

Kamanitz, Baranovitz, Bialystok, arrived largely in their entirety. Other yeshivas that were partially reestablished there were Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, Tomchei Tmimim of Lubovitz, Toras Chessed of Baranovitz, Mezritsh, Austrah, Slonim and Lutsk. Established in more than 30 shuls in Vilna, the more than 2,500 Yeshiva talmidim called forth a 'Kol-Torah' in the Yerushalaim of Lithuania. Not long afterward, most of the yeshivoth were moved to numerous small communities in Lithuania. Throughout this period, Rav Chaim Ozer was almost solely responsible for both the physical and spiritual maintenance of the extraordinary assemblage of Torah elite.

The terrible period 1939-40 made its greatest demand on the Gadlus of Rav Chaim Ozer in its glory. The horrible destruction of his people, the unspeakable terrors everywhere committed, deep suffering to his tender heart. Adding greatly to his - and all his people's - sorrow were the death of two of the greatest Gedolei Torah of the age - Rav Shimon Shkop z.t.l. of Grodno and Rav Boruch Ber Leibovitz z.t.l. of Kammenitz.

Despite his terrible personal suffering and that of his people, Rav Chaim Ozer never permitted himself a sad expression in the face of any visitor. Many are the people today who can testify to the wondrous uplifting and relief which they felt after having passed even a short time in his presence.

On the 17th of July, 1940, the Russians swept over the borders of Lithuania, incorporating it in the Soviet sphere. Jewish possessions were widely confiscated. Shuls and communal organizations were closed down. The Shechita tax was eliminated, dealing a heavy blow to kashrus. Children were required by law to attend the Communist schools. The worries of the desparate situation wore away at Rav Chaim Ozer's already weak constitution.