



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

Volume Two

(Beginning of) CHAPTER XLV



THE HATED ROMANOV'S WERE AT LAST HURLED FROM THEIR throne, the Tsar and his cohorts shorn of power. It was not the result of a political *coup d'état*; the great achievement was accomplished by the rebellion of the entire people. Only yesterday inarticulate, crushed as they had been for centuries, under the heel of a ruthless absolutism, insulted and degraded, the Russian masses had risen to demand their heritage and to proclaim to the whole world that autocracy and tyranny were forever at an end in their country. The glorious tidings were the first sign of life in the vast European cemetery of war and destruction. They inspired all liberty-loving people with new hope and enthusiasm, yet no one felt the spirit of the Revolution as did the natives of Russia scattered all over the globe. They saw their beloved *Matushka Rossiya* now extend to them the promise of manhood and aspiration.

Russia was free; yet not truly so. Political independence was but the first step on the road to the new life. Of what use are "rights," I thought, if the economic conditions remain unchanged. I had known the blessings of democracy too long to have faith in political scene-shifting. Far more abiding was my faith in the people themselves, in the Russian masses now awakened to the consciousness of their power and to the realization of their opportunities. The imprisoned and exiled martyrs who had struggled to free Russia were now being resurrected, and some of their dreams realized. They were returning from the icy wastes of Siberia, from dungeons and banishment. They were coming back to unite with the people and to help them build a new Russia, economically and socially.

America also was contributing its quota. At the first news of the Tsar's overthrow thousands of exiles hastened back to their native country, now the Land of Promise. Many had lived in the United