

MECHANISM OF THE 1983 COALINGA EARTHQUAKE
DETERMINED FROM LONG-PERIOD SURFACE WAVES

by

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ABSTRACT

The mechanism of the May 2, 1983, Coalinga, California earthquake determined from long-period surface waves and first-motion data is given by dip angle = 65° , strike = $N58^{\circ}W$, rake = 70° , seismic moment = 5.4×10^{25} dyne-cm ($M_w = 6.4$), and the source process time ≈ 20 sec. The local magnitude, M_L , is estimated to be 6.43 ± 0.27 . On the M_L vs. M_w diagram, the Coalinga earthquake falls on the average trend for California earthquakes.

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INTRODUCTION

We report the source parameters of the 1983 Coalinga, California, earthquake (May 2, 23^h 42^m 37.8^s, 36°13.99'N, 120°17.59'W, 10.5 km, Eaton, 1983) determined from long-period (256 sec) surface waves recorded by the digital stations of the IDA (International Deployment of Accelerometers) network and the Global Digital Seismographic Network (GDSN).

The mechanism solution obtained from long-period surface waves represents the overall fault geometry, and provides a reliable estimate of the seismic moment.

ANALYSIS

The stations and the phases used are listed in Table 1. In total, 40 Rayleigh- and Love-wave phases from 19 stations are used. Using the method described by Kanamori and Given (1981), we inverted the spectral data of these surface waves at a period of 256 sec to determine the seismic moment tensor and the fault model.

Since the source depth reported by Eaton (1983) is 10.5 km, we used a point source at a depth of 9.75 km, the depth closest to 10.5 km where the excitation functions are tabulated in Kanamori and Given (1981). As is discussed by Kanamori and Given (1981), the two elements of the moment tensor, M_{zx} and M_{zy} are indeterminate for shallow events. Hence, we first set $M_{zx} = M_{zy} = 0$ which is equivalent to restricting the solution either to a 45° dip-slip or a vertical strike-slip fault. Despite this restriction, the solutions obtained with these constraints provide useful gross estimates of fault geometry and seismic moment.

Empirical relations (Furumoto, 1979, Furumoto and Nakanishi, 1983; Dziewonski and Woodhouse, 1983) suggest a source process time, τ , of about 10 sec for earthquakes with $M_s \approx 6.5$. We inverted the Rayleigh-wave data, varying τ from 0 to 50 sec, and found that $\tau = 20$ sec provides a best fit. Since the regional variation of Love-wave phase velocity is very large even at a period of 256 sec, we did not include Love waves for the determination of τ . Although this value is somewhat larger than that empirically expected, the difference is probably insignificant. Nakanishi and Kanamori (1983) obtained a standard deviation of 17 sec for the measurement of the source process time from a global data set.

Using $\tau = 20$ sec, we inverted the Rayleigh- and Love-wave spectral data together. The results are shown in Table 2, Figure 1 and Figure 2. The moment tensor can be decomposed into the major and minor double couples. The mechanism of the major double couple (constrained to be either a 45° dip-slip or a vertical strike slip) is a 45° thrust fault

with a strike of $N36^{\circ}W$. The seismic moment is 4.4×10^{25} dyne-cm. The moment of the minor double couple is only 8.9% of that of the major double couple, and is considered insignificant.

If we assume that the geometry of the source did not change during faulting, we can combine P-wave first-motion data with the surface-wave data to determine further details of the source geometry (Kanamori and Given, 1981). First-motion data were obtained from selected WWSSN (Worldwide Standardized Seismographic Network) and Canadian Network stations (Hartzell and Heaton, 1983, this volume), and RSTN (Regional Seismic Test Network) stations. These data are listed in Table 3. We computed the take-off angles using the Jeffreys-Bullen travel time curves with the velocity at the source of 6.5 km/sec. Stations ALE, VAL, WES and RSCP show a very small upward first-motion followed by a large downward motion, suggesting that these stations are located very close to the node of the P-wave radiation pattern. These stations together with other stations determine one of the nodal planes very well as shown by Figure 2. The strike of this plane is $N58^{\circ}W$ which agrees very well with that determined by Eaton (1983) from local data ($N53^{\circ}W$). The teleseismic first-motion data provide no constraint on the other nodal plane.

We then fixed the steep nodal plane and inverted the Rayleigh- and Love-wave data to determine the rake λ on this plane and the seismic moment. The result is shown in Table 4 and Figure 2. The RMS (root-mean-square) value of the difference between the observed and computed spectra is 0.0242 cm-sec, which is only slightly larger than that for the constrained moment tensor solution, 0.0239 cm-sec, indicating that this mechanism is a good fit to the surface-wave data. The rake on the steeply dipping plane is 70° which makes the strike of the second nodal plane almost north-south. The seismic moment for this solution is 5.4×10^{25} dyne-cm. Changing the depth from 9.75 to 16 km only increases the moment by 8%. This geometry is very similar to that determined by Hartzell and Heaton (1983, in this volume) from body-wave data and to that determined by inversion of GDSN waveform data (A. Dziewonski, personal communication, July 20, 1983).

Considering the relatively short source process time, the assumption that the geometry of the source for body waves is the same as that for surface waves is reasonable. Hence, we prefer this solution as the mechanism of the 1983 Coalinga earthquake.

CONCLUSION

The mechanism of the 1983 Coalinga, California, earthquake determined from long-period surface waves and first-motion data is given in Table 3 and Figure 2. The seismic moment is 5.4×10^{25} dyne-cm and $M_w = 6.4$. The source process time is about 20 sec; no evidence for anomalously

Long source process is found.

The strike of the aftershock area reported by Eaton (1983) is about $N38^{\circ}W$ and is more parallel to the steeply dipping nodal plane than to the low-angle nodal plane of our solution, suggesting that the steep plane is the fault plane.

The local magnitudes of the Coalinga earthquake determined from six Wood-Anderson records obtained from the Southern California Network are listed in Table 5. From these data, we obtain $M_L = 6.20 \pm 0.11$. The local magnitude determined from the network of the University of California, Berkeley, is 6.70 ± 0.16 (five observations) (B. A. Bolt, written communication, August, 1983, also this volume). The average of these two values weighted by the number of records used for each determination is $M_L = 6.43 \pm 0.27$. Figure 3 compares the Coalinga earthquake with other earthquakes in California (the 1976 Guatemala earthquake is included for comparison) on the M_L vs. M_W diagram which has been used to compare the high-frequency characteristics of earthquakes (Kanamori and Regan, 1982). The Coalinga earthquake falls on the average trend for California earthquakes.

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Table 1

Station	Δ (deg.)	ϕ (deg.)	Phases
SJG	51.0	95.7	R_2, R_3
KIP	36.1	256.3	R_2, R_3
TWO	117.8	245.7	R_1, R_2
CMO	32.9	338.8	R_2, R_3
KMY	106.6	319.9	R_1, R_2
ALE	50.0	8.3	R_2, R_3
RAR	68.4	219.8	R_2
ERM	71.0	308.6	R_2
ESK	74.0	31.9	R_2, R_3
HAL	43.3	60.6	R_2, R_3
ANTO	100.2	20.7	R_1, R_2, G_1
GUMO	86.0	283.9	R_1, R_2, G_1
NWAO	133.2	256.8	R_1, R_2, G_1
TATO	95.7	306.7	R_1, R_2, G_1
SNZO	97.5	223.7	R_1, R_2
CTAO	104.4	255.7	R_1, R_2, G_1
ZOBO	71.8	126.9	R_2
KONO	75.8	23.6	R_1, R_2, G_1
MAJO	77.3	306.1	G_1

Note: Δ is the distance and ϕ is the azimuth measured clockwise from the north.

Table 2

Constrained Moment Tensor

($M_{zx} = M_{zy} = 0$, $d = 9.75$ km, $\tau = 20$ sec)

M_{xy}	$M_{yy} - M_{xx}$	$M_{yy} + M_{xx}$
$2.3 \pm 0.3^*$	$-1.5 \pm 0.6^*$	$-4.0 \pm 0.3^*$

Major Double Couple

Moment	dip	rake	Strike	dip	rake	strike	RMS
4.4*	45°	90°	144°	45°	90°	-36°	0.0239**

Minor Double Couple - 8.9% of the Major Double Couple

* unit 10^{25} dyne-cm

** unit cm-sec

Table 3

First-Motion Data

Station	Δ (deg.)	ϕ (deg.)	i_h (deg.)	First Motion
AFI	69.6	234	20.1	U
AKU	62.3	27	22.6	U
ALE	50.2	8	27.2	Nodal Up
BOG	52.8	115	26.0	U
COP	80.0	24	19.3	U
ESK	74.2	31	19.2	U
KON	75.9	23	19.2	U
LPA	91.5	133	16.0	U
LPS	35.4	120	30.0	U
MAT	77.4	306	19.7	U
SHK	82.2	307	18.5	U
VAL	73.1	37	19.2	Nodal Up
WES	38.0	65	30.7	Nodal Up
FFC	22.4	28	33.8	D
PHC	15.4	342	49.7	D
RSCP	28.0	80	33.5	Nodal Up
RSNY	35.4	62	30.1	D
RSSD	14.7	52	49.8	D
RSON	24.0	44	33.3	D

Note: Δ is the distance, ϕ is the azimuth measured clockwise from the north, and i_h is the take-off angle.

Table 4

Fault Inversion

(Depth 9.75 km, Source Process Time = 20 sec)

Seismic Moment	$(5.4 \pm 0.3) \times 10^{25}$ dyne-cm
First Nodal Plane	
Dip	65° (Constrained)
Strike	70 ± 3°
Strike	-58° (Constrained)
Second Nodal Plane	
Dip	32°
Strike	126°
Strike	163°
P axis	
Azimuth	47°
Plunge	18°
T axis	
Azimuth	178°
Plunge	64°
RMS	0.0242 cm-sec

Table 5

Wood-Anderson Amplitude Data from Southern California Network

Station	Comp.	Δ (km)	Azimuth (Deg.)	Amp. mm	M_L^*
RVR	NS	364	132	53.0	6.12
RVR	EW	364	132	70.0	6.25
PLM	NS	448	135	35.2	6.15
PLM	EW	448	135	64.8	6.41
PAS	NS	301	140	99.6	6.11
PAS	EW	301	140	116.0	6.17

Av. 6.20 ± 0.11

* Station correction, 0.1 unit is added for RVR and PAS.

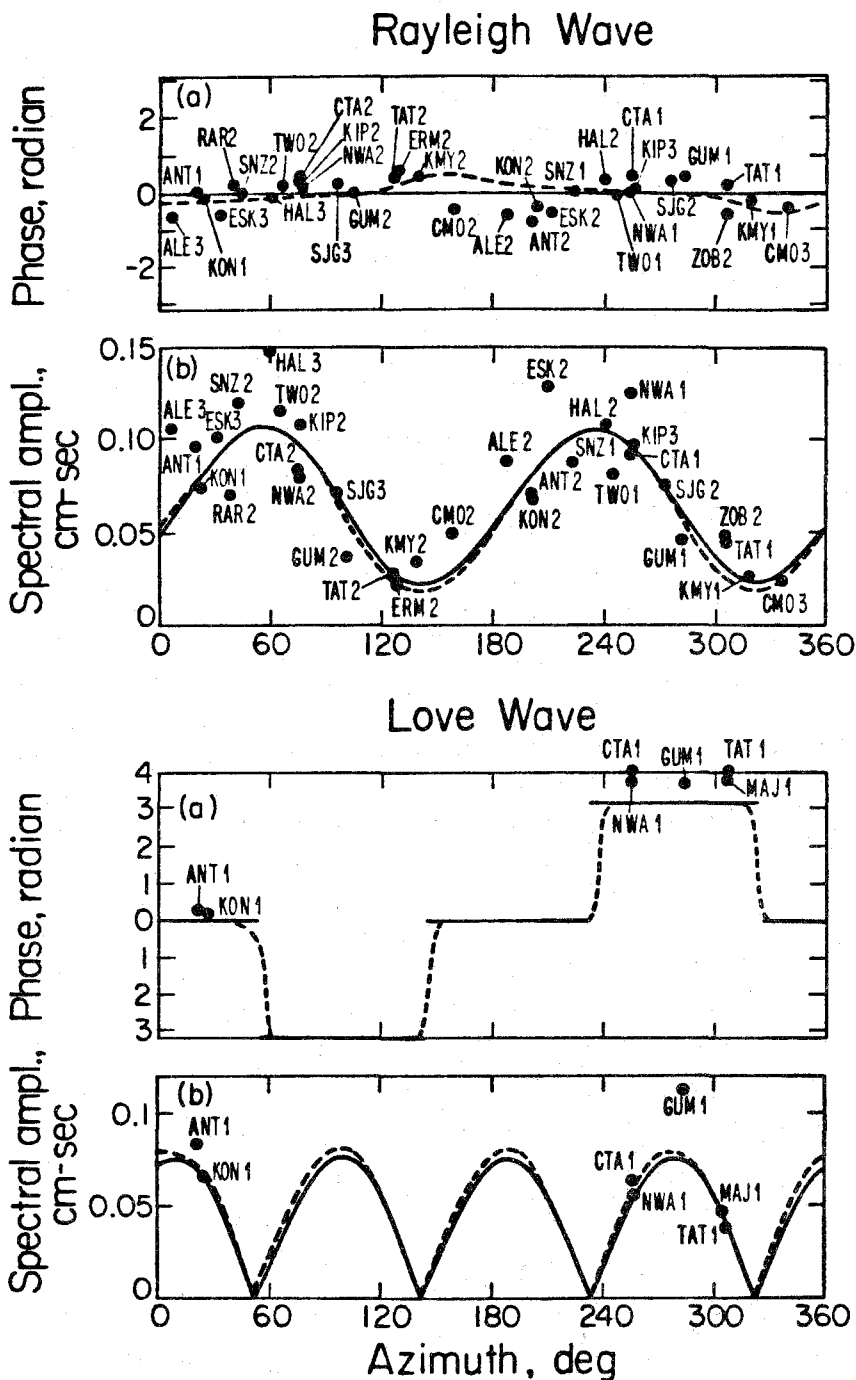


Figure 1. Phase (a) and amplitude (b) spectra of Rayleigh and Love waves at a period of 256 sec. Each data point represents the source spectrum at each station. The three-letter station code and phase number are attached to each data point. Solid and dashed curves are computed for the constrained moment tensor (Table 2) and the fault model (Table 4) respectively.

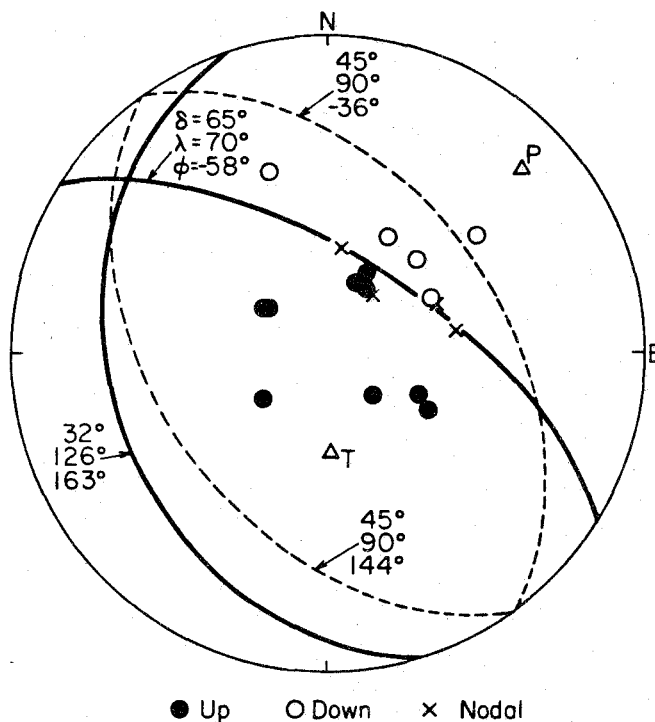


Figure 2. First-motion data and the nodal lines for the major double couple of the moment tensor solution (Table 2, dashed curve) and the fault model (Table 4, solid curve).

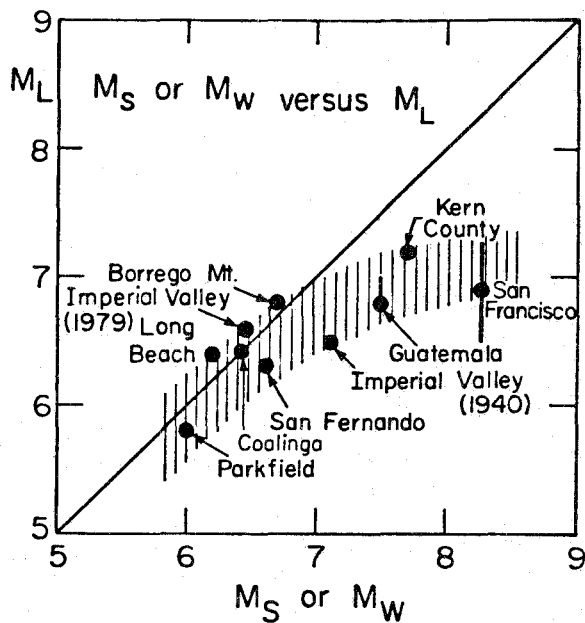


Figure 3. The relation between local magnitude, M_L , and moment magnitude, M_W , (or surface-wave magnified M_S) for California earthquakes and the 1976 Guatemala earthquake. Diagonal line represents $M_L = M_W$ (or M_S), band of vertical lines defines range of M_L at a given M_W (or M_S) for California earthquakes.