

Lukow County

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Lukow County is one of the administrative areas researched within the frame of the “Night Without End” project. Located 100 km east of Warsaw, in the Polesie region, in 1942 it had become an important railway hub, a central point for convoys of Jews from Miedzyrzec, Radzyn, Parczew deported towards Treblinka. As for the Jews of Lukow, they were deported on October 5, 1942, after the liquidation of the ghetto in several waves. The same fate met the Jews from the neighboring locations as well as some brought earlier into this area, namely from Slovakia. The German military presence was especially visible in this area, and it was the Germans who were responsible for practically all Jewish deaths in the studied region – both during the liquidation actions and later, during the ensuing period of Judenjagd (Hunt for the Jews). If we discount Jews who have earlier fled into the Soviet Union, those who survived in the area amounted to no more than 1%. My paper will focus on this small number of Jews who, between 1942 and 1944, fled the death transports and went into hiding in the forests, or sought shelter among the peasants. We are talking here about some 1,000 people (to be precise 986 out of 15,788 living in the area prior to deportations). What were the ways in which the Jews were able to flee? What were their strategies of survival? Where did they look for help? These questions shed light on the attitudes and the presence of the Polish population, its role and its dilemmas. For the Jews, the attitudes of gentiles failed to create a hospitable climate. This line of research allows us to look at the Jewish-Polish relations in this region. It was on the basis of the available sources which inform us about the Jews – both survivors and those who perished - that we can evaluate the reasons which determined one’s chances of survival.