

Life in the East End

When boys finished school many became tradesmen - carpenters, upholsterers, jewellers, tailors, cabinet makers and woodworkers.



Whitechapel Cabinet Makers workshop, c.1910.
Courtesy of the Jewish Museum.

“My father was a tailor and my mother sewed to make dresses. And they both worked... I remember my Father... in a room in that house where all his machinery was... he worked for other people. You know, for a firm. And my mother used to make the dresses”
(Doreen)

The markets were vibrant, noisy, crowded:

“... in Petticoat Lane in those days, the stall holders were allowed so many yards to put their goods on, but most of them used to take more than they were allotted, so [the local policeman, nicknamed ‘Kosher’] used to go past and say Mr Levi, you’re eight or nine inches over your limit you’re not allowed so much... so Mr Levi, he wouldn’t alter his pitch. What he’d do is, he would take a half a crown, or five shillings out of his pocket and slip it into Kosher’s hands, so of course Kosher made quite a living”
(Gus)



An East End Jewish Tailors Shop c.1910.
Courtesy of the Jewish Museum.



Petticoat Lane Market, c.1910.
Courtesy of the Jewish Museum.



Fascist Meeting in the East End, 1930.
Courtesy of the Jewish Museum.

Escaping persecution was not easy. The Jewish population faced Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Facists in the East End. Taxes to the Jewish Community alongside hostilities and destruction from the Blitz encouraged many to seek new homes elsewhere.

“Mosley’s fascists used to walk from near Mile End station right the way down Grove Road... We used to have stones thrown at the windows but of course the shutters were up and I was never allowed out at certain times at the week-end because it was dangerous.”
(John)

Jewish Free School Chior c.1930. Courtesy of Jewish Museum.

