Juliana Ernestine von Mickwitz was born in 1889 to a Russian noble family in Finland.

Russian nobility in that time spoke French as well as their native language. Juliana was tutored also in German and English.

Before WWI, Juliana worked as a personal secretary to the owner of a petroleum company in Baku. When the owner died, Juliana worked with his widow, whom she called "Aunt Eugenia."

In the turmoil after WWI, the communists came to power in Russia, and began destroying the nobility.

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