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In memoriam

Gustav Adolf Schulze (1911–1986)



On February 28, 1986, Gustav Adolf Schulze, long-standing director of the geophysical division of Gewerkschaft Brigitta (today BEB Erdgas und Erdöl GmbH), died at the age of 75. Those who knew him during his last years must admire him for the courageous way in which he endured his illness. G.A. Schulze is survived by his wife Gertrud (maiden name Engel) and two sons. All his life he was proud of his hometown, Hannover, where he was born on January 10, 1911, and where he died. Here, he went to school at the tradition-rich "Ratsgymnasium" and afterward in 1931 began his studies in the natural sciences at Göttingen. In addition to physics and mathematics, he quickly went into geophysics and received his Ph.D. in 1935 from Gustav Angenheister with his thesis on the dispersion of seismic waves. Today this could be described as an early application of the Vibroseis method, by which the changing frequencies, which were generated in the ground by the unbalanced wheel of a machine at the railway workshop and were correlated and interpreted as seismic refraction measurements.

Dr. Schulze remained at the Göttingen Geophysical Institute as a scientific assistant, interrupted once by military service. Here he wrote papers on various aspects of acoustic wave propagation, seismic disturbance measurements, air waves, and microseismics.

He made significant contributions to the seismic-reflection recording and interpretation of the internationally important Helgoland shooting (1947). As is well known, with these measurements it was shown for the first time that blasting can be observed and interpreted over very great distances. This was the beginning of the seismic-reflection study of the earth's crust using blasting, a method which has yielded many fruitful results.

All this predestined him for his subsequent occupation, which he began in 1948 as a geophysicist and chief of the seismic field crew for the former Gewerkschaft Brigitta. Soon afterward, he became director of the geophysical division and developed the seismic crews and interpretation groups into an effective instrument for researching the subsurface for useful hydrocarbon deposits. Under his direction, the division outgrew the age of working with analog paper seismograms and of interpreting and analyzing with traditional systems of levers and screws, and advanced into the age of digital field recording and data processing with modern computers. His former colleagues and co-workers knew of his continual interest in new developments in his field and of the enthusiasm with which he promoted the use of such developments in his area. His work at BEB dealt with questions of seismic interpretation.

After retiring from active service, he stayed in contact with geophysics through various activities, i.e., in the European Community, as a consultant in Egypt, and in research projects of the German oil industry in cooperation with universities.

We all mourn the death of Gustav Adolf Schulze, a committed colleague and long-standing member of the German Geophysical Society.

Horst Dürschner