



WALENTYNA CYRAN

Section leader Walentyna Cyran, born in Grodno in 1899, wife of the head of the computation office of the District Court in Grodno.

In June 1941, having received a number of letters and cables from my elderly aunt in Moscow (who had found me after many years through an address office), I made efforts to obtain a pass to Moscow in order to visit my aunt. My aunt, together with my parents and siblings, hadn't returned to our country after the evacuation from Grodno in 1914. Since I didn't know any details about the fate of my near and dear, I decided to take this unique opportunity to learn what had befallen my family, believing all the time that I would manage to return to our country in time. Having been granted a ten-day pass, I left Grodno on 13 June and on 15 June I arrived in Moscow. I learned that my parents had died during an epidemic of typhoid fever and cholera, and that my brothers had been arrested for counter-revolutionary activities and hadn't been heard from since. I learned all this, but on 22 June it was already impossible to go back to Poland.

I had to stay in Moscow, with no right of residence, no possibility of return, no right to buy a piece of bread or take any job; I kept changing places of residence and hiding wherever and whenever I could (during night searches I was often concealed in wardrobes or chests).

Due to the great number of spies, I could hardly leave the flat. Identity papers were checked everywhere and all the time. A summary court was established to try cases of hiding or concealing accused or unregistered persons. When I learned that a Polish embassy operated in Moscow, getting there became my sole purpose.

With the help of some good people – my aunt's friends – I got to know a priest from the only Catholic church in Moscow, known as the French church. The priest took my fate into his



hands. After many difficulties and waiting for the right moment, I finally got to the Polish embassy with the help of the above-mentioned priest. It was during General Sikorski's stay in Moscow, in December 1941.

On 6 December General Szyszko-Bohusz himself wrote me a referral to the Polish army in Buzuluk. There I handed the referral to the WAS [Women's Auxiliary Service] inspector, Mrs. Piechocka. Having appeared before the draft board, I joined the WAS.