

From Campus to Cafes: Writing The Middle East For Your Daily Read

Final Paper

Mehmet Eray Avcı - 5596018

Berlin's History of Mosques: What More Can Be Seen

Berlin, the capital city of Germany, is one of the most well-known and important cities in the world for its reputation of cultural history, political history, and tourism. The city's diversified and multi-cultural structure attracts millions of people from around the world to visit and to live. As Berlin's history is essential in understanding global history, every aspect of Berlin gains a new layer of importance. In this essay, Berlin's history with its mosques, with its muslim community will be shortly examined, and will be tried to show the developments of global, German, and Berlin history through the lens of mosque communities.

In Today's Berlin, it is not extremely difficult to come across a mosque or a crescent moon that represents the religion of Islam. This is no surprise, as Berlin is known for its hosting many immigrants from all over the world, with a huge number of people coming from the Middle East region, since the second half of the 20th century. However, although been omitted by the majority, Berlin's interaction with people from Islamic regions dates far back. The previously prisoner of war camp in Wünsdorf, Zossen, and now a memorial graveyard, Halbmondlager, is significant in writing the history of Middle East in Berlin. Halbmondlager, which is Half-Moon (Crescent) Camp in literal translation, was built in 1915 by the German

Emperor Wilhelm The Second's order, in alliance with the Sublime Ottoman Empire, to host Muslim prisoners of war, who were fighting for the Allies of the World War I.

The year was 1915 and the biggest powers in the world had gone into a disastrous war. This global conflict was taking place between the Central Powers (German Empire, Austria-Hungary Empire, Ottoman Empire mainly) and Allies (United Kingdom, France, Russia, Italy mainly). Although the political power of the Islamic Caliphate was in Ottoman Empire's hands, Muslim soldiers who were from regions that were colonized and controlled by the Allies such as India, Central Asia, Africa was fighting against the Ottomans and other Central Power armies. It was that time when the German Emperor Wilhelm II decided to build a camp for prisoners of war, in Wünsdorf area of very most southern part of Berlin. Since the camp was decided to be used to host people from Islamic religion, it was named as the symbol of Islam, "Crescent", or "Halbmond" in German.¹ The barracks in the camp were also designed to be built as Crescent shaped buildings, and there were 50 of them, each hosting 80 people, and the camp holding 4,000 prisoners in total at one time.² The occupancy rate of the camp was lower in comparison with other camps the German Empire built and maintained throughout the war. Also, the sanitary facilities were larger, and a greater care and importance was given by the German authorities. It was because this camp was not only aimed to be just a prison for the captured, but to share Jihad propagandas, to convince the captured to fight for the Ottomans and Central Power armies.

¹ "Wünsdorf Şehitliği, Zossen", Cultural Inventory, accessed Nov 6, 2024, <https://kulturenvanteri.com/yer/?p=206669>.

² "Halbmondlager (continued)", The National WWI Museum and Memorial, accessed Nov 6, 2024. <https://fightingwithfaith.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/halbmondlager-continued>

Other than the barrack buildings, the camp had a mosque, directly located in the center of the camp area. It was agreed by both the Ottoman authorities and German authorities that a mosque was mandatory for this camp with this certain motivation. The construction process took only about 5-6 weeks, since the mosque was made by red and white wood. This was the first functional mosque in the land of Germany in its history and its design was influenced by the Dome of the Rock (or *Qubbatu's-Sakhra* in original pronunciation) that is located in Jerusalem (*Qudus*), which is accepted as the first *qibla* (direction which muslims pray towards) in Islam. The mosque was opened by a ceremony attended by the Turkish and German authorities. The mosque even had a minaret and *Ezan* was being recited five times a day. Every special religious day were being held at the mosque.³ German sources were claiming that prisoners were treated nearly as guests of people, not prisoners.⁴ The National WWI Museum and Memorial depicts the opening of the mosque scene as the following: “The commandant of the prison camp, Colonel V. Oestfeld, gave a speech to the prisoners, which was translated for the Mohammedans and in which he explained that the construction of the mosque was a gift from the German Emperor for the Mohammedans, who should not go without their religious customs even in captivity. This was followed by a speech by the Turkish ambassador. In his reply, the Mohammedan cleric thanked the camp commander for erecting the mosque and for the mild treatment of his fellow believers, which made them forget their imprisonment to such an extent that they almost

³ Gerhard Höpp, „Die Wünsdorfer Moschee. Eine Episode islamischen Lebens in Deutschland, 1915-1930.“ In: *Die Welt des Islams*, 36(1996)2, S. 204-218

⁴ “Halbmondlager”, The National WWI Museum and Memorial, accessed Nov 6, 2024. <https://fightingwithfaith.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/halbmondlager>

regarded themselves as guests of the German people.”⁵ German ambassador Hans von Wangenheim was ordering the camp officers to “...Treat the Mohammedans who have fallen into German captivity with particular consideration, especially pay attention to religious regulations when it comes to food and give them the opportunity to fulfill their religious obligations. Good behavior inmates will be released home on grounds that Mohammedans are not to be regarded as enemies on our part.”⁶ Max Von Oppenheim, who was the head of pro-German-Ottoman propaganda, wrote in his “Instructions for the Propaganda Camps” book, the following: “As a special goal, the military use of the camp inmates in the Orient should be striven for; in addition, the sympathy and interest of the people for Germany should be awakened to such an extent that after the end of the war they would become followers of Germany and return to their homeland.... [the means of propaganda will be] a) a religious influence b) instruction by holding meetings and lectures, giving lessons, group excursions in the vicinity of the camp, sightseeing of the Reich capital, etc., c) good treatment, food and clothing...”⁷ The propaganda for the Muslim prisoners to join the Jihad call of the Ottoman Caliph Mehmed V was essential for the German authorities.

Ottoman authorities were also actively taking part in the propaganda matters in the Halbmöndlager. Turkish officials were often paying visits to camp to see the camp, checking on people’s status, and ensuring the propaganda process. One of these officials was Mehmet Akif,

⁵ “Halbmöndlager (continued)”, The National WWI Museum and Memorial, accessed Nov 6, 2024. <https://fightingwithfaith.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/halbmöndlager-continued>

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ “Propaganda”, The National WWI Museum and Memorial, accessed Nov 6, 2024 <https://fightingwithfaith.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/propaganda>

who was one of the significant poets of his time and was going to be called “The National Poet” as he was going to write the National Anthem of the newly founded Turkish Republic. He mentions his visit to Berlin in his poems book, *Safahat*. In this book it is seen that the Ottoman side was witnessing the effects of the Allies propaganda on their colonies in Halbmondlager. Mehmet Akif’s shock in seeing that Muslim people from British and French colonies were fighting in a war that was nothing to do with them against their other Muslim co-religious folks is heavily perceivable in his poem.⁸ He emphasizes his sorrow and pity for the poor people from all over the world, not only Muslims, but Germans and other Central Power’s martyrs too. Same as journalists from Istanbul reporting their experiences in Halbmondlager, Mehmet Akif uses his witnessings not to only spread the propaganda for the prisoners of war, but also his readers in his home country. It is obvious that the camp in Wünsdorf became a meeting point for Muslim people all around the world to meet and interact with each other and witness what the political dividedness has brought to them. Ottoman officials understood the importance of the propaganda war in Halbmondlager and work with the German authorities to develop strategies on how to stop the Allies from using the gun force and labor force from their colonies, which the Central Powers could possibly use.

Moving forward, calendars hit the year 1918 and the Great War comes to an end. During the late stages of the war and after the war, some of the prisoners in Halbmondlager lose their lives due to harsh climate change and their bodies buried to the newly built camp cemetery. Also, the Halbmondlager starts to host people from other religious groups, such as Hindus, Sikhs and

⁸ “Hatıralar / Berlin Hatıraları”, Safahat, accessed Nov 6, 2024, <https://safahat.diyenet.gov.tr/PoemDetail.aspx?bID=10&pID=75>

Russian Orthodox prisoners of war. Just as the camp, the cemetery also becomes an inter-religious place, as people from different ethnicities and religions are buried in the same area. Germany, after losing the war, begins to disarmament and closes the camp area. The mosque, which was representing Germany's first attempt to show religious hospitality to the Muslims in the modern era, stays functional until 1926, the year which Imam Khafiz Şükrü Efendi pass away. After Şükrü Efendi's time, the mosque gets demolished. The cemetery shared the same fate with the mosque, as it got disappeared in time due to oblivion and wild nature. The barracks were later used by the Russian Red Army until early 1990s. Reports after the vandalism of the Russian army indicate that there was almost nothing left to see from the previously existing Halbmondlager.⁹

In 1995, the German federal government, decides to renovate the area in attempts to restore the historical richness of Germany after unification.¹⁰ In 2007, the renovation of the cemetery is completed.¹¹ Today, when people visit the area of Halbmondlager, they only expect to see the renovated cemetery and a memorial monument from 1916, and a touristic information board on site. On the memorial monument, the following is written in Ottoman Turkish: "Please recite *Surat'ul-Fatiha* for the souls of the Kazan Muslims who were prisoners during the Great War in Kaiser Wilhelm II's era." In the cemetery, one can witness people from different

⁹ "Nicht Mekka, sondern Zehrendorf", Deutschlandfunk Kultur, accessed Nov 6, 2024, <https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/nicht-mekka-sondern-zehrendorf-100.html>

¹⁰ "Nicht Mekka, sondern Zehrendorf", Deutschlandfunk Kultur, accessed Nov 6, 2024, <https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/nicht-mekka-sondern-zehrendorf-100.html>

¹¹ "Halbmondlager", Enzyklopedia des Islam, accessed Nov 6, 2024, <http://www.eslam.de/begriffe/h/halbmondlager.htm>

ethnicities and religions, people who fought with each other in the combat area, are lying beneath the earth, together, resting in peace in this silent area. Names and stories of people who are buried are written in the tombstones, although not everyone's, which proves the uniqueness of the cemetery. The latest excavation works in the Halbmondlager was managed by Prof. Dr. Susan Pollock and Prof. Dr. Reinhard Bernbeck from Free Universitat Berlin in 2015. In the Garnisonsmuseum in the same town, Wünsdorf, there exists a model of the Halbmondlager mosque, that was started to be exhibited in 2012. Lastly, in 2016, refugees coming from the Middle East region begun to be hosted in the buildings that were newly constructed in the Wünsdorf area, by the quirk of fate.

The Halbmondlager starts and represents the legacy of Berlin's complex and evolving relationship with the Middle East region. The Halbmondlager today stands as a memorial that honors the intercultural experiences and respects the trauma. Although being demolished and lost in the wild, the on going attempts from the contemporary times make The Halbmondlager to continue staying alive, helping it to spread the lessons from WWI and how it was possible to live among the people from other cultures around the world in harmony. This area is also an example of how Berlin's universities, and cultural institutions frame and share the knowledge about the Middle East, shaping perspectives on trauma and displacement. Moreover, the recent start of housing of the Middle Eastern refugees near the Halbmondlager site evokes a continuity of cultural history of trauma and displacement, and shows the importance given by the German authorities to this site.

The story of Berlin Muslims did not end with the Halbmondlager's closure, it continued to exist and evolve. In 1920s, Berlin became a hub for many international students and different political groups. Ahmadiyya was one of them. Ahmadiyya was a political-religious movement that was founded in late 1880s' British India, in the village of Qadian. After Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's foundation, the movement started to evolve and grow. The movement started to seek missionary aims, and succeeded in opening a mosque in the Western world for the first time in 1913, in Woking, England. The mosque was a success for Ahmadiyya in terms of representing their movement, and attracting people from outside. Ahmadiyya's next aim would be to open a mosque and carry the movement's mission in Berlin. This aim would be matched up with the Berlin's international Muslim community's needs for a mosque and Weimar state's prospect to repair Berlin's reputation worldwide for international hospitality after the loss of the Great War.

In 1922, the missionary Maulana Sadr-ud-Din was sent to Berlin by the Ahmadiyya movement. He was the imam of the mosque in Woking, and he was responsible for the opening of the new mosque. When he arrived in Berlin, he published magazines, created contacts with German officials and Muslims in Berlin, and eventually, had been able to open the new mosque in Berlin's Wilmersdorf district, located on Brienner Strasse 7-8.¹² For the inauguration of this new mosque, that was held in 1925, Islamic scholars particularly from Iran and Arab world, Turkish officials in Berlin, Muslim student and Ahmadiyya missionaries were invited. Finally, the "Berliner Moschee", modelled after the famous mausoleum in India, Taj Mahal, began to serve for Muslims as a pray area, a community house for celebrations of Eid, and a center to

¹² Gerdien Jonker, "Overviewing a Century. The Lahore-Ahmadiyya Mosque Archive in Berlin." *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 11, no. 3 (2022): 298-99, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22117954-bja10069>.

propagate Islam in Berlin.¹³ Before Berliner Moschee, muslims in Berlin had to hold their religious services in places like Schloss Wannsee, Humboldthaus, the Oriental Club, the Hindustanhaus, the Tiergartenhof and the roof of the observatory in Treptow. With the opening of the mosque, these places were no more needed and Berliner muslims finally had embraced their own praying area.

The mosque, after its opening, started to carry out the mission to educate the people about Islamic faith. In 1926, the studies to translate the Holy Book of Islam, The Quran, to German from Arabic was started. The full translation was completed in 1939. The translation's first edition quickly sold out, but because of the new Nazi regime and the Second World War, a new edition could not be printed. The new edition could only be printed in 1964. The mosque's archive shows many letters from German people, asking for copies of the translation, implying the importance and attraction that was given to the mosque and its community's works.¹⁴ The mosque's publishing house was more than just a translating Quran, as the mosque community created works to answer questions about Islam in the German community. One instance for this is Hugo Marcus' book titled "Muhammad's Personality: The First Democrat-Prophet." Hugo Marcus was a convert of Jewish origin who was introduced to Islam with the Ahmadiyya community. The imam of the mosque, Sadr-ud-Din, also wrote books titled "Introduction to the Holy Quran" and "The Muslim Prayer and what to take notice of it" in German. Another example of the published books is Prof. S. M. Abdullah's "The Position of Women in Islam"

¹³ Ahmad, Nasir. "DIE BERLINER MOSCHEE 90 Years Old Muslim Monument." Accessed February 25, 2025. <https://berlin.ahmadiyya.org/history/90th-anniv-berlin-mosque.pdf>.

¹⁴ *ibid*.

book, also published in German. The books sought out make introduction and clear any unanswered question about Islam in the German community. Other than these books, the mosque published magazines such as “The Moslemische Revue”, published until 1940, the year it was prohibited during the war.

In 1920s and 30s, the mosque saw a great attention from the Lebensreform movement. Lebensreform, directly translated to English as “Life-Reform”, was a social movement in Germany, opposing industrialization, materialism, and urbanization. Followers of the movement proposed to be back to the living a more natural way of life. The movement was more popular for the upper/bourgeois class. Couple of followers of the movement converted to Islam, after engaging with the Ahmadiyya community, and supported the mission of spreading Islam in the German community via publishing works.¹⁵ The mosque community organized hikings, meetings, tea parties and lectures with people to engage more socially. A well-formed community was established, and some people even strengthened the community by the way of marrying. In the 1936 Olympic games in Berlin, mosque community welcomed the Muslim Athletes from different parts of the world. However, this beautiful years were not going to last for too long. The Nazi Regime was a trouble also for the mosque, and some prominent members of the mosque had to flee the country. Some German members of the community did not wanted to be associated with the mosque, and therefore, the mosque’s interaction capacity fell dramatically. However, the mosque community accomplished to continue existing through

¹⁵ Jonker, Gerdien. "In Search of Religious Modernity: Conversion to Islam in Interwar Berlin". In *Muslims in Interwar Europe*, Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2016: 25,36. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004301979_003

negotiating with the Nazi officials. Throughout the World War II, the mosque suffered substantial damages and the dome also had seen some blows. These damages were later fixed by renovation.¹⁶ The mosque is still under the management of the head quarters of Ahmadiyya today. In the exhibition of the mosque's past, it is stated that mosque records 5000 people converting to Islam by reaching out to them, since their foundation to this day. The Ahmadiyya movement never saw the attention it gained in 1920s and 30s again, even after the war, due to a change in the demographics of Berlin. The Ahmadiyya community could open their second mosque only in 2008, in Berlin's Heinersdorf district, which used to be a part of East Berlin. Ahmadiyya's growing pace will seem slow, when compared with other muslim organizations, as will be mentioned later in this essay. Due to some of Ahmadiyya beliefs contradicting with generally accepted beliefs of the Muslim population, the mosque is not a strong choice to visit for a large amount of muslim population in today's Berlin. As Berlin as a city continued to grow further and embrace more, new changes of religious scene were on their way.

In 1960s, Federal Republic of Germany, commonly known as the "West Germany", started to welcome guest workers from other countries, and Türkiye was one of them. West Berlin became a house for thousands of Turkish guest workers for industrial sector. The first time the workers came to Berlin, none of them was expecting to be permanently residing in Berlin, in contrast, it was expected them to work temporarily, save money, and return to their homeland. For these reasons, at first, there were no mission or aim to shape the culture of Berlin, as opening

¹⁶ Ahmad, Nasir. "DIE BERLINER MOSCHEE 90 Years Old Muslim Monument." Accessed February 25, 2025. <https://berlin.ahmadiyya.org/history/90th-anniv-berlin-mosque.pdf>.

places to represent their culture, or engaging with locals. The religious duties and cultural events were mostly performed by individuals themselves or in small groups such as families and friend groups in certain factories. Muslims were still using temporary solutions, using makeshift prayer spaces in basements and apartments. These improvised spaces were largely invisible to the broader German population. Later, these workers started grouping for celebrating special days as Eids, in different locations, just as the muslims in 1920s Berlin before the mosque in Wilmersdorf. And eventually, muslim guest workers started to found organizations to perform religious services and engage with people outside of Islamic faith. After 1970s and 1980s, some guest workers started to understand that their time in Germany was not going to be temporarily, and for them it was more preferable to reside permanently in Germany, and in Berlin, and as more amount of guest workers came to find work and residence in Germany and Berlin, a strong Muslim community had been created.¹⁷

The Kreuzberg district of Berlin was one of the main areas for the guest workers to reside, as it was distant from the West Berlin's centered and richer areas. Other residing areas were Neukölln and Wedding districts, however, Kreuzberg was considered as the main area. In need of a space to perform pray and gather together, muslim Berliners founded the mosque in 1976, on Skalitzer Strasse 131, near Kottbusser Tor, Kreuzberg's main square. It was named as Mevlana Moschee, deriving from the famous poet and scholar Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi. One aspect of this mosque is that it cannot be directly seen from the street (except for the minaret), as

¹⁷ Cemal Tosun, "Almanya'da Türk-İslâm Kültür Merkezleri: Camiler", *İslâmî Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Cilt 6, Sayı 3, Ankara 1992, 176-177.

visitors have to go through a hall way between apartments to enter the mosque.¹⁸ The mosque's founding process was affiliated with the *Milli Görüş* (in English: National Vision) movement, an Islamist movement led by Turkish politician and scholar Necmettin Erbakan. Although Erbakan's politics were originally inside Türkiye's borders, the movement gained popularity between Turkish guest workers in Europe, using their connections and gaps of a social authority in Islamic organizations. Thus, besides bringing the possibility of welcoming the Turkish guest workers in aspects of religious and social communal aspects, Mevlana brought Turkish politics to the city too. The Mevlana mosque became a focal point of conflict between Turkish leftists and right wings, representing the right wing side. Particularly, an example is the event in March 1980, when a demonstration in support of Afghan Muslims was met with an opposing protest by Turkish leftists. A violent clash happened, leading to the death of a left-wing protestor. The mosque faced a suspicious view of the German authorities and people.¹⁹ In 2014, there was an arson attack to the mosque.²⁰ However, throughout the time, Mevlana mosque continued to stand still and welcome muslims of Berlin for their religious acts, and even took part in the education of religion and Turkish culture. Still today, for its central location and history of decades, Mevlana Mosque serves as a central place for muslim visitors in Berlin for religious and social services.

¹⁸ Enzyklopedia des Islam. "Mevlana Moschee." Accessed Feb 25, 2025 https://www.eslam.de/begriffe/m/mevlana-moschee_berlin.htm

¹⁹ Jonker, Gerdien. 2005. 'The Mevlana mosque in Berlin-Kreuzberg: An unsolved conflict.' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31/6:1067–1081.

²⁰ Enzyklopedia des Islam. "Mevlana Moschee." Accessed Feb 25, 2025 https://www.eslam.de/begriffe/m/mevlana-moschee_berlin.htm

As muslim community grew further, new needs of new prayer areas emerged. Mevlana Mosque in Kreuzberg became an example of the in-city mosques in Berlin, with its structure that represents the Turkish architectural aspect of mosque and Berlin's aspect of mosques standing next to an apartment to the street side, being accessible only through a hall way. Moreover, its library and cafe section, allowed people to socialize in the mosque, and this constructed an example for the other mosques too. Today, Berlin hosts for more than 80 mosques or permanent pray areas in the city for its muslim residents and visitors. Most of the mosques today belong to Turkish community in Berlin, but they are divided according to organizations which founded them, such as IGMG (*Milli Görüş*), DİTİB (Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, a branch of the Presidency of the Religious Affairs in Ankara), Alperen Ocakları (Turkish-Islamic Nationalist right-wing organization), Süleymancılar (A Turkish Sufi order founded by Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan), Menzilciler (A Turkish Sufi order founded in Menzil village in Adıyaman, Türkiye), İskenderpaşa (A Turkish Sufi order founded in the İskenderpaşa Mosque in Istanbul), an so on. Although the mosques are being managed under different organizations, muslim residents in Berlin do not see a huge difference between them, in general, and the communities of these mosques and organization live in harmony together. Perhaps, one distinct Turkish mosque would belong to Gülenists, a liberal Islamic movement led by Fethullah Gülen, which is seen as a terrorist organization by the state of Türkiye, due to their affiliation with the 2016 coup attempt in Türkiye. However, the organization does not have a mosque in Berlin, or in Germany overall. They support the project of "House of One", a project that plans to build a house of

worship according to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, under the same roof.²¹ This project is not considered as a mosque by many.

One outstanding example of the mosques in Berlin would be the Şehitlik Mosque, located in the Columbiadamm Avenue in Tempelhof district. It is located next to Turkish Cemetery, which dates back until the late 18th century. The area which the Turkish ambassadors to Prussia was buried, is later converted into a Turkish Cemetery in 1866, thanks to donations of King Wilhelm I.²² Throughout the years, it became the cemetery of muslim people who lived and died in Berlin, with many important figures of the history being buried. In order to honor the the relations of Türkiye and Germany in this central location (it is very near the old Tempelhof Airport, which is today's Tempelhofer Feld Park since 2010, a popular park in Berlin to hang out and relax.) it was decided to build a mosque complex. The construction began in 1999 and ended in 2005.²³ The mosque is managed by DİTİB, and it is considered as one of the most beautiful mosques in Berlin to visit. The building's architectural style is influenced by the Classical Ottoman Style, and it can be seen from the street. With its mahya (decorative lights to illustrate words or sayings) and two minarets, and special events, lectures and conferences, it welcomes a generous amount of visitors. While other mosques in Berlin are built for needs of the communities, Şehitlik Mosque stands more as a cultural hub to represent Islam stronger, clearer

²¹ "A Member of Qatar Foundation Supports a FETÖ Project in Germany - Straturka." 2019. Straturka. July 13, 2019. <https://www.straturka.com/a-member-of-qatar-foundation-supports-a-feto-project-in-germany/>.

²² Mehmet, Yavuz, "Berlin'de Türk İslam Mimarisi.", Sanat Dergisi, 14, (2008): 87-88.

²³ Uca, A., & Can, A. H. (2019). Berlin Türk Şehitliği ve Mezar Taşları. Akademik Tarih Ve Düşünce Dergisi, 6(3), 1241-46

and wider. While other mosques are also social areas, rather than being solely religious areas, Şehitlik is a social and touristic area of a wider community, with representing the inclusiveness and diversity of Berlin among the communities.

Not all mosques in Berlin are of Turkish origin of course, although many. One of the most known example to that is the Omar Moschee near Görlitzer Bahnhof, located in Wiener Strasse. The mosque is mainly managed under the Arab community in Berlin, and architecturally, it represents the Arabic aesthetics of religious spaces. It was opened in 2010, and significantly gained a number of visitors after 2015, the year which the migration of Syrian refugees to Germany and Berlin began. As the Arab community continued to grow, other new mosques began to open too. Some of which are belonging to Syrians, Palestinians, and Salafism followers. Other than Arab community, African, Bosnian, Dagestanian, Chechnian, and Iranian communities have established their mosques and organizations in Berlin. The harmony that was mentioned between Turkish mosques exist in these transnational mosques to some extent, but it is seen that Sunni followers of Islam are mainly avoiding Shia mosques, and trying not to prefer Salafi mosques, and the same applies for other groups. One example of the Salafi mosques, that brought attention by a wide audience is Fussilat33 Mosque, in the Moabit district of Berlin. This attention is not due to their success in contributing to the diversity in the city, rather, due to their affiliation with radical Islamist terrorist organizations. The mosque is raided by the police and closed due to their affiliation with the terrorist attack in Berlin Kudamm Christmasmarkt in 2017.²⁴ It was the years which put a suspicious look on the mosques due to a potential threat of

²⁴ “Berlin Criminalizes IS-Linked Mosque.” dw.com. Deutsche Welle. February 28, 2017. <https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-criminalizes-islamic-state-linked-fussilet-mosque-activity/a-37741725>.

terrorism. However, Berlin mosques recovered from this time by showing solidarity with people against terrorism and radicalism. One another outstanding example of Berlin's mosques would be the Ibn Rushd-Goethe Mosque, located in Mitte district. The mosque is renowned for being a "liberal" mosque in Berlin, as it states that it is open to all people of different beliefs and sexualities. It is seen as a reformative mosque, as it does not allow the wearing of Burqa or Niqab.²⁵ However, it should be noted that this mosque is controversial and does not attract many visitors in comparison with other mosques.

It is not possible to list every mosque in Berlin and write their history, since there are plenty of them, however, these instances that were mentioned in this short essay are sufficient to tell the history of themselves, of Berlin's, of Germany's and of global, I believe. By reviewing the history of mosques in Berlin, one could analyze the political relations between Prussia and Ottomans, the connections and strategies Germany had built in WWI, the social life in Berlin during the Weimar years and the WWII, and migration that started with the guest worker's first arrival, economic boom in 20th century, political conflicts inside Germany, and inside Türkiye, and their carrying out to Germany, Berlin's multi-cultural structure, the migration wave started in 2010s, and the conflicts of liberal or radical comments of Islam. Berlin's story is unique in this sense and deserves to be studied more carefully, more detailingly, in longer works.

²⁵ "The Berlin Mosque Breaking Islamic Taboos," BBC, August 7, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40802538>.

Bibliography

“Berlin Criminalizes IS-Linked Mosque.” dw.com. Deutsche Welle. February 28, 2017. <https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-criminalizes-islamic-state-linked-fussilet-mosque-activity/a-37741725>.

Cultural Inventory. “Wünsdorf Şehitliği, Zossen.” Accessed Nov 6, 2024. <https://kulturenvanteri.com/yer/?p=206669>.

Deutschlandfunk Kultur. “Nicht Mekka, sondern Zehrendorf.” Accessed Nov 6, 2024, <https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/nicht-mekka-sondern-zehrendorf-100.html>

Enzyklopedia des Islam. “Halbmondlager.” Accessed Nov 6, 2024. <http://www.eslam.de/begriffe/h/halbmondlager.htm>

Enzyklopedia des Islam. “Mevlana Moschee.” Accessed Feb 25, 2025 https://www.eslam.de/begriffe/m/mevlana-moschee_berlin.htm

Höpp, Gerhard. „Die Wünsdorfer Moschee. Eine Episode islamischen Lebens in Deutschland, 1915-1930.“ In: Die Welt des Islams, 36(1996)2, S. 204-218

Jonker, Gerdien. "In Search of Religious Modernity: Conversion to Islam in Interwar Berlin". In Muslims in Interwar Europe, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2016) doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004301979_003

Jonker, Gerdien. "Overviewing a Century. The Lahore-Ahmadiyya Mosque Archive in Berlin." Journal of Muslims in Europe 11, no. 3 (2022): 297-314, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22117954-bja10069>.

Jonker, Gerdien. 2005. 'The Mevlana mosque in Berlin-Kreuzberg: An unsolved conflict.' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31/6:1067–1081.

Ahmad, Nasir. "DIE BERLINER MOSCHEE 90 Years Old Muslim Monument." Accessed February 25, 2025. <https://berlin.ahmadiyya.org/history/90th-anniv-berlin-mosque.pdf>.

Safahat. "Hatıralar / Berlin Hatıraları." Accessed Nov 6, 2024. <https://safahat.diyanet.gov.tr/PoemDetail.aspx?bID=10&pID=75>

"The Berlin Mosque Breaking Islamic Taboos," BBC, August 7, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40802538>.

The National WWI Museum and Memorial. "Halbmondlager." Accessed Nov 6, 2024. <https://fightingwithfaith.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/halbmondlager>

The National WWI Museum and Memorial. "Halbmondlager (continued)." Accessed Nov 6, 2024. <https://fightingwithfaith.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/halbmondlager-continued>

The National WWI Museum and Memorial. "Propaganda." Accessed Nov 6, 2024. <https://fightingwithfaith.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/propaganda>

Tosun, Cemal. "Almanya'da Türk-İslâm Kültür Merkezleri: Camiler", *İslâmî Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Cilt 6, Sayı 3, Ankara 1992, ss. 173-180.

Uca, A., & Can, A. H. (2019). Berlin Türk Şehitliği ve Mezar Taşları. *Akademik Tarih Ve Düşünce Dergisi*, 6(3), 1236-1308.

YAVUZ, Mehmet. "Berlin'de Türk İslam Mimarisi.", *Sanat Dergisi* (2008): 87-93.