

General V. Anders' Polish Army in Central Asia

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Abstract: The article is concerned with the history of General V. Anders' Polish Army stay in Central Asia in 1942. During the Second World War in the history of soviet-polish relations the issues that are ambiguously assessed by contemporary research people there are events of forming and fighting employment of the Polish Army commanded by Lieutenant General Vladislav Anders. As is generally known a military formation with a number of infantry divisions, military school, reserve regiment, staff and special military units were formed from among Polish citizens in 1942 in the USSR. The history of the Polish army was disclosed in a quite number of researches carried out by Soviet writers. In 1990 the documents of the talks between I.V. Stalin and the prime-minister of Polish government in London V. Sikorskiy, an ambassador in the USSR S. Kot and General V. Anders were published in the journal "Mejdunarodnaya zhizn" (International life) under the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Aigul Smanova, a Kazakhstan researcher, who carried out studies of documents in Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (in the city of Podolsk, Moscow region) and presented the article in the Kazakh language. [Anvar Ismailov, Kanat Bazarbayev, Zabirash Adilbekova & Raikhan Sadykova. **General V. Anders' Polish Army in Central Asia.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(1):145-147]. (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 22

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1 Introduction

Starting from the second half of the XIX century a Polish nation was formed in Turkestan krai and then formed its Diaspora and this process was connected with the Russian Empire's colonial policy and Central Asian wars which the results of quite a few number of nations movement, dwelling in European part of the Empire, into the vast territories of Turkestan. Basically they settled down in cities and military settlements. The Polish Diaspora was formed in the territory of Turkestan general-governorship, which was established in 1867, owing to those who joined the army, who served in railroad battalions (in the construction of Trans-Caspian and Orenburg-Tashkent main lines), exiles and other settlers.

In accordance with the First national census figures taken in the Russian Empire in 1897 Turkestan krai numbered eleven thousand Catholics, although nationality column was not given in a census questionnaire, however, the paragraphs for native language and religion were given. Majority of them were Poles [2,37]. By the establishment of the Soviet power having nine million native-born population in toto and over five thousand Europeans in the krai the number of Poles was approximately nine thousand people [2,15].

The second wave of Poles settlement in Turkestan krai was associated with the World War I (1914-1918). Starting from 1914 Austro-Hungarian and Germanic Army prisoners were sent to Central Asia and the strength of prisoners of war reached 148,000 in number. Because of economic

circumstances worsening in the krai starting from July 1915 prisoners of war and as from the month of April 1916 refugees were taken off from the European part of the Empire. Before 1917 the population of Poles was fifteen thousand people (by other sources including Hebrews and Lithuanians). In Syr Darya region (it included the territories of Kazakhstan's three regions i.e. Zhambyl, Kzylorda and South Kazakhstan) there were 3173 Poles and two thousand of them were in Tashkent [3, 90].

2. Materials and Methods.

The third wave of resettling Poles to Central Asia was connected with a tragic page of Poland's history at the end of 30th and the beginning of 40th years of the XX century [4, 27]. A significant number of Polish population from among prisoners of war, refugees, settlers and those deported from the West Ukraine and West Belorussia have been populated the territories of former Soviet state. According to information by Valentina Sergejevna Parsadanova, an outstanding historian-scientist on the Polish government, when including these territories into the USSR 312 000 families or over one million 173 thousand people have been evacuated and it is about 10 percent of the population of the West Ukraine and West Belorussia.

In September 1939 in the war of Germany in Poland, according to incomplete data, 65 thousand Polish soldiers and officers were killed, 140 thousand men were injured and over 400 thousand men were taken prisoners. The German forces lost 16,3 thousand killed, 27,6 thousand injured [5, 24]. Poland fell the first victim to the Third Reich in the way of

conquering European countries and from this the World War II levied.

According to the data for August 1941 in the USSR the number of Poles was 389382, 243106 of them were special settlers, 120962 were in prisons, camps and convict prisons and prisoners of war were 25314 [6,40]. In October 1941 the resettlement of Poles were launched in Central Asia. 35 thousand people have been housed in Uzbekistan. From 265501 Poles in Central Asia 56 thousand people have left in the South Kazakhstan.

In 30 July, 1941 diplomatic relations were accepted in London between the USSR and Poland. The agreement of forming the Polish Army in the USSR territory from among Poles has been reached. It was resolved that the Army would operate together with the USSR forces and allied powers against the Third Reich and as the war ends it will come back to Poland. The Polish Army was subordinate to the Soviet Red Army regarding the operations and as for manpower organization and recruitment issues to the Polish command. It was set that only land divisions will be formed in the USSR. As the Army puts troops on the alert it will levy war on German forces. To command the Polish Army was commissioned to General V. Anders who was the commander of Novogradskiy cavalry brigade in the first part of the war. On 30 October he was captured but was not taken to the prisoner-of-war camp and was arrested in a hospital being wounded. He was kept in Lvov and then Moscow prisons [7,124]. When defeating the Polish armed forces by tank forces under the command of Guderian only General V. Anders' cavalry brigade survived.

On 2 December 1941 a Polish prime-minister in London Vladislav Sikorskiy came to Moscow with an official visit. His meeting with I.V. Stalin was held on 3 December in the presence of V.M. Molotov, people's commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and General V. Anders. The meeting lasted two hours and thirty minutes in Molotov's office [8,125].

The Declaration of friendship and mutual assistance was passed giving rise to new relationship between the USSR and the Republic of Poland. It was stated in the Declaration that "Nazi imperialism is the bitterest enemy of mankind and no compromise can be reached with it: both countries jointly with other allies will fight a war to a decisive victory and annihilation of German aggressors, provide military aid to each other during the war and the troops of the Republic of Poland located in the USSR territory will wage war against German aggressors in close ranks with the Soviet forces" [9, 257].

25115 prisoners of war including 5 colonels, 18 lieutenant colonels, 39 majors, 134 captains, 12 captains of cavalry, 185 lieutenants, 487 second

lieutenants, 80 warrant officers, 2 gendarme and 42 police officers were sent to Buzuluk settlement (former Chkalovskaya, now Orenburg region, Russia), Tatishevo and Totskoe (Saratov region, Russia) for the formation of V. Anders' Army [10,125].

Reinforcement was taken from Central Asia, particularly from South Kazakhstan region to replenish V.Anders' Army. By the decision of the South Kazakhstan region management dated 26 November, 1941 17 thousand settlers of Polish nationality were received in six districts (Kyzyl-Kum, Suzak, Shaulder, Shayanov, Frunze and Karatassom). An authorized People's commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR under Kaz SSR rule G. Smirnov informed chairman of board of People's commissar for KazSSR N. Ondasynov (cipher telegram dated 28 January, 1942) that an interim representative office of Poland embassy was set up in Alma-Ata city and it is allowed to have an authorized delegate of the embassy from among Polish citizens released. Ventsek Kazimir was appointed as a representative in Kazakhstan. 103757 Polish citizens were disposed in the regions of Kaz SSR in all including those working in the construction of railway Akmolinsk-Kartaly [11, 140-141].

In the territory of soviet republics in Central Asia under the order of Central Asian command Post (CACP) dated of 1 February, 1942 Poles aged 19 to 45 were subjected to be conscripted to the ranks of the Polish army. 6457 men of Polish nationality and from among 245 officers, 1713 non-commissioned officers and 4499 private soldiers were inducted into the armed forces across Kazakhstan. 8569 men were conscripted into the military service including 2032 Jewish, 60 Ukrainians and 18 Belarussians. 5986 men were sent to the Polish Army and 5836 of them were Poles. 215 officers and 1511 non-commissioned officers were among them [12, 153-154]. The conscription was held in 10 regions of KazSSR except 4 regions (Akt'yubinsk, West Kazakhstan, Guryev and Pavlodar).

The formation of the Polish Army commanded by V. Anders came to an end in March 1942. The overall strength of the army reached 73,000 men not including 30,000 members of families that have been fed at army supply expense. After the talks between I.V. Stalin and V. Anders held on March 18, 1942 it was decided to cut down the number of the Army to 44,000 men, withdraw the rest of them to Iran where it was possible to receive rations and other supplies from anti-Hitlerite coalition allies [13, 300].

The redeployment of the Polish Army to Middle East was also put forward by W. Churchill at the meeting with V.M. Molotov in London (In May, 1942). In the British Prime minister's letter to Stalin dated On July, 1942 it was written "if three Polish

divisions, you kindly offered, would join with their compatriots in Palestine where we will be able to arm them fully. Poles will wish to send together with the troops a good few number of their women and children who live owing to the Polish soldiers' rations" [14, 67]. The Soviet Government agreed to withdraw Polish troops to Iran.

Since August 1942 the Army under the command of Anders numbering 70,000 including 20-25,000 members of military personnel's families had been withdrawn from the USSR territory. About 114,000 men or 75491 servicemen and 37756 members of their families had moved out of the territory since the commencement of two evacuations.

3. Conclusion

A part of men and officers who were against the resolution to withdraw to Iran left in the USSR headed by colonel (later general) Z. Berling and in 1943 entered into the Polish division under the command of Tadeush Kostyushko. The division was formed by the Polish patriots Union situated in the USSR. In October, 1943 the first Polish Army commanded by T. Kostyushko launched the fighting jointly with the Red Army forces and fought to the end of the war with the Third Reich.

The Army commanded by Vladislav Anders had been withdrawn from the USSR through Uzbekistan, South Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The Army headquarters was located Yangi-Yul settlement close to the city of Tashkent (chief of staff Major General Shishko-Bogush). The number of troops temporarily deployed in Central Asian command and at the centers of population: Shokpak (South Kazakhstan region), Otar and Lugovoi (Zhambyl region), Karabalty (Kirghizia), at the station of Vrevsk (the name has been taken after a governor-general of Turkestan krai in 1889-1898 baron A.B. Vrevsk – author's annotation) reached 45,000. The Polish Division of V. Anders' Army numbering 11500 men were in Zhuvalinsk district (Shokpak settlement). Accommodation, 100 hectares of land and construction materials from local resources had been provided for military manpower. At the Otar and Lugovaya stations in Turkestan-Siberian railroad school premises No.29 and 33 and a kolkhoz club in Merken district have been given to Polish divisions [15, 261].

The withdrawal itinerary of the Polish Army units and formations was through Ashgabat to the city Meshed, Iran. The withdrawal of Polish troops from Central Asia ended late 1942. According to archive data about 105,000 men have been withdrawn.

When the war was over in accordance with the Soviet-Polish agreement dated 6 July, 1945 all Polish citizens were allowed to move to Poland. The circular order of moving had been distributed (signed by a vice-chairman of the USSR government A.N. Kosygin) to union republics and regions [16, 85]. Those who wish to move to Poland from the USSR over the period July to October, 1946 were 1 420 840 men [17, 65]. Later on, the relations between the USSR and Polish People's Republic were gradually normalized.

The formation and withdrawal of the USSR Army commanded by Anders were finished during 1942.

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