The Jewish *Scheunenviertel* in Berlin (1930s)

Abstract

This footage, captured in 1938, according to the German Federal Archives, shows the ornate synagogue in the center of Berlin (Berlin-Mitte), flanked on both sides by Jewish shops and businesses. It captured some of the feel of a neighborhood that had occupied an outsized place in German-Jewish history throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. It served as a temporary or permanent haven for Jews, especially the tens of thousands after 1918 who fled the violence of the Russian Civil War and the antisemitic pogroms throughout Eastern Europe. Many Jewish immigrants to Germany used this neighborhood, nicknamed the *Scheunenviertel* for its earlier density of barns, as a first port of call, where they could find a place to sleep, kosher groceries, and places of worship. In the mid-1920s, the district had the highest population density of any neighborhood in Berlin, and most outsiders viewed this district as cramped, poor, and exclusively Jewish. In November 1923—at the peak of Germany's hyperinflation—mobs of angry Berliners from outside the neighborhood rampaged through the *Scheunenviertel*, attacking residents and looting Jewish businesses. They had succumbed to the false but pernicious antisemitic rumors that Jews in this district were hoarding money and food, and even the police themselves initially did nothing to quell the violence.

Source

Source: Scheunenviertel (a Jewish section), Berlin. USHMM: RG-60.0308, Accessed at United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv

USHMM