



Ferdinand von Steinbeis

After his death, Ferdinand von Steinbeis was entitled the founding father of professional education in Württemberg. He established a network of vocational schools around the country, for instance, weaver's schools in Blaubeuren (Webschulen in Blaubeuren) (1852) and Reutlingen (1855). Steinbeis stood for bilateral education. He believed in necessity of combining theoretical learning with skill when training efficient workers for industry of the future. Being the head of the central bureau of trade and crafts, Steinbeis developed conceptions of practical technology transfer in the middle of the 19th century already, which were implemented many years after his death.

Ferdinand von Steinbeis was born on May 5, 1807 in Olbronn near Maulbronn (Ölbronn bei Maulbronn) in the family of a priest. At the age of 14 he became an apprentice on a metallurgical plant in Wasseraalpingen. Three years later he began to study natural sciences in Tübingen University (Universität Tübingen). At the age of 20, Ferdinand von Steinbeis was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science for his paper in glassblowing. That year he was appointed a "clerk" on the Ludwigtal metallurgical plant of the Kingdom of Württembergisch in Tuttlingen (die Königlich Württembergische Hütte Ludwigtal bei Tuttlingen). In 1831, he was appointed the head of the kingdom's metallurgical sector by prince Karl Egon.

In 1842, he took the post of the general director of the Stumm metallurgical plant in Neunkirchen. At that time Steinbeis encouraged training of his subordinate personnel. In order to prevent leaving of trained personnel, he began to introduce social welfare for the plant workers, including aid funds for poor personnel, aid funds for unemployable apprentices, the plant's physician, the works canteen and financial support for acquisition of a dwelling.

In 1848 The Central Department for Crafts and Trade (Zentralstelle für Gewerbe und Handel) was established, intended for encouragement and support of craft development, and Steinbeis became the technical advisor in the Department, he was awarded a title and a rank of a government advisor. In 1855, he became the director of this establishment, and later on, its president.

In 1878, he ran the gauntlet of criticism on the part of the entire Chamber of Deputies for his speeches against introduction of protective tariffs. After that, he ceased one by one implementation of all social projects. In July, 1880 his petition for retirement was satisfied.

Ferdinand von Steinbeis died on February 7, 1893 in Leipzig and was buried in Ulm.



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1807 - 1893

Last update 30. January, 2010