

## AMNESTY

In a combined effort between Mr. Churchill and General Sikorski they succeeded to persuade Stalin to release Polish soldiers being imprisoned in labour camps in Russia. The Polish-Russian Military Agreement was signed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 1941. In this agreement, a Polish army was to be formed and trained in the Soviet Union, and eventually to take active part with the Allied Forces in the fight against Germany.

Apparently, only about 70% of the prisoners were mustered into the army. The rest could not be accounted for. In the vast wilderness, Russia had some secret labour camps at undisclosed locations and out of reach for the Polish recruiting teams. For those camps the amnesty was denied.

The Polish Government in Exile appointed General Anders Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army. His headquarters (HQ) were located in Bazuluk and later moved to Yungi-Yul.

Anders had inherited an army in a deplorable state. His soldiers were in very weak physical condition, undernourished, and had to train with inadequate supply of weapons. For instance, for the rifle drill they were given wooden replicas to practice with. The situation changed when General Anders managed to convince governments in London and Moscow that his soldiers would be fit and ready to fight much quicker if they were given a chance to recuperate and trained in a warmer country. With Stalin's permission, Polish troops were transferred to the Middle East (Persia – Iraq – Palestine – Egypt) and finally to Italy.

With the departure of the Polish army from Russia, General Anders after having many difficulties with the Russian authorities also succeeded to evacuate thousand of families. Thanks to his foresight, these civilian people, including myself, gained their freedom again.