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World of Our Fathers: The Jews of Eastern Europe

Milton Meltzer

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Here is a panoramic view of Jewish life in Eastern Europe up to the time millions of Jews emigrated to the US. Using eyewitness accounts, Milton Meltzer helps restore a world almost unknown to today's American Jews, most of whom can find their roots in that past. It was a world that knew great joys--in family and community, in learning and religious life--as well as the deep sorrows of persecution and pogrom. Word portraits bring to life rabbi and revolutionary, Hasid and Haskalist, shochet and poet, Zionist and Bundist, millionaire and luftmensch. Just as vividly portrayed, and often in their own words, are the people of the shtetl, struggling to make a living, remarkable for their endurance and their refusal to let hope die. The author uses diaries, letters, documents, newspaper accounts, songs, maps, poems, memoirs, weaving them into a historical narrative that details what led Jews to abandon their old world and venture to the new.