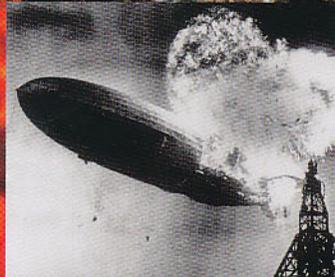


501

MOST DEVASTATING DISASTERS



Publisher: Polly Manguel

Project Editor: Emma Hill

Designer: Ron Callow/Design 23

Production Manager: Neil Randles

Chapters Written By:

Natural Fid Backhouse/Roland Matthews/Kieran Fogarty/Joe Toussaint/Janet Zoro/
Jackum Brown/Sal Oliver

Sports Joe Toussaint/Janet Zoro/Fid Backhouse

Transport Fid Backhouse/Roland Matthews/Jackum Brown/Janet Zoro/Joe Toussaint

Conflagrations Kieran Fogarty/Roland Matthews/Joe Toussaint/Fid Backhouse

Health Sal Oliver/Janet Zoro/Joe Toussaint/Roland Matthews

Political Roland Matthews/Fid Backhouse/Sal Oliver/Kieran Fogarty

Economic Fid Backhouse/Sal Oliver/Kieran Fogarty

Commercial Kieran Fogarty/Fid Backhouse

Military Roland Matthews/Fid Backhouse/Kieran Fogarty/Sal Oliver

Industrial Fid Backhouse

Engineering Roland Matthews/Jackum Brown/Janet Zoro/Kieran Fogarty/Fid Backhouse

Humanitarian Fid Backhouse/Kieran Fogarty/Roland Matthews/Sal Oliver/Joe Toussaint

Environmental & Ecological Fid Backhouse/Roland Matthews/Janet Zoro/Kieran Fogarty/Sal Oliver/
Jackum Brown/Joe Toussaint

Terrorism Fid Backhouse/Roland Matthews/Kieran Fogarty/Sal Oliver/Joe Toussaint

Massacres Janet Zoro/Kieran Fogarty/Fid Backhouse

Consequences Fid Backhouse

First published in Great Britain in 2010 by Bounty Books,
a division of Octopus Publishing Group Limited,
Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JY
www.octopusbooks.co.uk

An Hachette UK Company
www.hachette.co.uk

Copyright © 2010 Octopus Publishing Group Limited

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the
prior written permission of the publisher.

A CIP catalogue record is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-753719-58-9

Printed and bound in Hong Kong

Jiyeh power station oil spill

WHEN:

July 14–15 2006

WHERE:

Jiyeh, Lebanon

TOLL:

Incalculable effect on eastern Mediterranean fish stocks and bird life

YOU SHOULD KNOW:

After the spill, an overwhelming majority in the UN General Assembly passed a resolution that Israel should contribute to the cost of the clean-up. Israel refused, citing as a defence its own 'ecological disasters' from Hezbollah shelling.

In July 2006, during renewed conflict between Israel and the Lebanon, Israeli bombers hit a power plant at Jiyeh, south of Beirut, and vast quantities of heavy fuel oil escaped from damaged tanks into the sea. The Lebanon had no experience of this type of ecological disaster, which was a potential threat to the whole eastern Mediterranean, and called for international aid. Funding, expertise and specialized equipment came promptly from all over the world, but continued Israeli bombing and a naval blockade prevented immediate assessment or treatment of the damage. For nearly a month a 10 km (6 mi) wide oil slick drifted with the tides and not only continued to pollute the Lebanese coast but also threatened to spread to Turkey, Cyprus and beyond.

The spillage was estimated at around 30,000 tonnes. Beaches and harbours along a third of the Lebanese coast were smothered in thick black sludge and the sea was transmuted from limpid blue to an evil-smelling pitch-black brew. Underwater surveys revealed that oil sediment had sunk onto the seabed. The United Nations Environmental Programme expressed grave concern about the potential environmental and economic effects of the spill. Hundreds of thousands of fish, including spawning tuna, were contaminated, as were the endangered green turtles of the Mediterranean and hundreds of thousands of birds.

A coalition of environmental groups worked on clearing land and sea and on a waste-management project to remove and safely dispose of the contaminating sludge. In August 2009 a UN report recommended the establishment of a fund to provide assistance and support for eastern Mediterranean countries affected by similar events in the future.

A layer of sticky crude oil covers the Ramlet el-Beida public beach in Beirut.

