

From the Testimony of Abraham Sutzkewer on the Jews' Attempt to Flee Vilna before the Advancing German Forces – June 1941

Abraham Sutzkewer is a Jewish poet from Vilna. At the time of the invasion, June 1941, Sutzkewer was, as many Jews in Vilna, Capital of Lithuania, trapped by the German army. Many Jews in Vilna attempted to flee from the German Army approaching the city to the inner parts of the U.S.S.R.

“People carrying bundles streamed to the outskirts of the city ... Marching in the direction of Minsk ... the congestion on the roads grew from minute to minute. Young, old, streamed eastwards - fleeing from the plague, the plague that pursued and caught up ... German airplanes swepted like swarms of locusts. Our group scattered on the run ... At night, we stayed in the forest. Red Army soldiers warned us of German parachutists dressed in Soviet army uniforms ...The Germans caught up with us near Oshmyany ...We turned back to the road we had fled on - and were once more back in the city.”

Source: Arad, Yitzhak, *Ghetto in Flames*, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and B'nai Brith, 1980, p. 32.