

(4). By placing Shuttlesworth at the center of the story Manis enhances our understanding of the essentially local character of the movement and offers valuable insight into the dynamics of grass roots leadership. *A Fire You Can't Put Out* stands out in the crowded field of civil rights scholarship, and Manis's skillful storytelling ensures that his work will hold the interest of scholars and general readers alike.

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Orin Starn. *Nightwatch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.

Orin Starn's book *Nightwatch* is a highly readable chronicle of vigilante groups called *rondas campesinas*, which peasants organized in the 1970s in the northern Peruvian Andean mountains of South America. Drawing on field research in the late 1980s and early 1990s, he provides a careful and detailed retelling of their emergence as a reaction to the failure of state structures to stop skyrocketing crime and violence in rural communities in the midst of the country's economic, social, and political collapse. He finds that the *rondas* empowered peasants and strengthened community structures until their decline under Alberto Fujimori's authoritarian government in the 1990s.

The book begins with an exploration of the origins of the *rondas* in 1976 as a peasant initiative with the tactical support of local authorities. Starn maintains that the *rondas'* nighttime patrols and the assemblies that emerged out of them to resolve civil and criminal problems in the communities were not based on ancient or Inka traditions, but were a modern response to the economic conditions peasants encountered in the Andes in the 1970s. He describes a peasant culture that was not static and bound by tradition, but rather dynamic and able to confront new problems in an effective and organic manner. He locates an immediate inspiration for the patrols in the guard duty that peasants were forced to perform on haciendas before the 1969 agrarian reform law, and in "skills" that conscripted peasants had learned in military barracks. As a result the *rondas* not only led to a drop in crime and cattle rustling, but also a rise in human rights abuses, including dramatic incidents of physical punishment such as the torture and lynching of suspected criminals. Despite Starn's attempts to give a balanced reading of the *rondas*, his admiration of their efforts and achievements is clear. While the Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) Maoist guerrilla movement, as Starn points out numerous times, was easy to criticize because of their cult of violence and dogmatic

ideology, the peasant patrols were also plagued with many problems, which makes it equally difficult to idealize them as a positive model for building social justice and new social relations.

In the 1980s the Peruvian military organized similarly named *rondas campesinas* in the southern Andes to counter the powerful Shining Path uprising. Starn is careful to differentiate between the two types of *rondas*. Whereas the anti-*Sendero* *rondas* were explicitly state-sponsored efforts intended to achieve a military objective, *rondas* in the north, where *Sendero* was never very active, emerged as a social movement in response to local conditions. Starn maintains that these *rondas* represent a more significant social movement than the better known and more widely studied *Sendero* guerrilla organization, both in terms of the number of participants and its lasting impact. He ignores obvious parallels between the two groups, however. An epidemic of theft was also a driving force behind organization of the *Sendero* guerrillas, which acquired a similar moralizing bent that sought to bring order to the Andes. This work could also be strengthened through comparisons with other grassroots attempts to stop crime and monitor social behavior, such as neighborhood watch committees in revolutionary Nicaragua and Cuba. This type of exploration would help highlight both the positive contributions and negative liabilities of this type of vigilante justice. Starn never fully explores the question of whether the *rondas* are repressive or liberating.

Throughout the book Starn persistently identifies himself as a leftist. Other than vague comments about supporting the Sandinistas in the 1980s or not registering for the draft, it is not clear what this political orientation means to him or how it influences this study. He goes out of his way to justify studying an essentially conservative social movement and notes that he intends the book "to convey a sense of uncertainty and ambivalence" in understanding whether the peasants are individualist or communalist, innovative or traditionalist, revolutionary or reactionary. While honorable as an academic exercise, in the end the subtitle of the book, "The Politics of Protest in the Andes," is misleading. This is not a story of a protest movement that changed society but about peasants reacting to larger economic and social problems in order to defend their own local concerns. Starn puts a human face on people trying to survive through difficult day-to-day problems, but he misses the larger and more revolutionary implications of the devastating consequences of global capitalism on Andean peasant society and the nature of profound structural changes which would be necessary to end this exploitation.

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