



**Profiles of a Lost World: Memoirs of East
European Jewish Life before World War II
(Raphael Patai Series in Jewish Folklore and
Anthropology)**

Hirsz Abramowicz

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First published in a Yiddish edition in 1958, Profiles of a Lost World is a source of information about Eastern Europe before World War II as well as an touchstone for understanding a rich and complex cultural environment. Hirsz Abramowicz (1881-1960), a prominent Jewish educator, writer and cultural activist, knew that world and wrote about it, and his writings provide an eyewitness account of Jewish life during the first half of the twentieth century.

Abramowicz was a witness to war, revolution and major cultural transformations in the Jewish world. His essays, written and originally published in Yiddish between 1920 and 1955, document the local history of Lithuanian Jewry in rural and small-town settings, and in the city of Vilna-the "Jerusalem of Lithuania"- which was a major center of East European Jewish intellectual and cultural life. They shed light on the daily life of Jews and the flourishing of modern Yiddish culture in Eastern Europe during the early 20th century and offer a personal perspective on the rise of Jewish radical politics.

The collection incorporates local history of Lithuanian Jewry, shtetl folklore, observations on rural occupations, Jewish education, and life under German occupation during World War I. It also includes a series of profiles of leading social and intellectual Jewish personalities of the author's day, from traditional scholars to revolutionaries. Together the selections provide a blend of social and personal history and a window on a lost world.

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