

Methodology Report

EAP1624 - Digitization of the founding documents of the Student Federation of Peru 1920-1921

Historic Scope of the Student Federation of Peru (FEP)

One of the most striking characteristics of institutions in Peru is the precarious state of their historical archives, and particularly their official archives. Not only have they been subjected to the vicissitudes of political and social events and armed conflicts, but also to abandonment and neglect, either due to the loss of their political importance or to the lack of interest of the State in preserving them. Among the most outstanding cases are the state archives looted during the Chilean occupation of the capital city, the mass protests against the abuse of the authorities or the dissolution of journalistic companies and societies.

Only those institutions that have managed to remain in existence until the present day have historical archives. However, this does not exempt them from a series of problems, mainly political, that affect their preservation, maintenance and value enhancement. Such is the case of the historical archives of the National Major University of San Marcos (Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos - UNMSM), the Lima Public Charity Society (Sociedad de la Beneficencia Pública de Lima - SBPL) and the National General Archive (Archivo General de la Nación-AGN).

Archives pertaining to civil society organizations -such as artisans' societies, trade unions, farmers' communities, student federations, periodicals, among others- face even greater difficulties. Republican history has witnessed important periods of empowerment and emergence of civil society (1840-1880, 1895-1930, 1950-1980), whose records, such as minutes, correspondence, publications, etc., have not been preserved in spite of their institutional and social significance.

One such case is the archive of the Student Federation of Peru (Federación de Estudiantes del Perú - FEP). Established in a context of the emergence of the lower classes in national politics, the FEP arose in the context of the continental movement for the University Reform (1918), the commemoration of the Centennial of the Independence of Peru (1921-1924) and the New Homeland regime (1919-1930), headed by the dictator Augusto B. Leguía. Since its foundation in 1917, this institution was of great importance as the representative body of university students at the national level. Its purpose was to replace the obsolete student association that had existed since 1912 -which had a social rather than a trade union character- in order to actively participate in the national debate and influence politics. Its first president was the medical student Fortunato Quesada. Between 1919 and 1921 the FEP published the journal *Studium*.

This was possible as a result of the changes that took place within the student body of the University of San Marcos, whose social composition evolved towards a greater participation of students from the provinces, with their political, social and regionalist concerns. From this group would emerge the next generation of professionals, intellectuals, journalists and political leaders that would influence national history until the end of the 20th century. A generation that has received different names: of the 1919, of the Centenary or of the University Reform.

As such, many of these names appear in the documentation of the Archives of the Student Federation of Peru. This documentation was rescued by one of its members, the then medical student Juan Francisco Valega. This event is a response to one of the political vicissitudes mentioned at the beginning. In 1919, a series of political events took place in which university students played a relevant role. Their support to the workers' strikes (for the eight-hour workday, the reduction of the cost of living), the student strike for the University Reform and their endorsement of Leguía's candidacy against the civil party were the most outstanding.

This meant the need to strengthen the union organization in relation to the rapid political and social changes that were taking place. Its main objective, inherited from the reform of the University of Cordoba in 1918, was to establish solid relations with the situation of the country and to actively participate in the implementation of the changes that the country needed to bring about.

With Leguía's rise to power, the student movement gained his support, particularly for the First National Student Congress, held in the city of Cusco in 1920. Likewise, he supported the founding of the Popular Universities, oriented to the working class, under the leadership of the president of the FEP, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. However, Leguía's dictatorial turn in the pursuit of his presidential reelection caused a rupture that culminated in the expulsion of the students from their premises in the Park of the Exhibition [Parque de la Exposición] and the deportation of Haya de la Torre along with other students at the end of 1921.

Historical experience indicates that part of the FEP Archive was rescued and preserved by Juan Francisco Valega. After his death, this collection became part of the José Carlos Mariátegui Archive. Today, with the support of the Endangered Archives Programme of the British Library, the task of bringing it back to value and making it available to the general public has been fulfilled.

Although incomplete, this archive has great historical value and is of great importance for several reasons. To begin with, the archive covers the period of great impetus in the organization of the FEP, corresponding to the First National Student Congress of Peru and the founding of the González Prada Popular Universities in Lima and Vitarte. It also reflects the relationship of the FEP with various federated university centers, trade union organizations and even with international student organizations in countries such as Argentina, Mexico and

Spain. Secondly, this archive allows us to glimpse the issues under discussion within the student movement through its minutes, meetings and publications.

A third reason is that the documentation shows us the wide network of contacts and collaboration (both nationally and internationally) that the FEP established to achieve its goals. The fourth reason is that it exemplifies the wide recognition that the FEP achieved, both politically and socially, within civil society. Finally, the documentation offers relevant information that can be contrasted with other sources (official, journalistic, correspondence, testimonies), opening up new avenues for research into the history of the FEP and civil society at the time.

This period ends in 1930, with the fall of the Leguía dictatorship and the beginning of the second university reform, which would lead to the closure of the National University of San Marcos between 1932 and 1935. To this end, some materials subsequent to the central period are included, which also belong to the José Carlos Mariátegui Archive, and which exemplify the resurgence and continuity of the FEP in the following decades.

Criteria for the selection of materials

The purpose of this project is to disseminate the historical activities carried out by the Student Federation of Peru (FEP) in collaboration with student and political organizations between 1920 and 1921. The documentation, originally in the hands of Dr. Francisco Valega and later incorporated into the collection of the José Carlos Mariátegui Archive, was distributed in several folders. Most of it is correspondence from 1920, although it also includes, to a lesser extent, letters from 1921 and 1922

During the process, several decisions were made about the organization, classification and digitization of the documents. As a first step, a working group was created to not only manage the material, but also to establish the parameters for the project's application to the EAP.

Among the main guidelines defined for the management of documents, the following were considered:

- - The documents pertain to the beginning of the twentieth century, thus complying with the guidelines of the EAP.
- - The five folders of documents that make up the collection were reviewed to evaluate their condition and determine their viability for digitization.
- - Reports were produced on the condition of the documents. It was determined that the most damaged was the *Studium* magazine, which underwent a restoration process.
- - A duplicate copy of the publication of the Summary of the *First National Student Congress* was found, so it was decided to digitize the version in the best preservation state..

Organization and Classification of the Documentary Collection

During the review of the documents for digitization, the team initially determined that the collection was made up of two document series: Correspondence and Publications. These categories were included in the application proposal to the EAP.

However, during the organization process, it was identified that some documents did not match the typology of **Correspondence**, but were better aligned with Management Documents and Minutes. In view of this situation, it was decided to incorporate a third document series, which includes three additional files that had not been considered in the initial application.

As a result, the documentation has been classified and organized into three documentary series, covering the periods 1920-1922 and 1935-1947. The three series have been organized as follows:

1. **Series 01. Correspondence received from the Student Federation of Peru (1920-1922),** containing:
 - 01 file of correspondence received from the Student Federation of Peru from January to March 1920.
 - 01 file of correspondence received from the Student Federation of Peru from April to May 1920.
 - 01 file of correspondence received from the Student Federation of Peru from June to July 1920.
 - 01 file of correspondence received from the Student Federation of Peru from August to September 1920.
 - 01 file of correspondence received from the Student Federation of Peru from October to December 1920.
 - 01 file of correspondence received from the Student's Federation of Peru for the years 1921 and 1922.

This series shows the communications that the FEP kept with various national and international institutions on different activities and initiatives, among them, the development of the First National Student Congress held in 1920.

2. **Series 02. Publications produced by the Student Federation of Peru (1920-1947)**

In this series you can find various publications and documents edited by the FEP, as well as others published by different institutions related to the continuity of the Student Federation of Peru, such as bulletins and manifestos.

3. Series 03. Minutes and meeting documents of the Student Federation of Peru (1920)

This series gathers three files detailing the sessions held by the FEP between 1920 and 1921, including the Federation's internal debates and the agreements reached with different student unions.

Collection digitization

The digitization of the documents was carried out by a professional photographer with experience in digitizing archival materials. Following the guidelines established by the EAP for this type of documents, the project team designed a work plan that was carried out between October and November, managing to digitize a total of 515 documents. These are distributed in 6 correspondence folders, 1 folder with magazines and pamphlets and 1 folder with 3 files. In total, 1,546 digital objects were generated, a figure that exceeds the amount estimated in the project application.

As a first step, the documents were prepared, which included surface cleaning to remove dust, conditioning of folds in the sheets and removal of elements that could compromise their conservation, such as metal fasteners.

For digitization, an area was set up within the archive that had adequate lighting and did not interfere with the archive's normal activities. This space was conditioned to ensure an efficient workflow. During the process, Pablo Cruz was supported by Ana Torres to optimize the flow and speed of the digital scanning process.

Professional technological tools were used to obtain high resolution images and guarantee the quality of the digital files. For this purpose, the following tools were used:

- 01 EOS 70D 20.2-megapixel reflex camera with DIGIC 5+ image processor to capture images at 14 bits
- 02 1000w Profoto studio lights
- 01 Manfrotto tripod
- 01 ColorChecker Qpcard201 card for color calibration and color fidelity

The digital objects obtained are in TIFF format and have a resolution of 300 ppi and 24-bit RGB.

The naming structure of the digital objects follows a hierarchy based on the project number, in this case, EAP1624. The collection adopts this main code, while the series that comprise it are organized following a hierarchical numbering, as well as their respective files.

Thus, the nomenclature is established as follows:

Collection name:

EAP1624_1

Name of the series and documentary files:

EAP1624_1_1_Correspondence

EAP1624_1_1_1_Jan-Mar_1920

EAP1624_1_1_1_1920_00001

EAP1624_1_2_Newsletter

EAP1624_1_2_1

EAP1624_1_2_1_00001

EAP1624_1_3_Documents

EAP1624_1_3_1

EAP1624_1_3_1_00001

Metadata and Cataloging

The template provided by the EAP was used for the metadata extraction and structuring and was reviewed and consulted by the work team. A discussion was held on the cataloging of the correspondence files, as each one contained between 100 and 120 communications addressed to the Student Federation of Peru (FEP). Given the relevance of the information contained in these letters, both key individuals and institutions were identified. Among the prominent figures were Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, president of the FEP, as well as Carlos Ríos Pagaza and Juan Francisco Valega, members of the same federation. Likewise, institutions such as the Peruvian Regional Workers Federation, various student associations and federated centers of universities in Cusco, Arequipa and Trujillo were also registered. In addition, government entities were identified, including the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Peruvian Ministry of Development and Peruvian diplomatic missions in Madrid, Mexico, Bolivia and Argentina, among others.

Given that these data are fundamental to understanding the process of creation and development of the PEF, it was decided to carry out a description at the item level in the **Correspondence** series. Although this approach involved more time-consuming work, the relevance of the communications warranted a more detailed and meticulous analysis, with the aim of enriching the historical context of an organization on which little information currently exists. As a result, researchers will be able to access a concise summary of each letter in the Description field, available in both English and Spanish. This decision aims to facilitate access to the documentation and promote its use by as many people as possible.

It is important to mention that, during cataloging, the team faced problems with some documents, especially in the case of handwritten signatures, whose interpretation in many cases required paleographic knowledge. When it was not possible to identify the sender, it was decided to record their institution of origin.

Results

- The digitization of the collection of the Student Federation of Peru (FEP) has made it possible to protect fragile documents, considering the conditions in which they were found by the José Carlos Mariátegui Archive. This ensures their high historical value and contributes to their long-term preservation.
- The funds received have facilitated remote access to the collection, not only through the EAP catalog, but also through their future addition to the digital catalog of the José Carlos Mariátegui Archive. This benefits researchers and the general public without putting the original materials at risk. In addition, a digital copy of these documents will be kept in the Documentation Center of the Major National University of San Marcos.
- The item-level cataloging of the Correspondence series will make it possible to learn about the steps taken between the FEP and various individuals, organizations and institutions in the civil, governmental and trade union spheres, which were relevant at the beginning of the 20th century in Peru.
- The digitization of this collection has made it possible to recover and enhance the value of key documents in the history of the student movement, strengthening access to primary sources for new research. It also sets a precedent for future digitizations of archives of student organizations and social movements in Peru.