

the warring parties to sail as far north as Iceland and thence to Bergen, Göteborg and Malmö before finally being able to set course for Cuxhaven and its final destination Delfzijl. Thus a voyage which initially should have been routed through the English Channel and have lasted only a few days took more than two months from January to March 1945, in the depths of winter.

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- *Médecin-général Inspecteur* Raoul Favre † (joint author), *L'Homme et les catastrophes* (Man and disasters), France-Sélection, Aubervilliers Cédex, 1992, 800 pp.

This book, which won the *Prix de la Protection Civile* (Civil Defence Prize), had been out of print for several years and has just been updated and republished.

By a disaster, writes General Favre, is meant a sudden, brutal disruption of the pre-established order between man and nature which has three kinds of destructive effects:

- extensive damage;
- a very high number of victims (dead, injured, homeless, etc.);
- the more or less complete disappearance of a local infrastructure to control outbreaks of lawlessness, to help the victims and to take care of the casualties.

Some disasters are due to the natural elements, i.e. water and fire:

- burst dams and dykes, flooding of various kinds;
- forest fires, urban conflagrations, ships ablaze.

In addition there are mining disasters, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, cyclones and hurricanes.

Others are man-made, resulting from the use of various technologies:

- transport accidents: air disasters (in flight or on the ground), and rail, road and sea disasters;
- the effects of conflicts which cause huge numbers of civilian and military casualties through the use of conventional, chemical, nuclear or biological weapons.

Technological progress has greatly increased the number and variety of disasters. At the same time the previous statistics have been modified by a spate of natural disasters throughout the world, whose effects are now given wider media coverage and are thus better known than in the past.

Each chapter ends with tables giving details of every type of disaster, dating back to the earliest known sources. They are supplemented with general worldwide statistics going back to the turn of the century.

The book is an invaluable reference work, especially for those who are directly or indirectly involved in relief work or responsible for protecting people from the effects of all kinds of disasters.