

work in Honduras, there was a significant drop in infant mortality, which fell from 80.3 per 1,000 live births to 30.9' (p. 129). In Haiti, between 1998 and 2004, infant and child mortality (up to the age of five) fell from 159 to 39 per 1,000 live births in areas served by Cuban doctors (p. 131). By 2004 Cuban medical brigades were providing health care to 75 per cent of Haiti's population and 247 Haitian students were attending a medical school set up there by Cuban professors, and by the following year 600 Haitians were studying medicine in Cuba.

This book was published before the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti which claimed 230,000 lives. Cuba has since offered to reconstruct Haiti's health care system, with support from ALBA and Brazil, to be staffed by Cubans and Cuban-trained medical personnel. The book also predates the June 2009 coup in Honduras, which reduced welfare-based cooperation with the country. Fortunately, the authors continue to research and publish on the impact of Cuban medical internationalism, while all proceeds from this book go to MEDICC, an NGO which promotes cooperation among the US, Cuban and global health communities.

University College London

HELEN YAFFE

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 43 (2011). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10002063

Yolanda Lastra, Joel Sherzer and Dina Sherzer, *Adoring the Saints: Fiestas in Central Mexico* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009), pp. 208, \$55.00, hb.

This book, written in an accessible style and well illustrated with photographs and drawings, offers a comprehensive description of the patron saint fiestas of two communities located 400 kilometres north of Mexico City in the state of Guanajuato. Cruz del Palmar traces its origins to the colonisation of a region beyond the prehispanic urbanised core of Mesoamerica by Otomi Indians turned allies of the Spaniards. The 'Chichimeca Jonaz', whose language belongs to the same Oto-Pamean sub-family as Otomi, inhabit a neighbourhood named after the first Jesuit mission in Mexico, on the outskirts of the municipal capital of San Luis de la Paz. One of the semi-nomadic groups that occupied the area in pre-colonial times, they became hacienda peons and mine workers. The study describes the ritual integration of the two communities' fiestas, arguing that it expresses the symbolic continuity of a shared colonial reworking of indigenous identities originally constituted through the truce between the Spaniards, Otomis and Chichimecas in 1552, the mythical charter for founding San Luis – key to protecting silver shipments from Zacatecas and pacifying the Sierra Gorda – in the name of the canonised French crusader king, Louis IX.

The book begins with the saint cults and the functions of *mayordomos* and *cargueros* (glossed as fiesta 'leaders' and 'officials'), followed by a chapter on vigils and ritual meals. The latter offers an illuminating discussion of the hymns and ballads sung in vigils, supplemented by an appendix of transcriptions and English translations of the Spanish words. Chapter 4 describes processions and ceremonies, such as the changing of the *cargueros*, while the fifth chapter discusses dances, ritual drama and entertainment. The study examines specific local features such as the huge adorned panels decorated with flowers erected in front of churches and calvaries, and the mock battles between Apaches and soldiers identified as French. But the book justifies its subtitle in the sense that much of what is described applies more

generally, and it does end with an interpretative chapter. This asks whether what goes on in fiestas can be viewed as ‘resistance’ (of ‘popular religion’ to Catholic orthodoxy, or of the poor and indigenous to their social superiors), and concludes, reasonably, that such a perspective would have some relevance but would be one-sided. The main focus, however, is on the relationships between Indian and Spanish cultural traditions and questions of continuity and change. The authors argue that the idea of a post-conquest ‘Indo-Hispanic cultural world’ captures what the Mexican patron saint fiesta ‘represents’ better than ‘acculturation’, ‘syncretism’ or *mestizaje*.

The strong point of the authors’ discussion is that these festive cycles represent living and evolving traditions that make it necessary to take Mexican popular religiosity seriously. Yet they highlight ‘the indigenous’ in a way that sidelines the politics of *mestizaje*, and this sits uncomfortably with their invocation of Guillermo Bonfil’s idea of a ‘deep Mexico’, which presented the project of creating a Europeanised mestizo nation as an exercise in active denial and negation of the indigenous. The Chichimecas of San Luis, too, often seem to stand for the entire population of the municipality in an unconvincing way. A comparative study of patron saint fiestas in central and western Mexico would have to acknowledge that mestizo people who have come to see themselves as definitely ‘not Indian’, and who are racist about people who retain indigenous identities, still dress up their children as ‘inditos’ for festive occasions and may even beat ‘Aztec’ drums and wear feathers. Readers in search of more complex understandings of such ironic forms of mimesis are not going to find them here. The book also pays scant attention to the way in which neoliberal multiculturalist policies have not only turned groups like the ‘Chichimeca Jonaz’ into tourist attractions, but also made them less happy about accepting a name whose first part was a generic, though not necessarily pejorative, label for the ‘uncivilised’ ancestors of Nahuatl-speakers.

The book does offer some insights into the politics of fiesta organisation. In addition to conflicts with priests and the official Church, the authors mention controversies over how particular elements of the fiesta were staged or performed and discussions about whether a particular *carguero* could really afford the costs involved in sponsorship. The book also records thunderous applause when a regional *huapango* star declared: ‘This festival is not for tourists: it is for us, for our soul, for our saint’ (p. 123). But the authors, specialists in linguistic anthropology and comparative literature, are not aiming to provide a social anthropological account of fiestas. They provide no social profiling of the different kinds of actors whose festive roles they describe. Nor do they discuss fiesta financing or say much about the role of international migration in the reproduction and transformation of festive life. Their cultural anthropology approach highlights important issues such as the way a sense of having suffered religious persecution during the Cristero rebellion suffuses local Catholic political culture, alongside the general dynamism of a popular religiosity continually incorporating new elements. Yet different conclusions might have emerged from comparative analysis focused on a broader range of cases: too specific a reading is given to the ‘Apaches’, for example, since ‘wild’ Indians figure in other versions of this kind of ritual theatre as ‘others’ to indigenous people who identify themselves as Christians without identifying themselves with Europeans. Nevertheless, the authors are to be congratulated for producing a book that will give uninitiated readers detailed, vivid and nuanced understandings of what happens, formally and informally, in fiestas, and what makes them so important and

meaningful to ordinary Mexicans. At what is a troubling time for the country, it is good to read such an affectionate account of aspects of popular culture that might genuinely claim to be ‘the essence of Mexico’, even if they now have their darker side in desperate recourse to the favours of ‘Saint Death’. I was, however, left wondering whether, in light of the important distinction the Catholic Church makes between ‘adoring’ and ‘venerating’ saints, the book’s title was making a statement (and if so, what was intended?).

University of Manchester

JOHN GLEDHILL

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 43 (2011). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10002075

José de Echave, Alejandro Diez, Ludwig Huber, Bruno Revesz, Zavier Ricard Lanata and Martín Tanaka, *Minería y conflicto social* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos/Consortio de Investigación Económica y Social; Cuzco: Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos Bartolomé de las Casas; Castilla-Piura: Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado, 2009), pp. 424, pb.

Against a backdrop of neoliberal policies aimed at opening up investment opportunities for foreign capital and rocketing world commodity prices, the number of large-scale mining operations in Peru has increased significantly since 1990, bringing in their wake a plethora of conflicts involving local communities across the national territory. The publication of this monograph is consequently timely and welcome. The opening chapters provide case studies that plot the origins and trajectory of disputes in six locations: Tambogrande and Majas (in the department of Piura), Yanacocha (Cajamarca), Antamina (Ancash), Las Bambas (Apurímac) and Tintaya (Cuzco). Four main scenarios are encountered, ranging from areas of low conflict to those characterised by permanent low-intensity conflict, to locations where sporadic social explosions are followed by negotiation among the various parties, and finally to zones of persistent high conflict. Four central players in these disputes are also identified: the mining corporations (usually foreign-owned), provincial and national agencies of the Peruvian state, local communities (frequently resource-poor *minifundistas* eking out a living in the high Andes), and ‘external agents’ such as political activists, environmental groups and NGOs, both national and international. Shifting interactions among these often competing forces are shown to determine the success or failure of particular protests.

Overall, the empirical chapters in the monograph are of uneven quality, which reflects the degree of understanding possessed by the individual authors. While some contributors have lived and worked in an area for several decades, have been personally involved in mobilisations and are well acquainted with key participants, others write on the basis only of several weeks’ fieldwork. Unsurprisingly, these case studies lack depth vis-à-vis the warp and woof of local politics, especially with regard to delicate questions of corrupt practices concerning dealings between the mining corporations, bureaucrats and politicians, the buying-off of movement leaders, and the suborning of local media. Other crucial dimensions of micropolitics, such as the tactics employed by the employees of local and national state institutions to divide and rule with the goal of ‘managing’ protests, required further exploration.

In the second section, an attempt is made to relate the empirical data to contemporary social movement theory, especially the literature surrounding resource mobilisation, collective action and ‘identity’. The aim is to combine the