

# JEWES WITHOUT MONEY

The New Masses, March 1930

BY

## MICHAEL GOLD



Every one knew Mary Sugar Bum. Some of the most sodden bums made love to her. They bought her a five-cent hooker of rotgut whisky and took her into an alley while she cursed them and bargained for more whisky. We children watched this frequent drama.



O Workers' Revolution, you brought hope to me, a lonely, suicidal boy. You are the true Messiah. You will destroy the East Side when you come, and build there a garden for the human spirit.

"The best story of tenement life I have ever read. This account of the author's childhood on the East Side is sure to find a great reading public. Most books about children are dull; but this one is hideous, beautiful, horrifying, gorgeous and unforgettable. What a rare and startling event to come upon a book by a man who has something real to say, and knows how to say it!"—*Upton Sinclair.*

"The two books that I have ever read that seem to give one the taste and smell and terror and immensity of the East Side are *Haunch Paunch and Jowl* and now Mike Gold's *Jews Without Money.*"—*John Dos Passos.*

The autobiography of a boy who somehow managed to learn the two great lessons of the Sidewalks of New York: How to be Tough and How to be Tender. When Mike was seven, he knew that evictions were likely to come into your street any day, and perhaps into your house. He knew how the painted girls earned their living. He knew how Louis One Eye got his eye put out, and why he didn't want Mike around when he was talking to Mike's pretty young Aunt Lena.

From the East Side came Mike Gold's first knowledge of life. Nothing was withheld. There were no secrets too dark for childish ears to hear, no meat too strong for childish teeth to chew. Mike tells his story with the art of a writer who uses language with consummate skill, and with the emotion of a man whose heart is full.



For three nights Esther lay in her coffin on the table in the "front room." While she slept, old men hired at the synagogue sat by candlelight in our kitchen. The neighbors crept in, one by one, and sat with us during the *Sheva*. They offered my mother the most dismal comfort. Why is there so much gloomy wisdom at the hearts of the poor?

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