Gold, Mike (1893-1967) Encyclopedia Article

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Born to Jewish immigrants on New York's Lower East Side, Itzok Issac Granich changed his name to Mike Gold to avoid persecution in the Red Scare of 1919. A Harvard dropout, Gold entered Greenwich Village circles in 1914 and became perhaps the most influential leftist literary critic of the 1920s. After authoring "Towards Proletarian Literature" (1921), a radical manifesto that encouraged writers to promote revolution, Gold assumed editorship of *New Masses* in 1926. In 1930, he published *Jews Without Money,* a work of autobiographical fiction inspired by his tenement-house childhood. He spent the Depression decade writing for the Communist *Daily Worker*. Brash, irreverent, and dogmatic, he praised the class-conscious radicalism of Woody Guthrie and Langston Hughes and assailed Ernest Hemingway and Thorton Wilder for failing to promote social change. His politics confined him to France in the late 1940s and 1950s, and to relative obscurity in American literary history. His influence on radical writers, however, has been recovered in the late 1990s.

Further Reading:

Bloom, James D. *Left Letters: The Culture Wars of Mike Gold and Joseph Freeman.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1992.

Folsom, Michael, editor. *Mike Gold: A Literary Anthology.* New York, International Publications, 1972.