

## Paris, Bessarabia – Part 4

*Paris in Bessarabien:*  
*Chronik der Gemeinden Paris und Neu-Paris in Bessarabien,*  
Arthur Suckut, self-published, 1986, 321 pages.

Translator: Allen E. Konrad  
P.O. Box 157 Rowley, IA 52329  
E-mail: <onamission1939@gmail.com>  
Date Translated: October, 2020

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 will be made in parts. The translation below is from pages 164-188 of Arthur Suckut's book.

A translator's lament! Pages 194-199 have given me trouble in that they contain Plattdeutsch material which I have found difficult to translate. I have approached an Amish community near where I live to help me, but they inform me that this "Platt" is not the dialect they speak. I have called on others to help me, but none has shown up at this time. So I am presenting this translation with much of the "Platt" not translated. If the reader can understand it, please contact me so that I can revise this document and end up with a full translation.

---

---

[Translation Begins]

### Contents

Customs and Practices	- - - - -	174
Weddings — Courses of Instruction and Lectures — Club life and Camaraderie		
— Pre-military and Exemption — Form of Greetings		
What is being Read in the Village	- - - - -	190
Our Dialect	- - - - -	191
Dialect as a Preservation — Kaschuben and Swabia — Brief Platt-German		
Language Primer — Parisian Morsels — The Preserved Homeland Name		

## Customs and Practices

The very strong influence of the “Brotherhood Assemblies” also had an impact on the customs (*Sitten*) and practices (*Gebräuche*) in our village. Sure, they were similar to other places, but maybe quieter and less frequent.

Of course, we also had our “Year Group Comradeships” (*Jahrgangskameradschaften*) who met here and there to dance. But never in the vicinity of the Assemblies, usually outside the village, for example, at the windmill or on the sports field. When the youth were playing or singing through the village, about the “time of the draft/redemption” (*Losungszeit*), then they stopped with their music or their singing when they came near an Assembly.

Also with us there was the “strewing of the path” (*Wegstreuen*) by a young man to a young woman, whom one considered to be a couple in love. The girls had to go out early and clear their “path” (*Weg*) so that no one could be aware of it, least of all their own parents. This a person perceived as shameful.<sup>1</sup> There was also this and that practical joke in the village, but with restraint, such as removing garden gates from their hinges, which were then hidden somewhere, or that one removed something from wagons and equipment and then hid it. Hardly anything was destroyed through these actions.

As elsewhere, we had the “Day of Shifting” (*Wanderstag*) on 28 December, when the hired men and maids went looking for a new person to work for or stayed with the old one if he could promise them an increase in wages. There are still many things that could be listed here, such as the celebration of weddings: it was always influenced by the spirit of the common interest people (*Gemeinschaftsleute*), which we had in such large numbers.

Also among us was the custom, the practice, that the most recent people to be confirmed had to donate wine to the older age group in order to acquire their “right” to “walk the street” in their own companionship. Those who refused, came to experience something. The “hostilities” between Upper village and Lower village were bad, which did not only lead to conflict, but often also to nasty fights. Here, too, one had to “buy” wine; especially when a young man just on the other end of the village took an interest in a young woman and wanted to visit her. The demands of the girl's year group classmates were even higher, if the “foreigner” from the other part of the village even wanted to marry her. Well, he had to pay for it! As a rule, he had to invite the

---

<sup>1</sup> [Translator's Note: Unfamiliar with this custom, I approached Elvire Necker, who was born in Bessarabia, for some insight. One needs to remember that the prevailing German custom in Bessarabia for young people contemplating a possible marriage partner for life started with a young man indicating to his household that he had an interest in a young woman in another household. This started the process of *Kuppelsmänner* (literally “coupling-men,” maybe “match-makers”) being engaged by the male's household to contact the female's household to discover whether such a union might be possible. Should it be that a young man and a young woman were seeing each other “on the sly,” this would be considered an affront to traditional practice. Shame on the two who were “working” toward a marriage outside of the *Kuppelsmänner* custom! To add insult to injury, a person who knew of such “secret encounters” might play a trick on the young woman. During the night before the first of May, that person would use chopped straw (*Häcksel*) to spread on the path (*Wegstreuen*) between the young woman's home and that of the young man she was in love with. So the anxiety for the young woman on this particular day caused her to rise early in the morning and erase any embarrassing signs of chopped straw (if there was any) on the path (*Weg*) leading to the home of the young man.]

comrades on the evening before the wedding—there was no evening of the wedding party (*Polterabend*) with us—to a meal, to the “celebration of the release” (*Feier der Freigabe*) of their comrade.

This custom was even more strong if even a young man came from another village, usually by horse-drawn wagon, or with the “Britschka”—the spring-loaded wagon of the steppe—if he had one (his father). Often, he also came riding [on horseback] or riding a bicycle. If he did not want to “pay,” then things went badly for him. He still got off fairly well if one took off a part on the wagon, the harness of the horses or the bicycle and hid them, which he then had to “pay to get it back” (*freikaufen*).

Yes, yes—that is how we steppe people were—even in Paris! These were the alternatives in the otherwise hard steppe existence, which demanded from everyone the so much necessary cooperation. In times of need, people did not ask “from where” or “why.” Help was offered to everyone who needed it.

## **Weddings in the Old Homeland**

Since the younger ones among us, but especially all those who were born only after the Resettlement, no longer know how we celebrated weddings, we bring here a contribution by Paul Niederreiter, who describes the “wedding in Sarata” (*Heimatkalender 1985*, p. 118-122). It was similar in all villages, even with us in Paris. With us Friday was always generally the day of the wedding, with exceptions Wednesday. I would also like to add that the festivals were more “quiet” here than elsewhere; this was partly due to our nature, and partly to the influence of the “Brethren” in the area. There was also no dancing in fellowship houses; the whole process was characterized by word meditation (*Wortbetrachtung*) and singing, although some folk songs were also sung, which was not totally denied to the youth. Let us enjoy what Paul Niederreiter has to tell us.

## **Wedding Time in Sarata**

It was preferred to be married in the post-summer months. Then the most difficult work of the year was done in the mostly agricultural sector, the harvesting and threshing, and one had time and—if the harvest had turned out reasonably well—also the necessary money and the right mood to accomplish a respectable wedding.

In Sarata, a mother colony and a center of the German people of Bessarabia, whose wedding celebrations are to be reported here, the preparations, as in other villages, were tied to a certain process. Various groups of helpers were assigned well-defined tasks, which were carried out in a specified order on the days before the celebration.

As a rule, it was a fixed day of the week in each village on which the weddings took place. In Sarata, it was Thursday. Until the wedding day, a lot had to be considered and discussed, planned and determined between the bride and groom and the people involved in the wedding. Two decisions were particularly important for the satisfaction of the guests and the harmonious course of the wedding: who was to be acquired as a wedding cook and who had to be invited as

bridesmaids (*Brautmädchen/Brautjungfer*) and as best men (*Brautbub/Brautführer*). The wedding cook was authorized and responsible for everything that had to be baked, cooked or fried for the wedding. She alone had the say in these matters. In each village there were women whose good reputation as a wedding cook was known. It was more difficult for the bride and groom to make the right choice in bringing together bridesmaids and best men. To assign the secretly “desired” best man to each bridesmaid has caused a lot of headaches for many a bride and groom. And yet it did not always happen without small “disappointments” for those affected.

If the problem of putting the bridesmaids and best men together appropriately was too delicate for the bride and groom, it was simply left p to the young people to come up with the solution for themselves, who would be joined with whom and accompanied the bride and groom to the church. How large the crowd of bridesmaids and best men was depended on the size of the relatives and the circle of friends of the bride and groom and their financial possibilities. Both circumstances also determined the total number of all invited wedding guests. So, a wedding could have 40 to 120 (sometimes fewer and sometimes more) wedding guests. On the Saturday or Sunday before the wedding day at the latest, the wedding cook appeared in the wedding house, which was usually the bride's home, to prepare the individual types of dough for the daily bread, white bread, *Hefezopf*<sup>2</sup> and cake (*Kuchen*). Baking began on Monday. Neighbors, relatives and friends contributed sugar, butter, milk, eggs and additional things.

Apart from the fact that there were no bakeries in the villages, it is simply a colonist tradition that each family baked their daily bread themselves. Of course, this was all the more true for a wedding. There was a large oven in each farmyard. The neighbors and relatives also supported the wedding cook with their active help, because there was a lot of work! Dozens of loaves of bread, white bread, *Hefezöpfe* and *Kuchen* had to be prepared and baked. The *Kuchen* were mainly streusel cakes with a crumbly topping of flour, butter, and sugar, apple cakes/pies and plum cakes/pies. Tuesday and Wednesday were the days to butcher. Most of the time a pig was butchered, but geese, ducks and chickens were also butchered. How heavy the butchered pig had to be and how much feathered stock had to die depended on the number of wedding guests.

Many preparations for the wedding day were carried out side by side at the same time. The “card boys” (*Kartenbuben*), two or three young ones of school-age, carried the printed or written invitations to the wedding to the invited wedding guests. One was happy to be a card boy, there were tips. The “table boys” (*Tischbuben*)—usually three younger best men—had the task of bringing together from neighbors, relatives, and friends the tables needed for the wedding, because no wedding house itself had enough tables for a wedding. Wagons and horses were brought for this work. Of course, one took the most beautiful horses that were available. The harnesses of the horses were decorated with colorful ribbons. The “table boys” themselves were in the best mood and provided cheerfulness in the wedding courtyard and wedding house. What was true for the tables also applied to the “dishes” (*Geschirr*)—that is what one called cutlery, plates, glasses, pots, flower vases, and tablecloths. The dishes also had to be borrowed from neighbors and wedding guests. This was the responsibility of the “pot girls” (*Hafemädchen*) and the “dish girls” (*Geschirrmädchen*). The “pot girls,” usually two or four young girls between the

---

<sup>2</sup> A sweetened, usually greased yeast dough which is divided into three or more parts, which are rolled into strands that make the bread appear to be braided.

ages of 13 and 14, collected the necessary coffee pots, tablecloths and cutlery. The “dish girls” and the “table boys” had to be done by Wednesday evening, because on Wednesday evening was the evening of the wedding party (*Polterabend*). Above all, the younger wedding guests met for the evening of the wedding party. There was a lively, high-spirited atmosphere with dancing, board games and singing. For the meal, fresh liver sausage, blood sausage and bratwurst were served as well as certain parts of the butchered poultry: wings, necks and stomachs. There were sour pickled tomatoes, cucumbers and watermelons. Of course, the wine was not missing, which contributed a lot to the good mood.

Even if the evening of the wedding party might also drag on late into the night, on Thursday there was already early lively life in the wedding house. The most important day had begun.

Most of the wedding guests showed up in the wedding house shortly after the noon meal, as long as they did not have to travel from far away and for that reason had to arrive earlier. The table boys were still in use even today. Older people are picked up by them in the spring-wagon. Each guest was greeted with a welcome drink.

The time until going to the church, depending on the agreement for the wedding ceremony to begin at 2:00 PM or 3:00 PM, passed quickly. Skilled hands helped the bride to put on the wedding dress and the bridal veil with a green wreath, the bridesmaids put a green bouquet on “their” best men, the wedding guests carried on in conversation with each other, and here and there, there was a little something to adjust, arrange and add to. Before going to the church, there was usually someone from the circle of wedding guests who, in a short speech, pointed out to the couple to be married the importance of the day. Then they went to church: the bride and groom were followed in pairs by the bridesmaids and best men. Behind them, the parents, siblings and the other wedding guests. On the way to the church, shots were fired by friends—hidden behind a courtyard wall or behind a house—in honor of the bride and groom. The last thing on the way to the church, but especially up the church stairs, the bride and groom and wedding guests had to go through a lane of curious people. There had always been a lot of onlooker women who wanted to see and inspect the wedding dress and at the same time watch which bridesmaid had which best man as an escort. Perhaps one could make assumptions about this! It was also interesting how the bridesmaids were dressed, because at a wedding there was usually a new dress, as well as who was invited to the wedding. Many of the onlookers went into the church to witness the wedding ceremony.

When the newlyweds had arrived back at the wedding house after the wedding ceremony, they had to endure the congratulations. Every wedding guest wanted to personally congratulate the newlyweds. This took a long time, and some hearty kisses were audible, and some tears crept down on some cheeks. This was particularly noticeable when it was parents, godparents and aunts! It has never really been explored why this was so. Were they tears of emotion because “a wedding is just so beautiful,” were they tears of happiness that two obviously lucky ones had found each other again, or did the memory of their own wedding shed a tear from the corners of their eyes?

When the emotionally charged congratulation ceremony was over, a very important event followed: the arrangement of the wedding guests for a beautiful group picture. It sometimes took

a long time for the positioning of the often numerous wedding guests—including the children!—to match the artist's photographic taste. Of course, there were also photos showing the bride and groom alone. For this picture a beautiful frame was chosen: in the garden in front of the arbor, in front of a shrub, leaning against a tree trunk or sweetly positioned in front of a bench. Happiness and romance should radiate the reception of bride and groom for later children and children's children. For every best man it was a matter of honor to give his bridesmaid a wedding picture. After the effort of taking pictures, everyone deserved a good coffee with *Kuchen* or *Hefezoft*. If the living rooms were sufficient for the wedding house to accommodate all wedding guests, the celebration took place in the. If the number of guests was larger, which was already established long before, a tent was pitched in the courtyard, in which everyone could find space.

As soon as the guests had taken their place at the tables covered with *Kuchen*, white bread and *Hefezopf*, the “servers” appeared with fragrant coffee. During the wedding day, they had to ensure that every guest was provided with plenty of food and drink. The “servers” were dressed with a long flower-white apron and had a wide green-and-white sash slung obliquely over the chest and shoulder as a special feature of their responsible duty. After extensive coffee drinking, the young people (newlyweds, bridesmaids and best men) went outside. They took a short walk together for the sake of digestion or entertained themselves with party games. Meanwhile, the coffee tables were cleared inside and re-covered for the evening meal. The evening meal on the wedding day was the sumptuous high point of the wedding days. At last it now became clear how well the wedding cook, who had been engaged, could cook and whether she had done everything well. Usually there was roast pork for the evening meal, “rice pudding” (a rice soufflé), baked apple, warm vegetable salad (*Krautsalat*) and potato salad and more. It goes without saying that the wine was not missing, since each farmer had his own wine.

In the course of the evening, the pastor and his wife appeared for a short visit to wish the young couple their happiness. On some Thursdays, the pastor had to visit several wedding houses.

After the evening meal, they chatted, drank and sang. But young people want to dance. Soon some tables were cleared and space was created to swing the dancing leg. Music was always provided. Either someone from the ranks of the wedding guests played on a piano in the house or with a provided accordion, or one or two musicians were engaged. The dancing could last until dawn. Well, it was a wedding!

At midnight, however, there was a break. In the presence of all the guests, the “removing of the wreath” of the newlyweds took place. The bride had to sit on a chair that was in the middle of the room. While the bridesmaids, walking in a circle, sang the song “Beautiful is youth, it comes no more,” the bride's veil and green wreath were removed. The bride's eyes were then blindfolded and she had to hand over the wreath and veil to one of her bridesmaids. The young woman who received the wreath and veil saw it as a good sign that soon she herself would become a bride. The action with the groom was similar. The best man, to whom the groom handed over his bridegroom's bouquet while blindfolded, was certainly soon a marriage candidate himself. After the wreath removing, the newlyweds left. — But the young wedding guests danced for a long time.

Friday was the day of the “burial of the wedding” (*Hochzeitsvergrabung*). In the afternoon, the wedding guests showed up again and brought the young couple their gift for establishing their new home. One arrived at coffee time—there were still plenty of *Kuchen*—and stayed until the evening meal (*Abendbrot*). Friday's evening meal had a different makeup than the evening meal on Thursday, the day of the wedding. On Friday evening, there were large plates with cold cuts and warm bratwurst, along with vinaigrette (a Russian salad plate), sweet and sour plums and sour pickled cucumbers and tomatoes. Of course, this “standard menu” varied somewhat in the individual wedding houses. Dance and wine was never lacking!—It was customary that on Friday the young couple had to “serve up,” that is, they had to take care of the physical well-being of their guests that day. The servers of the day before had been released from their duties. On Saturday there was a lot of work until the traces of the wedding were removed and the house and yard had the old appearance again. The “pot girls,” the “dish girls” and the “table boys” had their hands full until the borrowed items had returned to their owners.

The fact that the young people had not had a much sleep in the last few days and had danced through the previous night was not noticeable on them. The work was quick with laughter, good-natured ridicule, flirtation and teasing. Everyone involved breathed a sigh of relief when the wedding had gone well, when the roast was crispy, white bread and *Kuchen* soft and tasty, coffee and wine good and plentiful, in short, when all the guests were satisfied and could say: This was a beautiful wedding!

## **Courses of Instruction and Courses of Lectures**

At the end of the nineteen twenties, the “spirit of progress” also moved with us, with sewing and knitting courses in the winter of 1928/29 in the school or in the house of Gustav Pfahl/Robert Quellmann. The best of these participants then gave further training courses here and there in the houses or in their own tailoring rooms. Some pictures show proof of this. When on 24 June, 1933, the Bessarabian Agricultural Association had its conference in our school, the foundation of one association after another followed:

1933: Foundation of the *Educational Association “Leuchtturm”* by teacher Johannes Keller, who remained the head until 1939 (departure to Arzis). Initially, there were 65 members, then membership increased to over 80. He was primarily concerned with cultural education and entertainment in the community.

1934: Founding of the wind instrument choir by teachers Emil Heer and Johannes Keller; they were the conductors for two years, with 13 wind instruments. From 1935/36 Otto Reppnach was then the conductor (produced his own march!), with 14 wind instruments. They were often welcome in many neighboring communities—even in Krasna!—to play at various occasions: weddings, confirmations, funerals, church celebrations, New Year's Eve and Easter morning in the cemetery and at festival worship services.



Embroidery course by the Singer Firm in the school, about 1928/1929



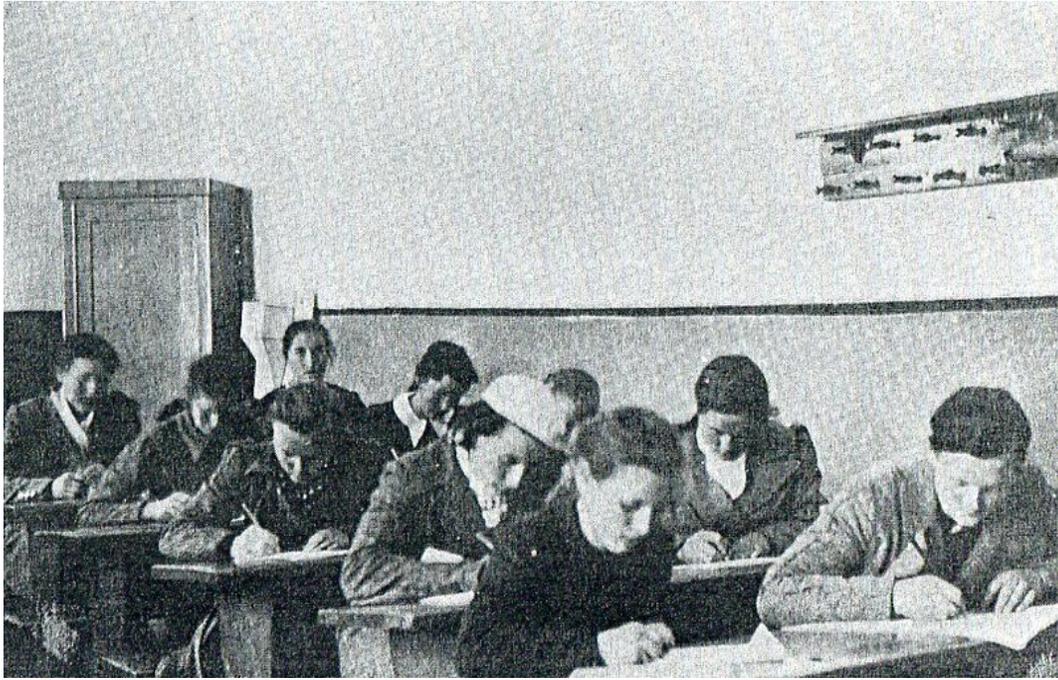
Tailoring course with Master Rommel from Transylvania (1928/29)



Training through sewing courses with director Martha Ziebart



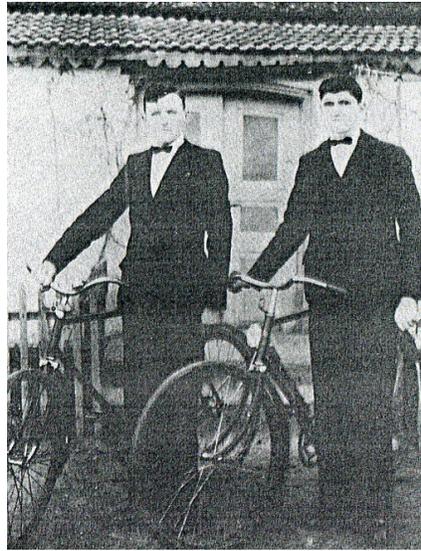
Sewing course with director Mathilde Wornath



On the occasion of an agricultural course in the written examination in the specialty of housekeeping for girls—in school about 1938



Brass band (founded 1934), taken around 1936. From left to right: 1st row: Robert Jaßmann, Otto Lehmann, Otto Reppnach (director), Albert Krüger, Ferdinand Pomreinke; 2nd row: Willi Knecht, Artur Bader, Otto König, Reinhold Lehmann; 3rd row: Robert Reppnach, Artur Franz, Otto Breitkreuz, Artur Scheffelmeier



Proud owners of a bicycle: Emil Ziebart (left) and Reinhold Suckut (Upper village)

### Club Life and Fellowship (*Kameradschaften*)

In most cases, one went hand in hand with the other, whether at the celebration on 10 May (Romanian national holiday—festival on the sports field), whether at the May tree or Pentecost tree, or at their regular meetings in the houses, sometimes separately by boys and girls, sometimes all together. They also had courses on the side and it was a special way for them of taking pride in coming up with their own costumes!

They also celebrated the egg games on Easter Monday in the meadows on the outskirts of the village, with night celebrations in the village within their fellowships. A fellowship usually included one or two age groups that had their own music band (accordion, drum and triangle). A football team was also formed from the fellowships of the Upper and Lower village, which organized several competitions, sometimes in the village, sometimes with neighboring villages. A picture shows the players of Paris and Beresina, around 1938.



Accordion player, drummer and runners after the egg game in the Upper village (about 1924); (from left to right) sitting: Gustav Radies and Ferdinand Kühn, standing: Johann Franz and Alexander König (both emigrated to Brazil in 1925)



Girls group in self-sewn costume (January 1938); from left to right: Ilse Allmer, Leonide Walter, Maria Knecht. The director was Mrs. Zoppel from Transylvania



Girls group in the Heer farmyard



Mixed youth group in the Lower village



Mixed youth group in the Lower village



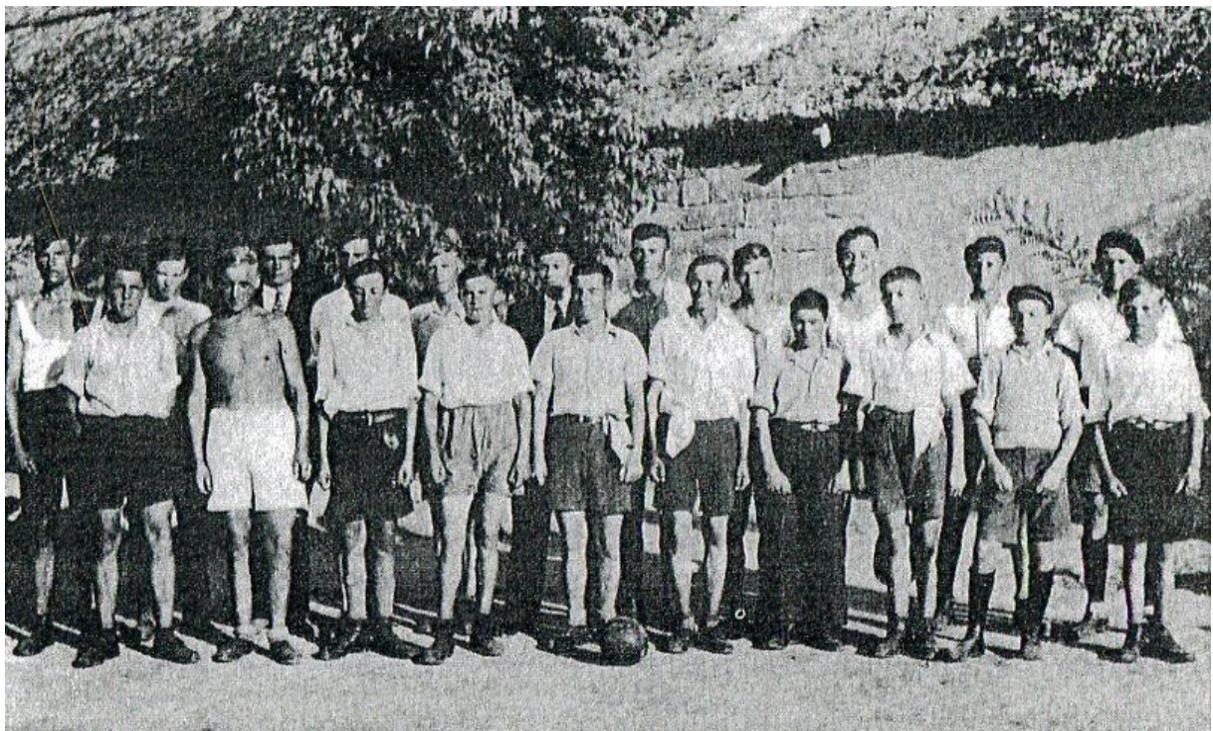
10 May celebration 1938 on the sports field, in the background the church and cemetery



10 May celebration 1938—Dance of the club youth from Upper and Lower village



Mixed group from Upper and Lower village



Football teams of Paris and Beresina after a match, around 1937



Pre-military service with teacher Cosacu as leader, around 1937/1938

### **Pre-Military and Draft/Redemption (*Losung*)**

From the age of 18-21, the male youth had to serve in the (Romanian) *Premilitare* (pre-military training). It was first set for Sunday morning, during the time of worship service. But then the folks of Paris revolted: They all showed too late and also in slippers (*Papuschen/Pantoffeln*). Teacher Cosaku, leader in Paris, was so upset that he sent them home. I will omit his accompanying Romanian curses here; I can quote only one, which he always liked to use: “*Duce la dracu!*” (Go, off to the devil). For this he received the mocking expression, as mentioned elsewhere: “Constantin Cosaku—duce la dracu!” Trouble, if he heard this—then the devil was loose! In any case, he had no choice but to give in to the “slipper heroes” and to postpone the activity to a time after the worship service or to the afternoon, then mostly on the new sports field, which the *Premilitare* had set up through compulsory labor, transplanted with beautiful young maple trees, as well as the road from the village (Bauers-Trits) to the spot. This would have become a beautiful avenue if the young boys had not played a prank on him and in a night of May (“Fool’s Freedom”—*Narrenfreiheit*) cut off all the young trees. Did that ever stir things up! The guilty person was sought after and subsequently punished—unfortunately the wrong person!! —Miscarriage of justice!

### **The Draft/Redemption (*Losung*)**

It goes back to Tsarist times and was actually a pretty good institution. Since not all sons could be inducted, they were given “redemption” (*gelost*). So it was that the only sons of families,

sons of widows, those who had to take the place of the father, sick ones, those were exempt. All the others who had reached the age of 21 had to be taken to the “place where lots were drawn” (*Losungsort*)—for us usually Klöstitz—in the company of the mayor, the clerk, the police, where they were then inspected (*gemustert*), that is to say “drafted” (*ausgelost*).

Lots were drawn, for example, 1, 2 and so forth up to 50. Those, for example, pulling lots 1-20 became soldiers, the others were set free and went home after a first thorough celebration. The “recruits” had a week of “fool's freedom” before their drafting, that is, they roamed the village in public with their music band, accompanied by a lot of the younger ones. One sang and played a lot, especially folk songs; from time to time one stopped, turned to an afternoon tea (*Vesper*) and a glass of wine. When this week was over, “order” was again restored in the whole matter. The equipment of the music band was “raffled” (*verlost*) to the next age group (*Jahrgang*). It was not always peaceful, but the elders were on guard about it and saw to it that there was no roughness or aggressiveness; nevertheless, sometimes there were brawls from time to time, sometimes serious injuries—sometimes even an unintentional homicide; an old man had been mistakenly thought of as a rival. From then on, the perpetrator was only called “The Assassin;” he had to be locked up for some time, but was then pardoned. Having to no longer stay in the village, he moved with others to Banat and Transylvania. During the Resettlement in October 1940, however, all those who had moved away after a certain deadline had to return to the “original homeland” or come via “straggler routes” to the resettlement camps of their former home villages; these were quite a few fellow-countrymen.

We want to leave it with these few concise descriptions. Just one more example: When a member of the “friendship” went to Berlin with many other Germans from Bessarabia for the Olympics in 1936 and sent a postcard to Paris from there, he was considered a “Nazi” when he was returning home—which we never were down there!—and had to endure some suspicions and interrogations. Through the mediation of influential persons, he has finally allowed to go and left alone.

## Ways of Greeting

A beautiful custom was greeting toward everyone and always. It was not just passing by, as if you had not seen anything. It was a pleasure to greet the other person and to exchange a few words. It was a kind of “greeting obligation” (*Grußpflicht*) especially among the younger ones toward the older ones. We in Paris did not say, “Greet God” (*Griiß Gott*). Only the Brothers and Sisters spoke like that in the Assembly. Usually, it was only “Good morning” (*Guten Morgen*) and so forth (of course everything in Platt!). The one greeted replied with “Thank God” (*Dank Gott*) or also “Have gratitude” (*Hab Dank*). When we said goodbye, we always said only the one word “Adieu!”—(Are there traces from France again?)—The Assembly people also said “God be with you” (*Gott befohlen*) or “As God wills” (*So Gott will!*). Woe to a young person (student!) who once failed to greet a teacher! It was also common for young people not to smoke in front of the elderly, especially in public; even the married son did not smoke in front of his parents. That is ridiculous, tell me what else you remember, one would say today. At that time it was consideration, it was respect for age, for being different. This mutual acceptance and respect was the consequence of our Christian upbringing, and it was not an inconvenience: where

one asks about God and his commandment, one also asks about one's neighbor and his needs. That has preserved us, it has proven itself a thousand times!

## What was Read in our Village

Our ancestors had with them in their luggage on the journey to Bessarabia—Bible, hymnbook, catechism, some sermon books and also occasionally other songbooks. They were the first “reading books” in the steppe, for decades in school instruction, until our time in German and religious instruction. In the course of time we were better supplied with German literature, for example with almanacs, newspapers, magazines and other good books in German, which existed in some houses; otherwise in the established libraries in schools, village councils or private houses. With us, there was one at school and one at the home of Christian Weiß. His brother Gottfried had a large collection of Christian literature. In the house of Eduard Suckut was a bookshop with Christian literature, which he obtained via Transylvania or directly from Germany. What was not in stock, could be ordered.

Now a list of some almanacs (*Kalender*), newspapers (*Zeitungen*), and so forth. (see list of references):

- *Odessaer Kalender (Odessa Almanac)* (in Russian time) with calendar, advice on agriculture, fruit growing, animal husbandry, among others—a good guide.
- *Hundertjähriger Kalender (Centenary Almanac)* with weather observations, calculations, weather standards, notes, and so forth, similar to the *Odessaer Kalender*.
- *Deutscher Volkskalender/Bauernkalender (German Folk Almanac/Farmer's Almanac)* (in Romanian time).
- Newspapers/magazines (*Zeitungen/Zeitschriften*):  
*Odessaer Zeitung, St. Petersburger Kirchenblatt, Lichter der Heimat, Sonntagsgruß, Deutsche Zeitung Bessarabiens, Deutsches Volksblatt, Der Christbote, Die Jugend, Auftrag und Weg* (EC) [Youth League for Decisive Christianity=EC], *Heilig dem Herrn* (by Pastor Modersohn), *Bibellesezettel* (Chr. Von Viebahn), *Schwäbische Tageszeitung* (from Stuttgart) and many more.
- Special link between the Germans abroad (Russia/Romania) was the *Dakota Freie Presse* (Dakota Free Press) and the *Staatsanzeiger* (State Gazette) from Bismarck, North Dakota. Both kept bringing reports from the places of our homeland, reports of emigrants in North America and South America or elsewhere. One or more writers were sought from each village, who wrote reports on an ongoing manner; for this they got the newspaper for free. With us there were several, especially teacher Christian Idler in his time in Paris (1919-1923). There are “all kinds of things” to read by him. He sometimes called himself “village mirror.”

These last two newspapers became the “link,” the “bridge to the homeland” for all those who had emigrated. They sent messages, letters, greetings, requests, addresses, and so forth, over and

over. Very interesting what is to be found in them; however, about Paris only a little in proportion to other villages. The newspapers often went from house to house, and there folks sat down together and one had to write a “letter” back over there again, with questions and the latest news. This is how it was with us at home!

## Our Dialect

It has been pointed out several times that we from Paris have had so many wandering paths and footprints behind us, with the associated “language footprints,” that we cannot say clearly, even less can prove where our language, especially our dialect, comes from. As already shown in the section “Where do the People of Paris come from?” [Part 1, p. 19], we have several language elements that range “from the Meuse to the Memel [Rivers].” Whether we are Huguenots, Dutch/Friesen, from Lower Saxony, Holstein, Mecklenburg, Pomerania/Prussia, or even Poland, where the Yiddish influence was very strong—this is no longer possible to determine exactly, even less accurate to verify. We are “linguistic mongrels (*Mischlinge*)”! A few examples may show this. I was mainly involved with the Dutch and Norwegians during the war. There were many words and phrases overall which we also have. Things went best with the Dutch. I had lively conversation in “*Platt*” with a theology professor from Flanders, and it really made us happy to investigate the differences.

In British captivity, I was able to see—including the British—that we have a lot of the same or similar words: Bed—Bett, Net—Netz, by you—bei euch...among others, partly written differently from ours, very similar in enunciation. No wonder that during the First World War, when he was taken into German captivity in his capacity as a Russian soldier, a person from Paris was put in a camp with the English; it took a lot to clear up the error and bring him back to his German comrades (people from Paris!).

## Dialect as Rescue

Our dialect has often helped in many kinds of needs and dangers. When the German language was forbidden to us in our old homeland (in both Russian and Romanian times), we spoke only Low German (*plattdeutsch*); because it was not considered German, it was allowed. How many times did the Swabians—for whom to them we were mistakenly the *Kaschuben* who could not possibly be “German”—make use of the assistance of the Low Germans (*Plattdeutschen*)! My father told me how he was deployed with many Swabians from our homeland on the Turkish front (South Caucasus). When the revolution came, one could no longer speak German. But he and his Paris comrades (Alfred Klettke, David König and Simon Krüger) could talk freely at any time and anywhere. Then our Swabians rallied around them so that the “Kaschuben” could speak for them. After the collapse in 1945, many of our people did not escape in time and had to return to Poland or in large transports to the Urals. German was forbidden everywhere—but *Plattdeutsch* was a rescue in need, it was valid! Nobody pressed them about it, people were allowed to talk freely.

When British-Canadian troops occupied the Lüneburg Moorland in April 1945, the following emerged: In a small village, bunkers had been set up in time in the nearby forest and the Germans hid there as the troops got closer and closer. There was talk of soldiers overseas being

among them. My grandfather, the old Christian Sukkut, who was already in his nineties, could not believe that one could go to Germany via the “Great Water;” he stayed in the village and waited. But when the fight started and a neighbor's farm was set on fire, he was suddenly terrified, ran out of the village towards the forest and, as loud as he could, called to his son Edward for help: “Edward, help me, help me! Help me, they are shooting me dead (*sei scheito mi dout!*)” As soon as the old man had shouted this, the shooting stopped, complete calm returned. What had happened? In a few seconds, he was surrounded by British soldiers who took care of him. They understood the “*Help mi!*” and thought a comrade had been hit and needed help. The grandfather was loaded onto a jeep and they drove him into the forest to the others, who begged them to return to the village in a friendly but resolute manner; in this case, this old man had saved them all from the worst. For weeks he was cared for by Canadian soldiers who liked to visit and talk to this strange man—as with a father! Several of these people could speak of *plattdeutsch*, and some still knew that their parents had emigrated from Bessarabia—perhaps even of Paris folks or their descendants?

## **Kashubian and Swabian**

In school, too, *Plattdeutsch*—except in the classroom—was the everyday language,. And some teachers had to be told by the first-graders: “What is that called?” Even in the town council, our dialect was the “official language” at all times; only the civil servants spoke written German. When there was an uprising in Tatarbuniar in 1924, guards (to the railway bridge and the train station) also came to us, who also wanted to make purchases in the shop. But there they did not understand, the secretary from the council had to interpret or tell the shopkeepers that they should speak German to these people! So were we not Germans? The Swabians did not think much of us, they were in our eyes the “yellow feet” (*Gelbfüßler*) (after a story by Johann Peter Hebel). In Teplitz—we only called them “Lightning Schabians” (*Blitz-Schwobo*)—the following happened when folks from Paris visited their grandmother. She had to let it be known that even the children in Paris speak (have to speak) *plattdeutsch*—simply unimaginable, what a sin!

“Oh God, help us, the poor child, it is forced to speak Kashubish;  
I could wish right now, that lightening would strike, this is not to be delighted in!”

The child calmly goes to the grandmother and says with shining eyes: “This is not a punishment for me, I always talk like this; it is the mother language of my people (*det's mien lew Moddospraak!*)” The grandmother had to settle down, the “lightening” (*Blitz*) had calmed things down, it had not struck!

The grandfather of our long-standing teacher Albert Eckert was with his family for a long time in Paris (unfortunately, when is unknown to us) as a clerk (*Schreiber*). When the family moved back to their homeland in Sarata, the children continued to speak in our dialect. The mother of the children gathered the neighborhood together as witnesses, lamented her suffering and slapped her hands over her head: “I do not understand my own children anymore, where is this going to lead to!” In the blink of an eye, one of the children came running, wept and complained: “He had me with the ball thrown (*Hei het mi met de Minscha (Ball) schmeito!*)” For the little child the lament was already large—for his mother, a world collapsed!

Oh my, what beautiful stories and examples could be listed here!

## A Brief Lesson on the Low (*Platt*) German Language

I would also like to mention a little grammar here. For this I found an example in the “*History of the Municipality of Tarutino*” (page 167-170) by Wilhelm Mutschall. Since in Tarutino the older people spoke almost exactly as we did in Paris, I take here the example (in the excerpt) of “*Uncle Bräsig*” (*Kräenbring*). He makes use of the verb—to read. Unlike Tarutino, we no longer had the pure “e,” but it sounded like a soft (*leises*) “o” (Yiddish).

Now our *Uncle Bräsig*:

I take the verb: to read (*lese/lesen*)—in Paris also: *leso*!

### *Jejewwod (Gegenwart)*

#### *Einzal*

1. *eck les,*
2. *du lest,*
3. *hei lesd,*

#### *Mehrzahl*

- wie lese,*
- jü lese,*
- sei lese,*

### Present Tense

#### Singular

1. I read,
2. You read,
3. He reads,

#### Plural

- We read,
- You read,
- They read,

### *Vergangenheit (Vergangenheit I)*

1. *eck lesd,*
2. *du lesd,*
3. *hei lesd,*

- wie lesde,*
- jü lesde,*
- sei lesde,*

### Past Tense

1. I read,
2. You read,
3. He read,

- We read,
- You read,
- They read,

### *Vergangeheit (Vergangenheit II)*

1. *eck hebt lest,*
2. *du hest lest,*
3. *hei het lest,*

- wie hebbe lest,*
- jü hebbe lest,*
- sei hebbe lest,*

### Narrative Past Tense

1. I have read,
2. You have read,
3. He has read,

- We have read,
- You have read,
- They have read,

### *Vergangenheit (Vergangenheit III)*

1. *eck had lest*
2. *du hadst lest,*
3. *hei had lest,*

- wi hade lest,*
- jü hade lest,*
- sei hade lest,*

### Conversational Past Tense

1. I had read,
2. You had read,
3. He had read,

- We had read,
- You had read,
- They had read,

### *Zukinft I*

1. *eck wa lese,*
2. *du wast lese,*
3. *hei wat lese,*

- wi ware lese,*
- jü ware lese,*
- sei ware lese,*

### Future Tense

1. I will read,
2. You will read,
- 3..He will read,

- We will read,
- You will read,
- They will read,

### *Zukunft II*

1. *eck wa lest hebbe,*
2. *du wast lest hebbe,*
3. *hei wat lest hebbe,*

- wi ware lest hebbe,*
- jü ware lest hebbe,*
- sie ware lest hebbe,*

### Future Perfect Tense

1. I will have read
2. You will have read
3. He will have read,

- We will have read,
- You will have read,
- They will have read,

### *Befehlsform*

### Imperative

Les!

Lest!

(You, sg) Read!

(You, pl) Read!

In addition to this short language lesson from Tarutino, there are also some typical twists and turns in Paris. We also had the salutation forms like: *Ju*—you; *Jug*—yours; *Jü*—You; *dat on det*—that and this; *jant*—that; *jantma*—back then.

The articles *der*—*die*—*das* were changed to *de*—*dei*—*dat*; for example, *de Votteo* (the father), *dei Motto* (the mother), *dat Kind* (the child); the abbreviation or reduction was even easier. There was only the *d'* for all the articles. Let us look at what Swabians and *Plattdeutsch* said among us:

<i>Schwaebisch:</i>	<i>'s Bänkle</i>	<i>'s Steinle</i>	<i>'s Mädle</i>	<i>'s Bäumle</i>
<i>Plattdeutsch:</i>	<i>d' Bänko</i>	<i>d' Steenko</i>	<i>d' Meiko</i>	<i>d' Beemko</i>
<i>Hochdeutsch:</i>	<i>die Bank</i>	<i>der Stein</i>	<i>das Mädchen</i>	<i>der Baum</i>
English:	the bank	the stone	the maiden	the tree

With us everything was different, whether animal names or plant names, names of birds, names of equipment, machines, clothes and food. If you wanted to bring it all together, it would be a small dictionary. It is possible that it may appear in an addendum. We bring some *plattdeutsche* pieces of fellow-countrymen from Paris, which Mr. Alfred Cammann collected years ago.

## Precious Samples from Paris

### Proverbs

01. *Dei Hehler es genau sou schult as dei Stehler.*  
The swindler is as guilty as the thief.
02. *Sou as ma sik bett', sou schlept ma.*  
Where one makes his bed, there is where one sleeps.
03. *Ma mot sik so wit strecho as' Deck reikt.*  
A person can stretch only as far as the ceiling reaches.
04. *Dei dreft' so lang, bedt Maut voll es (oder: bedt Maut ewo jeit).*  
He works at it until the measure is full. (or: the measure overflows.)
05. *D'Eppa fällt ne wit vom Bom. (Der Apfel....)*  
The apple does not fall far from the tree.
06. *Ma mot do Hos esto scheito, eb ma en et.*  
One has to first shoot the rabbit before he is able to eat it.
07. *Ma mot en jedem Dep a Hus hebo.*  
You have to have a house in every village. (to be able to stop there, to have assistance.)
08. *Chottes meijalo maualo langsam, ebo trefflich sein.*  
God's mills grind slowly, but exceedingly fine.
09. *Steck dem andero keno Struß a!*  
Do not pin a bouquet on someone else! (which means: do not praise a person unnecessarily so that he does not become arrogant.)
10. *A schlecht Wif kann undo Schet meijo wedrocho, as a Mann met-am Wocho eibringt.*

A bad woman can carry away more under the apron than what a man brings in with a wagon.

About the First Telephone in Bessarabia. A story of the grandfather.

*Hin on he veteldo dei Lüüd, dat nemojo lang duro wat, da wat ma mat iserno Tungo redo. Oft het ma drewo lacht on chlaubt, dat sou wat ne jewo kann. Eines Tages we Telefon hijo: Telefonmasto, Telefondraugt on dei Apporarat tom Reden. Derch os Dep Paris jin dat Telefon derch, ebo derch Katzbach ewo do Bach no ne.*

Now and then the people talked, and it has not been that long, what was told with an untiring tongue. One often laughs and believes the thing that you nor anyone else can. One day, the telephone was here: Telephone poles, telephone wire to be able to speak on the apparatus. The telephone came as far as Paris, but not yet over the brook to Katzbach.

*Eines Tages fehd a Mann vo Katzbach no Leipzig, dat a chod En von Katzbach af we, ebo ouk a Telefon had. As dei Mann nu en Leipzig we, we hei sie Wif spreiko. Sou reip hei en Paris a. Sio Wif en Katzbach we benachrichtig, on sou kem sei no Paris en t'Kanzlei. Dei Schriwo (Gemeindesekretär) steld dei Verbindung mat Leipzig he on bedt dat Wif, nu mat ehrem Mann to reden. Dat Wif had noch nie a Telefon seiyo on damit redt. Damals we dei Telefonkasto no ziemlich chroust. As dat Wif nu dei Stemm ve ehrem Mann hed (hört), kin sie en chout erkenno. Dat Wif kem utem Stauno ne ruto. Sei keik emo an de chrousto Kasto. Met es (mit eins) lechde sie de Hörer ob de Kasto on reip lut ut ob schwäbisch: "Ach Mann, Jakoble, bischt Du do em Kaschto dren?"*

One day, a man drove from Katzbach to Leipzig, **dat a chod En von Katzbach af we, ebo ouk a Telefon had.** As the man was in Leipzig, he wanted to speak to his wife. So he contacted Paris. His wife was notified in Katzbach and so she came to the town council in Paris. The clerk made the connection with Leipzig and asked the women to speak with her husband. The woman had never seen a telephone let alone talk on one. The telephone box was quite large. When the woman heard the voice of her husband, she immediately recognized him. The woman was astonished. She kept staring at the big box. With a laugh she said in Schwäbisch, in the presence of those listening, "My goodness, Jacob, are you inside the box?"

We also have a *Plattdeutsch* poet in the German Democratic Republic (from Paris) who occasionally sends a poem or a letter in our mother tongue. He introduces himself, and from his poem "*Dei oll Heimat*" we take the first and the last verse as space allows. He will need to forgive us because its many verses had to be shortened.

Poem by Willy Krüger (born 1931), son of Simon Krüger (blacksmith) and Martha née Allmer:

**The Old Homeland!**

*Eck wah ju amat vetello det on dat,  
ut de ollo Heimat ob platt.  
Wat hebbo sick ouk os Lüüd dauo queiat,*

*on dei Kinno hebbo ouk ne veia speiat.  
Em Frehjauo het dat afongo,  
on em Havst het dat obheet.*

*It started early in Spring,  
It ended with the harvest.*

*Emmo es dauo veia sungo woro,  
Heimatleedo senn no bet hid en os Herz (Ohro) komo.  
Alles kann ma hijo ne seggo, dat blewt heistellt,  
wat eck uto Heimat hebb no ne vetellt,  
alle wero chlecklich on tfredo.  
Bed dei Lüd wat vü de Omsiedlung hedo,  
Do häd keen stramm Tid vü os afongo.  
On Ditschland häd os do opnohmo,  
hid senn os Lüd en alle Welt vestreckt,  
derch Reeso on schriewo senn's a besko dechto reckt.  
Ji allo, wennch amat wello an os Heimat denko,  
scha dei Jedanko ouk to mi hei lenko.*

Jug Willi Kreecho ut Paris, 3. März 1985

Finally, we bring some Low German pieces as we told the children in order to calm them down; there are even more of them.

*Hopp, Hopp Rosepoppe,  
he ma es met weenen op,  
bruckst die ne gräme,  
eck wa die annehmo.*

*Giddy-up, giddy-up horsey dolly,*

*Muschkatko, Muschkatko,  
wouo west Du da?  
Bi Grousmottoro.  
Wat detst da douo?  
A Pättko Melk utdrinko.  
Wouo hest Pättko lauto?  
Uno de Desch stellt.  
Wouo hest Leipako lauto?  
Ena Pet schmeito.  
Wou meikt?  
Plum, Plum, Plum!*

*Little kitten, little kitten,  
Where were you?  
With Grandmother,  
What did you do there?*

*Mecha, Zecha, Zejebock,  
laut de strammo Voga flego,  
Voga schat mi Strou bringo,  
Strou we'k dem Neesko gewo,  
Neesko scha mi Mekl gewo,  
Melk we'k dem Schwio gewo,  
Schwio scha mi Speck gewo,  
Speck we'k dem Schousto gewo,  
Schoutsto scha mi Schou mauko,*

*Schou we'k dem Paupo gewo,  
Paup' scha mi triggo, as a run Kliggo.*

*Meiko, wenn du friggo west,  
scheck di detou!  
Nemm die anno Schoustojong,  
die meckt die Schlappo on Schouh.*

(The poem still had many professions, all of which were listed—but none appealed to the girl; she was left alone!)

Add to that the poem “Bresch am En,…” which, unfortunately, has been lost; Ilse Braumann-Allmer was able to get the beginning together. Presumably, a relative of hers once wrote it at home. Such pieces, sayings of this and that kind, were many in the village.

*Bresch am En,  
Bocha met de Flint,  
Bade, het ano Hackesteia,  
Paua denkt, es ne feia,  
Franz set' em Koof,  
Suckut denkt, es a Woof,  
Bronsk' het a Bia,  
Allmer denkt, es an Ia.*

In conclusion, a dialogue in our mother tongue which Ilse and Arthur presented at the Third Homeland Gathering on 9 June, 1984, in Ludwigsburg. As much joy as it was at that time for everyone, may it bring as much joy to all who can still read and understand it—our *plattdeutsch* language, the mother language of our people (*os plattdütsch Sprauk, os lew Moddosprauk*)!

### Do You Still Recall?

- A: Wenn eck sou treg denk an os oll Heimat, fällt mi doch mancht ei.  
**When I think back about our old homeland, many things come to mind.**
- I: Sou heit mit ouk, eck kann en deso koto Tid go ne alles seggo.  
**The same with me today, I can hardly mention everything about it.**
- A: Na, da nemf halt bloß einig Sacho, dei os grod eifalle senn...  
**Well, how about mentioning just one thing which right now comes to mind...**
- I: Da denk eck grod anno Schinoflouwa, wat het ma sik daou plogt: Aflodo, de Wogo emschmito, utnanostrego, met de Isofok odo met de Holtfoko emdräge. On wenn alles tschek we, da het ma d'Strou obschobero mest, ganz genau, sou as strigat; manchma het me bi Nobes de *Stoubowa* haualo mest; na, dat we sou wat!...

A: On d’Pötzmeia drejo, Kaff fotdroga, Koon einmauko, on no annet Abido—dat we doch recht schwauo. Denau es ma en d’ Bed fallo on het schlaupo as an Ratt.

I: Denkst ouk no dra, wo dat we bim Popscho blodero? Wenn feia Lüd toup wero, ma het vetellt on ouk sungo.

A: Ja, ja, wenn da o Jong up es anno rodo Kolbo funno het, da desdo siem Meiko anno Pos jewo—ha, dat we da vielleicht a Jelächter!

I: An Pingsto hebo d-Meikes emma a bes Angst hat, ep ne jemand hemalek ano Wech lecht het, bi anno Jong hei, wo ma denkt het, dat es an Liebschaft. Da hebbo d’Lüd ebo keiko on ouk *tuschelt!*

A: On wenn a jung Kerl stramm atreckt derch Straut jing, on d’Metz a bes opo Sied drogt het, da het ma doch gleich secht: “D’Metz opo Sied, sein Ollsch es ne wit”—Da we ouk sou!

I: On wenn d’Jonges de Meikes Branduscho seikt on jewt hebbo, da het ma sik ouk sint denkt: Na, bi deso bedo stemmt ouk ne alles.

A: Stramm wet ouk, wenn d’junge Lüd nau de Ernt “stoppalo” desdo, ve allem ennon Wijohef on enno Bastano; dauo het ma no manch chot Truwo odo Harbuso funno. Dei dest ma da behollo on eito.

I: On wenn endlich nau de Abed d’Weik remmo we, da het ma alles reggo maukt, da Hof on d’Straut fegt, frescho Sand streggt on we emmo frouh, wenn ma seggo kin: “Eck ben tschek met mino Abid!”

*And when the work week finally came to an end, things were all put in order, the yard and the path was swept, fresh sand was spread on where one always drove, so that one was able to say: “Now I am finished with my work!”*

A: Enno Schoua het’ ouk manch Geschehto jewt, ewo dei ma hit no lacho kann. A Lehro, dei stak roukt het, het es a Meiko ut sino Klass atroffo, we’s em Stall hemalek roukt het; bei het sou douo, as wenn et ne seio had. De andere Dach hetto em Unterricht op es seggt! “Na, Meike, bi di hat’ ouk schon: Herr führe mich nicht in Versuchung!” Sei we ebbo ne opo Mund falle on het treg jewt: “Und bei Ihnen, Herr Lehrer, muß es heißen: “Erlöse mich von

dem Übel!” Dat jew a Jelächter! Ebbo dei Lehrer het gout verstaou on het’ dat Meiko ne strauft; det we ve em chrod d’rechtig Predigt!

I: Ek kin ouk no mancht vetello, wat mi mio Votto alles secht het, wenn eck as Kind bi em op em Schlepp seito hebb. Oft heb eck ouk tou het, wenn’s em Tscheppko toup seito on ut erem Lewo vetellt hebbo. Ja, wat we dat frijo doch so stramm eno oso ollo Heimat! Ob eno Kamraudschaft, bim Eggospeialo an Oustero, odo bim Danzo am Pfingstboom—twek einfach alles herrlich! On wenn ma toup we on het Leedo sungo, Owens nau de Abid, ach, dat we a Erlebnis!

A: Ja, Ilse, fi kinno no lang vetelle ve allem, wat os Herz voll es an Erinnerungo an frijo; leider es dei Tid to koot. Trotzdem kenn’f seggo. Thett os allo Fred maukt, on anno Oko Wijo heff ouk vedeent. Vielleicht jewt denau anno “Mogritsch”—anno Drink op os good *Paris!* Also Lüd, a Jouch op os leew Heimatdeep!

In the following article by Emil Brickmann “The Saving Name” (*Der rettende Name*), Paris is meant, also fits for many others who are not named. Our mother tongue, too, has often been a great help in the times of need during those terrible years.

## **Saving of the Homeland Name**

### **The Experience of a Young Soldier during World War Two**

Gerhard was based in Paris before the Resettlement. He had started his apprenticeship with a fork-maker in the same place for fifteen years after he finished elementary school. He often came with his craft master to the Arzis Market and got to know the villages on the Kogálnik [River]. After the Resettlement, Gerhard was soon drafted into the armed forces and transferred to Russia, where he was in Front duty until the spring of 1944. When the Allies landed in

Normandy in June of 1944, his unit was moved to the West. As soon as they had been unloaded at a train station near Paris, they heard that the German Front had been broken through in Normandy and that the enemy was already approaching Paris. When they reached Paris the next day, Gerhard's unit was also involved in the street fights. He came to know that the name of that other Paris was to save his life once again.

The next day, the city was evacuated by the German troops, and Gerhard's unit began the retreat to the east. The enemy was always on their heels, and a life or death retreat began. They crossed the Brier Plain and reached the Aube [River] Valley. Being dead-tired, they wanted to overnight in the next city and Gerhard did not trust his eyes. They were in Arcis, in the middle of France. A homeland name! And when they marched on to Troyes the next morning, they came through Brienne. Should Gerhard really have been mistaken? Had he landed at the Kogálnik? But the river here was the Aube! Shortly before Troyes, they encountered enemy troops that opened fire on them. Gerhard and his comrades no longer had much ammunition left, as the supply had completely run out, and so soon everything was decided. What was not wounded or killed in action was captured by the French units. With the upper body bared, everyone had to take a step forward, and now the blood group tattoos on the upper arm were searched out. The soldiers of the Waffen-SS were put to the side and it was not known what was going to happen to them. Unfortunately, Gerhard had also been tattooed in the Resettlement camp at the time of naturalization and was put to the side, although he was small in shape and had never served with the Waffen-SS. Now this had happened to him and he believed that his end had come. But then a French officer came to them and checked their pay books again. When he looked through Gerhard's pay book, he lingered for a while, looked at Gerhard from top to bottom, as if he doubted that this little man might have been with the SS and asked Gerhard: "Are you really from Paris?" Gerhard could say yes. "So please go to the other side." Overwhelmed by the sudden turn of his fate, Gerhard ran to his comrades. With them, he was sent to a prisoner-of-war camp with the Americans, where he remained until 1947 and was then released to the American Zone with his relatives.

So the name of his hometown saved his life. Gerhard, however, will be grateful to the French officer throughout his life and will never forget him.

[Translation Ends]

## Pages yet to be Translated

### Contents

Our Resettlement to Germany	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	000
Resettlement of the Bessarabian Germans — Resettlement of Paris People — Onward Journey to Germany — The Time in Camp — Settlement									
Our Flight out of the East in 1945	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	000
Escape — Expulsion — Deportation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	000
Our Homeland Reunions (1976 – 1980 – 1984 – 1986)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	000
Paris then and today	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	000
Memories about Paris	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	000
This is Paris	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	000
Supplement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	000