

Paris, Bessarabia – Part 6

Paris in Bessarabien:
Chronik der Gemeinden Paris und Neu-Paris in Bessarabien,
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Information in square brackets [] is that provided by the translator. This book has 321 pages of information. So as to not overload a digitized copy of this book, the translation is being made in parts. The translation below is from pages 219-228 of Arthur Suckut's book.

[Translation Begins]

Contents

Our Flight out of the East in 1945	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	226
Escape — Expulsion — Deportation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	228
Search for a New Homeland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	230

Our Flight out of the East in 1945

After the Resettlement from Bessarabia, our Paris fellow-countrymen were very scattered in their settlement in the former Warthegau: south of Poznan (*Posen*) (districts Kosten and Jarotschin) and north and east of Poznan (districts Eichenbrück, Scharnikau, Obormik, Kalisch, Grätz and Krotoschin).

When the war front approached from the East in January of 1945, the escape routes to the West were also very different.

We were located in Altburgund District (Schubin) in Kiefernrode, together in the same village with two families from Paris, Immanuel Suckut and Johann Knecht. On the eve of the Flight—Saturday, 20 January, 1945—I arrived in Exin on the last train from Dietfurt via Elsenau. There I was in a training camp. From Exin, we walked 10km on a dark night to Kiefernrode, where my parents were already waiting for me with fear and prayers. They had already packed the items on two horse-drawn wagons. Thus God gave grace that I came home, before the Flight, as the youngest son of Eduard Suckut. The other three sons were all in military service—Albert and Arthur on the Eastern Front, Emil in Celle/Hann District, on a non-commissioned officer course.

The next morning, it was Sunday, 21 January, 1945, was the departure of the Flight to the West. On the one wagon that my father drove was also my mother, our old grandfather Christian Suckut (85 years) and I. On the second wagon was a Volga German woman with two daughters, who already had to flee and had a place to stay with us. This wagon was driven by our Polish worker. It was very cold, about 20⁰ cold and a lot of snow. The families Immanuel Suckut, Johann Knecht and family Erich Schiewe, from the same place, drove with us. Immanuel Suckut was our trek guide. We joined a longer trek, which was already on the way and headed towards Kolmar-Scharnakau. On the second night, we drove straight through without stopping. That night, our trek was partly attacked by partisans. There our Polish hired man also disappeared. So I then continued to drive the second wagon.

As we drove through Scarnikau, we met some Paris fellow-countrymen who were settled in this district. In Sharnikau, we crossed the Netze [River] Bridge in a hurry. It was said that the leading Russian tanks are already very close to us. Our neighbor, Erich Schiewe, who was on his way home as a soldier, took the German troops from the wagon in Sharnikau and engaged them in the fight against the Russians. He was then also wounded in Sharnikau. As we crossed the Netze Bridge, the explosive charges were already attached by the German soldiers. But we crossed over nicely. We were only a few kilometers away from Scharnikau when we heard the shooting and the thundering of the tanks and the cannons. It was afterwards said that the blood of the fleeing people in the treks ran on the streets. We were grateful to God for protecting us. But many of our former fellow-countrymen from Paris were overwhelmed by the war front and instead of continuing to the West came back to the East—either back to where they had been settled, or as far as to Siberia, such as, for example, the Reinhold Franz family. They were in the same district where we were settled, just further east. Reinhold Franz and his wife died in Siberia. Hugo—their son—got married there. After a long internment, the daughter Alma came alone to the West

When our trek over the Netze ran further westward through Pomerania in the direction toward Arnswalde, we were caught again by the leading Russian tanks. However, beforehand, we had quickly turned off the road into a forest. Soon after, the Russian tanks passed by on the main road. Immanuel Suckut had a map with him and a radio. So he followed the reports of where the leading Russian tanks were going. We then drove in a more northerly direction to the west. So we have experienced, again and again, God's protecting hand over us. To Him be brought thanks and honor.

We spent most of the night on farms. My mother had often run ahead to get accommodation and food for us and the horse-drawn wagons. We mostly slept in the barns where the horses were. On this journey, our grandfather once got lost. But, God be thanked, he found us again. He was nearly frozen. He had to be warmed up at an oven in a house before we could continue driving.

We crossed over the Oder [River] just south of Szczecin. The bridge had not yet been blown up. But even there, the German troops had already put up explosive charges. The soldiers urged people to hurry up so that quite a number of fleeing people could cross the Oder Bridge. When it was later blown up, many wagons of the people fleeing drove on the ice across the frozen Oder. Unfortunately, some of the ice broke and many wagons of fleeing people, both horses and people, drowned in the water. Our trek crossed over the Oder and we were saved again.

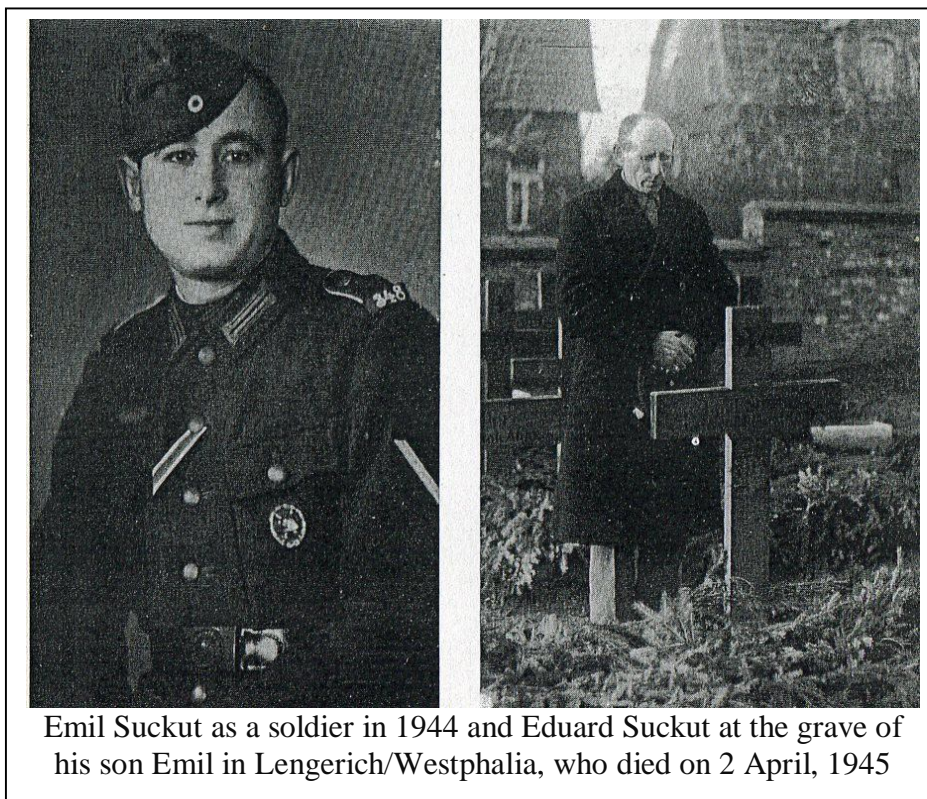
Now we went further west via Schwedt-Zehdenick to Neuruppin. By then, the first travel order had been completed. When we arrived in Neuruppin (Brandenburg), I quickly wrote to my three brothers so that they could know that we had fled to the West. All three brothers received this message and it later became their help to locate us more quickly.

From Neuruppin, we were sent to Klosterheide, where, from 4-10 February, we found some days of rest and recovery from the worst and most terrible events and experiences of our life to date—the Flight in winter, in bitter cold and the approaching of the enemy war front. In the Bible, Matthew 24 says: Ask that your flight not take place in the winter. This Bible word of Jesus has come true here. The new travel order came in Klosterheide that we should continue to the Celle District in the Lüneburg moorland.

Our journey from Klosterheide/Neuruppin continued to the west on 10 February, 1945. The journey was via Kyritz—Perleberg—Wittenberg—Dömitz. Here was the crossing over the Elbe [River]. Then we drove via Tannenberg—Lüchow—Ülzen—Eschede—Hermansburg to Müden/Örtze, Celle District. Here we were received by the authority and sent on to places in the area. The Immanuel Suckut family remained in Müden/Örtze. The Johann Knecht family came to Lutterloh near Unterließ, the Schiewe family and us—Eduard Suckut family—came to farmers at Poitzen near Müden/Örtze. At the farmer's house where we came to, we got a room and a kitchen, which were the upper half of the fodder kitchen (*Futterküche*) from the pigsty. Next to our room were Russian and Polish workers. Our grandfather, my parents and I lived in our room. The horses and wagons were used by the farmer for work. Later, we also lived and worked for a few years at this farmer in Poitzen. When we arrived in Poitzen on 16 February, 1945, we had every reason to thank God for all the protection on this Flight, which many fleeing people did not survive.

On the first Sunday in Poitzen, my father and I immediately visited my brother Emil. He could hardly believe that we were standing outside at the barracks gate and wanting to visit him. How great was the joy of the reunion. So he visited us several times in Poitzen. But then the troops were deployed to the West on the front line. So my brother Emil was killed in action, at the age of 20, on 2 April, 1945 (Easter). My brothers Arthur and Albert came home wounded from this war. After the Flight, my father had also been drafted to Hanover, where he and Johann Knecht had to do clean-up work after air raids. Shortly before the end of the war, the two fathers came to their families again in good health. In looking back, we can be grateful for God's grace, faithfulness and protection. This is how we too can speak: Up to this point the LORD has helped us. Reinhold Suckut (Eduard)

So far God has brought me, through His great goodness.
So far He has day and night, protected hearts and minds
So far He has led me, so far He has gladdened me,
So far helped me.



Escape — Expulsion — Deportation

The year 1945—the year of fate of the German Empire in its entirety—also hit our people bitterly. At home were almost only old, sick people, along with children. The news came as a surprise, so they could not quite prepare for an orderly flight. Then there was the bitterly cold winter at that time. Many prayed and wept the Bible word, reading and saying, “Pray that your

flight should not be in winter.” Now it was winter! A judgment of God? Many have seen it that way, and many also experienced it like that. Those who did not leave had to return or were taken back—as far as Siberia. For some, it was years before they were allowed out again, if they were still alive. This time cannot be described in a few sentences. The need is indescribable! It is no longer up to us today to make a judgment about it. The war and its consequences have affected many peoples, not just us Germans! Whoever somehow came through, survived or after years was allowed freedom, thanks his God from the heart and puts everything else in His power—He is Judge!

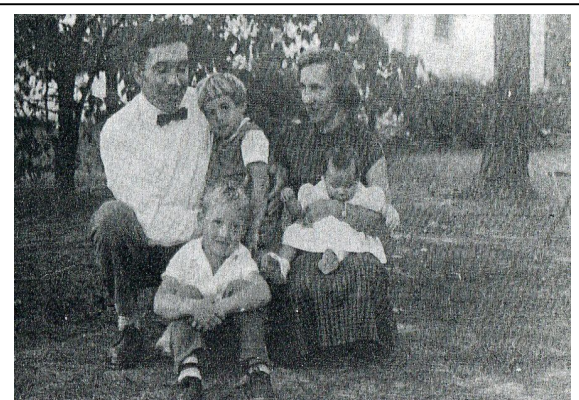
At that time, many experienced real miracles of leadership and protection; others have had to endure such bitter times of need that they cannot be described. May someone else who is entitled to speak, pass sentence, judge!



[Visiting relatives in the German Democratic Republic (from right to left): Reinhold Suckut, Otto Kelm, Erna Ziebart-Radies, Adele Franz-Pfahl]



Artur Bader (Simon) in front of his workshop as a wagon builder (still German Democratic Republic)



Willi Fano (Christlieb) with family in the USA, taken in 1963

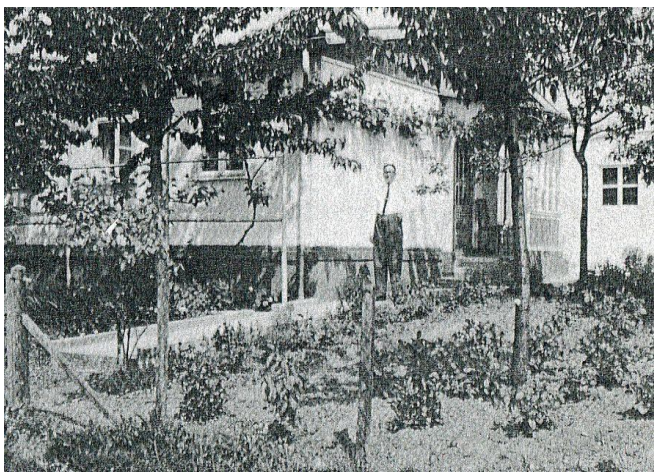


Eduard Allmer with family and Emma Breitreutz with family in the USA, emigrated after 1945

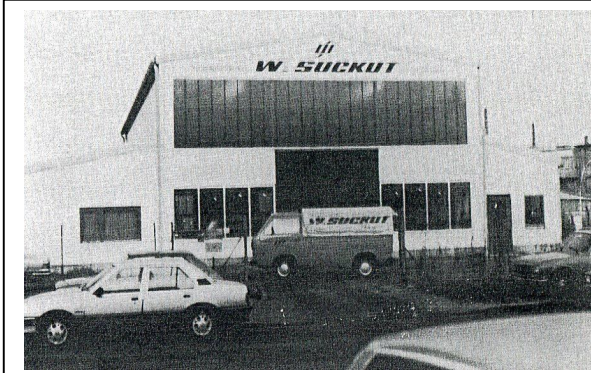
Whoever could, or to whom it was commanded, sought salvation in the West. We from Paris were met with the fact that just over a third remained in the German Democratic Republic, the others mostly in Lower Saxony and the Federal States. Few moved to Swabia, and that only after a few years. Several families and individuals emigrated to the USA, Canada and as far as Australia, because they could not find work here and saw no future.

Search for a New Homeland

What was in 1945 and the years after was one of the most important concerns of all the ones fleeing. As a rule, one was assigned. Only later could one continue to wander further, search, gather, start over again—provided that one received an immigration permit; this often only after a “de-nazification,” although we were “foreigners,” or rather foreign Germans, ethnic Germans. The strictness, poverty, unemployment in the rest of Germany can no longer be imagined today. It was only after years, when the “economic miracle” arose, that our people were able to build again, settle, even become self-employed. Some of us have become entrepreneurs, others have had further training, many have even studied. Today, one finds them in many professions. If one wanted to be as close as possible at first, today the urge goes again into the “scattering,” from the profession and his work there is no other way possible. Some old folks from Paris and Neu-Paris have their business operations or farmyards, often even larger than they were in their old homeland. Some pictures show these examples; others can only be mentioned, such as Reinhold Suckut (Maria), who has a very large farm in Lower Saxony, a really big farmer! Many of our people are now respected in a wide variety of panels or boards, valued everywhere.



[Artur Bader in front of his beautifully decorated former RAD barrack in Schwäbisch Hall-Tüngental. Today he is a versatile hobbyist and has also recreated our beautiful church as well as several equipment for the Bessarabia Homeland Museum]



Engineer's office and Locksmith's shop of Woldemar Suckut in Celle

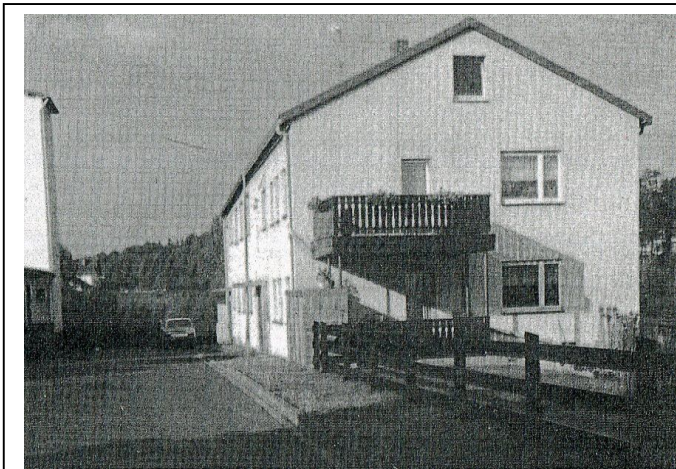


Construction and Furniture Joinery of Hugo Weichsel (centre) in Uelzen District

Today, almost nothing is known about the past, about the years of scarcity of Resettlement, Settlement, Flight and Expulsion. Only those who are already in their “middle age” still know how it is to wander, looking for a place to stay. It is a gift when everything is overcome with the passing of time; but it also involves the danger of not wanting to know more about it. And is not this an evil especially of our time? A person does not want to know anything more about fear, hunger, hardship and misery in the wider world. Have we forgotten—forgotten too quickly? Have we forgotten what we vowed, promised in those years of scarcity? Where, out of the pleading, is there also thanks, praise, doing good? *Think about that!*

We would like to take a closer look at one of today's self-employed people. It is Peter Maser, who came to Paris in 1924 with his parents and brothers from the Banat [area west of the Transylvanian Alps and north of the Danube River]; that is why they were all called “Banaters.”

While still at home, he learned to be a tailor, soon found work in the camp in Dresden with the guild master of all of Dresden, and learned a lot about it. He would have preferred to keep him



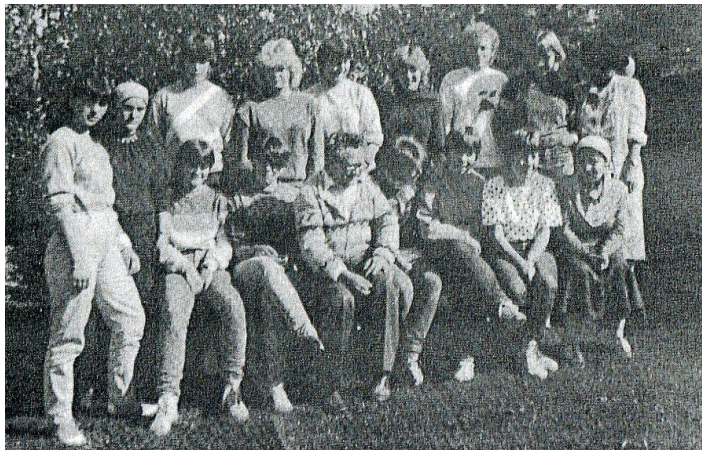
Residence and tailoring business of Peter Maser in Neustadt/Hesse

[Peter], possibly even to become a partner, but because of the settlement in the East, he [Peter] had to go along to the Warthegau, then be a soldier, severely wounded and then a “home-coming” to Marburg in Hesse.

Here he passed the master's examination in 1948 and started with an initial capital of 25 German Marks, first in a small room, later a big one was added. Immediately, he hired 13 workers, the business at that time went quite well. In Neustadt (Hesse), near Marburg, he got a plot of land and began to build, to expand to its present size (see pictures).

He is married, has three daughters and a son. His family members are partly involved in the company.

I would like to highlight two things in particular. Firstly, the matter with his work bench. He had this made in double size soon after his new beginning. During the day, people sat there to work, at night it was a place for spending the night sleeping on it, and this for several years. He still owns this “unique” table today!



A training group with Peter Maser (in the middle)

The other is an even greater, one of a kind, which gives a sense of how our people think, live and act; characterized by the Christian faith and by the various experiences of the needy life, as most of us have gone through. He has been training young people for many years, then keeping them until he has found a job for them through negotiation. What is special about this is that he takes into training to a large extent those girls who are late emigrants, who did not complete school, who cannot be

accommodated elsewhere. At his house, they get practical lessons from him; theoretically, from teachers from local schools. Not many people do that, it is not an easy thing. But whoever has experienced the love of Christ himself, through parents, teachers, comrades, among others, is caught up and motivated to do so to others—especially these weakest in society. A good, a great act of charity in our days! It is a pleasure to stop at his house and see all this. This serves as an example of many others who live and act in a similar way—like this “Banat Peter!”

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Pages Not Translated

[Pages as numbered in Suckut's Book]

Contents

Our Homeland Reunions (1976 – 1980 – 1984 – 1986)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	229
Paris then and today	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	246
Memories about Paris	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	254
This is Paris	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	268

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