

(which can also have the appearance of a Slovak kitchen or a place of origin of a Slovak Jewish family), homeland (including relation to Czechoslovakia and to Israel), religionism, just like views of Slovak Jews who stayed home. Salner's aim was not to subject these experiences to qualified analysis (for which, besides, he would need an abundance of works of foreign literature and many more pages). The resulting reflex thus remains to the reader who, however, can lean on the author's historic sketch of the development of the Jewish community after 1945 (with emphasis on the fact of the post-August 1968 emigration). But here Salner's overview is completed with annotations of his informants. A careful reader, among others, will also find the voice of the daughter of Žo Langerová, whose husband was sentenced in the Slánský trial. As an anthropologist, though, he follows with the greatest astonishment how one large meeting kicked off a chain of smaller meetings all around the world and the preparation of a new large undertaking in Slovakia. It attests primarily to the fact that the longing to belong somewhere and to someone is a basic anthropological constant and that the organizational principal of society can be a city of childhood and youth and/or the sum of similar experiences.

Blanka Soukupová

**Přemysl Mácha (ed.):
LIGHTING THE BONFIRE,
REBUILDING THE PYRAMID.
Case Studies in Identity,
Ethnicity and Nationalism in
Indigenous Communities in
Mexico.**

Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita 2009,
184 pp.

The reviewed collective monograph represents the result of a long-term interest of the youngest Ibero-American Studies generation in different manifestations of ethnicity of some contemporary Mexican Indian groups. Five authors territorially covered a substantial part of Mexico: from the northwest regions (the Rarámuri, Yaqui and Toboso peoples), via central and mid-western regions (the Purépecha and Aztec peoples) and down to today's apparently politically most distinctive area – the federated state of Chiapas in the south of the country (the Tzeltal, Tzotzil and eventually Chol peoples).

The monograph opens with a short study by its editor Přemysl Mácha. In his text he writes about news in political manifestations of ethnicity in the attitude of the Mexican state and ways of writing about it. In the latter he draws upon argumentations of a North American anthropologist Les Field, who compares the attitude of the state to the Indian question in the USA and Mexico. It seems that Fox's administration (since December 2000) has started or rather speeded up the reform process, which should result in a significant change in the attitude of the political center, or, in the case

of federally organized Mexico, of political centers, to at least several (more numerous) native groups. These reforms should lead to quick growth of ethnic awareness and creating of a rigid ethnic system of closed, ethnically “clean” communities. Mácha rightly points out the fact that the result of the rather chaotic though well-intentioned reforms, firmly embedded in the Constitution, can become the absolute opposite of a tolerant multicultural society. One of the main problems lies in the considerable inequality of almost sixty Indian groups. There are one million Yucatan Maya on one hand and on the other there are groups of only several hundred people. These groups live poorly, scattered in tiny villages of the Sonoran Desert (e.g., the Papago people), in the Chihuahua canyons (a large part of the Rarámuri and northern Tepehuan peoples) etc., or they politically join more powerful groups as, e.g., the Seri people whose chieftains swiftly communicate with headmen of Rarámuri or Pima subgroups. Such cases can be found elsewhere in Mexico, though the badly informed public does not know about them at all. Generally better-known conflicts between the Zapatista movement and the state and the representation of a “new” ethnicity of the demographically strong Nahuatl and Purépecha peoples are also reflected in the monograph.

Markéta Křížová deals in her paper with the forming of ethnic identity of some north Mexican groups (mainly the Rarámuri and Yaqui/Yoreme peoples) during the colonial times, particularly within Jesuit missions. On the grounds of archaeological finds from the southwest, she argues that the forming of

ethnic and cultural identity had undoubtedly started before the Spanish and the first missionaries came. The collapse of the sedentary (Neolithic) power center of Casas Grandes/Paquime, probably caused by climatic, demographic, ecological, as well as by social and political changes in this area, was one of the key moments for the ethnic space-forming in the Mexican north-west in protohistory. The Rarámuri people have belonged since protohistory (since approx. 12th century) among the most developed agricultural groups of the Mexican north-west. However, under the influence of pugnacious nomads and, even worse, after the arrival of conquerors they had to adapt to other subsistence forms in order to survive; agriculture lost its importance. The Rarámuri people adapted to various forms of transhumance as a way of life (also called the *ranchería* system), which helped them to save themselves as an ethnic group, but they also descended to a lower socio-economic level and split from a relatively homogeneous group into many local/micro-regional or later *ejido* groups. This is a persisting problem, as they do not have any political structure which could promote the interest of the whole group. So far a strong local (micro-ethnic) cultural and social identity persists and it is often so firm that any ethnic integration is out of question. Křížová notices practically only the Jesuit impact on forming the identity of Mexican Indians in the colonial times, though it is also important to realize that in about the last fifty years of the period and until the end of the 19th century mainly the Franciscans worked among the Rarámuri and other local people. It is a pity that we

have known only a little about their work so far. There is a lack of primary sources. Nevertheless the different attitudes in Jesuit and Franciscan evangelization enable us to ethnographically research their impact on the material and spiritual culture or social organization. There are so far visible differences within one single *ejido* (i.e., an economic and political unit in which a great part of the country inhabitants are concentrated). Those who were acculturated by the Jesuits often head communities or a whole *ejido*; men more often wear trousers, a sombrero and other attributes of the mestizo way of dressing, while the descendants of those who were under the Franciscan influence live more commonly, are more conservative in their clothing and usually do not have such political influence in their environment, etc.

In another text, Slovak ethnohistorian Radoslav Hlúšek deals with the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe as a national symbol. After a rather long historical introduction to the cult, he analyses what is important for us from the point of view of ethnic and political resistance to the majority society: other *guadalupanismo* (*otro guadalupanismo*) as a demonstration of the anti-Catholic attitude of a part of the native population of Central Mexico (Hlúšek did his fieldwork in the Santa Clara Huitziltepec community in the federative state of Puebla, where this “new” cult originated). We agree with the author that the *otro guadalupanismo* can be best characterized as a national movement and not as a religious sect, because *Guadalupana* is understood by the Indians and other followers of the movement more as a symbol of Earth

and Cosmos than as a saint or a goddess. The cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe is no doubt a factor which unites various social classes and ethnic groups of Mexico. If we can very well observe significant cultural differences among the north, center and south of the country, then *Guadalupana* works as a cultural phenomenon that has its dynamics in Lower California Tijuana as well as in Chiapas towns in the south.

Přemysl Mácha follows the process of the shift from *ethnie* to national self-determination among the Purépecha (Tarascan) people in the federative state of Michoacán. Besides Yucatan Maya and Nahuatl and part of the Zapotec peoples, the Purépecha probably have the strongest influence within Mexican indigenous movements of national self-determination, even though there is geographical and ecological fragmentation (e.g., there are four basic sub-groups of the Purépecha people). Their strong ethnicity historically comes from at least two factors: their awareness of their absolute difference from other Mexican groups (from the linguistic point the Purépecha language is an isolate) and therefore specific and not fully explained ethnogenesis, and the influence of the bishop, Vasco de Quiroga, whose missions in the 16th century led to strong concentration of the dispersed Purépecha groups. Mácha refers to a still-living legacy of Tata Vasco and he also mentions Cherán as a community where the first coordination political Purépecha center was founded (let us remember a monograph on this village by R. Beals from the 1940s which started systematic anthropological research of

chosen Mexican and other Middle-American communities by North American cultural anthropologists). In the 1940s in Pátzcuaro a big conference took place during the course of which the Inter-American Indian Institute was founded (*Instituto Indigenista Interamericano*) and the Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas in his famous speech pre-determined the direction for native identity based on corporatism, i.e., on incorporating indigenous villages to the Mexican political and economic system preserving their cultural specificity. With the arrival of modernity which often brutally hit even remote Mexican villages, such politics seems to be rather unrealistic. Being aware of this, Mácha speaks about two types of Purépecha identity: *old* and *new*. The latter is typical not only for the Purépecha people, but for practically all rural inhabitants. It is grounded in a strong de-flux of inhabitants into towns where they are acculturated by Mexican educational institutions. These newcomers settle down in cities and do not come back to their previous homes. However, this “pattern” of the new identity is not valid everywhere – e.g., in Guatemala or in the southern part of Mexico the Indian population keeps double residence, i.e., people stay in a city for several months but spend a substantial part of the year in their villages by working in their *milpas*. Simplified, it can be said that the “old” Purépecha people bear older traditions, understood as what A. Smith calls *ethnie*, while the “new” Purépecha people are those who change their identity and they form a *national* identity now. While the former organize “traditional” village fairs, the latter participate in wider

supra-village activities within the Mexican state.

The forming of public space and its change in south-Mexican Chiapas is the topic of a text by Bohuslav Kuřík, a student of general anthropology. He follows in detail the roots of the Zapatista movement (it would be more correct to speak about movements), in particular mobilization of Indian inhabitants and their entering into public space from the beginning of the 1970s till today. Around the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, a deterritorialization of borders among Tzeltal and Tzotzil villages and Mexican cities peaked, or more precisely, long-time unsolved problems of ownership of Indian land and other natural sources became so relevant that it overgrew into a huge revolt, culminating with the known events from the beginning of 1994, when the Zapatista entered onto the international scene and their political aims became known to the whole world. Kuřík, who did his fieldwork in Chiapas, then analyzes the onset of the official Zapatismo and researches it mainly in so-called *comunidades rebeldes* (revolting villages), which are significantly differentiated from others. The study can be understood as a preview to broader research which would deal in greater detail with the forming of social nets not only inside the revolting area, but also outside its limits, with the relations between the Mexican state and the rebels, and also with the movement from inside, because it would be very interesting to decode the relations inside such a broad movement, etc. The author finishes his text with many questions which he wants to deal with during his

starting research project and therefore we can look forward to a detailed study which could help the broader public to be better oriented with the rather confusing information about the Zapatista movement which is now available.

The Chiapas Zapatistas are also the topic of the final text of the monograph, written by Petra Binková. However, she researches them from another point of view than Kuřík. She is interested in visual representations, mostly *murals*, which fill public space of Chiapas villages, squares, houses, walls, etc. Binková differentiates two aspects of art in public space – she distinguishes between the rather traditional aspect and the one that expresses the political opinions of its creators. After that she analyses the understanding of public space on a theoretical level and concludes that Zapatista murals correspond to Habermas' concept of *public sphere*, representing rather a virtual or imaginary community which does not have to exist in defined, delimited space. The manifestations of Zapatista muralists instead of supporting their own identity, i.e., aiming at least at regional ethnic coherence, have so far the rather opposite effect: the discussion of the conflict in Chiapas is led mainly outside the Zapatista autonomous zone and the dichotomy inside the zone deepens because many of its inhabitants for different reasons refuse the Zapatista ideology or do not much identify with it.

As was already said in the introduction of this review, this monograph is probably the first attempt to present some problems of forming the “new” ethnicity of well-known Mexican Indian groups. All the authors did a lot of fieldwork or (as

in the case of M. Křížová) do long-term research in archives and try to enrich the never-ending flux of debates on this topic which are led not only in Mexico but also in many other countries. It is good that Czech and Slovak Mexico studies, some of whose representatives published parts of their long-term research here, do not stay behind in the trend.

Marek Halbich

**Victoria Pitts: IN THE FLESH:
THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF
BODY MODIFICATION.**

New York: Palgrave Macmillan
Press 2003, 239 pp.¹

Victoria Pitts-Taylor, Professor of Sociology at Queens College of the City University of New York, is one of the most prominent scholars interested in the issue of the body and body modifications. In 1999 she was one of the authors of a monothematic issue of the journal *Body and Society* devoted to body modifications, alongside Christian Klesse, Bryan S. Turner, Paul Sweetman and Sheila Jeffreys; it was later published as the anthology *Body Modifications* edited by Mike Featherstone.

In her book *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification* she addresses the issue of non-mainstream body modifications and the agency and power relations that shape them.

The term body modifications usually mean alterations of the human body for non-medical reasons. In its broad-

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