

governments to apply some of its ideas, e.g., the Central American Common Market and the Latin American Free Trade Area.

University of Virginia

ALEXANDRE KAFKA

Growth, Equality, and the Mexican Experience. By MORRIS SINGER. Austin, 1970. University of Texas Press for the Institute of Latin American Studies. Latin American Monographs, 16. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. x, 341. \$8.50.

The author, an economist, hopes to “throw . . . light on the relationships between growth and the several components of equality” in post-Revolutionary (especially 1939-1961) Mexico. He accepts the difficulties of the enterprise, and conceives of it as a tentative essay. General economic theory is applied to Mexican development experience. The bulk of the book deals with income distribution, taxation, savings, consumption, inflation, with lesser space on government expenditures on education and social welfare. Although much of the data is of interest primarily to specialists in finance, there are convenient reviews of data found in other studies that will be useful for reference purposes to economic historians generally. There is little new in these summaries. Singer’s cautions on simplistic interpretations of economic data by the untrained are useful.

In chapter 9 the author argues that although more expenditures for education and welfare would have reduced investment, there “probably” would have been a net gain to economic development, and he bases his stand in part on the history of savings propensities in Mexico. If this is not entirely convincing, at least it is founded on some sort of data rather than on hope and divination. Singer is moderately convinced in this connection—as in others—that the policies he advocates would have improved the good growth record of Mexico. He does state many caveats, understands the difficulties of being sure of such suggestions, and—no doubt unintentionally—succeeds in convincing this reviewer that Mexico’s *políticos* did about all that could have been expected of them in estimating investors’ reactions.

Chapter 10, on “Political Democracy and Economic Development,” scarcely deals with either political concepts or Mexico’s political experience. It fails to integrate politico-social matters into the economic development themes and data of the study. Singer finds the political system “highly adequate for the tasks of economic development,” and repudiates Raymond Vernon’s notion that power in Mexico is too diffused to permit effective development action by government. Chapter 11, entitled “Conclusion: Income Distribution and Demand in

Economic Development,” finally returns to the issues of chapter 1 on “the” (Singer’s caveat) relationship between growth and equality. He notes that definitions of equality and inequality present difficulties. Not surprisingly, he finds that the economic history of many countries shows rising inequalities as economic development becomes rapid—i.e., development requires income distribution in favor of the rising upper middle income class. But inequality, he points out, conflicts with values attaching to reduction of discrimination and increases in social mobility; thus, problems arise in deciding *schedules* for income inequality. He suggests that possibly Mexico has had too much inequality in income distribution, although he admits that “the precise nature of the limitation on growing inequality is arbitrary, and . . . involves value judgments;” still, “limits need to be placed upon the price paid by the low income groups for the advance of the entire economy.”

Singer points to values in inflation in the Mexican experience, as well as in monopoly in helping to reduce risk and uncertainty. He asserts that reduction of inequities in income distribution can be furthered more by expansion of highly productive industries than through wage increases as such. Finally, he develops a series of mathematical formulae for the elucidation of his theses. The formulae try, among other things, to indicate relationships between economic tensions and possible political unrest. The author is too sophisticated to suppose that the suggested manipulation of available data soon will revolutionize governmental decision-making.

Syracuse University

ROBERT JONES SHAFER

Papers of the Conference on Research and Resources of Haiti. Edited by RICHARD P. SCHAEDEL. Austin, 1969. Institute of Latin American Studies for the Research Institute for the Study of Man. Notes. Pp. 624. Paper.

Schaedel’s Introduction and the sixteen papers presented at a conference in New York City during November, 1967, constitute one of the more important analyses of Haiti’s underdevelopment and proposals for amelioration. The publication’s value will be increased by a reading, first, of papers by three Haitian panelists that have been placed at the end. The first stresses the reasons for Haiti’s plight: the external forces—ostracism from the family of nations, threats of foreign intervention, and the limited achievements of the American intervention, 1915–1934—as well as such internal factors as the evils of the colonial legacy (especially the hostility between the small number of