PART 2

Second Wave

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CHAPTER 3

Saint Petersburg

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Tatars arrived in Saint Petersburg amongst the first migrants in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The new Russian capital, founded by Emperor Peter I in 1703 by the Neva River, needed large numbers of builders. For the Peter and Paul Fortress and other works, soldiers and prisoners of war were drafted. Both groups included Muslims, amongst others Turks who had been captured during the Azov campaigns in 1695–96 and sent in April 1704 from the Schlüsselburg (Nöteborg) fortress. Before them Tatars and Bashkirs already worked in the fortress and Tatars participated in the building of the Kronwerk (Kronverk), the ground fortification supporting it. Soon the new city attracted peasants and townspeople from the provinces, including Kazan and other regions with large Muslim populations. Tatar Muslims were preferred over baptised Tatars and in 1717 the numbers of non-Christian noblemen and Tatars rose with 500 per month; supposedly around 4,000 Muslims lived in the cosmopolitan city (Kosheleva 2004: 89).

In the imperial capital, national and international questions were resolved on different levels of the state administration, including issues concerning Tatars and Muslims. Embassies from other countries visited regularly, amongst others the Crimean Tatar and Khiva Khanates and Bukhara Emirate. With the embassies came also Tatars who held high positions, but they remained only for a certain period. The embassies from Crimea ended in 1783 with Russia conquering the khanate, but the Emirs of Bukhara and the Khans of Khiva continued visiting into the early twentieth century. Even Siberian Tatars, who were under Russian rule, sent deputies to Saint Petersburg when they had complaints or requests. The Swedish traveller Johan Peter Falck mentions that in 1762 the Barabin Tatars in the southern Siberian steppe sent a deputy to a law commission in the capital, but could not find a suitable candidate amongst themselves and chose a mulla from Tara instead. After his successful visit every district received two more administrative positions in addition to a superintendent, to keep order in the unruly Barabin steppe (Falk 1786: III, 537).

Tatars and Bashkirs were also amongst the first builders on the island Kotlin and its fortress Kronstadt in the Gulf of Finland. In the mid–eighteenth century a small Tatar community existed on the island, including retired sailors and tradespeople. A street was called after the common Tatar surname Saidash(ev) and mentioned already in 1740. Within the city the Tatar *sloboda* or

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settlement, which stretched from the Kronwerk to the Petersburg Island, opposite the Peter and Paul Fortress, appeared as the first compact Tatar-Muslim quarters. Here lived Tatar soldiers and workmen who were sent for temporary construction work. Despite the difficult conditions, Tatars created comfort in their homes. A Hanoverian resident at the Russian court, Friedrich Christian Weber (returned to Germany in 1719), noted that near the Tatar market lived Tatars, Turks, Kalmyks and others, who kept so elegant furnishings that "one could hardly find anything like it in Rome or Paris" (Bespyatykh 1991: 52). The typical house was a hut with a stove and a porch, often with a bathhouse which continued to exist even after 1720, when private houses were forbidden to have baths. Some Tatars, however, lived in unheated dugouts. A.I. Bogdanov, who in 1779 wrote about the early history of Saint Petersburg (from its founding until the 1750s), noted that there had been Tatar *yurts* (tents) opposite the fortress and the street was called "Tatar Street".

In the so-called Tatar Market (also "Tatar Camp") in the heart of the Tatar settlement near the Kronwerk, the modern Sytnyi rynok, Tatars were engaged in petty trade during the first half of the eighteenth century. Here was a kind of sprawling flea market where one could buy used clothing, both European and Asian, old ropes and other things necessary in everyday life (Bespyatykh 1991: 113). The Tatar settlement and the market appear for the first time on maps in 1716 and continue to do so into the 1720s, but later the names disappear due to the fact that the inhabitants were moved to another location in 1722. In the 1770s, Great and Small Tatar Streets were renamed as Great and Small Nikolskaya Streets. Only "Tatar Lane" in the previous Tatar settlement on Petersburg Island has kept its name since 1798; here in fact few Tatars remained already by the end of the century (Obrazcov 1999: 104).

FIGURE 3.1 *The Tatar Lane, known since 1798, in a former Tatar neighbourhood in the historical centre, Petrogradskaya storona, of Saint Petersburg*
PHOTO: RENAT BEKKIN, 2010

The majority of the Tatars who came to Saint Petersburg in the first period were from the Province of Kazan. Until the mid–nineteenth century, Muslims in the capital were mostly men serving in the army, yet seldom officers. Later most of the Tatar population was engaged in petty trade and services, even with industrialisation and economic change, although no large Tatar companies are documented. A famous folkloric figure in the city during the nineteenth and early twentieth century became the roaming Tatar seller who was called "prince", sold "red things" and shouted in the courtyards *"Halat, halat!"* (clothes, robes) (see Grigor'ev 2005: 251; Klyucheva 1997: 111, 206; Obolenskiy 1988: 13). Tatars were also house caretakers with many important functions such as registration of new inhabitants and maintenance; and they replaced after 1900 the Tverians who traditionally held these positions. Tatars worked in transport, competing successfully with Russians from the central provinces, and some Tatars held lower servant positions in the imperial Winter Palace.

Waiters in restaurants were mostly Kasimov Tatars from Ryazan and Tambov Provinces, who replaced the Kazan Tatar majority in the capital by the mid–nineteenth century. All luxury restaurants had Tatars amongst their waiters, for example Astoria and Grand Hotel Europa. Tatars served also in restaurants, founded by migrants from other provinces. By the turn of the century there were four: Fayzulla Karamyshev's restaurant on Nevski Prospekt (the main street); Krestovskiy Garden owned by Habibulla Yalyshev; Samarkand owned by Rahmatulla Khalitov; and Donon, Betan and Tatars, whose co-owners, Izatulla Brondukov and Ibrahim Tankacheev, had been waiters. Tatars owned buffets along the Baltic, Warsaw, Nikolaev and Tsarskoe Selo railway lines and in several other towns throughout the country, which amazed foreign travellers to Russia, who saw in them and the waiters "descendants of Genghis Khan" (Restorannoe delo 1913: 8; for Donon, see Baryshnikov 2003: 5, 38–39).

The Kasimov Tatars organised a kind of ethnic trade union in 1867, Bekbulatov Society for Mutual Charity, which implemented a strict discipline amongst its members. Late payers, immoral lifestyle or breaking the law was punished and serious offenders excluded. The members supported each other with information and job offers, and if they failed in this, they had to pay a fine of 3 roubles. The union had a branch in the town of Kasimov and could function without the authorities troubling them. The founder was Habibulla Bekbulatov, who in the 1860s initiated a project to publish Tatar periodicals in Saint Petersburg. Publication permission was refused, as was his next idea in the 1870s, a Tatar newspaper called *Daftyar muzhdavar* (News Collection) (Zaycev 2006: 112–114).[1]

1 Russian State Historical Archive, РГИА, Ф. 821. Оп. 8, Д. 1180; Устав Бекбулатовского общества взаимной благотворительности касимовских татар: [Утв. 2 янв. 1867 г.]. – Спб, 1882, pp. 6–7.

Bekbulatov was successful in another important task, however, and in 1870 a second Muslim congregation was established with the informal name Kasimov. It was triggered by the official confirmation in 1869 of the civil *akhun* (teacher) in Saint Petersburg, Muhammed-Shakir Yunusov, who represented the interests of the so-called Bukharans, wealthy merchants mostly from southern Siberia. The majority of the Kasimov Tatars were not satisfied, and Bekbulatov started a correspondence with the authorities to get a second imam. The Kasimov Tatars committed to support him, and Ataulla Bayazitov was proposed as a candidate. After receiving the necessary documents from Ufa, where the headquarters of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly were located since 1802,[2] the Kasimov Tatars insisted that they should have their own congregation. Four hundred persons signed the petition and after some hesitation the Ministry of Internal Affairs accepted. Bayazitov remained imam in Saint Petersburg for more than forty years.

Meanwhile, the second largest group of Tatars, Mishars from Nizhny Novgorod Province, grouped around the oldest congregation, founded in 1822. Mishar Tatars from the Sergach area south of Nizhny Novgorod moved to Saint Petersburg after the middle of the nineteenth century and some continued onwards to Finland and the Baltic countries after the 1860s, but several kept up trade in the capital, working also as pedlars in nearby popular summer tourist towns like, Zelenogorsk (Terijoki) and Roshchino (Raivola) on the Karelian Isthmus. In the second half of the nineteenth century, their congregation was located in the Five Corners quarters in Saint Petersburg, where the Mishars lived and kept a prayer room (earlier, prayers were held in private flats), tea shops and companies engaged in the transportation of heavy goods. Around Shcherbakov Alley a veritable Tatar town grew up with shops, food kitchens and tea houses, and even a school. The journal *Our Food* noted in 1893 that the taverns were visited mostly by Tatar sellers of clothes, handkerchiefs and Kazan soap, drivers and carriers. There were no signs outside, but the Tatars knew the taverns well. When entering, the visitor was first impressed by the dirt. The room was small with one table covered with a cloth, and to the left another room was reserved for women only, who ate separately from the men. The taverns were places where one went for a quick meal and they served horse meat dumplings, one portion consisting of 25 pieces in broth; *salma*,

2 The *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe duhovnoe sobranie* (Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly) was founded on orders of Catherine II in 1788, opened in Ufa in 1789 and operated in Orenburg 1796–1802, after which it moved back to Ufa. The assembly was a state administrative unit, responsible for the Muslims in the Volga-Ural region, Siberia and parts of Central Asia, including the Kazakh steppe.

which the Russians recognised as ordinary dumplings; and noodles in broth (Nasha pishcha 1893: 15).

Religious Life

Several Muslim prayer rooms were present in Saint Petersburg during the nineteenth century. When the first civil congregation was founded in 1822, its activities were located in the premises where the imam lived. Around 1900, most of the members in the first congregation were Nizhny Novgorod Mishars and Bukharans. The second congregation, also based on ethnic principles, was the one founded in 1870 by the Kasimov Tatars. The army and Imperial Guard had its own congregation, which was abolished in 1896. From it a third congregation evolved, which functioned for ten years before it was officially accepted in 1906. The members were both military men and Muslims from other professions; ethnicity was not important. A fourth congregation appeared after an initiative of the Muslim Charitable Society in Saint Petersburg. The need to establish a new congregation appeared due to the fact that a large part of the Muslims who lived or worked around Spasskaya district and other parts of the capital, especially around the Novo-Aleksandrovsky market, needed a place for worship. Progressive, liberal-minded Muslims also wanted to have a separate congregation. All congregations rented facilities in different parts of the city. A. Bakhtiarov, a famous observer of Saint Petersburg life, described a Muslim prayer at the end of the nineteenth century:

> One of the biggest Tatar prayer rooms in Saint Petersburg is placed over a tavern – a fact which causes an involuntary smile. The Tatars themselves are conscious about this unpleasant neighbourhood, but put up with the inconvenience, because it is difficult to find a large space for a comparatively inexpensive price, which they pay here. Every Friday at noon 300–500 Tatars gather in the prayer room. […] Dressed in festive costumes, the Tatars pass the tavern and go up to the prayer room. Some of them wear silk, others colourful robes, and on the head a white turban. Upstairs on the landing they take off their galoshes or boots and enter. The prayer room is a large hall with a low ceiling, and carpets on the floor! In the front, facing south, is a table covered with a green cloth. Here lies the Al-Quran [Koran], the holy book of the Muslims. Every Tatar who enters brings with him a mat which he spreads on the floor and sits down on. From the tavern slight sounds drift into the prayer room… The mulla wears snow-white, a turban and a colourful silk robe. Those who do not carry turbans have caps. Women are

> absolutely forbidden to enter, but outsiders, including Russians, are allowed. […] The Tatars begin to disperse when the prayer is over. At the entrance a couple of Tatar boys are begging in a whiny voice, asking the faithful for alms. Richer Tatars willingly oblige them.
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> BAKHTIAROV 1895: 25–27

Tatar Mosque

The first documented effort to build a mosque in Saint Petersburg dates from 1798, when around five hundred Muslim military men appealed to Emperor Paul I, asking for a house of worship and a cemetery. The petition was written by retired second lieutenant Shagi-Ahmed Tefkilev. Probably the mosque was planned to be built on the embankment of the Fontanka River, at the place where the hotel Azimuth is located today, but the proposal was rejected. Muslims were allowed to gather in the Tauride and later in the Mikhailovsky Palace. During religious festivities, like Uraza Bayram (the Feast of Breaking the Fast) and Kurban Bayram (the Feast of the Sacrifice), Muslims rented premises in the city centre. The question of the mosque was also later taken up repeatedly. In 1861 the imam of the civil congregation in Saint Petersburg, Muhammed-Alim Khantemirov (in office 1856–1869), sent a petition to the governor-general with the request to build the first mosque in the capital. Khantemirov suggested a few places in the city centre, where he thought it would be suitable to place the mosque. The military governor-general P.V. Golenishchev-Kutuzov supported Khantemirov and thought the best location was near a bridge in what is now Matisov; on the bridge itself was located a "workhouse", in actuality a prison, and since the 1840s a mental asylum. It is not clear whether the authorities planned to turn the prison into a mosque or grant the congregation land nearby.

The Tatars did not have much choice in the crowded capital, and as the authorities did not object, it remained only to receive support from the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. From this organisation, which was expected to support the mosque, the Muslims in Saint Petersburg met with opposition. According to the official opinion of the Assembly, the community had limited financial possibilities, but the refusal was caused by a conflict between the chairman Abdulvahid Suleymanov and Khantemirov. The disagreement originated from the time when the first mentioned was imam and the father of the second *muezzin* (prayer caller) of the civil congregation in Saint Petersburg. Thus personal ambitions and misapprehensions amongst the Muslims themselves hindered the mosque project. As a

consequence, the authorities viewed the next two efforts by the Muslim religious leaders to raise funds and write petitions for a mosque in 1867 and 1881 with suspicion; as a comparison, in 1869 Jews received the right to build a synagogue in Saint Petersburg.

Only in the new century did the mosque question move forward. In 1906 the Committe for Building a Cathedral Mosque was registered. In the committee, headed by Abdul-Aziz Davletshin, participated several military men, including a cavalry general and general-major, state officials, a barrister, traders and house owners, as well as two *akhuns* (imams), Muhammed-Zarif Yunusov (son of Muhammed-Shakir Yunusov) and Ataulla Bayazitov. The final version of the project became a kind of synthesis of proposals by N.V. Vasil'ev, who created the artistic details and worked with the civil engineer S.S. Krichinsky, a Polish-Lithuanian Tatar who was responsible for the construction, and the academic A.I. von Gogen, an architect at the Imperial Court. On 3 February 1910, a ceremony was organised for laying the first stone, timed to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Emir of Bukhara's accession to the throne. The emir was the main sponsor of the mosque and with his assistance and financial aid, land was acquired for the building in the old city centre. During the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty on 21 February 1913, the mosque was opened officially, although final works were completed only in April 1920.

FIGURE 3.2 *The mosque of Saint Petersburg on a postcard from the mid-1910s*
COURTESY NATIONAL LIBRARY OF RUSSIA

With the Civil War starting in 1918, the Tatar community in Saint Petersburg was seriously reduced. Several Tatars immigrated to Finland or through Finland to other countries such as Germany and Turkey, or settled in the vicinity of Saint Petersburg on the Finnish side of the border, waiting to return. Some went back to their home villages. Yet after the war the number of Tatars in the city, called Petrograd during the First World War, returned to the previous figures. The newcomers came from a different cultural and educational background than the earlier officials, military men and traders, who often knew each other and originated from the same region or even the same village. In the beginning of the 1920s, a few thousand Tatars fled because of famine from the Volga region to Petrograd, including many children. For these children several houses were organised, where they were educated in an anti-religious spirit.

Despite the Soviet government's attempts to put obstacles before Muslims, the mosque continued to function as a religious centre in the 1920s. The number of attendants, however, diminished every year. The Soviet Union did not accept religion and used different methods to suppress religious life, from administrative pressure to arrests. On 15 February 1931 the imams Yakub Khalikov and Kamaletdin Basyrov as well as members of the congregational council were taken away from the mosque and sentenced to labour camps for ten years. In 1933 the cellar of the mosque was given to a public catering trust. An oven was installed and smoke penetrated into the mosque. From the mid-1930s the premises of the mosque were used for storage of fruits and vegetables and by a carpenter trust dealing with funerals. In 1937 the mosque was blacklisted for not paying tax and rent and in 1940 the Leningrad City Council of Worker Deputies accepted a declaration for its closure. The building was shut down under the pretext of a failed roof repair. The congregation council protested against the decision with the argument that the repair was ready up to 70 per cent, but there was no reversal. In 1941 valuable items were transferred to the Museum of History of Religions. The building itself was expected to be renovated and used as a cultural institution. For Friday prayers, Muslims started to gather in the Tatar section of Novo-Volkovo Cemetery.

Immediately after the end of the Second World War, Muslims turned to the municipality with an application for registration of the community. They also wanted to confirm the members of their council, the "Twenty", and asked for permission to build a prayer house near Novo-Volkovo Cemetery with their own funds, or use an empty Polish chapel. Until 1949 the mosque was used as a warehouse by the company Lengorzdrav, when the director of the Hermitage Museum asked the building to be given to the museum for its Central Asia collections. The museum did not come to use it and the building remained a warehouse. Only in 1956 did the authorities return the mosque to the Muslims. A possible explanation to this sudden reversal of decision came from the visit of the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, who wished to visit the mosque

FIGURE 3.3 *Old women gathered for Friday prayer in the Muslim part of Novo-Volkovo Cemetery, unofficially called the Tatar Cemetery*
PHOTO: D.I. ISHAKOV, 1954; COURTESY STATE MUSEUM FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS, SAINT PETERSBURG

and establish friendly relations with the Muslims in the Soviet Union. The members of the congregation cleaned out the premises and redecorated the interior on Sundays and holidays. They also brought carpets as gifts. Even many years later during difficult periods, old Tatars, who made up the majority of the congregation, bought carpets especially to be given to the mosque after their deaths. The big Saint Petersburg Mosque is popularly called the "Tatar mosque".

Tatar Cemetery

One of the first places where Muslims were buried in the beginning of the eighteenth century was located outside the historical part of Saint Petersburg between the Neva and Bolshaya Nevka Rivers. As noted before, the first initiative for a Muslim cemetery came from Shagi-Ahmet Tefkilev in 1798. He pointed out that the appropriate place for Muslim burials was near the village of Volkova, where Turkish prisoners of war from the times of Empress Catherine II were already buried. This place was called the "Turkish Cemetery".[3] There was

3 Russian State Historical Archive, По прошению Шаги-Ахмета Тефкилева о молитвенном доме и отведении места для кладбища. РГИА. Ф. 1374. Оп. 2. Д. 1112 and ibid., Л. 3–30б.

no reaction from the authorities until 1826, when in response to a request by the military *akhun* of the Imperial Guard, permission was granted by the Emperor Nicholas I, allowing a Muslim cemetery to be created on lands which belonged to peasants from the village of Volkova. As a result, in the same year a plot of two *desyatina* (around 2.2 hectares) at the embankment of the Volkovka River was allocated to the cemetery, more than three kilometres from the city. Originally it was meant for military burials, but also civil Sunni Muslims were buried there.

In 1831 a cholera epidemic ravaged and a special cholera section was installed close to the Muslim graveyard. The victims of the next epidemic in 1848 were also brought there, as well as persons who had died without receiving absolution by the Orthodox Church. On many maps from the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century the Muslim cemetery is called "Tatar Cemetery", due to the fact that Tatars made up the majority of the Muslims in the city. This did not, however, prevent other Sunni Muslims from being buried there; Shia Muslims were buried in a Persian graveyard established in 1843 nearby. Today the Tatar cemetery consists literally of several layers of burials. As early as in 1877, according to the military *akhun* Hamidulla Khalitov, there was no more space in the cemetery. To solve this problem, the Muslims received in the 1870s an additional five *desyatina* of land (around 5.45 hectares) at Preobrazhenskoe Cemetery along the Nikolaevskaya railway, about ten kilometres from the city near the station of Obukhovo. No burials were made, as the cemetery had an established fee and, according to Muslim tradition, burials should be free.

The question was settled only in 1909. Muslim cemeteries are usually treated by Muslims as *waqf*, a charity property which is donated to the community by a patron or the state and cannot be transferred. Fatima Bayrasheva, following the will of her husband Ataulla Bayrashev, a merchant who ran various kinds of restaurants, issued a donation document in which she amongst other things allocated funds to buy land for the needs of the Muslim community in the village of Volkova. Support for the cemetery came also from the Muslim Charitable Society in Saint Petersburg and over time the Tatar cemetery became a full-fledged *waqf*.

In the first years after the opening of the Tatar cemetery the deceased were buried without memorials. Records were not kept and knowledge remained with family, friends and the graveyard watchmen. City Tatars had no tradition of visiting the cemetery, and also later graves are in a poor condition. During Soviet times unkept graves were recycled, and today one can observe several stones from earlier periods, stating the names of their new "owners". After the regime change in 1917, the cemetery continued to be used by Tatars and other Muslims, but during the Soviet period the number of atheists increased. They

carried Muslim family names and certain Muslim rites were kept, for instance in most cases the dead were buried in a shroud and not in a coffin.

After the closure of the mosque, the Muslims in the city – renamed Leningrad and deprived of its status as capital – returned to the previous situation, having no place for prayer. Novo-Volkovo Cemetery became therefore important and Muslims gathered there for Friday prayers, usually a few hundred persons, at celebrations like Kurban or Uraza Bayram even up to 7,000. During the Siege of Leningrad in the winter of 1941–42, when mortality rates were high, combat engineers blew up the frozen ground with dynamite. In the trenches they laid one layer of corpses and trucks covered them with soil, and then new layers were added. How many layers of dead were buried is unknown. Only in 1956, after the mosque was reopened, did prayers move back to the city. In 1964 the cemetery was closed for new families, and only those whose relatives or loved ones were already buried there, and who possess the necessary connections, can be brought to eternal rest in this cemetery.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the increasing numbers of Muslims in various towns and villages in Petersburg Province, several cemeteries were created. They were often close to Jewish graveyards and their approximate location can therefore be identified. All these cemeteries have disappeared in the suburbs of Saint Petersburg and in the modern Leningrad region. Until the mid-twentieth century, there were Muslim cemeteries in Lyuban (from the beginning of the eighteenth century), Kronstadt (from the mid–1800s), Tsarskoe Selo (from the 1820s), Gatchina (from 1851), Pavlovsk (from the end of the nineteenth century), Luga and Peterhof (both from the beginning of the 1900s), Tosno (from 1905), Novaya Ladoga (from 1906), Vyborg (from 1911) and Zelenogorsk (from 1916).

Horse Slaughter

The main meat dish amongst Tatars in Saint Petersburg consisted of horse. Tatar merchants soon saw future prospects in the new market and started opening slaughterhouses, which could answer to the needs of Tatar consumers. One of the first butcheries was located on Krestovsky Island, where during the second half of the eighteenth century the marshy soil was drained through channels. This island area consisted of several small islands, and on one of these Tatars slaughtered horses in accordance with Muslim rites until the mid–nineteenth century. The channels were filled by the end of that century, but the name "Tatar Island" continued to be used by the locals. There was also another place on Krestovsky Island related to Tatars, the small river "Tatarka". The other

butcheries were often located close to horse markets, for instance, places which in urban folklore were called "burning fields"; there were three in Saint Petersburg. One began in front of the Novodevichy Convent and ran as far as to the Moscow Gate. In front of the monastery on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays horses were tried, bought and sold for use or slaughter. The nuns in the monastery were dissatisfied with this kind of neighbour, but the horse fair continued until the beginning of the twentieth century. Other places in the urban geography linked with horses are the Summer and Winter Horse Squares and the Horse Square between the Monastyrka River and the railway. Three times a week horses were bought and sold and a fee of five *kopek* was charged per horse from every seller. The places changed during the Soviet times and the last mentioned, for example, now hosts a hospital.

The Tatar butcheries were mostly located in the southern parts of the city or surrounding areas. In March 1875 merchant Abdul-Malek Yakushev and state peasants Abdull-Gazet Kutaev, Abdurahman Abdurazakov and Nigmatulla Kolyushov "on behalf of the Society of Tatars" appealed to the authorities for permission to open a wooden slaughterhouse in the village of Kupchino. Yakushev had owned a butchery in this area, but it was closed because he could not keep the sanitary regulations. Inspectors of the police reported that the stench reached the nearby railway and the Emperor's family had smelled it on the way to the summer palace in Tsarskoe Selo.[4] Yakushev and his companions received permission with the condition that they must follow the plan they had presented, a veterinarian should be present at their cost, a road was to be constructed to the place and the meat was only to be sold for human consumption, not as food for animals.

In the 1880s several meat shops were opened in the Five Corners quarters in Saint Petersburg, each shareholder keeping his own shop. By 1885 the earlier partner of Yakushev, Abdull-Gazet Kutaev, became chairman of the company. The others involved had changed to other businesses, but there was no lack of competition amongst either Tatars or Russians. A Russian, Dmitriy Mosyagin, asked in 1884 for permission to build a new horse slaughterhouse which would provide meat primarily for his factory where many Tatars worked. Permission was not granted for the reason that "Tatars were more experienced in this matter". In 1889 the peasants Mustafin and Safronov applied, but the municipality had other plans. When in 1892 the Kupchino slaughterhouse closed due to poor hygiene, in a corner of the Al'buminnaya Street (now Krasutskogo Street) and Zabalkansky Prospekt (now Moskovskiy Prospekt), the new City Slaughterhouse had already been operating for one month. Equipped with the

4 Central State Historical Archive, ЦГИА СПб. Ф. 256 Оп 5. Д. 17. Л. 15.

latest technology, it was designed to serve consumers by offering quality horse meat, clean and safe. The City Slaughterhouse was shut down only at the end of the 1920s.

Organisations and Cultural Activities

After the first unsuccessful efforts to publish Tatar periodicals in the 1860s and 1870s, by the turn of the century Saint Petersburg had become an important Tatar and Muslim cultural and intellectual centre in addition to Kazan. The first Tatar and Muslim newspaper both in the capital and in all of Russia was called *Nur* (Light) and appeared in the turbulent year 1905, parallel with other socio-political publications, such as the newspapers *Ul'fat* (Unity) and *al-Til'miz* (Student) by Abd al-Rashid Ibrahimov, a famous cultural figure who left Saint Petersburg for Japan in 1908 and later settled in the Ottoman Empire, Germany and, again, Japan. In 1913 three Tatar newspapers were published and *Il* (Country) became very popular. The Muslim faction in the parliament published in 1913–15 the newspaper *Millyat* (Nation). Book publishing had started earlier, and in 1893 Il'yas-murza Boraganskiy opened a private printing press, which became known as Eastern Electric Press, Boraganskogo or Eastern Typography and Binding. In 1914 the merchant Muhammed-Alim Maksutov acquired a press on Serpukhovskaya Street and called it Printing Association 'Amanat' by Maksutov. This press specialised in the production of Tatar books commissioned by the Muslim deputies in the parliament. Between 1914 and 1916 Amanat published 25 books with the total amount of copies rising to 84,113.

Until 1917 two out of four All-Russian Muslim Congresses took place in the capital. The Muslim faction in the State Duma (parliament) represented officially all Muslims in the country and around them gathered many social and political activists, as well as several Tatars. Especially during the first of the two vast turbulences in 1905–07 and 1917, Muslims from all regions participated in political activities and concentrated their ambitions and hopes on the capital. Amongst the public figures were several well-known Tatar military officers and lawyers such as Ali-Oskar Syrtlanov, a parliament deputy and attorney; the major-general Ishaq Islamov, the famous hydrographer, explorer of the polar regions and veteran of the Russian-Japanese War; the major-general and Orientalist Abdul-Aziz Davletshin and the theologian-reformer Musa Bigeev (also Bigi), whom the contemporaries called "the Muslim Luther".

Local issues related to the Tatars in Saint Petersburg were dealt with by the communities themselves. Important organisations were charities, which developed

mainly during the First World War. For instance, funds were collected for wounded soldiers, and in Tsarskoe Selo from 1915 there was a military hospital with a Muslim staff for Muslim patients. The Muslim Charitable Society in Saint Petersburg was the largest organisation and it played an important cultural role, bringing together the Muslims of the capital. The first attempt to establish a society dates back to the early 1890s and the initiative came from a Polish-Lithuanian Tatar, Salih Yanovich-Chainskiy (Polish: Janowicz-Czaiiński), and the major-general sultan Gazi Wali-Khan. The statutes of the society were registered in 1898. Amongst the founders were predominantly Azerbaijani Tatars, that is, Azerbaijani merchants, representatives from noble Turkic families and several Muslim intellectuals.

The aim of the Muslim Charitable Society was to help poor Muslims and support students in entering or completing their education in secondary or higher institutions. Any person who paid at least 500 roubles or committed to contribute a minimum of 50 roubles per year could become a member. There were also associate members who paid at least one rouble per year and collaborators, who personally participated in the society with their work. Honorary patrons were the Bukharan Emirs Seid Abdul-Ahad-khan and Seid Mir-Alim-khan and the Khivan ruler Seid Asfendiyar Bogadur-khan. As honorary trustee of the society was elected the Azerbaijani merchant Z.-A. Tagiev, who contributed with 10,000 roubles. His wife Sonna-khanum Tagieva added 1,000 roubles and was appointed honorary guardian of the society. Chairmen of the society board were the major-general Ali Sheikh-Ali (1898–04), David Smol'skiy (1904–08), Abdul-Aziz Davletshin (1908–09), Ali-Oskar Syrtlanov (1910–12) and Zahid Shamil' (1913–17).

In addition to helping students and orphans, the Muslim Charitable Society paid funeral expenses for poor Muslims. In 1906, after a series of unsuccessful attempts, the Committee for Building a Cathedral Mosque in Saint Petersburg was registered. Several of the society members played an important role in this committee and the process of the mosque construction. The society also assisted victims of earthquakes, those affected by crop failure, veterans of the Russian-Japanese War and others. During the First World War, the society provided active support to Muslim soldiers and their families, before being liquidated in 1918. Certain cultural activities continued, however, and there was, for example, Tatar theatres in Leningrad during the 1920s and 1930s.

Often Tatar communities in Saint Petersburg held on to a traditional way of life. Progressive Tatars adapted to the cosmopolitan city and its values and lifestyle, speaking Russian and other languages without effort, but the majority of the Tatars were traders or waiters and did not learn Russian or spoke it badly. In the metropolis they could stay within their own group and needed only a

FIGURE 3.4 *A Tatar family in Kronstadt in the 1930s*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY R. BEKKIN'S FAMILY ARCHIVE

few basic words to communicate with clients. The only exception was the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars, who had lost their Tatar language and used Russian instead. During the Soviet period Tatars from other parts of the country moved to Leningrad for different reasons and integrated into Russian society to a high degree. They had little or nothing to do with the city before their move and the character of the Tatar community changed. Today all Tatars in Saint Petersburg speak Russian perfectly, several as their mother tongue, but at home some prefer to speak a mixed language of Tatar and Russian. They do not follow Muslim traditions, except at burials and sometimes marriage ceremonies, but keep Tatar celebrations such as Sabantuy (summer plough festival) and prepare Tatar food for holidays.

In the romantic and following periods of cultural life in Saint Petersburg during the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, several hundred Tatars and Tatar descendants participated in the creation of what is usually known as "Russian" culture. They left profound impressions on literature and the arts; amongst them probably the most famous internationally is the writer Ivan Turgenyev. In Saint Petersburg, Tatars contributed to the development of culture and in all kinds of intellectual activities. Amongst the writers, the poet Anna Akhmatova adopted her grandmother's Tatar family name as her pen name; the writer Gavril Derzhavin who also lived in the capital had Tatar roots, and in Soviet times, the world-famous ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev, employed at the Mariinsky Theatre before defecting to the West, came from a Tatar-Bashkir family.

Social Life and Networks

Tatars who moved to Saint Petersburg in the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century in search of better opportunities often came for seasonal work, but their city lifestyle and new experiences flowed back to their villages and towns of origin. Few went to the capital with the intention of staying. The restaurant owners Yalyshev, Karamyshev, Khalitov and others could afford the expensive life and chose to remain, but most others preferred to return home after earning some money. Mostly men migrated, while women and children remained behind in the provinces, where the men sent money and occasionally dropped in themselves. These men came from different social groups, from very poor to rich families, and were both fathers and young men. They worked in the capital for some time securing finances, and then returned home where they used the money to buy mills or started up businesses. Several were successful, but, for instance, the theologian Musa Bigeev could not bring his wife and children from Chistopol to Saint Petersburg for a long time because he lacked funds.

The costly life as well as fear of the consequences for their families in the metropolis caused many Tatar men to leave women and children at home, even when they were absent from their families for several years. The social system was patriarchal and it was easier to control the family in a village or small town, where relatives could keep an eye on the wife and daughters, and there was more security. However, the absence created several problems, ranging from illegitimate children to divorces. When village women accompanied their husbands to Saint Petersburg, they often remained restricted to their homes. If the men were young and unmarried (some were teenagers), they worked for a certain period in the capital and then returned to the village to get married.

FIGURE 3.5 *A skating Tatar in Saint Petersburg in 1916*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION OF R. BEKKIN

Going back to work in the city, they often left their young brides behind. In Saint Petersburg some young Tatars "enjoyed life", drinking alcohol, gambling and smoking tobacco, but others turned to religion, prayed regularly and visited Friday prayers. Some studied the Koran under the guidance of the famous *hafiz* (memoriser of the Koran) Sadreddin Izhberdeev and other teachers. Cases of married men with two wives were rare, but existed. At least one case of a wife living in Saint Petersburg, where she helped her husband, and the other in the village taking care of the children is known from Aktuk (cf. Ahsen Böre 1945: 11–19, 24–25, 47, 66).

In educated, progressive Tatar families women had more freedom and assisted their husbands, having a position more or less equal to those occupied by men. Especially Tatar noble families and the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars held progressive views. One example is the wife of the parliament deputy A.-O. Syrtlanov, Amina, who came from a noble family herself. After her husband's

accidental death she became a well-known public figure before eventually immigrating to Finland. There she was the first to break with the Muslim community when turning to Theosophy, and she eventually moved to France.

Amongst the Tatars buried in Novo-Volkovo Cemetery are several Polish-Lithuanian Tatars. At the end of the nineteenth century they accounted for a small but significant group amongst the Muslims in Saint Petersburg. Some stayed in the city, whereas others remained for a period and returned home or moved to another town. The number of preserved gravestones for Polish-Lithuanian Tatars, buried until the 1920s, do not exceed ten today, but according to records there should be several more which have not survived. In most cases the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars came to Saint Petersburg temporarily as military men, often officers, as students or on other means of business. A charitable society was formed for Polish-Lithuanian Tatar students at the Polytechnic Institute.[5] Some Tatars became famous, such as Salih Yanovich-Chainskiy, a medical doctor, surgeon and philanthropist, who contributed to the development of medicine and to general charity in society. He was a member of the Medical-Philantropic Committee of the Imperial Philanthropic Society and also of the Committee for Building of a Cathedral Mosque in Saint Petersburg. His gravestone is preserved in Novo-Volkovo Cemetery. Yanovich-Chainskiy left behind a rich library which according to his will was donated to the higher female courses at the Nikolaevsky military hospital, where he taught for many years, and to the medical Pirogov Society. He further left considerable sums for maintenance of poor students in the Military Medical Academy and for the mosque.

Epilogue

Saint Petersburg has since its founding in the eighteenth century hosted several groups of Tatars, who have stayed only for a limited period of time or remained to settle down in the metropolis. The main groups who contributed to the cosmopolitan character of the city are Kasimov, Kazan and Nizhny Novgorod Mishar Tatars, as well as Polish-Lithuanian Tatars. They created organisations, newspapers, restaurants and a mosque, and enriched the economic, cultural and religious life in Saint Petersburg for several centuries. Many Mishar Tatars moved to Finland and the Baltic countries before and after 1918, but several stayed in the capital also during Soviet times, integrating more than previous generations into Russian society. However, in the 1930s during the Stalinist oppression and during the Siege of Leningrad in the

5 For more information see: Устав мусульманского кружка при Политехническом институте (1914). Central State Historical Archive, ЦГИА СПб. Ф. 478. Оп. 14. Д. 330.

Second World War, many Tatars emigrated, migrated within the Soviet Union, died or were evacuated or deported. Few who had relations to Tatars in Finland or the Baltic countries remained, but after 1991 some efforts were made to reconnect. In 2010 there were almost 31,000 Tatars in Saint Petersburg and there is no danger of Tatars disappearing from the city. Today Mishar Tatars form the majority and there is lively contact with other Tatars within Russia and internationally.

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