



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

Volume Two

CHAPTER XLV

A comrade contributes to our funds

contribution to our work. We needed money for our campaign desperately and I was glad that someone had come forward with an offer. The indifferent reception I had given Hallbeck made me somewhat embarrassed when he handed me his cheque. I apologized by explaining how busy we were, but he assured me that he understood and that it was perfectly all right. He had very little time, he said, and, hastily bidding us good-bye, he edged his way out. When I looked at the cheque, I discovered to my amazement that it was for three thousand dollars. I was sure the old comrade had made a mistake and I quickly went to call him back. But he shook his head and assured me there was no error about it. I begged him to return to the office and tell us something about himself. I could not take his money without knowing whether he had enough left to secure his old age.

He told us that he had emigrated from Sweden to America sixty years previously. A rebel since his youth, the judicial murder of our Chicago comrades had made him an anarchist. For a quarter of a century he had lived in California as a wine-grower and he had saved a little money. His own needs were small, and he had no kin in the United States, never having married. His three sisters in the old country were in comfortable circumstances, and they would also get a modest legacy after his death. He was very much interested in the No-Conscription campaign, and, being too old to participate actively, he had decided to put a little money at our disposal for the work. We need have no scruples about accepting the cheque, he assured us. "I am eighty," he added, "and I have not much longer to live. I want to feel that whatever I can spare will benefit the cause I have believed in during the largest part of my life. I don't want the State or the Church to profit by my death." Our venerable comrade's simple manner, his devotion to our work and generous gesture, affected us too profoundly for banal expressions of thanks. Our hand-clasp showed our appreciation, and he left us as unostentatiously as he had come. His cheque was deposited in the bank as a fund for anti-war activities.

June 14, the day of our Forward Hall meeting, arrived. In the late afternoon I was called on the telephone, and a strange voice warned me against attending the gathering. The man had overheard a plot to kill me, he informed me. I asked for his name, but he declined to give it; nor would he consent to see me. I thanked him for his interest in my welfare and hung up the receiver.

Jocularly I told Sasha and Fitzzi that I must prepare my will. "But