

Teacher Friedrich Fiechtner

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Translated by: Allen E. Konrad
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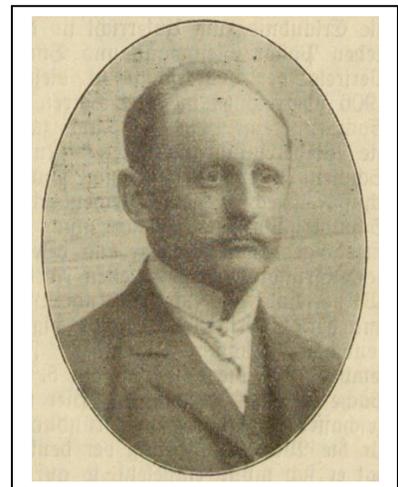
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Teacher Friedrich Fiechtner

A commemorative page on the occasion of his 25th year of activity at the Sarata Werner Seminar.

A rare festive occasion was celebrated on 25 August, 1929 at the Werner School in Sarata. Teacher Friedrich Fiechtner was able to look back on this day on a 25 year teaching position at our teacher training institute, and if we understand and remember the importance of the Werner School for the cultural development of our German colonies, that it really is one of our strongest undertakings that has stood for 85 years and still stands to preserve our traditions and our faith, so all the more of significance is the importance of a man who fully devoted 25 years to this school.

Friedrich Fiechtner was born. on 13 April (old calendar), 1874 at Hoffnungsfeld, near Hoffnungstal, in Kherson, the son of the village teacher Johs. Fiechtner. Already in his childhood, it was his earnest desire to be a “school teacher.” When he was 14 years old, he lost his father, and the mother remained with six unsupported children, almost completely penniless. But thanks to the insight of his guardian, Michael Tröster, and the energetic support of his older brother, Immanuel, who was at that time a student of Werner School, he was able to join Class 2 in the school in 1888. He graduated from the school in 1891 as one of the best students and then accepted the position of sexton assistant in Friedenstal. In the next few years, he took the Russian teacher exam in Kishinev and was then employed as a teacher for the Russian subjects in the same municipality. Always working eagerly to advance in his training, he received a call in 1896 to his hometown of Hoffnungsfeld. Because it was the “heartfelt desire” of his mother that he become his father's successor, and it was especially his ambition to work for his



closest clan of brethren, Friedrich Fiechtner followed this call and became sexton, teacher, and municipal secretary at Hoffnungsfeld. However, after two years, he exchanged this position for a position as a teacher at the St. Paul Church school in Odessa, with the hope that he would be able to devote himself to further self-study in a town like Odessa. And he did just that. By frequent visits to the urban libraries and private evening classes at the University, as well as through travels within and outside the country, he was able to significantly enhance his education, and, in 1901, succeeded in passing the private tutor exam in the German language. Then, in 1904, he was called to the Sarata Werner School, and so his most passionate desire was fulfilled. He took up his post with joyful enthusiasm. What he sought for his students and, to a large extent, achieved, had great bearing in the address presented by our Evangelical Lutheran Consistory, which, among other things, said: "In addition to the outstanding natural talent, there were your zeal, your loyalty and conscientiousness at your calling, which were exhibited in the efficiency and thoroughness of your former students, where you have achieved good results with regard to their spiritual and secular engagement."

Even through such successful work in the school, the activity of F. Fiechtner was not exhausted. Outside the school, he had a mission to fulfill toward the adults. Through speech and writing, he sought, at every opportunity, to interact with our people at public gatherings, at festive occasions, at the national council meetings, and at the synodical church assemblies. He assisted very diligently in 1904 and 1905 toward the founding of the "General German Education Association in South Russia", on its second shareholders meeting in Odessa on 24 and 25 May, 1906, he campaigned for the founding of a proper secondary school (*Mittelschule*) for us German colonists. This was the first kernel of seed for our German grammar school (*Gymnasium*) at Tarutino. On 24-25 September of the same year, he took an intense interest in the Church Assembly, which was convened by the St. Petersburg Consistory for the makeover of our old church regulations, going from a consistorial system to a synodical system. Yes, as a result of his "open letter" in the "Odessa Newspaper" (*Odessaer Zeitung*), the General Superintendent thanked our sexton-teacher by granting him an invitation to this very important meeting. And when, in the course of the discussions, it came to the point of a resolution to send three delegates to St. Petersburg to get the permission of the Education Minister for using the mother tongue for teaching in the elementary schools, besides Pastor Steinwand and bookseller Schaad, Friedrich Fiechtner, as a representative of the teaching staff, was also one of the three negotiators. On 27 November, 1906, the three men handed the Minister 333 municipality statements on this matter and a memorial with the overwhelming results that on 23 March, 1907, the approval of the reintroduction of our mother tongue as the language of instruction in our schools. After returning from St. Petersburg, F. Fiechtner developed his mathematics books in the German language, which, adapted to the changing conditions of school, are used with success by teachers and students even today, and he participated as a leader in the solution to the question of establishing an evening school (*Fortbildungsschule*) in Bessarabia, since the Werner School could no longer meet the increasing educational requirements and easily alienated our young people of German nationality when entering schools using a foreign language. It was also F. Fiechtner who brought about the first deliberation about this matter on 29 December, 1906, and the second deliberation in Arzis on 5 May, 1907. The movement and the mood were created here which later led to the founding of the Tarutino Secondary School (*Gymnasium*). He also campaigned boldly for the reintroduction of the German language for instruction in the central schools (*Zentralschulen*); also upon the advice of representatives for all central schools in

Schönwise near Alexandrovsk on 18-20 June, 1908; and at the first Central School Teachers' Conference in Sarata on 11-12 August, 1909.

In 1910, F. Fiechtner married Miss Mathilde Kehrer, daughter of A. Kehrer. Both her parents being teachers at the Girls School (*Mädchenschule*) in Tarutino. His only son, Helmut, studied philology in Tübingen, Germany, and his daughter Hildegard is currently attending the elementary school (*Volksschule*) in Sarata.

From 1915-1919, Fr. Fiechtner was mobilized and was employed as a bread baker in Odessa. But "other" winds blew in 1918 as our Central Committee in Odessa organized summer courses for German Bessarabian teachers in Sarata, and here, as well as later in Kronau, Fiechtner was re-assigned to teach mathematics. In the same year, he also wrote a "History of Romania" and a "Geography" in the German language for our elementary schools (*Volksschulen*).

So the up-to-now life of F. Fiechtner lies before us as a life full of diligence and striving, full of effort and work. He is self-taught in the fullest sense of the word. May he be blessed with good health and with still many years in the service of the people, the church and the school. We need people-persons and schoolmasters such as Friedrich Fiechtner.

K.H.

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