



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

## Volume Two

### CHAPTER XLV



#### *Our meeting is used as a trap*

I shall probably reach a disgusting old age," I remarked. To be prepared for any eventuality, however, I decided to leave a note directing that "the \$3000 contributed by James Hallbeck should remain in charge of Alexander Berkman, my lifelong friend and comrade in battle, to be applied to anti-war work and the support of imprisoned conscientious objectors." The *Mother Earth* fund, consisting of \$329, was to pay our office debts; our stock of books was to be sold and the proceeds used for the needs of the movement. My personal library I bequeathed to my youngest brother and Stella. My only property, the little farm in Ossining, which my friend Bolton Hall had recently deeded to me, I left to Ian Keith Ballantine, Stella's little boy. Sasha and Fitzi witnessed the document with their signatures.

Reaching East Broadway, where Forward Hall is located, we were met, not by ordinary plotters, but by the entire police department. At least it seemed so to us, judging by the number of New York's "finest" that lined the street and the whole of Rutgers Square adjacent to our meeting-place. The crowd had been pushed back to the farthest end of the square. Those who had succeeded in getting into the building found themselves locked in and held as prisoners, as it were. No conspirators having designs upon my life had the ghost of a chance to get near me or Sasha, so closely were we encircled by husky officers, who hurried us into the building.

The hall was filled to suffocation. There were police galore and an array of Federal officials, but no soldiers. Forward Hall had probably never before held such a large American attendance. People seemed to realize that free expression on the war and conscription had become a rarity, and they were eager to lend their support.

The meeting was very spirited and our program was carried out without a hitch. But at the close every man in the hall who appeared subject to the draft was detained by the officers, and those who could not show a registration card were placed under arrest. It was apparently the intention of the Federal authorities to use our meeting as a trap. We therefore resolved to hold no more public gatherings unless we could make sure that those who had not complied with the registration law would keep away. We decided to concentrate more on the printed word.

On the following afternoon we were all busy in our offices. Sasha and Fitzi were on the upper floor, preparing the next issue of the *Blast*. I worked with my new secretary, Pauline, while our friend