

Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, Geneva, *Disaster Prevention and Mitigation: A Comparison of Current Knowledge, Volume 3: Seismological Aspects*. New York: United Nations, 1978, 127 pp.

This book presents a brief account of the earthquake problem, appropriate for educated persons, presumably United Nations personnel and personnel in government agencies in seismic regions. According to the Foreword, the purpose of this series of volumes is to provide the international community with a comprehensive review of existing knowledge of the causes and characteristics of natural phenomena and the preventative measures which may be taken to reduce or eliminate their impact on disaster-prone developing countries. The author of the publication is not identified other than to state that it was prepared by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator with the collaboration of Mr. Alberto Castellani and Mr. Jean Rothé. Castellani and Rothé are well-known workers in the earthquake engineering and seismology, respectively, so it can be expected that the book should be sound and, indeed, it is.

The scope of the book is indicated by the chapter headings which are: General Informa-

tion on Earthquakes; Microseismic Study of Earthquakes; Macroseismic Study of Earthquakes; Acceleration Measurements and Response Spectrum; The Seismicity of the Earth; Earthquake Prediction; Earthquake Protection; The Role of Seismology in Land Development and Town Planning; Economic Consequences of Earthquakes; Basic Parameters for Calculating Structures; Tsunamis; Bibliography.

If we compare the present publication with the recently published paperback book: *Earthquakes – A Primer*, by Bruce A. Bolt, we see considerable differences. The book by Bolt is addressed to the educated layman who wants to learn about earthquakes whereas the volume under review is clearly aimed at a more specialized audience, namely government officials, and intergovernmental officials, who have some responsibility for coping with the earthquake problem, and presumably these persons would already have read a book similar to the Bolt volume.

The volume under review would give a government official a good picture of the earthquake problem from which he could conclude that considerable progress has already been made in coping with earthquake hazards and that additional progress can be made with the support of the appropriate government agencies. Reviewer recommends the book to such readers.

A perusal of this volume by an expert will bring to his attention certain glaring weaknesses in the field (not in the book) where unfortunately a mixture of science and mysticism prevails. These topics are: intensity scales; macrozoning; and microzoning. Hopefully, future research will develop more reliable methods for these purposes.

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