

## Comment

### Next to Nothing: More on Pedro Pablo Atusparia

William W. Stein

I applaud Mark Thurner's "Atusparia and Cáceres: Rereading Representations of Peru's Late Nineteenth-Century 'National Problem,'" as well as his recent book, which all serious Andeanists and Peruvianists will now need to consult.<sup>1</sup> Not only do I accept his corrections of many of the errors of commission and omission in my work, but I have learned much from him that will inform any future work I do on related topics.<sup>2</sup> I admire both his perseverance in locating crucial documents and his grasp of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Peruvian history. But I am perplexed by several of his statements, such as, for example, that "next to nothing . . . is known" about Pedro Pablo Atusparia, peasant leader of the Atusparia Revolt and the man who met with General Andrés Bello in his Lima salon shortly before Bello became president of Peru. The statement intrigues me, because "next to nothing" is *not* "nothing." Indeed, a whole and infinite universe of meanings may lie in the uncharted territory of "next to nothing." Mark Thurner, thus, encourages me to "imagine [the] unimagined,"<sup>3</sup> a task upon which I now enthusiastically embark.

*Editor's note:* In the past this journal has included a section of comments in which authors and readers have discussed articles published in the *HAHR*. Although recently there has been a decline in the number of such contributions (the last forum for such discussion was in 1991), the editors hope that in the near future contributors and readers of the *HAHR* will submit short commentaries and essays that engage issues raised in the published articles.

I thank Texas Tech University for assistance with the preparation of this manuscript. Susan I. Stein has read it and made many helpful comments, and her impatience with impulsive writing and conceptual adventures have caused me to think about writing and to rewrite, for which I am grateful. However, any miswritings are my own.

1. See Mark Thurner, "Atusparia and Cáceres: Rereading Representations of Peru's Late Nineteenth-Century 'National Problem,'" *HAHR* 77 (1997); and his *From Two Republics to One Divided: Contradictions of Postcolonial Nationmaking in Andean Peru* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1997).

2. William W. Stein, *El levantamiento de Atusparia: el movimiento popular ancashino de 1885: un estudio de documentos* (Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1988).

3. Thurner, *From Two Republics*, 12.

According to Alba Herrera, Atusparia's birth certificate has not been located, although his descendants have indicated that he was born in the hamlet of Marián in 1840.<sup>4</sup> Maguiña Chauca says that Atusparia was raised by adoptive parents in the rural communities of Tuquipayoc and Marián, a densely populated rural sector about ten kilometers northeast of the city of Huaraz. When he was about ten years old he was sent to live with his *padrino*, José Manuel Alzamora, the operator of a dye works.<sup>5</sup> Thurner records that "Manuel Alzamora had initially been named subprefect of Huaraz by the Atusparia rebels in 1885, but he was soon replaced. . . . Indeed, several reports suggested . . . that Atusparia himself had worked for Alzamora."<sup>6</sup> Maguiña Chauca says that due to his character "as a good husband and family head and artisan . . . he was an exemplary citizen," and so was named *alcalde* of his division of the district of Huaraz for 1885.<sup>7</sup>

However, Atusparia would have had to be even more than an "exemplary citizen" to occupy such a high cargo. He would have had to spend years filling a number of junior positions in the *varayoc* system of political, moral, and ritual leadership that linked the people of rural hamlets and urban artisans in such tasks as the management of water during the dry season, the payment of poll taxes, the performance of *corvée* labor, and the celebration of religious ritual. And he would have had to dedicate much of his wealth to satisfy the many ritual and festive obligations of the many cargos he had fulfilled, as well as the principal one he was then occupying. He would also have had to accumulate a large following of clients in order to make himself attractive to the Huaraz mestizos who chose him.<sup>8</sup> We can, therefore, confidently assume that despite

4. C. Augusto Alba Herrera, *Atusparia y la revolución campesina de 1885 en Ancash* (Lima: Ediciones Atusparia, 1985), 172. This and all other translations from the Spanish are mine.

5. J. Santiago Maguiña Chauca, "La revolución indígena de 1885 en Huaraz y Ancash" (Huaraz: n.d., mimeo), 2.

6. Thurner, *From Two Republics*, 111.

7. Maguiña Chauca, "Revolución indígena," 3.

8. I am here assuming that the Huaraz *varayoc* system operates in a fashion similar to that in the province of Carhuaz where I did ethnographic fieldwork in 1951–52. See William W. Stein, *Hualcan: Life in the Highlands of Peru* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), 184–97. My ethnographic work in the Andes began in Hualcán, in the district of Carhuaz, not in Vicos. Although I visited Vicos from time to time in 1952, I was not a "participant in the original Peru-Cornell project on the hacienda Vicos," as Florencia Mallon states. See Florencia E. Mallon, review of *El levantamiento de Atusparia: el movimiento popular ancashino de 1885: un estudio de documentos*, HAHR 72 (1992): 130. My first fieldwork in Vicos took place in 1962, and even then I was a guest in Vicos, not a participant in the project.

his urban occupation Atusparia was well endowed with lands and livestock in the rural sector. As both a peasant and an artisan he could function on the margin of the mestizo sector in Huaraz and at the center of the Quechua-speaking rural milieu. In order to satisfy the expectations of his rural and urban clients he had to be an even-tempered, firm, and generous man; to satisfy his urban patrons he had to exercise influence in a large peasant population. As a *persona notable* he could only function at the center of peasant life through the concentration and redistribution of wealth. He also participated in social relations on a much wider scale than did most other peasants. As an employee of a dye works he would have been involved in the wool trade in the southern part of the Callejón de Huaylas and beyond, as well as in the cotton trade that traversed the Cordillera Negra to the coastal region.<sup>9</sup> It was in these trading activities that Atusparia might have encountered Pedro Cochachin, the other peasant leader of the 1885 insurgency, who was also a muleteer as well as a miner. (In the apocryphal narration the two Pedros met in a *chichería*, a home brew shop, while on the road.) Thus, both would have been among those persons whom Concha Contreras, in his study of the llama drivers (*llameros*) of southern Peru, calls “social, cultural, and economic agents,” those who through interregional commerce extend a system of communication and social relations that brings into contact rural people who otherwise relate to each other briefly, weakly, and often occasionally and accidentally.<sup>10</sup> Atusparia, then, was hardly Thurner’s “smallholding peasant residing in a humble hamlet.”<sup>11</sup>

In this Andean society patronage was, and still is, a major principle guiding social relations.<sup>12</sup> For illiterate and monolingual Quechua peasants it is crucial to have intermediaries who know Spanish and can read the Constitu-

9. Stein, *Levantamiento de Atusparia*, 244–45, 321–22. I may have misled Mark Thurner with my statement: “Más allá de estos pocos datos e inferencias, sabemos poco más sobre su [i.e., Atusparia’s] vida antes del crítico año de 1885.”

10. Juan de Dios Concha Contreras, “Relación entre pastores y agricultores,” *Allpanchis Phuturinga* 8 (1975): 92–93. This does not mean that peasants in the Callejón de Huaylas do not sometimes have extensive experience traveling far from their home bases. If my unrepresentative and nonrandom sample of Hualcán and Vicos are any indication, I knew people who had worked or traded on the coast from La Libertad to the guano islands, in communities on the western slopes of the Andes, through the whole of the Callejón, and as far east as the Marañón River. I have no reason to believe that life was that different in 1885; and at that time many peasants had seen action in both the War of the Pacific and the civil conflict between Cáceres and Iglesias.

11. Thurner, *From Two Republics*, 145.

12. See William W. Stein, “Patronage,” in *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, eds. David Levinson and Melvin Ember (New York: Henry Holt, 1996), 905–8.

tion and the newspapers, who provide access to markets and extend credit, who own land on which microholders find employment and cultivate provisions, who (for a fee) furnish peasants with sacred objects necessary for rituals, and who can function at some level of skill in Peru's legal system. Peasants supply their mestizo patrons with labor power and produce, as well as a fighting force that they use in their conflicts with other mestizos. The reciprocities between patrons and clients may be asymmetrical, but they are reciprocities.<sup>13</sup> What captures my imagination in this social system is the mimetic character of these reciprocal relations. Taussig's observation that "the power of the copy to influence what it is a copy of"<sup>14</sup> suggests that, for example, Ancash clients mime the grand theft of their patrons with petty theft, earning the epithet "thieving Indians" but acquiring some power over the landlords who keep them in such abject poverty.

In the Callejón de Huaylas people are linked by ties of attachment, support, and dependence in extensive social networks. Such networks are latent corporate groups, or "quasi-groups," as Adrian Mayer calls them.<sup>15</sup> They can, however, become manifest, losing their network character and taking shape as cattle-rustling gangs, as groups of social or antisocial bandits, or as paramilitary troops that might participate in struggles between competing patrons or in the Atusparia Revolt.

This is not a romance of happy patrons and clients, however, for there is a tragic side to it all in which local and regional mestizo bosses, called *gamonales* in Peru, assault their mestizo retainers verbally (with epithets, insults, scoldings, and shoutings, as well as false promises and outright fraud) and abuse and oppress "their" peasants physically (with whips, clubs, stocks, and jails, as well as with rapes, confiscations of property, and encroachments). Patrons and clients

13. See Enrique José Mayer, *Reciprocity, Self-Sufficiency and Market Relations in a Contemporary Community in the Central Andes of Peru* (Ithaca: Latin American Studies Program, Cornell University, 1974), 213–23, which was my introduction to the concept of "asymmetrical reciprocity."

14. Michael T. Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 250. I am especially attracted by the bearing Taussig's conception of "copying" has on literary citation in general. And, in particular, I am impressed by the magic through which by copying him some of the power of his work is transferred to me. There are no oedipal undertones in this relation of two authors, for I do not pretend to take power from him. However, I wonder why Mark Thurner fails to send me copies of the works in which he cites me copiously.

15. Adrian Meyer, "The Significance of Quasi-Groups in the Study of Complex Societies," in *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, ed. Michael Banton (London: Tavistock, 1966).

are linked together in what Deborah Poole calls “a regional ‘culture of violence.’”<sup>16</sup> It is easy, then, to see peasant violence as a copy of *gamonal* practice.

This was the social context out of which Atusparia, the peasant leader who mimed the soldier in leading forces that opposed President Iglesias, not-so-mysteriously appeared in General Cáceres’s salon. The newspaper reports that Thurner reproduces in abridged form and in English translation from my work appear to identify Atusparia as a Cacerista.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, we may legitimately ask how this visit could have occurred if Atusparia had not been considered as having rendered great assistance to the general. Support for this assertion is to be found in the sixth paragraph of the second report, a part of the text that Thurner does not include:

It has not been the idea of communism or race hatred that moved the Indians to rise up en masse and engage in combat against Iglesiasista forces. No, they had no greater desire than to see the triumph of the Constitution and of liberty. They desired to aid the GREAT REPUBLICAN whom they believed to be the only one capable of saving Peru from the ruins in which it was left as a result of the war with Chile. They asked nothing and desired nothing that was not just or legal.<sup>18</sup>

The meeting with Atusparia gave Cáceres the opportunity to project a populist image, but it also allowed him to recognize Atusparia’s contribution to his political triumph. It is difficult to understand how Atusparia, an illiterate peasant who could barely scrawl his name on an official document, could find his way into the general’s salon without considerable assistance from the mestizo Caceristas in Huaraz. Apparently, he had support from the peasantry as well. Alba Herrera reports that

Atusparia traveled to the city of Lima on a special mission on behalf of his peasant brothers and sisters. . . . He disembarked at Callao from the steamship *Casma* on May 31, 1886, staying in Lima in the house of his fellow countryman, Dr. Fernando Suárez Olivos, with whom on the next day he visited General Cáceres. . . . After attending the public ceremonies

16. Deborah Poole, “Introduction: Anthropological Perspectives on Violence and Culture—A View from the Peruvian High Provinces,” in *Unruly Order: Violence, Power, and Cultural Identity in the High Provinces of Southern Peru*, ed. Deborah Poole (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 5.

17. See Thurner, “Atusparia and Cáceres,” 410–11; and Stein, *Levantamiento de Atusparia*, 272–76.

18. *El Comercio* (Lima), 2 June 1886, reproduced in Stein, *Levantamiento de Atusparia*, 275.

of General Cáceres's ascension to the presidency of the Republic, he dedicated himself, in the company of Dr. Suárez Olivos, to visiting the offices and plants of Lima's newspapers. . . . On June 15 he embarked on the return trip to his native land on the steamship *Chala*, en route to Casma.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. Suárez Olivos was not exactly a "fellow countryman" given that he was the Lima representative of the mestizos of Huaraz—or at least of the Cacerista faction. He assisted Atusparia as guide, interpreter, and mentor, and could have been the one who arranged the interview. I believe that the purpose of the meeting was to remind the general to favor Huaraz with patronage for services rendered. Without a doubt, the doctor was present in order to assist the general, who spoke the Ayacucho variety of southern Quechua which was, and still is, unintelligible to the residents of Callejón de Huaylas.<sup>20</sup>

Atusparia, then, was also a client of Cacerista patrons who in 1885 were eager to use his influence among the peasants, not only of Huaraz but of the entire Callejón de Huaylas and beyond, to aid their political cause, and who in 1886 were hoping for a payoff. I fail to see in this any of what Thurner sarcastically calls "elitist bias" or "paranoid prose [which] denies the subjectivity and collective agency of subalterns by searching for the causes of revolt in the 'redactors' of petitions, in corrupt provincial officials, in wicked landlords, and in other conspiratorial elites." It is no argument "that peasants are sociologically [or, for that matter, psychologically] incapable of leading their own revolts."<sup>21</sup>

19. Alba Herrera, *Atusparia y la revolución campesina*, 177.

20. See Bruce Mannheim, *The Language of the Inka since the European Invasion* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1991), for a discussion, among many other relevant topics, of the differences among Quechua dialects. I recall a Universidad de San Marcos student, originally from Huancavelica, who was brought to Vicos to gather data and, given the differences of his dialect of Quechua with that of Vicos, had to work through an interpreter from Carhuaz. In the Callejón de Huaylas the topic of the speech patterns of *conchucanos*, people from Conchucos, located a few miles away but on the other side of the Cordillera Blanca, is a matter of amusement and a topic of jokes. It is regrettable that the weight of Quechua scholarship falls on southern Peru. The mestizos of Cuzco take their variety of Quechua "to be the mother language of all the Quechua varieties"; see Nancy H. Hornberger, "Five Vowels or Three? Linguistics and Politics in Quechua Language Planning in Peru," in *Power and Inequality in Language Education*, ed. James W. Tollefson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 197. And even the good mestizos of the Callejón de Huaylas believe (falsely) that the Quechua spoken there is a "corrupt" variety of a language that is much purer to the south.

21. Turner, *From Two Republics*, 84.

Was the Cacerista connection Atusparia's only motive for insurgency? Not at all. The 1885 movement was overdetermined, as is all rebellion, and consequently an overinterpretation is needed where no interpretation is final.<sup>22</sup> Atusparia was just as much protesting increased taxation<sup>23</sup> and a lifetime of oppression and "othering" by mestizos.<sup>24</sup> His motivations, like that of the peasant masses who followed him, were formed by conscious and unconscious human impulses such as desire, lust, greed, revenge, and wishes to be free of restraint and domination.<sup>25</sup>

As for imagining a "protonationalist awareness" in the heart of the 1885 movement, a mental feat that Thurner wisely sidesteps, such consciousness is a

22. I try to view the process through which a person comes to rebel in William W. Stein, *Dance in the Cemetery: José Carlos Mariátegui and the Lima Scandal of 1917* (Lanham, Md.: Univ. Press of America, 1997).

23. Thurner, in "Atusparia and Cáceres," 421 n. 30, observes that an "antifiscal" notion has also found its way into Stein's *Levantamiento*. While I have recognized those scholars who give emphasis to the antifiscal nature of the Atusparia Revolt, I do not believe I was as willing to "accept" such a [label], even "in part," as Mark Thurner, *From Two Republics*, 81, seems to hold. What I said was: "Podemos seguir llamándola 'antifiscal,' pero debemos reconocer que era mucho más que eso"; see Stein, *Levantamiento de Atusparia*, 73. Elsewhere, after reviewing several interpretations of the uprising—antifiscal, prepolitical, race war, nativist—I wrote: "Es probable que todas estas distintas interpretaciones sean correctas o, al menos, pertinentes en cierto grado, será útil comprender que esta es una reflexión sobre la heterogénea composición del movimiento, correspondiente a la naturaleza del orden social en que se formó"; see Stein, *Levantamiento de Atusparia*, 52. As for "class struggle," since neither peasants nor mestizos constituted a "socioeconomic class," the term is not appropriate. However, the moral of the story is much deeper than arguing over words: a book that is miswritten is bound to be misread.

24. The "othering" process involves the conversion of people into "illiterate, lazy, backward Indians," which "begins at least with the beginning of colonialism." See Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1995), 219, 230. See also Michael Taussig's discussion of othering and copying in *Mimesis and Alterity*, which can assist our interpretation of the "primal scene" of this essay: the meeting of Atusparia and Cáceres.

25. I do not wish to resuscitate the infamous "swaddling hypothesis" of the "culture and personality" school of a half century ago, but I want to add that the restraints imposed on peasants by the gamonal sector mime the tight swaddling of infants for the first year and more. Infants are wrapped with sashes and carried in shawls on their mothers' backs or placed on the floor. They are relaxed only for periodic cleanings. I do not believe that swaddling has any significant effect on character formation, but I do wish to point out that placing people in stocks and jails, as well as limiting their geographic mobility by hacienda labor requirements and the discouragement of fluency in Spanish and literacy, constitute a symbolic swaddling by reducing them to an infantile condition of immobility. It is easy to understand peasant resistance and, when conditions permit, rebellion under these circumstances alone.

real possibility. But it is very hard to find in the creole and mestizo journalistic discourse of the time, or in the flowery petitions prepared by the peasantry's "redactors."<sup>26</sup> Benedict Anderson states that "in an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe?) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism . . . show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles. On the other hand, how truly rare it is to find *analogous* nationalist products expressing fear and loathing."<sup>27</sup> If love existed in the 1885 movement, it was buried by the unreal and schizoid "word salad"—a small sample of which I have included in the foregoing—behind which Peru's creoles and mestizos hid.

The question of nationalities came up in the late twenties when Moscow's Comintern, basing itself on certain of Stalin's texts, sought to find in Peru "subordinate nationalities, principally Quechua and Aymara: Peru was, like Russia, a multinational society."<sup>28</sup> It is noteworthy that José Carlos Mariátegui rejected this imposition of an alien doctrine as a "crude translation of the Soviet problem" to what he envisioned as Peruvian reality.<sup>29</sup> César Germaná comments that Mariátegui "was not ignorant of the ethnic characteristics of peasants, but he saw the land as the principal problem. The proposal for the self-determination of the Indians—the national thesis of the International—could only be foreign to his reasoning," which moved him to uphold "the idea of a Peruvian nationality in formation."<sup>30</sup> Mariátegui, whose object was to

26. Thurner, "Atusparia and Cáceres," 440.

27. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 141–42.

28. Alberto Flores Galindo, *La agonía de Mariátegui: la polémica con la Komintern* (Lima: DESCO, Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo, 1980), 32.

29. Carmen Rosa Balbi, "Mariátegui, el marxismo y nuestro tiempo," in *La aventura de Mariátegui: nuevas perspectivas*, eds. Gonzalo Portocarrero, Eduardo Cáceres, and Rafael Tapia (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Fondo Editorial, 1995), 584.

30. César Germaná, *El "socialismo indo-americano" de José Carlos Mariátegui: proyecto de reconstrucción del sentido histórico de la sociedad peruana* (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1995), 179. The problems of forming a Peruvian nation are well documented in Linda J. Seligmann's *Between Reform & Revolution: Political Struggles in the Peruvian Andes, 1969–1991* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1995), which covers the failure of agrarian reform, as well as the "reform of the agrarian reform," at the community level. In my opinion, this ethnographer merits a medal of ethnographic valor for confronting the discomforts and real dangers of work in the field in these difficult times, as do others who have produced such excellent contributions from the "High Provinces"; see Poole, *Unruly Order*.



“deother” the Peruvian majority, wrote: “The Indian is the cement of our nationality. . . . Without the Indian no Peruvianness is possible.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, he envisioned an undivided Peru, an aspiration that I am sure Thurner would share with Mariátegui and many others.

31. José Carlos Mariátegui, *Peruñicemos al Perú* (Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1977), 32.