede con los compromisos que tiene la Federación'.¹¹⁶ In August, the FOPEP was faced with the impossibility of paying the rent on its *terreno*. Delegate Dueñas declared 'el mutualismo nos lleva a la quiebra' and suggested that mutualism be suspended and the *terreno* sold to fund the creation of the FOPEP's own bakery.¹¹⁷ The feeling that it was becoming financially impossible to sustain the mutual aid functions of the FOPEP was later echoed by Levano in November when he pointed out that 'a ese paso no se podrá atender a los enfermos'.¹¹⁸ As pointed out previously, the FOPEP was a union *a base multiple*: it combined mutual aid functions with syndicalism. In the assemblies, a discussion arose on whether to forego mutualism. However, by late November the crisis within the FOPEP was beginning to take a completely new and far more critical turn. Delegate Racchumi declared that he had read in *La Tribuna* an *alegato* written by delegate Mayorga, adding: 'que todo el mundo conoce como un vocero de un partido político a dicho periodico y que jamás podrá ser defensor del obrero y que jamás se

¹¹³ Centro de Divulgación de Historia Popular, Oral History Archive: Interview with Isaias Contreras. Contreras was a construction worker and later became a Communist Party cadre.

¹¹⁴ 'El sindicalismo ganará eficiencia cuanto mas se aleje de la política'. *La Tribuna*, 25 November 1931.

¹¹⁵ However, Sabroso's position remained influential within APRA and is largely responsible for the relative independence which labour maintained with respect to the aprista cúpula in the 1930s and 1940s. See Steven J. Hirsch, 'Peru 1931-1948: Organized Labor and the Limits of Aprista Hegemony', Paper presented at the Eighth Annual Conference on Latin American Labor History, Princeton University, April 19-20, 1991. Indeed Sabroso was disciplined by the cúpula in 1944 and suspended from the party for 14 months. Alberto Moya Obeso, *Sindicalismo aprista y clasista en el Perú, 1920-1956*, Imprenta de la Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo, n/d, p. 119.

¹¹⁶ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 7 October 1931.

¹¹⁷ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 8 August 1931.

¹¹⁸ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 14 November 1931.

debe mezclar la política porque el sindicalismo esta al margen de la política'.¹¹⁹ Indeed, Mayorga had written to *La Tribuna*:

[I declare] publicamente que el suscrito no es sanchezcerista, por estas razones: Oí el primer discurso que pronunció Sanchez Cerro desde los balcones de Palacio, en el que insultó a los altos jefes militares: más tarde haciendo alarde de valentía escupió en el rostro de otro militar; despues mandó a masacrar a los mineros de Talara, a los indefensos Indios del distrito de 'Oyolo', (...) y despues masacró a una juventud en su propio templo (San Marcos). Como obrero organizado y ansia la justicia social pertenezco al Partido Aprista Peruano, que hoy o mañana siempre triunfará.¹²⁰

Mayorga's letter is revealing. In effect, he perceives both labour organisation and social justice as 'organic' to APRA. Certainly this was the image APRA was portraying at the time. However, we should beware of concluding from this a necessary 'ideological' explanation of APRA's success in wooing organised labour. Indeed, the voluntary incorporation of sectors of the working class into APRA had ostensibly more clear-cut reasons:

La incorporación de los obreros peruanos al Partido del Pueblo [APRA] obedece a dos razones fundamentales. La primera es la razón de ser del momento: el partido es el partido de los trabajadores. Pero cabe preguntar: ¿Por qué los trabajadores necesitan un partido? Porque la lucha sindical nos demostró que la oligarquía nunca atendería a nuestros derechos si no constituíamos una fuerza política poderosa capaz de conquistarlos. Los obreros nos incorporamos pues, al aprismo, *concientes de que este Partido es el unico medio de conquistar las reivindicaciones del pueblo. Además necesitabamos una escuela de política y de cultura: tambien el partido significa esto para los obreros.*¹²¹

Indeed, APRA became a means to achieve 'the people's demands', a channel of, to use a fashionable term, empowerment. As we show below, faced with the failure of institutional channels of negotiation and the ineffectiveness of direct action, many workers chose to enter into political alliances with the emerging

¹¹⁹ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 28 November 1931.

¹²⁰ *La Tribuna*, 6 September, 1931

¹²¹ Samuel Vásquez, interview, *La Tribuna* 18 May 1948, in Rolando Pereda Torres, *Sindicalismo de Frente Unico*, Editorial Pachacutec, Lima, 1990.

mass political parties, particularly APRA. Such alliances were understood as a means to access state power. In some cases, the alliance went beyond the personal and became institutional.

By April 1932 there were two bakery workers' unions: the FOPEP and the Aprista *Sindicato de Obreros Panaderos*. Unfortunately, only limited information has been found on the *Sindicato*. In the FOPEP, Gutiérrez had been re-instated to the presidency. In a letter to the Prefect of Lima published in *El Comercio*, Gutiérrez and Chancafé pointed out that the group which had abandoned their locale on 30 March were Apristas who were opposed to the free sale of bread and were under the protection of some *industriales* who also oppose the free sale of bread. As we have seen, the FOPEP believed that the unrestricted sale of bread, ie unrestricted to officially recognised bakeries, would weaken the *industriales*. Chancafé and Gutiérrez added that the FOPEP was recognised by the government, had represented the *gremio* for over 45 years, and that there could only be one Federation.¹²² It is not clear how many *federados* had left to form the new *Sindicato*. According to an announcement for a matinee of music and dancing organised by the *Sindicato*, speeches would be made by Carlos Cuartara, Emilio Mendivil and Santiago Barahona, all of whom had featured prominently in debates at the FOPEP. It is worth noting that the participants could expect a speech from Felicita de Alvarez, a sign perhaps of APRA's message of gender equality seeping into the very male dominated world of bakeries and unions.¹²³

On 9 April, Gutiérrez informed the FOPEP that ex-delegate Mendivil, who had joined the other side, had accused them of being communists. According to Gutiérrez, Mendivil had approached his 'pariente', a parliamentary deputy of the same name, and had 'gestionado ante él para que reconozcan como Sindicato de O[breros] P[anaderos] Estrella del Perú, nombre que no le correspondía porque solo había una Federación'. Gutiérrez further informed that he had pointed out to the deputy that, being a member of the Unión Revolucionaria Party, he should not support the 'grupo de Apristas que rodean a su primo Mendivil'. Finally, he had warned that if this were to happen he would be quite prepared to take the matter up with the President of the Republic. Increasingly, it became clear that the FOPEP was being pushed, or was pushing itself, towards an implicit alliance with the government to combat the 'other' union. The decision to support the free sale of bread, outside the control of the bakeries, came to be seen not simply as a measure to gain the upper hand over the bakery owners but also as a means of

¹²² *El Comercio*, 9 April 1932.

weakening the aprista union. As delegate Racchumi noted 'sabido está y no es cosa nueva que el reparto libre del pan ha beneficiado y beneficiará a toda la colectividad, que ciertos industriales oponen, aliados con el grupo de compañeros fraccionarios'. It is therefore not surprising that the FOPEP voted to support the measure. The proposal by the Junta de Gobierno to create state bakeries also received approval on similar grounds, the argument being that only federated bakery workers would be employed by the state. At an earlier debate the proposal had met with opposition. One delegate opposed the proposed invitation to Dr Herrera, the government's representative (and the person in charge of negotiating the proposal with the FOPEP) on the basis that 'nos pueden tildar que estamos metiendo el gremio en política'. Surprisingly, given his previous anarchist credentials, it was Levano who argued that Herrera should be invited. He pointed out that the FOPEP's *reglamento* stipulated that 'debemos buscar por todos los medios posibles nuestro mejoramiento' and that therefore it would be justified to talk the proposal through with Dr Herrera.¹²⁴ Delegate Berlochaga's contention that 'el Estado siempre se pega al capitalismo' was countered, again surprisingly, by Levano who pointed out, 'el Estado ha sido el primero en cumplir sus leyes de indemnización'. Finally, the implicit alliance with the government was confirmed by the decision to make Dr Herrera an honorary member of the FOPEP.¹²⁵

The following week, the process was taken further when Gutiérrez suggested that 'sería racional formar un Comité de Obreros Panaderos Sanchezcerristas para poder enfrentar a un grupo que también hace política'. Although the proposal met with some opposition, it was accepted. Levano pointed out that he did not belong to any political party, and that the statutes of the FOPEP forbade it, but that 'todos estamos en el derecho de simpatizar por tal o cual partido'. Again, the decision was justified by alluding to the pro-aprista bakery owners. Delegate La Rosa noted that 'la [panadería] Fornecilla lleva una campaña en contra de los que no son apristas amenando al comp. Cordova y a un japos que es el velador de despedirlos si prestan su apoyo a nuestra Federación'. Racchumi added: 'en todas las casas donde trabajan los de ese grupo ostilizan a los que nos son simpatizantes'. Domínguez saw the decision as a tactical one: 'todo panadero debe acudir a ese llamamiento para formar un Comité de panaderos Cerristas, porque tengo conocimiento que el primer programa de ese grupo es ostilizar a los que no

¹²³ *El Comercio*, 10 April 1932.

¹²⁴ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 6 April 1932.

¹²⁵ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 9 April 1932.

simpatizan con ellos y es preciso tomar medidas energicas en contra ese grupo y que con esa actitud no vamos a traer política aqui sino que nos servirá para contrarrestar esa campaña hostil que no podemos llamarnos panaderos donde trabajan ellos'. Gutiérrez added: 'esto sería muy benefico para nosotros porque entonces nos acompañarían todas las agrupaciones Cerristas y suficiente sería un decreto del Ministerio de Gobierno para clausurar su sindicato como lo hizo con la CGTP de Trabajadores (sic)'. He later reiterated: '[si] hubiera querido formar un partido político lo hubiera hecho antes de ahora pero (...) ese grupo que se ha separado de la Federación [me] ha obligado a formarlo'.¹²⁶ Little over a month later, *El Comercio* published a letter from the *Comité de Obreros Panaderos No1 afiliado a la Unión Revolucionaria*. The letter, signed by Luis Ramirez and Guillermo Gomez, congratulated the paper for its defence of the fatherland and of the working class.¹²⁷

In the event, the FOPEP's alliance with Sanchezcerrismo appears to have been shortlived.¹²⁸ However, from the point of view of our discussion, it is no less important. Above all, the proposed alliance with the Unión Revolucionaria was seen a *means* to achieve specific objectives: in this case, to protect itself from the other group, but also to gain access, through entry into a political alliance to 'the highly paternalistic relationships that are conducive to the microlevel exchange of material benefits for political support'.¹²⁹ In other words, the FOPEP sought to replace the institutional links to power, - the Sección del Trabajo, the Ministerio de Fomento - with direct, clientelistic links established through to the *Sanchezcerrista* party. Thus Stein is correct when he points out that:

From the masses' point of view, therefore, populist clientelism developed as a realistic effort on their part to obtain a piece of a limited pie or simply to cope with a difficult, often threatening environment by forging ties to those who possessed greater access to the resources of the state.¹³⁰

However this paper challenges another of Stein's contentions, perhaps his central argument, that:

Mass political culture in Peru in 1931 may be defined as the politics of personal dependence [whereby] real or imagined ties of personal dependence to these leaders [Haya de la Torre,

¹²⁶ FOPEP, Libro de actas, 16 April 1932.

¹²⁷ *El Comercio*, 24 May 1932.

¹²⁸ No mention is made of the Comité or Sanchezcerrismo in the libros de actas in 1933 or 1934.

¹²⁹ Kenneth Roberts, 'Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case', *World Politics* 48, 1995, p. 106. Roberts uses the phrase in the context of Fujimori's own brand of populism. However, the phrase fits the 1930s case remarkably well.

Sánchez Cerro] were the major motivation in most cases for entering politics in the first place, and expectations held by mass supporters to gain something from their political participation hinged on those ties.

As the narrative shows, the alliance to Sanchezcerrismo had little to do with Sánchez Cerro himself. Sánchez Cerro is never mentioned in the debates (nor is Haya de la Torre). Gaining access to the state apparatus seems to have been the main objective: entry into a populist clientelistic relation was therefore a means and not an end in itself.

Clearly, the abandonment of 'anti-politicism' was not linked to a sudden *prise de conscience*, nor was the espousal of Sanchezcerrismo either a consequence of false consciousness, linked to the influence of fascism within artisan groups, or limited to Stein's *lumpenproletariat*.¹³¹ It certainly had nothing to do with a emerging confidence in 'bourgeois politics'.¹³² Nor is there any real indication that the ideology of the mass political parties found great acceptance within the FOPEP. The discussions certainly do not hover around such favourite Aprista themes of the time as anti-imperialism and the 'plan minimo'. The material benefits of the alliance, not the ideological ones, were deemed important. At this level of analysis, the alliance with either party, APRA or the *Unión Revolucionaria*, had more to do with rational calculation than ideology, or rather, the subordination of ideology to rational calculation.

Unfortunately, there is not enough information to determine what drove certain workers to opt for Aprismo and others for Sanchezcerrismo. The debates in the FOPEP seem to indicate that those bakery workers who joined the Aprista union were younger. It is possible that, faced with an executive reluctant to change its ways, the younger members of the FOPEP, perhaps more receptive to APRA's discourse, decided to break away. But as the narrative shows the generally accepted view which holds that APRA incorporated much of the anarchosyndicalist constituency, through its parallel incorporation of elements of anarchosyndicalist discourse and practice, clearly needs revision.¹³³ As the narrative shows there were potential anarchosyndicalists, or in any case anti-political bakery workers, in both unions. Tellingly,

¹³⁰ Stein, *Populism in Peru*, p. 204.

¹³¹ Stein, *Populism in Peru*, p. 114.

¹³² As Dawson points out: 'The experience of organised labour throughout the twenties had not been such as to encourage the development of political analysis which placed any confidence in the ability of electoral processes to solve the problems which affected the working class (...) [T]here was a conspicuous absence from working class literature during the twenties of reference to political rights nor had the political environment of the *Oncenio* been such as to encourage the slightest confidence in the country's democratic institutions', *Politics and the Labour Movement in Lima*, p. 279.

¹³³ See Luis Tejada, 'La influencia anarquista en el APRA' in *Socialismo y Participación*, No. 29, Lima, 1995.

Levano remained in the FOPEP. Equally, the narrative shows that the view which holds that the decaying artisanal class were attracted by Sanchezcerrismo while organised and modern labour joined APRA is a myth. Being an anarchosyndicalist or a bakery worker did not pre-dispose one to becoming an aprista, in the same way that being a worker does not pre-dispose one to becoming a revolutionary, as the Peruvian Communist Party obviously and wrongly believed. The 1930s conjuncture might well have been revolutionary, however, neither the FOPEP nor, I would venture, the Lima working class were.

Conclusion

The FOPEP's dramatic departure from its traditional 'anti-politicism', understood as a rejection of party politics, marked the end of an era in its history. It also marks the end of our snapshot look at its evolution in the early 1930s. This paper has pointed to how the economic consequences of the 1930s depression in conjunction with the political crisis resulting from the collapse of the Leguía regime contributed to the breakdown of the institutional forms of mediation between the state and the FOPEP constructed during in the early 1920s. The breakdown had three causes. First, the FOPEP was plunged into a financial and organisational crisis and lost both the confidence of and control over its members. Second, the breakdown was due in no small measure to the combination of capital's intransigence and the inefficiency of the Sección del Trabajo, although the latter has been alluded to rather than explicitly demonstrated. Finally, the breakdown was precipitated by the appearance of mass political parties whose radical discourse undermined the traditional moderate syndicalism espoused by the FOPEP and I would argue, the majority of organised labour - which favoured negotiation rather than confrontation - leading to the abandonment of anti-politicism. These three factors pushed labour towards political alliances with either the Sánchezcerrista party or APRA. As we have shown, the Communist Party found little sympathy among Lima's working class. However, the abandonment of anti-politicism and the entry into a political alliance in the case of the FOPEP occurred primarily in order to maintain, and perhaps even enhance, the labour-state clientelistic ties formed as early as the 1900s, if not earlier. In other words, these ties, *institutionalised* during the *Oncenio*, were *de-institutionalised* during the political and economic crisis of the early 1930s and replaced by *populist* ties. Although, in essence, the ties were not dissimilar to those which the mutualist organisations had established with *Civilismo* in the 1900s and 1910s, they were

established in a totally different context, and incidentally through a different discourse (the people; the masses). However, whether institutional or populist, these ties, the bridges linking labour to the state, were seen as indispensable: the FOPEP's willingness to forego its anti-politicism to establish populist clientelistic ties was an indication of the extent to which these ties were perceived as essential to the survival of the union, in other words to its continued capacity to function as both a mutual-aid organisation and a syndicalist union. The relative ease and speed with which the decision was taken also points to the previously discussed limitations of ideology within the labour movement. In this light, the need to reconsider the nature of state-labour relations in the early twentieth century in Peru seems all the more pressing.