

Hasan Ozbekhan, 86, Economist Who Helped Found Global Group, Dies

By JEREMY PEARCE FEB. 26, 2007

Hasan Ozbekhan, a Turkish-born economist and management expert who helped found the Club of Rome, a group of thinkers who came together to examine unwieldy global problems like food shortages and overpopulation, died on Feb. 12 in Philadelphia. He was 86.

The cause was a pulmonary embolism, his family said.

In the early 1970s, Mr. Ozbekhan (pronounced UHZ-beh-kahn), who taught at the University of Pennsylvania and applied the field-of-systems theory to global problems, helped inspire the group of planners, diplomats, scientists and academics who came together as the Club of Rome. He wrote a paper, "The Predicament of Mankind," that became an influential core document of the group, addressing issues of energy, overpopulation, depletion of resources and environmental degradation.

Alexander N. Christakis, a former colleague in the Club of Rome, said Mr. Ozbekhan's writings constituted "a forward-looking document" and argued that global problems were "strongly interconnected and that any attempts to deal with them independently would simply not work."

Mr. Ozbekhan, who was the club's director of research and a member of its executive committee, later resigned, but the organization continues and now operates from Hamburg.

In 1975, while working as a consultant for the French government, Mr. Ozbekhan published a report about long-range planning in Paris. The report reviewed land use, cultural issues and the city's economy and tried to provide the French with an avenue toward developing the city "within the context of a globalizing world." In 1977, he gave a lecture on the future of Paris before the Royal Society in London.

Hasan Ziya Ozbekhan was born in Istanbul. He earned an undergraduate degree from the London School of Economics. He became an American citizen in the 1950s.

From 1963 to 1969, Mr. Ozbekhan was principal scientist and director of planning at the System Development Corporation, a military research group and software development company in Santa Monica, Calif.

In 1970, he was named a professor of management at the University of Pennsylvania, where he also taught statistics, operations research and social systems sciences. He retired in 1992.

Mr. Ozbekhan is survived by his wife, the former Anne Binkley. The couple lived in Philadelphia. A previous marriage ended in divorce.

He is also survived by two daughters, Ayshe Ozbekhan-Samet of Philadelphia and Leyla Spencer of Lambertville, N.J.; a stepdaughter, Catherine Rand of Cincinnati; and four grandchildren.

Source:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/26/us/26ozbekhan.html?ex=1330232400&en=a86e51e2e258ef21&ei=5124&partner=permalink&exprod=permalink>