

Advance Education Class in Tarutino

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Note: This article deals with the progression among the German Colonies along the northern shores of the Black Sea [from Bessarabia to the North Caucasus] from the appearance of the simple village grammar school which offered only reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion, to the time when many different advanced educational facilities sprang up. As the title indicates, Tarutino, Bessarabia ended up with training schools for boys and for girls. Information within [brackets] are comments by the translator.

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[Translation Begins]

Advance Education Class in Tarutino

A piece of Bessarabian School History

by Retired Director A. Mauch

In August of 1949, I came across a calendar published in Odessa, in 1914, by Pastor Stach or Father Keller; in the calendar itself I could not find any reference to the publisher. In this calendar you can read an article entitled “A School Foundation 30 Years Ago” and written by J. Prinz. I had read the article at the time; but it was like new to me and highly interesting. In it, J. Prinz tells how a small group of ideally-minded young men fought for years with all kinds of resistance until they succeeded in opening a Lower Grammar School (*Untergymnasium* or *Progymnasium*) in the twin village Tempelhof-Orbelianowka [North Caucasus]. (Tempelhof and Orbelianowka were close to each other and had many things in common in administration and business). The inhabitants belonged to the group of Swabian emigrants who left Württemberg in 1817 together with the Teplitz people in Bessarabia and the Hoffnungstal people in the Cherson Province (*Gouvernement*) and moved eastwards with the aim of awaiting the Coming of the Lord in the Caucasus, near Mount Ararat and the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. According to the calculations of Prelate Bengel, the end of the world was to occur in 1836.

In Odessa, it was possible to split the Harmony (*Harmonie*), as such an emigration procession was called; one part branched off to Teplitz, a second to Hoffnungstal, but a third could not be

turned away from its destination. It overcame all difficulties and travel and finally settled near Pyatigorsk, on the upper course of the Kuma River in the northern foothills of the Caucasus Mountains. The area pleased the stubborn Swabians, because it reminded them of their beautiful Swabian homeland with its wooded heights and fertile valleys. They leased from Prince Orbeliani an estate of 10,000 *deßjatine* [1 *deßjatine* = 2.7 acres / 1.09 hectares] for 30 years at 25 kopecks per *deßjatine*, worked as honest Swabians with persevering diligence, as they were accustomed to, and achieved considerable prosperity, mainly through wine-growing.

But one thing was missing: a higher school. The Elementary School (*Volksschule*) was not enough for many an ambitious boy, and attendance at the Russian middle schools brought the danger, after all, of alienation from the home-bred way and language. To found a German Middle School was now the thought, which gained a foothold and was finally realized. On 1 October, 1883, Prinz reports, the opening ceremony took place. Unfortunately, I have to refrain from going into more detail about the history of the *Progymnasium* of Tempelhof-Orbelianowka. I only want to mention one thing, that the school, already in 1891, had to cease its activities after just eight years of existence.

I was a teacher from 1886 onwards and remember how the beneficial effectiveness of that German Grammar School (*Gymnasiums*) and the cultural progress of the villages of Tempelhof-Orbelianowka was emphasized in the German Odessa newspaper (*Odessaer Zeitung*) and held up as a model to the other colonies. The rest of us had our few Central Schools (*Zentralschulen*). Since 1844, Bessarabia had had a Teacher Training Institute (*Lehrerbildungsanstalt*), the Werner School, but at that time we did not yet have a Grammar School or even a *Progymnasium* approved by the government and confirmed according to old legal regulations.

When I read the article by Prinz, I remembered that in Bessarabia we also had a school with the course of a Three Class *Progymnasium*, but it did not bear this proud name, but the simple name “Advance Education School” (*Fortbildungsschule*) or “Advance Education Class” (*Fortbildungsklasse*). And this Advance Education School was opened 9 years earlier, in 1872, and lasted a little longer, namely 20 years until 1892.

I will now tell the story of its foundation, its successful activity and its end. I know some people will say: “What do you get out of these old stories?” Well, others will be grateful if they are allowed to tell or read about things that have happened in the past, the old homeland that we have now left behind, especially if what is told from the past rescues something praiseworthy from what has been forgotten.

It was in May of 1871 when my father, Christian Mauch, from Bergdorf in the Cherson Province (*Gouvernement*), where he had been a sexton-teacher for 5 years, was recalled to his native Bessarabia in the same capacity by the municipality of Tarutino. He originated from Arzis. Tarutino was the oldest and largest German village in Bessarabia, and also the most important market town in the Akkerman District (*Kreise*). It also formed, in a sense, the Administrative Center of the northern part of the district; for in Tarutino lived at that time the Peace Mediator (*Mirowoi posrednik*), the highest administrative official in the Region (*Bezirk*) and representative of the state power; it was also the seat of the State Justice of the Peace (*mirowoi sudja*). Then there was a regional hospital in Tarutino and the regional doctor, at that time a German, by the

name of Zimmerberg. So it happened that Tarutino was for many years the only German village where every German farmer and often the farmer's wife came to do some business. But no one went to Tarutino, but to "Antschekrak", as it was commonly called.

The name "Anchekrak" comes from "Chan" and "Chokra", two Turkish-Tatar words. The word "Chan" has two meanings: "Prince" or "Inn Yard" (Caravan Rest Place in the Orient). Chokra is said to mean "Spring"; but it could also have the obvious meaning of "Brook". In fact, there is a spring above the northern end of the village, which supplies the water for the water supply to the village. (This beneficial institution was the work of Ferdinand Krause, who was in office in the 1870s of the last century, and who will be discussed later. This incidentally). Now Chan-Chokra or Chan-Chokrak can mean "Prince's Spring" or "Inn (*Gasthof*) to the Spring". The old Tartar settlement, of which ashes were still present after decades, was certainly a kind of market town for the surrounding Tatar and Moldovan villages long before the founding of the German village, and, when the German village of Tarutino was founded in 1814, it naturally became the trading center not only for the Germans, but also for all other folks in the surrounding villages. There was no reason for the population to give up the old name. Chan-Chokra remained Chanchokrak; the Germans, however, made the word pronounceable and formed it into Antschekrak. Moreover, there is a steppe river called Bohem-Chekarak in the District of Berdjansk [Taurida]. On its banks was the Mennonite village of Rückenau, which belonged to the Halbstädt Wolost (S. *Odessaer kalender*, year 1911, page 124).

In the 1850s, the municipality had built a large schoolhouse, which was probably about 60 meters [196.8 ft] long and 20 meters [65.6 ft] wide. Inside, it was divided into three rooms. At



Elementary School in Tarutino

one end was the residence of the sexton-teacher and the rest of the room was occupied by two large halls, which were separated from each other by a central wall and yet were connected by an arcade with three large arches, so that the biblical history lessons could be given jointly by the sexton-teacher, for example, for all 400 and more students. The teacher's helper, known by the title of *Provisor*, conducted the lessons of the little ones in the somewhat smaller hall.

The sheer overcrowding of the classes with so many pupils called into question the success of the lessons; the lack of teaching materials and the short and irregular school attendance contributed to the fact that the more ambitious and talented pupils had little more to do in the last years of their seven years of compulsory schooling and left school unsatisfied. These were unsustainable conditions. My father complained about the distress to the village elder, Ferdinand Krause, whom he had very soon won over as a friend. Krause himself had a gifted son, who was to have an advanced education, but, if possible, to receive it in his home village. The following plan was developed by the two men. A separate residence is to be built for the sexton-teacher, for a second teacher and the teacher's helper, and a third class to be made from the previous sexton-teacher's residence in the schoolhouse. Ferdinand Krause had a pronounced talent for leadership

and towered over his fellow villagers in spirit and energy by a considerable amount. As always, the German municipalities were extremely conservative and at that time not very teachable, especially in the topic of schools. But F. Krause knew his *Pappenheimers* [the name of an old Franconian-Swabian noble family] and knew how to take them in the right direction. The municipality approved the plan submitted to it and, in the Spring of 1872, the construction of the new building began. The summer was not yet over when the new residence was ready-made, just as it still stands after 68 years, when Tarutino was left by the Germans in 1940 to follow the call to the motherland. Before autumn began, the 3rd Class was also prepared. But the suitable teacher was missing.

Then, one day, a gentleman from Germany came to my father and introduced himself as a high school professor (*Gymnasialprofessor*) looking for a job. His name was Diederichs (not Diederich and not Dieterich). The man delighted him. Should not a person allow him to open an Advance Education Class in the new, smaller classroom? Village Mayor Krause was immediately enthusiastic about the idea, if only for the sake of his son, and he knew that his brother Michael, manufacturer Steinke, August Neumann and a few other village proprietors would also be in favor of it for the sake of their sons. My father had some young people from Bergdorf in mind, who were also striving for further education, from the other German villages in the area one could certainly count on an extra supply of students. It was still in those good old days when the schools in the German municipalities knew only one authority, the pastor. Pastor Pingoud was a scholar and especially strong in Latin. He examined the job applicant and found that Mr. Diederichs could be the right man to do a good job in an Advance Education Class according to the program of a Grammar School (*Gymnasiums*). Pastor Pingoud was thinking of the training of future theology students.

F. Krause was now the one who pushed the matter through to the municipality. As was to be expected, some students from their own municipality were gained, but also young men from outside came forward and joined the Class, such as Chr. Fischer and Laitenberger from Bergdorf, Em. Müller from Leipzig, Chr. Lukas from Neu-Beresina in Cherson, Vogel from Brienne, Gärtig from Teplitz and a few others who have disappeared from my memory.

Teacher Diederichs, as my father later recounted, adhered to the program of a German Grammar School, with the addition of instruction in the Russian language. The textbook of the Russian language was Pielemann's—*Methode*—the method of translation. Diederichs was a very industrious and talented pedagogue; for he had to prepare himself so far by self-study in order to be able to give the Russian lessons. My father, who could speak Russian fluently, but had acquired a good pronunciation from his Russian teacher at the Werner School in Sarata, was able to help him at night with the pronunciation.

So now teacher Diederichs worked with one and the same pupils for three years and made brilliant progress. In 1875, he unexpectedly gave up his position in Tarutino and accepted the position of a Grammar School professor in Odessa, where he moved with his young wife, named Berta, a daughter of Provost Behning from Sarata,. In Odessa, Diederichs has disappeared in the vast number of intelligent folks of Odessa. We never heard anything more from him, as Provost Behning also left Sarata at the same time because of the notorious Reading Book Controversy, moved to Germany and died there.

The students of the Advance Education Class left the school and looked for another Private School for their further education or returned to the home of their parents. Quite a number of those who wanted to continue their studies in a school, including those mentioned above, found one in the Private Grammar School of Pastor Schomburg in the German village of Benkendorf, near the district town of Akkerman. How the pastor came up with the idea of opening a Higher Private School without means and without support from the municipality, without pedagogical assistants, dependent completely on his own material and spiritual strength, I have never experienced.

With the estate of Count Benkendorf, the municipality had also bought the estate yard with a large palatial residential building, which was designated as a parsonage. It offered Pastor Schomburg enough space to accommodate his school including a boarding school (*Internat*). With his private teaching work, he pursued the very clear purpose of preparing the students for the School-leaving Examination (*Matura*). After already only two years, in 1877, he gave up his job in Benkendorf and moved to Katharinenstadt on the Volga, where he devoted himself entirely to the management of a Private Grammar School. A whole crowd of Bessarabian colonists went with him to Katharinenstadt. Among them were the later pastors D. Steinwand from Klöstitz, J. Jundt from Schabo, the sons of teacher W. Beck from Paris, G. Hahn from Sarata and two Koch brothers from Gnadental, also among them was Liborius, the son of the former Provost Behning.

On 28 June, 1888, when Pastor Gustav Schomburg celebrated his 25th anniversary in Odessa, his former student, Pastor W. Beck, gave the ceremonial speech in the church. The history professor Fr. Bienemann, who wrote a history of the Evangelical Congregation of Odessa, tells in it that Pastor Beck expressed his and all other students' thanks to the one celebrating his jubilee (*Jubilar*) in warm and moving words. Pastor Schomburg, on his own, had brought it, through untiring energy, through rare exertion of his strength, to the point where a considerable number of young colonists moved on to the university—what otherwise only grammar schools achieve. Some of his students were already in office and positions of honor, some of them worked as pastors in the colonies. It was the jubilarian who had first got the question of higher education flowing in the colonies, at least in those of Bessarabia.

Pastor Schomburg truly deserves that his name is brought out of the past and at least the main stages of his life are made public. In Bienemann we now find the following biographical notes (p. 401).

Gustav Schomburg was born on 31 August, 1835 in Kitzlar, Prussia. He studied theology in Marburg and Halle. On 28 June, 1863, he was ordained in Kassel (Hesse). The following year, he came to southern Russia and was first pastor for four years in the parish of Johannistal-Waterloo in the Cherson Province, then, from 1868 to 1877, in the parish of Benkendorf in Bessarabia. In order to be able to devote himself entirely to his inclination to the pedagogical profession, he went to Katharinenstadt on the Volga, where he apparently opened up a larger circle of activities. From 1882 to 1866, he was then on the Volga. From the autumn of 1886 to the summer of 1887, he was pastor-vicar at St. Michael's Congregation in Moscow, and, in July of 1887, he was finally called as Assistant Pastor and, at the same time, Teacher of Religion at

the Pauli Secondary School (*Realschule*) and Director of the Girls' School at the Odessa Evangelical Congregation.

So much for the notes of history professor Bienemann. I could not refrain from inserting here at least these brief pieces of information about the man who had rendered so much service to the German colonies in southern Russia. He should not be completely forgotten; it is enough that one can no longer find out where this schoolman completed his selfless work on the German youth and when the much-wandered, restless man concluded his busy life.

Of the castle of Count Benkendorf on the hill above the village by the same name, not a stone remains in the direct sense of the word. When I visited the place a few decades ago, which the schoolman, Pastor Schomburg, had once consecrated through his teaching and educational activities, I found there a beautiful, large orchard of the then owner of the estate, Mr. Rud. Schulz, but no trace of the estate house belonging to the Count. Only two mossy gravestones lay nearby, where the cemetery of the von Benkendorf family may have once been.

After this digression, which was necessary as a supplement and for the greater completion of the Bessarabian German Advance Education School history, we return to our Tarutino Advance Education School and follow the further course of its existence.

It was not to disappear immediately with the departure of teacher Diederichs. The brother of the village elder Ferdinand Krause, named Johann Krause, had just finished his university studies in Dorpat [in present-day Estonia] (1875). He allowed himself to be persuaded to take over the vacant teaching position. But he only held out for a year, then he wandered over the big water to America and sought and found his success there.

In 1876, a man came again at the right time to continue the work in the Advance Education Class; it was teacher Wilhelm Mutschall. He had just completed the Mission School in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria after three years of study and was about to devote himself to the service of the "Inner or Foreign (*Äußeren*) Mission". He allowed himself to be easily persuaded to stay in his homeland—Tarutino was his birthplace—and to render services to the Inner Mission through his pedagogical work at the Advance Education School, just as did his schoolmates elsewhere.

For seven and a half years—until the end of 1883—he was active in Tarutino. He divided his class into two sections. In the first section, with a small number of students, they worked strictly according to the program of a Middle School (we called it *Progymnasium*) and did the same thing over the course of three years. Mutschall mastered Russian, as he had studied for three years at the Werner School in Sarata before entering the Neuendettelsau Mission School. I was placed in the first group and was one of the oldest students of Mutschall. We even had Latin for a while; the instruction in this was given to us by the Assistant Pastor Ottomar Pigroud, son of the old pastor of the Tarutino parish. We practiced Latin with enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the young pastor left Tarutino after only one year and went to the Jekaterinoslaw Province, where he took over the pastoral position in Grunau (Alexandrowka).

Some boys from other villages also took part in the first Mutschall course. These were the later teachers Alfred Neumann from Wittenberg and Georg Bohnet from Alt-Posttal and his brother Heinrich, the later District Clerk of Posttal. Later, the municipality no longer allowed outsider students to be admitted; they needed the space for their own.

At the end of the Three Year Course, the students of the first section were released, and the more capable students of the 2nd section started the new course.

On 3 December, 1883, Teacher K. Baisch died after about forty years of work at the Werner School in Sarata. Mutschall was elected as his successor. His efficiency in the teaching profession was known until then in a small circle. Mutschall displayed his full strength in Sarata and soon stood, far beyond the borders of Bessarabia, in high esteem as a pedagogue and teacher trainer. It is not for nothing that he was later called, after 25 years in the service of the Teacher Training Institute, the “teacher of the German-Bessarabian people.”

In Tarutino, a whole series of capable men grew out of his number of students, who afterwards exerted their valuable influence on the community in various directions. Here I will only mention the names of three brothers who took a particularly active part in the subsequent development of the school system in Tarutino, and even played a leading role in it. They were the brothers August, Daniel and Christian Erdmann; of them only August Erdmann is still living. He was my section colleague in the Advance Education Class. All three have continued to build on the foundation laid by Mutschall and have developed themselves through energetic work on themselves to such an extent that they have been active as teachers and outstanding clerks in the municipalities of Bessarabia. In their mature age, all three settled in their native village and took a leading part in the external and internal structure of the municipality.

According to Mutschall, Friedrich Heine, from Prischib in the Taurida Province [northeast corner of the Black Sea area], was a teacher at the Advance Education Class (1884-1886). He was soon popular and respected, but, after two years, he returned to the Taurida Province and accepted the position of District Clerk, first in Halbstadt and then in Prishib.

In 1886, I was elected by the municipality as Heine’s successor. In the same year, our German Church Schools were placed under the administration of the Ministry of Education by imperial decree. I had to receive my confirmation as a teacher at the Tarutino school from the District School Inspector; but otherwise the Russian school authorities did not care much about us until the year 1892; in the six years of my official position in Tarutino, I never once saw a Russian school official in my class. Up to that year, we had a free hand in our schools and worked unhindered in the sense of the handed down tradition.

Since my class only consisted of about 50 boys, I naturally had the opportunity to achieve something with goal-oriented work. I could name a whole series of my former pupils who in their adulthood were among other bearers of cultural progress in the municipality; a Zarbock and Julius Strese continued to work further on what they had received and managed to pass the Russian Elementary School Teacher’s examination through independent work and did good work as sexton-teachers in the districts of Taurida and Kuban [a region in the North Caucasus].

In the meantime, however, the number of students in the municipality had grown to well over 500. There was no other way, one had to approach the procurement of space. Now it became



apparent that the value of a good school education was highly valued. It was mainly the graduates of the Advance Education Class or their parents. The municipality was won over for a radical reconstruction of the old school building. A ground floor was constructed and space was created for four classes and some other necessary rooms. In addition, the municipality built a school with a teacher's residence for the smaller team at each of the four ends of the village,

which was almost 4 kilometers [2.5 miles] long. Instead of three, eight teachers were hired and the classes were equipped in keeping with the times. However, the Advance Education Class as such had come to an end. I left my job and moved to Arzis in 1892, to my home village, where my father was born and where my name was listed in the register of citizens (*posemeiny spisok*) according to the colonist custom of that time. I wanted to serve my home village.

Here it is probably appropriate to give a short report about a Private Girls' School that functioned in Tarutino from 1878 to about 1890. There were two sisters from the Baltics, named Rosa and Natalie Sarring, who one day, under the protection of the pastor and old Isert, opened the school in the Bierwag house, and quietly, without making much noise about their work, instructed a whole host of girls from Tarutino and the surrounding villages in the programs of a Higher School, and gave them instruction especially in female handicrafts. Their students certainly remembered these two faithful educators and teachers with gratitude until the end of their lives. That the two Sarring sisters were highly revered and loved by them, I can say with full certainty, since I brought home one of the students from the first School Course as my wife. In 1886, Miss Rosa died and Miss Natalie found shelter for the last years of her life in an asylum in the Baltic provinces.

Should a faithful work lasting more than a decade on that group of girls have remained without influence on the cultural progress and moral attitude of our communities, if not through direct, then at least indirect influence on the environment? Yes, no doubt.

1905 was the year of the "Little Russian Revolution". It brought many new things into the lives of the people of the Russian State, not only in the political sphere. The urge for higher education, not only for the boys, but also for the girls, became strong enough in the German colonist circles to be able to approach the founding of Secondary Schools. In the German colonies of southern Russia, a whole series of Secondary Schools were opened. In the Taurida Province, it was especially Pastor Stach in Eugenfeld who brought about the founding of an Agricultural High School. In Halbstadt, the Mennonites opened a Commercial School; the Molotschna colonists opened a Girls' Grammar School in Prischib, as well as a Girls' Central School in New York, and in Alexanderkrone, a Central School for boys; in the Cherson Province, at that time, a Four Class Private Secondary School (*Realschule*) was established in

Neu-Freudental under Pastor Pättsch; in Karlsruhe, a Boys' Grammar School under the leadership of Father Scherr and, in Landau, Father Z. Reichert opened a Three Class Girls' Secondary School with curtailed classical curriculum (*Progymnasium*); in Großliebental, a Four Class Girls' Secondary School with curtailed classical curriculum was founded in 1906 by my instigation (I was then a teacher at the Großliebental Central School).

In Bessarabia, the urge to learn was just as intense as everywhere in the German settlement areas. In Chabag (Schabo), the municipality opened a Four Class Secondary Elementary School (corresponding to a Four Class *Progymnasium*) and in Tarutino, a Girls' Grammar School was built under the prompting of teacher Immanuel Fiechtner.

Now several Bessarabian municipalities entered into a competition for the founding of a Boys' Grammar School. The Tarutino community was victorious, but through the intervention of two high school professors from the Baltic provinces, Mr. Renz and Mr. Uno van Beuningen. In February of 1908, they opened a Private Grammar School in Tarutino with three classes and 100 students. The question of where the projected Boys' Grammar School was to be opened was thus solved in Tarutino's favor. It was a clever move on the part of the two professors, but they only succeeded on the advice and with the help of strong patrons from the Tarutino community. Above all, it was from the more intellectual forces that had grown up from the generation of first Advance Education School students who received the predominance here, mainly under the leadership of Daniel Erdmann.

It is also thanks to him that the municipality built a stately building for the accommodation of an Eight Class Grammar School after only two years. Daniel Erdmann had won the full confidence of the community through the way in which he served his municipal offices as village elder and head mayor, and they also followed his advice in offering the great monetary sacrifice. As Wilhelm Priebe, a member of the building commission, said, the expenses for the construction amounted to over 75,000 rubles.

And Daniel Erdmann, as I have already mentioned, and I beg you not to forget, was a bud of the former Advance Education Class, the history of which I have here endeavored to share with the friendly reader. I am deeply convinced that without this forerunner and his spiritual influence on the community of Tarutino, it would not have been possible to move it to this sacrifice. In the course of the years, not only had the external prosperity increased, but also the insight had grown that people with higher education must also belong to a humane national community.

So, the little tree planted in the cultivated soil of Tarutino in 1872, although invisible to the external eye, had grown and bore abundant fruit.

The threads of the spiritual relationships of past times continue wonderfully to the present. In this way, every deed takes on a special meaning, whether it is good or evil.

Ferdinand Krause and my father, Christian Mauch, certainly did not have the distant future in mind, but only the needs and necessities of their present when they brought the Advance Education School in Tarutino into being; but it was a good deed with beneficial consequences.

And that is what I wanted to show with these memories from early times, which I should actually have put as a motto: “This is the blessing of a good deed, that it must continue to give birth to good.”

[Translation Ends]