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Athens, Greece, erc@otenet.gr.*

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D&SCRN Granted Formal Status

For the past four years, our Network has been operating as a Working Group (Sociology of Disasters). During the 4th ESA Congress in Amsterdam, the founders of the Network decided to adopt the name, "Disaster and Social Crisis Research Network(D&SCRN) taking into account various traditions in the field as well as the recommendations of the Executive Committee for more inclusive titles in order to prevent proliferation of Networks. At its recent meeting in Prague (28-29 April 2000), the Executive Committee of the ESA granted formal recognition to the "Disaster and Social Crisis Research Network" (D&SCRN).

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The 5th ESA Conference in Helsinki : D&SCRN Call for Papers

The 5th European Sociological Association Conference, "Visions and Divisions: Challenges to European Sociology", will be held in Helsinki, August 28th - September 1st 2001.

The newly recognized by the ESA, "Disaster and Social Crisis Research Network," plans to organize five regular sessions during the Conference (See Below). Sociologists and other Social Scientists who are interested in making a presentation in one of these sessions should submit an abstract of not more than 250 words, no later than January 31, 2001, to the respective session coordinators.

Details regarding the conditions for publishing the abstract in the Conference Abstracts, the deadlines for submission of the papers and the terms of presentation will be provided to the prospective participants at a later date by the Session coordinators.

I. Disasters and Social Crises: Visions and Divisions in American and European Approaches

This session will focus on theories in European disaster and social crisis studies. Among the questions to be addressed are:

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*D&SCRN Granted Formal Status
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The purpose of the D&SCRN is to promote the study, research and analysis of “natural”, “technological” and “social” disasters with a view to contributing to the development of disaster-resilient European communities and preventing or mitigating the human, economic, social, cultural and psychological effects of disasters.

At the time of recognition, the D&SCRN had 14 members. Our members come from Germany (3), the United States (3), the United Kingdom (2), Russia (1), Greece (1), the Ukraine (1), Yugoslavia (1), Hungary (1) and Finland (1). The Network has a good geographic representation, but we need to increase our numbers and welcome new members who with their studies of disasters and social crises would like to contribute to making our European communities more disaster- and crisis-resilient.

Colleagues who are already members of ESA in good standing and would like to join us may do so by sending an application with their name, their affiliation, their addresses (conventional and electronic), and their interests in disasters and social crises to N. Petropoulos (erc@otenet.gr), the network coordinator and to Maureen Fordham who manages the network's webpage (m.h.fordham@anglia.ac.uk). At this time there are no financial obligations. Those colleagues who are not ESA members and would like to join the D&SCRN network should first become members of ESA (see www.valt.helsinki.fi/esa/member.htm for information concerning ESA membership requirements).

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How theoretical is contemporary European disaster and social crisis research?; how atheoretical? Are the theoretical approaches of European sociologists different from those of their American counterparts? How theoretically homogeneous are European disaster studies?; that is, are there national differences in theoretical orientation? Is there skewing in theory use as a result of differing events and differing threats in different European countries? Are there East-West European differences?; North-South differences? To what extent do document studies reflect recent trends in sociological theory?; to what extent are they grounded in the "classics"? Are different theories being used to explain disasters versus other types of crises? Are European sociologists more concerned with special theories of disaster or with theories of social life that also incorporate disasters?

Coordinators: Wolf Dombrowski, Disaster Research Unit, Univ. of Kiel, Germany, E-mail: wdombro@soziologie.uni-kiel.de

Robert A. Stallings, School of Policy, Planning, and Development, University of Southern California, USA, E-mail: rstallin@usc.edu

II. Deconstructing Disaster Management: Beyond the Command and Control Model

This session will address the role and efficacy of the dominant model of disaster management known as 'command and control'. Secondly it will explore alternatives, such as the emergent human resources model. Papers will examine the following questions: Is the highly centralised, militaristic, command and control model, widely used around the

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world, the most effective or appropriate? How successful is it in meeting the needs of highly culturally diverse urban communities? Is it sensitive to the needs of different social groups such as women, ethnic minorities, disabled persons, children, the elderly? Is it more appropriate at some stages of the disaster process than others? What is the actual and potential role of emergent groups in disasters and disaster planning and to what extent is their inclusion compatible with the command and control model? What alternative models exist? What examples are there of alternative models in practice (as opposed to purely theoretical models)?

Coordinator: Maureen Fordham, Anglia Polytechnic University, United Kingdom. E-mail: m.h.fordham@anglia.ac.uk

III. The Contributions of Sociology to Disaster Research and Vice Versa

Sociological theories and models have contributed to disaster research. Ideas from collective behavior, complex organizations and symbolic interactionism have been used. But since this was last systematically documented 15 years ago, updated versions will be obtained. This session will also identify sociological theories, models, bodies of empirical research and major hypotheses not yet systematically applied in disaster studies. Finally, special attention will be paid to how and where disaster research has and/or could feedback into sociology.

Coordinators: E.L. (Henry) Quarantelli, Disaster Research Center, University of Delaware, USA. E-mail: elqdr@udel.edu
Bruna de Marchi,, ISIG Institute of Inter-

national Sociology of Gorizia. E-mail : bruna.de-marchi@libero.it

IV. Global Accumulation of Capital as a Factor in Social Crises and Complex Disasters

Session proposes to examine the extent to which the antagonistic process of profit-seeking within the global capitalist economy can be considered the causal factor in social crises and complex disasters, involving deprivation of people and destruction of their lives, as well as of their natural, social, technical and cultural environment. Recent experiences in Iraq and Yugoslavia repose the question to what extent the competition of transnational corporations to gain unimpeded access to cheap raw materials, labor force and/or markets has contributed to the emergence and exacerbation of social crises and complex disasters with all their attendant consequences, including among other things pollution of air, ground and water, falls in production and rises in unemployment, increased death rates and illnesses of all kinds, and repression of social movements which are protesting the disastrous policies of transnational capitalist institutions.

Coordinator: Vera Vratusa, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia. E-mail: vvratusa@f.bg.ac.yu

V. Disaster and Sociocultural Changes: Changes other than those in the Organization of Civil Protection

Social Science disasterologists usually restrict their research and analysis to an assessment of the responses of organizations, communities and citizens with a view toward improving the effectiveness of response in future disasters. In this context,

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they usually investigate those aspects of social organization which relate to civil protection. Few studies have concentrated on the impact of disasters on other aspects of social organization. These few exceptions have dealt mainly with the impact of disasters on intra-group solidarity and deviance--processes which are short-term reactions with no implications for more permanent and extensive socio-cultural changes. This session invites theoretical, conceptual or empirical papers on the impact of 'natural' and/or "technological" disasters on other than civil defense institutions. The papers may take a macrosociological systemic approach (i.e. assess the impact on the entire social system) or an institutional approach (i.e. analyze the impact on specific social institutions such as the familial, the educational, the legal-political, the economic, and the religious).

Coordinator: Nicholas Petropoulos,
Emergencies Research Center, Athens,
Greece. E-mail: erc@otenet.gr

*ISDR: Disaster Reduction,
Education and Youth*

The "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" (ISDR), an offshoot of the IDNDR, has announced the theme of the World Disaster Reduction Campaign, for the year 2000, which is "Disaster Reduction, Education and Youth." The campaign will give specific emphasis to the prevention of forest fires, whose impact according to Mr. Phillip Boule, former director of the IDNDR and ISDR Secretariats, has been underestimated.

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*Global Change & Catastrophic Risk
Management: Earthquake Risks in
Europe*

Maureen Fordham was present at the "Second EuroConference on Global Change and Catastrophic Risk Management: Earthquake Risks in Europe", Laxenburg, Austria. July 6th-9th 2000 (<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/research/RMP/july2000/local.html>). The conference was organized by IIASA (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis) and proceedings will be available on the website at a later date.

The conference had 3 major aims: to examine how population/capital movements and other global change phenomena are increasing vulnerability to earthquakes in Europe and throughout the world; to examine whether there is evidence of possible regional interdependencies of earthquake risks; and to examine a set of risk management issues for both mitigating earthquake losses and improving the spread of the residual losses through public loss-sharing policies and private risk-transfer mechanisms.

Maureen Fordham was invited to give a paper on gender aspects which was entitled: "The Place of Gender in Earthquake Vulnerability and Mitigation". She also provided a commentary on James K Mitchell's plenary presentation "Human Dimensions of Europe's Increasing Earthquake Disaster Potential"; and jointly chaired (with James K Mitchell) a small group discussion on the social aspects/human dimensions of natural disasters.

The conference brought together economists, seismologists, insurance professionals, risk modellers, and social scientists to explore interdisciplinary approaches to reducing earthquake damage in Europe.

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Disaster Reduction, Education & Youth (continued)

The major objectives of the campaign are:

- (1) To promote a shift from a mentality of response to disasters to one of management of risks
- (2) To promote a stronger commitment to incorporate disaster reduction in education curricula and
- (3) To promote greater participation of youth in disaster reduction activities.

The ISDR is in the process of preparing a series of support materials and guidelines (e.g. brochures, posters, documentation for forest fires, t-shirts with the theme of forest fires, a kids' corner on the website, information about awards etc.) in order to launch the campaign in the member countries and local communities.

Member-states which are not confronting the threat of forest fires may participate in the campaign by addressing other kinds of disasters.

The campaign will last from August to October 2000 and will culminate on 11 October 2000, with the celebrations for the International Day for Disaster Reduction.

For more information concerning the campaign you may get in touch with the ISDR Secretariat (isdr@un.org).

With the opportunity we would like to wish good luck to the new leadership of the ISDR Secretariat. We remain optimistic that they will heed Dr. Boule's recommendations regarding the future of UN disaster policies. We also suggest that the new leadership replace the "R" with the "P" in order to give emphasis to the 'culture of prevention.'

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"The Yugoslav Disaster Diary: A connection Between "Social" and "Natural" Disasters?"

A more than four week-long drought and a tropical heat above 30 degrees Celsius, accompanied by fires and followed by hailstorms, struck Yugoslavia and the surrounding Balkan countries during this spring and summer. They have created degrading living conditions for humans, flora and fauna. Agricultural yields are decimated, especially fodder, seasonal vegetables and fruit.

It still can not be ascertained precisely to what extent the fuel exhaust from several hundred to over one-thousand NATO military aircraft contributed to the aggravation of the main cause of climatic changes and of these natural disasters - the long-term tropospheric warming and stratospheric ozone depletion. The NATO forces made 36.000 sorties during 78 nights and days of illegal bombing of Yugoslavia, last spring and early summer. Also, they still maintain intensified flying activity over the Balkan region, contributing further to air pollution and formation of nitric acid rain clouds endangering entire Europe.

It is certain, however, that NATO countries political and military leaderships' choice of mainly civilian targets for destruction by more than 23.000 tons of explosives contained in cluster bombs, Tomahawk Cruise missiles and A-10 plane bullets "enriched" with depleted uranium, made more difficult and sometimes impossible the implementation of drought, fire and hailstorm disaster prevention and relief measures.

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“The Yugoslav Disaster Diary: A connection Between “Social” and “Natural” Disasters?” (continued)

Thus the bombing of industrial plants which were producing plastic water pipes and agricultural machines and appliances, besides increasing the rate of the already high unemployment, also dwindled capacities for reparation and development of a proper irrigation network, deep plowing of soil, airplane extinguishing of fire and rocket protection from hail.

The destruction or damaging of the major chemical, petrochemical, fertilizer, pharmaceutical plants and infrastructure, thwarted the proper filtering and chemical maintenance of water, reduced implementation of adequate agrotechnical measures like artificial manuring to just 10% of the arable land, and decreased storage and production capacities of medicines.

The bombing of 144 major petrochemical and industrial installations and factories in a largely agricultural region, caused as well long-lasting and trans-boundary pollution of the entire ecosystem with very toxic and potentially carcinogenic and mutagenic substances (e.g. ethylene dichloride, hydrochloride, vinyl chloride monomer, sulphur dioxide, phosgene, nitrogen hydroxide, ammonia, pyraline, lead, liquid mercury). These substances made their way into the Danube and its tributaries, Lepenica and Velika Morava rivers, that feed reservoirs used for drinking water and irrigation by 85 million people in the entire Basin before emptying into the Black Sea.

It is also certain that the USA and EU administrations' policy of collective punishment of the Yugoslav peoples, irrespective of nationality, through the imposition of an economic blockage and

sanctions, for almost a decade (minimally corrected by few self-interested exceptions), are still hampering the implementation of adequate natural disaster relief measures. The USA and EU governments will remain legally accountable for further increases of the death rate due to deteriorated nutrition, hygiene and health care under conditions of economic deprivation that were aggravated by the bombing and under a regime of sanctions which restricted the possibilities for the importing of ingredients necessary for the production of foodstuffs, filters and medicaments. All drugs are scarce, but especially citostatics, since the incidence of cancer is already doubled according to December 1999 "Report of Current Cancer Epidemiology in Serbia based on Available Data" by Cancer Foundation Yugoslavia (e-mail: kcbkosa@ptt.yu)

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A Greek Disaster Diary: Recent Disasters and Reflections of Past Ones

During the past two months Greece has experienced a series of “natural”, “technological” and “social disasters”. Counted among the technological disasters are two airplane accidents, one that involved a military airplane crash on a village residence during a training mission (“terrain masking”) and which resulted in the death of the two air force pilots and two high school students who were in their house and preparing for University entrance exams

A Greek Disaster Diary: Past and Present Disasters and Social Crises(continued)

and the other which involved a forced-ocean landing of a private Chesna air plane on a flight from Santorini to Crete and which resulted in the death of the pilot and a women passenger and the rescue of two passengers.

The rest of the disasters all occurred on the ground. The first of these involved a terrorist attack in Athens and the assassination of the British military attaché (Stephen Sonders) by the “The 17th of November Organization”—(The date refers to the day that Greek Students revolted against the 1967 dictatorship) . According to a declaration which the organization sent to the Greek newspapers, the military attaché was involved in planning the campaign against Yugoslavia. The British authorities have denied that the victim had any involvement in the above campaign.

During the past 25 years, the “17th of November Organization” has claimed 58 attacks against foreign and domestic targets. These attacks resulted in 23 deaths. The targets were either persons or property, individuals or groups.

A breakdown according to the **nationality** of the targets reveals that the overwhelming number were Greek (35). Then followed in decreasing order American (11), Turkish (4), German (3), Dutch (1), French (1), British (2) and European Union(1) targets.

A breakdown in terms of **activity/occupation of the targets** reveals the following distribution: Greek and foreign industrial interests (14), Foreign diplomatic personnel (9), Greek political figures and parties (6), foreign military services (5), Greek army and police services (5),

foreign secret services (3), Greek tax services (3), former collaborators with the dictatorship (3), Greek Press/ journalists (2), Greek bankers (2), Greek judges (2), Doctors (1) and 3 “other” (European Union offices, suburban residential areas, luxurious apartment complexes, etc.).

The assassination of Sonders followed a few days after the release of a U.S.Congress Committee Report which equated Greece to African and Asian countries in the management of terrorism and amidst bilateral negotiations for increased cooperation between the two countries in the suppression and prevention of terrorism. This coincidence led some circles within Greece (mainly the left opposition) to suggest the involvement of foreign secret services in the assassination of Sonders.

Cognizant of the impact of terrorism on international relations and on tourism, but also wanting to protect its national sovereignty and the civil rights of Greek citizens, the Greek government is moving in the direction of (a) increasing training of Greek anti-terrorism forces through cooperation with EU countries, (b) making some minor modifications on counter-terrorism legislation (e.g. protection of witnesses and former terrorists who cooperate, non-use of jurors, etc), and (c) encouraging the continuous involvement and participation of citizens in the process of prevention and detection.

The “violence of men” in June was followed by the “violence of nature” in July. During July, Greece was hit by two heat waves, with temperatures fluctuating between 40 and 46 degrees Celsius. Whether these were the result of global warming or reverberations from EL NINO or from the bombings in Yugoslavia, we cannot determine at this time. For one thing, they affected adversely the living conditions of vulnerable categories of people (including

A Greek Disaster Diary: Past and Present Disasters and Social Crises(continued)

those of the September 7, 1999 EQ victims who were living in containers, without air conditioners). For another thing, they also contributed – together with high winds, drought, dry growth, neglected city dumps and at times the help of an active human hand - to a barrage of forest fires that was unprecedented in terms of quantity and quality. At one day, there were counted 153 forest fires. In addition, a number of human settlements were threatened and houses were burned—leading to evacuations of villagers. The worst hit was Samos, the island of Pythagoras. Except for the loss of two air force pilots in the line of action, there were no other losses of life. The magnitude of the disaster led Greek authorities to ask for help from other countries which were not also confronting forest fires (e.g. Israel, Germany, Russia).

The barrage of forest fires in some areas (Samos) precipitated a mass exodus of tourists (e.g. Dutch tourists), often upon the instructions of Dutch, British and Turkish tourist or insurance agents who were urging tourists to continue their vacations across the border. This not only upset the local tourist establishments which depend on tourist income, it also threatened to undermine the good atmosphere which prevailed between Greece and Turkey following the 1999 earthquakes.

Aside from the human, economic and social impacts, the recent forest fires set into motion a discussion (at times with recriminations) regarding the wisdom of a recent (1997) governmental decision to separate the “prevention” (remained in the Ministry of agriculture) and the “suppression” (transferred to the fire service in the Ministry of Public Order) factors in forest fire protection.

With regard to forest fire prevention, there are signs of progress, e.g. (a) cooperation of Greek forest experts with the Joint Research Center in ISPRA on risk analysis development incorporating “constant”, “variable” and “social” factors, (b) re-organization and decentralization of meteorological stations, (c) participation of Greek universities along with universities, institutes, and private companies from Germany, France, Spain, Italy and Portugal in the development of the FUEGO system of fire detection and suppression with the use of GIS technology and (d) the encouragement and training of civilian volunteers for both fire prevention and protection on the basis of specialization.

The failure of prevention inevitably leads to increased rehabilitation costs, which some one has to defray. In the case of the recent forest fires, the Greek government is applying the rehabilitation model for earthquakes in terms of immediate relief and long term recovery loans. Nonetheless, the government has realized that the costs can be forbidding especially following a proliferation of natural disasters. It could undermine national economic planning and the national budgets. The government is in the process of drafting legislation for the compulsory insurance protection from natural disasters for some 5 million structures under 130 sq. m., with the cooperation of state and private insurance agencies. In the meantime, recent archeological evidence from Crete (2700 years ago) revealed that laws which were inscribed on stone columns contained provisions for compensation of victims, following natural disasters (EQs, floods etc).

Speaking of compensations, it would be instructive to mention the class action suit against Germany of the survivors of the mini-holocaust involving the mass executions by the nazis of some 300 people (men, women and children) in the village community of Dystomo. The survivors

A Greek Disaster Diary: Past and Present Disasters and Social Crises(continued)

have won their case in the local and federal Greek courts. Following the unwillingness of Germany to pay the compensation, the Greek courts have ordered the confiscation of Germany properties in Greek territory. The German government has also gone to court asking for non-implementation of such order on the basis of procedures (e.g. requires the signature of the Greek Minister of Justice, non-jurisdiction of Greek Courts etc.), and invoking the need to maintain good relations among members of the EU. The execution of the order has been postponed until September when the issue will be discussed anew in Greek courts.

I would like to end this disaster diary with a note on the rehabilitation ramifications of a disaster without geographical or temporal borders-the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. Specifically, I would like to mention the efforts of Mrs. Irina Grusevaia from Byelorussia, President of the International Organization for Humanitarian Cooperation, who has undertaken a campaign for the placement of the Chernobyl children victims in families to help their recovery process. On a local basis, such efforts are being coordinated by an ecological organization, the Mediterranean SOS Network (medsoc@Ath.forthnet.gr) In the future, we plan to give more information regarding such placements or other activities of the Network. Meanwhile, we would like to applaud the decision by the German government to phase out its nuclear reactors and to express the hope that the Turkish ecology movement will succeed in stopping the construction of a nuclear reactor in Western Turkey (or in any part of Turkey). In fact, the transnational nature of nuclear accidents calls on all ecology movements to demand the passing of legislation for the phasing out of all nuclear

nuclear reactors and for multilateral cooperation in the search of alternative forms of energy.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The D&SCRN Electronic Newsletter is published four times a year (March, June, September and December). Announcements of conferences, book, film, and CD-ROM reviews, reportage on conferences, disaster diaries, brief articles on best or worst practices in disaster prevention and recovery, commentaries on disasters and crises, human interest stories relevant to disasters, etc. should be sent electronically to the editor (erc@otenet.gr) no later than the first of the month of publication. N. Petropoulos.