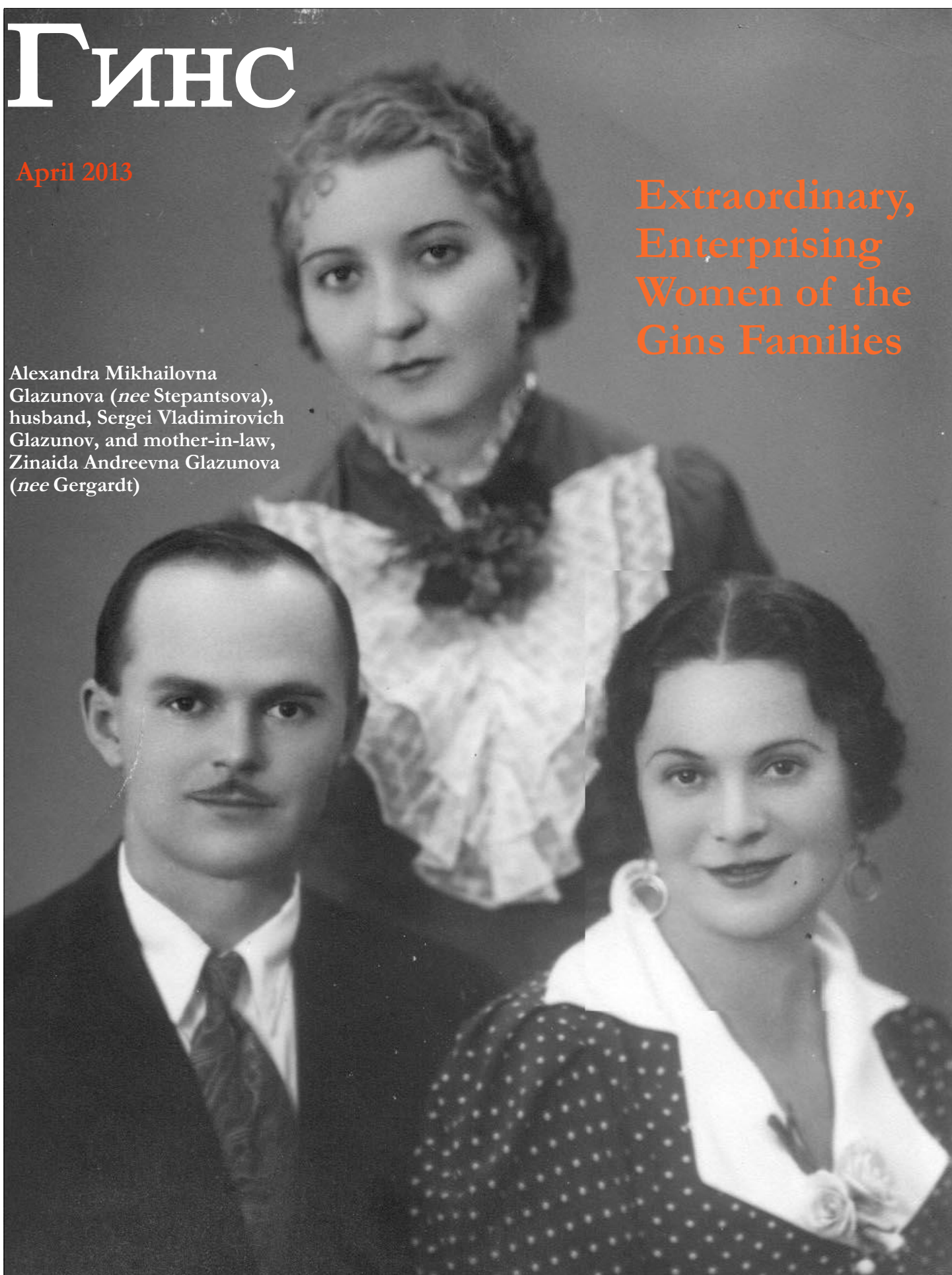


ГИНС

April 2013

Extraordinary, Enterprising Women of the Gins Families

Alexandra Mikhailovna
Glazunova (*nee* Stepantsova),
husband, Sergei Vladimirovich
Glazunov, and mother-in-law,
Zinaida Andreevna Glazunova
(*nee* Gergardt)





ГИНС

Gins/Guins
FamilyHistory

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Researchers

Stas Bookalo

Boris Drabjuk Ph.D.

Eduard Gins

Susan Morris

Vicky Mlyniec

Sara Guins

Katherine Guins

Kathy Guins

Gen Guins

Juliana Marin

Natalia Simu

Alexandra Glazunov

Margarita Glazunov

Valerie Warden

EDUARD GINS/ЭДУАРД ГИНС

GUEST EDITOR

SUSAN L. MORRIS

GINS RESEARCH COORDINATOR &
PUBLICATIONS EDITOR

ALEXANDRA MORRIS

GRAPHIC DESIGN ASSISTANCE &
TECHNICAL SUPPORT

On the Cover: Standing - Alexandra Glazunova;
seated - Sergei Glazunov and Zina Glazunova.
PHOTO COURTESY ALEXANDRA GLAZUNOVA COLLECTION.

155 Rincon Street
Ventura, California 93001
(805) 746-6432 cell

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VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1

Breaking News

Happy Birthday, Alexandra! We take this opportunity to celebrate the upcoming 99th birthday of the most senior member of the Gins and related families. She was born in Harbin on 27 Apr 1914. Alexandra's life is one of great personal accomplishment and extraordinary community service. She not only earned two PhDs -- one in psychology and the other in theology -- she also recognized the need for special services to aid those in her community and worked tirelessly to achieve her goals.

Alexandra established the first hospital-based diabetes clinic in the Bay Area and founded the Russian American Community Service Center in San Francisco. The Russian American Community Service Center, created in 1977, which Alexandra managed for many years, is still in operation after more than three decades. The Center offers elder care services for Russian-speakers by providing high-quality, low-cost meals, in-home meal delivery for those who are homebound, and additional services.



Above: Alexandra and Sergei Glazunov. PHOTO COURTESY MARK STEPHANS.

It's inspiring to have such intelligent, dedicated, talented, and resourceful women as our relatives. They remind us that we have the ability to create positive change in our world.



Above, grandson Serge Jr., Margarita, and Serge Glazunov with Alexandra, San Francisco, 2011. PHOTO: V. MLYNIEC.

ALEXANDRA GLAZUNOVA (NEE STEPANTSOVA) RECEIVES TREASURED FAMILY PHOTOS FROM GREAT-NEPHEW, MARK STEPHANS

Family history research provides ample rewards, and one of the most satisfying is bringing relatives unknown to each other into contact. That happened a couple of years ago when I managed to locate a great nephew of Alexandra's -- Mark Stephans (b. 1956 Portland, OR) -- through reviewing records of their shared family history on Ancestry.com. Mark is the grandson of Alexandra's brother, Victor, and lives in Tennessee. His wife, Laura, posted a Stephans (Stepantsov) family tree and I noticed that it lacked many details relating to Victor's Russian background. So, I sent Laura a note to fill her in on what I had learned from discussions with Alexandra, her niece, Elaine Leonhardt, and nephew, Nick Berkoff. Laura shared the information with Mark, who began corresponding with me.

Keen to learn all about his Russian heritage, Mark was delighted with the new details and particularly happy with the thought that he had a living relative whom he had never met. I informed Alexandra of Mark's presence and showed her a revised family tree with all four of her brother Victor's grandchildren from the marriage of his only son, Victor.

And, by a slightly strange twist of fate, Mark was able to share photographs of Alexandra and her family in China with her. They came to him from his grandmother's brother (who was not related to the Stepantsovs). When Mark's great uncle passed away, Mark inherited photographs that belonged to his grandfather, by way of Victor's first wife, Esther. Esther's brother had been in the military as a young man, was very lonely and wanted family photos, so Esther sent Stepantsov pictures to him. Decades later, these images came to Mark with his great-uncle's passing.

Mark called Alexandra to tell her about the photos, since he knew they showed images of his grandfather's family, and possibly of Alexandra, herself. She was thrilled to hear from Mark and offered to help identify the people in the photographs. Mark sent the image files to me, I made prints and shared them with Alexandra last July. Her first words when she saw these poignant pictures from Harbin in the 1930s were, "Can you believe it...?"



Above: Alexandra Stepantsova in Harbin, 1934. Alexandra married Sergei Glazunov in 1937, moved to the U.S. and The Netherlands.. PHOTO COURTESY MARK STEPHANS.



Brother, Alexander, and Alexandra, with their mother, Matrona, and father, Mikhail, outside the family home in Harbin, 1934. PHOTO COURTESY MARK STEPHANS.

Alexandra recalled that some of the photos, including those on this page, were taken in Harbin in 1934 when she and her brother, Alexander, who flew in from the U.S., took their ailing father, Mikhail, to see medical specialists at the Rockefeller Center in Peking. Mikhail, who had been seriously ill, was diagnosed with esophageal cancer and he passed away in 1936.

There were happier times recorded in the photos, too, of carefree summer days, Victor with tennis racket in hand. But one of my favorites is on the first page of this issue -- the stylish young couple Alexandra and Sergei Glazunov. They appear calm, confident, poised to take on the world. And they did...



Vera Bekkar (*nee* Gins) with passionate dance partner, 1930s. PHOTO: VERA G. BEKKAR.



Lidija and Evgenija Gins, abt. 1920s. PHOTO: NALECZ-GEMBICKI COLLECTION

Gins Sisters Find Excitement in the Entertainment Industry

Photos shared by our Polish cousins have given us a new view of Gins sisters Evgenija and Lidija Vladimirovna, who found excitement, glamour, and employment in the Entertainment Industry. We've seen the image of the two in full costume as exotic dancers in Paris in the 1920s, but the lovely picture of them, above right, from Anna Gembitskaja's (*nee* Gins) Polish photo album, adds another dimension. Evgenija, b. 1900, and Lidija, b. 1903 (both in Chisinau, now in Moldova), were as image-conscious during the daytime as they were at night. The new photo appears to be of the two in expensive, tiered, white or light-colored summer dresses. Their *au courant* outfits were meant to support the image of their onstage personas as glamorous *femme fatales*.

And not to be outdone by her younger sisters, Vera Vladimirovna Gins, b. 1895, also employed in the Entertainment Industry, knew how to kick up her heels, as well. Vera, as we mentioned before, worked as a seamstress for Hollywood studios in the 30s and 40s. But it was not all work and no play, as the above photo shows us. Vera attended parties with celebrities and appears to be enjoying herself on the dance floor, whirling around in the arms of a dashing leading man. Read more about Vera's experience in the Entertainment Industry in this issue...



Evgenija and Lidija Gins, 1920s. PHOTO COURTESY VERA G. BEKKAR.



Ekaterina Dmitrievna Gins (*nee* Lamzaki). PHOTOS 1, 3, 4 COURTESY SERGEI GUINS COLLECTION; PHOTOS 2, 5 COURTESY JULIANA MARIN.

Courageous Mothers: Ekaterina Dmitrievna Gins and Julija Lvovna Gins

Ekaterina Dmitrievna Gins and her daughter-in-law, Julija Lvovna Gins, endured much heartbreak during their lifetimes. Their worlds were turned inside-out with the disruption and danger brought by the Russian Revolution, Civil War and Julija's subsequent resettlement to Harbin, and later, to the U.S. A significant hardship both women faced was the loss of their husbands, which created the need to support a family as a single mother. Ekaterina's spouse, Konstantin Moritsevich-Emilievich Gins, died in Kiev in 1891, and his youngest son -- who was Julija's husband -- Nikolaj Konstantinovich Gins died in Harbin in 1931.

Resilient, resourceful, and determined, both Ekaterina and Julija found employment and worked most of their lives. Between them, they raised five intelligent, talented children to adulthood.



Dmitrij, George, Nina, and Nikolaj were the children of Konstantin and Ekaterina Gins; and Tatiana was the daughter of Nikolaj and Julija Gins.

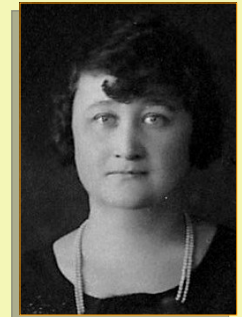
To support her family, Ekaterina worked, beginning in 1880, as a mathematics teacher at the Chisinau Female Grammar School of Prince Dadiani, according to a document found by Eduard Gins, included in George Gins' files from St. Petersburg University. She succeeded in educating her four children with her salary and a meager annuity that she received following Konstantin's death.

Julija also worked throughout her adult life, first for the Russian Ministry of Supply and then in the Harbin bookstore co-owned by George Gins. Later, when she and Tatiana emigrated to California, Julija found employment as a seamstress, like Vera Bekkar.

Ekaterina and Julija's legacy of quiet courage and devotion to family lives on in their many appreciative descendants.

Below: Julija Lvovna Gins (*nee* Prokhnitskaja). PHOTOS 1, 3, 4, 5 COURTESY VICKY MLYNIEC; PHOTO 2 COURTESY SERGEI GUINS COLLECTION.

Left: Tatiana Nikolaevna Gins, granddaughter of Ekaterina Gins, daughter of Julija Lvovna Gins (*nee* Prokhnitskaja). PHOTO COURTESY VICKY MLYNIEC.



УБИЙЦЫ

по рассказу Э.Хемингуэя



Vadim Novikov Stars in *The Killers*, 1956

Gins family members, male as well as female, were somehow attracted to the movie industry. Handsome young Vadim Novikov, (b. 1936 in Kiev) son of Olga Vladimirovna Novikova (*nee* Gins) and Konstantin Timofeevich Novikov, played a gangster in a student production of the Ernest Hemingway short story, *The Killers*. Vadim must have met the legendary Soviet film director Andrei Tarkovskij when Tarkovskij was a student at the State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) in Moscow, where Vadim lived with his parents.

Vadim, a tall, blond, blue-eyed 19-year old in 1955 (above), took the part of Max, one of two gangsters who were intent on killing a boxer by the name of Ole Anderson. The film, lasting only 19 minutes, must have given Vadim a taste of what to expect as an actor, but according to documents discovered by Eduard Gins, he left the film industry in 1963 and moved from Moscow to Minsk, Belarus. Further details about Vadim's later life await our discovery.

Additional details that Eduard gleaned in his latest search include the fact that Vadim's father, Konstantin, (b. 1911) was away during the Great Patriotic War (World War II). We do not know if Konstantin was killed or was able to return to his wife and son in Moscow.

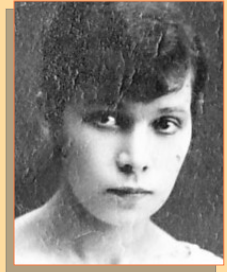
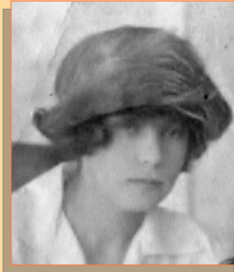


Above and left: Vadim Novikov, 19 years old, 1955.

Left: Olga Vladimirovna Novikova (*nee* Gins), 1927, Moscow. PHOTOS COURTESY VERA G. BEKKAR COLLECTION.

Top left: Movie title in Russian, "The Killers," story by E. Hemingway.

Olga, who was the third daughter of Vladimir and Varvara Gins, appears to have moved to Moscow from the family home in Samara in 1928, and she died between 1960 and 1963. If Konstantin's birth year is correct, then Olga was 11 years his senior, as she was born in 1887. Theirs is certainly an intriguing story.



Above: Vera Vladimirovna Bekkar (*nee* Gins).

PHOTOS COURTESY VERA G. BEKKAR COLLECTION.

Needles, Pins, and Workers Unions: Vera Bekkar joins the Motion Picture Costumers Local 705

Vera Bekkar's life did not turn out as she had hoped. Growing up in Chisinau, spending five years with her family in both Vilna and Samara, Vera enjoyed the privileges of higher education available for families of hereditary nobility. Although, like her mother, Varvara Vasilievna, Vera was not idle. Both women worked while in Samara. Varvara taught arithmetic in the Imperial Russian Music Society.

And after high school graduation Vera studied first aid and, according to documents unearthed by Eduard Gins, applied for a position at the Samara branch of the Russian GB Bank on 5 Aug 1916. Her request was approved and Vera started training for the civilian service office on 23 Aug 1916. At 20 years old, Vera earned a salary amounting to 48 ru annually. By 1 Oct 1917, Vera was appointed to fill a vacancy in the civilian writing office.

But everything changed following the Revolution of 1917. Vera left Samara for the relative safety of Omsk. She found work at a bank and met her future husband. The rest of her story, from her 1919 marriage to Boris Bekkarevich, to her skill at bartering with Siberian villagers for food by offering needles and thread, and her arrival in the U.S.



in 1923, has been presented in past issues.

Once in California, Vera's life continued to take unimagined twists and turns. Living in Hollywood in 1928, Vera became a single mother supporting an 8-year-old son, Igor (Harry), when husband, Boris, left to find work on the East coast.

Vera quickly realized that she could earn wages through the use of her talent as a seamstress, so she applied for positions in the wardrobe departments of local movie studios. Lucky and determined, Vera ended up working for the David Selznick Studios in Culver City during the making of the epic, *Gone With the Wind*. She excelled at her new position and was given the assignment of working on the lovely garden party dress worn by the character Scarlett O'Hara, seen on this page. Our family still has samples of fabric that Vera kept from the dress.

Through her work on the film, Vera encountered two slightly ironic situations. Not only was she a recent refugee from the Russian Civil War working on a film about the American Civil War, but fleeing communism and coming from the nobility, Vera was required to join the Motion Picture Costumers Local 705 and became a labor union member in her newly adopted country. Shades of worker solidarity!

Below: Varvara Vasilievna Gins (*nee* Miroevskaja).
PHOTOS COURTESY VERA G. BEKKAR COLLECTION.

Left: Vivian Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind*





Julija and Nikolaj Gins, 26 Jul/8 Aug 1919, Omsk. PHOTO COURTESY VICKY MLYNIEC.

Nikolaj and Julija Pen a Note to Emilja, Perhaps While on Honeymoon

With translation by Vicky Mlynniec and Irina Bass

We do not have a date for this letter, but it is likely to be summer of 1919.

Dear Milja,

Have you received my letter sent by express (mail)? This isn't clear from your letter. In any case, I think if you haven't received it you will receive it. Your last (photo) card is so good that Vera (not Gins now but Bekkarevitch) suggested printing them and selling them as post-cards. In all likelihood I would earn a lot of money, don't you think?

Jultsa and I are blissfully happy since the departure of Uncle Sasha and family for Semipalatinsk. I must say that they are very nice people but their children are very nervous and this is reflected in their behavior. Jultsa says that they have a very unintelligent look and that there's no comparing them with Milja's children. I am in complete agreement that they are not attractive, but as concerns "unintelligent appearance," here she is exaggerating.

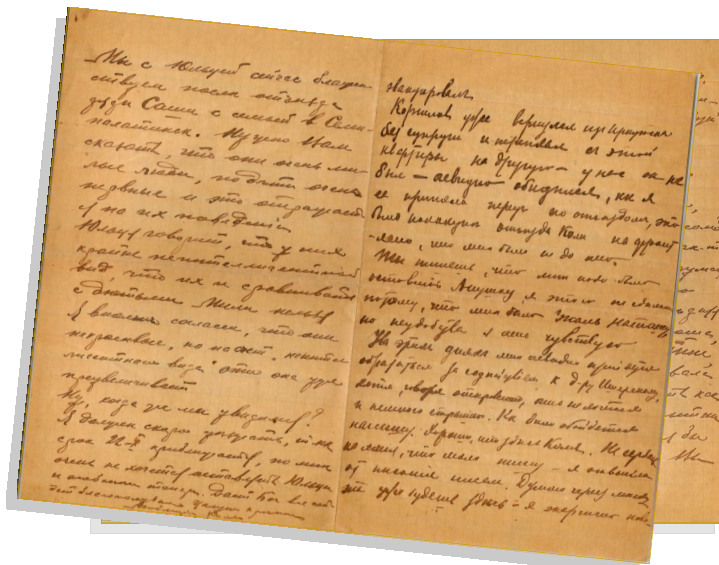
Well, when will we see each other?

I must leave soon, 22 - X is approaching, but I really don't want to leave Jultsa, especially now. May God grant that everything turn out well. I kiss you firmly. Love, Kolja.

Pages written by Jultsa

(first line is a single word -- эвакуировал (evacuated) --ending a sentence from a page we don't have.

Kornilov (or Korgilov) has already returned from Irkutsk without his spouse and moved from this apartment to another (unintelligible), he hasn't been to us--he has obviously taken offense that I took her in (adopted her) before his departure. This was the day before Kolja left for the front--clearly, I wasn't up to it. You write that I need to leave (give up) Anushka, I haven't done this because I felt sorry for Natasha, but I feel very awkward. One day I will obviously seek assistance from Dr. Itarskij, although frankly, I really don't want to and it's a little scary. How the matter is managed, I will write you. It's good that Kolja is here. Don't be angry at me that I don't write much--I fell out of the habit of writing letters. I think that you will already be here in a month -- I shall lead a vigorous agitation for the reverse evacuation. Write a bit more about the children. Everyone really likes your (photo) card. Surprisingly successful. The dining room we already moved into a small room. Miltsa, if Tar. Vas. did not buy powder for me, then bring white (definitely foreign, but not Japanese). Besides that, buy some kind of lace. For winter we already have potatoes, onions and flour (3 sacks). I'm going to buy cabbage. Everything here is terribly expensive. Oil (or butter) is already 25 rubles a pound, eggs 30 rubles, and so on. We received a raise in salary and I will now receive 2343 rubles 50 kopecks but ____ when there is such expense. We have already covered the windows. In general I await you. Give my regards to Nadeshda Fyoderovna. I can't bring myself to write to her. Well, I kiss you and the children firmly. See you soon! Loving you, Jultsa.





Above, left?: Zina Vologodskaja.
PHOTO COURTESY SERGEI GUINS COLLECTION.

Gins Family Friend Zina Popova Celebrates 100th Birthday

Congratulations go out to Zina Popova (*nee* Vologodskaja), who turned 100 this year. She is the dear friend of the families of George, Sergei, and Tanja Gins and lived in the Gins household in Harbin after her father, P. V. Vologodskij, died in 1925. She, Sergei, and Seva shared a room when they were young, until Seva and Zina went off to college.

Zina is also godmother to Jeff Anderson, who visited Zina several years ago at her home in Australia. In fact the photo that Zina is holding at right is a birthday gift from Vicky. As it turns out, Zina is the last surviving member of the people in the photo from 1928.



Below, from top left: Ludmila Prokhnitskaja, Zina Vologodskaja, Nikolaj Prokhnitskij, Julija Gins, Sergei Gins, Nikolaj Gins; from lower left, George Gins, Vsevolod Gins, Tatiana Gins, and Emilija Gins. PHOTO COURTESY VICKY MLYNIEC. Photo, Right: Zina Popova (*nee* Vologodskaja), celebrating her 100th birthday in 2013, holding the same photo as below in which she appeared with the Gins and related family members in about 1928. PHOTO COURTESY POPOV COLLECTION.

