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**«COMPACT MASS OF INTERNAL ENEMIES»:
SITUATION OF LITHUANIAN JEWS DURING
WORLD WAR I (BASED ON NAFTALI FRIDMAN'S
MATERIALS)**

«Компактна маса внутрішніх ворогів»:

*становище литовських євреїв під час Першої світової війни
за матеріалами Нафталі Фридмана*

The Great War led to a significant deterioration in the situation of Lithuanian Jews, who found themselves at the center of the war theater. They faced a series of measures and processes that had devastating consequences under wartime conditions. In light of these challenging circumstances, one figure emerged as particularly vital: Naftali Fridman, a member of the State Duma representing the Kovno Governorate, who undertook to defend and assist the Jewish community to the best of his ability. Through his efforts, Fridman amassed a substantial collection of documents providing a wealth of information about the conditions experienced by his coreligionists during the First World War, with particular focus on Lithuanian Jews, his compatriots. These materials constitute record group 1010 of the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kyiv. The informational value of the documents from the Fridman collection for examining the situation of Lithuanian Jews during the Great War remains unexplored. Furthermore, a

comprehensive understanding of this ethnoreligious group's circumstances during the period is still lacking. The significance of such research lies in deepening understanding of the informational value of Ukrainian archival collections for studying the history of Jews in the Russian Empire, specifically Lithuanian Jews. Moreover, examining their wartime experiences is essential for grasping the extent of Jewish persecution and the social challenges that emerged during the conflict. The purpose of this study is to determine the information potential of documents from the Naftali Fridman collection for researching the situation of Lithuanian Jews during the First World War by examining the processes and phenomena they confronted during this period. The term «information potential» refers to the information about Lithuanian Jewish circumstances that can be gleaned from documents in this record group. The research methodology is grounded in the principles of historicism, systematicity, and objectivity. Methods of synthesis, induction, analysis, typology, and source criticism were employed. The study reveals that documents collected through Naftali Fridman's activities illuminate various aspects of Lithuanian Jewish life during the war, including reactions to the military conflict, forced evictions, looting, violence, hostage-taking, and the refugee crisis. Fridman's materials enable detailed examination of forced eviction processes and hostage-taking practices. The article identifies the principal directions of movement for evicted Jews and the consequences of this process. The study also details the hostage-taking process, particularly the Jewish response to such measures, and describes the reaction to the outbreak of war and specific actions taken by Lithuanian Jews in response to the news. Such information is largely absent from existing research. Notably, the Fridman collection contains the least documentation concerning refugees and expulsion. This collection can serve as a foundation for future research, particularly on topics such as antisemitic sentiment in the Russian Empire, the impact of World War I on the Jewish situation, and deeper investigation of Fridman's life and role as a defender of his fellow Jews. This study underscores the importance of these archival materials for understanding the broader historical context of Lithuanian Jews during the Great War.

Keywords: Naftali Fridman, Jew, World War I, Lithuania, Russian Empire, eviction, violence, hostage-taking.

Велика (Перша світова) війна призвела до значного погіршення становища литовських євреїв, які опинилися посеред театру воєнних дій. На захист євреїв став їхній земляк і одновірець, депутат Державної думи Нафталі Фрідман. Мета роботи — визначити інформаційний потенціал документів з архівного фонду Нафталі Фрідмана для дослідження становища литовських євреїв під час Першої світової війни через вивчення процесів і явищ, з якими вони зіткнулись у зазначений період на основі вказаних матеріалів.

Ключові слова: Нафталі Фрідман, євреї, Перша світова війна, Литва, Російська імперія, виселення, насильство, взяття заручників.

The Jews of the Russian Empire faced the outbreak of World War I under a number of restrictions and prohibitions that affected various spheres of life. They were the result of the need to resolve the «Jewish question» related to the possibility or impossibility of coexistence between Jews and non-Jews within the state. The events that befell the Jewish community of the Russian Empire during the Great War further aggravated its situation. It was especially difficult for the inhabitants of the frontline territories and lands covered by the fire of hostilities. Among them were Lithuanian Jews, who faced a series of measures and processes that were a devastating consequence of wartime and led to radical changes. Given the difficult situation of the Jews of the empire, the figure of one fellow believer was especially important to them in wartime. A member of the State Duma from the Kovno governorate Naftali Fridman was the one who, within his competence and capabilities, stood up to defend and help Jews. As a result of his activity, Fridman collected a significant array of documents that recorded diverse information about the situation of his fellow believers during the First World War, in particular — Lithuanian Jews, his countrymen.

To date, there are no studies of the information potential of the materials resulting from Naftali Fridman's activities in the study of the situation of Lithuanian Jews during the Great War. Some references to the files of the relevant archival collection are found in the work of S. Goldin (Гольдин, С. 2018), who utilized documents from the Fridman collection in particular to study the process of eviction of Lithuanian Jews and its consequences. The author focuses on the circumstances of the decision to forcibly evict Jews from the Kovno and Kurland governorates, as well as the course of the expulsions. The process of taking hostages with general details and military pogroms of Lithuanian Jews were also discovered in Goldin's work.

It should be noted that the most frequent subject of study of the mentioned ethnoreligious group during this period was the process of forced eviction. This is primarily due to the fact that this measure was applied on the largest scale to Lithuanian Jews during the First World War. A thorough study of the eviction process and the situation of the Jewish evictees was conducted by L. Stein (Stein, L., 2011). The author examines this problem, starting with the circumstances that led to the application of such a measure to Jews and ending with a brief description of the process of their return to Lithuania. A. Polonsky, giving a rather generalized characterization of the policy toward the Jews of the Russian Empire during the Great War, noted the fact of the eviction of 500–600 thousand Jews from the front line (Polonsky, A. 2015, p. 205). E. Lohr, in his fundamental article on the actions of the Russian army against Jews, thoroughly investigated the expulsions, main-

ly considering the preconditions and organization of expulsions (Lohr, E. 2001). In addition, the author examined the peculiarities of the wartime pogroms: he described a common course of such events on the example of the town of Shadovo, Kovno governorate, and used descriptions of 32 cases of pogroms of Lithuanian Jews (out of 54 in total) to make some generalization about the wave of pogroms from April through October, 1915. Exploring the anti-Jewish violence in the Russian Empire during the war, P. Zavadivker noted the fact that pogroms were carried out along the northwestern front during the Great retreat and noted the role of Cossack units in perpetrating the pogroms in Kovno and Vilna (Zavadivker, P. 2021, p. 110–111). O. Budnytski provides data on the number of refugees and evacuees from the Lithuanian governorates, comparing them with other regions, and traces how the myth of «Jewish betrayal», formed during the retreat of the Russian army in 1914–1915, later grew into a wave of pogroms during the civil war (Будницький, О. 2005, с. 98–99, 285–290). A similar idea is developed by J. Motta in his work «The Great War Against Eastern European Jewry, 1914–1920», whose title already indicates the author’s concept. Motta analysed the consequences of the war for the Jews of the empire: mobilization, deportations, pogroms, and mass displacement, paying particular attention to Lithuanian Jews (Motta, J. 2017, p. 19–33, 109–122). Thus, despite the existence of solid studies covering deportations, refugees, pogroms, and the general policy of the Russian Empire towards Jews during the Great War, a comprehensive view of the situation of Lithuanian Jews is still lacking. The informational potential of the materials in Naftali Fridman’s collection, which could be an important source for reconstructing this experience, remains particularly unexplored.

Hence, *the hypothesis* to be confirmed or refuted is that the documents from the Naftali Fridman collection allow us to specify the processes and phenomena that fell to the lot of Lithuanian Jews during the First World War, and to give them an exhaustive description. Thus, *the purpose* of this research is to study the situation of Lithuanian Jews on the basis of documents from the record group 1010.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks will be solved:

- to characterise the documents of record group 1010 Naftali Fridman (stored in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine (Kyiv) (CSHAK of Ukraine)), related to the history of Lithuanian Jews;
- to determine what processes and phenomena in their wartime life can be investigated on the basis of the documents;
- to investigate the situation of Lithuanian Jews and to determine how comprehensive a picture of the above processes and phenomena Fridman’s documents provide;
- to identify prospects for further research.

The relevance of the research topic lies in expanding the understanding of the information potential of Ukrainian archival collections for researching the history

of the Jews of the Russian Empire in general and Lithuanian Jews in particular. In addition, the study of their fate during this period is important for understanding the scale of the persecution of Jews and the social challenges that arose during the war. In turn, this helps to understand the dynamics of interaction between the government, the army, and the civilian population, as well as the escalation of anti-Semitism that gained momentum during the war. Also, in the context of the growing interest in the study of the history of the Jews of Eastern Europe, particularly Lithuania, this article will expand our understanding of the conditions of existence of this Jewish community during the war.

The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism and systematicity. They made it possible to consider the issues raised in the relevant historical context and without ideological layers. A set of methods was used, including analysis, synthesis, and induction, to study individual phenomena and generalize trends found in the documents. The typological method was used to classify the phenomena faced by Lithuanian Jews. Among the specifically historical methods, the method of source criticism should be emphasized, which allowed to assess the authenticity, authorship of documents. Given that the study is based on materials created and collected as a result of Naftali Fridman's activities, these sources inevitably contain an element of subjectivity. Therefore, this aspect should be taken into account when reviewing and evaluating the results of the study.

The main research material. «...I am addressing you as a close friend and defender of the rights of my people», these words begin one of the many letters written during World War I by Jews of the Russian Empire to Naftali Fridman. A lawyer and politician of Jewish origin, a member of the 3rd and 4th State Duma of the Russian Empire from the Kovno governorate, he actively fought against anti-Semitism, which broke out with renewed vigour during World War I, and helped deportees, refugees, hostages, and victims of looting and violence¹. As a result of Fridman's activities, a number of documents were created and collected, which formed a separate record group of the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kyiv. Record group 1010 consists of 241 cases, the documents of which were created in Russian, as well as in Yiddish and Hebrew between 1907 and 1920. There is only one known milestone in the history of the record group's formation: according to the archive's internal records, the documents were accepted for storage in March 1944. How exactly these documents came to Kyiv during that period remains a question. The period of Fridman's activity during the First World War is represented mainly by materials concerning the situation of Polish and Lithuanian Jews, subjects of the Russian monarch, as well as the Jews of the empire in general (both civilians and military). The materials of this collection are quite diverse: official documents, texts of Fridman's reports on the situation

¹ Naftalis Fridmanas. Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija, online-encyclopaedia. URL: <https://salo.li/690d722>.

of Jews, transcripts of conversations between representatives of the Jewish population of the empire and representatives of the highest authorities, descriptions of the situation of Jews in various localities and testimonies about certain events, correspondence regarding requests for assistance, etc. These documents allow us to characterize several processes and phenomena that fell to the lot of Lithuanian Jews during the First World War, namely the reaction of the Jewish community to the outbreak of war, violence and looting, eviction, expulsions, refugees, and taking hostages.

The reaction of the Jewish community to the outbreak of war

In one of his speeches at the beginning of the war, Naftali Fridman emphasized that the Jews of the empire remained loyal to their state during those difficult times. Lithuanian Jews were no exception — they demonstrated their loyalty through concrete actions¹. This refers, for example, to support behind the front lines. It consisted, first, of collecting funds to help war victims (both military and civilian) and transferring them to the Red Cross and the Tatiana Committee². Secondly, Jews participated in treating wounded soldiers. The Jewish hospital in Ponevezh was converted into a military hospital for the wounded, and in Shavli and Vilki, the wounded were often housed in Jewish homes, where the residents took care of the soldiers³. Thirdly, Lithuanian Jews provided food support to soldiers who stayed in certain settlements during 1914–1915: they fed them for free, baked bread, shared their Sabbath challah, and opened shops even on religious holidays⁴. They also provided soldiers with shoes, underwear, clothing, and cigarettes whenever possible⁵.

At that time, attitudes toward Jews were quite loyal, even sympathetic. For the vast majority of Lithuanian Jews, 1914 passed relatively peacefully, especially compared to 1915. However, defeats at the front quickly changed the mood. The authorities began to search for «traitors», and Jews were accused of espionage and sympathizing with the enemy. Spy mania spread among both the military and the civilian population (Будницький, О. 2005, с. 289). The German army's advance on Lithuania led to an increase in negative attitudes toward Jews, who were associated with internal enemies. They were seen as accomplices of the Germans, who welcomed their arrival and facilitated it in every way possible. One of the most famous cases of constructing a traitorous image, which was

¹ Центральний державний історичний архів України в м. Києві (Далі — ЦДІАК України). Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 8; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 108. Арк. 20.

² ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 4, 8.

³ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 4–5; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 161.

⁴ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 6–8, 17; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 105. Арк. 60; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 106. Арк. 78.

⁵ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 108. Арк. 90, 179; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 109. Арк. 110.

widely reported in the Russian press, is connected with Lithuanian Jews and an event that took place in the town of Kūžiai in the Kovno Governorate. Local Jews were accused of hiding German troops in their homes before Germany's attack on the town. Although the Ministry of Internal Affairs investigated the case and confirmed the innocence of the Jews, the press did not publish a retraction of the accusation¹. It was this image that determined all the actions and events that befell Lithuanian Jews during World War I.

Some of the hardships Jews faced were *violence and looting*. During the first retreat from Prussia in September 1914, there were some excesses in the Suwalki and Kovno governorates that were not widespread. In most cases, the military paid for goods, and anti-Jewish agitation in certain localities was not very successful: for example, in Rumpishki and Shaty in the Kovno province, the local Christian population tried to campaign, but there were no excesses or pogroms². Instead, from mid-April 1915, after the beginning of the German offensive, Lithuanian Jews faced a large wave of anti-Jewish violence from the retreating Russian army, which lasted until September of that year. The geography of the looting and violence correlates with the changing of the frontline. Fridman's documents show that the vast majority of such incidents occurred in May within the Kovno governorate, in particular in the Kovno and Rosieny districts, with several cases recorded in the Shavli and Telshi districts. In Vilkomir district, where many evictees and refugees were concentrated, violence erupted in July. Some incidents were also recorded in various places in the Vilna governorate in September.

Jews tried to avoid meeting and communicating with Germans during the spring offensive, as such actions were interpreted as aiding the enemy and became pretexts for Russian troops to massacre local Jews³. They sometimes even hid and did not go out without being accompanied by Christians. Some Jews who had to come into contact with the Germans in one way or another without any malice, even left the settlements as a precaution before the Russian army arrived⁴. Most often, it was the slander of Jews by representatives of the local Christian population as allegedly sympathizers and helpers of the Germans that triggered the outbreak of looting and violence. Such actions were partly the result of the influence of anti-Semitic propaganda (conducted in the press or by individuals), and partly a way of revenge and reprisals against Jews for personal reasons. It came to absurd cases: for example, in Klumpishki, representatives of the Jewish population were arrested on charges of espionage and aiding the enemy, but the Germans did not even enter the village⁵. Usually, the excesses began after Russian troops entered a settlement and first communicated with locals who denounced

¹ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 14. Арк. 20.

² ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 105. Арк. 61.

³ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 275, 276, 281, 282, 283.

⁴ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 109. Арк. 104.

⁵ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 87.

Jews. In some places, the presence of Russian troops resulted in minimal losses, but the vast majority of descriptions of the situation of Jewish communities in certain settlements contain references to events that can be characterized as full-fledged pogroms. Pogroms are defined as massive violent acts directed against a certain group of people on religious, national, or racial grounds, characterized by physical attacks, torture and murder, mutilation, destruction and looting of property, and rape. According to the American scholar E. Lohr, they can be called «military pogroms» because the military — soldiers, Cossacks, and sometimes officers — took the most active part in them. Some members of the local population also joined the looting. In Onikshty, «the streets were covered with goods like snow»¹. There were robberies of shops, houses, and individuals, destruction of Jewish property, beatings and injuries of Jews (including the elderly), and rape. There were isolated cases of murder. All violent acts were of the nature of outright mockery: in the shops, absolutely unnecessary things were taken away from the military, often sold for nothing to Christians in front of the Jewish owners; they were also physically abused, in particular, the elderly². Jews were also involved in forced labour (Kovno governorate): repairing bridges, digging trenches and other earthworks, guarding the telegraph and post office, and cleaning the streets³. Such work, according to eyewitnesses, was accompanied by bullying and difficult working conditions.

They suffered from the German troops as well, who, however, mostly confined themselves to requisitioning food, fodder, warm clothes, and linen from shops and houses⁴. I also found isolated references to the Germans' involvement of Jews in forced labour. However, there were also people who defended Jews or warned of possible danger (these included individual Russian army officers, soldiers, and even Cossacks). There were also so-called «good» or «kind» regiments that behaved calmly and did not harm Jews⁵. In some places, local authorities, most often commandants, stood up to protect the Jewish population: they issued notices of liability for slander, orders to stop violence, and so on. There are references to the protection of Jewish property by the police and the government officials. For example, a government official of Kroky even took the looted Jewish property and returned it to its owners. Individuals campaigned against anti-Semitism, and some officers stopped beatings and prevented rape. Christian neighbours stood up for slandered Jews⁶.

The Great War forced many Lithuanian Jews to leave their homes, either voluntarily or by force. With the outbreak of war, the entire territory of the Pale of

¹ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 108. Арк. 206.

² ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 111, 132.

³ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 5, 92, 97, 104, 126, 133, 298, 324.

⁴ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 111, 275, 276, 279, 281, 282.

⁵ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 106. Арк. 69.

⁶ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 133; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 109. Арк. 72.

Settlement of the Russian Empire, like other Russian-occupied territories, came under military control. The civilian authorities were forced to execute all their orders, which the military considered necessary to give in connection with the needs of wartime. One of the orders issued by the military command to protect the army from «Jewish treason» during the German offensive was the *forced eviction* of Jews from the frontline areas and the territories bordering them. In fact, we are talking about deportation, which was called «eviction» in the documents. All persons of Jewish descent were subject to eviction: children, elderly and sick Jews, wives of wounded soldiers and war veterans, women who sewed things as gifts for soldiers and treated the wounded, as well as St. George's Cross Cavaliers and wounded soldiers on leave¹. The flow of eviction orders correlated with the movement of the front line. The bulk of them were issued in early May 1915, during the period of active hostilities. The first isolated evictions took place in April in the eastward direction from Suwalki to Vilna governorates (the city of Merech), while in early May a large-scale flow of evictees, mainly from Shavli, Ponevezh, Rosieny, and Vilkomir districts, was sent to the south and southeast of Kovno governorate and to the north of Vilna governorate. At the same time, some of the evictees from the north of the Kovno governorate went to Kurland and Livonia. As of mid-May, the centres of the largest concentration of evictees were the settlements of the Vilkomir district of the Kovno governorate, as well as mainly the Vilna and Svetsiany districts of the Vilna governorate. At the end of May, by order of the commandant of the Kovno fortress, the evictees from the Kovno governorate who lived in four districts of the Vilna governorate were deported to Belarus and Ukraine. In the second half of July, evictions took place of evictees from Suwalki governorate who were living in the town of Merech, Vilna governorate, and from the town of Kovarsk, Kovno governorate. Individual evictions took place within the Vilna governorate in early September.

Usually, the command's orders to deport Jews were handed over to civilian authorities². The time limit for eviction was scanty, ranging from half an hour to two days, with an average of about a day. Accordingly, there was almost no time left for gathering and selling movable and immovable property. Jews had to either leave their property to fend for themselves or sell it for nothing. Whenever possible, evictees tried not to go far away, but to stay near their places of permanent residence with the hope of getting back at least to keep an eye on the property, take it out, and collect debts. In addition, in most cases, short-distance moves were also due to logistical issues: people often had to leave their settlements, which did not have railway stations, on foot. An alternative was to travel by wagons of Christian neighbours, which was rarely used because of the sever-

¹ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 230, 232; Спр. 14. Арк. 20; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 134–135, 137.

² ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 219, 223; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104; Арк. 160; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 106. Арк. 153.

al-fold increase in fares¹. However, even this option might not have been available: Christians might have refused to help Jews even for money, fearing punishment, or it might have been forbidden by the military or local authorities². Later, the fate of the evictees, as noted above, varied: some were lucky to stay in settlements within the predominantly Vilna governorate, while others were deported by rail to the southern governorates (primarily Katerynoslav, Poltava, Tavria), as well as Vitebsk and Minsk.

The eviction process was extremely difficult. There were, however, people who tried to make it easier: much depended on the local civilian authorities, who carried out the orders of the military. For example, Vilna governor Verevkin did everything in his power to ease the fate of the evictees, while Kovno governor Gryazev, on the contrary, prevented the evictees from removing their property, left their telegraphic petitions with paid answers without any response and insisted that they sell their property to Christians³. Some responsible persons kept order and regulated the prices for transportation services, preventing speculation, and also helped the evictees along the way. In Bobty, the bailiff allowed the evictees from Veliona to spend the night and did not allow any violence. The governor of Vileika, Vilna governorate, allowed Jews to bake and deliver bread to the railroad stations for the deportees, making sure that it was not for Germans⁴.

It is difficult to say, however, whether this was the result of a personal good attitude toward Jews or simply the conscientious performance of their duties. Civilians sometimes brought food to the evictees on the way. More often, however, the process of eviction was accompanied by cruel treatment of Jews. Representatives of the local authorities obstructed the departure. During the walk, oncoming soldiers and Cossacks beat and robbed the evictees; soldiers and police did not allow them to stop in settlements encountered along the way. During the deportation by rail, people were placed in freight cars in such a way that many did not even have a place to sit. They were forbidden to disembark along the way, kept in the cars for long periods of time, prevented from receiving or buying food, as well as travel of accompanying persons, including doctors⁵. The Jews who had arrived in Katerynoslav and were waiting in the wagons for the next journey were so exhausted that they asked to be shot⁶. Undoubtedly, this situation was caused by the treatment of evictees as criminals (for example, the attitude of the Oshmyany city official who forbade them to provide assistance to evictees)⁷. However, it seems that representatives of higher authorities tried to influ-

¹ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 202.

² ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 202.

³ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 14. Арк. 36.

⁴ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 170.

⁵ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 220–222; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 106. Арк. 84.

⁶ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 109. Арк. 20.

⁷ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 108. Арк. 29.

ence this: for example, the governor of Vilna reported receiving a telegram from a friend of the Minister of Internal Affairs Junkowski, which stated that the evictees should be treated as free people, not as administratively expelled¹. The consequences of such conditions were frequent deaths of the elderly and sick². Also, family members often got lost in the chaos of the evictions. It is also worth mentioning the cases when evictees were informed that they were allowed to return home, but in reality, people were banned from entering settlements and sent back. In the new places, the situation of the deportees was extremely difficult. The usual problems were the lack of space to accommodate the newly arrived Jews, the need to provide them with food, medical care, and work. In addition, the local authorities created problems. The Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Victims (ЕКОРО) and its local branches provided all possible assistance: they provided funds for organizing local assistance, resettled and tried to improve living conditions, provided medical care and food, made financial aid payments, and tried to find employment for the evictees. Representatives of the Katerynoslav committee fed and provided psychological assistance to the evictees who continued on and remained in the freight cars³.

Consequences of evictions were devastating. According to Fridman, as of May 9, 1915, nearly 150,000 Jews, almost half of the Kovno governorate's population alone, were expelled⁴. Many of these people ended up in Ukrainian provinces, including Poltava and Katerynoslav. The created image of the expellees as spies and internal enemies of the empire led to the growth of anti-Semitic sentiment among the local population, which influenced the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in 1918–1921⁵. In most cases, the property of the evictees was either sold for next to nothing, or left to fend for themselves, becoming the subject of looting and use by soldiers, and Christian neighbours. Almost every description of the expulsion of Jews from a particular settlement contains a mention of a similar fate for the property left behind. In a number of large towns in the Kovno governorate from which Jews were evicted, their property was protected. However, this was not a guarantee of preventing theft. In some settlements, the civilian authorities posted notices that cases of looting of property left behind by Jews would be referred to a military field court (Janowo, Vilkomir, Rumpishki, etc.)⁶. In most cases, however, the authorities remained a passive observer of the process of Christian occupation of Jewish homes and other real estate and theft, and in some places even facilitated or participated in the looting⁷. Fridman's materials document cases of arson or destruction of Jewish houses and shops by Chris-

¹ ЦДАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 156.

² ЦДАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 221–222.

³ ЦДАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 109. Арк. 21.

⁴ ЦДАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 14. Арк. 15.

⁵ ЦДАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 109. Арк. 49.

⁶ ЦДАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 219, 223.

⁷ ЦДАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 16. Арк. 11.

tians, which was caused by the permanent or temporary return of some members of the Jewish population to their places of residence and the fear of their neighbours for the consequences of their criminal actions¹. The eviction turned wealthy people into poor people who lost their property and income and who were forced to stand in line for hours for a piece of bread². Thanks to an agreement between Fridman and the governor of Kovno Nikolai Gryazev, some Jews received a limited number of passes and the opportunity to temporarily return home to dispose of their property and receive some means of subsistence³. Those who received a pass were obliged to take out not only their own property but also that of their neighbours. However, the passes were not enough to fully resolve the necessary cases, and it was difficult for an industrialist to deal with the affairs of a neighbouring pharmacist. Thus, as a result of the robbery and seizure of property, many Jews lost, if not all of their wealth, then a significant part of it. The evicted Jewish industrialists and traders corresponded with Fridman, inquiring about the possibility of receiving compensation for property lost as a result of the war. However, it is known that as of October-November 1915 this was impossible — they were only advised to stock up on proof-of-return documents, as well as an inventory of the property⁴. After the evictions of Jews, prices for goods rose, shortages began, trade almost ceased in some places. For example, in Kovno, almost all shops on the main streets were closed, goods became more expensive, and shortages began⁵. The Kovno fortress was left without the services of Jewish timber workers in the face of the German occupation, some other government contracts also remained unfulfilled⁶.

Speaking of massive population movements, it is also necessary to mention *refugees*. The fighting that took place near or directly on Lithuanian lands inevitably caused the Jewish population to flee from many settlements. The refugee movement of Lithuanian Jews, as well as Christians, was recorded during the year from September 1914 to September 1915. The flow of refugees, according to Fridman's materials, is possible to characterize rather as chaotic. Refugees filled many governorates: Kovno and Vilna, as well as Mohylev, Poltava, and others. There were several reasons why people left their homes. Firstly, violence, looting, and destruction in their own or neighbouring settlements. In the second case, Jews could leave their homes preventively. Secondly, the warnings from the aforementioned military («good» or «kind» regiments) about potential danger made people go. The last reason is the hostilities taking place near or directly in the settlement. Jews learned about the outrages that took place in nearby set-

¹ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 123; ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 108. Арк. 187.

² ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 158.

³ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 3. Арк. 228.

⁴ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 16. Арк. 28, 37, 45.

⁵ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 189.

⁶ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 104. Арк. 194–196.

tlements and, in order to avoid a similar fate, gathered themselves and left their place of residence. It should be noted that a refugee from Telsha, attorney-at-law T. Bloch, appealed to the Jewish refugee movement caused by the advance of enemy troops as proof of loyalty to the Russian Empire during a conversation with a friend of the Minister of the Interior of the Russian Empire. They say that if Jews really sympathized with the Germans, no one would leave their homes and go into the unknown.

Some *expulsions* of Jews also took place. Unlike forced evictions, expulsions were localized, individual actions based on denunciations, personal conflicts, or minor offenses. Expulsions were punitive, not preventive, as in the case of deportations.

According to available documents, people were expelled on the basis of denunciations by locals who were settling scores with Jews in this way. For example, in one place in Kovno governorate peasants cut down some trees in a Jewish cemetery. The Jews initiated a logging case. The peasants then reported that they were threatened to be killed when the Germans came, and this was enough to expel nine Jews from Kovno governorate¹. Buying an old overcoat from a soldier and selling cigarettes after 11 p.m. were also reasons for expulsion. Such persons were deported, in particular, to the Mogilev and Poltava provinces. It should also be noted that it seems that local authorities and the population identified the evictees and hostages with them, extrapolating from the former the attitude towards those who were expelled.

In addition to all of the above-mentioned, *hostage-taking* was one of the measures approved by the military command to prevent «Jewish treason». The deportations caused many difficulties, particularly in the areas of military and civilian logistics, as well as in supplying the army. Because of this, the commander-in-chief of the Northwestern Front, General Mikhail Alekseev, ordered an end to the mass deportations of Jews from settlements that were not in the combat zone. Those who had already been evicted were allowed to return, but only on condition that the community provide hostages from among the rabbis and wealthy and respected Jews who were responsible for the behaviour of the entire Jewish community. At the end of May 1915, the Supreme Commander confirmed this permission, emphasizing that return was possible only if hostages were provided. However, most Jews refused to return under such humiliating conditions. Thus, the residents of the town of Yanovo in the Kovno Governorate agreed to be evicted at the end of April 1915, refusing to hand over 10 of their co-religionists as hostages. A similar situation arose in the towns of the Vilna Governorate located near the Kovno Fortress. In a number of settlements, some of the designated hostages signed a document on the terms of their status, while others refused, unwilling to acknowledge the slander against the Jews. Despite this, on May 29, the governor announced that all of them were officially consid-

¹ ЦДІАК України. Ф. 1010. Оп. 1. Спр. 14. Арк. 16, 18.

ered hostages. As a result, 30 people were sent to prison in Trakai, where they were held at the expense of the Jewish community. Another 14 hostages were held in Vilna. It was not until June 22 that the governor of Vilna announced their release. They were allowed to stay at home, but under police supervision and with the obligation to monitor the behaviour of their co-religionists, report any actions that could harm the Russian army, and evacuate with the police in case of an enemy attack (Ірчак, І. 2024, с. 43–44).

To sum up, the collection of Naftali Fridman's documents stored in record group 1010 of the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kyiv contains a number of materials concerning the situation of Lithuanian Jews during the Great War. Both official documents and transcripts of conversations, as well as Fridman's notes, correspondence, and other materials allow us to shed light on the situation of Lithuanian Jews caught in the epicentre of hostilities in the Eastern European theatre of the First World War. It is possible to identify and partially reconstruct the main processes and phenomena that fell to the lot of Lithuanian Jews at that time on their basis. These are the reaction of the Lithuanian Jews to the outbreak of war, violence and looting, eviction, expulsions, refugees and taking hostages.

Fridman's materials allow us to conduct a detailed study of the process of forced eviction and the practice of taking hostages. Thus, the first process was studied from the issuance of the eviction orders to the situation of the evicted Jews in the «internal» governorates of the empire. It was also possible to determine the geography of the displaced Lithuanian Jews' movements between April and September 1915. The study details the process of taking hostages as well, particularly the Jewish response to such a measure. The reaction to the outbreak of war and the specific actions of Lithuanian Jews related to this news were also characterized. Jews were raising funds, treated wounded soldiers and assisted the army in its daily needs. It should be noted that this data is lacking in existing studies. Instead, the least information in the Fridman collection is about the refugees and expulsions. The mentioned documents also allow us to evaluate the role of Fridman in the life of Lithuanian Jews, who, to the best of his ability, tried to alleviate the situation of those who fell victim to circumstances. Fridman's legacy as a defender of his people provides valuable insights into this dark historical period and underscores the importance of vigilance against prejudice and injustice.

The study of the information potential of Fridman's documents opens the way for further comprehensive research on the situation of Lithuanian Jews during the First World War. For example, studying the spread of anti-Semitic sentiments in the Russian Empire during the war, which may in turn provide insight into how the war exacerbated ethnic and religious conflicts. It is also important to analyse the economic situation of the Jewish community in the Lithuanian lands and to study how the conditions of the war affected the structure of Jewish families and communities. Another prospect for further research is to compare information

from the collection's documents with data from the rest of the corpus of sources that covered the situation of Lithuanian Jews.

The activities of Naftali Fridman as a defender of the Jewish population of the Russian Empire and his personality undoubtedly deserve a more thorough and large-scale study as well.

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