

My Life as a Radical Jewish Woman: Memoirs of a Zionist Feminist in Poland (The Modern Jewish Experience)

Puah Rakovsky

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"... vital to understanding this period of East European Jewish history. As Hyman promises, the memoir... read[s] like a novel." ?Russian Review

In this striking autobiography Puah Rakovsky (1865-1955) tells of her experiences as a Jewish woman in late 19th- and early 20th-century Poland who broke with her traditional upbringing to become a professional educator, Zionist activist, and feminist leader. Her passionate account offers unprecedented entrée into the life experience of East European Jewry in a period of massive social change. Published in the original Yiddish in 1954, the work appears here in English for the first time, annotated and with a historical introduction by Paula E. Hyman. Born into a rabbinic family in 1865 in Bialystok, then within the Russian Empire, Rakovsky witnessed the flourishing of a variety of radical political movements, the birth of Zionism, and the devastation of World War I. No mere bystander, she was an activist who assumed leadership roles in the public arenas of education and politics: she founded a pioneering Jewish girls' school in Warsaw and a national Jewish women's organization in 1920s Poland. In her memoir Rakovsky reflects on the position of Jewish women in her time and gives her personal and political perspective on central events of modern Jewish history from her childhood until her emigration to the Land of Israel in 1935.



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