

RODRÍGUEZ DE TIÓ, LOLA (1843–1924)

"It is necessary for a woman to receive solid liberal instruction ... so that she can join her intellectual efforts to those of men; the result would be the complete wholeness that many great thinkers are fruitlessly searching for."

The author of *La Borinqueña* the island's national anthem Rodríguez de Tió lived the life of a sojourner as she, her husband and daughters were ousted from the island on numerous occasions for their political beliefs. Born in San Germán in 1843 into an educated family that traced its lineage to Ponce de León, Rodríguez de Tió defied and re-defined the type of life expected of women in her social class throughout the Americas. She strongly believed in the solidarity binding Cuba and Puerto Rico in their common struggles for liberation, comparing them to the two wings of one bird, which received bullets and praise in the same heart. Rodríguez de Tió lived in New York City from 1895 until 1899 – a short span in terms of years, but a critically significant period in the movement for Antillean independence. Here the eloquent writer collaborated with other exiled insurgents, and moved in social and political circles that boasted key leaders and community organizers. Rodríguez de Tió enhanced both the cultural and political dimensions of the exile community. An accomplished musician, she gave piano recitals, poetry readings and delivered fiery speeches calling for political change, all of which enriched the coffers of the war efforts. An electrifying performer with a sense of drama, she enthralled bohemian audiences.

She became vice president and later honorary president of the Club Hermanas de Ruis Rivera, considered to be among the first women's club belonging to the section of Puerto Rico of the Cuban Revolutionary Party. Named in honor of the Puerto Rican general who engaged in combat in the Spanish-Cuban war, the club raised money through a broad range of activities, including cultural events, pageants, seasonal celebrations, picnics, dances, bazaars, and the staging of theatrical productions. Its members also secured medical supplies and other much needed provisions to send to Cuba.