

Chapter V1

The House in Sochi

Zuka Ossinin liked Sochi from the start. It was a fashionable resort on the Caucasian shore of the Black Sea. It was a new play ground for the wealthy, only about twelve years old and already called the Russian Riviera. The big new “Hotel Riviera” was the last word in comfort and luxury. The beach of golden sand was long and the swimming was wonderful. The town of Sochi was small but compact and surrounded by magnificent villas and cottages. The scenery was enchanting; high mountains, waterfalls palm alleys, cypress alleys, flowers and more flowers. It was a place of rest for people who had big names and big money.

Grand dad had a smallish villa on a picturesque slope facing the sea. It was hidden by cherry trees, fig trees and cypresses and it blazed with the color of many different kinds of flowers. Grand dad, an enthusiastic horticulturist, had found his paradise in Sochi and had turned his home and garden into one as well. He had only one servant, Annushka, who had been in his service for about forty years. She was big, strong and on the fat side. She looked after the old barin like a baby and cared for him in that spirit as well. She had known Zuka since his birth and for many years she had a soft spot in her heart for the slender boy.

Zuka imagined that in time, Sochi would provide stiff competition to the French resorts often frequented by the noble class. This was not a blind assumption on his part as he knew the best European resorts quite well.

It all started when mother, always believing Zuka to be on the delicate side, had taken him to a great specialist in Moscow. The great doctor looked Zuka over casually, talked for some time with Mother and solemnly prescribed a two year trip to Europe, France, Italy and Switzerland, in particular, for a change of climate. He was a great specialist and a fashionable doctor. No harm would come to a normally healthy boy of twelve by sending him to the best resorts in Europe. He knew what mother wanted and he prescribed it. That was why he was a fashionable doctor; he prescribed for mothers.

Before World War 1, Russians were regarded in the same light as American tourists are today. Zuka was ashamed to admit he had taken pleasure in seeing the French bows and the out stretched Italian hands, so eager for a couple of gold coins. The only place that compared with Sochi's natural beauty was Salto-Maggiore, an Italian resort, famous for it's sulphur baths. Zuka had tender memories of women he met there.

The Mystery Lady of Salto-Maggiore

Zuka was sitting in a deep arm-chair in a magnificent bath house waiting for his turn for a mud bath. He was absorbed in a struggle to understand an Italian newspaper when a low pleasant woman's voice spoke to him in Italian: “Bambino, you dropped your hat.” He looked around and

saw his light white hat lying on the floor. Zuka picked it up and automatically thanked her in French: "*Merci, Madam.*"

She looked at him fixedly for a second and asked: "*Voi no soono Italiano, mio bambino?*"

"*No Signora, Io no sonno Italiano, Io sonno Russo*" and to his great surprise the lady exclaimed in perfect Russian:

"Are you Russian? You do not look like a Russian."

Zuka was hurt. "Madame, I do not know how a Russian is supposed to look, but I am Russian, from the Volga River."

Her smile conquered him completely. "Excuse me, please, but I did not mean it that way."

Zuka thought she was the most beautiful creature he had ever met. Her sensitive delicate face looked as if it had been chiseled by a great sculptor. She had dark hair, deep blue eyes, ivory skin and wore no visible make up. She radiated charm and purity and commanded respect.

Zuka was at a loss as to who she might be as he had met all the Russians then living in Salto-Maggiore. Everyone of consequence was staying at the big hotel just across the road from the bath house. The ground floor was occupied by a Mr. Taft, a former President of the United States and his family. Also, a nice quiet girl of Zuka's age with a funny haircut and big luminous eyes and pigtails. They used to bump into each other in the garden. There was also the wife of a German Ambassador. Zuka liked to play with her son since they both spoke German. Another floor was occupied by Grand Duke, Vladimir Alexandrovich of Russia, a brother to the beloved Emperor Alexander the 111 and a senior member of the imperial family. There was an ancient Senator from Petersburg with his youngish wife; Prince and Princess Beloselsky, who came for the cure, and a few nondescript South American ladies and hidalgos. The Grand Duke was really ill, but still liked to hold court. Zuka tried to avoid his garden tea parties as much as possible. He was frightened in the awesome presence of the Grand Duke. Yes, he knew all of them, but not this beautiful Russian lady. Certainly she had every right to be at the Grand Duke's tea parties. The lady came over to Zuka and placed her hand lightly on his shoulder.

"I am sorry if I have offended you, but I do feel we might become good friends. Tell me about your Volga River. My river is the Dnieper. . ." and in no time she knew all about him, his mother and his trip to Europe. When it was time for her to go, she made an appointment for the morrow, and so began their strange friendship. She occupied an expensive private cottage and shunned all acquaintances. She had only one servant companion, a tall angular woman with a plain face, straight plain hair, steady and unfriendly eyes and the strong capable hands of a trained nurse. Zuka sensed some kind of tragedy in the life of the woman, a deep hurting tragedy. She never said anything about herself and Zuka never asked. If she did not want to

confide in him it would be tactless to press her.

During all their hours together she never laughed, only smiled occasionally. Her smile was soft and wistful. An aura of gentle melancholy surrounded her and the cottage. She liked to sit by the open window looking at the distant, rugged Italian mountains. Zuka, her faithful page, would sit on a low foot-stool by her side. Sometimes she would stroke his hair ever so lightly, still oblivious to his presence as if she were living over and over again a part of her life. She never complained about anyone There was no bitterness; she was like Hawaiian music smooth and graceful.

On the night before Zuka left she said “I wish you all the luck in life, Zuka. Thank you so much for your loyalty and your company. I want you to be happy. Only I do not know what happiness is. Certainly not wealth. Money can help but it cannot make you happy. Once I thought happiness was love but I am not sure now. Whatever it may be, I do wish you happiness Zuka. Please remember me,” she said as she kissed him lightly on the lips like a loving sister might kiss her kid brother. Throughout his life the memory of this gentle, charming but unhappy Lady haunted him.

School Days in Sochi

On the the first day Zuka attended school in Sochi, he was surprised to see a new and modern building facing the broad street, with gardens, play grounds and even a palm grove. When he entered the school he was amazed at the number of girls of all shapes and sizes running happily up and down the stairs. This was his first experience with co-education and it was completely new to him. Russian high schools had programs different from those in America; they were equivalent to Junior Colleges in the States. Seventh and eighth grade students were considered “Seniors.” Zuka was in seventh grade. In war time, completion of the sixth grade was all that was necessary for admittance to Officers’ Training School.

Ossinin reported to the office, settled his admission and was directed to proceed to his class room. When he entered the cozy, sunny room he was greeted enthusiastically by his new school mates. He stood for a second, smiled and introduced himself. “I am Sergei Ossinin from the Moscow Imperial High School. But I like it here.” There was hand shaking and greetings. A nice dark-eyed girl laughed.

“I think, Ossinin, you will have to sit with me. It is the only comfortable place left. I am Katia Smolenskaya. I know it is hard for you coming from Moscow, but you will get used to the girls here.”

Zuka liked her immediately. She was unmistakably a Little Russian or Ukrainian girl in appearance, friendly and healthy. Ossinin looked around and noticed several uniforms of Petrograd’s High School – also “Refugees” as they were called, whose mothers had the same bright idea as his mother: sending their youngsters out of the turbulent capital.

“By the way, Ossinin, what is your party?” asked a student of rather small stature, who wore gold-rimmed glasses. “I am Vladimir Kouchumov (later to become Soviet Military Attache in London) and I am a Social Revolutionist.

At that time there were four major political parties in Russia, all Socialist: the Social Revolutionary Party of Sasha Kerensky, the Social Democratic Bolshevik Faction (later the Communist Party) of Lenin; the Social Democratic Party of the Menshevicks (or minority) and the Laborites.

“I do not belong to any political party,” Ossinin answered, rather amused by the seriousness of the question.

“Yes, but what are your political ideas?”

“Oh, as to that, I am a Monarchist.” Good natured boos came from the majority and cheers from a minority of the students.

Kouchumov looked at him with open scorn. “A Monarchist? Maybe you are a militarist also.” The scorn was murderous.

“If by that you mean am I ready to defend my country, my home and my family—yes!”

A pretty blonde girl turned to him and said wearily “Stop your politics, Kouchumov; give Ossinin a chance to get acquainted.” Vera Fedeyeva turned to Ossinin and said “We like having you here. The Caucasus is hospital. Welcome.”

Ossinin acclimated himself easily to the new life, his new friends and new enemies. He had a natural gift of making enemies for he was a Scorpio and it is one of the characteristics of Scorpio people to make life-long enemies without much effort. It is also their ability to make life-long friends easily. Being born a Scorpio there were several aspects of Ossinin’s character that facilitated the mass production of enemies. He was too cock-sure for his stature, too casual with people outside his station and at times, too sarcastic and biting with his comments. Without much effort he could wound his antagonist in the most vulnerable spot. In a way he was a snob and very stubborn about his likes and dislikes. He was seldom rash but quite often foolish. His gravest mistake was that he invariably thought people better than they turned out to be.

The political climate of the school was rather intense. Socialists were in the majority and top dogs. Those not politically inclined were the under dogs. Monarchists were considered pariahs. The school was not only the political and educational center of the students’ lives, it was also the social center. A special student was appointed to organize extra curricular activities. The administration wisely limited their activities to teaching and the students were left to run their own affairs. Dancing, parties, games, literary and musical entertainments were held on Saturdays and Sundays. A big recreation hall, located on the top floor of the school, was well

suited for parties. The gardens provided an excellent location for exclusive parties and innocent flirtations with a few shy kisses.

Co-education had its advantages and was fun. It was customary for a boy to carry the books of a girl he liked and to bring her flowers. This meant that the “line was engaged.” A change in a girl’s favor was usually quite a blow to a former beau. It also meant loss of face. Vera Fadeyeva was queen of the school and the favor of carrying her books was sought by many. Ossinin never aspired, at least not openly, to that great privilege. He freelanced for a time.

There were two main factions in the school, the locals, consisting mostly of Georgians and the refugees from central Russia. A third group, the Mohammedans kept to themselves. They did not favor refugees as they were strangers in the Caucasus. At the same time, they hated the socialism of the local boys. The refugees were, as a rule, more polished and better turned out. They were also better dancers and more fascinating as far as the girls were concerned. The local boys took that with very bad grace.

Zuka plunged into the social life of the school and soon had a host of enemies and a few loyal friends including Count Gabriel Bobrinskoi of Petrograd, Alek Tiajelnikov, the son of a Lieutenant General (the former Commander of Matthew Ossinin’s Guard Litovsky Regiment), and Djanashia, a scion of an ancient Mingrelian family. The Mingrelians were considered the noblest and proudest race in all the Caucasus. They were also considered the most handsome race and they were every bit that. Djanashia was a true Mingrelian with raven black hair, big, deep blue eyes, a proud face and the grace of a young panther. They never talked of courage as it was taken for granted and they never talked of fear-- it was unknown to them.

During social gatherings, Ossinin, a good dancer and good mixer, fluttered from one girl to another without committing to carrying anyone’s books. He was secretly very interested in Natasha Bobrinskaya, the younger sister of his bosom friend. But she was not in his school so opportunities to converse with her were rare.

The Fight

All went well until one morning when a junior grader, with an air of profound mystery, slipped a note into Ossinin’s hand. It was from Vera Jvania, queen of the local caucasian girls, and a Mingrelian. Next day, Zuka was carrying her books and the same day the whole school knew about it. Before Zuka, her escort had been a certain local boy, a Georgian with a name unpronounceable even to Russians – Ishisheshtaisheshvilli. His face matched his name. It was as replete with pimples of all sizes and colors as his name was with letters. In spite of his name and his pimples he was very high up in the socialist party and of some consequence locally. He wanted revenge as he had lost face. Now Zuka carried Vera’s books. So Ossinin was not surprised when he was confronted by Ishvilli, as he was so nick named. In no uncertain terms, Ishvilli informed Zuka that he wanted to smash his snuggy face in. Naturally a crowd collected to see the humiliation of the presumptuous refugee. Ishvilli was hot and rash; Ossinin cool and

composed. The incident occurred just before class started. Zuka wanted time to make Ishvilli really mad.

“If you think a fight will bring back Vera’s favor I will be pleased to oblige you as soon as I dispose of my books,” he said with an ironical bow.

Ossinin swiftly entered his classroom, deposited the books on his table and walked out to the crowded corridor. Girls with eager faces lined the walls. Ossinin’s hobby was fencing but he knew something about boxing as well. A ring formed around them as the boys faced each other. Ishvilli, angered by Zuka’s mocking remarks, rushed at him madly. Ossinin side-stepped and opened up, taking a glancing blow to his chest. He answered it with a straight right and a straight left to Ishvilli’s nose. Immediately blood gushed in a stream down his shirt. This astounded everyone including Ossinin. The combat was over. The incident should have ended there, but it did not. It served as an example to Ossinin of what Russia was in for under the Socialists.

A Summons to Court

A few days later, to his great consternation, Ossinin received a summons from the “Court of Honor of the Student Body.” He was to answer the charge of “Assault and battery and gross insult to student Ishvilli” This was something new: the challenging and defeated party accusing the other of “assault and battery!” In the beginning he could not make heads or tails out of the summons for the entire school had witnessed the fight, including the member of the Court of Honor. The whole school knew the reason why the fight was forced upon him so why the summons? Only in the quietness of grandfather’s villa, as he watched a glorious sunset over the Black Sea, was he able to figure it out. Court of Honor - baloney! This Ish...shvilli was a local boy and a leader in the Socialist Party. The members of the court were also locals and loyal orthodox socialists as well. In their eyes, Zuka was a dirty Monarchist and a refugee as well. The locals were trying to discredit him in order to promote their own ends. Any imperial court of honor would simply reject such an accusation immediately. If the local court accepted it, it could mean only one thing – judgment had already been passed and was not in his favor.

The following Saturday night, the recreation hall was jammed with students. The Court of Honor had made a shrewd move by summoning Ossinin. They expected him to ignore the summons. That would be a powerful weapon in their hands. But he was present, seated on the defendant’s bench, smiling outwardly but boiling inside. The court proceedings were opened with ceremony. The president was an eighth grader by the name of Bednov. (The irony of translation – the original meaning of the name is “poor man”) Others were Boguchava and Kouchumov of the seventh grade and all the local ”shvillies.” Very pompously, Bednov called on Ossinin to stand up and hear the indictment

“Sergei Ossinin, you are accused of aggravated assault and battery and of insulting Ish....shvilli by striking him without warning or provocation. Do you please guilty or not guilty?”

“Not guilty.” Ossinin looked straight into Bednov’s eyes.

“In that case we can proceed. Ish...shivilli, call your witnesses, please.” Bednov did not actually avoid looking at Ossinin, but his eyes were completely veiled.

One after another, a half-dozen students, all ardent socialists, testified before the court and the assembly with one in the same story: Ish...shivilli had been walking peacefully along the corridor when Ossinin, without any provocation or warning, hit him in the face and smashed his nose. The witnesses described how dreadfully he bled, and that they did not know the reason for the attack.

Ossinin watched the audience during these recitals. The non-political faction of the school, mostly girls, were visibly indignant. The Moslems watched with undisguised contempt and disgust. Ossinin, a Christian, was deeply ashamed to see this open perjury. Five years later he would come to better understand what was really behind this event but at the time he could only guess. Djanashia stood by Zuka’s side during the whole proceeding. He had been at Ossinin’s side during the fight and he knew the truth. Ossinin noticed the chalk-white face of Vera Jvania in the crowd, her blue eyes very dark and blazing with fire.

“Now, defendant Ossinin, you have heard the witnesses for the plaintiff. You may call your own witnesses,” Bednov announced with feigned impartiality.

“I have no witnesses to call and I have nothing to say.”

The hall gasped in an open display of a hundred different emotions. The neutrals thought that Zuka had lost his reason. The socialists suffered a big disappointment. Evidently they hoped to make an issue of contradictory testimony realizing that they were prepared to “out witness” the defendant ten to one.

Ossinin continued, “I do not call any witnesses for the simple reason that nearly the whole school witnessed the fight. And all of you know the reason for it.” Ossinin swept the wide semi-circle of the audience with his hand.

“What is the use of calling anyone? You know very well the fight is outside the court’s jurisdiction. I am not going to repeat what is already known.”

Bednov cut in hurriedly:

“Defendant Ossinin, if you cannot produce witnesses, the court will proceed with its verdict in your case.” Bednov sensed the mounting unrest among the students and decided that the best course was to move on. The judges, with artificial gravity on their faces, exchanged opinion in undertones and whispers. At last, Bednov stood up and pompously announced:

“Defendant Ossinin, the Court of Honor, after impartial consideration, has found you guilty of assault and battery and orders you to apologize publically to Ish...shvilli for the insult.”

The girls were out of hand and cried out “For shame!” They booed the court’s verdict. The vibrant voice of Vera rang out “It’s all a lie!” as Bednov attempted to continue “Ossinin, are you going to abide by the decision of this Court?”

Ossinin raised his hand. “Silence please.” The turmoil gradually quieted.

“Yes, I am going to abide by the decision of the Court. I helped organize it and pledged to support it. I am not going back on my word and if someone’s honor had been besmirched, it will not be mine.”

The whole court jumped up. Bednov blurted out: “Are you trying to insinuate that this court is deliberately prejudiced? Do you think we are prejudiced in our decision? Careful Ossinin, you may also be tried for contempt of Court.”

“Did I say anything about the impartiality of the Court?” countered Ossinin. “I said ‘someone’s honor’ and you reacted. There is a proverb in Russia about a situation like this.” His words were drowned by laughter. Bednov hurriedly dismissed the court.

Soon Ossinin found himself encircled by solicitous girls and well wishers. Vera gently pressed his hand and whispered “You will escort me home tonight, won’t you?” Certainly he would. With Court over, the dancing began. Ossinin waltzed with Vera, oblivious to the rest of the world. Ish...shvilli had evaporated.

At the end of the evening, a group of Caucasians came to Ossinin. “If you had called on us we would have testified in your behalf, but we would have hated to support an outsider against a native Georgian. We are glad you did not ask us to. Bednov and the others perjured their Christian faith by giving false testimony. We Mohammedans do not bear false witness. Sorry, Ossinin, no offense, for a moment we forgot you were a Christian.”

“Yes, I am, but they are not,” Ossinin answered, ashamed of the his fellow Christians.

“We Caucasians,” continued the grave boy, “do not give our friendship lightly, and we do not take it back lightly either. We want you to be our *Kunack* (pal).” They shook hands solemnly in the Mohammedan fashion by placing both hands between one another’s.

The trial had not served the purpose the socialists had anticipated. Ossinin became more popular and now a solid Mohammedan block had joined the refugee faction of the student body. Soon the incident was all but forgotten and life in Sochi went on with study, picnics and youthful flirtations.

Growing Unrest

One particular Sunday was proclaimed “Commemoration Day” for some revolutionary martyrs. In the best of spirits, Zuka Ossinin hurried to school for general merriment and games. As he approached, he looked up to see a red flag flying over the building. It reminded him of the court case and it made him angry. He sprinted madly up the stairs to the top recreation hall disregarding the greetings from assembled students. He rushed to the window, jumped to the slanting part of the roof, vaulted over to the main roof, climbed to the flagpole and jerked the red flag down. He returned to the hall trailing the red material behind him. He threw the flag on the floor and began to perform a “Danse Macabre” on it, kicking it as much as possible to show his disdain. It was not a nice thing to do, but he could not help himself.

The astonished students watched his performance with amazement, not caring much about what the flag signified to Zuka. All of a sudden, the sound a hysterical sobbing caused everyone to look around. Vladimir Kouchumov, face dead white and with fists clenched, screamed and sobbed, shaking his fists at Ossinin. Vladimir had been on the Court of Honor so of course the flag meant a great deal to him.

“You, you rotten Monarchist! You are debasing the sacred flag of the suffering proletariat, the sacred insignia of the Socialist Revolutionary Party! How dare you treat the flag of revolution and social justice in such a way? You will pay for this!” He was beside himself with anger and so was Ossinin, who continued his demonstration.

Kouchumov was clearly a very devout party member. At every opportunity he would thunder against the social injustice of the imperial regime and the heartless oppression of the poor and noble proletariat by the ruthless, greedy and blood-sucking aristocrats. Justice and happiness of the people! He would gladly sacrifice his life for such principles.

Many years later with some interest and amusement, Ossinin read in the morning Brisbane Courier Mail an article about a Colonel Vladimir Kouchumov being appointed Soviet Military Attache’ to the Court of St. James in London. Kouchumov was a rather uncommon name and coupled with the name of Vladimir, recalled the long-forgotten incident in Sochi in 1917. So Vladimir was a military Attache? For a pacifist and an anti-militarist of 1917 this career seemed rather peculiar. In order to be appointed chief spy in Britain one had to be very high up in the Communist Party. In order to obtain such an important post one must actually have shed Russian blood in buckets and have wallowed in a sea of bitter tears of the many tortured and murdered people. Ossinin was mildly amused to know that a Socialist, a paladin of justice and of the people’s rights had become a communist colonel.

These high school experiences gave Ossinin intimate knowledge as to what communist socialism was all about. The mock trial, with its brazen disregard for decency and honor, had fired his anger at seeing the red flag flying above his school. Though his trial of honor was conducted in a high school in 1917, it paved the way for future world-famous trials held in

Moscow during the next decade. The actions of the Soviet regime were written by the men of Ossinin's generation. Those were men who, years later, presided at the Moscow trials which condemned thousands of innocent people to death. Once the Communists adopted a certain method of operation they did not deviate from it. A snake can change it's skin but not it's heart.

Zuka becomes a Counter Revolutionary

The news about the downfall of the Kerensky Government was taken for granted in Sochi. The subsequent flight of Sasha Kerensky, disguised as a nurse, was also taken for granted as nothing else could have been expected of him. Life did not change right away. One socialist party had been kicked out of power by another socialist party. But the new Social Democratic Party of the Bolsheviks happened to have a ruthless hand and advocated action, not speeches.

Sochi, still under the protection of the Caucasian forces inland, did not immediately feel the full impact of the new regime but some very alarming news trickled out of Russia. News of mass murders by the communist commissar, Mr. Saenko, plus the confiscation of property and arrests of small tradesmen filtrated across Russia. The one domineering Socialist Revolution Party was quickly fading away. Most of it's member were now flirting with the bosses of the new party in power.

Ossinin was not happy. Although life was going on as though nothing had happened, he was very uneasy. One night Count Bobrinski called on him in secret. The news he brought was very important. The famous General Kornilov had succeeded in escaping from prison where Kerensky had tried to keep him from attempting to restore order. Now General Kornilov was in Kouban raising national forces to fight the Communists. Colonel Kouznetzov was in Sochi and was going to Gagri, the next important resort about one hundred miles away. He was in contact with Lieutenant Prince Hounkalov, the Prince of Abkhazia, who had already pledged himself and some of his best men to support Kornilov. His Caucasian forces were being organized and volunteers were needed.

This was great news! Zuka and Bobrinski made a list of those who could be trusted. They would support Kornilov by forming a unit in Sochi. Bobrinski disappeared into the night to make contact with those on his list. Ossinin disappeared too to inform his group of trusted pals that the time had come to join the nationalist forces.

Prince Hounkalov acted swiftly and raised Abkhazia against the Reds. His daring raids on the red territory along the sea coast gave the communists the jitters. Prince Hounkalov was here, there and everywhere at the same time. He was a nightmare to the communists and soon became a legendary hero to the people. Soviet masters suspected the existence of the Kornilov organization in Sochi and attempted to break it up.

One day, prince Poutiatin, Ossinin's neighbor, was arrested. His only crime was that he was a real prince, a real Russian patriot and a man with an impeccable past. Several other arrests

followed but no one talked, even under pressure. The new organization retaliated. The old chief of Militia (police) met with an unforeseen accident. The new chief was a member of Kornilov's secret unit. That helped a lot. Gradually communications with Hounkalov and the next unit in Gagri were established and maintained.

Meanwhile, life went on more or less peacefully. Zuka and his friends continued to attend classes while acting as counter revolutionaries in secret. The social center for nationalist fighters in Sochi was a tea shop appropriated called "The Cup of Tea." It had been organized by the society ladies from the hotel with a charitable purpose in mind. The elderly ladies presided over tables, coffee posts and a samovar; the younger set acted as waitresses. It was an oasis in a "Red Sahara," where *si-devants* could meet each other and feel at home. Needless to say, the "Cup of Tea" was a counter revolutionary nest. The café was on the square right in the center of the city. According to southern custom, most of the tables were under gayly colored umbrellas, right on the sidewalk.

Zuka Ossinin and his friends frequented the "Cup of Tea" for political and personal reasons. Most of the ladies were in the know and acted as "go betweens," passing information or instructions while serving the tables. The ladies were in abundance while suitable gentlemen were scarce. The climate was mild, the parks and gardens had many romantic and enchanting spots, and the future uncertain, so even a youngster of Zuka's age and status could encounter a not so innocent flirtation. Needless to say, the members of the inside organization were well received.

One afternoon at five o'clock, the official and popular time for tea, "The Cup of Tea" was as busy as a beehive. Zuka was in animated conversation with one of the ladies when some commotion in the streets attracted general attention. A score of Red guards and militia were running for their lives along the main street leading to the square. In confusion they crossed the square and disappeared in the direction of their headquarters. The mystified people looked around to see the reason for this occurrence. A solitary horseman proceeded along the palm-shaded alley. The whole square gasped. The Caucasian rider was unmistakably Lieutenant Prince Hounkalov, the Soviet's nightmare and the arch-enemy of the revolution. He wore the uniform of an officer of the Imperial Caucasian Division called "A Savage Division" throughout Russia. The tales of its valor, bravery, horsemanship and absolute fearlessness during the German War had spread across Russia like wildfire. Grand Duke Michail Alexandrovich, brother of the Tzar, had been a commander of this legendary cavalry division. It had consisted of cavalry regiments of all races from the Caucasian region.

The prince and his mount were decked out to the last detail. Prince Hounkalov proceeded leisurely along the avenue leading to the square as if in his own domain. The Reds, seeing him first, expected to see his squadron also, but his name alone was enough to strike terror into the hearts of the Red soldiers, not to mention his riders. So they ran and ran fast, to mobilize all available forces against this terrible enemy. The Prince rode gaily to "The Cup of Tea," dismounted and crossed the sidewalk to the tea shop. His priceless thoroughbred stood

motionless as though sculptured out of rock; only its eyes followed it's master. It was hard to say who was more magnificent the horse or the horseman.

Prince Hounkalov entered the tea room, made a slight half-bow to the ladies and greeted all by touching his forehead with the fingers of the open hand. He explained that he had felt like making a social call and dropping in for a friendly chat. Immediately he was surrounded by eager and excited young girls. One set the table, another brought the cup of tea, others showered the table with cakes, sweets and sandwiches He infected every body with his high spirits, frankness and gaiety. He flirted with the pretty girls as if he had not a single care in the world.

Muffled sounds of heavy treads from afar reached the café. The horse jerked its head and cocked his ears impatiently. The prince finished his tea, dropped a large donation for charity on the table, bowed to the ladies with appropriate thanks, left the tea room. Meanwhile, the Reds were cautiously surrounding the square. Prince Hounkalov walked to his horse and in one swift move, was in the saddle. He pressed his heels to the horse's flanks and the animal responded instantly, flying off like the wind. The red guards ran into the square. The prince turned, parabellum in his hand, fired several shots at the guards, who dropped for cover, and was gone. Only a faint echo of a flying horse and a fine floating film of dust, lingered for some time along the green alleys and the avenues of the deserted, bewildered town.