



PETER POLIS

Director of the Institute for
Meteorology & Aerology in Aachen

Peter Hermann Johann Polis was born in Aachen on November 22, 1869. Already in his school days he devoted himself with great enthusiasm to weather records and forecasts, which were also published in a local newspaper in Aachen. In order to further pursue his passion, he decided after school not to start working in his father's cloth factory, but to begin studying meteorology in Freiburg i. Br. and Bonn. After three years of study from 1889 to 1891, however, Peter Polis returned to Aachen and began working in his father's factory.

Nevertheless, he continued his scientific work and established a private weather station which was incorporated into the observation network of the Prussian Meteorological Institute in Berlin in 1894. In 1898 he received his doctorate from the University of Basel on the subject of air currents and in 1899 he habilitated at the TH Aachen, where he was also a private lecturer from 1900. Due to his growing recognition by the public, Peter Polis' father finally accepted his son's scientific ambitions and supported them financially from then on, which allowed the construction of a meteorological observatory in Aachen. It was opened in 1900 with Polis as director.

In his work, he tried to link meteorological observations and research with practical issues, e.g. in agriculture, viticulture, and construction and health care. He was also interested in aviation, so from 1908 he supplied data from high-altitude wind measurements with pilot balloons to the department of aircraft construction at the TH Aachen and he became director of the newly founded Institute of Meteorology and Aerology in Aachen. In addition, together with the Marconi Society, he developed ideas for wireless telegraphic transmission of weather observations from postal and merchant ships on the transatlantic routes, which ultimately led to the use of weather ships and weather intelligence services on the Atlantic.

In addition to meteorology, however, Peter Polis was also interested in seismology, since Aachen is one of the most active earthquake regions in Germany, which is why he was involved in the foundation of the DGG in Leipzig in 1922. In the same year he was also appointed associate professor.

On November 2, 1929, Peter Polis died, completely unexpected, on a business trip to the conference of the directors of the meteorological institutes of Germany as a result of a stroke. He was only 59 years old.

DGG PRO – Public Relations & Outreach, Hannover