[Review of the book *Successes in Anti-Poverty*]

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[Review of the book *Successes in Anti-Poverty*]

**Abstract**  
[Excerpt] Michael Lipton has devoted a long career to studying and fighting poverty in the developing world. In this volume he talks about how to make anti-poverty programs work.

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organizations. As in many other studies of disasters, Hopkins finds ample evidence that vital information was not communicated to people who, if they had received it, might have taken preventive action. Hopkins offers various suggestions on how to improve communications within organizations, emphasizing the possibilities that are offered by new informational technologies. This leaves the impression that hazard management is largely a technical problem that professionals can solve, without the need to understand the impact of the broader political-economic context on corporate organization and behavior.

Of course, Hopkins knows very well that this is not the case, and the best chapters of the book are those in which he successfully integrates the insights of political economy and organizational theory to produce a more complete understanding of the causation of workplace disasters. Thus, for example, in his discussion of cultural impediments to the recognition of hazards within the corporation (Chapter 4), Hopkins invokes the construct of a culture of denial. The unwillingness of people to accept new evidence that is contrary to beliefs has been analyzed by some in terms of cognitive dissonance, a psychological phenomenon. Hopkins, however, expressly links the culture of denial to the production pressures under which the mine operated (Chapter 10). Mine managers, under the gun to maintain high production, were disinclined to believe evidence that hazardous conditions were developing that required a temporary halt to operations. Indeed, the culture of denial enabled mine management to believe that it was being safety-conscious and not putting production ahead of safety even while it recklessly allowed workers to go underground at a time when the mine was explosive.

Hopkins also does an admirable job of demolishing the argument, so often heard today that it has virtually become a mantra of some government officials and safety experts, that safety pays (Chapter 10). Mine managers, under the gun to maintain high production, were disinclined to believe evidence that hazardous conditions were developing that required a temporary halt to operations. Indeed, the culture of denial enabled mine management to believe that it was being safety-conscious and not putting production ahead of safety even while it recklessly allowed workers to go underground at a time when the mine was explosive.

In sum, Hopkins covers a lot of ground in a short book. He has tried to reach a broad audience of safety professionals, policy-makers, and academics by drawing on both organizational and political-economic analysis of disasters. A fuller and more explicit theoretical integration of those two disciplines at the outset would have smoothed the discussion that followed. Nevertheless, the book offers both a compelling case study of a disaster that should have been avoided and numerous insights into the reasons why it and others like it were not.

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Michael Lipton has devoted a long career to studying and fighting poverty in the developing world. In this volume he talks about how to make anti-poverty programs work.

Three overarching principles are recommended. (1) The principle of joint requirements: several conditions have to be met jointly if many people are to escape poverty. (2) The principle of total effect: anti-poverty policies have effects beyond their particular areas and must be evaluated accordingly. (3) The principle of joint planning: programs should be designed with clear and reasonable expectations about targeting of services on the poor, sustainability, quality of yield, and acquisition of yield by the poor.

The force of the book is in applying these principles in particular contexts. Thus, Lipton recommends the following design features for employment-creation schemes such as that in Maharashtra (India): design employment for low-opportunity-cost individuals; seek alternatives to direct targeting; use scheme rules and conditions to discriminate in favor of the poor; allow for poor workers' frequent physical difficulties; minimize poor participants' transactions costs; reduce covariate stresses on public works resources; use retailer, employer, and public works competition "for the poor"; before starting, check that low demand for labor causes poverty; subsidize coverage, sustainability, and graduation; encourage grassroots pressure groups to improve the scheme; seek complemen-
tarities among employment schemes; build up capacity of schemes and workers before works begin; and use performance incentives for officials and participants. In a similar vein, drawing lessons from the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and other similar programs, he has set forth thirteen rules for successful pro-poor credit: respect fungibility of credit; seek a poverty focus, but by means other than direct targeting; avoid anti-poor rules and actions; find alternatives to physical collateral; cut poor borrowers' transactions costs; reduce the covariance of repayment; avoid lending monopolies; ensure that extra credit can be productive before raising its supply; subsidize transactions costs and administration, not interest; avoid politicizing or softening repayment, but anticipate emergencies; complement credit with infrastructure and education; impose savings requirements to improve borrowers' performance; and create incentives to lenders and borrowers for repayment.

For those seeking to combat poverty in low-income countries, these pages offer a great deal of empirically based wisdom.

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The Industrial Relations Research Association Series has a history of publications in the best tradition of industrial relations—the application of suitable theoretical and empirical tools to issues of importance to policy-makers and practitioners, analyzed from a multidisciplinary perspective as appropriate. This volume, dealing with new approaches to disability at the workplace—an area that has received increased attention especially since the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990—admirably upholds that tradition.

The editors first provide background information relevant to most of the subsequent chapters, framed by an industrial relations systems approach. Among the issues they examine are the various definitions of disability; the role of the different actors; evaluation criteria applied to the goals of the disability system; various sources of income support for disabled workers (for example, workers' compensation, social security disability insurance, and employer benefits such as health insurance, sick leave, and short and long-term disability); and the main public policy options for prevention (tort liability, health and safety regulations, internal responsibility, and general financial incentives through devices such as experience ratings). They also discuss the important role of ideology and power in the system (crucial for determining what "legitimately" qualifies for compensation), as well as the role of technology, including medical technology.

In the chapters that follow, the editors have brought together international experts from various disciplines to examine the key issues. These include the following:

- myths and realities pertaining to the disabled, especially with respect to the incidence, causes, and nature of workplace disability by demographic and socioeconomic categories
- discrimination against the disabled
- the impact of workers' compensation benefits and vocational rehabilitation on the return to work decision and on post-injury employment stability and wages
- the pros and cons of preventing workplace disability through various mechanisms such as health and safety regulations, financial incentives such as experience rating, market-based compensating wage-risk premiums, tort liability, and employee assistance programs
- the role of unions in collective bargaining, information dissemination, enforcement of employee rights, and lobbying
- the role of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other policies, especially in dealing with discrimination against the disabled and in facilitating reasonable accommodation requirements at the workplace
- the role of vocational rehabilitation in facilitating employment, including a discussion of the methodological problems in estimating program effects
- the role of workers' compensation, including its historical evolution and current developments, especially with respect to such dimensions as benefit levels, eligibility rules, health care delivery, disability management, re-employment, and tort liability
- the role of the Social Security Disability Insurance program, especially with respect to work incentives, vocational rehabilitation, and health care coverage
- the growing importance of disputes and litigation over such issues as benefit eligibility, and the role of alternative dispute resolution procedures
- alternative approaches in the United States, Canada,