Muslim Tatar Minorities in the Baltic Sea Region

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Preface

The ethnonym "Tatar" is ambiguous and has been used for many ethno-cultural entities in tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire, as well as in neighbouring European countries. Throughout the centuries it has been utilised as a label for Mongols, Tungus, various Siberian peoples, Turkic peoples and even some groups of Roma. Nowadays, Kazan Tatars have their own republic, Tatarstan, in the Volga area within the Russian Federation. In the Baltic Sea region – as well as in the Volga-Ural area – there are Mishar Tatars, who speak a northwestern Turkic language. Other Tatars, with a longer presence in the Baltic Sea region, have for centuries spoken Slavonic rather than Turkic languages. The Tatars in this area practise a form of Islam which is closely adapted to the Christian or secular environment in which they dwell. These Tatars are good examples of how easily an ethno-religious group living in diaspora may modify their faith and religious practices according to ever-changing political and socio-cultural contexts. Their history has been marked by dramatic events and sweeping social changes.

For centuries, Muslim Tatars have been part of the ethnic mosaic of the Baltic region. This book is a rarely told narrative that provides interesting insights into a cultural history that deserves to be better known. The Tatars are Europeans possessing the same right to be Europeans as any other people on this continent. At the same time they have in many ways been pioneers of the Muslim presence here. They built their own mosques without problems many generations before so-called mosque conflicts became commonplace, and they interacted with other Northern Europeans at a time when Islamophobia was not part of the general vocabulary. In several respects they are well integrated in the countries within which they live.

This volume grew out of an interest in how religion, in this case Islam, is practised mainly amongst "ordinary people". Originally, it became a part of a research program on inter-religious relations at Södertörn University in Stockholm. We are most thankful to Professor Egdunas Račius and Professor Göran Larsson for agreeing to plan and administer the work with this volume in its early stages. Sebastian Cwiklinski has been most helpful with some linguistic issues, and towards the end of the editorial process, Sabira Ståhlberg helped by scrutinising some of the chapters, which we also wish to gratefully acknowledge.

A group of scholars from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden with various disciplinary backgrounds but a common interest in history, religion and Tatars were invited to participate. We had a first

meeting in Vilnius in October 2011, where also Professor Jørgen Nielsen participated as a commentator, discussing the first drafts of this book. Another meeting took place at Södertörn University in August 2012. We opted for nationwide studies of the countries around the Baltic Sea. However, there are two exceptions. Denmark and Russia are, albeit more marginally than the other nations that are presented in separate chapters, Baltic Sea countries too. The fact that Denmark is not included here is that the Tatar presence there has been too limited to provide a good basis for a substantial chapter of its own. However, some notes on Denmark and the diplomatic contacts between Crimean Tatars and that country are included in the Introduction.

Regarding Russia, we felt that covering the whole federation, extending all the way to the Far East, would bring us too far from our area of focus, the Baltic Sea region. Besides, there are already many studies on Muslim Tatars in various parts of the huge Russian federation, not only in Russian but also in English. However, we decided to include a separate chapter on the Saint Petersburg area, where Tatars have been present since the founding of the city and have also interacted closely with Tatars in other parts of the Baltic Sea rim, particularly Finland and Estonia. Belarus is not a Baltic Sea nation, but Tatars there are closely related to Tatars in Lithuania and Poland. Hence, Belarus is featured in the Introduction as well as briefly in the chapters on those two countries.

The disposition of the volume, suggested already by Račius and Larsson, is based on the chronology of the Tatar presence in the Baltic Sea region. In addition to the written texts, some illustrations and rare documents show how the Tatars have managed to live for generations as demographically small ethnic groups, as cultural and religious minorities, or as Muslims in the Baltic Sea region.

We would like to express our thanks to all participating colleagues who have supported and critically reviewed our effort to make this work into a book. The final manuscript has been copy-edited by Karen Swartz Larsson, which we gratefully acknowledge; and for financial assistance we are indebted to the Baltic Sea Foundation.

Ingvar Svanberg and *David Westerlund*
Uppsala and Stockholm in June 2015

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Introduction

Sebastian Cwiklinski

The present volume deals with Tatars in the Baltic Sea region, and at first sight the subject seems to be well defined. A closer look reveals, however, that it is not quite as easy as it appears because the history of the groups commonly labelled Tatar is complex and intertwined. The main goal of this introduction is to present those Muslim ethnic groups in the Baltic Sea region that are commonly known as Tatars nowadays; the puzzled history of the ethnonym itself, which for centuries has been used as a label to design "Wild Hordes from the East", will be dealt with only to the extent of its relevance for the theme of the present volume (Barthold 1934; Jäschke 1966). Nowadays there are mainly three ethnic groups known as Tatars, but as there are almost no representatives of the Crimean Tatars in the Baltic Sea region, the present volume will only briefly mention them. The Volga Tatars, who live in the Volga-Ural basin and neighbouring regions, speak a Turkic language, and historically the majority of them were Muslims; the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars, who live mainly in Poland and Lithuania, but also in Belarus, are the descendants of Muslim soldiers that came to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as early as in 1397. While they were assimilated linguistically and switched to Belarusian, Polish and later Lithuanian, they remained Muslims, with religion being the most prominent feature of distinction for them. The history and the current situation of the two groups and of their interaction in the region will be the main subject of the present volume.

History

The Tatar presence in the Baltic Sea region has a centuries old history, but as both the history and political affiliations of the countries in question have been different, the history of how Tatars came to the region differs from country to country, and a survey of the Tatar Muslim presence in the region has to begin with a short country-to-country approach, showing differences as well as similarities. After the defeat of the Khan of the Golden Horde, Toqtamysh, against the Central Asian ruler Timur in the late fourteenth century, the Lithuanian grand duke Vytautas granted asylum to Toqtamysh and some of his soldiers in 1397. In return for compulsory military service, soldiers were granted land, and the elite were raised to nobility. Tatars took part in the battle of Grunewald in 1410 on the Polish side, and in the following centuries they were

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an integral part of the Lithuanian state. After the establishment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1569, the Tatar elite continued to play an important role in the Polish army, whereas the majority of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars settled mainly in the countryside on a territory encompassing large regions of the present states of Poland, Belarus and Lithuania. While preserving their religion, the Muslim community assimilated linguistically during the following centuries. The Tatar nobility gradually switched to Polish, but the majority of Tatars adopted the Belarusian language, and it was only much later that also most of the Tatars in the countryside switched to Polish. As a consequence of the linguistic assimilation, Tatars in the region started as early as in the fifteenth century to write their religious works in the Belarusian language, but in Arabic script (Stankevich 1933). This constellation with a Polish-language nobility involved in the army and the majority of the population living in the countryside remained stable until the early twentieth century.

During a limited period in the early modern times, some Baltic Sea states had diplomatic contacts with Tatars. During and in the aftermath of the Second Northern War (1655–1660), when Sweden was at war with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its allies, the Crimean khanate joined the anti-Swedish alliance and tried to foster it by sending both delegations and diplomatic notes to a number of European rulers. Hence, from 1656 to 1681, a Crimean Tatar delegation came several times to Königsberg and Berlin in order to secure the support of Frederick William, the Elector of Brandenburg and Duke of Prussia. During the same time there was an exchange of diplomatic notes between the khanate and the Danish kingdom (Schwarz 1989; Matuz 1976).

The decision of the Russian emperor Peter I to found the new capital Saint Petersburg at the mouth of the Neva River was not only the visible expression of a new orientation of Imperial Russian politics towards Northern Europe, but had practical consequences for the Tatar presence in the Baltic Sea region as well. It brought many Tatar workers to the region as the new capital was in need of large numbers of builders. Thus, right from the beginning, Tatars became integral part of the new capital of the Russian Empire. The choice of Saint Petersburg as capital, as well as the subsequent expansion of the empire in the following years, may be regarded as the starting point for a broader Tatar presence in the region: With more Baltic Sea countries becoming a part of the empire, Russian imperial administrative and military structures were expanded to the new region. After the Great Northern War had ended with the Swedish defeat against Russia in 1710, the Swedish Provinces of Estonia and Livonia, which correspond to the territories of present-day Estonia and northern Latvia, became part of Russia. After the Swedish defeat in the Finnish War (1808–09), Finland became an autonomous grand duchy of Russia, whereas after the

partition of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, present-day Lithuania and large territories of contemporary Poland fell to the Russian Empire. After a brief period of relative autonomy, the brutal suppression of uprisings in 1830 and 1863 led finally to the total incorporation of Poland into the Russian imperial structures.

In all these cases the expansion of Russian rule led to military and administrative personnel moving to the new territories. Bureaucrats and soldiers coming from the old empire gained power. Along with the military personnel came also Muslim soldiers serving in the Russian army. Hence the number of Muslims especially in Poland and Finland rose significantly. To a lesser extent the same process can also be observed in Estonia. It was only from the 1870s onwards that Muslim civilians – mainly merchants and civil servants – came from the Volga-Ural region and the Caucasus to the countries along the eastern Baltic Sea coast.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Muslims in the Russian Empire began to integrate more into Russian society, and this drove many Muslims to actively participate in the economic life of Russia. Hence Tatar merchants, who had earlier been active in the Volga-Ural region, expanded the activities of their trading houses to the new western provinces of the Russian Empire as well as to Central Europe. Some of them opened branches of their companies in the western parts of the empire and in Central Europe; thus the first Tatars came also to Germany to do business. At the same time young Tatars looking for European education started to attend not only Russian, but also European, including German, universities.

Even if the Tatar communities in the Baltic Sea region share some common features, it would be wrong to suggest they were uniform. The way in which Muslims from the Russian Empire came to the "Baltic lands", how they established Islamic institutions, and whether they were visible and distinguishable in a mainly Christian environment has to be researched on a regional and sometimes even on a local basis. Despite the fact that Muslim communities in the Baltic lands until the end of the Russian Empire in 1917 belonged to one single empire, the structure of each community showed its own specific characteristics.

In Poland, for instance, a double structure came into existence with rural Muslim communities consisting of "Polish Tatars" and Muslims from the Russian Empire settling predominantly in big cities like Warsaw. The way these two communities interacted still has not been thoroughly investigated. At least in the first years after the Polish January Uprising of 1863, cooperation between them was virtually inconceivable since Polish Tatars became famous as defenders of Polishness and Polish values against Russian rule, while "Russian Muslims"

were representatives of the rule Polish Tatars were fighting against. The question becomes more difficult as the Russian Muslim community in Poland did not constitute a homogeneous entity. Amongst them were Volga Tatars as well as Muslims from Crimea and the Caucasus, and the main criterion to define them was Islam. Language and ethnic allegiance obviously did not play a prominent role, and the community was a Muslim rather than a Tatar one. In Finland, however, the Muslim community clearly had both a religious and an ethnic identity, as most of the immigrants were of Tatar origin, coming even from one single region in Russia. Thus while it is possible to describe the Finnish Tatar community both in religious and ethnic terms, in the Polish cases a more complex situation has to be taken into account.

The end of the Russian Empire in 1917 was a turning point for the Tatar Muslim communities in the Baltic Sea region. With Poland, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia gaining independence in the subsequent years, the Muslim communities in their respective countries found themselves in independent states, and this meant that now several separated communities developed more independently from each other as the social, economic, political and legal situation in each country was different. Amongst others, the Muslim communities faced new problems and opportunities. In some of the countries these communities were striving for recognition from the state in order to gain

FIGURE 0.1 *Fire station in Tallinn (from the 1910s), where Muslim prayer meetings were held on important holidays*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

a certain legal status, and the bureaucratic procedures accompanying these attempts required a formalisation of the relations within the communities. Therefore, the associations had to establish their statutes and make them meet certain formal demands. This led to discussions and to subsequent changes in the internal structures of the communities (for the Polish example, see Miśkiewicz 1990).

Interestingly, the diplomatic situation of the states of the Baltic region in the inter-war period did not have direct repercussions on the Tatar Muslim communities. Most of them did not define themselves as a "communities of exiles", and so defining their position towards the Soviet system was not their first priority. This may be exemplified by the Polish case. The Polish state actively tried to weaken the Soviet Union by creating the Prométhée, a network of non-Russian communities of exiles throughout Europe. Despite the fact that the centre of the Prométhée was in Warsaw, and that amongst the communities supported by the Polish state there was also the network of the Volga-Ural Tatars, Polish Tatars did not feel a need to join the Prométhée. The participation of Volga Tatars and other Muslim exiles from the Soviet Union in Polish Tatar activities remained on a very superficial level. In Germany, however, where the Tatar community had a strong diaspora and exile identity, opposition to the Soviet system was crucial and dominated all the activities of the community (see further Rorlich 1986; Yémelianova 1997 and Cwiklinski 2008).

The few cases in which Tatars in Finland and Poland were in touch with Tatars from Russia at all can hardly be called examples of cooperation. The controversial figure of the Siberian Tatar Alimjan Idris (b. 1887), who had come to Germany during the First World War as imam for the Tatar inmates of the prison camps, played a crucial role in most efforts of cooperation. Idris had developed close contact with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and continued his cooperation with German officials throughout the 1920s. Soon, however, Idris was suspected of serving as an agent for the Soviets, and his visits to Finland and Estonia in the 1920s and 1930s, officially for instructing the Tatar communities in the fundamentals of Islam, raised suspicions amongst both Finnish Tatars and the communities of Turkic exiles organised in the Prométhée network. Apart from this isolated case, there was only an exchange of news via *Milli Yul*, a Volga Tatar journal edited by the Tatar association within the Prométhée. Tatars from Finland reported in the journal about their activities, but the articles show that there was no deeper cooperation between, on the one hand, the Tatar communities in Finland and, on the other hand, Poland and the Prométhée.

The Second World War was a turning point for the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Tatar communities. Right from the start of the war the Soviets

FIGURE 0.2 *Muslim Tatar pupils from a Sunday school in Narva in the 1930s with their teacher, Alimjan Idris from Germany*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

occupied the eastern parts of Poland and annexed the three Baltic countries, but in 1941 Germany occupied Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and this had consequences for the Tatar communities there. Estonian Tatars, for instance, were conscripted into both the German and the Soviet armies, while others, who had moved to Finland earlier, fought in the ranks of the Finnish army against the Soviet Union. Tatars leaving Finland for Sweden at that time were the founding fathers of the small Tatar community in that country. After the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Tatars from the three countries shared the fate of other residents of their respective countries and faced persecution and deportation.

In Poland, the events during and after the Second World War meant a total breakup of the Tatar community. During the Soviet occupation of the then eastern part of Poland in 1939–41, the leading figures of the Polish Tatar community were arrested by the Soviets, convicted and subsequently executed (see Usmanova 2008a and 2008b). The territorial changes after the Second World War in Poland, when areas within the territories east of the Curzon line were annexed by the Soviet Union, led to major changes in the Polish Tatar community. As most of the regions traditionally inhabited by Polish Tatars happened to fall under Soviet rule (as parts either of the Lithuanian or of the Belarusian Soviet Republic), the majority of the Tatar community decided to migrate westwards into the formerly German regions of the Polish state. Thus

local Polish Tatar groups settled also in western Polish towns like Wrocław and Gdańsk, and it took the whole community several decades to reconstitute itself (Miśkiewicz 1993).

Apart from the Białystok region, which remained Polish, the traditional areas of settlement of the Polish Tatar community came under Soviet rule. Like other parts of the Soviet Union, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine became for various reasons the destination of inner-Soviet migrations, and amongst the migrants coming from inner Russia and Central Asia there were also people of Volga Tatar origin. In Estonia and Latvia, Russian Tatars nowadays constitute the majority of the small Tatar communities. The term "Russian Tatars" is used in this volume as a shorthand for Volga Tatars coming mainly from Russia to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Even though this designation is not quite exact as people of Tatar origin came not only from inner Russia and Siberia, but also from Kazakhstan and other countries, it seems to be more appropriate than other solutions. In countries like Lithuania and Belarus a coexistence of two different groups associated with the ethnonym "Tatar" – the Polish-Lithuanian and the Russian Tatar communities, respectively – can be observed.

Tatars in Belarus

The Tatar community in Belarus will not be covered by the present volume as Belarus is not a Baltic Sea country. However, as the Tatars of Belarus are (like their Polish and Lithuanian counterparts) the descendants of the historical Polish-Belarusian-Lithuanian Tatar community and heirs of its culture, we decided to cover the community in the introduction to this volume. First, it should be noted that it is difficult to apply the present-day terminology to the centuries prior to the nineteenth. Accordingly, a distinction between "Polish" and "Belarusian" Tatars in those times is impossible. It was only after the First World War with the establishment of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR) (1919) that a separate Belarusian Tatar community slowly developed, and only recently have researchers started to deal with its history in detail (see, for instance, Kanapacki 2005, Grybava 2012 and Grybava 2013). However, large parts of the present-day Belarusian territory with a Tatar population remained Polish until the Soviet annexation of the eastern parts of Poland in 1939 and were incorporated into the BSSR only then.

A look at the present situation of the Tatar community in Belarus reveals a contradictory picture. On the one hand, the number of Tatars declined drastically from 10,031 in 1970 to 7,316 in 2009 (Zinovskij 2011: 8), which is

explained by observers by both the anti-religious policy in Soviet times and by the secularisation of society. On the other hand the community took the new opportunities of the post-perestroika years and made itself heard: it edited a number of newspapers and journals (*Žyccë tatarskae*, 1991 to present; *Bayram*, 1991–2002; *Žizn*, 1997 to present), books and prayer manuals both in Belarusian and in Russian and organised a number of conferences on the history of the community (see, for instance, Citov, Kanapacki and Yakuboŭski 1999). The future will show which one of the contradictory tendencies will prevail.

Contemporary Developments

Perestroika in the Soviet Union from 1986 onwards brought major changes also to the Tatars. The official view on Tatar history held throughout several decades slowly made way for a more differentiated picture, and this change coincided with the growth of a Tatar nationalist movement striving even for total independence of the Tatar Autonomous Republic. The declaration of the sovereignty of the Tatar Republic (Tatarstan) within the Russian Federation in 1990, and its subsequent autonomy, had repercussions also on the Tatar communities in the Baltic Sea region since Tatarstan has developed a "foreign policy" directed at Tatar diasporas both inside and outside the Russian Federation. A short overview of these developments will show that in studies on Tatars in the Baltic Sea region, one has to take into account the Tatarstan factor as well.

The territory of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, founded in 1920, comprised only a minority of the Tatar population in the Soviet Socialist Union, and Tatars in that republic were in a minority position too, while the largest part of the population was comprised of ethnic Russians. One of the main goals of the Tatar nationalist movement since perestroika was to coordinate the Tatar communities both inside and outside Tatarstan, which coincided with a shift of Tatar historians' interests. They began to do research on Tatar diasporas in Europe, while officials were eager to establish links with Tatars in the diaspora.

A visible expression of this interest was the establishment of the World Congress of Tatars since 1992, an umbrella organisation uniting Tatars all over the world. This organisation evolved from conferences held every five years, gathering representatives of Tatar communities mainly from the successor states of the Soviet Union, but also from Europe, North America and Australia. The presence of leading politicians both from Tatarstan and Federal Russia at the congresses indicates the importance that official structures attribute to the work of the congress. The work of the World Congress of Tatars consists mainly

of coordinating the policy directed at Tatar communities outside Tatarstan and addresses communities and their organisations both inside and outside Russia. While the work with Tatars inside Russia is crucial for the Tatar people as only a minority of the Tatars in Russia live inside Tatarstan, the work with the Tatar diaspora outside Russia can be regarded as an attempt by the Tatar elite to profit both politically and economically from the presence of compatriots in important countries. Although the World Congress of Tatars keeps a close eye on developments in the diaspora – its Department for External Affairs is well informed about what Tatar cultural associations do in any country – one cannot speak of direct interference in their day-to-day matters. Rather, the congress tries to influence the representatives of the Tatar diaspora indirectly.

The late 1990s and the first decade of the third millennium saw the emergence of a new kind of Tatar diaspora in Europe as well as in North America and Australia. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, thousands of people from that country immigrated to Europe, Israel, North America, Australia and other places to continue their lives under better conditions. For a long time the fact that amongst the migrants were people of many different nationalities was almost unnoticed as the migrants were mostly busy integrating into the new societies. It was only in their new countries that people of Tatar origin amongst the migrants began to organise separately as Tatars. Despite the great variability of both the diaspora countries and the respective migrant communities it is possible to discern some common features of the new Tatar migration. Since the new Tatar communities in the Baltic Sea region do not constitute an exception to the rule (in this respect, Tatar communities in Estonia show similarities to communities in countries as distinct as Canada or Australia), it is worth dwelling on those similarities.

Due to the dispersion of the Tatars throughout the Soviet Union many of the new migrants of Tatar origin had grown up in a non-Tatar environment, and they often had come to their new destinations without a developed Tatar identity. Most of them had acquired higher, often university education, and along with the integration into Soviet academic life many of them had been subjected to justification. It can be assumed that only a minority of them now speak Tatar fluently, while the absolute majority of them have an excellent command of Russian.

Many of these features can also be observed amongst Tatars in the Baltic Sea region, although there are differences to be taken into account. The majority of people of Russian Tatar origin (that is, people of Tatar origin not directly linked to the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars) in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia seem to have migrated there already in Soviet times, while in other countries the bulk of the Tatar migrants have arrived only after 1991. In the three Baltic countries,

Russian Tatars form part of the Russian-language population, commonly known as "Baltic Russians" regardless of their nationality. Problems of gaining citizenship that affect the Baltic Russian community in Latvia and Estonia are equally relevant for the Russian Tatars there. Thus, in some respects Russian Tatars in Latvia and Estonia, and to a minor extent in Lithuania, share common features with ethnic Russians and other people not belonging to the titular nation. In sociological terms, it might sometimes make sense to group Russian Tatars and ethnic Russians in one category.

Tatar Activities in the Diaspora

Tatar cultural associations and organisations in the diaspora outside Russia show astonishing similarities, regardless of their actual country of residence. To a certain extent, thus, a Russian Tatar association in Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia or Germany will not be very different from a Canadian, Australian or Belgian counterpart. Most of the Tatar associations have been founded not earlier than in the 1990s (with the notable exception of the cultural association Idel in Riga, founded in 1988), and their members communicate mostly in Russian. In their activities the main emphasis is put on cultural activities, with religion playing no major role.

The highlight of their activities is usually the annual summer festival Sabantuy (plough festival). As the name indicates, Sabantuy, which is celebrated not only by Tatars, but by Bashkirs and Chuvashs too (both being Turkic peoples in the Volga-Ural region), has rural origins. It was first mentioned by Russian travellers in the late eighteenth century, but it did not attract much attention in later times. In Soviet times, it seems to have been tolerated by the Soviet authorities, but it is only since 1991 that Sabantuy acquired a semi-official status in Russia. Every year a federal Sabantuy is held, which is regularly visited by the Russian president, and in Tatarstan a central Sabantuy held annually in the capital Kazan underlines the "Tatarness" of the festival. Features typical of the festival in rural areas are the *köräsh* (a traditional Tatar wrestling competition) and several competitive games played by men, women and children alike. The festival has become an icon of – often imagined – Tatarness, and it is celebrated not only in Tatarstan and Russia (including places as remote from the Volga-Ural region as Vladivostok and Saint Petersburg), but also at places in the diaspora like San Francisco, New York, Toronto, Prague and at several places in Germany and the Baltic Sea region.

In an urban context, both inside and outside Russia, the festival will be adapted to both the local opportunities and interests of the attendants.

Sometimes the organisers invite folk singers or dancers from Tatarstan, but the bulk of the festival activities will be led by the local organisers themselves. Local folklore groups may present Tatar dances. Often the festival will end in a disco evening with Tatar and/or Russian pop music. Amongst the guests one may find politicians or artists from Tatarstan (sometimes representatives of the World Congress of Tatars attend), local politicians (such as mayors, ministers and representatives of national minorities) or people from other Tatar communities in the diaspora.

Apart from the flagship activities around Sabantuy, Tatar communities inside and outside the Baltic Sea region carry out other cultural activities that reaffirm their idea of Tatarness. To give an idea of the range of activities, it may be enough to name just a couple of them. There are, for instance, remembrance lectures for the Tatar poet Gabdulla Tuqay (1887–1913), who is regarded by Tatars both in Tatarstan and in the diaspora as the founding father of modern Tatar literature. Another example is the organisation of the Chak Chak Bayram, a festival celebrating *chak chak*, a sweet regarded as a traditional Tatar dish.

Some aspects of the activities of Russian Tatar associations in the diaspora are particularly worth noting. First, at least in the visible activities of the associations, religion does not play a significant role. The Tatar identity reaffirmed

FIGURE 0.3 *The traditional Tatar dish chak-chak (Pol. czak-czak), which is fried, sweet, and made with honey and poppy seeds*
PHOTO: AGATA S. NALBORCZYK, 2014

in the activities of the associations is a cultural one, with dances and music (and, to a minor extent, material culture) playing the dominant role. Islam (as a religion) can be seen as one of many factors contributing to Tatar ethnicity, but on the surface almost nothing of that is to be seen. The second aspect to be noted is the dominance of the Russian language both in everyday life and in most of the activities of Russian Tatars. Publications, websites and announcements of events are most likely to be made in Russian rather than in the titular language of the country of residence, let alone in Tatar. The great majority of Russian Tatars in the Baltic Sea region probably use Russian as the main language of communication. The obvious russification of Russian Tatars in the Baltic Sea region and in the diaspora in general parallels the situation in Russia itself, where large parts of the urban Tatar population have already switched to Russian. Single cases of Russian Tatars residing in Baltic countries with a high proficiency in either Tatar or the titular languages cannot change this picture of mainly Russian-language communities.

Due to the fact that they live in similar conditions, and to the small size of their respective communities, Russian Tatar communities in the Baltic Sea region soon began to get to know each other. The most significant sign of the beginning cooperation was the annual All Baltic Sabantuy, the eighth of which was held in June 2012 in Narva in Estonia. However, in 2014 the name of the event was changed to the European Sabantuy. Until 2011, cooperation between Russian Tatar communities in the Baltic Sea region was limited to the sporadic attendance of festivals. Yet the will to cooperate more closely soon became manifest. In an organisational form, Russian Tatars from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia began to unite within the World Congress of Tatars, which soon began to establish regional and youth branches, and many of the meetings of the subbranches took place in the Baltic region.

Since the end of the first decade of the new millennium, Russian Tatars in the Baltic Sea region have begun to engage in organising regionally, and it was not always clear whether their efforts were thought to be in accordance with the World Congress of Tatars or independent of it. Apparently they were a continuation of the informal meetings in previous years, and traces of these can be seen on a website established by a Tatar from Latvia. At first sight, the website seems to unite a number of different associations, ranging from an Association of Tatar Communities of Europe to the European Tatar Youth Association and a European fan club of the ice hockey team of Qazan, the capital of Tatarstan. A closer look at the website reveals, however, that the projects described exist only in virtual form.[1]

1 Available at: http://www.tatarlar-europe.eu (accessed 14 June 2014).

FIGURE 0.4 *Estonian Tatars visiting a cemetery in Tatarstan, in 2005*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

Tatar Identity in the Baltic Sea Region

A study of the present Tatar situation in the Baltic Sea region reveals an astonishing multitude of communities, ethnic and cultural concepts, and at first sight one may ask whether there are any features at all uniting all the groups now commonly known as Tatars. Yet, a closer look at the situation shows that there are several elements that contribute to the Tatarness of a given group in the region.

The first "identity marker" to mention is the (sometimes imagined) origin from a "Tatar nation". Any group in the Baltic Sea region calling itself Tatar will claim its origins from people stemming from the Golden Horde, and regardless of how real this claim is, it is surely of a certain importance. Sometimes the assumed origin becomes the main identity feature, while in other cases – take, for instance, the Russian Tatars – it is only of minor relevance.

Religion plays an important role in the ethnicity of some of the groups mentioned, and at least nominally the absolute majority of the Tatars in the Baltic Sea region are Muslims. For Polish Tatars, Islam was the crucial factor in their ethnicity, with the origin from the Golden Horde playing only a minor role in strengthening their identity. In times of partitions of Poland, Polish Tatars defended Polish culture against Russian rule, reconciling Islam and Polishness,

seemingly without problems. For Finnish Tatars, Islam is similarly crucial, but the allegiance to Tatar culture and language is relevant as well, and the allegiance to the homelands is also important. In the case of the Russian Tatars, however, Islam plays only a marginal role. As shown above, their identity is clearly a cultural one with a strong focus on literature and folklore, and religion plays only an additional role. Apparently, it is not of any major relevance whether a member of the Russian Tatar community is atheist, agnostic or religious. Yet it can be assumed that most of them are not religious, and this may raise suspicions amongst the members of more religiously orientated Tatar groups.

For Russian Tatar communities outside Russia it is important that Volga Tatars are not the only Turkic people from the Volga-Ural region at least nominally professing Islam. The Bashkirs, whose literary language was established as late as in the 1920s by the Soviet authorities, are the titular nation of Bashkortostan, an autonomous republic in the Russian Federation. Inside Russia the ethnic relations between Volga-Ural Tatars and Bashkirs are often conflictual – the establishment of both the Tatar and the Bashkir Autonomous republics after the breakdown of the Russian Empire after the First World War had been accompanied by a feud between Tatar and Bashkir politicians, and nowadays Tatar representatives in Bashkiria reproach the Bashkir authorities for trying to assimilate the Tatar population in that republic (see further Gorenburg 1999). Outside Russia, however, Tatars and Bashkirs may come together to unite under diasporic conditions. Their close cooperation is facilitated not only by the similarity of the Tatar and Bashkir languages (both belong to the Kipchaq sub-group of the Turkic languages and are almost totally mutually intelligible), but also because both peoples live in the Volga-Ural region. Apart from this, Tatar and Bashkir identities cannot always be strictly separated from each other as mixed marriages amongst both peoples are quite common.

In a diaspora context outside Russia, the local situation of a given country will decide whether Tatars and Bashkirs organise separately or jointly, and this holds true also for the countries around the Baltic Sea. Hence, while in the Latvian capital Riga and in the German capital Berlin we find Tatar-Bashkir Cultural Associations, Bashkirs in Estonia have organised independently of Tatar structures. But even in countries where "purely Tatar" structures exist, Bashkirs may join Tatar activities. For instance, when Tatars celebrate their annual Sabantuy, people in national Bashkir folk costumes may show up as well. However, it should be mentioned that Bashkirs might decide to celebrate their own Bashkir Sabantuy as well, as was the case with the Bashkir community in Estonia in 2012. When talking about Muslim Tatar communities in the Baltic Sea region, thus, Bashkirs have to be taken into account, although this holds true only for the Russian Tatar communities.

FIGURE 0.5 *Playing at the Sabantuy festival in a park in Berlin*
PHOTO: RAIS KHALILOV, 2004

Nowadays pan-Turkism does not play any role in the ethnicity of Baltic Tatar communities. The fact that the Finnish Tatar community cooperated with the Turkish Republic in several phases throughout the twentieth century and that there was once a pan-Turkic imam in Finland does not change the overall picture of a community being committed to both Islam and Tatar culture. Thus, the partial change from Tatar to Turkish as a language of instruction seems to be a matter of pragmatic consideration rather than an ideological choice. Apparently, pan-Turkism is not an attractive option for Tatars in the Baltic Sea region.

Final Remarks

At first sight, the very fact that the ethnonym "Tatar" comprises several very different concepts and, accordingly, several different groups, seems to make generalisations about Tatars in the Baltic Sea region inconceivable. However, the practice shows that there is both exclusion and cooperation between different Tatar groups in the region. The apparent and undeniable difference between Polish-Lithuanian Tatars and Russian Tatars, as well as between the ancient immigration and the new ones, may exclude cooperation between

different groups commonly known as Tatars, and indeed there are examples that may suggest that cooperation can be difficult: The Tatar community in Finland is renowned for being very strict about allowing and denying access to their associations, and it happened more than once that Russian Tatars resident in Finland complained bitterly about that practice. However, there are counter-examples showing that the different Tatar groups are willing to cooperate with each other. The journal *Lietuvos totoriai* (Lithuanian Tatars) is a recent prominent example. This journal is edited in Kaunas, Lithuania. From 1995 to 2004 it was edited only in Lithuanian, then a Russian-language section was added in 2004, and a Polish section followed in 2006.

While Polish is both the historical language of the Polish-Lithuanian Tatar community and the present means of communication for the Tatar community in Poland, Lithuanian has become the language of communication for the Lithuania-based community. Large parts of the Russian Tatar community in the three Baltic countries use Russian as their language of choice. It is worth noting that the above-mentioned journal *Lietuvos totoriai* is edited by Galimas Sitdykovas, a Russian Tatar who has lived in Lithuania for decades. The writers contributing to the journal stem from three clearly discernible communities, and the content of each language section reflects the ethnic structure of the respective community. However, a closer look at the journal shows that there are manifold interconnections between the three sections, and apart from this the ethnic identity of each community reflected in the sections is not always clear-cut. Apart from *Lietuvos totoriai*, there are other examples of cooperation between different Tatar communities in the region both within and across country borders.

Thus the task of the country chapters of this volume is twofold. First, they will outline the history as well as the contemporary situation of their respective Tatar communities, focusing on how Tatars define their Tatarness by combining historical, religious, ethnic, cultural and other features. By doing this, they will confront self-images with social reality, but the focus will be on the internal structure of a given Tatar community. Secondly, the country chapters will examine the way people commonly known as Tatars communicate with the world outside their own community. Tatar communities in the Baltic Sea region cooperate with different actors on the local, regional, federal and international levels, and amongst their contacts are different ethnic groups including Tatars both in and outside the Baltic Sea region.

Tatars in the region cooperate with different states, Tatar and non-Tatar international associations, Islamic umbrella organisations as well as with residents of their respective countries. The way these contacts work out and intertwine will tell a great deal about the communities engaging in them.

Studies of the internal coherence reasserted by cultural practices as well as of the inter-connections of the Tatar communities in the Baltic Sea region reveal a complex, flexible and sometimes contradictory picture that does not always match the image of stable or even inflexible communities. Perhaps it is precisely this that makes the study of Tatars in the Baltic Sea region so interesting.

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PART 1

Early Settlements

∴

CHAPTER 1

Lithuania

Egdūnas Račius and Tamara Bairašauskaitė

In the fourteenth century, a diaspora of Tatars began to take shape on the territory of what was then the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It consisted of Turkic-speaking Kipchak immigrants from the Golden Horde (later the Great Horde and the khanates of Kazan and Crimea). They were driven to the grand duchy by political upheavals that had engulfed the former Mongol empire founded by Chingiz Khan, intense fighting for power and the search for allies. The formation of the diaspora and its development, especially the beginning of this process, are shrouded in legend, although more in-depth research allows us to discern periods of Tatar immigration and settlement in the Grand Duchy. Tatars did not leave any visible traces even when they took part in the military expedition of Gediminas (1275–1341), the Grand Duke of Lithuania, against the crusaders (Batūra 1975: 125–147, 156–168).

It is believed that Tatars were attracted to the grand duchy first of all through the Eastern politics of Grand Duke Vytautas (1350–1430); military support was given by him to Togtamysh Khan (died 1405) of the White Horde and his progeny, who were attempting to regain the lost throne. According to an account written by the chronicler Janusz Dlugosz 80 years after the purported events, Vytautas should have brought back with him Tatars and another ethno-confessional group, Karaims, during his military expeditions to the Don Steppes and Crimea in 1397 or 1398. In any case, the arrival of Tatars in the grand duchy and the formation of their settlements, first of all next to the main centres in the state, namely, Vilnius, Grodno, Kreva, Lida, Novgorodek and Trakai (Kryczyński 1938; Sobczak 1984: 20–21), is associated with the name of Vytautas. Such arrangement of settlements allowed the Lithuanian ruler to have Tatars at hand wherever he was at the moment.

It was these colonies that made up the core of the Tatar settlements in Lithuania. With time, their net would grow or shrink, depending upon economical, political and social factors. Toponyms with Kipchak elements still remind us where the first Tatar settlements were located. Research conducted by the Polish Orientalist scholar Henryk Jankowski shows that of the 26 places with names with Turkic roots found by him, 18 are around Vilnius and Trakai, and that is indeed there where the early Tatar settlements are mentioned in historical sources (Jankowski 2001: 189–200; Borawski et al. 1991: 59–135). In the sixteenth century, the net of settlements expanded to the

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territory of contemporary Belarus. Immigrants from the Great Horde and the khanates of Kazan and Crimea would settle next in Ashmiany, Lida, Minsk and Slonim. It must have been then that Tatar prisoners of war, taken captive during military encounters with armies of khans, settled there. Such prisoners would often be bought out of captivity by their relatives already residing in Lithuania, although the social status of former prisoners of war is not known.

Some Tatar settlements were established on the private lands of the Lithuanian nobility, for instance, in the duchies of Kletsk, Nesvizh and Biržai, all of which belonged to the noble Radvilos family (Borawski 1991a: 33–49; Sobczak 2000: 190–204; Karvelis 2004: 41–43). By the seventeenth century, Tatar immigration died out, and due to wars with the Duchy of Moscow and the Kingdom of Sweden, the net of their settlements thinned. At the end of that century, the geography of Tatar settements changed. King John II Casimir Vasa allocated several villages for Tatars in Alytus District, and King Jan Sobieski allowed Tatars to settle in the royal districts of Brasta, Grodno and Kobrin (Sobczak 1991: 70–90). Over time, some of the Tatars moved to towns where as a rule they formed separate colonies or lived on certain streets called "Tatar ends". Such colonies or streets were present in Vilnius (in the suburb of Lukiškės), Kaunas, Novgorodek, Slonim and elsewhere. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with more and more Tatars moving to towns, smaller Tatar settlements disappeared. In the territory of contemporary Lithuania, there are several remaining Tatar settlements believed to have been formed over a long period of time between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Those are the villages of Keturiasdešimt totorių and Nemėžis in the vicinity of Vilnius and the village of Raižiai in Alytus District.

Tatar Muslims in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

Tatars occupied different positions in the society of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there existed an elite stratum, composed of families of Tatars who used the titles of ulan, seit, murza and duke, brought over from the Golden Horde. The exceptionality of their position is attested to by the fact that members of such families as a rule led the Tatar flags (military units) and headed the Tatar community. Gradually, this stratum merged with the group of Tatar servicemen, and the titles that were carried along turned into parts of family names (for instance, Murza Tuhan Baranovskis, Ulan Maliuszicki, Seit Tupalski), while the title of duke no longer indicated belonging to the nobility of the Horde. In fact, it was also used by Tatars who had personally earned it (Dumin 1989: 7–49).

However, the social position of Tatars was first of all defined by their relation to the ruler and the land (called *beneficija*). Some of the Tatars, in return for the households provided, had to provide an equipped soldier, complete with horse, and reported only directly to the grand duke. Personal military service was also provided by Tatars-Cosacks, who owned medium-sized plots of land. Additionally, they served as couriers, postmen, guardsmen, road-workers, bridge-builders and the like. Besides these, there were "ordinary" Tatars: servicemen in the households of the Lithuanian nobility, peasants, artisans, carriers and gardeners (Zakrzewski 2002: 125–126). In due course, the former nobility of the Horde, as well as the descendants of the military elite and soldiers, merged into these social groups.

The integration of Tatars into the society of the grand duchy went along two distinct paths: those Tatars who had converted to Christianty soon assimilated. Their social status must have depended to a great deal on the position they had held in the Golden Horde, because in the grand duchy, there emerged many noble families with Tatar roots (Borawski and Sienkiewicz 1998: 87–114). On the other hand, followers of Islam made a separate community which was awarded certain privileges, while at the same time certain restrictions were placed upon them.

There is much discussion about the place of the Muslim Tatars in the social structure of the grand duchy. The sixteenth century codex of feudal rights, the Third Lithuanian Statute (promulgated in 1588), described Tatar rights separately from the rights of Christians. The statute made a distinction between the group of noble Tatars, such as dukes, murzas and ulans, who could use the privileges of the noblemen, and free men. Another article of the codex distinguished those Tatars who did military service and could use privileges of the nobility, but there were restrictions imposed upon them in the judicial process. The statute did not bestow any special rights upon, or assign duties to, the rest of Tatars, though Tatars living in the cities had to pay a poll-tax (Wisner 2001: 80). Despite the favourable social environment and legal status, Muslim Tatars in the Grand Duchy had no political rights and could not be members of local councils of the noblemen, nor could they serve in local municipalities or courts. In essence, their main task was to defend the ruler and the state from enemies. Therefore, they were a specific ethno-social group occupying a peculiar place in society and, because of their non-Christian faith, had not merged with any other social group (Sobczak 1986: 467–480).

Lithuanian Tatars in the Russian Empire

After the third division of the Polish-Lithuanian state in 1795, almost the entire diaspora of the Lithuanian Tatars found themselves within the borders of the Russian Empire. The imperial government distinguished the Tatars, very much

like Karaims, Jews and Roma, as non-Christians. However, it recognised the Tatar right to immovable property, preserved their former freedoms and did not restrict their religious practices.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Tatars – making use of the imperial laws requiring the privileged social strata of the newly acquired lands to prove their noble rank – approached the institutions of representatives of regional nobility seeking recognition of their nobility status. Top governmental institutions, after specifically considering the Tatar issue, came to the conclusion that they could pursue recognition of their nobility status because, due to their social situation, they met the criteria for the Russian nobility. The imperial order of 6 March 1819 commissioned a compilation of a separate list of the Lithuanian Tatar nobility. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, in the Provinces (*guberniya*) of Grodno, Minsk and Vilnius alone, the nobility status of 237 Tatar family lines (or 2,325 direct male descendents of the lines) was recognised. Tatars once again had to prove their nobility status when on 27 March 1840 an order "On the rights to nobility status of Greeks and Mohammedans living in Russia" was promulgated. Not all families of Tatars who had secured their nobility rank in the beginning of the nineteenth century were successful in proving their nobility in the second round. As a rule, it was only those who had managed to strengthen their social status after having become subjects of the Russian Empire: land-owners, military officers and civil servants (Bairašauskaitė 1996: 46–71).

Also in the nineteenth century, coats of arms of Tatar families were finalised. Tatars created these attributes of nobility with inspiration from different sources. Some of them pictured *tamgas*, ancestral tribal-familial signs, which until the end of the eighteenth century had been used by Tatars in their official stamps, and also symbols connected to family traditions. Other coats of arms were taken from old Polish lists of coats of arms and especially popular ones were those that pictured an arrow, a sword, a crescent, or a star. Some 60 Tatar families attempted to register their old titles of duke and murza. However, the Russian Imperial Governing Senate's Department of Heraldry did not recognise these titles of Tatar families (Dumin 1999). The recognised nobility status opened the way for Tatars to the civil service as well as service in the Russian military. Owners of estates with serfs had the right to take part in the nobility's self-governing. Tatar names can be seen in documents of local governing bodies of the nobility of the nineteenth century. They served in various institutions of governorates and districts, in courts, the police force, custom and post offices, and worked with the telegraph system and railways.

The imperial government made use of Tatar military skills and, out of the advance guard regiments of the former grand duchy, formed in 1797 the

Lithuanian Tatar regiment. In 1803, out of it, separate Lithuanian cavalry and Tatar cavalry (since 1807, Tatar ulans) regiments were formed. In 1819, both regiments were assigned to the separate Lithuanian corps, which, however, was dissolved in 1833. Since then, Tatars served in the Russian imperial military as professional soldiers, graduates from special military academies. Until the First World War, 20 generals, descendants of Lithuanian Tatars, had served in the Russian military (Bairašauskaitė 1996: 84–121).

The Twentieth Century

In the beginning of the twentieth century, amidst the First World War, the Russian Empire collapsed, and in the territories of its former western governorates new young independent states emerged. This led to a break-up of the Tatar diaspora: their historic settlements and inhabitants found themselves in the territories of contemporary Belarus, Poland and Lithuania. According to the 1922 census, only 961 Lithuanian Tatars, mostly farmers, artisans, petty civil servants and military officers, remained in the territory of the newly formed Republic of Lithuania. They were concentrated in three Muslim parishes: Kaunas, Raižiai (in Butrimonys County of Alytus District), and Vinkšnupiai (in Bartninkai County of Vilkaviškis District). Some 5,000 Tatars had become residents (and ultimately citizens) of the Republic of Poland, with another several thousand in Soviet Byelorussia.

The main concerns for the Lithuanian Tatars in Lithuania at that time were the revival of the community, repair of the surviving mosques, registration of congregations and appointment of imams. In 1923, a secular organisation, Kauno totorių draugija (Kaunas Tatar Society), was established. It was planning to engage in cultural and educational activities, address social welfare issues and govern parish property. Its plans also included establishing a Tatar school, a bookshop and a library; however, these plans remained unrealised. On the other hand, the Tatar Society managed to organise the buiding of a new brick mosque in Kaunas, which began in 1930. In 1936, the society was renamed Kauno musulmonų draugija (Kaunas Muslim Society). Its main aim was to unite Lithuania's Muslim congregations and establish a Muftiate similar to the one established by Tatars in Poland; however, the society failed to do either (Bairašauskaitė 1992: 98–114).

In the interwar period, the main centre of the revival and cultural, educational and religious activities of the Lithuanian Tatar diaspora was Vilnius, then part of the Polish state. It was there where the Tatar intelligentsia, who played a major role in the revival of the Tatar community, was concentrated.

As the result of the efforts of several Tatar families, Tatar gatherings took place in Vilnius every year; more prosperous Tatars sought to buy back former Tatar estates. In 1925, a Tatar congress took place in Vilnius. It founded a Muslim religious union of Poland, a new religious-administrative institution – the Muftiate, and elected the first and, as it later turned out, the only mufti of the interwar period, Dr Jakób Szynkiewicz (1884–1966) (Miśkiewicz 1986). Throughout that period, these organs took care of the religious matters of the Polish Muslim community, education of imams, instruction in religion for Muslim children, and engaged in publishing and the promotion of relations with the Muslim world.

During the same congress, a separate secular organisation, Związek Kulturalno-Oświatowy Tatarów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Cultural and Educational Union of Polish Tatars), was established. Its aim was to unite the ethnic Tatar community by supporting the cultural, economic, social and professional interests of its members. Chapters of this union functioned in the provinces, where amateur art groups were set up. In 1939, Tatar women founded their own organisation. In Vilnius, a Tatar youth circle started operating in 1934. In 1929, the Tatar museum and archive were founded in Vilnius. Between 1934 and 1939, Tatars published their own journal, *Życie Tatarskie* (Tatar Life). The most notable community figures were the brothers Leon (1887–1939) and Olgierd (1884–1942) Kryczyński. In the beginning of the twentieth century, while studying in Saint Petersburg, they headed the circle of Polish Muslim students, which was interested in the history, religion, customs and material heritage of the Tatars. It was Leon Kryczyński, who – by then in Vilnius – initiated serious research into the history, religion and culture of Lithuanian Tatars; the results were published in three separate issues of the *Rocznik Tatarski* (Tatar Yearbook) between 1932 and 1938 (Miśkiewicz 1990).

With the start of the Second World War, activities of Tatar organisations in both countries (Poland and Lithuania) froze, and by the time it ended they ceased completely. After the war, many of the Tatar families, along with the Polish repatriates, resettled in northern and northwestern Poland (Miśkiewicz 1993). Some of the Tatars, particularly the intelligentsia, migrated to the U.K., the U.S.A., Turkey and other countries.

The Contemporary Situation

Though, as indicated above, Muslims have been an integral part of Lithuanian society since at least the fourteenth century, the newly independent post-communist Lithuania has witnessed a (re)appearance of Islam on its soil, where

the revived indigenous Tatar Muslim community is gradually being supplemented by immigrant Muslims and even more so by a steadily growing group of Lithuanian converts and their progeny. The 2011 official census found 2,727 residents of Lithuania to be specifically Sunni Muslims (Department 2013: 14), or 0.1 per cent of the total population of three million. In the 2001 census that number stood at 2,860 (Department 2002: 204–205) and thus had decreased in a decade by some 5 per cent. Of 2,727 Sunni Muslims in 2011, 1,441 identified themselves as ethnic Tatars (Department 2013: 14), or 52.8 per cent of all Sunni Muslims and just 51.6 per cent of all 2,793 ethnic Tatars (Department 2013: 7), while 374 identified themselves as ethnic Lithuanians (Department 2013: 14). In the previous (2001) census, there were 1,679 ethnic Muslim Tatars (or 58.7 per cent of all Sunni Muslims and 51.9 per cent of all 3,235 ethnic Tatars) and 185 Lithuanians (Department 2002: 204–205). As the total number of Lithuania's residents who identified themselves as ethnic Tatars in 2001 stood at 3,235 and in 2011 at 2,793, there was a significant 13.7 per cent decrease in a decade.

Although many Lithuanian Tatars took it for granted in the early years of independence that all Lithuanian Tatars are by default Muslims, and this was more or less true until the Second World War, recent censuses figures suggest that is no longer the case – just a little over 50 per cent of the ethnic Tatars identified themselves as Muslims. The current mufti, Romas Jakubauskas, in an interview in Setember 2011 also expressed the opinion that amongst the Lithuanian Tatars only half can be regarded as Muslim, the rest being agnostic or altogether atheist.[1] Consequently, the Lithuanian Tatars have a double, although overlapping, internal structure in the form of ethnic and faith-based organisations.

As an ethnic community, it consists of a number of regionally-based (chiefly in Kaunas, Alytus and Vilnius Districts and the Vilnius region) organisations, formally called *Totorių bendruomenės* (Tatar communities), most of which were established in the early 1990s. The umbrella organisation for these communities was supposed to be Lietuvos totorių bendruomenių sąjunga (Union of Lithuanian Tatar Communities), founded in 1996 and registered in Kaunas. However, since its founding, the union was rejected by the Vilniaus rajono totorių bendruomenė (Vilnius Region Tatar Community), formally comprising five sections, those of Nemėžis, Keturasdešimt totorių, Švenčionys, Trakai and Vilnius City, as an illegitimate representative organisation for all of the Lithuanian Tatars. A letter, dated 7 February 2005, written in the name of the Vilnius Region Tatar Community (Vilnius 2005) to the Ministry of Justice explicitly shows its hostility toward the Union of the Lithuanian Tatar

1 Interview with Romas Jakubauskas, Vilnius, September 2011.

Communities, which in the letter is even deemed as deviant for alledgedly having relations with or even being dependent upon the Ahmadiyya movement's British branch.

Since the Vilnius Region Tatar Community's board remained immovable in its view of the union, on the union's initiative an alternative community, Vilniaus apskrities totorių bendruomenė (Vilnius District Tatar Community), was established in 2005 and was immediately made a member of the union. Since then Vilnius has had two rather antagonistic Tatar communities (Sitdykovas 2005: 1–2). The animosity flared up to the point that the Vilnius Region Tatar Community formally asked the Lithuanian authorities to ban the Union of Tatar Communities and prosecute its chairman Dr Adas Jakubauskas for alleged embezzlement of community funds (Vilnius Region Tatar Community 2005). The state then took no heed, and since the death of the chairman of the Vilnius Region Tatar Community, its new leadership is no longer as hostile to the union, thus paving the way for an inevitable merger of the Vilnius-based communities and the general restructuring of the union itself.

Next to these "purely" Lithuanian Tatar communities, there are several other Tatar communities whose membership or location is not traditionally Lithuanian Tatar. Thus, for example, in Visaginas there is a Tatar community, comprised mainly of recent Tatar immigrants from inner Russia, while in Panevėžys and Klaipėda (cities with no traditional Lithuanian Tatar presence) there are also communities of mixed background with a heavy presence of "Soviet" Tatars. Thus, strictly speaking, communities in Visaginas, Panevėžys and Klaipėda, while bearing a self-designation as Tatar, are not those of Lithuanian Tatars. However, the Panevėžys and Klaipėda communities are members of the Union of Lithuanian Tatar Communities, while the one in Visaginas is not. Asked about the union's (and, by extension, Lithuanian Tatars') relations with Tatars who settled in Lithuania during the Soviet period, the current chairman of the union, Dr Adas Jakubauskas, in a conversation in September 2011 stated that they are friendly and that Lithuanian Tatars treat the Tatars of inner Russia as their cousins, while the mufti asserted that from a religious perspective there is no difference between Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian Tatars.[2] A certain feeling of kinship can certainly be felt in the Tatar-published periodical *Lietuvos totoriai* (Lithuanian Tatars), which routinely devotes several pages to the Kazan Tatar history and the present. This can be explained in part by the fact that the editor-in-chief of the publication, Galimas Sitdykovas, who has had this position since its inception, is himself a Soviet-time immigrant.

2 Interviews with Adas Jakubauskas and Romas Jakubauskas in Vilnius, September 2011.

As for the religious organisation of Lithuania's Muslims, the main body (according to Article 1.1. of its statute), "the supreme governing body of Lithuanian Sunni Muslims" (Spiritual Centre…1998) is the Vilnius-based Lietuvos musulmonų sunitų dvasinis centras – muftiatas (Spiritual Centre of the Lithuanian Sunni Muslims – Muftiate), was (re)established in 1998 and has since then been dominated by Lithuanian Tatars (only one person on the current muftiate board is a non-Tatar – a Lithuanian convert to Islam). For a decade and a half after its establishment, the muftiate was headquartered on state-owned property in a downtown apartment block, rented by the Vilnius city section of the Vilnius Region Tatar Community, and, next to the mufti's office, had several classrooms and a prayer hall, which used to serve as the space for Friday prayers. In 2013, however, both the religious and the ethnic organisations moved into new premises privately owned by a public enterprise founded by the muftiate and the Turkish Department for Religious Affairs (popularly called by its Turkish name, *Diyanet*).

The muftiate currently formally supervises activities of some nine Muslim communities in Lithuania, though two of them, according to the mufti himself, have long been defunct.[3] Membership in those religious organisations based in the traditional localities of Lithuanian Tatars (namely, Nemėžis, the village of Keturiasdešimt totorių, Raižiai, Švenčionys, and to a high degree also Vilnius and Kaunas) virtually coincides with membership in ethnic organisations.

So far, there have been two muftis, both Lithuanian Tatars – Romualdas Krinickis (born in 1973), who served as the mufti between 1998 and 2008, and the current mufti (since 2008) Romualdas Jakubauskas (also born in 1973). The former mufti, Krinickis, a native of Vilnius, at the time of election to the post was 25 years of age. In addition to his duties as mufti, he served as imam in the village of Keturiasdešimt totorių (where one of the four purpose-built historical Tatar mosques is situated) congregations. Upon relinquishing his duties as the mufti to Jakubauskas, Krinickis kept his position as imam of the Keturiasdešimt totorių mosque and currently leads Friday prayers in Vilnius occasionally.

The current mufti, Jakubauskas, a native of Kaunas, acquired his religious education in Lebanon, where he studied at a religious college between 1992 and 1999. After returning to Lithuania, he assumed the position of imam of the Kaunas mosque and kept it until 2012, when a Turkish imam, sent by the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), succeeded him. The elections

3 Centre of Registers 2011. Available at: <www.registrucentras.lt/jar/p/index.php?pav=musulmon%F8&kod=&sav=&sta=&for=700&p=1> (accessed 6 September 2011).

of 2008 catapulted Jakubauskas to the mufti position. For the first two years he chose to reside in Kaunas, but after realising that this led to a paralysis of muftiate activities, he finally (in 2011) decided to move with his family to Vilnius. Next to the mufti, who is the supreme Muslim religious authority in Lithuania, and the former mufti, there are several elderly, self-styled Lithuanian Tatar imams in once Tatar-dominated villages who formally submit to the mufti's authority but by now rarely perform their duties as imams.

Though traditionally the majority of Lithuanian Tatars were countryside dwellers, during Soviet times (mainly due to kolhozisation and industrialisation) many moved to nearby towns and cities. In this way, the capital city Vilnius and the second biggest city in the country, Kaunas, received the bulk of the migrants. Once settled in the urban milieu, most of the Tatars successfully blended into it. This was to a great extent facilitated by the fact that Tatars did not in any respect differ from the non-Tatar majority: they spoke the local languages (Lithuanian, Russian or local Polish), dressed the same way the rest of people in society did, and their physical appearance (the phenotype), with a few individual exceptions, did not differ noticeably from other inhabitants of the land. The only aspect that made Tatars clearly different to the majority was their belonging to Islam. However, in the Soviet Union with its official aversion to religion and pervasive atheistic policies alongside draconian restrictions on the religious activities of all religious groups, religious identity mattered little if at all. All in all, in Soviet times, being a Tatar was not an obstacle to becoming a well-integrated member of society. Consequently, a number of Lithuanian Tatars became academics, artists and civil servants. This trend has continued to the present with a number of Tatars, or at least people of Tatar descent, holding high positions in academic, military and public administration fields.

Since at least after the First World War, the Lithuanian Tatars have been pursuing a mythology of the settlement and genesis of their community in Lithuania in which by far the most prominent role has been accorded to Grand Duke Vytautas, the loyalty to whom – and by extension to his state – is the focal point in this mythology. It has now been revived in post-communist Lithuania with Tatars vehemently insisting on their complete loyalty to the Lithuanian state and the nation, disregarding its Catholic background. An expression of the veneration of Vytautas can be observed in the efforts of the Lithuanian Tatar community to erect a monument to him in Raižiai, a once Tatar-dominated village – the site of the sole operating mosque during the Soviet period and a sprawling Tatar cemetery – which some Tatars informally call "the capital of Lithuanian Tatars". In June 2010, on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of a legendary Grunwald battle (in the territory of today's Poland) in which Tatar horsemen took part on the side of the joint Polish-Lithuanian

army, such a monument, financed largely through donations made by Lithuanian Tatars, was finally erected and officially unveiled (Kaunas 2010).[4] The following year, the Union of Lithuanian Tatar Communities officially passed the possession and maintenance rights of the monument on to the Alytus District Administration.

Soon after regaining independence, the Lithuanian state recognised Islam as one of the nine so-called traditional faith communities to be protected by the state itself. Article 5 of the Law on Traditional Religious Communities and Associations of the Republic of Lithuania, promulagated in 1995, reads: "The state recognises nine traditional religious communities and associations existing in Lithuania, which comprise a part of the historical, spiritual and social heritage of Lithuania: Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Reformed, Russian Orthodox, Old Believer, Judaical, Sunni Muslim and Karaite". Such an attitude on the side of the state would be only laudable. However, the Lithuanian state out of inertia recognises only the Lithuanian version of Islam, which is the version of it practised by the Lithuanian Tatar Muslims, officially as Sunni Islam. Thus, the Lithuanian Muslims – that is, Lithuanian Tatars – while registering their muftiate with the Ministry of Justice in 1998, in their words, "were forced" to put the word "Sunni" in the title. As the then head of the Vilnius congregation, Asanavičius, explained: "The Muslims could expect to receive financial support from the state only if they put 'Sunni' in the title of their organisation" (Sitdykovas 1999: 1); otherwise, their organisation would not be regarded as an organisation of one of the nine officially protected traditional confessions. Since the state allocates funds for the traditional religious communities recognised by the state as such, Tatars (who until now make the majority in the registered Muslim congregations and control the muftiate itself) receive annual support from the state in the range of 3,500 euros[5] – which, however, even by Lithuanian standards is a meager amount.

Moreover, it is *a priori* presumed by the Lithuanian state that a Muslim religious organisation in Lithuania is an organisation of Lithuanian Tatars, who historically have been Sunni of the Hanafi school of law. This was confirmed in an inteview in March 2011 with a civil servant at the Ministry of Justice, who

4 Kauno apskrities totorių bendruomenė (Kaunas District Tatar Community) 2010. *Vytauto Didžiojo ir Žalgirio mūšio 600-jų metinių paminklo atidengimo iškilmės*. Available at: <http://www.totoriai.lt/raiziai_paminklas.htm> (accessed 10 April 2014).

5 Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2010. *Nutarimas dėl lėšų paskirstymo tradicinių Lietuvos bažnyčių ir religinių organizacijų vadovybėms* (*Resolution on Allocation of Funds to Authorities of Traditional Lithuanian Churches and Religious Organizations*). Available at: <http://www.lrvk.lt/bylos/Teises_aktai/2010/05/15313.doc> (accessed 5 July 2010).

has been in charge of religious affairs there for over a decade. In 2002, the muftiate addressed the Ministry of Justice with a request "not to register [with the Ministry] newly forming Muslim congregations without permission from our Spiritual Centre of the Lithuanian Sunni Muslims – Muftiate, as it is stipulated in the Article 3.5 of our statute".[6] Since then, two new congregations in the seaport city of Klaipėda (where there has never been any Tatar – or Muslim, for that matter – presence as the city since its founding in the thirteenth century had been part of Prussia, not the Grand Duchy) – Klaipėdos miesto musulmonų religinė bendruomenė Al-Tauhyd (Klaipėda City Muslim Religious Community Al-Tauhyd, established in 2007) and Klaipėdos krašto musulmonų bendruomenė Iman (Klaipėda Region Muslim Community Iman, founded in 2009) – have been formed. Both have received the muftiate's blessing (the first one still by Krinickis, the second by Jakubauskas) to receive official state recognition as traditional religious communities.

Religion and Culture

In the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the local Muslim community was comparatively small, closed and independent. It did not submit to any lay or spiritual authority from without. One or several Tatar settlements comprised what would locally be called a "parish", which would have its own mosque. Members of these congregations would elect their imams, popularly called mulla until the nineteenth century. The congregations would take care of their mosques and any possible endowments of property for religious purposes (known in Arabic as *waqf*) attached to them, as a rule a plot of communal land devoted to the sustenance of the imam. Along with Islam, the term "jamaat" arrived in the grand duchy. To Lithuanian Tatars it meant congregation but also the meeting of the congregation. Until the eighteenth century, *jamaat* testified to its Tatar origins and represented the religious community in its relations with the government. Andrzej Zakrzewski even argues that *jamaat* was a self-governing body of the community, led by senior Tatar officers responsible for the diaspora's military-administrative organisation (Zakrzewski 1989: 137–138). The autonomy of the Lithuanian Muslim religious community was curtailed in 1832, when the Muslims of the western provinces of the Russian Empire became subjects of Таврическое магометанское духовное

6 "Dėl naujų musulmonų religinių bendruomenių registravimo". Unpublished letter from the Spiritual Centre of the Lithuanian Sunni Muslims – Muftiate to the Ministry of Justice, 28 June 2002.

правление (Taurida Mohammedan Spiritual Board) and of the mufti whose headquarters was in Crimea. The Tatars had to submit to laws pertaining to non-Christian religious communities, and in addition to performing their religious duties, imams had to register the births, marriages and deaths of their community members (Bairašauskaitė 1996: 130–150).

Islam as historically practised by Lithuanian Tatars has been researched very little. The contention commonly found in literature on Lithuanian Tatars that they are Sunni of the Hanafi school of law has, however, been challenged by, amongst others, Piotr Borawski. He has noted that the belonging of the Lithuanian Muslims to any branch of Islam was a mere formality as the Lithuanian Tatar community never had any religious scholars or experts on Islamic law, and in general Tatars were not interested in interpretations of Islam (Borawski 1991a: 183). One may safely argue that the beliefs and practices of Lithuania's Muslims were formed under the influence of various trends and at the same time were simplistic with expressed features of what some researchers of Islam call folk Islam.

Since the majority of Lithuanian Tatars traditionally lived in the countryside, most of their mosques, around which religious life revolved, were situated in villages rather than cities. By the beginning of the twentieth century, on the territory of today's Republic of Lithuania, only half a dozen mosques remained. During the Soviet era they were all, except for the one in Raižiai, closed. Only four of them have survived into the present. The oldest (built in 1815) amongst them is situated in the village of Keturiasdešimties totorių (20 kilometres south of Vilnius). The second-oldest (built in 1889) is the one in Raižiai (Alytus District, some 90 kilometres south-west of Vilnius). Besides these, there are the Nemėžis village (10 kilometres southeast of Vilnius) mosque (built in 1909) and, finally, the one in Kaunas city (the only brick mosque in Lithuania, built in the 1930s). In the capital city, Vilnius, there is currently no purpose-built mosque at all as the pre-First World War Tatar mosque was demolished by Soviet authorities in the 1960s and has not been rebuilt. With the advent of independence, the Kaunas mosque was restored and reopened as early as 1991, while the ones in the villages of Nemėžis and Keturiasdešimt totorių were restored in 1993.[7]

However, due to lack of attending worshippers, the three historical Tatar mosques located in once Tatar-dominated villages, though they formally have imams in charge of them, open their doors only during religious festivities like

7 The current interior of Keturiasdešimt totorių, Raižiai and Nemėžis mosques has been recently digitalized and can be viewed at <http://www.panoramas.lt/index.php?page_id=132&pan_type=242&show=yes&search_katalog=mecete> (accessed 5 September 2011).

FIGURE 1.1 *The Nemėžis mosque from 1909*
PHOTO: EGDŪNAS RAČIUS, 2013

the two Bayrams (the feasts at the end of the fasting and the pilgrimage seasons). The Kaunas mosque, with its vibrant multicultural congregation, mainly composed of foreign students and businessmen, has fared better, especially after 2000, when Romas Jakubauskas (the current mufti), a young and energetic native Tatar with a proper Islamic education, assumed the position of imam there.

Though through Jakubauskas' organised summer camps (annually organised between 1994 and 2005) and other activities aimed at Tatar youth, some young Tatars have (re)discovered their Muslim roots and as a result have become more observant. The Muslim Tatar community in general is, due to emigration, assimilation, intermarriage and above all secularisation, apparently dwindling, and there is little hope that it will ever produce a deeply religious component of any significance in the future composition of the Muslim community in Lithuania, let alone spiritual leaders. Their virtual absence from

FIGURE 1.2 *The mosque in Kaunas from 1932*
PHOTO: EGDŪNAS RAČIUS, 2013

the communal Friday prayers in Vilnius and Kaunas further attests to the Lithuanian Tatars' effective loss of interest in religion, something that is routinely lamented by those still paying attention to religious duties (Klemkaitė 2008: 38).

Traditionally, mosques would be surrounded by cemeteries (although there have been numerous cemeteries without mosques nearby). Currently, the mosques of Keturiasdešimt totorių, Raižiai and Nemėžis have cemeteries attached to them. The cemeteries in Raižiai and Nemėžis still accept the dead for burial, while Keturiasdešimt totorių Cemetery is closed for burying.[8] While the earlier graves strictly follow Islamic requirements (with two unpolished

8 A digitalized view of Keturiasdešimt totorių cemetery with the mosque in the middle can be viewed at <http://www.panoramas.lt/index.php?page_id=132&pan_type=242&show=yes&search_katalog=mecete> (accessed 5 September 2011).

FIGURE 1.3 *The Tatar cemetery in Nemėžis*
PHOTO: EGDŪNAS RAČIUS, 2013

stones of different size marking the burial site), later (starting with the nineteenth century) ones reflect the fashions of the day typical to the region – with monuments of polished stone, adorned with inscriptions in Arabic, Russian, Polish or (most recently) Lithuanian, sometimes with photos or engravings of the faces of the deceased. It is worth noting that many Arabic inscriptions have orthographic mistakes, presumably because they were done by local non-Tatar (hence non-Muslim) artisans from the same blueprints. A group of Polish researchers did an extensive analysis of these cemeteries in the wider region (Drozd 1999).

Lithuanian Tatar manuscript literature makes up a distinctive cultural stratum. It has been forming since the sixteenth century when the dialects of Kipchak-Turkic languages of the Tatars were supplanted by the dominant local languages, Byelorussian and Polish (Dubiński 1981: 85). Until that time, the Tatar elite could use the manuscripts brought over from the Muslim East, most likely through the Ottoman Turks. Lithuanian Tatars took over and also used texts written in Arabic, Chagatay, Ottoman Turkish and even some in Persian. In the sixteenth century, they started translating them into Byelorussian and Polish, but still using the Arabic script, albeit modified.

The humanist culture of Lithuanian Tatars was evidently influenced by the Reformation, the social, religious and cultural movement that started in Lithuania in the 1530s and 1540s and which brought to maturation a new approach to literature in one's mother tongue (Lukšaitė 1994: 9–11). To satisfy their religious, educational and daily needs, Tatars created or adapted texts of different types and genres. The most popular amongst them was the so-called *kitab*. It is a collection of relevant texts of secular and religious nature, comprising *ahadith* (narrative reports of Muhammad's sayings and actions), apocrypha, Quranic and Biblical stories, stories of moral and didactic nature or having to do with adventure, descriptions of Muslim obligations, rituals and prayers. As a rule, *kitabs* were written in either Byelorussian or Polish, but there have also been those written in Middle Eastern languages, accompanied by a translation. Another type of manuscripts was *hamail*, a collection of prayers in Arabic and/or Ottoman Turkish with explanations in Byelorussian or Polish. In these prayer books, medical and household advice as well as explanations of dreams and the like can often be found. Practically all Tatar families had such prayer books. Much less common types of manuscripts were *tafsir*, the Quranic text written in Arabic and its verbatim translation into Byelorussian or Polish, and *tajweed*, a textbook for Quran recitation. The contents of the latter would usually be rendered in either Ottoman Turkish, Byelorussian or Polish (Antonovich 1968: 14–20).

Andrzej Drozd argues that as early as in the seventeenth century, wealthy members of the Tatar elite were well familiar with both the Middle Eastern and the old Polish literature, knew Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and were distinguishable by their humanist culture (Drozd 1999: 30–37). For instance, the fact that Tatars had interpreters amongst themselves who knew the Turkish language is attested to by insertions of new Turkish texts into the manuscripts of the first part of the seventeenth century or a Turkish-Byelorussian dictionary written by a Slonim mulla, Mustapha Szehidevicz, in the 1830s (Antonovich 1968: 123; Aleksandrovich-Michkinene and Shupa 1995; Suter 2004: 87, 537). The educational level of translators is further confirmed by translations of the Quran and other liturgical texts from Arabic into Polish and Byelorussian (Drozd 1999: 52–80). However, there are no data testifying that Tatars would know Arabic in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and insertions in texts in Persian can most certainly be treated as accidental (Antonovich 1968: 125).

The manuscript literature of the Lithuanian Tatars is an excellent example of what may be called cultural and religious syncretism. Hence, in it, cultural layers of the Muslim East and Eastern Europe are intertwined. In Tatar religious manuscripts, there are a number of texts directly related to Christian and

Jewish religious cultures. For instance, while stories about Jesus' life and death or about how his disciples converted pagans can be attributed to both the Christian and the Muslim traditions, the genealogy of Adam's descendants and the description of the Great Deluge are almost taken verbatim from the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament (Antonovich 1968: 178–179, 185–186, 190).

Moreover, researchers have noted that most of the common Muslim narratives, like the creation of the world, Judgment Day, or the Prophet's renowned trip to heaven (*miraj*), have been semantically adapted in the manuscripts of the Lithuanian Tatars to correspond to their social environment and realities of the time, for instance, in regards to mixed marriages or relations with Jews and Christians (Łapicz 1989: 173). This leads to a working conclusion that the Lithuanian Tatars were engaged in the creation of a specific understanding of Islam and at the same time endeavoured to implant their version of this religion and culture in the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Compilers and copyists of *kitabs* were well acquainted with the local literature of the grand duchy. In some of the Tatar manuscripts, the Bible, translated into Polish by Arian Symon Budny in 1571–1572, is used. A hagiographic story, the hymn about Saint Job (Drozd 1995: 166–167), which is very popular in medieval European literature, and polemical texts taken from Protestant religious literature are also found in Tatar manuscripts (Drozd 1994: 220–227). Names of the authors and translators of Tatar manuscripts are not known. The first manuscripts have not survived, and most of the preserved manuscripts are copies from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which contain new texts often added when copying or translating the earlier versions of the manuscripts. Therefore, the manuscript literature of Lithuanian Tatars should be treated as a result of colletive effort.

Due to the specificity of the manuscript literature, its cultural user was solely the Tatar community. The only known impulse for the Tatar writing for an outside readership was a challenge thrown at them in the beginning of the seventeenth century, when a person – believed to have been a Catholic priest – under the pseudonym of Piotr Czyżewski published the pamphlet *Alfurkan* (Czyżewski 1617; Nosowski 1974: 351–368), degrading Tatar origins and their religion. There are hints that a Tatar by the name of Azulewicz responded to this charge by writing *Apologia Tatarow* (Apology of the Tatars), but the manuscript of this text has not survived.

Printed literature written by and for Tatars did not appear until the nineteenth century. The first printed book was published in Vilnius in 1830 and was titled *Wykład wiary mahometańskiej czyli islamskiej z części Koranu i przykazań proroka chadisiem zwanych* (Presentation of the Mohammedan Faith) (Sobolewski 1830). Its author, Józef Sobolewski, was a local judge in Novgorodek.

Another author, Maciej Tuhan-Baranowski, was the first Tatar who made an attempt to write the history of Lithuanian Tatars. His *O muślimach litewskich* (About Lithuanian Muslims), based on a mythologised romantic concept of Tatar origins, was published in 1896 in Warsaw (Bairašauskaitė 1997: 253–284).

There was virtually no original literary output made by Tatars in Lithuania either in the interwar or Soviet periods. Even today, there is little original literary activity amongst Lithuanian Tatars with the exception of several poets, who write in one of the languages spoken in the country, there is virtually no Tatar prose. However, several Tatar activists are engaged in the procurement of academic and semi-academic literature on Lithuanian Tatars. Noteworthy amongst recent publications are an edited volume on the history of Lithuanian Tatars and an annotated translation into Lithuanian and Russian of a hefty Tatar *kitab* dating back to the eighteenth century (Miškinienė 2009). Though some of these publications indeed have academic value, most are meant for wider audiences, both Tatar and non-Tatar, although it remains to be seen if non-Tatars are much interested in (or in fact have access to) such publications, given that most of them tend to be published in small quantities and distributed amongst Tatars themselves. In order to salvage their cultural identity, Tatars in settlements with big enough communities, such as Vilnius, Kaunas, Keturiasdešimt totorių, Raižiai and Nemėžis, have maintained weekend schools for Tatar youngsters, where teenagers are given classes on Tatar history and the religion of Islam. Since the Lithuanian Tatars lost their old mother tongue several centuries ago and now speak one of the languages of the country (Lithuanian, Polish, Russian or Byelorussian) as their mother tongue, language teaching focuses on Turkish (usually taught by the imam supplied by the Turkish embassy) and Arabic (usually taught by Arab students).

Amongst the communal festivals, probably the most well known is Sabantuy (summer plough festival), an event spanning several days which features songs, dances, games and cuisine. Though not known amongst Lithuanian Tatars until practically the very end of the twentieth century, it was introduced to them by Tatars who arrived in and settled in Lithuania during Soviet times. However, some of the Lithuanian Tatars have now internalised this festival and have started branding it as their own. For instance, in June 2011, when the seventh Baltic States' Tatar Sabantuy was organised in Trakai, a historic capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the chairman of the Union of Lithuanian Tatar Communities, Adas Jakubauskas, is quoted as having said that:

> "Trakai since the times of Grand Duke Vytautas was famous for being one of the largest places of concentration of Tatar communities in Lithuania. [...] This is why we decided to publicise this Sabantuy with the slogan

> 'Return to Trakai' and hope that Trakai will become a traditional place to hold this festival, which helps Lithuanian Tatars to preserve their national traditions, develop their culture and bring together the community" ("Visi nori būti savarankiški…", 2011).

Since 2011, Sabantuy is organised in Trakai by the Union of Lithuanian Tatar Communities every year. The mufti is not enchanted by this idea; in his opinion, Sabantuy is an alien festival with which Lithuanian Tatars historically have nothing to do and should not identify. However, he is not against the participation of Lithuanian Tatars, if invited as guests, in Sabantuy organised by Tatars with a Kazan background (Jakubauskas R. 2011).

Apart from the annual Sabantuy festival, Tatars gather together for other annual religious celebrations (Bayrams), which they, however, treat like occasions for communal get-togethers rather than religious rituals. Though some do take part in communal prayers, many stay outdoors and simply congregate with relatives and long-not-seen acqauintances.[9] Occasionally, the religious component in these celebrations is supplemented with artistic performances in the evening in rented halls, with dance and music performed by either local Tatars or guests from Tatarstan. Given their small numbers, Tatars (although mainly non-Lithuanian) appear to be rather active in participating in performative arts, such as folk dance. For instance, in 1996, when celebrating the 600th anniversary of Tatar residence in Lithuania, a folklore ensemble called Alije was founded. Since then it has become a prominent feature at many Tatar celebrations and festivals not only in Lithuania but also in Poland and Belarus. Another folk dance ensemble, Miras, based in Visaginas (in the far northeastern corner of the country, bordering Belarus), has lately been as active as Alije. In the autumn of 2010, Tatars organised in Vilnius the seventh International Lithuanian Tatars' culture and sports festival, which took two days and featured, amongst other things, music and dance performances by Lithuanian and foreign Tatar bands, troupes and choirs as well as a photo exhibition.

Another, very new, occasion for getting together – or rather a means of getting Tatars to get together – is the so-called festival of *šimtalapis* (hundred-listed), a specific type of pastry prepared exclusively by Lithuanian Tatars and branded by themselves and others as a top dish of their cuisine. In February 2011, some 150 people gathered in Vilnius for such a Šimtalapis festival, organised by the Union of Lithuanian Tatar Communities. The festival comprised culinary competitions, a folk music, song and dance concert, poetry readings

9 One of the authors' (Račius) observation from the celebrations after Ramadan in the mosque of the village of Keturiasdešimt totorių in the autumn of 2009.

FIGURE 1.4 *Timur Seifullen (left), chairman of the Estonian Islamic Congregation, and Radik Mažitov, a member of the Lithuanian Muslim community, on a pilgrimage in Mecca, 2003*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

and a youth disco. A report on the festival on one of the Tatar-maintained websites expressed its wish that "in the future the festival of 'Šimtalapis' will become traditional, during which Lithuanian Tatars will get together, and women and girls of the Lithuanian Tatar community will demonstrate their culinary mastery".[10]

In order to familiarise the non-Tatar population of Lithuania, as well as visitors to the country, with the heritage of Lithuanian Tatars, some of the activists from amongst the Lithuanian Tatars have, with the help of tourism agencies, organised public lectures and guided tours to sites of note, such as Tatar mosques and cemeteries in and around Vilnius, thus making Lithuanian Tatar culture into a brand of its own.

Epilogue

The twentieth century brought many new challenges to the survival of the Muslim Lithuanian Tatars – wars of the first part of the century displaced

10 Kauno apskrities totorių bendruomenė (Kaunas District Tatar Community) 2011. *Įvyko „Šimtalapio šventė"*. Available at: <http://www.totoriai.lt/simtalapio_svente.htm> (accessed 10 April 2014).

communities, caused the loss of numerous lives, and broke the intellectual spine of the community. The Soviet period alienated Tatars from their religion and suppressed their ethnic identity and creativity, while the current period of Lithuania's independence facilitated rapid demographic changes (due to migration and shifts in birth-death ratio) in the numbers and composition of the community. The official statistics attest to the inevitable fate of the community to disappear from the list of national minorities of the county, and although some of the younger Tatars (re)discover their Muslim roots and become devout believers, very few amongst them identify with the Tatar communities living elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. The language barrier is one of the obstacles preventing closer communication and cooperation with Tatars abroad – young Lithuanian Tatars do not speak the Tatar language, and very few of them have mastered Russian, while those in Russia and Ukraine hardly speak English. Therefore, it is hard to imagine that some sort of lifeline would be forged with those Tatar communities abroad. On the other hand, there is evidence of some contact-seaching with the Tatar diaspora in Western Europe. If this is pursued in earnest, in the future, the Lithuanian Tatars, albeit authochthonous to Lithuania, and thus Europe, will potentially become part of a pan-European (in the sense of the EU) diaspora identity movement.

One also has to realise that in the post-communist context most of the Lithuanian Tatars are highly secularised, and for them Islam tends to bear a festive character rather than being a comprehensive system of beliefs and daily practices as it once was, especially for tightly-knit rural communities. And although due to inertia Islam and Tartars are still, in the popular mind of Lithuanians, inseparable, it is more and more obvious that the face of the living Islam in Lithuania (in both the physical appearance of the worshippers but even more importantly in its contents), with accelerating conversions of Lithuanians to Islam and immigration from Muslim majority countries, has already become anything but Tatar. It remains to be seen how the Tatar-owned religious property, foremost the surviving mosques, will fare – whether they will become state-protected historical sites or, if passed into the hands of practicing non-Tatar Muslims, they will be reborn to new life. The Kaunas mosque appears to be on the latter path already.

In any case, the preserved cultural heritage of Lithuanian Tatars, in whatever form, is becoming more and more the artefacts of history and museums as well as a form of consumerised attraction at the expense of authentic living cultural life amongst the Tatars themselves. Yet, there is so much of this centuries-long heritage that has either not been made accessible to wider audiences or not even (re)discovered, even amongst the surviving Tatars themselves. With every year passing and those who still remember and care

about it from amongst the community itself departing, it is more urgent than ever to record and relate it to the wider cultural heritage of Lithuania but also to the wider Baltic Sea basin.

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CHAPTER 2

Poland

Agata S. Nalborczyk

Polish Tatars constitute a small but quite close-knit religious and ethnic minority. The present structure of the Polish Tatar minority was formed after the First World War, when Poland regained independence after 123 years of partitions. In spite of 45 years of communist rule after the Second World War, Polish Tatars managed to preserve their religion and traditions; and after 1989, when Poland became a democratic state again, they started to revive old ways and develop new ones of transmitting their religious and cultural heritage. Polish Tatars are descendants of the Tatars who started to settle in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the fourteenth century (Kryczyński 2000: 4–5). The first Tatars settled in the territories of today's Poland in the seventeenth century (Sobczak 1984: 34–38), mainly in the Podlachia (Pol. Podlasie) region in the east, where in 1679 they were granted land by King John III Sobieski along with the same duties and privileges as Tatars in Lithuania (Konopacki 2010: 78). Because of their military service and fief ownership, most Polish Tatars in practice belonged to the noble class (Kryczyński 2000: 27). In the second half of the seventeenth century, their status already equalled that of the Christian Polish-Lithuanian nobility (Borawski 1986: 178–180).

Military Involvement

Tatars were settled in Poland on the same terms as those before them were in Lithuania, and the lands were given to them together with the duty to serve in the armed forces (Sobczak 1984: 80–91; Tyszkiewicz 1989: 160). They continued to serve in their own units of cavalry called *chorągiew* (banners) (Sobczak 1984: 49–50), basic administrative units of soldiers in both the Crown and Lithuanian armies, which consisted on average of 100 to 200 horsemen or infantrymen. Tatars were mobilised at the command of a prince or king (or later commander-in-chief, *hetman*), unlike other district banners, who mobilised only during the common mobilisation of armed forces (*pospolite ruszenie*) (Zakrzewski 2004: 135; Sobczak 1984: 67–68). Tatars also served in police squads, supervised the execution of decrees, suppressed revolts and served in patrols at times of unrest (Zakrzewski 2004: 137).

In the next centuries Tatars fought, for instance, in the war with the Ottoman Empire – of which the most famous is the Battle of Vienna on 12 October 1683 and the less known Battle of Parkany (now Štúrovo) in Slovakia on 7–8 October 1683,

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during which the life of the Polish king, Jan III Sobieski, the commander of the united troops, is said to have been saved by one of his Tatar soldiers (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 28–29). One of the historical transmissions reports that this individual was Rittmeister Samuel Mur Krzeszowski, who commanded his own small banner of 60 horsemen and was one of the settlers from the Crown of the Polish Kingdom in Podlachia (Kryczyński 2000: 27). In 1795, due to the Third Partition of Poland, the lands inhabited by Tatars were incorporated into the Russian Empire (see further Nalborczyk and Borecki 2011: 345–346). Despite this, many Tatars participated in armed freedom fighting before the partitions and throughout the period of the partitions. For instance, the 4th Regiment of the Advance Guard of the Army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania commanded by General Józef Bielak, who was of Tatar origin, fought in the Kościuszko Insurrection in the 1790s and so did Colonel Mustafa Achmatowicz, one of its commanding officers (Tyszkiewicz 2002: 33–47). This regiment consisted of eight squadrons, and each of them was commanded by officers of Tatar origin. Tatars also fought in subsequent uprisings directed against Russia (Kryczyński 2000: 38; see Nalborczyk 2013: 240–242).

In 1918, when Poland regained independence after World War I, the population of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars within its borders amounted to about 5,500 (Miśkiewicz 1990: 61). As a testimony to the tradition of Tatar military service, in 1919 the National Command Authority created the Tatar Uhlan regiment, named after Mustafa Achmatowicz. This regiment, commanded at first by General Aleksander Romanowicz and then by Podpolkovnik (Lieutenant Colonel) Zenon Kryczyński, took part in fights against the Bolshevik Russia 1919–1920. After this war the Regiment was disbanded and in 1936 a Tatar Squadron (also called the Mahometan Squadron) of the 13th Regiment of Wilno Uhlans was created in the Polish army, with an imam and slightly different uniforms, to which Muslims were recruited. Tatars were among supreme officers of this squadron, for example Rittmeister Aleksander Jeljaszewicz, the last commander. Tatars served not only in the Uhlan regiment, the First Battery of the Horse Artillery was commanded by Podpolkovnik (Lieutenant Colonel) Leon Mirza Huźman Sulkiewicz, who was awarded with the highest Polish military decoration, the Order of Virtuti Militari, and in the 29th Artillery Regiment served Podpolkovnik (Lieutenant Colonel) Fuad Aleksandrowicz (Konopacki 2006: 33).

During the Second World War, Tatars served in all units of the Polish army at almost every frontline in the world, in the 2nd Corps of the Polish Armed Forces in the West and in the Polish 1st Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division under Soviet command. Interestingly, even Tatar women shared a similar liking for military service – nine women served in the Women's Auxiliary Service in the 2nd Corps of the Polish Armed Forces in the West (Konopacki 2006: 33). The most well-known of them is Dżennet Dżabagi-Skibniewska (1915–1991). Apparently, Tatars are exceptionally proud of their past and the

military service of their ancestors. Contemporary magazines, books and poetical works published by Tatars often feature officers of Tatar origin serving in the Polish army.

Tatars as a Religious Minority

Well-structured organisational bodies are responsible for the organised life of Polish Tatars. These fall into two categories: denominational organisations and cultural ones. Denominational organisations are officially recognised by the Polish state (Ministry of Interior and Administration), and they own places of prayer, cemeteries etc. In 1925, the oldest of them, Muzułmański Związek Religijny w Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej, the Muslim Religious Union in the Republic of Poland (henceforth the Union), was established, and a mufti was elected, the Orientalist Dr Jakub Szynkiewicz (Sobczak 2004: 188–189; see further Nalborczyk, forthcoming). The Union was independent of religious and secular authorities. It gained the status of a legal entity, and so did all of its local communities. However, it was only in 1936 that Islam was finally officially recognised by the Polish Parliament in the Act of 21 April 1936, which defined the relationship between the state and the Union (see further Sobczak 2004: 173–174). Prior to 1939, it operated on the basis of 19 local Muslim religious communities. The seat of the mufti was in Vilnius (now the capital of Lithuania), at that time a city with a particularly numerous Muslim community. The Union's activity was brought to a halt by the Second World War, and the organisation was only reactivated in 1947 under the communist regime (with a partly changed name reflecting that it was now a part of the socialist People's Republic of Poland).

After the Second World War, Poland regained only a small part of the territories inhabited by Tatars (about 10 per cent) with three pre-war religious communities: in Warsaw, Bohoniki and Kruszyniany (Kołodziejczyk 1997: 29). The eastern territories that belonged to Poland before the war were taken by the Soviet Union (the Lithuanian and Belorussian Soviet republics). However, as a result of migration programmes, many Muslim Tatars were forced to leave the lands taken over by the Soviet Union and move to the western parts of the Polish post-war territories, such as Gdańsk and Gorzów Wielkopolski, which used to belong to Germany before the war (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 80–83). New religious communities were soon established there, but due to those post-war migrations, the Tatar population was dispersed. The number of imams was insufficient, places of worship were left outside Polish borders (some of them destroyed), and many educated Tatars lost their lives at war (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 171). The level of religious education was not high either, which was partly a result of the isolation of Poland from other countries, where there existed centres of education in

Muslim theology. For years, therefore, the functions of imams were held by Tatars educated before the war (Borawski 1986: 307–308). In such circumstances, some families decided to leave the western territories where the Tatars were dispersed and join the Tatar community in its traditional settlements in Podlachia, especially in Białystok, where a new local Muslim community was officially established in 1961 (Miśkiewicz 1993: 97).

The People's Republic of Poland, in existence from 1945 to 1989, was a totalitarian and non-democratic state, where human rights were not observed and where all activities and organisations were controlled by the state. As any other organisation, thus, the Muslim Religious Union's activity was strictly supervised by the state. However, despite the tight control, some new local religious communities were established, and members of the Union managed to organise some cultural activities, like publishing periodicals, one of which was the quarterly *Życie Muzułmańskie* (The Muslim Life), published between 1986–1991 with Selim Chazbijewicz as editor-in-chief. Until the late 1980s, Tatars were still almost the only Muslims living in Poland.

The situation changed in 1989, because of the political transformation which followed after the change of the government system. Poland became a democratic state, and Polish citizens were guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion. The relations between religions and state are now regulated, above all, by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 and the Act on the Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion of 17 May 1989. Nevertheless, the Act of 21 April 1936 on the relations between the state and the Muslim Religious Union was not repealed by the Sejm (Parliament) of the Republic of Poland, and according to Polish legislation, all legal acts from before 1939 remain in force unless repealed (Nalborczyk and Borecki 2011: 351). The activities of religious communities are not financed by the state; neither does the state pay the salaries of their officials, unless they teach religious education in schools or work as chaplains in the army or hospitals (Rynkowski 2005: 399).

The majority of the Polish Muslim Tatars are members of the Union. After the political transformation of 1989, its traditional name was restored. It is the oldest denominational organisation of Polish Muslims. It is also the largest one today, with the number of its members amounting to about 5,000. The Union operates on the basis of six local Muslim communities. The oldest of them, established in the seventeenth century, are located in Kruszyniany and Bohoniki, the biggest is in Białystok, while the remaining ones are found in Gdańsk and two in Warsaw. As an officially recognised denominational organisation, the Union has the right to erect mosques, provide religious instruction at public schools, perform ritual slaughter as well as to have religious endowments (*waqf*) and perform burial ceremonies according to Muslim religious regulations. Until 2012 the Union was allowed to give *halal* certificates (of Islamically proper food) (Nalborczyk and Grodź: 2013: 510).

FIGURE 2.1 *The mosque in Kruszyniany from the eighteenth century*
PHOTO: AGATA S. NALBORCZYK, 2014

The Union is led by the Highest Muslim Board and the present mufti, Tomasz Miśkiewicz (of Tatar origin), who was elected in 2004 – the first time for such an election since the Second World War. The seat of the mufti is now in Warsaw and Białystok.

The Union organises not only daily and Friday prayers, but also community meetings during religious holidays, such as during the month of Ramadan. Moreover, it arranges cultural events dedicated to Tatar traditions, including the Podlachia Days of Muslim Culture (Podlaskie Dni Kultury Muzułmańskiej) and the Tatar Culture Days (Dni Kultury Tatarskiej). It publishes two quarterly magazines: *Przegląd Tatarski* (The Tatar Review) and *Muzułmanie Rzeczpospolitej* (Muslims of the Republic of Poland). The Union runs its own website and receives financial support from the state for its cultural and publishing activities.[1]

Polish Tatars are Sunnis of the Hanafi school of law. The most important religious holidays for them are Ramazan Bayram (the celebrations at the end of Ramadan) and Kurban Bayram (the Feast of the Sacrifice). Interestingly, in spite of being Sunni, Tatars traditionally also celebrate some Shiite holidays like Ashura Bayram (Pol. Aszurejny Bajram), when martyrs are commemorated, and Mawlid (Pol. Miełlud Bajram), the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (see further Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 191–192). All celebrations start with a

1 The website is available at: http://www.mzr.pl.

FIGURE 2.2 *Interior of the mosque in Bohoniki*
PHOTO: AGATA S. NALBORCZYK, 2014

prayer, then the imam recites or "sings" *sadoga* (Arab. *sadaqa*), that is, a prayer for the food that is shared amongst the participants. After the prayer, Tatars have a festive meal consisting of traditional Tatar dishes in their houses, and in the afternoon they visit a cemetery to pray for the dead. For the most important religious holidays, many Tatars go to traditional Tatar mosques in Kruszyniany and Bohoniki to celebrate together in those historical places as in the old days. They gather in those traditional places especially during the Kurban Bayram, when the sacrificial animal (usually a cow or a sheep) is slaughtered and its meat given to the community.

Polish Tatars observe their own religious rituals connected with the most significant stages in human life, and whole communities participate in them. They observe *azan* – giving a name to a newborn baby. The baby is dressed in white and laid on a table facing Mecca, next to the Quran, candles, bread, salt and water. The imam says a prayer pronouncing the baby's name, then takes the baby's index finger and says the profession of faith seven times. Next, holding the baby in his hands, he recites *azan* (Kryczyński 2000: 210–211).

Marriage is also a very important ceremony for Polish Tatars. The Tatar nuptial ceremony starts with a common prayer of men and the imam in the groom's house. Then all the guests go to the bride's house where the marriage ceremony takes place. The imam stands at the head of a table covered with a white tablecloth, decorated with myrtle, candles, water, bread and salt. The young couple

stand on a sheepskin facing Mecca and the ceremony begins. The bride's head is covered with a veil (Pol. *zaharemienie*) and all the guests congratulate the newly-wed couple (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 192–193). The whole wedding procession then moves to the groom's house for the wedding reception. Before the religious ceremony they must have a civil ceremony at a state office. It is a necessary condition for the marriage to be valid for state authorities.

The community life of Polish Tatars has always been concentrated around mosques and prayer houses. Between the First and Second World Wars, there were 17 purpose-built mosques and two prayer houses in Poland (Kryczyński 2000: 162–163). There was no mosque in the capital. Therefore, Warsaw Muslims established, in 1928, the Komitet Budowy Meczetu (Mosque-Building Committee). However, they did not manage to start any mosque construction work before 1939, when the Second World War broke out (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 93–94). Only one Tatar mosque has been established in the post-war period in Poland (Gdańsk, 1990).

Thus there are now three purpose-built mosques belonging to the Muslim Religious Union within Polish borders: in Kruszyniany (dating back to the eighteenth century), Bohoniki (from the nineteenth century), and the newest one in Gdańsk. The biggest local Muslim religious community, in Białystok, has only a prayer house at its disposal, and so do other communities. Local Tatar communities organise their religious and cultural activities mostly in mosques/prayer houses or in their surroundings, for instance in Białystok (the Podlachia Days of the Muslim Culture) and in Kruszyniany (the Tatar Culture Days). In places where there is no Muslim religious instruction in public schools, due to insufficient numbers of pupils, religious instruction is provided in mosques, prayer houses or Islamic cultural centres.

Every cemetery in traditional Muslim religious communities, called *mizar/miziar* (or *zireć*), plays an important role. There are historical Muslim cemeteries still in service in Kruszyniany, Bohoniki and Warsaw (the so-called Tatar Cemetery, established in 1867), but there are also several closed cemeteries in places where the Tatar minority has vanished. Polish Tatars meet at the cemeteries to pray for the dead. Tatar graves are made of stone with inscriptions including the Muslim creed or profession of faith (*shahada*) and a special blessing (*basmala*). The dead are buried within 24 hours and without coffins, but sometimes a coffin must be used due to health regulations. The body is washed and wrapped in a green shroud. During the night before the burial ceremony, men gather in the house around the body to pray and recite the Quran. During prayers they are offered *syta*, a traditional drink of water with honey. After the burial, the closest family is obliged to give *sadoga*, homemade sweets and cakes, to the participants of the ceremony (see further Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 193–194).

FIGURE 2.3 *Graveyard in Kruszyniany*
PHOTO: AGATA S. NALBORCZYK, 2014

Tatars as an Ethnic Minority

Beside denominational organisations, Tatar organised life is structured by cultural associations. These associations must only be registered at a respective office after fullfilling required conditions.[2]

Current relations between the state and ethnic minorities are regulated by the Act of 6 January 2005 on National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Languages.[3] Tatars are mentioned in the Act and recognised as an ethnic minority.[4] Article 18 of the Act states:[5]

1. Public authorities shall be obligated to take appropriate measures in order to support the activity aimed at protection, maintenance and development of cultural identity of the minority.

2 Act of 7 April 1989 on Associations (Dz. U. 2001 nr 79 poz. 85).

3 Dz. U. 2005 nr 17 poz. 141.

4 A translation of the Act into the Tatar language is available on the website of the Ministry of Interior and Administration, although Polish Tatars lost their language in the sixteenth century and speak Polish now: http://www.mswia.gov.pl/download.php?s=1&id=2342 (accessed 27 June 2014).

5 The English version on the website of the Ministry of Interior and Administration is available at: http://www.mswia.gov.pl/download.php?s=1&id=2327 (accessed 27 June 2014).

2. The measures referred to in par. 1 may, in particular, include targeted grants and core grants to finance:
   (1) the activities of cultural institutions, artistic movement and folk art of minorities, and artistic events of significance for the minority culture;
   (2) investments contributing to the preservation of minority cultural identity;
   (3) publication of books, journals, periodicals and leaflets in minority languages or in the Polish language in the printed form or by the use of other video and sound recording techniques;
   (4) support for TV and radio programmes made by the minorities;
   (5) protection of places associated with minority;
   (6) activities of local cultural clubs;
   (7) the running of libraries and documentation of minority cultural and artistic life;
   (8) education of children and youth, effected in various forms;
   (9) promotion of knowledge about minorities;
   (10) other programmes accomplishing the purposes referred to in par. 1, and promoting civic integration of minorities.

According to the provisions of the Act of 6 January 2005, the state is entitled and even obliged to give financial support to ethnic minorities. For this reason, a number of activities and publications of Polish Tatars include the adjective "Tatar", not "Muslim".

In 1926, Polish Tatars established a cultural association, Związek Kulturalno-Oświatowy Tatarów Polskich Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej, the Union of Culture and Education of Tatars in the Republic of Poland. This association operated on the basis of 20 divisions located in cities and villages with a considerable Tatar population (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 159). The main aim of the cultural association and its local divisions was the collection and protection of old documents, historical monuments and objects connected with Polish Tatar history and traditions. Each local division was obliged to create a library or an amateur art group as well as to organise public lectures promoting knowledge of the Tatar religion and cultural heritage (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 159).

In 1929, the Tatar National Museum (Tatarskie Muzeum Narodowe) and two years later (that is, 1931) the Tatar National Archive (Tatarskie Archiwum Narodowe) were created in Vilnius thanks to Leon Kryczyński's initiative – an important member of the association (Tyszkiewicz 2002: 143–145). The cultural association started to publish its own magazines: in 1932 the academic *Rocznik Tatarski* (Tatar Yearbook), which was published three times between 1932 and

1938, and in 1934 the more popularised bimonthly *Życie Tatarskie* (Tatar Life), with 69 issues appearing between 1934 and 1939.

The activity of the cultural association was brought to a halt by the Second World War, never to be reactivated during the communist regime. In 1992, however, a new organisation with similar purposes was established: Związek Tatarów Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej, the Tatar Union of the Republic of Poland, which has tried to continue the tradition of the pre-war organisation. Three important Tatar personalities were involved in establishing the new association: Maciej Musa Konopacki, a Tatar writer and journalist, the social activist Stefan Mustafa Mucharski and Prof. Selim Chazbijewicz, a poet, academic and journalist.

The main aim of the association is to revive the Tatar cultural heritage. It operates on the basis of three local autonomous divisions in Bohoniki, Podlachia and Gdańsk. It established the Cultural Centre of Polish Tatars in Gdańsk, organising exhibitions on Tatar culture and traditions, presenting amongst others costumes and armoury. The association receives financial support from the Ministry of Interior and Administration (the Department of Religious Denominations and Ethnic Minorities).

The cultural association organises scholarly and general-public conferences creating an opportunity for the dispersed Tatar community to meet and for the young generation to get acquainted with the history and tradition of their ancestors. It also maintains contact with Tatar organisations in neighbouring countries like Lithuania or Belarus. Its publishing activities are mostly connected with the *Rocznik Tatarski* (Tatar Yearbook), which was reactivated in 1992. It is a periodical devoted to scientific, cultural and social aspects of the past and current Tatar culture in Poland and Eastern Europe. In addition, the Library of the Polish Tatar Yearbook publishes books (thus far around 20 titles, formally called supplements to the Yearbook). A particularly long-standing editor-in-chief of the journal has been Selim Chazbijewicz.

In 2008, a new cultural association was established in Sokółka, Lokalna Grupa Działania Szlak Tatarski, Local Activist Group – Tatar Trail. This group undertakes activities on a local level only, within the communities of Sokółka, Szudziałowo, Krynki, Kuźnica and Sidra – located along the historical Tatar trail of tourist attractions. However, the main aim of the association is to organise activities supporting the development of rural regions, including assistance in getting financial support from EU programmes promoting the activation of local citizens and European integration.

The association is one of the main organisers of cultural and academic events dedicated to Polish Tatar traditions like Letnia Akademia Wiedzy o Tatarach, the Summer Academy of Polish Tatars, organised for the seventeenth

time in 2015 together with the Podlachia division of the Tatar Union of the Republic of Poland. Another event was the Międzynarodowe Zawody Łucznictwa Konnego Tatarów Polskich, International Competition in Horse Archery of Polish Tatars, organised in 2010 together with Lithuanian Tatars. The association has a website,[6] and it now continues to publish the pre-war quarterly entitled *Życie Tatarskie* (*Tatar Life*), which was reactivated in 1998.

Some Cultural Activities and Characteristics

In 2000, a group of young Tatars formed an art group called Buńczuk (English: *bunchuk*, a piece of horse or yak tail hair attached to the top of a pole used in the Tatar army) in Białystok. Its members perform traditional Tatar dances, recite poetry (sometimes even selected suras from the Quran) and sing old songs. The group was founded and has been managed by Halima Szahidewicz, the president of the local Muslim religious community. Buńczuk performs at festivals and folk meetings. Szahidewicz acquires materials for presentations, prepares folk costumes and takes care of the group's finances.

The beginnings of the group were not easy, since Polish Tatars have lost their traditional clothes and ways of dancing and singing. Halima Szahidewicz invited a professional dancer from Crimea, Leviza Bigbulatova, who was to teach Tatar dances to the group. The task in itself was difficult as young dancers did not speak Russian. When their teacher returned to Russia, older and more experienced dancers transferred their skills and knowledge to new members of the group; they even invented new choreography. Costumes worn by the dancers have been brought from Crimea and Bashkiria. Buńczuk performs at every event important for the Tatar community all over Poland, including the Podlachia Bayram Days, celebrations of the 330th anniversary of the beginning of the Tatar settlement on Polish soil, or the visit with the Polish president to decorate the Polish mufti with the Gold Cross of Merit in 2011.

Amongst the cultural customs and traditions characteristic of the Tatar community are splendid dances organised during Muslim holidays. The first ball was held in the 1890s in Vilnius and attracted Tatars not only from the Vilnius area, but also from distant provinces of Russia. By 1918, another few dance balls combined with charity events were organised. They were attended mainly by Tatars from the upper class (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 147–148). After the First World War, these dances began to be called Tatar balls and played an important role in the social life of young Tatars. They were usually organised by the

6 Available at: http://www.szlaktatarski.org.

Union of Culture and Education of Tatars in the Republic of Poland. Tatars have always preferred endogamic marriages. The long-standing tendency has been to look for a husband or a wife of the same faith outside of one's hometown, sometimes even in distant places (Horodejuk 2005: 51). Tatar balls were supposed to help young people make friends and possibly meet a future spouse. Some of them would attract as many as 200 participants (Warmińska 1999: 158). These occasions did not differ from any of the other balls in Poland or Lithuania. (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 148). Regular evening dresses were worn.

After the Second World War, the balls were reactivated and played the same role as before. The first dances were not very spectacular and took place in private houses in villages like Bohoniki and Sokółka. As of the 1960s, grand balls started to be organised in Białystok. They were attended by whole families and each family would have their own table (Warmińska 1999: 159). The balls in the 1990s were very often attended by city mayors and voivodes (Miśkiewicz and Kamocki 2004: 149–150). Tatar dances after the Second World War have been no different to any other ball organised in Poland as far as music and dance is concerned. The only differences are that the meals contain no pork and that there is almost no alcohol served. A contest for the most beautiful Tatar girl makes up one of the traditional parts of the balls. Tatar families from neighbouring countries like Lithuania or Belarus are also invited (Warmińska 1999: 158–160).

A very important element of Tatar tradition and socio-cultural life is their cuisine and its distinctive dishes. These have survived throughout the centuries of Tatar presence in Poland and Lithuania. In some cases, they lost their original names, gaining new ones derived from local languages, but they retained the typical character of dishes made by nomadic peoples. Their composition is a visible sign of Muslim influence – none of them are made of pork and no alcohol is used in the cooking process. Tatar specialties include various types of dumplings – roasted (*kibiny, cebulniki, jeczpoczmaki, pierekaczewniki*), fried (*czebureki, pieremiacze*) and boiled (*kartoflaniki, manty*). Tatar *kołduny* are stuffed dumplings served with broth, just like Tartar potato-dough dumplings stuffed with beef. *Kołduny* are served as a main course and they are an indispensable component of a festive dinner during every Bayram, wedding receptions or *azan*. Sweet Tatar deserts include: *czak-czak, listkowiec* and Tatar halva made of honey and butter.

In many Tatar homes, traditional dishes are prepared every day, not only for festive occasions. All religious or cultural meetings end with tasting traditional Tatar dishes, for example, during the Podlachia Muslim Cultural Days, Sabantuy celebrations ('plough festival'), workshops for children and youth, prayers for peace in Kruszyniany and other religion-related events. The person most active in the promotion of Tatar cuisine is Dżenneta Bogdanowicz from Kruszyniany, a teacher of Tatar cooking (as part of the Festival of Tatar Culture and Tradition)

and organiser of collective cooking events. Bogdanowicz stars in shows and television programmes devoted to Polish regional cuisine. It was thanks to her campaign that *pierekaczewnik* was awarded the Traditional Speciality Guaranteed label given to products protected by European Union law.

Contemporary Developments

Today, an important role in transmitting Tatar tradition is played by various workshops organised for young people, who otherwise may have little contact in their family homes with the customs of their ancestors. Such workshops are organised primarily by the Muslim Religious Union local community in Białystok. Many of these projects get financial support from local and regional authorities, such as the City Hall in Białystok, but also from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Teaching young Tatars about the traditions of their ancestors is not the only aim of the workshops. They also serve the purpose of bringing people together and integrating the young Tatar community.

A dance and art workshop featuring a competition on knowledge of Tatar-related subjects was held on 8–11 November 2008 in Goniądz and Nowogród, near Łomża. It attracted around 50 participants. Amongst the tutors were Halima Szahidewicz – at that time the president of the Białystok Muslim community who supervised dancing classes, and the mufti Tomasz Miśkiewicz, who enriched the programme of the workshop by teaching a few boys conducting the prayer. On 11–14 June 2009 in Kruszyniany, the Białystok Muslim community and its president Halima Szahidewicz organised a theatre and cooking workshop. Under the supervision of Dżenneta Bogdanowicz, young boys and girls learned about the secrets of preparing food in a traditional Tatar way. The workshop ended with a theatre performance and food tasting. Every year Tatar dance workshops take place in spring and is organised by the Białystok community. The participants are mainly Tatar children and young adults. Each workshop ends with a presentation of newly acquired skills to the participants' parents and guests from the City Hall.

The tradition of organising Tatar balls died out in the early years of the twenty-first century, but it has recently been revived. In Białystok, on 17 July 2015, a ball was held on the first day of the Ramadan Bayram holiday as part of the programme of the Tenth Podlachia Bayram Days. Apart from a few women with veils, most guests wore clothes typically worn by Polish people on such occasions.

The turning of the twentieth century into the twenty-first brought the new media, which greatly facilitated spreading information about the history, traditions and customs of Polish Tatars. The Internet has been especially helpful in this respect. There are several websites run by the Polish Tatar community

FIGURE 2.4
Halina Szahidewicz after receiving the title "the Person of the Dialogue 2011", handed over by the Common Council of Catholics and Muslims in January 2012 during the 12th Day of Islam in the Catholic Church in Poland
PHOTO: KRZYSZTOF MUCHARSKI

that are dedicated to Tatar history, culture and traditions. Some of them are run by organisations, some by private people. Most of these sites contain information about the history of the Tatar settlement in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and descriptions of Tatar traditions.

The Muslim Religious Union runs two websites devoted to Tatar issues. The first one, entitled Tatarzy w Polsce, Tatars in Poland,[7] presents information regarding the history of Tatar military service in the Polish army and biographic entries about people of Tatar descent who have been prominent figures in Polish history. It also briefly discusses the Podlachia Tatar Trail, presenting local Tatar cemeteries. Moreover, the website gives an overview of Tatar-Muslim magazines available on the market. There is a poetry corner devoted to poetry written by Tatar community members or on subjects close to Tatars, as well as a photo gallery presenting various events related to the Tatar minority. The website was created with financial support from Podlaskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Białystok, a unit of a local state administration.

7 Available at: http://www.tatarzy.pl.

Another portal administered by the Union is called Podlaski Szlak Tatarski, Podlachia Tartar Trail,[8] and contains a presentation of villages and towns connected with Tatar history or their present existence in the Podlachia region. The history of each village is accompanied by pictures and a presentation of religious buildings or monuments, including those belonging to other religions. The project was financed with support from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

Yet another website is run by a young Tatar by the name of Michał Mucharem Adamowicz.[9] It focuses on the presentation of relationships between Polish Tatars and other Tatar communities, stressing the cultural links between all Tatars. The author presents descriptions of folk costumes, literature, weapons, art, language and the Tatar alphabet. One can also find information about current events promoting Tatar culture in Poland and Lithuania, Muslim calendars and a list of publications in the Polish language on Tatar history, culture, customs and beliefs, as well as volumes of poetry.

A private website of an agrotourism farm and restaurant called Tatarska Jurta, Tatar Yurt,[10] is run by Dżenneta and Mirosław Bogdanowicz. Apart from information about the business they run, the website also provides a lot of information about Tatar traditions. "A Tatar Yurt" is famous for its splendid cuisine. The food is prepared by Dżenneta Bogdanowicz herself – an active promoter of Tatar culinary traditions. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, visited the Tatar Yurt during his visit to Poland and tasted some of the Tatar dishes she prepared. Apart from information about Tatar history, the website presents their religion and describes the history and characteristics of the mosque in Kruszyniany (the oldest Polish mosque, built in the eighteenth century). Admirers of Tatar cuisine will find a list of traditional Tatar dishes together with photographs.

All Tatar organisations have their own websites available on the Internet. The most extensive of these is the website of the Muslim Religious Union,[11] which contains information about the Union, its statutes, lists and addresses of Muslim communities, the rules of their establishment, the names of imams and a list of mosques, prayer houses and cemeteries. The website of the Union does not only contain information about Islam and Muslim religious life, but is in addition a rich source of information on Tatar history, traditions and culture. It also contains a description of the Tatar Trail, a photo gallery of sacral buildings of Polish

8 Available at: http://www.szlaktatarski.pl.

9 Available at: http://www.tataria.eu.

10 Available at: http://www.kruszyniany.pl.

11 Available at: http://www.mzr.pl.

Muslims, the history of the Tatar presence on Polish soil, facts about the office of field imam and the history of Tatar military service in the Polish army. From the website one can download current and old issues of journals published by the Muslim Religious Union. The website of the Association of Tatars in the Republic of Poland is mainly devoted to the affairs of the organisation,[12] but in the news section there is also a great deal of broader information on events promoting the traditions and culture of Polish Tatars.

As shown earlier, the ancestors of the majority of Tatars living in Poland today served in the Polish army. For centuries of their military service, they used their own weapons to fight, including curved swords and bows. Most often they fought on horseback and were famous for their extraordinary skills in this respect. Thanks to such events, young Tatars have the opportunity to learn about a distant component of their tradition, which is clearly different to that of the rest of Polish society. Therefore, a very common element of meetings devoted to Tatar culture and traditions are archery shows with the use of traditional Tatar bows.

In May and June 2009, an exhibition of ranged weapons, entitled "Bow – the weapon or the sacred", was presented in the Museum of the Sokółka Region in Sokółka, which attracted considerable interest. On the opening day of the exhibition, visitors could try their skills in archery and taste Tatar dishes. Even more recently, an International Horseback Archery Competition of Polish Tatars was held in Bohoniki (9–10 July 2011). The programme of the event included the opportunity to test one's skills in the use of a Tatar bow, a parade of horse archers in historical costumes and Tatar food tasting.

Epilogue

In spite of a modest size, the religious and ethnic minority of the Polish Tatars leads a rich cultural and religious life thanks to very active religious or cultural organisations. Some of them, like the Muslim Religious Union (established in 1925), are rather old. These organisations publish their own periodicals dedicated to the religion and history of Polish Tatars, their literature and traditions. Very popular amongst members of the Tatar community are books describing the Tatar heritage or containing modern Tatar poetry by, for instance, Selim Chazbijewicz. An important part of the community life of Sunni Muslim Polish Tatars is celebrating the major Islamic religious festivals like Ramazan Bayram and some special ones, like Ashura Bayram or *sadoga*, celebrated according to old customs, even though not in agreement with the most popular Sunni traditions.

12 Available at: http://ztrp.org.

It should be noted that Polish Tatar women play a very important role in the community life of the Tatar Muslim minority. They are involved in the preparation of all kinds of religious and cultural activities. Halina Szahidewicz, who for almost 25 years was elected president of the largest local Muslim community in Białystok, had a number of other duties like managing the dance group Buńczuk, supervising the Islamic religious instruction in Białystok and teaching young generations how to prepare traditional Tatar dishes. She is also involved in the Christian-Muslim dialogue in Poland and in 2011 was rewarded with the title "The Person of the Dialogue 2011" by the Common Council of Catholics and Muslims. Another example is Dżenneta Bogdanowicz.

A significant aspect of organising religious and cultural life is obtaining financial support for these activities from the state. Due to the fact that the Polish state is not allowed to provide such support for religious activities, even the Muslim Religious Union organises the majority of the events under the label "ethnic" ("Tatar") in order to be able to get support from state authorities. It is also interesting that, in spite of being a traditional minority, Polish Tatars have started to use new means of communication, like websites to transmit their cultural heritage and religious traditions.

Many of these activities, financed by the state, are directed to the Tatar youth in order to maintain traditional Muslim Tatar identity that might be threatened by the dispersion of the Tatar minority after the Second World War and post-war migrations from villages to cities. Another factor that might influence the future of this minority is the fact that Tatars no longer make the majority of Polish Muslims, although they constitute the best organised part of them. However, the rise of the awareness and of the pride because of the Tatar and Muslim background can be noticed – during the census of 2011 about 2,000 people declared their ethnicity as Tatar, in comparison with about 500 in 2002. Yet most of them describe themselves as Poles with Tatar ethnic roots. Young Tatars also stress the role of Islam as a constructing and very important element of their identity (Łyszczarz 2013: 261–264). The validity of this attitude has been proved in the past – most of the Polish Tatars who converted to Christianity lost their Tatar identity.

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PART 2

Second Wave

∵

CHAPTER 3

Saint Petersburg

Renat Bekkin and Sabira Ståhlberg

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.
>
> 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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CHAPTER 4

Finland

Harry Halén and Tuomas Martikainen

After the war between Sweden and Russia in 1808–09, Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia. Amongst the soldiers and Cossacks sent to garrisons in Finland were Muslims, mainly Tatars and Bashkirs from the Volga-Ural region, documented in the collections of Russian military documents in the Finnish National Archives. Initially they were listed yearly in the Orthodox communion records, but after 1836 priests, imams and rabbis were installed, and they kept separate records. Until 1914 records were kept in Tatar by the military imam of Sveaborg's (Suomenlinna) fortress outside Helsinki (Helsingfors). These records list births, deaths, marriages and divorces amongst the Muslims, military and civilian. The Muslims residing in Finland had as their religious centre the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, like all Muslims in European Russia. This centre was later moved to Ufa (Halén 1997).

The first military imam, Bikchentey Bikbov, resided in Sveaborg from 1836–56. His successor, the combined military and civilian imam Ahmet Safa Bakirov (on duty 1857–65), lived in Helsinki, because after the Crimean War there was a need to rearrange the garrison. In 1863, the commander-in-chief ordered all family members of soldiers and warrant officers living in the fortress to move into the town. In 1870 approximately 50 family members of Muslim soldiers had settled in Helsinki (Halén 1982). At the same time there were 23 Muslims in Viborg (Viipuri, Vyborg) and 17 in Åbo (Turku), several probably Tatars (Leitzinger 2006: 85).

From 1866 to 1905 Timur Galeyev served as a combined military and civilian imam in addition to earning his livelihood as a market seller. As early as in 1841 he had occasionally as acting military imam kept records of the Helsinki Muslims, whereas Bikbov at the same time was responsible for the Sveaborg Muslims. Aged 77, Galeyev returned to Russia in 1905 due to poor health and died there the same year. His son Ataulla (Gataulla) Galeyev, also a market seller, worked as a substitute imam from 1901 onwards, but left for the home village in 1907 as the Russian military authorities had ceased to pay his salary

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and the rent for the prayer house. After him Semiulla Sadertdinov was appointed as the sole civilian imam in Helsinki by the Muslim merchant community and was on its expenses, although soldiers certainly also attended Friday prayers. He was the son of the Yañapar (part of Aktuk) village *muezzin* (the individual who calls the prayer), and in addition to selling textiles he served as imam from 1908 to 1913. Later he became imam in Turku.

The period from 1914 to 1962 belongs to imam Weli-Ahmed (Välìähmäd) Hakim (1882–1970). He was a Turkish-minded, educated man from Simbirsk Province and was at the time of Sadertdinov's resignation on a visit in Helsinki. He had served as imam in Kasimov and took an exam in Moscow to be a religious teacher. He successfully completed the exam to become an imam before the Islamic Spiritual Board in Ufa in 1914. With a petition dated 23 February 1915, 97 Muslims in Helsinki, 11 in Hangö (Hanko) and 12 in Hyvinkää (Hyvinge) asked for the authorisation for Hakim to become their imam and teacher. Nothing politically suspect was found in his person, but because the country had not yet a law regarding religious freedom, the Senate suggested that the concession would be granted only temporarily. Consequently, he had to manage with casual income in lack of a regular salary until 1926.

It is difficult to estimate the relative or exact number of Muslims, but during the period of 1812–36 there were at least 121 men in Sveaborg (Halén 2000). Only in 1833–35 no less than 44 Muslims served in regiments. Approximately the same amount was found in the artillery, whereas the Sveaborg naval port counted far fewer of them. In the Sveaborg military hospital records one finds 22 Muslim deaths reported in the 1860s and 1870s due to typhoid, tuberculosis and pneumonia. Finland was sometimes used as a place of deportation for Muslims. In 1845, Nogay Tatar Prince Bey-Murza Aslambekov was sent to the Kexholm fort, and in 1847 mulla Ramazān Mustafā-oġlï from Daghestan was brought to Åland (Ahvenanmaa) and had an affair with a local girl, which is still remembered.

The Ramadan celebration in 1865 was held in the large workshop of a carpenter at a Russian garrison in the centre of Helsinki, as the imam's home was not spacious enough. In the second half of the century, prayer services were generally attended jointly by soldiers and Tatar merchants. Gradually the entries concerning soldiers in the imam's records were replaced by notations describing civilian merchants, of which some seem to also have been on military duty.

During the First World War many wounded and sick soldiers were brought from the fronts in Poland, Belarus and the Baltic countries to Finland in order to get treatment and to recover. At least 31 Muslim soldiers can be found listed, and 17 Muslims belonged to the veterinary and disinfection units and the

military medical transportation platoon. The 8th Orenburg Cossack Regiment, which was on a march during 1916 in southern and central Finland, commanded by Colonel Faddeyev, contained numerous Tatars, Bashkirs and perhaps even Kazaks. In the newly established garrison in Åland there were at least 100 or 200 Muslims, with characteristically Tatar or Bashkir names. On 14 October 1917 the well-known Tatar imam and scholar Musa Carullah Bigi (Bigiyev) visited the Åland garrison in the capacity of *akhun* (high-ranking imam or mulla) in order to hold a prayer service and talk with the Muslim soldiers.[1]

Revolutionary Feelings

The Bolshevik coup d'etat in 1917 stirred also Russians in Finland. At a general meeting in the summer of 1917, a resolution demanded that all 32 Muslim deputies elected to the Executive Committee of Helsinki Muslims be immediately released from all of their military duties in order to be able to serve in it.[2] The political Muslim military organisations were encouraged by the chairman of the committee, Kimal Akmalovich, in the Helsinki Soviet's *Izvestiya*[3] to support the interim regime in its struggle against the counter-revolutionaries. Faithful to the fatherland and the revolution, all Muslim soldiers should together with their other comrades fulfil only the commands of the new supreme commander and minister-chairman Kerenski and the legal organs.

Quite different tunes were soon heard, however. The first meeting of the Muslims in Finland was opened in Helsinki on 25 October 1917. Comrade Aimaletdinov, an office employee from the Sveaborg naval port, acted as chairman. The meeting arrived at the conclusion that the politics of Kerenski was clearly counter-revolutionary. Accordingly, the Muslims in Finland were prepared to stand up as one man to defend their precious freedom and the revolution upon the first call, and it was decided that all local Muslims should organise themselves militarily. Already three divisions were formed on the front. It was furthermore decided that a certain Hakimov – obviously the above-mentioned Weli-Ahmed Hakim – should be elected to be the military imam of Finland. A local Muslim Military Soviet of Finland was to be

1 National Archives, VeSA 17278.

2 *Izvestiya* of the Helsinki Soviet, No. 108, 25 July 1917 (8 August 1917 in the Gregorian calendar).

3 *Izvestiya* of the Helsinki Soviet, No. 142, 3 September 1917 (16 September 1917 in the Gregorian calendar).

established in Helsinki, and irrespective of numbers, each garrison would be represented through one member. There were demands to pay attention to Muslim strivings and needs in the border areas, especially concerning the Muslims in Finland.[4] Chairman K. Akmalovich wrote about the status of Muslims in Finland and especially in Helsinki,[5] stating that an end must be put to their oppression. He saw the key for a successful unification in culture, enlightenment and organisational activity. The most hampering factor was the lack of capable activists.

Muslim soldiers in Finland had their own detachment libraries containing mainly educational literature and fiction in Kazan Tatar as well as religious texts in Arabic, although even the imam was hardly well versed in it. The Muslims in Russia had already long been culture-oriented and stood clearly on a higher level of education than, for instance, Russian peasants. The Jadidist Muslim reform movement was so eager to adopt European cultural ideals that the imperial government feared nationalist initiatives and tried to stamp it out. In fact the Kazan Theological Academy had an anti-Islam division from 1842 and later even a professorship for anti-Islamic propaganda (Geraci 2001: 54–68). Some literature from the Sveaborg Muslim library and a number of other similar reading rooms is still preserved with stamps indicating the former detachments.

The attitude of civilian Muslims to the revolutionary activities of the soldiers and junior seamen is not easy to estimate. Maybe they as fellow believers, kinsmen and individuals speaking the same language had ties so strong that they in any case felt that they belonged to the same front. After the revolution the situation was naturally dramatically polarised, as is evident from a lawsuit in 1921 when civilians coming to Finland were suspected or accused of Bolshevik sympathies.

Formation of the Merchant Community

As early as in 1816, the merchant Seifulla Seifulla-uġlï from Simbirsk Province applied at the Helsinki municipal administrative court for a vending permit for Bukharan carpets he had brought. He was granted the permit, but only for a

4 *Izvestiya* of the Helsinki Soviet, No. 189, 31 October 1917 (13 November 1917 in the Gregorian calendar).

5 *Izvestiya* of the Helsinki Soviet, No. 213, 29 November 1917 (12 December 1917 in the Gregorian calendar).

single time.[6] In the 1870s, Muslim merchants began to settle in Finland more or less permanently. They were entered into the records alongside the Muslim soldiers. The newcomers were solely or at least mainly Mishar Tatars from Nizhny Novgorod Province, Sergach District, Urazovka (Uraz aul) congregation, about 150 kilometres southeast from Nizhny Novgorod. Most of them came from the villages of Yañapar ("New Quarters" in Aktuk; Russian: Aktukovo), Kuysue, Mädänä, Chümbäle and Suksu, and were often related to each other. These Mishars cultivated their fields in the summer, but because of the scanty outcome, they went as pedlars to Saint Petersburg in other seasons, selling amongst other things textiles, clothing, lace, yarns, furs, hides and soap (see Saint Petersburg chapter). Many of the Tatars became rich and ran significant trading houses, especially in Finland. The traders were men; wives and children remained in the home villages (Noack 1998: 305).

By the end of the nineteenth century, diversity in Finland had increased, and Muslims and Jews could easily join urban life in the grand duchy. The newcomers had to adapt to local market conditions, and as active merchants they quickly adjusted to society. Russian was understood in towns, and the similar structure and sound system of the Tatar and Finnish languages made it easy to adopt the new language (Halén 1991). In addition, Finns were known to be related to the Moksha Mordvins, neighbours of the Mishar Tatars.

According to recollections of the newcomers, the move went smoothly. The attitudes of the original population seem to have had a dual character, however, as was also the case concerning the East Karelian pedlars. In 1885 a notice against pedlars appeared in Uusikaupunki (Nystad):

> Now…again appeared those Tartarians, or whatever they may be, pedlars who with their smooth tongue persuade people to buy all sorts of junk of poor quality. As peddling from house to house is for the inhabitants of our own town and other citizens forbidden under penalty of a fine, how come a stranger who does not pay any other taxes than a small appropriation (nothing to the municipality) is given that kind of privilege?[7]

In Finland the reception was at any rate more positive than in Russia, where Tatars and other minorities were discriminated against in many ways. The immigrants were industrious and generally blameless in their ways of living.

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6 Minutes of the Helsinki municipal administrative court, §3, 30 March 1816 (Helsinki City Archives, Ca: 125).

7 "Maaseuduilta", *Aura*, 10 November 1885.

Muslim pedlars and market sellers began to frequent Viborg regularly around the time of the completion of the Riihimäki–Saint Petersburg railway in 1870. In 1881–82 a number of them came for sales trips, lasting a couple of months. Amongst them were also ancestors of the present Tatar community in Finland. After finishing summer jobs in the home villages, many young men went to Saint Petersburg or Finland, which had been found to be a promising marketplace. In the initial period only the men came and then returned to the home villages, but soon whole families followed, after receiving the message of prosperous possibilities. The merchant Hasan Kanykoff was bold enough to invite apprentices to Finland in order to introduce them to the art of peddling. Soon there was a lively traffic between Finland and the Tatar home villages.

Peddling and petty trade soon developed into a market hall trade. Some Tatars sold cotton products, silk fabrics, carpets and furs in the Repola market hall and the so-called Corner Hall (Kulmahalli) in Helsinki. The next important centre for Tatar trading activities became Terijoki on the Karelian Isthmus, popular as a summer resort amongst the upper-class inhabitants of Saint Petersburg. From Kotka their trade reached even the island of Hogland (Suursaari) in the Gulf of Finland. In Tampere (Tammerfors) the essential income flowed from textiles, due to the local Finlayson cotton factory. Fur trade flourished in Helsinki; carpets started to take over only after the 1940s. The usual career development through three generations was as follows: from pedlar to market seller, market hall dealer, shopkeeper, tradesman and, finally, managing director.

Many merchants soon turned into well-established and appreciated businessmen. During the depression in the 1930s they offered credits to other enterprisers financing, for instance, large stone house projects. Still in 1940 almost all members of the Tatar community earned their living by trade. In the beginning of 1953, the number of them in the Province of Uusimaa (Nyland) was 412, of which only six lived in a rural community. In Häme (Tavastland) they numbered 172 (in the countryside only one), in Turku and Pori 146 (in rural communities 13), in Vaasa 11, and in the Province of Oulu 15. The textile, clothing and fur trade maintained a strong position, but after the Second World War, a significant change took place. Well-educated youths started to appear in academic professions and as, for example, physicians, lawyers, economists, bank directors, photographers and pharmacists. Nowadays the formerly profitable private business has become difficult in Finland due to big companies taking large shares of the market. The continuation of family enterprises is also endangered, as the younger generation now looks for other professions.

Organisations and Religious Congregations

A charity organisation of the Helsinki Muslims, Musulmaanien Hyväntekeväisyys Seura (Гельсингфорсское Мусульманское Благотворительное Общество) was founded at the end of October 1915 in order to support the community of believers and its elementary school as well as to assist the poor. A Muslim congregation could not yet be created, and this was a surrogate. The charity organisation was housed by the new imam, Weli-Ahmed Hakim. In a room of his home the imam also ran a school class for Tatar children.

After Finland became independent in 1917, because of fears and prejudices, a law concerning freedom of religion was accepted only in 1922. In September 1924 Helsinki Muslims wrote a petition for a congregation, and it could be established in spring 1925. The number of members was 528, practically all Tatars from the Sergach region, living mainly in the bigger Finnish towns, many having been born in Helsinki, Sveaborg or Viborg.

The imam Weli-Ahmed Hakim considered it impossible to keep records during 1915–16 or even to issue birth certificates because the Senate had not legalised his position in Finland. As there were no specific regulations concerning the organisations of Muslims and Jews or the confirmation of their religious functionaries (despite a motion to the Senate in 1912), it was necessary to act within the framework of the general legislation of the country. On request he promised to reconstruct the lacking data from that period from his notebooks. In his report to Grand Mufti Muhammed Safa Bayazitov, Hakim complains about the difficulties and largely exaggerates the numbers of Muslims in Finland, counting them as amounting to 2–3,000.[8]

The prayer room was first located in connection to the imam's home in various houses on Albertinkatu in Helsinki, followed by several other places. Finally in 1961, the spacious Islam House (Islam-talo) on Fredrikinkatu 33 was completed. The building received financial aid from Turkey, Pakistan and Morocco. The building hosts, amongst other things, a mosque, festival hall, congregation office, assembly localities, classrooms, a small library, the locales of the Association of the Turks in Finland (Finlandiye Türkleri Birligi), and the sports club *Yolduz* (Star).

At least 30 Muslim pedlars lived in Tampere already in 1896–1905. The Tampere Muslims established an unofficial congregation around 1910–12. As the first teacher and imam they invited Alautdin Abbäs from the region of Kazan, but he moved to Terijoki in 1915. The teacher Gibadulla Murtasin led prayers from 1923 to 1941 as acting imam. In 1942–44 the duty was in the hands

8 "*Объ утвержденіи крестьянина Валіахмета Хакимова имамомъ-хатыбомъ Гельсингфорскаго магометанскаго общества*". National Archives, KKK 1915, Fb 1127, 75: 10.

of Mahmut Rahim, a prisoner of war who was later returned to the Soviet Union. The congregation became official only in 1943, and in 1948 it was given the right to confirm marriages. Merchant Ymär Sali (formerly Alautdin) donated a house to the congregation in the city centre. Since 1977 the offices have been on Hämeenkatu 29. Feasts were celebrated in the locales of the Emmaus House, a charity organisation.

The Tampere Muslims had the ambition of building the northernmost mosque in the world with the support of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The activist behind this project was Habibur-Rahman Shakir (1903–75), who fled from Russia via Afghanistan to India. In addition to Tatar, he spoke Urdu, Arabic and Persian. Musa Carullah Bigi, who had moved to Pakistan, sent Shakir in 1947 to Tampere as the new imam. After Shakir no full-time imam has been present in Tampere, but Letfulla Baibulat took care of the duties for 17 years, and his son Esad Baibulat followed from 1994. The Helsinki imam has taken care of marriages, name-giving and burials. Chairmen of the congregation were Ymär Sali 1943–51, Semiulla Wafin 1951–82 and Esad Baibulat from 1983. The congregation's eldest leads the prayer ceremony for a community of around 100 persons. However, of them about 30 are members of the Helsinki-based Islamic Congregation of Finland. Around 60–80 persons attend the Ramadan and Kurban feasts; at other times the number of active members is 25–30. Old people usually pray at home (Baibulat 2004).

In the 1930s, Zinnetullah I. Ahsen Böre invited from Turkey Mehmet Sadik, a native Azeri, as a private teacher, but instead of educational activities Sadik dedicated himself to the newspaper *Yeni Turan* (1931–33, *Turan* in 1934), published by Ahsen Böre and Hairulla Samaletdin. The paper told in Turkish and Finnish about the struggles for independence of the Turkic peoples in the Soviet Union and about Finland for the Turks, but as the police became interested in it and also the Soviet Union pricked up its ears, Sadik was fired in 1932.

The Terijoki (now Zelenogorsk in Russia) congregation was officially established in 1916, although it came into existence in 1912, but it could function only until 1918 as the turmoil of the Civil War compelled the members to leave for other parts of Finland. In 1917–21 there were about 30 Tatar-owned shops in Terijoki, but they were destroyed during the war, and only a small number remained there and in nearby Kellomäki. In the beginning of the 1930s, only a few shops were left, and the hopes of renewed contact with Saint Petersburg, now Leningrad, were shattered.

Zinetullah Ahsen Böre (Imadütdin/Aimaditdin/Aimaletdin) was the Terijoki imam from 1916, having the same year taken the exam for it.[9] He was arrested and robbed by Red Guards and Bolsheviks. Seven Tatar families (altogether 36

9 "По ходатайству Зинатуллы Аймадиддинова объ утвержденію его въ духовномъ званіи имама и мугаллима". National Archives, ккк 1916, Fb 1240, 75: 21.

FIGURE 4.1 *The wooden mosque in Järvenpää (from 1942), the oldest mosque in the Nordic countries*
PHOTO: ANDREAS ALI JONASSON, 2014

persons) still lived in Terijoki and Kellomäki after 1918, but no services were held for 11 years (1923–34) until Weli-Ahmed Hakim began to visit. Even the Terijoki Islamic school with its teachers, the former Tampere imam Alautdin Abbäs and Abdul Aziz, could work there only in 1916–17. Summer courses for children were later held in this popular summer resort.

The first Tatars to settle in the Kinnari area of Järvenpää, about 40 kilometres north of Helsinki, were the furrier Hasan Kanykoff and felt-maker Beshar Schamaletdin in 1925. Due to cheap land prices, a noticeable Tatar community developed there. The only separate mosque building (Tat. mächet) in the whole country still stands in Järvenpää.

In the early period, the duties of the imam in Kotka were fulfilled by Dayan Nasibulla and Djafer Arifulla. In 1939, this southern coastal town counted 45–50 Muslims, all of them belonging to Tatar merchant families. For the benefit of education, two-month courses were held by the teacher Zakir Kadiri.[10]

Mishar pedlars came to the harbour town of Turku in southwestern Finland at the latest in 1883. In the beginning of the 1930s the Tatars numbered about 80 persons. Their imam was for a long time Ymär Nisametdin.

10 *Yaña Milli Yul* 1939: 8–9, pp. 38–39.

Turanian Ideology

Most Muslim traders brought their families to Finland only after 1917. To those remaining in the Soviet Union, the majority being women, the Finnish Foreign Ministry granted visas through embassies in Petrograd and Moscow from the early 1920s. In the event that Soviet authorities refused exit permits, the border was crossed with the help of smugglers. This traffic started in the tearoom of Mustafa Ayuhanov (Mustai Ismailov) on Apraksin Alley in Petrograd. He had been peddling in Tampere from around 1895 to 1905, but because of unprofitable sales he returned to Saint Petersburg. Accommodation was provided in the back rooms. On the same street lived many Tatar merchants who later moved to Finland.

In order to clear up the legal status of newcomers over the border, they were first put in the Terijoki quarantine. The border was crossed in 1921–24 by 215 Muslims, amongst them young men, women and children. Of the 84 persons coming in 1921, all crossed over in secret. In 1925–29, immigration of family members to Finland diminished to single cases. Thereafter they could come only by escaping or paying large sums. Wives and children of Tatar traders continued to come to Finland during the whole of the 1920s by sea or by land, mainly without a legal permit.

During the First World War many young Tatars had to leave Finland for military service in Russia, but most of them tried to return, referring to their previous, often long-time stays in Finland. The same is true for those who in 1918 were expelled under German pressure – the Germans aimed at sending all Russian citizens out of the country. For instance, the pedlar Zinnetulla Hairullin, who in 1912 had settled in Kuopio, went in February 1918 back to Russia, but in the home district miserable conditions prevailed. It was impossible to practise agriculture; there were only four horses per 100 inhabitants and no ploughs and only wooden spades for tilling the earth. He returned secretly by sea in November 1922.[11]

In spite of a basically positive attitude towards legal immigrants, Finnish authorities began to deny some visas, fearing that there could be Bolshevik elements amongst the Tatar refugees. There was no actual reason for this, and help often came in the form of relatives already living in Finland or Finnish academics. Professor Yrjö Jahnsson assisted and cooperated in various ways with Tatars already in the country, especially Hasan Kanykoff. Jahnsson's

11 National Archives, EK-Valpo, Terijoen osasto 170. Henkilötietoja NL:n rajan ylittäneistä 1921–1924 A–H.

relationships with the authorities were significant in overcoming the reluctance and suspicion of the Ministry of the Interior and the Central Police.

He also actively promoted the liberation and fight for independence of the kindred Finno-Ugrian and other "Turanian" minority peoples of Russia (Zetterberg 1982: 287–313). When the ambitions for freedom were crushed in 1920 because of the Tartu Peace Treaty, Jahnsson dedicated himself to the "Turanian" movement, which had a broader scope than the kinship ideology. As a Ural-Altaic-Korean-Japanese counter power it was directed against the hegemony of Indo-European ("Aryan") peoples and the Bolsheviks. He wanted to bring representatives of Russia's Turkic peoples to Finland to become educated and to spread a new civilisation amongst their own peoples, with the goal of sending them to the Soviet Union for subversive activities.

After the attempt of the Volga-Ural ("Idel-Ural") Tatars to create an independent country had ended in the spring of 1918, leaders of the movement arrived in Finland as political refugees. Yusuf Akçura, Ayaz Ishaki (Idilli), Musa Carullah Bigi, Zeki Velidi (Togan), Sadri Maksudi (Arsal) and the former Petrograd imam Lütfi Ishaki soon set out for Germany, France or Turkey. Alimjan (Alimcan) Idris and Abdullah Battal (Taymas) stayed for longer periods working as teachers and instructors amongst the Muslims in Finland. The ethnic composition of the Muslim community had diversified due to the flow of immigrants. In addition to the Volga-Ural Tatars and Bashkirs, there were also single representatives of other Muslim peoples from Russia, Central Asia and Caucasia.

A few Mishar Tatars, mostly elderly, wanted to return back to the ancestral lands despite the political difficulties and misery in the villages. Connections with the Soviet Union were cut off for decades. Instead, Tatars in Finland maintained lively contact with Tatars in Estonia and Latvia. The only Lithuanian Tatar in Finland seems to have been the film star and director Teodor Tugai (Teuvo Tulio). At the end of 1943 Tatars from the Baltic states came to Finland as political refugees, and some of them wanted to fight for Finland immediately. Because of the unstable conditions after the war, many left Finland for Sweden.

Religious, Cultural and Ethnic Issues

Initially the question concerning the right of registering marriages encountered opposition from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, as it was feared that it would lead to the acceptance of polygamy. This was not practised amongst Muslims in Finland, and there was no trend towards it, but the Muslims did not

receive the right of marriage registration until 1932. The right to census registration was valid until 1971. The size of the community was about 700 persons (circa 120 households) in 1932. In 1970 both congregations counted together 823 members, of whom 372 lived in Helsinki, 128 in Tampere, 68 in Järvenpää, 59 in Turku, 54 in Espoo, and the rest were dispersed in different places. In 1978 the number of members totalled 938, but it has declined thereafter.

The Muslim congregation was a linguistic and cultural community where the determining factors were background and knowledge of the Tatar language, although the statutes do not express any restrictions concerning language or ethnicity. Marriages with outsiders became with time common, although they were for several decades considered condemnable. During the years 1925–75 altogether 301 marriages were registered, out of which 132 were with outsiders. As most of the Finnish Tatars are interrelated, many have remained single, not finding a Tatar spouse within the community and not daring to marry an outsider. The number of Tatar children is consequently declining. A small revitalisation was gained through marriages with Tatars from Tatarstan in the 1990s.

After the retirement of Hakim, Ahmet Naim Atasever, a Kazan Tatar from Turkey, was the imam from 1962 to 1983, assisted by Huseyin Sadik and Hasan Hamidulla. After retirement Atasever moved back to Turkey. The Crimean Tatar Abdurrahman Kaya was then invited from Turkey. He had a degree from Istanbul University and worked as a lecturer at the Eskişehir senior high school. His period in Helsinki lasted from 1983 to 1992. Enver Yıldırım, of Turkmen descent, acted as the imam in 1993, but he soon joined the new religious movement called Islam and Love, founded by his Turkish son-in-law. Atasever was recalled in 1994 (see further Heino 1997: 217–219).

Children's participation in congregational activities depends on their language skills. Transmitting the language is one of the central concerns of the community, and teaching plays a key role in preserving language and culture. Already in the home villages, education was held in high esteem, and this was continued in Finland. From Finland some Turkish-minded families sent their children abroad to receive education, usually to the famous Galatasaray Lyceum in Istanbul or to Berlin for commercial studies. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the immigrants tried to maintain a free-form elementary school and continuation courses in different places in Finland, and an association to establish a school was founded. Gibadulla Murtasin (1895–1968), from the well-known Jadidist (modernist) Izh-Bobi (a Muslim educational institution or *madrasa*), had studied pedagogy in Kazan. During the First World War he became a prisoner of war, and when the Tampere Muslims appealed to Ayaz Ishaki for a teacher in 1924, he sent Murtasin from Berlin. In addition to his

position as a teacher, Murtasin also led prayer meetings, and he soon became a noticeable cultural personality in the town. After the regular school-day, Murtasin lectured six hours a week on national subjects, religion and reading the Koran, the mother tongue, Arabic calligraphy, history, song, music and plays, having about 12 pupils. His summers were spent in Terijoki teaching. In Tampere he arranged evenings featuring song and plays.

Instead of returning to Germany, Murtasin remained in Helsinki for educational purposes. A Tatar school started in 1948 under the auspices of the Islamic Congregation and was supported by the Helsinki municipal government. In addition to the normative six-year curriculum, Tatar was read in the traditional Arabic script, not modern Turkish in the Latin alphabet as was originally planned. It was also important to learn Arabic calligraphy. The pupils should be able to read the shorter suras by heart with a special front-vowel intonation. The history of Turkic peoples and Islamic education were essential parts of the teaching.

In 1965 a new teacher began to use standard Turkish as well. Because of this, many parents chose to put their children in Finnish- or Swedish-speaking schools instead. Only a few pupils were left, so the school had to close in 1969. In addition to homes, the responsibility of language preservation was also shifted to organisations, kindergartens and special summer and winter courses. Previously, only Tatar was spoken at home, but nowadays youths use many Finnish loanwords, and some of them even speak Finnish or Swedish with each other. Tatarstan could support the language, but the Cyrillic alphabet and Russian loanwords create an obstacle. The genuine Mishar vernacular is presently under the influence of modern Kazan Tatar.

Islamic graveyards in different places were often put side by side with the Jewish ones. This is the case in Helsinki, Kexholm, Lappeenranta (Villmanstrand), Turku (gained official status in 1912), Viborg (Ristimäki Cemetery) and Åland (on the island of Prästö near the ruins of the Bomarsund fortress, no graves visible). In Tampere a special Muslim row was reserved in the middle of the Lutheran Kalevankangas Cemetery. In Terijoki an Islamic graveyard was created near the Lintula Orthodox nunnery in 1916. The old Islamic graveyard in Helsinki is situated in Lapinlahti (Lappvik), at the bottom of the now filled Ruoholahti Bay (Gräsviken). Initially its lower part was reserved for military use, but the graves were probably not marked, or the wooden poles have disappeared. The oldest preserved gravestone is on a Cossack's grave from 1916; older grave monuments are non-existent.

No Tatars are known to have participated in the Finnish Civil War in 1918, but they supported the legal (White) government. Ten Tatars lost their lives in the Second World War, and a monument was erected in 1956. Altogether

156 of the Finnish Islamic Congregation, which at that time had about 740 members, served at the front against the Soviet Union in 1939–44. About ten Tatars also served in the Intelligence Department of the Headquarters due to their language skills, for instance as interrogators of prisoners of war. Ironically, Tatars and Russians on both sides had to fight their relatives on the other side.

The majority of the Muslim soldiers in the nineteenth century belonged loosely to the concept "Tatar". However, this term is not applied in the congregation records, as the denomination there is "Mishar". The Tatar merchant community has, however, used it only sparingly. They rather considered themselves to be Muslims or Turks and many felt that the term "Tatar" was offensive; yet mulla Timur Galeyev used to call his brothers-in-faith *mishär taifä* (the Mishar crowd).

In independent Finland several Tatars strived to obtain citizenship, in order to remain legally in the country and not be sent to the Soviet Union. Several received it around 1925. Some individuals like Z. Ahsen Böre who were refused, accepted Turkish citizenship in order to secure their residence. Later the acquisition of Finnish citizenship became quite expensive. In 1939, only around 400 out of the total number of 740 Muslims had acquired Finnish citizenship. Three families were Turkish and one was Iranian.

The self-understanding of the first generation was based on Islam and the mother tongue. The term *möselman* (Muslim) also covered the Bashkir, Azeri, Kazak, Uzbek and other co-religionists, part of whom represented even non-Turkic peoples from Caucasia. The second generation felt a sentimental attraction to other Turkic nations under the guiding star of the new republic of Turkey and defined themselves as a special kind of *şimal törekläre* or "Northern Turks" (a denomination usually reserved for the Siberian Yakuts). Enthusiasm for Turkey sprang from the birth of the republic in 1923 and its leader Kemal Atatürk. The Turkish PR-boat Karadeniz (Black Sea) received a joyous

FIGURE 4.2
The Tatar girl Fähima H. Ismailoff in the late 1930s, at the age of three, in Finland
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY THE TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

reception in Finland in the summer of 1925. The transition to the Latin alphabet in Turkey in 1929 divided opinions in Finland; the Turkish-minded wanted to abandon Arabic script when writing Tatar. For instance, the imam Hakim represented a kind of pan-Turkish ideology and wanted to call the Tatars "Turks" and the Tatar language "Turkish", a question which still divides the community. The third generation found a Kazan Tatar national and cultural ideal, and the fourth has returned to the Mishar roots (see further Sakaranaho 2002).

The community has adopted a double identity, as the members at the same time feel that they are Finns and Tatars (Leitzinger 2006: 256–258). The latter component is subject to a variety of interpretations and nuances by different individuals. In addition to, or instead of, the "genuine" Mishar Tatar, the Turkish State Turkish, or a broader general Turkic, Kazan Turkic (Kazan Tatar), and even the ancient Volga Bolgar identity have been adopted as frameworks, although the Volga Bolgars are generally considered forefathers of the Chuvash and are linguistically far from the Kipchaks or Tatars.

Cultural Activities

From the 1950s onwards eminent cultural personalities from Turkey, like Alimjan Idris and Abdullah Battal Taymas, as well as the professors Reşid Rahmeti Arat and Akdes Nimet Kurat, visited the community. Also from Tatarstan Kazan University academics have lectured in Finland, such as the archaeologist Alfred Halikov, the folklorist Ilbaris Nadirov, the professors of the Tatar language Dilyara Tumasheva and Flora Safiullina, the professor of Turkology Edhem Tenishev, the historian Mirkasim Usmanov and the writer Robert (Rabit) Batulla.

The Tatar identity was strengthened through renewed contact with the native villages. This traffic started cautiously as visits paid by groups of artists, scholars and imams or muftis from Tatarstan in the late 1960s, but there were still fears concerning possible negative consequences on an individual level because of Soviet restrictions. When mutual family visits became possible, the Järvenpää Tatar Aynur Nisametdin studied in Kazan in 1988. Closer contact could begin to develop and flourish only after the fall of the Soviet regime in 1991. Tatars from the previous Soviet republics were amazed that Tatars were not oppressed in Finland.[12] The Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) made a documentary program with Aynur, and Kazan and the Mishar villages were contrasted with the lifestyle and conditions of the Tatar community in Finland.

12 *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2 March 1992.

An important factor in maintaining cultural traditions and language is the Association of the Turks in Finland (Finlandiye Türkleri Birligi, FTB), established in 1935 to promote "national" values. Even the statutes are written in Turkish and speak about "Northern Turks", but in 1984 the term "Tatar" was accepted. Local branches are the Tampere Türkler Birligi (Tampere Turkish Association, 1935) and the Turku Turkish-Tatar Association (1938, renamed Turku Turkish Association 1951). A cultural organisation bearing the name of Abdulla Tukay, the Tatar national poet, was established in Helsinki in 1968 in order to create cultural ties with Tatarstan. A separate Tampere Islamic Association (1939) did not last long.

The activities of FTB consist of choir singing, a youth orchestra, and an amateur theatre troupe performing classical plays of Tatar writers, especially comedies, for social evenings. Several women participate as actors and organisers. National evenings and tea parties usually end with the jointly performed song *Tugan tel* (Mother Tongue), which has the character of a national anthem amongst the Tatars. Experts in the traditional and very ornamented "long melody" (*uzun köy*) can hardly be found anymore, but an interest in song and music is maintained through common cultural evenings. Performers were, amongst others, the Tampere accordionist Halid Korbangali and the popular female soloists Dina Asis and Betül Hairetdin from the band Başkarma. Many kinds of song booklets and the bulky collection *Bıznıñ cırlar* (Our Songs, 1980) reflect this lively interest.

The football club Altın Orda (Golden Horde) and, from 1945 onwards, its continuation, the sports club Yolduz with numerous subsections, have promoted physical education. The friendly football match between Yolduz of the Muslims and Makkabi of the Jews was a yearly event. Everyone in Finland knows the name of Atik Ismail, a famous football player.

The surprisingly rich literary production of this very small minority people of Finland deserves special mention. Roughly 200 books, booklets, brochures, stencils, newspapers and newsletters as well as congregation journals have been published in Tatar since the 1920s, first in Arabic script, then parallel editions in Arabic and Latin letters and nowadays in Latin script only. The National Library holdings include a collection of them (Halén 1979; 1996).[13] A broad picture of the history and life of the Finnish Tatars is found in the works of Antero Leitzinger (1996; 2006) and Muazzez Baibulat (2004), and their histories and stories have recently been worked into poetry and prose.

According to old tradition, families formerly prepared air-dried horse meat sausages in the attic. One national dish is also the tasty circular beef pastry (*pärämäch*

13 National Library, Manuscript Department, Coll. 732, catalogue 666: "Tatarica".

or pärämäts) and meat soup (*shorba*). The right to ritual slaughter became a matter of public dispute already a century ago. Despite social opposition, sheep could be slaughtered according to Islamic regulations in secret. Special shops appeared much later. During the summer it is difficult to observe the fasting regulations in the north, as the sun sets very late and rises again soon, and it is therefore allowed to follow the rhythms of the nearest Islamic country, usually Turkey.

Recent Developments

Finland experienced two dramatic processes after the Second World War which separate its history from that of its Scandinavian neighbours. Firstly, almost half a million people were resettled due to the loss of territory to the Soviet Union. This also affected Tatars who had been living on the Karelian Isthmus, including Terijoki and Viborg. Secondly, the rapid change from an agricultural to an industrialised society from the 1950s to the 1970s created an excess labour force and, as a consequence, population movements to neighbouring Sweden. Consequently, only small numbers of people from other countries moved to Finland (Martikainen 2013b: 4–6). The Muslim community started to change gradually via two main channels. The first included expatriate Finns marrying Muslims. Also the growth of international tourism to Muslim countries led to some inter-religious marriages, and part of the new families eventually moved to Finland. Secondly, foreign students and occasional employment and marriage seekers came to Finland in small numbers. By the end of the 1980s, these people were numerous enough to create their own community, open a space for their religious observance and organise religious education for children in their own language. Hence, the Islamic Society of Finland was founded in 1996 and slowly grew to become a mosque community. The reason for starting up a new organisation was a consequence of Tatar reluctance to open up membership and change language practices in their own community. Tatars nevertheless keep the mosque doors open for those willing to participate in prayer meetings. They have also supported further organisational activities amongst the newcomers (Sakaranaho 2006: 246–248).

Simultaneously with the opening of Finland to the global economy and, far more dramatically, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, immigrants started to arrive. This development included various types of migration flows, but most notably the number of Muslims has risen due to the acceptance of quota refugees and independent asylum seekers from various countries. In the early 1980s the Tatars were the only representatives of organised Islam in Finland, but by the 1990s they found themselves a minority. In 2012, out of the estimated 60,000–65,000 Muslims in Finland, the Tatars formed little more than 1 per cent and their share is continuously shrinking (Martikainen 2013a).

Also the strengthening of a problem-oriented public discourse and outright hostility towards Islam and Muslims have come as unpleasant surprises to the Tatar community, which considers its history in Finland as a success and a prime example of integration. Therefore the community has retained a low profile and has avoided taking part in some of the collaborative efforts of newcomer Muslims. For example, the Tatars prefer to represent themselves and have not joined the Islamic Council of Finland, which was founded in 2006 with the help of the Minorities Ombudsman to help solve several Muslim-related public questions (Martikainen 2013a).

The greatest challenge for the Finnish Tatar community is their ageing and declining membership. Common inter-marriages and the generally low fertility rate influence the age structure. The joint membership in the two Tatar congregations has fallen from 786 (1980) to 610 (2012) individuals. In 2012, over half of the Tatars were above the age of 50, and the number of under-age children is about one-tenth. The community is acutely aware of and worried about the issue, but no simple solution is available.

Epilogue

The history and formation of the Tatar community in Finland provides a window to ethnic and religious minority formation processes in a much earlier stage than in most parts of Western and Northern Europe. The Tatars have fared well and have created an impressive infrastructure to support their ethnic, cultural and religious traditions as well as their linguistic identity. However, times change and today the Tatars are faced with an ageing membership like the rest of the Finnish population, an increasingly secularised social environment and, perhaps foremost, the rise of non-Tatar Muslim communities that link them in a new way to European discussions and fears of the role of Islam on the continent. The Tatars have shown that they have what it takes to preserve their cultural and religious traditions in Finland, yet their shrinking numbers do leave the option of a long-term development open.

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CHAPTER 5

Estonia

Toomas Abiline and Ringo Ringvee

The first Tatars arrived in Estonia in the sixteenth century as soldiers in Russian troops invading the land during the Livonian War (1558–1583).[1] In 1552 the Russian tsar Ivan IV conquered the Kazan khanate and four years later, in 1556, the Astrakhan khanate. In 1558 Estonia's population met Tatars during Russia's three-week long military campaign against five local small states in Livonia, present-day Estonia and northern Latvia. The campaign was led by the former Khan of Kazan, now a vassal of Moscow, Shig-Alei (Shahghali, Shah Ali; 1505–1567), whose army with 40,000 men had in their ranks, besides Russians and Tatars, also Maris (Cheremises) and Bashkirs (Zetterberg 2010: 128).

In 1570 Russia's troops besieged Reval (Tallinn) with 40,000 men, of whom 10,000 were Tatars and other ethnic groups from Kazan and Astrakhan (Linnas 2004: 1989). During the 1558 campaign, as well as in the second siege of Tallinn in 1577, some Tatars left Russian troops and became subjects of the Swedish king. Some of them took permanent residence in Estonia. One of the most famous deserters from the Russian army was the Tatar boyar Bulaat Murssov, who joined the defenders of Tallinn in 1577 (Russow 1993: 264). It is not clear whether or not Murssov was a Muslim as Ivan IV had persuaded defeated Tatars by death threats to change their religion from Islam to Orthodox Christianity (Sergejev and Vseviov 2007: 227). In 1579 northern Estonia was again raided by Tatar troops in the Russian military. The invaders were challenged by German and Swedish mercenaries and a local peasant army, which was led by the legendary Estonian warlord Ivo Schenckenberg, who was captured and handed over to the Grand Duke of Pskov who executed him with his comrades (Russow 1993: 309).

The most famous Tatar nobility in Estonia is the Baranov (Baranow, Baranoff) family. It was established in Estonia by four Baranov brothers who changed their support for the Russian tsar to the Swedish king during the Livonian War. Mursa-Shdan Baran, grandfather of the brothers Woin, Feodor, Kasari and Menschik, had declared his loyalty to the Grand Duke of Moscow as

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early as in 1430 and became baptised as an Orthodox Christian (von Stackelberg 1931: 17). A village in western Estonia, which was owned by Kasari Baranov, as well as the longest river in western Estonia, have been named after him (Lõugas 1997: 43). Karl Gustav von Baranow (1713–1796) became the Actual Privy Council according to the Civil Ranks of the Russian Empire as well as Councillor of Estland, the northern part of present-day Estonia. He owned the estates of Gross-Lechtiocal (Suure Lähtru), Waetz (Väätsa), Penningby (Peningi) and Rabbifer (Rabivere). Since the eighteenth century, members of the Baranov family were active as various high-ranking officials and officers in the Russian Empire until the Revolution of 1917.

Under Russian Rule, 1721–1918

The first larger Tatar community emerged in Estonia after the end of the Great Northern War in 1721, when Estonia became part of the expanding Russian Empire. Tatars were recruited to the Russian army, and the Tatar community in Estonia was founded by the soldiers who stayed there after being released from their 25 years long military service. The policy of the Russian Empire was to diversify the population in the border regions. One way of doing this was forced marriages between discharged soldiers and Estonian women. The household registers of Tallinn's Lutheran Holy Spirit Church from 1794 show that several dozen marriages between Tatar marines and non-commissioned officers with Estonian women were contracted at the same time. The remark at the entry reads: "according to the government's order" (Abiline 2008: 62). The numbers of the Muslim Tatar servicemen must have been large enough as there was a small mosque in the garrison town Neustadt (Uuslinn).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some Tatars as well as other Muslims from the Russian Empire were sent to Estonia also as convicts to build coastal fortresses in Tallinn and Paldiski. They had been sentenced to penal servitude basically because of their resistance to the tsarist power. After the rebellion of Yemelyan Pugachev had been crushed in 1775, the Bashkir peasant leader and bard Salavat Yulayev, who was sentenced for life, was also sent to Paldiski. His father Yulay was a convict in Paldiski as well. The convicts built coastal fortresses and breakwaters. The forced labour was hard – only one kopek was allotted for daily food – and the convicts slept in big detention barracks, called *ostrogs*. Usually the convict could not survive longer than for about three or four years, and Paldiski was justly called another Siberia. The fact that Salavat Yulayev lived in Paldiski from 1775 to 1800, and

his father Yulay from 1775 to 1798, can be explained by the bribes that were sent to prison wardens and guards from Bashkiria. Therefore the Bashkirs were provided with better food than other convicts. It is also known that Salavat had an Estonian sweetheart, Ano, but as a convict he could not marry and have a family. They were taken to work in shackles. Salavat Yulayev drowned in the Paldiski Bay in 1800 (Ahmetov 1999: 59).

The Tatar community of discharged servicemen was concentrated in certain districts of Tallinn. The oldest one became known as the Tatars' neighbourhood (Tatar Sloboda), a free settlement which was established in the eighteenth century when Tallinn became one of the important naval bases for the Russian fleet. The retired soldiers started to buy land and build houses in the area. Even today the main street of that area is Tatari tänav (the Tatar Street), a name that was used already in the late eighteenth century (Kivi 1972: 121–122). Most probably due to the large Tatar community, one of the suburbs, Kadriorg, was called the Tatar Nest.[2] Between 1834 and 1862 there were around 50 Muslims living in Tallinn, and most of them were Tatars. At that time the Muslims had their own mosque and imam. According to the Tallinn City Archives, there were in 1838 two marriages between Tatar Muslim men and Estonian women, and in 1842 there was one (Abiline 2007a: 10).

A new wave of Tatars arrived in Estonia after the disestablishment of serfdom in Russia in 1861. Many Tatar peasants who were released from serfdom became merchants, and some itinerant Tatar merchants arrived in Estonia. As they travelled by horse carts, they were often considered to be wandering Roma people. Some of the itinerant merchants settled down and established small shops. The main clients for these shops came from Tatar as well as from other Muslim communities. One of the main places from where the newcomers came was the village of Kuj-Su in Sergach County in Nizhny Novgorod (Ahmetov and Nisamedtinov 1999: 449).

There have been estimations that in 1914 there were around 2,000 Tatars living in Tallinn (Ahmetov and Nisamedtinov 1999: 449). The real number is probably lower as, according to the census of 1897, there were 109 Tatars living in Tallinn. One of the reasons for the difference of the numbers is that the servicemen were not counted in the census and that it was common to call all Muslims Tatars. In the early twentieth century Tatars rented a hall in the fire station at Viru Square in the Tallinn city centre for religious holidays.[3]

2 Institute of the Estonian Language: Card catalogue of place names, Gustav Vilbaste collection, GV1957.

3 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 23 March 2006.

Tatars who had settled in Estonia did not lose contact with their homelands in the Volga region and supported their communities there. A good example of this is the merchant Zakir Zakerov, who arrived in Estonia in the late nineteenth century. He had a successful shop at Viru Square in the centre of Tallinn. Zakerov had six to seven, sometimes even twelve, young men from his home village near Nizhny Novgorod as apprentices. They learned the trade as well as spoke Russian. The apprenticeship usually lasted for two years, and they had a month of vacation during which they could visit their home village.[4]

The most honourable and richest of all Tatars in Estonia before the First World War was Sigbatulla Magdejev. The King of Tatars, as he was called, was born in the Province of Nizhny Novgorod in 1863. Sigbatulla Magdejev arrived in Tallinn in 1885, and he soon became a successful and wealthy businessman. In 1892 his first son Hairulla was born. Magdejev was married twice and had thirteen children of whom only six reached adulthood. In 1904 his son Ibrahim was born. Since his sons survived while his first daughters had died as newborns, Magdejev bought a piece of land near the Inner City Cemetery to show his gratitude to God by establishing a graveyard for Tatars there. The graveyard was surrounded by a stone wall, and the iron gates were decorated with crescents, symbols of Islam. It has been said that the wall and iron gate were built with the money Magdejev had received from the Jewish community after he had helped that community to negotiate a land grant for the Jewish cemetery from the governor-general (Linnas 2004: 1999; Abiline 2008: 68).

Sigbatulla Magdejev's wealth came from his trade in fur, rugs and jewels. He had business contacts in Saint Petersburg and Pskov, and his customers included dukes and grand dukes. He made regular business trips to Saint Petersburg and Haapsalu, a popular resort amongst the Russian elite in western Estonia. During the Russian Civil War, Magdejev traded with Russian White émigrés in Estonia and made notable profits. Like many of his fellow Tatars in Estonia, he did not forget his home village and donated money for the building of wells and bridges.[5]

The Estonian Republic, 1918–1940

During the First World War (1914–1918) and the Estonian Independence War (1918–1920) many Tatars left Estonia. Some of them moved to Finland in fear of arriving German troops, while some tried to return to their historical

4 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 9 April 2007.

5 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 9 April 2007.

homelands in the Volga region. During the First World War there were approximately 200 Tatars living in Estonia (Ahmetov and Nisamedtinov 1999: 449). The independence movement amongst the Tatars was crushed by both the White and Red armies, however, and a new wave of Tatars came to Estonia. In 1920 the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was formed in Soviet Russia, and Tatars in Estonia lost contact with relatives in Tatarstan in the mid-1920s.[6]

During the first period of the Estonian independence (1918–1940), the main centres of Tatar communities were in Narva and in Tallinn. According to the census of 1934, there were 170 Muslims living in Estonia, of whom 166 were Tatars. According to the Tatars themselves, this number was not exactly correct. In their view, there were 180 Tatars living there, half of them in Narva and the other half in Tallinn.[7] The period before the Second World War is still considered by Tatars as a "golden time" since life was peaceful and it was possible to develop Tatar national societies and cultural life. Nowadays the majority of people who have personal memories from that period have passed away. Most of the following account is based on two interviews with one of the oldest members of the Tatar community, Nadir Aizatullin (1928–2009), who was born in Tallinn on 23 August 1928. His father Umiar Aizatullin married his mother Asma Zakerova in 1916, when she was only 14 years old. The first two children, the brothers Osman and Häidar, died as infants. However, later three sons were born: Enver, Emir and Nadir, the youngest.

Tatars lived mostly in towns, and one of the most respected professions was that of merchant. Umiar Aizatullin started his merchant career in his brother's clothing shop. On paydays he took the goods in suitcases to the big factories where he sold the goods or gave on credit and collected the payment afterwards. In the 1930s Umiar Aizatullin had his own shop in a small one-storey house at Tartu Street 9 in the centre of Tallinn. He sold clothes and textiles; there was also a section for second-hand clothing, and part of the business was the repairing of old clothes. Umiar's wife Asma worked in the shop as a seamstress, and there was also another seamstress and a furrier. Umiar's older brother helped to clean up the shop: on Saturdays the floors were polished, and on Sundays the goods were sold in a junk market. The goods were put on a cart, taken to the market, and were sold under the fabric shelter, *palatka*, until three o'clock in the afternoon. According to Nadir, his parents were very busy with the shop and their days were long. The family had a servant, and Nadir

6 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 23 March 2006.

7 "Muhamedi pühakoda Tallinnas", *Rahvaleht*, No. 50, 29 April 1935.

had a private teacher. The only chance for Nadir to spend time with his parents was at the dinner table on Sunday afternoons.

In the 1930s the best known Tatar businessmen in Tallinn were the fur merchants Sigbatulla Magdejev, Hairulla Magdejev (Hairulla Mehdi) and Fateh Zakerov, and the lace merchant Umiar Zarip (Abiline 2007b). On 8 January 1938 the newspaper *Vaba Maa* published an article on Tatars, and there a Tatar draper was described in the following way:

> With a huge quadrilateral bindle of white fabric on his back, a metal rule in his hand – this is how we used to see Tatars moving from house to house selling their goods. Quickly he unties his bindle and there are all kinds of fabrics: window curtains, towels, rugs and lace, dress and suit fabrics. Quickly he measures the fabric, tears off a part of it, and the buyer should be confident that he got the first class good almost for nothing.

Learning the trade started at an early age. Nadir Aizatullin was only eight or nine years old when he started to sell combs and candles in the market. Before Easter he sold colours for colouring Easter eggs. On Sundays, candles were readily saleable items at the Rahumäe cemetery, where he sold these with his brother. The Soviet occupation in 1940 hit Nadir's family hard as the hard-earned money lost its value. There were also Tatars who bought waste metal both in towns and in the countryside. The best known rag-and-bone merchant in Tallinn was a former White Army officer, Väliulla Arslanov, who travelled around with a horse cart and collected waste metal, bronze and copper and sold it to the Franz Krull machine factory. Arslanov collected linen, wax and other items too.

The formal education of a younger generation was considered important by well-to-do Tatars, and several younger generation Tatars became civil servants. Umiar Zarip's daughters studied medicine at Tartu University, and his sons Ahmed and Ibrahim received their secondary education at the highly respected French Lyceum in Tallinn.[8] The Aizatullin family lived in a rented three-room flat in the Tatar neighbourhood of Kompasna. The flat in the house where they rented had water and sewer systems, although the toilet was in the hallway. Tatars mostly rented their flats, but there were also house-owners amongst them. In the Kompasna neighbourhood lived, besides Tatars, also Estonians, Russians and Jews. The relations between Tatars and Estonians were in general good, but there were occasional quarrels with the Jews. As the route for Jewish boys from the school to the synagogue went through the Tatar neighbourhood,

8 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 9 April 2007.

there were sometimes conflicts between Jewish and Tatar boys. The latter played mostly amongst themselves, and the most popular leisure time hobby was football. As there were no resources to buy a real football, they had a replacement one made of rugs. According to Nadir Aizatullin's recollection, Tatars went for justice to the Jewish community court.

Tatars had a vivid social life, and during the holidays the families visited each other, always accompanied by children. They used Islamic as well as Christian calendars. In addition to the Muslim holidays, Christmas and Easter were celebrated in their community as well. Although Christmas trees were not used, gifts were exchanged at Christmas time, and during Easter time, eggs were coloured. The Aizatullin family coloured around 150 eggs that were distributed amongst friends. The richer Tatars replaced eggs as gifts with oranges, nuts and candies. The Islamic tradition of alms-giving was followed by donating money or clothes, giving free dinners or by relinquishing the debts of the poorer community members.[9]

Tatars did not often wear their ethnic costumes. The general outfit did not differ much from the one of Estonians. Women did wear headscarves and jewellery during the celebrations. Also the homes of Tatars did not differ much from the homes of Estonians. One of the particularities of Tatar homes might have been the use of carpets on the walls. As the drinking of tea was important, the samovar had a special place in every Tatar home. The honorary place in homes was reserved for the Quran, and nothing was allowed to be placed on the Quran. However, there were few Tatars who were able to read the Holy Book, and even fewer who could understand what was read. Nadir Aizatullin recalled that his mother read the Quran, while his father did not.

Tatars kept the Muslim food prohibitions, which meant that they did not eat pork. The most popular meat at that time was that of horses. The Tatar Cultural Society or Tatar businessmen received occasional phone calls from enterprises where horses were used as a work force. If an accident with a horse had taken place, the horse could be sold to Tatars. The meat was shared by the community members, and always the poorest of the community had their share too. Horse meat was also used to make sausages. The meat was cut into pieces and tendons were separated. It was then mixed with salt and sugar, put into a gut and flavoured with toddy. This kind of sausage was kept throughout the winter, usually in the attic in the cold and wind, and in the spring it was ready to be eaten. During the summer the menu consisted more of fish and poultry, and during winter time especially beef and horse meat were consumed.[10] Unlike

9 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 9 April 2007.

10 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 23 March 2006.

tea, coffee was not popular. Although consumption of alcohol is prohibited by Islam, Nadir Aizatullin noted that "life takes its part". Hence during social gatherings some men visited "a side-room". There were also alcoholics amongst Tatars. After longer periods of drinking, they went to the mulla in regret, but the drinking periods tended to recur.

Estonian Tatars had close contact with the Tatar community in Finland. There was a Tatari Kultuuriselts (Tatar Cultural Society) in Tallinn with a board of respected Tatar men who organised different social events. There was a choir for older men as well as a youth choir that sang Tatar songs. When radios and gramophones became more common, modern dances were danced. There was also a choir in Narva, and plays were performed there. The board of the Cultural Society organised trips to Finland. Tatars from Tallinn often spent their summer vacations at the summer resort in Narva-Jõesuu, where summer schools for the children were organised. The last Tatar summer gathering took place in Narva-Jõesuu in 1939, when almost all Tatars living in Estonia participated.

People in Tatar homes used the Tatar language, and literature in that language could also be found in homes. There was a Tatar Sunday school in Tallinn. It operated in the house belonging to Sigbatulla Magdejev at Raua Street 57. In Sunday school children were taught the basics of Islam, Tatar history and culture, geography and the Arabic alphabet. The teacher was Arif Rami from Finland, who had been a gold industrialist in Siberia before the Russian Revolution. There was also an evening school for children in Narva at the premises of the Tatar congregation at Kiriku Street 2. In March 1935 there were 25 children enrolled in classes, and the study hours started at 3 p.m. and lasted until 9.30 p.m. (Ahmetov and Nisamedtinov 1999: 450).[11]

The Tatar identity of children was strengthened in the summer camps that took place in Narva-Jõesuu. The teacher at these camps was Alimjan (Alimcan) Idris from Berlin. He was one of the most active Muslims in Eastern Europe and visited Estonia several times during the 1930s. A Volga Tatar himself, he was surprised to see the good situation of Muslims in Estonia. There was a religious society and there was no discrimination. In his address to local Muslims in 1934 he said:

> You live now in Estonia. The current government of the Estonian Republic does not have any connection with previous tsarist or current Soviet Russia, where Muslims were and are secondary citizens. The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia gives the same rights as the native population

11 "Narvas avati muhameedlaste kool". *Uus Eesti*, 4 March 1938.

> also has to minority nationalities, and this constitutional principle has been followed by the government and other executive powers. There are no Muslims who could complain that the government has committed injustices against them. Consider the Estonian Republic as your state![12]

During the second half of the 1930s, there was a patriotic campaign amongst Estonians to Estonise their non-Estonian family names by replacing family names of German or Russian origin with Estonian ones. In 1938 similar discussions concerning tatarising family names by removing Russian suffixes were held in the Tatar community.[13]

Religious and Social Life in the Inter-War Period

The first Muslim religious association was established in Narva, where Narva Muhamedi Kogudus (the Narva Mohammedan Congregation) was registered on 18 May 1928 and was reregistered in 1937 as Narva Muhamedi Usuühing (the Narva Mohammedan Religious Society). The religious community in Tallinn became a legal entity on 13 March 1940 (Linnas 2004: 1991). In general, Tatars had much respect for religion. They tried to follow the religious practices, felt deep respect towards spiritual leaders, and went for repentance to the mulla. For many Tatars who were merchants, however, it was difficult to observe the daily prayers. Thus it was common that all five daily prayers were performed once in the evening. Friday prayers and religious holidays were observed. The three main religious holidays for the Tatars in Estonia were the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, Mawlid, the celebrations at the end of Ramadan, Ramazan Bayram, and the Feast of the Sacrifice, Kurban Bayram. Families prepared themselves for these holidays by cleaning their homes, changing curtains and by preparing holiday meals. At these times gifts were exchanged, donations were made to the poor, and the community gathered for common prayers.

The first mosque opened its doors on 29 July 1935 in Narva at Kiriku Street 2, where the religious society had bought a house. The inauguration brought together Tatars from different parts of Estonia and also from Finland. As the newspaper *Postimees* reported the following day, the ceremony was conducted by the spiritual head of the Finnish Muslims, Väliahmäd Hakim. The official ceremony was followed by a cultural part in which Tatar boys and girls sang Turkish and Arab songs. In Tallinn, Friday prayers in the 1930s took place in the

12 "Muhameedlaste juhi tänu Eesti valitsusele", *Postimees*, 9 July 1934.

13 "Eesti tatarlased paluvad oma nimede tataristamist", *Uus Eesti*, 27 June 1938.

mulla's flat at Raua Street 57. During the holidays around 60 to 70 Tatars gathered there. There was also another prayer room in Sube Street 4, where the community rented a larger room on the second floor of a house where a common bath was situated.

In 1935 a journalist from the newspaper *Rahvaleht* attended the Friday noon prayer at the Sube street hall. He described on 29 April what he had seen. The following quotation is from his news story "Muslim sanctuary in Tallinn":

> It is a large but poor room on the second floor of a house with a bath at Sube Street that Tatars have chosen to be their temple. Almost the entire floor is covered with carpets. The walls are painted with blue-grayish oil paint resembling thus the walls of the bath. The room is divided into two parts with drapes. In the larger part of the room there is a two-stage footstool, minbar, on the southern wall – in the direction of the Muslim's holy city Mecca. Here the men are praying, behind the drape there is a prayer space for the women. During the ritual prayer the women may not come out from behind the drape. The regulation on this is especially strict for the young girls who have not reached their menstrual age. It is possible to see that in the space reserved for women, where the only two windows of the room are, there is also a couple of tables with a sewing machine, samovar and other necessities for everyday life. In the prayer hall, which is used only once a week, lives also a 70-year-old Tatar woman whose duty is to keep the holy place in order. When the clock strikes 12, there are only two elderly women who sit on the carpets with crossed legs and speak a Turkish-Tatar dialect. The women are waiting for the clergyman, the imam. Their heads are covered with clean white headscarves, covered with wool headscarves [that is, double headscarves were used]. Islam requires covering the hair during prayer.
>
> Soon imam Adiatulla Minahztetin arrives. He takes a white turban from the minbar [pulpit]. The turban has a white bottom and a black tassel. During the service there is a thin white ribbon hanging from behind the turban, during other times it is tied to the turban. Waiting for the other congregation members to arrive, the imam, whose duties include sermons and prayers, starts to talk with the women. Next the muezzin [who calls the prayer] Ismael Devlet-Shahh arrives. He takes another turban from the minbar. Ismael does not have many duties. While his counterparts in his homeland sing prayer calls – *azans* – from the tall minarets five times a day, then our muezzin must be content with one *azan* a week. It takes place during Friday noon prayers.
>
> Soon after Devlet-Shahh the other Tatars arrive. Amongst others, I can see familiar faces from the business life of Tallinn. The famous businessman

> Sibgatulla Megdejev comes with F. Zakerov, who has a fur shop with Hairulla Sibgatullin at Aia Street. The men take off their coats, roll up their sleeves and go to a side-room to wash. Before the prayer service they wash their face, lower body, hands and feet. Some stay barefooted or in socks during the prayer. Socks may have holes, but they must be clean. Finally Tatars cover their heads with small Tatar hats; one of them even uses a red Turkish *fez* with a black tassel. The muezzin raises his hands to his ears and starts with the *azan* in Arabic. Imam Adiatulla sings the prayers from the prayer book in Arabic, holding at the same time a long stick with a knob in his hand. The service lasts for an hour.

Another news story, published in the newspaper *Vaba maa* in January 1938, reported that there were men who took their trousers off for prayer time and thus wore only their underwear. Nadir recalled that in the prayer house at Sube Street the adults sat on the chairs by the wall, while the children had to move around and kiss their hands as a greeting. According to Nadir Azatullin, the elderly people tried to keep the fast during Ramadan. When the Ramadan fast took place in the winter months, for example from 5 December 1934 to 5 January 1935, it was easy to fast. However, during the summertime, when a Tatar might have to move around with his goods to sell on his back it was difficult to keep the fast. Children drank in the morning and had to fast until the evening, if they could. On Sundays the fast was kept at least half of the day. People who did not fast during Ramadan for good reasons had, however, to make it up later. Although making a pilgrimage to Mecca is a religious duty for a Muslim, there was no one in Estonia who had done so before the Second World War. It was told that there had been one Muslim in Finland who had made the pilgrimage, but he had become seriously ill due to the hot climate as reported in the newspaper *Rahvaleht* on 29 April 1935.

Although Estonian Tatars did not strictly follow many of the religious observances and tended to be quite liberal in them, *zakat* (charity) was strictly observed. Better-off Tatars took care of poorer community members, alms were given in the form of money, clothes were donated and debts were relinquished. When a sheep was killed during Kurban Bayram, the meat was shared by family members as well as with poorer families. As Nadir Aizatullin recalled, none of the Tatars had to suffer for lack of meat.

Muslims in Estonia have used both the title of mulla and that of imam to designate their spiritual leaders. The spiritual life was taken care of by Adiatulla Minahztetin and his assistant Ismael Devlet-Shahh (Abiline 2007b: 28). Aidiatulla Minahztetin received his religious education in Kazan and Bukhara. He had served as imam in Nizhny Novgorod, from where he was sent to serve the Tatar

community in Estonia. Before the Revolution of 1917, Minahztetin had served Tatars in Saint Petersburg also.[14] Besides being the leader of Friday prayers, he had the duties of naming newborns, conducting marriage ceremonies and performing funeral rituals. The religious leader for Muslims in Narva was Mustafa Haerdinov. On special occasions, the imam Väliahmäd Hakim from Finland visited Tallinn and Narva.[15]

The mulla and his assistant were economically supported by the community, and their only duty was to serve the community as spiritual leaders. The mulla had a three-room flat in a house belonging to Sigbatulla Magdejev at Raua Street 57. He was a respected man and was often invited to family celebrations where he had the seat of honour. According to Nadir Aizatullin, the mulla was a man with many peculiarities. One of these was his passion for tea. Allegedly, he sometimes drank as much as ten litres of tea during a night when he was sweating so much that he had two towels – one of them was on his neck while the other was drying on the samovar.

Tatar families tended to have many children. When an infant was named, there was a mulla present who read the required prayers. When boys reached a proper age, they were circumcised. As a rule, marriages took place between Tatars. Before the Russian Revolution and the independence of Estonia, young Tatar men travelled to find a bride from their ancestral villages. During the time of the Estonian Republic the proper spouse was usually found in the local Tatar community. Mixed marriages with Estonians or Russians were rare, and they were generally not accepted by the community. Tatar women depended on their husbands, and usually they did not work outside their homes. At the table men and women sat on opposite sides. At public meetings and social events, women had to cover their hair and palms. Before the Second World War there were apparently no divorces in Tatar families.

Parents of the groom went to propose, and only after the two families came to an agreement could the couple appear together in public. The groom had to pay money to the bride's family, which was used for buying gifts for the bride as well as for covering the cost of the wedding. There were many traditions connected to marriage. The marriage ceremony for the groom and for the bride did not take place in the same room. While the bride was in one room with other women, the groom with other men and the mulla were in another. During the ceremony the mulla gave honey to both the bride and the groom to symbolise the sweet life they were going to have.

14 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 9 April 2007.

15 "Muhameedlaste piiskop Narva-Jõesuhu", *Postimees*, 8 June 1934.

Before the Second World War there were reportedly four Tatars who had married Estonian women. One of them was Hairulla Magdejev, a son of the richest Tatar businessman in Estonia, Sigbatulla Magdejev, who never forgave his son for making this decision. It has been recalled that even when they sat at the same table, his father never spoke with Hairulla. Despite the lack of support from his father, Hairulla became a successful businessman and ran a fur shop with his uncle Fateh Zakerov. Sigbatulla Magdejev also had problems with a younger son who did not marry the woman his father had chosen. Instead of an heir of a rich businessman from Riga, Hairulla Magdejev married Rashide Sahmaef from Narva. The marriage ceremony took place in 1926, and this was the first marriage in the Tatar community where the groom and bride were married in the same room (Abiline 2007b).

Tatars had their separate graveyards in Tallinn as well as in Narva and Rakvere. At the Tatar cemetery the graves did not have signs or gravestones. Neither were there flowers, although grass was planted, and children had the duty of removing weeds. Benches were lacking there too. There were only graves, and each person knew where her or his relatives were buried. The first Tatar whose grave had the brink of the grave made of concrete was Ämer Arslanov, who died while being a serviceman in the Estonian defence forces. At his funeral, gun salutes were shot, and the first metal wreath was placed in a Tatar graveyard. The graveyard was often visited, usually with children. In the beginning of the twentieth century Tatars followed a tradition that forbade women in their fertile age to visit the graveyard. This tradition was abandoned in the 1930s.[16]

When Sigbatulla Magdejev died in 1939, the local newspaper *Uudisleht* published on 14 April the following news: "The King of the Tatars is dead!" Almost all Tatars in Tallinn attended the funeral ceremony, which was led by the imam Väliahmäd Hakim from Finland. In its in-depth news coverage of the funeral, the newspaper also mentioned that Sigbatulla's relatives gave away 1,000 crowns (around 7,350 euros in current value) for people so that they could buy something for themselves that would remind them of him.

Under Occupation, 1940–1988

The Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union, and the subsequent Soviet occupation of Estonia, cut off the relations between Tatars in Estonia and Finland. The Soviet occupation of Estonia in 1940 ended the activities of

16 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 23 March 2006.

Tatar societies. In 1940 the Muslim religious associations in Tallinn and Narva were closed. Graveyards owned by religious societies in Tallinn, Narva and Rakvere were municipalised.[17]

During the first Soviet (1940–1941) and German (1941–1944) occupations, Tatars and Estonians shared the same fate. Their men were mobilised to fight either in Soviet or German armies. The wealthy fur merchant Hairula Mehdi was arrested by the Soviet authorities, and he died on 18 November 1941 in a Gulag prison camp in the Gorky (Nizhny Novgorod) region. Ibrahim Zarip (1925–1994) fought in the Second World War in the Finnish Navy (Seifullen 2004). In 1943, during the German occupation, the Muslim congregation in Narva was reregistered. The congregation had 81 members, and they elected Zinnätulla Seifullin as spiritual leader (Abiline 2008: 70). The Tatar community lost many of its men during the Second World War. In 1944 many Tatars left Estonia, shortly before the Soviet troops re-entered the country. They settled in Finland, Sweden, Germany, Canada and Australia. The community in Narva was completely destroyed after the war, as the Soviet regime resettled all the population of Narva to other areas of Estonia. Tatars of Narva moved mostly to Tallinn and the surrounding areas.

During the Soviet period the Tatar community started to grow. The reason for this was the Soviet migration policy. There was a considerable immigration to Estonia from other parts of the Soviet Union, which led to changes in the ethnic composition of Estonia. In 1932 ethnic Estonians formed 88.2 per cent of the total population, and by 1989 the percentage of ethnic Estonians had fallen to 61.5 per cent. In 1947 hundreds of Tatars from the Nizhny Novgorod region were brought in to build a chemical factory in Maardu, near Tallinn. In the 1950s more Tatars arrived in order to build a hydroelectric plant in Narva (Seifullen 2004). As in the nineteenth century, many Tatars came to Estonia as servicemen in the army. Some Tatars arrived as railroad workers, some as seamen. In the 1970s a new wave of Tatars arrived in Estonia as construction workers for the 1980 Moscow Olympics' sailing regatta sites. By 1989 there were 4,058 Tatars living in Estonia (Ahmetov and Nisamedtinov 1999: 450).

The relations between the older Tatar community and the newcomers were in general good. Until the 1960s marriages were mostly between Tatars, and the bride was often brought from Tatarstan or other parts of Russia. Nadir Aizatullin, for example, married in 1953 after his service in the army. He went to Moscow where he was acquainted with Tatar girls, although his

17 "Akt Narva Muhamedi Usuühingu valduses olnud Rakvere Kalmistu üleandmise kohta Rakvere Linna Täitevkomiteele kommunaalmajanduse osakonnale", 1 April 1941. Document in the Private Archives of T. Seifullen.

FIGURE 5.1 *Meeting of Tatars in Tallin in the 1950s*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

mother had already chosen a bride for him. He saw his future wife twice for half an hour before the wedding. The bride token was 3,000 roubles. According to Nadir, his marriage was very happy because his mother had made a wise choice.[18] In the 1950s and 1960s it was common that the Tatar language was spoken at home.[19] The newcomers from the urban areas, however, spoke Russian instead of Tatar.

During the Soviet period, religious traditions were followed in domestic surroundings. The prayers were said at home, marriages, the naming of the newborn and funerals were conducted according to Muslim traditions. Also, circumcision was practised. When there was no official mulla during the Soviet period, rituals were led by the elderly men of the community. One of these old men was Zinnätulla Seifullin, who had no formal religious education. Nevertheless, he became a leader of the religious community and taught the basics of Islam to children and prayers in Arabic. Tatars who arrived in Estonia from other parts of the Soviet Union might have lost their language but had kept their religious identity.

18 Interview with Nadir Aizatullin, Tallinn, 9 April 2007.

19 Interview with Timur Seifullen, Tallinn, 17 August 2011.

FIGURE 5.2
Zinnätulla and Näimä Seifullin with their sons Änvär and Ädhäm in the early 1920s in Narva
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

The interaction with Tatars in the Soviet Union was important. However, contact with Tatars in Finland was broken for several years until the late 1950s, when Tatars living in Finland could come to visit their relatives and friends as tourists. In 1944, during the Second World War, the drainage system surrounding the Tatar cemetery in Tallinn was destroyed in a bombardment, and the cemetery was flooded. In 1953 it was closed, and Tatars reburied their deceased relatives in the Liiva cemetery of Tallinn, where a special area was reserved for them. During the years that followed, the old Tatar cemetery was turned into a grove and a petrol station.

Post-Soviet Time

The liberalisation processes in the Soviet Union during the late 1980s were accompanied by the national reawakening movements. In the Estonian context it also meant the national reawakening of ethnic minorities. In 1988 Tatars with roots in pre-Soviet Estonia established Tatari Kultuuriselts (the Tatar Cultural Society). In addition to strengthening the ethnic identity of Tatars, the society supported the Estonian independence movement. The first chairman of the society was Timur Seifullen. The Tatar Cultural Society was also one of

FIGURE 5.3 *A gathering of Tatar Muslims in Tallinn, 1988*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

the founding organisations of Eesti Rahvuste Ühendus (the Estonian Union of Nationalities), and many Tatars were involved in the activities of Eestimaa Rahavarinne (the Estonian People's Front). Members of the society gave information about the political changes in Estonia to Tatarstan as well as to other parts of the Soviet Union. In 1995 the Tatar Cultural Society was renamed and is currently known as Tatari Kogukond Eestis (the Tatar Community in Estonia).

The Tatar Cultural Society started to organise cultural life and established a Sunday school, where Ilsjär Magdejeva was the teacher. The active members participating in different cultural activities gave concerts in different places in Estonia as well as in Tatarstan. The first years of the Tatar Cultural Society were full of ethno-national enthusiasm. At the society's gatherings only the Tatar language was spoken, and there were many visitors from Tatarstan who urged Estonian Tatars to return to their historical homeland, and ideas of an emerging independent Tatarstan were discussed. In the 1990s many Tatars who had arrived in Estonia during Soviet times returned to Tatarstan. The number of Tatars living in Estonia declined from 4,058 in 1989 to 3,546 in 1994, and by 2011 there were 1,998 Tatars in Estonia. Most of those who remained live in Tallinn, Maardu, Kohtla-Järve and Narva. Thus, Tatars are one of the most urbanised ethnic groups living in Estonia.

Today there are six registered Tatar societies in Estonia. Two of them are in Tallinn: Tatari Kultuuriselts Idel (Tatar Cultural Society Idel) from 1997 (the word *Idel* means Volga) and Tatari Kultuurikeskus Yoldõz (the Tatar Cultural

FIGURE 5.4 *Older members of the Maardu Tatar Society in 2004*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

Center Yoldõz) from 2003 (*yoldõz* means star). The rest of them are in Maardu, Sillamäe, Narva and Pärnu. The national societies have organised several events like concerts, exhibitions, conferences and sporting activities. Interaction with Tatars living in Finland has been re-established. Furthermore, there is contact with Tatars living in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Belarus. There are also close connections with the historical homeland, Tatarstan, as well as with Tatars in other countries. The Tatar societies have organised several trips to Tatarstan and established modes of cultural exchange.

Currently there are two main groups in the Estonian Tatar community. One group is made up of Tatars who have their roots in the pre-Soviet period, and the other one is the group that came to Estonia during Soviet times. Tatars with roots in the pre-Soviet community are fully integrated into Estonian society. They speak Estonian and identify themselves as part of Estonia. However, Tatars who have their roots in Soviet times have been educated in the Russian language and have more features in common with the so-called Russian minority in Estonia. This group consists of different ethnic groups who settled in Estonia at the time of Soviet rule but share amongst themselves the Russian language as a common denominator. Thus Tatars in Estonia consider themselves as parts of the Estonian or the Russian community there. The option to maintain a separate, Tatar language-based subculture has not yet become a possibility since the Tatar community has not been able to provide Tatar language-based education to their children (Ahmetov and Nisamedtinov 1999: 451). According to Timur Seifullen, approximately half of the Tatars in Estonia speak the Tatar language at least on a satisfactory level. In the context of ethnic

minorities living in Estonia, it is a good result. In spite of some differences between the two main groups in terms of lifestyle and identity, they have not caused a split in the Tatar community. Both of these groups are actively involved in the activities of different Tatar societies.

The main foundations of the Tatar ethnic identity have been the Tatar language and Islam. It has been claimed that around 60 per cent of the Tatars consider themselves to be Muslims, although only around 15 per cent practise their religion actively.[20] When the Tatar Cultural Society was established in 1988, one of the aims of the organisation was to reregister the Muslim religious association (Seifullen 2004). In 1989 the Tatar Cultural Society sent its representatives to meet with the mufti of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate for the European Soviet Union and Siberia, Hazrat Talgat Tatdzhetin in Ufa, the capital of the Bashkirian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.[21] The idea of re-establishing a Muslim religious association was supported by the directorate. On 7 August 1989 Tallinna Islami Kogudus (the Tallinn Islamic Congregation) became a registered religious association. Hasjan Murtazin (1913–1997) was elected as the spiritual leader of the congregation and Gajar Zarip as the chairman. The congregation also sent Ali Harrasov, who had arrived in Estonia in the 1960s, to study Islam in a *madrasa* (Muslim school) in Ufa. In 1990 the Spiritual Directorate sent him to Estonia to serve the community as a local imam.

After the adoption of a Churches and Congregations Act in 1993, the religious associations in Estonia had to reregister themselves. In the midst of this process the Tallinn Islamic Congregation decided to become the religious association for all Muslims living in Estonia. In the re-registration the name of the congregation was changed to Eesti Islami Kogudus (the Estonian Islamic Congregation). Since that time Azeris, Uzbeks, Kirgiz, Kazaks and Muslims of other ethnic groups from the former Soviet Union have also become members of the congregations (Seifullen 2004). At the same time the congregation also united Sunni (Tatars and others) and Shia (mostly Azeris) branches of Islam in Estonia. Since then the diversity of the congregation has grown due to the new immigrants from Muslim countries and local converts who have joined the religious community. Tatars, however, are still the largest ethnic group amongst Muslims in Estonia. The older generations of Tatars born in Estonia have learned the prayers in Arabic, although they do not speak that language and cannot read the Quran. They are familiar with Muslim traditions and try to

20 Interview with Timur Seifullen, Tallinn, 8 June 2007.

21 Estonian Islamic Congregation. File S. 1–5. Annual Activity Report 1989. Archives of the Religious Affairs Commissioner in the ESSR at the Estonian Ministry of the Interior.

follow them. If possible, they attend Friday prayers. There is also an interest in Islam amongst the younger generation, although according to the 2011 census only 23 per cent of the Tatars between the ages of 15 and 29 defined themselves as Muslims. Some participate actively in the activities of the congregation and learn Arabic and Muslim traditions. Even though religion is a distinctive part of the Tatar identity in Estonia, it should be noted that not all Tatars are Muslims or religious at all. According to the 2011 census, 32 per cent of Tatars defined themselves as Muslims, 22 per cent chose not to answer the question of religious affiliation, and 31.5 per cent declared no religious affiliation.

The congregation has close contact with the Muslim community in Poland. The relations between Tatars and congregation members who have recently come to Estonia have been good, although there are language and cultural differences. However, when the mufti – who is an ethnic Tatar – is abroad, and prayers are led by Arab congregation members, the Tatars tend to abstain from them. Since 1994 the chairman of the board of the congregation has been Timur Seifullen. In 1995 a splinter group emerged from the Estonian Islamic Congregation. This group registered as a religious association under the name of Eesti Muhameedlaste Sunniitide Kogudus (the Estonian Mohammedian Sunnite Congregation). The spiritual leader of the new organisation was the former leader of the Estonian Islamic Congregation, Ali Harrasov. The congregation assembled mostly Tatars who arrived in Estonia during the Soviet period and who speak mostly Russian.

Since 2002 the leader of the Estonian Islamic Congregation has been the Tallinn-born mufti Ildar Muhhamedshin (b. 1971). He is a Tatar and graduate from Medina Islamic University in Saudi Arabia. At Friday prayer on 5 December 2002 in Tallinn, 329 adult members of the Estonian Islamic Congregation and the Estonian Mohammedian Sunnite Congregation recognised Ildar Muhhamedshin as mufti and spiritual leader of the Muslims in Estonia.[22] He is married to Iman Makhmutova, a Moscow-born Tatar and graduate from the King Saud University of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. Until 2009 the congregation used different rented facilities in Tallinn for their activities. Since then it has been operating in a building at Keevise Street 9 in Tallinn. The house was bought by Saudi Arabian sponsors; the centre Kultuurikeskus Turath (the Cultural Centre Turath) is also situated there. Ildar Muhhamedshin and his wife are both actively involved in this Cultural Centre's activities. The centre provides Arabic lessons and classes on the basics of Islam to both children and to adults, men as well as women, and prayer instruction. The focus of the centre is, however, on Islam and not Tatar identity.

22 "Eesti Islami Koguduse koosoleku protokoll", No. 9/02, 5 December 2002.a.

FIGURE 5.5 *Ildar Muhhamedshin, graduate of the Islamic University of Medina, spiritual leader and mufti of the Estonian Islamic Congregation, 2004*
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; COURTESY TALLINN CITY MUSEUM

In 1990 the first two Estonian Muslims went on *hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca), and by October 2012 there had been 42 Estonian Muslims who had been in Mecca for *hajj*.[23] In 2007 the first translation of the whole Quran was published. The initiative for this translation project came from Timur Seifullen, and it was carried out by a well-known Estonian Orientalist, Haljand Udam (1936–2005).

Epilogue

The number of Tatars in Estonia has been declining. According to the 2011 census there were 1,993 Tatars in Estonia. The reasons for this are assimilation through mixed marriages as well as deaths of the older generation. On the other hand, there has been a new interest in Tatar roots amongst the younger generation. A good example of this is the youth ensemble Kiash (Sun), which operates in Maardu, near Tallinn. However, it should also be noted that the Tatar language has lost much of its grip of the Tatar community, and fluent language skills amongst people in the younger generation are more an exception than a rule. According to the 2011 census, 18 per cent of

23 Interview with Ildar Muhhamedshin, Tallinn, 3 October 2012.

the Tatars under 30 years of age spoke Tatar as their first language. Although the community has tried to organise language courses, there have been problems finding competent teachers of the Tatar language. The language is passed on to a younger generation mostly by grandparents. There are changes also in Russian-speaking Tatar families who have sent their children to Estonian schools to be educated in Estonian. Many of the young Tatars have left Estonia to pursue their educational or professional careers abroad. The community that was unified during the pre-Soviet period has become more diverse, and although many young Tatars say that they would prefer to have a spouse from the Tatar community, the practice is often different. There have been a few recent cases when the bride has been brought from Tatarstan. Although young Tatars tend to consider themselves as Muslims, only a few of them practise their religion actively.

The cooperation between Tatars in the Baltic states has recently been increasing. On 18 June 2011 the Tatar national holiday Sabantuy was celebrated by Tatars from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in Trakai, Lithuania. There the idea to establish an Association of Tatars in the Baltics was proposed by a representative of Lithuanian Tatars, Adas Jakubauskas. For the Sabantuy celebration that took place on 16 June 2012, Tatars from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, Kazan and Saint Petersburg were also present.

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CHAPTER 6

Latvia

Valters Ščerbinskis

In 1918, when Latvia became an independent state, the country's territory was inhabited primarily by a Latvian-speaking population. Before that time, mainly Lutheran, agrarian Latvian middle and lower classes lived in the Russian Provinces of Courland and Livonia as well as in three "Latvian" districts of Vitebsk Province. These areas were socially and culturally dominated by Baltic German upper classes but politically ruled by the Russian administration. In 1918, after the collapse of the Russian Empire, Latvia proclaimed its independence, but only in 1921 did the country secure *de jure* independence.

During the period between the World Wars, Latvia was culturally and politically dominated by the majority of the population, the Latvians. In 1940, all three Baltic states were occupied by the Soviet Union, in 1941 by Germany and in 1944 again by the Soviet Union. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Latvia regained independence and an era of important political, social and economic changes started. All these events caused big demographic changes in the population of Latvia. These changes were particularly numerous after the Second World War. Challenges to the demographic development continued after the re-establishment of the Latvian independent state and after Latvia joined the European Union in 2004 (see further Plakans 2011; Pabriks and Purs 2002; Oberländer and Wohlfart 2004).

Tatars before 1918

The history of permanent Tatar settlements in Latvia dates back to the nineteenth century. However, until the end of that century the presence of Tatars was only episodic. Apart from pillages by Tatar soldiers in territories inhabited by Latvians, present-day Latvia was an unknown land for Tatars. After the incorporation of the Latvian lands into the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century, a small number of Tatars from Russia started to appear in the cities or towns of Riga, Jelgava, Jēkabpils, Liepāja and Daugavpils.

At the end of the nineteenth century there was a small but increasing community of Tatars in Riga. They gained public visibility mainly through Muslim institutions. In 1890, a Muslim cemetery was formed alongside the Catholic

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cemetery Miķeļa kapi.[1] There are archival documents with the names of the initiators of this cemetery: the local mulla Muhamet Shakir Abdula Aparov and two representatives of the local Muslim community, Abdula Myazhitov and Kurma Hamet Ishniyezov. All of them were Tatars. Originally the cemetery extended over 100 square metres, but soon another 100 square metres were added.

In 1902, a Muslim congregation was officially founded in Riga. The Tatar Ibragim Davidov was elected imam, and soon after that a prayer house was opened too.[2] According to the census of 1897, in the Province of Livonia (inhabited by both Latvians and Estonians), there were 449 people whose mother tongue was Tatar. At that time there were even more Tatars in Courland, where their number reached 552 in 1892. The majority of the Tatars served in the Russian army as conscripts. About three-fourths of them were illiterate and almost all of them belonged to the peasantry. After their military service, these people left the Baltic provinces. In Riga, where the majority of the Tatar civilians resided, there were – apart from those in the military service – also 33 small traders and 29 persons involved in food production (Trojnicekij 1905a: 76–127, 152–201, 210–233; Trojnicekij 1905b: 76–124, 146–195, 208–228).

In the Latgale part of Vitebsk Province the majority of Tatars were, according to the 1897 census, located in Daugavpils, where the troops of the Russian army were stationed. According to the earlier 1892 census, there were 560 Tatars in that town, all of them being Muslims. Almost all of the Tatars belonged also to the peasantry, and the majority of them were illiterate. It appears that some of them hardly even knew Russian (Trojnicekij 1903: 2–3).

During the early twentieth century the number of persons who belonged to the Tatar group in the Baltic provinces did not change considerably. The majority of them had previously been soldiers in the Russian army. An interesting exception constituted the Tatar students of the Polytechnic Institute in Riga. In 1907 five Tatar students were enrolled there. The statistics show that in 1913 there were 510 Muslims in Riga and its vicinity. Almost all of them lived in the Moscow suburb (434 persons) and for most of them (406 people) the native tongue was either Turkish or Tatar. In 1914, according to data from the Muslim community, there were about 1,000 members in the congregation, which seems to be an exaggeration, though. During the 17 years that had passed since the census of 1897, the number of both Muslims and Tatars had

1 Latvian State Historical Archives of the Latvian National Archives, Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhīvs (Riga City Board), 2724. f., 2. apr., 1118. l.

2 Latvian State Historical Archives of the Latvian National Archives (Ministry of Interior, Department of Churches and Religions), 1370. f., 1. apr., 2799. l., 31. lp.

grown. It was obvious that the internal policy of the Russian administration, the attachment of peoples to their native places, as well as economic backwardness restricted migration within the Russian Empire. During the First World War, the majority of the local Tatars emigrated, and only a few families remained in Latvia after 1920.[3]

The Inter-War Period

Conditions changed radically in Latvia after the war. Many non-Latvians left during the First World War. For different reasons there was also an opposite migration and many non-Latvians arrived in Latvia for the very same causes that prompted others to leave. After the establishment of the Bolshevik regime in Russia, a great number of refugees came to Latvia for asylum. Many non-Latvians also arrived in Latvia as prisoners of war, after earlier service as soldiers in the Red Army, and some of them were soon mobilised by the Latvian army. Probably around 20 Tatars were recruited to the army of independent Latvia. Almost all of them were former conscripts of the Red Army who, while fighting in the battlefield, became prisoners of war. According to the answers to a questionnaire, these Tatars were born in the Volga region and were Muslim peasants. Not surprisingly, in 1920, the commander-in-chief of the Latvian army even issued an order that the Muslims should have three days off from military service during the religious festival of Kurban Bayram (the Feast of the Sacrifice). After 1920, however, presumably almost all of them left Latvia again.

The Muslims of Latvia who had survived the wars and periods of disorder gathered when peace came in Riga. A Tatar by the name of Hasan Haretdinov-Konikov (Hasan Kanykoff) arrived in Riga in April 1920 from Helsinki, on behalf of Finnish Muslims who wanted to obtain permission to take some rugs and "holy books" from the prayer house.[4] This wish was based on the motivation that some Riga Muslims had moved to Finland. However, the Department of Religious Affairs of Latvia did not grant permission for this, because the Muslim congregation was not legally closed in Riga. It was possible only after the recommencement of normal life that Riga Muslims could return and renew their religious activities. In 1920 the meeting of the Riga Muslims elected Šakirs

3 Latvian State Historical Archives of the Latvian National Archives (Ministry of Interior, Department of Churches and Religions), 1370. f., 1. apr., 2799. l., 30. lp.

4 Haretdinov-Konikov's letter to the Latvian Ministry of Interior, 1920IV. Latvian State Historical Archives of the Latvian National Archives (Ministry of Interior, Department of Churches and Religions), 1370. f., 1. apr., 2799. l., 29. lp.

FIGURE 6.1 *The passport of Riga's imam Šakirs Husnetdinovs, 1922*
SOURCE: LVVA, 2996. F., 7. APR., 40260. L.

Husnetdinovs, the owner of a Turkish café and bakery, as acting imam, and in 1928 the Muslim congregation asked the Department of Religious Affairs to appoint him the permanent imam of Riga and its vicinity.[5] This request was granted, and until 1940 Husnetdinovs performed the duties as the only local imam (Ščerbinskis 1998: 15–16).

The number of Tatars in Latvia did not change significantly throughout the inter-war years. In 1920 there were only 115 Tatars left, but there were 162 Muslims altogether. Later, in 1935, there were only 66 Muslims of whom more than half (39) were Tatars. The Riga Muslim congregation had only 42 members at that time, of whom 32 were born in Riga. Four big families were predominant amongst the Riga Muslim Tatars: Husnetdinovs, Kerimovs, Kirimovs and Mahmutovs.[6] Most of the Tatars in Riga belonged to a second generation – their parents were born there at the end of the nineteenth century. Islam appears to have been a strong element in holding the small Tatar community in Latvia together. According to recollections of Minhadždins Kirimovs from the mid-1990s, Riga Tatars gathered mostly for religious purposes. They had meetings on Fridays every other week in the flat of imam Husnetdinovs. The

5 Latvian State Historical Archives of the Latvian National Archives (Ministry of Interior, Department of Churches and Religions), 1370. f., 1. apr., 2799. l., 12. lp.

6 Latvian State Historical Archives of the Latvian National Archives (Ministry of Interior, Department of Churches and Religions), 1370. f., 1. apr., 2799. l., 3. lp.

Hustnetdinovs and the Kirimovs families were united in that the imam's wife was a sister of Ramazans Kirimovs, the "patriarch" of the Kirimovs family. All the children in these families were fluent in Latvian, they spoke Tatar at home and knew Arabic as well. Islamic education was provided by the parents (Anonymous 1994).

Apparently, Latvian Muslims were characterised by a strong religious identity. Members of one and the same family had sometimes a Turkish and sometimes a Tatar ethnicity indicated in their passports – apparently state officials could not often distinguish these identities either. Imam Šakirs Husnetdinovs' passport may exemplify this doubleness. According to that document, issued in the early 1920s, his ethnicity was Turkish, although undoubtedly he was a Tatar from the Nizhny Novgorod area.[7]

Several Tatars of the inter-war period, unlike the earlier times, left their mark on local politics and public life in Latvia. Two members of the most prominent Tatar family there, Alimžans Husnetdinovs and Abdula Husnetdinovs, as well as a merchant from the Kirimovs family, had been members of the Latvian nationalist organisation Pērkonkrusts. This was the most important organisation of radical Latvian nationalists, created in 1931 and banned by the government in 1933. Pērkonkrusts's ideology was not only highly nationalistic, but also anti-German and anti-Semitic, using the slogan "Latvia for Latvians!". To a certain extent Pērkonkrusts contributed to the integration of the Latvian community, from which Latvian Tatars could benefit as well. There were, however, very few non-Latvians amongst the rank and file of this nationalistic organisation, and therefore the names of the three Tatars are clearly noticeable.[8]

Unfortunately, we do not have any details about the political activities and views of the Tatars involved in Pērkonkrusts. Abdula Husnetdins was the secretary at the Turkish consulate and often published articles on Turkey in the Latvian press. Altogether he published a number of articles mainly in *Brīvā Zeme*, a semi-official agrarian newspaper, which was one of the favourites of the members of the authoritarian regime. His articles covered a wide variety of topics, from politics to cultural issues and religion, focusing mainly on Turkey but also describing other Middle East countries. In 1940, when the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic countries, all public activities that were considered anti-Soviet were banned. Thousands of local people were arrested,

7 Latvian State Historical Archives of the Latvian National Archives (Riga City Passport Collection), 2996. f., 7. apr., 40260. l.

8 Latvian State Historical Archives of the Latvian National Archives, Cardfile of the Political Police.

and amongst them was presumably Abdula Hustnetdinovs who simply disappeared.

In July 1941 the Soviet army was expelled, and German Nazi occupation regulations were implemented. Two years later, according to information from the Board of Statistics, only 40 Tatars remained in Latvia. During the Nazi regime, spiritual care was in the hands of Riga's previous imam Husnetdinovs, who in the late 1930s had changed his surname to Eriss. He served both local and displaced Muslims, and the community continued its religious activities. A few Tatars were involved in military action on the German side, and at least two of them, Hanefiss Hustnetdinovs and Nurmuhameds Husnetdinovs, died on the Eastern Front, while another one was later arrested and presumably died in a Soviet concentration camp. A Riga baker of Tatar origin, Halils Kirimovs, who in March 1944 had become a policeman, was also arrested after his return from the Red Army and died in a concentration camp in Saratov.[9]

By the end of the German occupation, the majority of the Tatars left Latvia for the West. Many of them were rather well-off and of anti-communist disposition. Thus, when the communist regime was implemented, repressions were imminent for them. In the late 1940s most of them, if not all, probably lived in refugee camps in West Germany amongst numerous other refugees from Latvia. It was common to search for lost relatives through local Latvian newspapers. Thus, in 1948 the Estonian-born Dr Umugulsom Zarip, who lived in Heidelberg, searched for information about the Estonian-born Emma Asisov-Zarip and the Latvian-born Haris Asisov-Zarip (born Kirimovs).[10] The information also clearly indicated close family links between Tatars in Latvia and Estonia.

After 1949 most or maybe all of the refugees left the ruined Germany for the U.S.A., Australia and Canada. For instance, some of the members of the Kirimovs family settled in Australia. In 1982, a book commemorating Riga's French Lyceum was published by the Latvian exile community in Melbourne in Australia. Former pupils of this Riga school published their memories about their schoolmates. One of the authors in this commemorative publication mentioned the Tatar cousins Abdula Husnetdinovs – who perished during the first Soviet occupation year – and Samarhanulla Kirimovs (Beinerts 1982: 67).

9 Latvian State Archives of the Latvian National Archives, Latvijas Valsts arhīvs (KGB files concerning persons accused of particularly dangerous anti-state crimes), 1986. f., 1. apr., 35705. l.

10 *Latviešu Ziņas/Latvian News*, 26 June 1958.

The Soviet Period

After the Second World War, the Baltic republics were added to the Soviet Union. Together with many thousands of other immigrants, a number of Tatars from other Soviet republics arrived in Latvia. A second wave of immigration came in the 1950s. As a result, in 1979 there were even more Tatars (3,764) than Estonians (3,681), the traditional neighbours from the north. A huge influx of non-Latvians, particularly in the 1970s and the 1980s, continued with growing intensity and the amount of members of the Tatar community gradually increased. In 1989 their number was 4,800; by comparison, the number of Estonians was now only 3,312 (Ščerbinskis 1998: 29).

The majority of the Tatars in the Soviet period lived in Riga and other big cities or towns. For instance, at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, 88 per cent of them lived in towns, and amongst the ethnic groups of Latvia they came second after the Jews in terms of urbanisation. Immigration was favoured both by state policy and the conditions of social life. The gigantic industrial factories, built for the needs of the communist economy, needed manpower, and that was the main reason why many Tatars came to Latvia as workers or specialists of different professions. Newcomers settled for life in Latvia also after their service in the Soviet army, after studies in institutions of higher education, as well as after marrying local inhabitants. Moreover, the comparatively high standard of living was an important reason for coming to Latvia. Some of the Tatar immigrants had served in the Soviet army and after retiring from military service they remained in Latvia.

Although it was impossible to organise any public activities of ethnic character for Tatars in Latvia under the communist regime, many newcomers maintained Tatar contacts. Here again probably the most visible element was religion. Some new Muslims joined a small informal Islamic community already in 1945, which was led by a man who was familiar with religious matters, thus performing the duties of a mulla or imam. On a volunteer basis the Muslim cemetery in Riga was put in order too, and in 1958 a member of the local council, Šarifa Raihanova, obtained rights for the Muslim section in Jēkabpils Cemetery. At that time there were 25 Tatar families living in Jēkabpils (Lipša 1993). However, the Soviet anti-religious policy restricted the spreading of religions and religious practices amongst believers, although it could not eliminate religion altogether. Similarly, the policy of russification was not completely successful. Even far away from their roots, some Tatar immigrants from the Volga area or elsewhere to a certain extent managed to preserve their own ethnic traditions and language in Latvia.

FIGURE 6.2 *Latvian Tatar Muslims gather at a burial site in Riga*
PHOTO: ZUFARS ZAINULLINS, 2012

The Soviet regime tried for several decades to eliminate the national consciousness of non-Russians. Tatars had the possibility of sending their children either to Russian or Latvian schools only. Since the Latvian language and culture were strange for the bulk of immigrants, and since Russian was much more prestigious and useful, the absolute majority of the younger generation of Tatars was accustomed to the Russian environment and somewhat alienated from their own people. In the 1970s and 1980s, the worldviews and norms of the public behaviour of immigrants differed greatly from those of the locals, who remembered the pre-1940 independence, and the totalitarian regime was not able to balance those differences.

Post-Soviet Changes

During the decline of the Soviet Union and soon after its fall in 1991, the arrival of immigrants from other parts of the Soviet Union to Latvia almost completely ended. New immigration was hindered by decisions to restrict immigration and the demarcation of the newly acquired state borders. Therefore, unlike

before, the number of Tatars would now have to be connected basically to natural growth and to repatriation. Between 1989 and 1993 the number of Tatars decreased from 4,828 to 3,253.

After the initial decline, however, the numbers of Tatars started to grow again, unlike the numbers of ethnic Latvians and, particularly, Russians. Almost every year in the 1990s there was an increase of approximately 100 persons in the overall number of the Tatar community, according to official data. It can be presumed that one of the reasons for the increase in this Tatar community is the gradual legalisation of persons who before the mid-1990s had lived illegally in the country. A certain role is also played by the growth of the national consciousness in this process. However, like all other ethnic groups in Latvia, the number of Tatars is now again decreasing. In 2008 they numbered 2,863, of whom 1,720 were non-citizens, and in 2011 the number had dropped to 2,689 (1,471 non-citizens).[11]

The beginning of the non-citizen status is related to the early 1990s, when Latvian independence was regained: citizenship was automatically granted only to those who were either citizens themselves or descendants of citizens (without reference to, for instance, ethnicity or religion) of pre-occupation (that is, pre-1940) Latvia. Since the great majority of the Tatars arrived after this date, they could become citizens only through a process of naturalisation, which required basic knowledge of the Latvian language and history. The decrease in the Tatar population in Latvia could be explained by the low birth rate and assimilation into the Russian and probably also into the Latvian ethnic identity, and to a certain extent by immigration to the more prosperous European countries as well.

The Tatar community in the late 1980s was strongly russified. In an interview in the mid-1990s, the chairman of the Tatar society Idel (Volga) estimated that around half of the Tatars in Latvia were thoroughly russified. According to the 1989 census, 2,505 of the 4,828 Tatars had considered Russian to be their native tongue and only 2,257 the Tatar language (Vēbers 1994: 10). The loss of language is recognised by the local Tatars as an important and pitiable issue. For instance, the homepage of the European Tatars and its Latvian section is almost entirely in Russian. In theory, Tatars are willing to reclaim the language of their ancestors, but in practice Russian is by far the most important language for the Tatar community.

Often the lost links with the ethnic motherland completely alienate people from the culture and native language of their country of origin. However, the

11 "Integrācijas politika Latvijā: daudzpusīga pieeja", 12 October 2011. Available at: http://www.am.gov.lv/data/file/l/integracijas_politika_latvija.pdf (accessed 27 August 2014).

case of the Tatars seems far from simple, since many of them came to Latvia from Central Asia or other places where their settlements were recent and the Tatar diaspora comparatively small. For instance, the long-term chairman of both the Tatar society and the Muslim community in the 1990s, Midhats Satdanovs, was born in Tashkent in Uzbekistan, far away from the Tatar "homeland" of Tatarstan. Tatars in contemporary Latvia are of different social origin, and they belong to diverse social and professional groups.

During the post-Soviet period their lives changed considerably. Until recently, ignorance of the Latvian language and absence of citizenship made it impossible for many Tatars to become employed by governmental authorities. The number of those traditionally employed in the industrial sector has decreased considerably. The overall decrease of this sector forced many former employees there to acquire skills of other professions. In the early 1990s, many Tatars moved into small or middle-size business activities, either as owners or employees. Also former officers of the Soviet army had to look for new employment. For instance, two of the four imams in the 1990s, Ildus Sabitov and Askhad Ibragimov, were retired Soviet army officers.

New Cultural and Religious Visibility

With the collapse of the Soviet regime and the regaining of independence for Latvia, the minorities had the possibility of maintaining and developing their culture and religion publicly and openly. From the very beginning, national cultural societies emerged, uniting the more conscious representatives. Usually the number of activists or even passive supporters of different ethnic activities were a small minority within the ethnic community. Thus the Tatar society can normally collect about 30–50 members, while the festival of Kurban Bayram might gather some hundreds of the thousand Tatars living in Riga. Already from the very beginning of the Tatar society Idel in 1988, it declared as the aim of its activities supporting Tatar culture, teaching the Tatar language, as well as popularisation of Tatar ethnicity and Tatarstan.

Like many other small ethnic groups, the Tatars experienced divisions within their community. As early as at the beginning of the 1990s, there were several Tatar societies in Riga; because of internal contradictions the Tatar community split. Now (2014) there are two Tatar societies in Latvia: Idel, which is led by Midhats Satdanovs, and since 2000 the major Tatar-Bashkir society Čišma, which is led by Zufars Zainullins, who is also the chairman of the Association of the Muslim Communities and a member of a consultative council chaired by the President of Latvia. According to information provided

by Zainullins, Čišma had about 300 members in 2012, while Idel had only about 25–30. Since 2002 Čišma publishes a quarterly bulletin. There are two affiliate branches, in Ventspils and Daugavpils, respectively.[12] Each month Tatars send for half an hour a radio programme from facilities provided by the state, in the Russian, Tatar and Bashkir languages.

Simultaneously with the attempts to preserve and encourage ethnic culture and formation, a very important role is played by the integration process amongst Latvian citizens. The insignificant number of Tatars in the 1990s who had Latvian citizenship was due to the fact that almost no one amongst the Tatars – except a few members of one pre-war family – had pre-1940 citizenship, and few were able or willing to pass the Latvian language test. Even as recently as in 2011, 54.7 per cent of the whole Tatar population in Latvia lacked citizenship.

Tatars played a leading role in creating a Muslim community in Latvia. Being considerably more numerous than the other Muslim groups, Tatars formed the backbone of both the Riga Islamic community and the Daugavpils Islamic Centre. With the help of students from the Middle East and Africa, as well as external financial support, they were able to organise functioning religious communities. The very first Islamic community, Riga's Muslim community Idel, was created in April 1994 by the Tatar society with the same name and chaired by the chairman of the society (Sabitov 1997). Although Tatars are still in charge of Muslim activities, the Islamic community has now (2014) no longer a Tatar majority as some 10–15 years earlier. It now includes also comparatively large proportions of Azerbaijanis, Muslim immigrants from the Middle East, Chechens, Uzbeks, Latvian converts and others.

Today communication across borders has become an obvious necessity. The Latvian Tatar community has three main targets for international communication. First and foremost, active contact is maintained with Russia, the country of origin for the majority of Latvian Tatars, and particularly with the Republic of Tatarstan. The Tatar societies tried to promote contact with Kazan and Ufa already in the 1990s. It seems that Latvian Tatars received very small, if any, support from the Russian Federation and its constituent republic Tatarstan. However, Tatarstan and Kazan are widely promoted by Tatars as a symbol of an ethnic home region. Latvian Tatar leaders sometimes visit pan-Tatar events in Kazan, and artists from Tatarstan have occasionally visited Latvia and the local Tatar communities there. However, contact and cooperation depend largely on the personal initiatives of the Tatar community leaders.

12 For a brief survey of the activities of the Tatar community since 1988, see this home page: http://www.tatarlar-europe.eu/index.php/ru/tatar-history/item/37-istorija-tatar-latvii (acessed 27 August 2014).

Since the early 1990s, Tatars in Latvia have also established contact with the Turkish embassy, and as Muslims in charge of Islamic activities in Latvia, they cooperate with different foreign Muslim institutions in Europe and Asia. Basically, all contact with the Middle East is upheld through Islamic channels. Members of the Tatar community of Latvia are active within Baltic and European networks of Tatar communities. In April 2012, Riga Tatars hosted the First Forum of the European Tatar Youth. One of the main topics discussed in Riga was the importance of preserving the Tatar language.[13] This forum, as well as other pan-European Tatar activities and websites, seem to involve only a few people in Latvia. Another example of cross-border cooperation is the annual inter-Baltic organisation of Sabantuy (summer plough festival). In 2011 this festival was celebrated in Lithuania, in 2012 in Estonia and in 2013 in Latvia.

Only a few Tatars are well-known in Latvian society. Two Tatars who are visible in the public sphere are Ramins Nafikovs, who was born in Kazan but graduated from the Latvian Academy of the Arts and became a painter in Riga, and the photographer Vladimirs Husnutdinovs, who was born in Riga but has ancestral roots in Tatarstan. Ravil Kalinkin has been an important activist and organiser; he was born in Astrakhan but moved to Latvia in 1961. Dzhemma Kaybisheva, another early activist, was born in Bashkortostan and came to Latvia in 1960, where she worked as a teacher of the Latvian language in non-Latvian schools. Midhat Shakirzyanov, who moved to Latvia in 1959, was a well-known educator and lecturer at the Sports Academy, and Luiza Shigabutdinova, who came to Latvia in 1958, was held in high esteem as a school teacher. All those people were in the vanguard of safe-guarding or strengthening the community.

Tatars have appeared in public much less than, for instance, Armenians and Georgians, whose numbers are smaller. There are no reports of a prejudiced atmosphere or legal discrimination against Tatars in Latvia. Russian-speakers (most Tatars speak Russian only) are not officially discriminated against because of their lack of knowledge in Latvian. However, their chances to get good jobs and to participate in nationwide cultural activities, which normally require knowledge of Latvian, decrease because of the language issue. Although the Tatars have been an engine for Muslim activities in general, individual Tatars are rarely associated with the more radical Muslim community. Apparently, Tatars do not feel ethnic discomfort in Latvia, and the demand for knowledge of the Latvian language is reasonable, says the chairman of the

13 See further this home page: <http://www.tatarlar-europe.eu/index.php/ru/glavnaya/item/211-завершился-i-форум-татарской-молодежи-европы> (acessed 27 August 2014).

society *Čišme*, Zufars Zainullins, in an interview with the Bashkir Republic (Russian Federation) news agency Bashinform.[14]

During the Soviet period there was a small group of Crimean Tatars in Latvia. Numbering only 60 persons, according to the 1989 census, they established a society of Crimean Tatars called Vatan (Fatherland) as soon as it became possible in 1988. From the beginning Crimean Tatars formed a particular group. Unlike the other Tatars, the Crimean Tatars were more visible in Latvian society. First of all, they benefited from their unanimous support of Baltic independence and, secondly, because their chairman Refat Chubarov, born in exile in Samarkand in Uzbekistan, was a very energetic leader. Amongst other things, Vatan opened on 18 May 1990 an exhibition commemorating Crimean Tatar deportations, which clearly alluded to parallels between Baltic and Tatar experiences. Already then Crimean Tatars in Latvia expressed their willingness to repatriate to Crimea, as stated by Chubarov in an interview with a Latvian newspaper: "As soon as it will be possible, we will leave" (Meistere 1990). As soon as the restrictions for the return to Crimea were removed, the Crimean Tatars left Latvia (Ščerbinskis 1998: 35, 52). Refat Chubarov continued to be a prominent public figure also in Crimea until 2014, where he was chairman of the *Mejlis*, the Parliament of Crimean Tatars.

Epilogue

The re-establishment of Latvian independence in 1991 led to a high diversity of cultural and ethnic activities amongst Tatars. While previously belonging to a diffuse crowd of "Soviet citizens", Tatars faced the challenge of creating a diaspora community of their own. This caused a need to clarify their minority identity within Latvia, to choose between a sometimes rather vague previous identification and a new one that demanded more concrete dimensions in terms of culture, language, religion and citizenship. In independent Latvia, Tatars have created a relatively viable, active community. After Latvia entered the European Union, the number of citizens amongst Tatars gradually rose, and proficiency in the Latvian language has improved too. Because international contact with Tatarstan is quite limited, largely due to the long geographical distance to that region, local Tatars focus a great deal on the Baltic and European Tatar networks.

14 Available at: <http://www.veneportaal.ee/kultura/02/11020701.htm> (accessed 27 August 2014).

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PART 3

Third Wave

CHAPTER 7

Sweden

Sabira Ståhlberg and Ingvar Svanberg

The Tatars in Sweden form a tiny minority, hardly known or acknowledged even amongst experts and immigration authorities. During the past 60 years they have led a mostly anonymous life within Swedish society. Many are completely assimilated with few or vague references to their cultural, ethnic and religious background. An active community, clear ethnicity and a symbolic universe which could preserve the Tatar cultural heritage outside the family context do not exist. The history of the contemporary Tatars and people with Tatar origins living in Sweden is poorly documented and based on a few documents and oral reports brought together mainly by Didar Samaletdin and Türker Soukkan, and anecdotal evidence (Westman 1983; Samaletdin 1983; Soukkan 1986, 1987; Södling 1992; Gustafsson 1993; al-Nadaf 2002: 86). Almost everything written about Swedish Tatars is based on these sources (Svanberg 1984: 69, 1990a, 1999: 386; Svanberg and Tydén 1992: 376; Otterbeck 1998: 145). Today a few descendants of Tatar immigrants in Sweden show an interest in their background, but this is more a kind of *Großmutter-Effekt*, as the German ethnologist Ulrich Tolksdorf (1975: 73) calls it, or third generation phenomenon (Hansen's Law), using the words of the American historian Marcus Lee Hansen (1938), rather than a preservation of their ethnic or cultural group identity.

The exonym *Tatar* for a person of Asiatic origin, or more specifically for an individual belonging to a Turkic-speaking group within the Russian Empire, has been used in Sweden at least since the 1540s. A Tatar named Bugdan Balatzen from Russia was, for instance, employed as a keeper of exotic animals (camel, bear, lion) at the Royal Palace in Stockholm in the 1590s (Bernström 1951: 71). The Swedish military encountered Tatars in several wars against Russia, and in analyses of political processes in neighbouring countries, Tatars are sometimes mentioned. The chancellor Axel Oxenstierna noted in 1630 that "the Tatar has strongly attacked Poland with 120,000 men and reported to be ravaging". Tatar troops also sometimes attacked Finland, which formed the eastern part of Sweden until 1809. The khanate of Crimea, ruled by Tatars from 1441 to 1783, kept since the 1500s diplomatic contact with Sweden, and envoys from the khan arrived in Stockholm at least in 1630, 1633 and 1637 (Jarring 1987: 85–86). However, there was no immigration to or settlement of Tatars in Sweden, partly because the Lutheran clergy was

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opposed to believers of other religions or denominations. The Swedish Church Law of 1686 stated that "Jews, Turks, Moors and Pagans entering the country should be informed about the right belief and baptised as Christians". Some "Turks" (that is, Muslims from the Ottoman Empire) were actually baptised in Stockholm in 1672 and 1695 and could settle in the country (Svanberg and Tydén 1992: 134).

A Tatar businessman, Ebrahim Letejeff Umerkajeff (1877–1954) from Penza, settled in Stockholm as early as in 1897 in connection with the General Art and Industrial Exposition of Stockholm. He married Maria Elisabeth Hult (1876–1955) and worked as a furrier in his workshop in central Stockholm. He is buried in Helsinki at the Tatar Muslim cemetery. His Swedish-born son Hussein Umerkajeff (1901–1989) also worked in the fur-trade business in Stockholm.

Several Swedish travellers studied Tatars during their journeys in Russia and Central Asia. The Swedish officer Philip Johan von Strahlenberg (1676–1747) was a prisoner of war in Tobolsk. After his return to Sweden he published a book in 1730, which described in detail the languages and customs of several ethnic groups in Russia, amongst others the Tatars (Strahlenberg 1730: 35, 68). Johan Peter Falck (1731–1774), a botanist and zoologist who explored southern

FIGURE 7.1
Ebrahim Letejeff Umerkajeff (1877–1954) from Penza in central Russia was a pioneer immigrant amongst the Tatars in Sweden. He settled in Stockholm as early as in 1897 in connection with the General Art and Industrial Exposition of Stockholm. Although he married a Swedish woman and raised a family there, he was buried in the Islamic graveyard in Helsinki
PHOTO: SABIRA STÅHLBERG, 2011

Russia and Siberia around 1770, collected information about several kinds of Tatars in different regions (Falk 1785; Svanberg 1987). Most famous was the explorer Sven Hedin (1898: 33–34), who during his journeys in Russia and Central Asia had the opportunity to get personally acquainted with many Tatars. Some encounters with Tatars took place within the framework of Swedish missionary activities. Attempts were made to convert Muslims in Central Russia, mostly Bashkirs, to Christianity (Sarwe 1927).

Emigration from Finland and Estonia

Most of the present Tatars in Sweden are descendants of Mishar Tatars, who after the end of the Second World War emigrated from Finland and Estonia. Mishars live south of the Volga in the Nizhny Novgorod, Tambov, Penza and Ryazan Districts of Russia, as well as in the Chuvash Republic, Republic of Mordova and Mari El Republic (Iskhakov 2004; Vovina 2006; Svanberg 2011b: 363; see also this book's chapter about Finland). Few Tatars left Finland for Sweden before the 1940s, although some spoke Swedish fluently and had business contacts in Sweden, amongst them the merchant Hasan Kanykoff (1880–1954). Swedish was also widely used in towns like Viborg (Vyborg) in Karelia where Tatars lived. A reason to remain in Finland was probably that one could more easily reach the home villages by railway. In the 1920s, when the eastern border was closed, most Tatars had already adapted and owned flourishing companies in Finland.

An exception was the family of Ahsen Böre from the mainly Finnish-speaking town of Tampere (Tammerfors). The younger sons of Zinnetullah Ahsen Böre (1886–1945) studied at a Swedish-speaking school in the 1930s and joined a Swedish sports club. Two daughters also went to the Swedish school in Tampere. Zinnetullah did not know much Swedish (or any other language besides Tatar), but imported goods and visited factories in Sweden and he moved part of his possessions to "safety" out of Finland during the Second World War. The sons left for Sweden at the beginning of the 1940s to study and take care of their father's business, but remained in the country, integrated and changed careers. Vasif (1924–2008) became a successful civil engineer, working for different logistics companies and lecturing about technical topics; he later moved to Belgium. Zeyd (1920–1984) became an architect. Both married Swedish women and are buried in Christian cemeteries. Today several Ahsen Böres live around Linköping (Ahsen Böre 1945: 7, 36, 60).

In the 1940s the Tatars moved from Finland to Sweden mainly because of the difficult political and economic situation. Finland had lost the war and the Soviet Union called for the return of prisoners of war. Ethnic Ingrian Finns who had been evacuated to Finland in 1942–1943 were sent back (Matley 1979). Many Tatars feared that they also would be sent to the Soviet Union, and Tatar men who had served in the army fled along with Finnish officers and soldiers to Sweden. Finland did not extradite the Tatars, but at least two Tatar communists had left voluntarily in the 1920s and 1930s for the Soviet Union. Several Tatar men returned to Finland from Sweden within a few years when the situation had calmed down. Fear of the Soviet Union prevailed, however, and in the 1950s there was again some immigration to Sweden (Leitzinger 2006).[1]

The next wave from Finland came in the 1970s, when thousands of Finns moved to more prosperous Sweden in search of work (De Geer and Wande 1990: 98–101). Tatars, usually young men, joined the economic move and settled in the Stockholm area. They either married in Sweden or later brought their families over from Finland. These Tatars kept close contact with their families and friends back home, and their children were regularly sent to relatives and summer camps organised by the Tatar community in Finland. Some later returned home, but most stayed in Sweden and they still keep in touch with Tatars in Finland.

Finnish and Tatar immigrants from this period used somewhat similar strategies of conserving traditions and relationships with the mother country. The Tatars could thus in several respects be defined as Finnish immigrants, also because they had Finnish citizenship and often passed as Finns in the eyes of Swedish institutions. They did not, however, create "colonies" or separate quarters in some bigger Swedish towns like the Finns, and they did not look for employment in industries or big companies, but usually made their own small, independent trade enterprises. Another difference is that the Tatars more easily learned Swedish than many Finns and they were more adaptive to the new environment, having already the experience of integrating into Finnish society. The Tatars were at least bilingual Tatar-Finnish with some school or working knowledge of Swedish and English when they came to Sweden. Without much effort they improved their Swedish to a reasonably good level which enabled them to communicate more efficiently with the surrounding society.

Another Tatar migration to Sweden originated in Estonia. The Tatars in Narva, Dorpat (Tartu) and Reval (Tallinn) had a similar background as the community in Finland. They were related through kinship ties and had a

1 Oral communication with Harry Halén, Helsinki, October 2011.

similar infrastructure, but the group was very small (see this book's chapter about Estonia). In 1887 there were 109 Tatars living in Estonia, and in 1934 the Tatars there amounted to 166 individuals. Until the Second World War there were 200–300 Tatars in Estonia, who preserved their traditions, educated their children in the Tatar language and arranged cultural events with theatre, poetry readings and singing (Abiline 2007; Özkan 2009: 91). When the Soviet troops occupied Estonia in 1940, several Tatars fled to Finland, but they had to continue their journey to Sweden in order to escape Soviet "repatriation". They lived for some time in borrowed summer houses in the vicinity of the capital, but then moved into central Stockholm, and often their families joined them from Finland (Soukkan 1987: 9).

Of five Tatars in Sweden interviewed by Türker Soukkan in the 1980s, two were born in Finland, two in Estonia and one came from the Soviet Union. It is not known if any Tatars came from war or concentration camps in Germany. Germany hosted a large Tatar community before the Second World War (Cwiklinski 2008). Before 1989 the Tatars in Sweden had many relatives and contacts in Finland and some in the Soviet Union, including Estonia, but due to political and transport reasons the relationship with Finland was the strongest. It was, and still is, very easy to travel between Sweden and Finland by plane or ferry, and many Tatars use the relatively cheap one-day cruises to visit relatives in either country. In the 1980s, the Tatars in Sweden were estimated to be around 50 and persons with one Tatar parent about 30. Most of them lived in the Stockholm area and about 15 in other places, such as Karlstad and Norrköping (Soukkan 1987: 9).

Traditions and Modernisation

The parents of the modern Tatars in Sweden came to Estonia and Finland as petty traders, travelling from their villages to the nearest town and from there by train from Russia to Finland and Estonia. Before 1917 Finland was part of Russia and the Tatars did not have much difficulty in establishing themselves in the autonomous grand duchy. The men usually arrived first and women and children were brought later from the villages. Some men kept small restaurants for *pilmin* (*pelmeni*, that is, dumplings filled with meat, mushrooms or vegetable stuffing), but most were hawkers who within a few years established themselves in markets and shops selling small things, gold, jewellery and handicrafts. Many worked in the textile and fur businesses. In Sweden the first generation kept to the same occupation. One Tatar had a fur shop at least until 1985 in Stockholm. In 1983 Didar and Emir Samaletdin opened a popular restaurant called Djingis

FIGURE 7.2
Djingis Khan was a restaurant in Stockholm in the 1980s. It was owned by a Tatar family and served Oriental and Swedish food
PHOTO: INGVAR SVANBERG

Khan in Södermalm, southern Stockholm, which lasted throughout the 1980s (Svanberg 1984: 69, 1990a). Today Tatars cannot be separated from Swedes on the labour market; they have academic degrees and work in all kinds of fields like the majority of the Swedish population. A few Tatars modernised the traditional occupations and were involved in importing horses from Central Asia and the Caucasus to Sweden before the 1990s.

The first and often also second immigrant generations still know the Tatar language, but the third speaks predominantly Swedish. Children of one Tatar parent usually do not speak Tatar. Separate education for children has not been arranged in Sweden except for some private teaching. Cultural events such as tea evenings took place in the 1960s and 1970s, but the Tatars are not organised as a community. There is no data except personal information about the language situation, but during the 1980s Tatar children were sent to summer schools in Finland and had ample opportunity to speak Tatar outside the family environment. Also exogamic marriages have been common in Sweden since the 1960s and some Tatars married Turks who immigrated in larger groups as workers (Lundberg and Svanberg 1992). Social control was not as strong as in Finland, where the Tatar community is much bigger, and although some Tatars looked for partners in Finland, many married Swedes or persons of other ethnic backgrounds. Didar Samaletdin, who was born in the 1940s, mentions that she was fluent in Swedish and lived like most other teenagers, but had a stricter upbringing. She accepted Islam as her religion when she was 15 and married a Tatar from Finland at the age of 18, but educated herself to become a social worker and had a long career in the social field (Södling 1992; Gustafsson 1993; al-Nadaf 2002).

Tatar culture in Sweden has been preserved by families and individuals to a large extent with help from the community and relatives in Finland. Since the 1990s, contact with Russia and especially Tatarstan is easier to make, but still

FIGURE 7.3
Traditional fried or baked round Tatar pastry, pärämäts, with meat or potatoes. Modern versions also have mushrooms or other ingredients. This is an oven-baked mushroom-potato pärämäts
PHOTO: SABIRA STÅHLBERG, 2012

the main inspiration and organisation come from Finland. Tatars from Sweden have also taken trips to the villages in Russia where their ancestors lived, and some have reconnected with Estonia. When the Tatars travel to their "homeland" in Russia, the second and later generations travel in the capacity of Finnish or Swedish tourists, with the difference being that they can speak to the villagers. There are linguistic differences today, however, because the Tatars in Russia use many Russian words, whereas Finnish and Swedish Tatars use words from their environments. Few Tatars have relatives in these villages nowadays, due to the massive emigration from there to Finland before 1917 and the destruction of the villages in the 1930s, which forced the remaining inhabitants to move to cities like Moscow or Saint Petersburg. Today the villages south of Sergach in the Nizhniy Novgorod area are inhabited by a few hundred elderly Tatars who have returned and rebuilt the villages since the 1950s. During these visits to Russia, the Nordic Tatars usually also visit Kazan, which is considered to be the centre of Tatar culture and language. Nowadays Tatars from Russia visit Sweden for various reasons, and Muslim leaders, for instance, have been hosted by local Turkic Muslims living in Stockholm. In May 2010, the chairman of the Russian Mufties Council, Mufti Sheikh Rawil Gainutdin (b. 1959), visited Stockholm and met with Tatars, Kazakhs and Uighurs living in Sweden.

Food plays a crucial role in Tatar culture. Until the 1950s, Tatars in Sweden often invited each other over for celebrations, and Tatar visitors and immigrants were taken care of by other families. When Rudolf Nureyev, the famous Tatar-Bashkir dancer from the Soviet Union who defected to the West in 1961, visited Stockholm, several Tatars watched the ballet. They visited him afterwards, and realising that he longed for *pärämäts*, a special fried or baked Tatar pastry with a filling of minced meat and onions, a few women stayed up all

night preparing pastries for him. Tatars also traditionally prepare a sausage made of dried horse-meat. In Estonia, Tatars were horse butchers and called horse-flesh eaters. In Sweden they found a profitable market niche of selling horse-flesh to industrial workers. Tatars in Finland have also kept small *pärämäts*-shops, but there is no information that there have been similar food stalls or bakeries in Sweden.

Pioneer Muslims

According to the Swedish census of 1930, which is the last with information on religious affiliation, only fifteen Muslims lived in the country. At that time the laws did not allow a Muslim congregation. However, Swedish legislation changed and became more liberal after the Second World War, and in 1949 the first Muslim congregation of the country, Turk-Islam Föreningen i Sverige för Religion och Kultur (Turk-Islamic Association in Sweden for the Promotion of Religion and Culture) was founded by Tatars and two Turks. The initiative came from Ali Zakerov (1911–1975), a refugee from Estonia and the father of Didar Samaletdin, Osman Soukkan and Akif Arhan (who was of Turkish origin). Amongst the founders was also Ebrahim Umerkajeff. Osman Soukkan (1903–1975) became the first imam of the congregation. A handful of members – Tatar, Turkish and Arab men – met in Kjellsons konditori, a café on Birger Jarlsgatan in the centre of Stockholm, where they could gather around one single table (Soukkan 1986: 109; Karlsson and Svanberg 1995: 15; Svanberg 1999: 384; al-Nadaf 2002).

Soon after, the association rented Folkets Hus (The People's House, a leisure and cultural centre built for the working class) in Stockholm. According to Didar Samaletdin, it served as their first mosque or prayer room (Westman 1983; Samaletdin 1993). Next they gathered in Medborgarhuset located on the southern side of Medborgarplatsen, Södermalm, where they held Muslim celebrations. The association was also the first to apply for the rights to build a mosque in the 1950s, but the application was rejected. It changed its name to Islam Församlingen i Sverige (The Islamic Congregation of Sweden) and bought some land in Stockholm's Forest Cemetery, Skogskyrkogården, where a separate Muslim graveyard can still be found. The congregation held ceremonies at the cemetery until the mid-1970s (Soukkan 1986, 1987: 12).

Tatars made up the majority in the beginning, and the Islamic Congregation was a kind of ethnic community, but it lost its Tatar character during the 1960s. The activity was at its peak during the first decade. In 1952 the Tatars in Stockholm published one issue of a journal named *Heberçi* (Messenger)

(Halén 1979: 12). Labour immigrants from Turkey and Yugoslavia, Arabs, Indonesians and Pakistanis filled the membership ranks, but the Turks from Anatolia held the leading positions. Similar to the Tatars in Finland, the form of Islam the Tatars professed was a tradition-based Sunni, but the newcomers had other views on how to practise religion. Muslim communities started to split up along ethnic lines when they grew. In 1953 there were around 500 Muslims in Sweden and in 1966 more than a thousand. The Tatars turned to Finland for support. Unlike the situation in Finland, there was no strong Turkish cultural movement amongst the Swedish Tatars, and they did not have the ranks to or the possibility of creating cultural activities or an ethno-confessional community like their neighbours. Islamic culture in Sweden was created by other groups, and the Tatars were marginalised from the mainstream Islamic community by the end of the 1960s (Karlsson and Svanberg 1995: 15; Svanberg 1999: 384).

The difficulty of raising Tatar children and being a Muslim in Sweden has been discussed many times in media by Didar Samaletdin. She has been a pioneer in trying to explain Islam to members of Swedish society, especially during the 1980s. Didar was the only woman president of the congregation for a short while and has been an important spokesperson for the Muslims of Stockholm. Later she turned to local politics, and for many years she was of interest to the media and students (Otterbeck 2003: 12). Her father and grandfather taught her the faith, and her view is typical of the liberal Tatar attitude to religion. She received a Christian education at school, which "did no harm", and although she is a woman, she and other Tatar women participate in all religious ceremonies and activities. She is open to all traditions and religions, and as a child she requested a Christmas tree like everybody else. In her own family she invented Ramadan gifts for the children instead of Christmas gifts, but also had a tree like the Swedish majority. During her social work she has shown respect for different religious needs by, for instance, installing prayer rooms in nursing homes with many immigrant elders (Westman 1983; Gustafsson 1993).

Religion is important as an ethnic marker to Tatars in Finland and Sweden, but few participate in religious life except for the ceremonies connected with transition, such as name-giving and funerals or celebrations of the feast of Ramadan and of Kurban Bayram (the Feast of the Sacrifice). Few or no Tatars practise circumcision in Sweden. Today mainly families gather and there are few occasions when Tatars come together in bigger groups. Some of the Tatars who emigrated from Finland return to the country they grew up in when they get older, or wish to be buried in the Tatar Muslim cemetery in Helsinki together with their relatives. A parallel practice exists amongst Turks and other

immigrant groups to Sweden and there are several funeral agencies providing services for families whose members want to be buried "at home".

Assimilation

Mishar Tatars have always been a highly adaptive diaspora minority, but through personal and family networks they are able to keep contact over great distances (Svanberg 2011b: 363). The establishment of the Soviet Union cut off Finnish and Estonian Tatars from their home villages and the sources for their culture, such as newspapers, books and magazines from Kazan. Some Canadian sociologists employ the term "institutional completeness" to describe the extent to which an ethnic group has access to institutions that contribute to the preservation of culture and language. Important diacritical cultural traits in this connection are language and religion, but also resources within the group and the pattern of settlement and the number of immigrants (Driedger and Church 1974). The Tatars in Sweden had, despite the fact that they were pioneers of organised Muslim life in Stockholm, a low institutional completeness. Instead they experienced a high degree of integration into the host community.

There are many reasons for the quick assimilation of the Tatars into Swedish society. Tatar immigration was always small, and there was no continuity from Russia, Estonia or Finland which could feed the community with new impulses. When the Soviet Union broke down, the mental distance was already too large for recuperation. The Tatars in Sweden are deeply integrated; most are assimilated and exposed to exogamy to a high degree. They call themselves Tatar or Mishar. The language has been called Tatar and not Turkish or North Turkish as in Finland during a certain period (Soukkan 1987). Most Tatars in Sweden nowadays have double first names, Swedish and Tatar, and several take Swedish or international "aliases" to be able to function in places of work or schools. Sweden is officially an open country for immigrants, taking care of language and cultural education for many groups, but in everyday life Tatars feel that a Swedish name and a local identity help them to integrate better.

Changes in Sweden have affected the Tatars in several ways. They have received formal rights, such as freedom of religion in 1952, and in the 1960s Christian education in schools started to change into a general study of religions. Most Tatars do not bother about *halal*, the lawful slaughter of meat according to Islam, or Ramadan fasting, and many eat pork meat and drink

alcohol, which facilitates assimilation. Multiculturalism and full equality for immigrants was introduced in the 1970s, which has made it easier for small communities to exist, but at the same time more difficult to be heard in society amongst the larger groups. There have also been some conflicts. Tatars tend to bury their dead within a few days, but in Sweden the procedures can take up to two weeks or even more s (Soukkan 1987).

In the late 1980s, Islamic terrorism and negative images of Muslims flooded Swedish media and Tatars together with other Muslims were forced to clarify their positions. Tatars choose mostly to leave out the religious aspect or explain its positive sides, but religious identity remains difficult. Today the Tatar language and identity are slowly disappearing in Sweden. There are less than a hundred Tatars, and the next generations will not speak Tatar. Tatars or Tatar descendants can be found on all levels in Swedish society and they are engaged in social, political, military and economic activities which have nothing to do with the Tatar language or culture. A few younger Tatar descendants are interested in their roots, but they have a generic Tatar identity which comprises all Tatars, comparable to the pan-Turkic ideas of the nineteenth century. They use the Internet as a tool for finding out or informing about Tatar culture and often nurture romantic ideas about being a Tatar and about the glorious past of the Tatars (Ståhlberg 2004).

Even though there are a few individuals who are interested in their ethnic background, there seems to be no possibility for the Tatar minority to survive in Sweden. There are no efforts to revitalise the group, because the demographic and institutional conditions needed to create a new institutional completeness are not present (cf. Lundberg and Svanberg 1992). Sweden is a pluralistic country with many cultures, languages and religions, but it is also an assimilating society, which emphasises individual choices of lifestyle, religious and sexual orientation as well as political opinions. At the same time the economy and career opportunities require assimilation or at least a kind of adaptation to existing values, language usage and social context. The Tatar group is also too small to be able to influence Muslim organisations or policies, and there is no interest on either side that they would be accepted into any of the larger Muslim congregations.

Today there are no statistics about the number of Tatars living in Sweden. There might be Tatars hidden in different groups which immigrated since the 1960s from Turkey and the Balkans, especially Romania and Bulgaria. They often call themselves Turks and only in private communications they might acknowledge to another Tatar that they are in fact Tatars or have Tatar ancestors. These are mainly not Volga Tatars like the Tatars from Finland, but they

are instead of Crimean Tatar origin. They speak a language closer to Turkish and come from a culture connected with the Ottoman Empire, in contrast to the Volga Tatars whose history and culture since the sixteenth century have been formed by life within Russia. There is also a tiny group of Noghai in Stockholm, originating from a few villages in the Kulu District of central Anatolia, and they are often referred to as "Tatars" by other Anatolian Turks (Svanberg 1990b; Svanberg 2011a: 273).

Tatars have also immigrated to Sweden more recently, since the beginning of the 1990s within the large move from the previous Soviet republics. According to Mikael Parkvall (2009: 151), there are around 220 "Tatar-speakers" in Sweden, and most of them seem to be recent immigrants. Only 9 per cent are Swedish-born and most of these new Tatars have migrated from Russia (2/3) and some from Uzbekistan. Parkvall concludes that the number of Tatars grows "unusually fast". It is not sure, however, that all (or even the majority) who call themselves Tatars speak the Tatar language or carry the culture, as many Tatars in Russia and Uzbekistan usually speak Russian or Uzbek as well and have assimilated. If this is a new beginning of a Tatar community in Sweden only time will tell.

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CHAPTER 8

Germany

Sebastian Cwiklinski

A lasting Tatar presence in Germany – with "Tatar" referring to Volga and Crimean Tatars from the Russian Empire – began only at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Russian Muslims started exploring Europe in search of ways of modernising their way of life. However, there was some more limited contact between Germans and Tatars in previous times too. It has already been mentioned in the introduction to this volume that diplomatic missions from the Crimean khanate visited Brandenburg-Prussia several times in the second half of the seventeenth century (Schwarz 1989). During the Ottoman siege of Vienna (1683), large parts of Germany were in fear of "Tatars", but this derogatory term did not refer to a specific people, but more generally to "Muslims coming from the East", and it was almost interchangeable with "Turks" (Hotopp-Riecke and Pohl 2009). In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, real contact between Tatars and Prussia took place. In 1745, when 72 Polish Tatar soldiers serving in the Polish army did not receive their payment in time, they decided to serve in the Prussian army. During the second half of the eighteenth century, more Muslims and other people joined them, and so their number rose to more than 1,000. In 1788, they received their own "Bosniak" regiment in the Prussian army. The term "Bosniak" referred to Muslims speaking Slavonic languages. However, as this entity was not ethnically homogeneous, it is not possible to call it Tatar or even Muslim. From the late eighteenth century onwards, it was dominated by ethnic Poles (Theilig et al. 2014).

The crucial role in drawing the attention of Volga Tatars to Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century was played by the journalist Fatih Karimi (1870–1937), who in 1902 published his travelogue *Avrupa Seyahati* (Journey through Europe) in which he presented Germany as both touristically interesting and economically attractive (Rorlich 1985). In the years following the Russian Revolution of 1905, some Tatar merchants began establishing links with Germany by founding German branches of their businesses. Some of them even chose to settle down temporarily in Berlin, the German capital (see further Cwiklinski 2000: 19–20; Gilyazov 1998: 340–341).

From the First to the Second World War

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 these isolated Tatar attempts to establish links with Germany came to a standstill as Germany and Russia

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became enemies of war. From then on the Tatar presence in Germany became a highly politicised issue and has to be seen from the perspective of power politics. Even if one focuses on the community life of Tatars during that period, one has to take into account the repercussions of political events on the life of Tatar residents in Germany. It is therefore by no means by accident that Tatar community life in the true sense of the word came into existence as a consequence of Germany's policy in the First World War: In order to find war allies, the German Empire had followed the strategy of "revolutionising" the Muslim peoples in the Middle East and forced the Ottoman Sultan to proclaim the *jihad* ("holy war"). The Germans' idea was to turn the Muslims in the British, French and Russian Empires against their own rulers. This strategy was also directed at Muslim prisoners of war (P.O.W.s) from the "enemy armies" in Germany, amongst whom there were also about 12,000 Turks from the Russian army. The German authorities interned Muslim P.O.W.s in two prison camps near Berlin, one of which was designed for Muslims from the Russian army. A special section at the German Foreign Office, the Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient (News Service for the Orient), was established to develop the necessary propaganda to be directed at the P.O.W.s (Höpp 1997). The Tatar staff of the propaganda section can be seen as the core of future Tatar community life, and the background of the staff members is quite telling: Two publicists had been invited from Istanbul where they had joined the pan-Islamist movement in the Ottoman Empire, whereas another staff member had settled down in Berlin in pre-war times as a merchant. Kemaleddin Bedri, the fourth staff member, was a student of dentistry and had come to Berlin from Istanbul in 1916.

As the German authorities were eager to convince the Tatar P.O.W.s, as well as the other Muslim prisoners, of the necessity of joining the *jihad*, special care was taken of their spiritual needs. Prayers were held regularly, and the two Tatar members of the Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient staff regularly held Friday sermons, which later were published in the camp newspapers published by the Nachrichtenstelle. The gradual development of these newspapers from the tools of German war propaganda to publications that at least partly reflected the life of the camp inmates can be read even from their titles. While the first one, *El Dschihad*, which was edited from 1915 to 1918, was nothing but propaganda for a would-be "holy war", the last one, *Tatar ile* (The Tatar Lands), edited after the end of the First World War, between 1919 and 1920, also covered the former camp inmates' life. In general, the Tatar publications in Germany from 1915 to 1920 reflect both the propaganda and the community life aspects. Amongst them we find propaganda leaflets directed at both Tatar soldiers in

the Russian army and at the camp inmates (see Cwiklinski 2013), translations of German propaganda leaflets without any special reference to Tatars, *El Dschihad*, but also textbooks for the classes in the prisoner camp (Cwiklinski 2000: 24–25; Gilyazov 1998: 343). The camp inmates were, moreover, interested in poetry as can be seen not only from some journal pages, but also from the little exercise books they kept in private (Baldauf 2006). In order to offer the P.O.W.s books in their native languages, the German authorities even purchased a private library with Tatar and Russian books, which was installed in the camp.

At first sight, the life of the Tatar P.O.W.s seems to come very close to normal community life. Many of the features so typical for diaspora communities can also be found here. Yet, an analysis of the camp inmates' life should bear in mind that it was a restricted one, although many of the known facts may lead us to the wrong conclusion that life in the prisoner camp was idyllic. The image of an idyllic paradise in the prisoner camps was precisely what German war propaganda during the First World War wanted to convey to the public. Hence it is by no means surprising that the German press widely reported on the conditions in the camps, mostly portraying an exotic life and underlining the contrast between the traditional landscape of the Province of Brandenburg and the "exotic Orientals". Also the photographs taken by Otto Stiehl, an officer working in the camps, partly for personal interest, partly as part of the propaganda efforts, convey a similar image (see further Kahleyss 2000; Cwiklinski 2000). This image is sharply contrasted by the fact that more than 400 of the approximately 11,000 Tatar camp inmates died of the hardships in the camp and were buried in a special Muslim cemetery near the village of Zehrensdorf.

The end of the German-Russian War, and then of the First World War in 1918, was a turning point for the Tatar camp inmates as they were no longer prisoners of war. However, their repatriation to Russia was delayed due to several problems, and a remarkable number of former P.O.W.s continued to stay in the area. As the camp was dissolved in 1921, some of the former prisoners chose to settle near the wooden mosque established in one of the prisoner camps. According to contemporary estimates, some 200 families lived in the little settlement, partly earning their living by working in the nearby factories (Gilyazov 1998: 343–346). Alimjan Idris and Kemaleddin Bedri, two of the former staff members of the propaganda central at the German Foreign Office, chose to stay in Germany after the end of the war. Both of them continued to be community leaders of the little community near Berlin. In January 1918 they founded the Verein zur Unterstützung russisch-mohammedanischer Studenten (Association for the Support of Russian

الجنة تحت ظلال السيوف

وقاتلوا في سبيل الله

اقرأوا الله وكونوا مع الصادقين

الجهاد

وما توفيقي إلا بالله

Berlin
den 23. Juni 1915

EL DSCHIHAD

Zeitung für die muhammedanischen Kriegsgefangenen

Nr. 8
Turkotatarische Ausgabe

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سزدن قرندشی اور وطنلردن توتقان ارسکان
یراندن براق توشکان بیچاره غریب کشیلر!
بزسزکه چین کونکلدن شفقت قیلهٔ مز بیک
اخلاص برله ن سزنگ حال کزنی اویلاب
مرحمت قیلهٔ مز سزنگ اوچون قانیغه مز هم
حقیقت جان کوکلدن قانیغه مز

ای مسلمانلر بزسزنگ یالغز بویله ده اسیر
بولغان کنز اوچون قانیغرما بز چونکه سیز
حاضرده حقیقتده اسیر کمل سیز، بلکه سیز بزما
نیا پادشاهلغنگ غریز قوناقلاری وهر
تلی مسافرلری بولاسیز. بوکونده غرمانیا
دولتی وغیرمانیاجا عتلاری سیز ترکه وحلهٔ
مسلمان اسیرلرینه حرمتلی قوناقلاردیب قا
رایلار چونکه بوصوغشهٔ غیرمانیا دولتی خلیفهٔ
مسلمین پادشاهی برله ن اتفاقی
بولوب جمله مسلمانلرنگ حق سیز پادشاهی بولغان
روسی آنگلیان فرانسوز دولتلری ایله
صوغشوب هم مسلمانلرنگ حق دوشمانلرنی صا قلارغه اجتهاد قیلهٔ در،

جمله کز که معلوم رسیه پادشاهی اوزینگ
قول آستنده بولغان مسلمانلرنگ مقدس
دینلرینه مدرسه لرینه مسجدلرینه دخی ایرکیلیک
بیرمانیچه هردملی قصدلیق لرقیلوب حتی
«محکمهٔ شرعیه» دوخاونای صا برانیا لرینه دخی
دین اسلامی بخشی بیلکان کشیلردن مفتی
وقاضیلر صایلاب قویادم، دخی نیچه توزلی
ظلم وجبرلر قیلوب بیچاره مسلمانلرنگ

برلرینگ کوبنی قازانغه آلوب بوتوردی
باشقورت برلری طاروب آلوب قویدی،
ترکستان طرفلرنده صارتلارنگ وقازا
قلارنگ برلرینه ادرص اول لری اوتوروب
بیچاره مسلمانلرنگ اوز ملکلری بولغان برلرنگ
اوزلری اختیارسیز قیلدی، مونه بزسزنگ
شوندی حال لرکزنی اویلاب بیک قانیغه مز
سیزاوزحالکزنی اوزکز بیلکان سیلی درست
کز ایله دشمان کزنی اویره آلمانیچه، سیزنی دائما
اسیرحکمنده توتقان دیسزنگ اذکزنی ودین
کزنی هرزمان حقارت قیلوب حورتیلغان
دشمانلرکزنه اطاعت قیلوب دوستلرکزنه
قارشی صوغشقه کردکز، بوندن دنیا مسلمانلر
نگ خلیفه لرینگ دوستی بولغان حقیقی دوست
کزنه قارشی ملطق آتدکز.

غیرمانیا دولتی غیرمانیالی قومی وجاعتلری بالغز
بوکون اوچون دکل بوصوغشی اوچون کنده ره
دکل، بلکه هروقت وهرزمان اوچون هم
مسلمانلرنگ دوستی در. چونکه مسلمانلرنگ
خلیفه سی ودین اسلامنگ بالغزنه پادشاهی
بولغان سلطان محمد رشاد خان حضرتلرینگ
اتفاق قیلغان دوستلاریدر. شول سببدن
هم غیرمانلر مسلمانلرنگ دوستلاریدر، هرمسلمان
هرزمان اوچون بوفی شولای دیب بیلورکه بیهوشی

ای هرملی قوناقلرمزنی سزکه بوسوزلری
سوبیلاکدن مقصود درشولدرکه: سیزاوزحال
کزنی اوزکزاویلاکز بیک یخشی تفکر قیلوکز
صوغشی بوتکاچ صلح بولغان زمان حق تعالی
حضرتلری نصیب ایدرسه سکزاوزکزنگ
توغان اوسکان یورتلارکزنه قانیغه مز آتا آنا
وفرندشی اردوغلارکزایله کورشوب شادلانیرسز
انشاالله. لکین شونی اونوتماکز سیزنگ ارشول

ایسکی دوشمان کزنگ قول آستنه قانیغه مز
توتراجق سیز، سیزنی قدر دوغری بولاسزدوغریلق
قیلهٔ مزدیب کزنده دشمانلرسزنگ مالکزنی
آلوب اوزدین کزنی حقارت قیلوب سکزاروغشو
بولغانده سؤال دشمانلرنه اطاعت قیلوب
دین اسلام کنگ پاشلغی بولغان خلیفه مزکزنی
قارشی مسلمان قرندشلرکزکه قارشی ملطق
آتوب شریعت اسلامیه کنگ خرابلغنه سبب
بولورسز، حاضرده هم ففقاسیه طرفنده روسیه
مسلمانلری روس حالدلت لری برلان برابر دشمنگز
مسلمان قرندشی لرینه قارشی صوغشه لر.
حالبوکه پیغمبر علیه السلام ایتکان «سباب
المسلم فسوق وقتاله کفر» یعنی مسلمانی سو
گک فاسق لقدر مسلمانغه قارشی صوغشق
کفردر خدای صاقلاسون دین دشمانی بولغان
اورصلارنغه یاردم قیلوب مسلمانلرنغه قارشی دوشمانلرکنگ دوستی ومسلمانلر برلان عهد قیلشوب
اتفاق بولغان آلمانلرنغه قارشی صوغشق واقعا
نغه ملطق اتفق البته اسلام شریعتنغه وقرآن
امرینه خلاف در.

سیزکز قبلاکز هیچ بروقت اویلاماکز غیرمانیا
حکومتی برسوزلری اوزی فائده سی اوچون بازدیرا در دیب. بوکون غیرمانیا فوقی هرطرفده
غالب بولوب دشمانلرینغه قارشی اوزی صاقلا
رغه هرزمان قادراولدینی اوچون بشقه لرکنگ
یاردمنغه محتاج دکلدر، لکن حاضرده برصوغشه
مسلمانلرکنگ منفعتی برله ن آلمانلرکنگ منفعت
وفائده لری برشدر. شول سببدن غیرمانیا
حکومتی مسلمانلرکنگ کیله جک زمانده راحت
بولق لری مکر قیلوب کوزلری اچق اوچون
اجتهاد قیلهٔ در. هم اجتهادلری خالص دوستلق
یوزندندر.

FIGURE 8.1 *The newspaper El Dschihad*
NO. 8, 1915

Muslim Students). The association, which had set its goal as "spreading German culture and industry amongst the Russian Muslims", should play an outstanding role in uniting the community by bringing new students to Berlin (Cwiklinski 2002a: 1008).

The students of Tatar origin at Berlin University in the 1920s and 1930s constituted an integral part of the Tatar community in Germany, and their origin reflected the sometimes confusing structure of the Tatar diaspora. While some of them were indeed former P.O.W.s from the camp near Berlin, others had come from Turkistan and Soviet Russia and later the Soviet Union. A third group came from several countries as distinct as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Manchuria and Finland (Cwiklinski 2000: 32–35; Gilyazov 1998: 345–346). Alimjan Idris was the driving force behind the student association, and his main focus was to secure the students' funding by connecting to the authorities in Soviet Russia and Turkistan. In 1922 Idris brought more students from Turkistan to the German capital, obviously profiting from his good contact with Turkistani officials. His apparently good contact with both Soviet Russian and Turkistani officials in the 1920s raised suspicions in the community of exiles that he might be a Soviet spy, which consequently led to his growing isolation.

In the 1920s and 1930s two developments within the Tatar and Bashkir community in Germany could be observed: On the one hand many of them integrated into German society, and some of them married German women, so that they only partly organised in favour of a "national" cause. Thus it is by no means surprising that the Tatar turkologist Ahmet Temir (1912–2003), who had come from Turkey to Germany in 1936 to study at Berlin University, in his memoires drew the conclusion that the Tatars in Germany did not constitute a homogeneous community (Temir 1998) – Temir even met a Tatar who had converted to Catholicism.

On the other hand, apart from the growing integration into German society, a mounting influence of power politics also became important. As early as at the beginning the 1920s, Berlin temporarily became a home for Tatar and Bashkir exile politicians (Cwiklinski 2000: 29–32). By the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s the influence on the community of both the Soviet state and of diaspora politics became evident. The Soviet secret services kept a close eye on the Tatar and Bashkir communities in Berlin and other German cities, obviously using for this purpose not only students loyal to the Soviet state, but also prominent representatives of the community like Alimjan Idris – who was suspected of maintaining very close ties with the Soviets (see further Gaynetdinov 1997). In the 1920s the Polish state established the Prométhée movement, a network of nationalist exiles from the non-Russian peoples in the

Soviet Union, the main goal of which was to weaken that state. As a result of this, the Idel-Ural istiqlal komitasy (Committee for the Independence of the Volga-Ural Region) was founded in Warsaw by the Tatar politician and writer Ayaz Ishaki (1878–1954). The journal of the committee, *Milli Yul* (The National Way), later *Yaña Milli Yul* (The New National Way), was edited from 1928 onwards in Berlin nominally by Ishaki himself, but de facto by his daughter Saadet Ishaki (later Çağatay, 1906–1989), who continued her Oriental studies at Berlin University. The journal, which was edited from 1928 to 1939 in Arabic script, tried to unite the Tatar and Bashkir diaspora communities dispersed throughout the world behind the project of an independent Volga-Ural state uniting all Muslims in that region. Thus one can find articles about the situation of the Tatars in Finland, Japan and Manchuria, but also from Germany itself. The reports on Tatars in Germany concentrate on their political activities in a diaspora context, like the celebration of the birthday of the Tatar poet Gabdulla Tuqay or the anniversary of the founding of the Milli idarä (National Assembly) in 1918, the attempt to create an independent Volga-Ural state.

The image of the Tatar community in Germany that one gets from the articles in Y*aña Milli Yul* is a clearly political one, with religion playing only a minor role in comparison to more "ethnic" and "politicised" subjects. For instance, solidarity with other Turkic communities of exiles from the Soviet Union (like Turkistanis and Azerbaijanis) was by far more important than religion (Cwiklinski 2000: 37–39). Even if one concedes that the picture painted by the articles in *Yaña Milli Yul* was biased, as the journal was focused on politics, there is almost no other information available to change this image.

The rise to power of German national socialism in 1933 affected only slowly and gradually the life of the Tatar community in Germany. In the second half of the 1930s, however, when Germany began its preparations for the war against the Soviet Union, an aggressive anti-Soviet tactic became first priority for German foreign policy. In this context, knowledge of the different nationalities of the Soviet Union, including Tatars and Bashkirs, was crucial for the Nazi strategists, and soon a second rise of the *Ostforschung* (research on the East) began, which also contributed to a renaissance of research on Tatars. The restoration of Tatar lessons at Berlin University in 1936, which had been stopped in 1933, has to be seen in this context. The driving force behind the renewal of the Tatar lessons and of research on Tatars in general was the young Baltic German scholar Gerhard von Mende (1904–1963), who in 1936 became professor of Soviet nationality studies at Berlin University. In hindsight the Tatar lessons taught by Ahmet Temir have to be seen as part of an active anti-Soviet policy paving the way for the war on the Soviet Union, but the classes themselves did not cover anything else but language and literature.

The German assault on Poland in 1939 was insofar decisive for part of the Tatar community in Germany as it brought the financial and political funding of Ishaki's structures both in Warsaw and Berlin to an end. So the last issue of *Yaña Milli Yul* was edited in September 1939, and Saadet Çağatay, her Uzbek husband and further immigrants loyal to Ishaki left Germany for Turkey and other exile countries. The German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 was a second turning point for the Tatar presence in Germany, but the Crimean and Volga Tatars who happened to live under German rule in the war years can hardly be called a "community". Soon after the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, Germany made more than one million P.O.W.s, and less than a week after the assault, a meeting in the German Foreign Office discussed the possibility of using them for armed formations within the German army (in "national legions"). The important aspect of the formations was that they were supposed to be national ones, each of them representing one or two nationalities from the Soviet Union. In Nazi propaganda the national legions were supposed to become later the core of national armies of would-be "free countries" under Nazi rule (Cwiklinski 2002b; Gilyazov 2005).

National inspection commissions for the recruitment of soldiers amongst the prisoners of war were established, the Tatar one being headed by the Tatar scholar Ahmet Temir, the young turkologist who had come to Germany in 1936. Temir selected amongst the P.O.W.s not only candidates suitable for the new legion, but also for the propaganda central to be established at the newly founded Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (the Ostministerium). The Volga-Ural legion was founded in the summer of 1942, and the Tatar propaganda central at the Ostministerium (the Tatarische Leitstelle) in the autumn of that year. The propaganda central began to publish *Idel-Ural* (Volga-Ural), a newspaper designed for the Tatar legion, and further publications like literary journals and almanacs (Cwiklinski 2002b). The publications of the propaganda central propagated the would-be independence of a Volga-Ural state under the auspices of Nazi Germany. The propaganda partly referred to the Tatar nationalist movement in the 1910s and 1920s, but also to the ideology of Nazi Germany. In many of the publications one can find not only the justification of Nazi German imperialism, but also of anti-Semitism (Cwiklinski 2002b). Tatars were, moreover, supposed to fight in the Osttürkischer Waffenverband, the armed formation in the Waffen-SS designed for Turks from the Soviet Union.

After the German occupation of Crimea, a Crimean Tatar propaganda central at the Ostministerium (Krimtatarische Leitstelle) was also established. In 1944 the propaganda central consisted of a single staff member, Edige Kirimal, who began to edit a newspaper for the Crimean Tatar soldiers in the German army. However, a detailed analysis of the circumstances of Tatar and, more

generally speaking, non-Russian collaboration with Nazi Germany during the Second World War will not be undertaken here. Discussions on collaboration, resistance and treason should be conducted by researchers of political and military history. We may confine ourselves to the conclusion that for the majority of the Tatar and Bashkir P.O.W.s, the question of joining, or not joining, the Volga Tatar legion (thus, of collaborating or not with Nazi Germany) most probably did not have an ideological dimension. If one takes into account that approximately 80 per cent of the Soviet P.O.W.s died in the first winter of 1941–42, the question of being able to leave the mortal living conditions in the prison camps becomes less ideological than essential for survival. Although we lack further sources, we can assume that for most of the Tatar soldiers ideological considerations did not play the major role in their decision-making process.

For the sake of giving a more complete picture, it should be mentioned that there were also some female Tatars in Germany during the Second World War. Amongst the Soviet civilians conscripted to forced labour in Germany there were also an unknown number of Tatars, mainly women, but there is almost no information available that might allow us to provide details about their lives.

After the Second World War

The defeat of Germany brought the strange adventure of a Tatar legion in the German army to an end. Some soldiers of the Tatar legion and the Osttürkischer Waffenverband, as well as staff members of the Tatar propaganda central in the Ostministerium, tried to avoid extradition to the Soviet Union by fleeing to the U.S.A. – administered zone in southern Germany, as they had to fear harsh repression or even the death penalty for military treason. Tatars and Bashkirs gathered mainly in the camps for displaced persons in Bavaria and later on moved to Munich, which in the early 1950s became a small centre of Tatar and Bashkir exiles. The choice of Munich was mainly due to the fact that in the beginning of the Cold War the U.S. authorities used the Bavarian capital as a basis for their propaganda efforts against the Soviet Union. A CIA–funded Institute for Research on the Soviet Union was established, and in the 1950s Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was founded, which also broadcasted in the languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union. The Tatar/Bashkir service of the radio consisted of former members of the Tatar legion, of the Tatar propaganda central in the Ostministerium and of the Russian Liberation Army (the Vlasov Army). It is therefore not by accident that virtually all of the Tatar books and journals published in Germany in that period were published in Munich (see further Gilyazov 1994; Cwiklinski 2005: 85, 95).

There is not much information available about the everyday life of Volga and Crimean Tatars and Bashkirs in post-war Germany. Many of the men – there is no information at all available concerning whether there were Tatar women in Germany in the first years after the Second World War – had married German women and raised families, but they were not very eager to pass on their cultural heritage to their children. Most of them did not reveal their real identity to the German public for fear of Soviet reprisals, mostly disguising themselves as "Turks". As we know from the testimony of one daughter from a mixed Tatar-German family, sometimes this atmosphere of fear of the Soviets was also transmitted to the children. The Orientalist Camilla Dawletschin-Linder vividly reported that her father had urged her to learn the basics of the Russian language as it "might become both necessary and useful in the near future". On the other hand, her father insisted on hiding his political activities both in pre- and post-war Germany from her in order not to bother her.[1]

Since the 1960s there has been a new wave of people of Tatar origin coming to Germany in connection with the labour migration from Turkey. Some of the "Turkish" workers were of Crimean Tatar origin, but this did not lead to a revival of Tatar life as the new migrants were mainly adapting to life in Germany. Therefore it is not surprising that it was not until the 1990s that Turkish migrants of Crimean Tatar heritage began to organise. However, the Volga Tatar diaspora in Turkey became important for Tatar structures in Germany. Virtually all the new staff members of the Tatar section of Radio Liberty in Munich came from Turkey. As far as we know, there was not much interaction between the "Tatarstani" Tatars (that is, the old immigrants) and their "Turkish" compatriots. When the Soviet Tatar writer Taufiq Aydi (1941–2001) came to Germany in 1990–91 to visit the Tatar diaspora, he met both Tatarstani and Turkish Tatars. As one can learn from his travelogue published in 2000, he was very impressed by the fact that both groups had managed to integrate into German society while at the same time preserving their allegiance to Tatar culture. Obviously he was impressed by the fact that one "Turkish Tatar" family living in Munich still spoke Tatar fluently. The family had come from the Central Anatolian village of Böğrüdelik, which had been founded by Siberian Tatars at the beginning of the twentieth century (Aydi 2000).

A change in the community life of Tatars in Germany did not occur until the early 1990s after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. Alongside with the begin-

1 Camilla Dawletschin-Linder, personal communication at the public presentation of the memoirs of her father, 4 September 2003, Berlin. In 1989 she co-edited the Tatar-German dictionary compiled by her father, see Dawletschin, Dawletschin and Tezcan 1989.

ning migration from Russia and other successor states of the former Soviet Union, people of Tatar origin also came to Germany. Most of them came individually either as students or as spouses of Volga Germans and Russian Jews, who both had the right to settle down in Germany under certain conditions. Due to the dispersion of the Tatar population throughout the whole territory of the former Soviet Union, the Tatar newcomers came not only from Tatarstan and Bashkiria (nowadays Bashkortostan), but also from Saint Petersburg and other regions in Russia, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Their only common feature was that they had grown up in Soviet society, and due to the dispersion of their people, most of them were strongly russified. Other than their Tatar predecessors in Germany in previous times, the newcomers often had no clearly developed Tatar identity, spoke only Russian and in the beginning obviously felt no need to organise as Tatars. Therefore it is not surprising that there were no strong links between them and the "old" diaspora people.

This situation was to be changed not by Tatars themselves, but by a German institution, the Institute for Turkish Studies at Berlin Free University. In the early 1990s Margarete Ersen-Rasch, the Turkish lecturer at the institute, had begun to make contact with the Volga-Ural region and to learn and teach both the Tatar and the Bashkir languages. With the establishment of closer links between, on the one hand, the institute and, on the other hand, Tatarstan and Bashkkortostan, it also began to attract the attention of single Tatar students (Cwiklinski 2000: 52–57). The activities of one of them at the institute, the young Tatar musicologist and poet Ildar Kharissov, were of a certain importance for the development of the Tatar community not only in Berlin, but in Germany in general. With the concerts and lectures he organised at the institute since the mid-1990s he caught the attention of Rais Khalilov and Nouria Khadeeva, two Tatar artists from Russia who had come to Berlin in 1993 and 1996 respectively. The three artists later became the core of the Tatarisch-Baschkirischer Kulturverein (Tatar-Bashkir Cultural Association, henceforth the Kulturverein), which was founded in 1999. However, in its first years the activities of the association consisted mainly of sporadic artistic activities like art exhibitions of its three founders.

Once again a new impetus for the Tatar-Bashkir community came from the outside. At the solemn presentation of a small brochure on Tatar-Bashkir life in Berlin (Cwiklinski 2000) in the autumn of 2000, the founders of the Kulturverein made contact with the Berlin Museum of European Cultures, which had the idea of organising the Tatarische Kulturtage, a Tatar cultural festival, in 2003. The festival, which took place at the museum in August and September 2003, can be seen as the real starting point for the activities of the Kulturverein (Tietmeyer and Kharissov 2004). The origin of the participants of the festival and of the members of the now fully constituted cultural association reflects

FIGURE 8.2 *The Tatar artist Schamil Gimajew*
DRAWING BY NOURIA KHADEEVA

the differentiated structure of the new Tatar diaspora in Germany. Tatars and Bashkirs from Tatarstan, Bashkiria and other parts of Russia, as well as those from Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, attended the festivities. This point may be illustrated by the biography of the main artist of the opening concert, the professional concert pianist Sevimbike Elibay. She was born in 1954 in Turkey of Volga Tatar parents. Her father, a former soldier in the Red Army, had fallen into German captivity in the Second World War, while her mother, who was born in Ukraine, had studied in Germany during that war. After the war Sevimbike's parents were acquainted with each other in a camp for displaced persons in Bavaria, married and later immigrated to Turkey. In the early 1960s the family moved to the U.S.A., where Sevimbike Elibay grew up. After beginning her piano studies at the Juilliard School in New York, Sevimbike came in 1977 to Germany to continue her studies. She has lived in Germany ever since, as of 1983 in Berlin. After having learnt incidentally that the Institute for Turkish Studies at Berlin Free University offered Tatar language classes, she decided to learn the mother tongue of her parents.

The festival, which was covered extensively by Russian- and Tatar-language media both in Russia and Germany, drew the attention of the public to the association and attracted many people of Tatar and Bashkir origin now residing

in Germany. After the festival there was a real outburst of activities of the Kulturverein. At the end of 2003 the association rented its own rooms in Berlin and organised regularly Tatar language classes; some enthusiasts even started to learn both the Arabic script and the basics of Arabic grammar (obviously regarding this as a key not to Islam, but to Tatar culture), although they did not get very far. The need for Tatar language classes was felt as many of the members of the association did not know the language at all. Communication in the association was either in German, which all the attendants knew well, or in Russian, the de facto mother tongue of most of them. Meetings with guests from Tatarstan, the preparations for the traditional plough festival Sabantuy, which is held in Tatarstan in early summertime, and art exhibitions completed the picture of an organisation that was about to establish itself as a relevant factor both in the cultural life of Berlin and in Tatar diaspora life in general. Apart from this, in 2003 the association also started its own journal *Bertugan* (Relative), which was edited by Alia Taissina, a Tatar woman residing in Western Germany who had just established her own publishing house.

Although the situation looked quite promising for the activists, the end in 2004–05 came soon and suddenly. The circumstances of the incident that led to the de facto breakup of the association are quite telling. In June 2004 the Moscow-based Academy for Problems of Security, Defence and Jurisdiction informed the Kulturverein that it wanted to award a certain number of members of the association with a high order for their merits in building cultural bridges between Russia and Germany; the association itself was supposed to select the people to be honoured. While it had no problems in selecting the activists, the fact that the academy belonged to the KGB structures raised questions amongst the association's members: While some of them demanded the public rejection of honours by a KGB institution, others rejected such calls as damaging interference in the private matters of the honoured. The discussion broadened and sharpened, and the question of allegiance to the homeland versus the necessity of integrating into German society surfaced.

Those who defended the idea of relating positively to "the homeland" never made it clear whether they meant the Soviet Union, Russia or Tatarstan. The personal attitude of the participants of the dispute with the Soviet Union – some of the contestants were suspected of having been KGB informants, while others identified as former dissidents – determined their position in this quarrel, which had begun as a discussion about receiving awards from a Russian academy. In the end the discussions led to a split in the association as those who related positively to the "homeland" left in 2005 and organised themselves independently from the Kulturverein. As the people leaving the association were amongst its most active members, the association came almost to a standstill, and the "dissidents" founded their own organisation and started

editing their own journal, *AlTaBash*, which was published exclusively online,[2] the title of which is an acronym for Germany (in Turkish/Tatar *Almanya*), Tatarstan and Bashkortostan.

The details of the conflict may be left aside as they are not relevant for the purpose of this chapter. The conflict in itself is, however, quite telling for the ethnicity of Tatars and Bashkirs in Germany. The contestants' attitude to the Soviet past, to dissidents and to the question of how to relate to authorities in Russia and/or Tatarstan were by far more relevant than Tatar or Bashkir culture. Being Russian or German, or not knowing the Tatar language and/or culture, did not disqualify a man or a woman in their eyes, but having the "wrong" attitude towards the Soviet past or propagating the "wrong" attitude to the present Russian authorities did. It is obvious that the dispute was a conflict between different attitudes to the Soviet Union, and Tatars from Turkey or other parts of the world outside the space of the former Soviet Union did not have any place in it.

The second aspect that meets the eyes of the observer is the role of individuals. The Tatar-Bashkir structures in Germany were and are totally dependent on the activism of single persons. When one of the most active persons, a Tatar woman, left the association and founded her own association, which in the end became an "intercultural integrational association", the centre almost ceased its activities. As a personal friend of hers happened to move from Berlin to Frankfurt in Western Germany, the traditional Sabantuy festivities were to be organised in Frankfurt too.

Crimean Tatars

Crimean Tatars or, to be more exact, people of Crimean Tatar origin and/or heritage, should be treated independently from Volga Tatar and Bashkir community life as there was hardly any connection between the two Tatar groups. However, despite the obvious differences between them, there are visible parallels that are worth focusing on. Leaving the diplomatic missions of Crimean Tatar envoys in previous centuries aside, the first Crimean Tatars in Germany were recorded in 1922, when an observer from Turkistan noted that two Crimean Tatar students studied at Berlin University (Cwiklinski 2000: 49). The Crimean Tatar propaganda central in the Ostministerium has already been mentioned. The Crimean Tatar efforts in the Second World War were insofar relevant as Edige Kirimal, the only staff member of the propaganda central, had remained in Germany. Before leaving Germany for Turkey, Kirimal

2 Available at: <http://www.tatarlar-deutschland.de/jurnal-altabash/> (accessed 11 February 2014).

published in 1952 his scholarly research on the Crimean Tatar national movement (Kirimal 1952). He was the most prominent and visible person to represent Crimean Tatars in Germany. A small Krimtatarenverein (Crimean Tatar Association), which was founded in 1965 in the south German town of Augsburg, did not attract much attention. It can be assumed that it consisted not only of former soldiers in the German army, but also of former forced labourers who had been deported from Crimea to Germany during the Second World War. The association remains active today, but Crimean Tatar refugees or their children no longer play a leading role. It is now dominated by migrants of Crimean Tatar origin from Turkey and one German activist.

However, it was not until the late 1990s that the association became more active, when Crimean Tatar ethnicity again became relevant in the then Soviet Union and its successor states Ukraine, Russia and Uzbekistan as well as in Turkey. Crimean Tatars were allowed to return from their Central Asian exile to Crimea, and this allowed for closer links between Crimean Tatars in Ukraine and in Turkey, where Crimean Tatars always had been an active part of the Turkic diaspora. This renewal of contact between the diaspora in Turkey and the Crimean homeland was also crucial for Germany. Any manifestation of Crimean Tatar ethnicity in Germany has to be seen as an offspring of the "Turkish-Crimean" revival. Hence it is by no means surprising that the two Crimean Tatar institutions now active in Germany both have close links with Turkey.[3]

Even a superficial look at the Crimean Tatar community reveals the greater role of religion compared to Volga Tatars and Bashkirs in Germany. For instance, one of the three recorded public activities of the Krimtatarenverein (Crimean Tatar Association) in 2011 was the celebration of the Kurban Bayramı (Feast of the Sacrifice). The greater importance of religion amongst the Crimean Tatars compared to Volga Tatars parallels the situation of migrants from Turkey in general compared to representatives of "Muslim" peoples from the former Soviet Union, amongst whom religion plays only a minor role, if any.

The Current Situation

The split of the Volga Tatar-Bashkir community in 2005–06 into two factions revealed the importance of the "Soviet homeland" for the ethnic identity of Tatar and Bashkir residents in Germany. For them the crucial opposition was between integrating into German society and feeling a bond to the homeland,

3 A journal entitled *Bizim Kırım* (Our Crimea) has been edited since 2003; see the web page page of the journal with full access to the first nine numbers of the journal: <http://www.bizimkirim.com> (accessed 11 February 2014).

the latter meaning either the Soviet Union or the "Tatar lands". The allegiance to the homeland was not necessarily linked to language, "national customs" or special dishes, although all of these items did contribute partly to the ethnic identity and solidarity of Tatar and Bashkir residents in Germany.

It is by no means accidental that Tatars and Bashkirs organised jointly. Both peoples speak quite similar Turkic languages and share many common cultural features, and both had cooperated closely in exile conditions in previous times. Apart from this, the fact that most of the migrants in Germany hardly speak Tatar or Bashkir at all makes the question to which of the two peoples one person belongs quite irrelevant. People of Crimean Tatar origin, mostly stemming from the Turkish labour migration to Germany, developed their own community life independently of the Volga Tatar and Bashkir community, and religion played a more important role amongst them.

The personal animosities within the Volga Tatar and Bashkir community and the split of the Kulturverein were severe blows to Tatar ethnicity in Germany. Many Tatar and Bashkir residents in Germany and other people sympathetic to Tatar culture (including ethnic Russians, Turks and Germans) shied away from connecting too closely to any organisational efforts and thereby getting involved in the disputes. Since then all the associations mentioned have visibly reduced their activities and/or shifted away from exclusively Tatar/Bashkir matters. Everyday life seems to have taken the upper hand. Yet, a second look at the Tatar-Bashkir cultural scene shows that there is still a great deal of activities in ethnically relevant fields, and with a closer look at the question of who organises them under which circumstances, the difference to previous times becomes obvious. First, the number of people involved in Tatar activities has fallen drastically – only a handful of people still engage actively. Secondly, the character of the activities has changed: While at the peak of Tatar-Bashkir cultural life in Germany from 2003 to 2005 people gathered regularly at the semi-official office of the Kulturverein in Berlin to join a Tatar class, to listen to a talk on Tatar or Bashkir culture or simply to chat, nowadays the activities take place only once or a few times a year, and they have a much more professional and official appearance. They mainly consist of organised visits of Tatar and Bashkir musicians, writers or artists or other prominent persons from Russia and Crimea. Thus when, for instance, the prominent Crimean Tatar politician Mustafa Cemilev intends to visit Germany, it is the small elite of organisers who will help him establish the necessary contacts. However, there is the notable exception of the Sabantuy festival, which is arranged almost annually: The Sabantuy celebrations held in several regions of Germany are both a showcase of Tatar culture and an occasion for people interested in Tatar culture to meet. Whether or not the annual festivities should be regarded as manifestations of Tatar community life depends on the definition of the latter.

FIGURE 8.3 *Sabantuy festival participants in Berlin.*
PHOTO: RAIS KHALILOV, 2004

The "organising elite" consists of academics who, semi-professionally, devote an enormous amount of time to – both Crimean and Volga – Tatar and Bashkir matters, and at least some of them would like to earn their living from their activities, although this is quite unrealistic in Germany. What they have in common is not ethnic origin or a good command of the Tatar language – two of them are Germans, and only two of them speak the language fluently. None of them has a Tatar/Bashkir partner, let alone family. It is not the traditional features of ethnicity that qualify a person for the organising elite, but rather the connections to the cultural and political Tatar and Bashkir life in Tatarstan, Bashkiria and Crimea, respectively, and/or to governmental structures in Russia, Ukraine and to a lesser extent in Turkey. In the contacts the organisers are establishing, a pragmatic approach can be observed. The rivalries of 2005–06 have been replaced by pragmatic cooperation, and now the few organisers work together to coordinate their contacts, not limiting themselves to representatives of "their" titular nation(s). So all of them will be active when, for instance, prominent Crimean Tatar politicians are planning to visit Germany.[4] What does the present organisational

4 In order to follow the activities of the "organisers", it is sufficient to visit their web pages and their small organisations, the Krimtatarenverein Deutschland (apparently the only one with a minor community life), the (inactive) Tatarisch-Baschkirischer Kulturverein Deutschland, the Interkultureller Integrationsverein Tamga – according to the subtitle of their web page, an

structure of Tatars and Bashkirs in Germany tell about Volga and Crimean Tatar and Bashkir ethnicity? Organisational elites have always existed and are not restricted to the present time. The specificity of the present situation is that there is almost no community life to be discovered behind the admittedly shining facade of organised events.

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organisation "(not only) by Tatars for Tatars in Berlin", the organisation Tatarlar Deutschland (sic, visibly closely linked to the Tamga organisation) and the small publishing house Bertugan Verlag Mainz. All of them can be accessed from the linklist on the web page of the Krimtatarenverein available at: <http://tatarlar.de/links.htm> (accessed 11 February 2014). For an example of a joint activity of all of them, see their appeal for respect of the cultural rights of Crimean and Volga Tatars from 2009, "We are in anxiety", in German, Russian, Turkish and English: <http://tatarlar.de/docs/Wir%20sind%20in%20Sorge.pdf> (accessed 11 February 2014).

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