



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

## Volume Two

### CHAPTER XLV



#### *Police interfere with our meeting*

recovery. He continued to suffer much pain and discomfort. Most of his writing had to be done in bed or with his leg perched up on a chair. He could barely hop about on crutches, but he was again adamant in his decision to attend the mass meeting. We knew he was suffering, but he cracked jokes and scolded Fitz and me because we were making "too much fuss."

When we got within half a dozen blocks of Hunt's Point Palace, our taxi had to come to a stop. Before us was a human dam, as far as the eye could see, a densely packed, swaying mass, counting tens of thousands. On the outskirts were police on horse and on foot, and great numbers of soldiers in khaki. They were shouting orders, swearing, and pushing the crowd from the sidewalks to the street and back again. The taxi could not proceed, and it was hopeless to try to get Sasha to the hall on his crutches. We had to make a detour around vacant lots until we reached the back entrance of the Palace. There we came upon a score of patrol wagons armed with search-lights and machine-guns. The officers stationed at the stage door, failing to recognize us, refused to let us pass. A reporter who knew us whispered to the police sergeant in charge. "Oh, all right," he shouted, "but nobody else will be admitted. The place is overcrowded."

The sergeant had lied; the house was only half filled. The police were keeping the people from getting in, and at seven o'clock they had ordered the doors locked. While they were denying the right of entry to workers, they permitted scores of half-drunken sailors and soldiers to enter the hall. The balcony and the front seats were filled with them. They talked loudly, made vulgar remarks, jeered, hooted, and otherwise behaved as befits men who are preparing to make the world safe for democracy.

In the room behind the stage were officials from the Department of Justice, members of the Federal attorney's office, United States marshals, detectives from the "Anarchist Squad," and reporters. The scene looked as if set for bloodshed. The representatives of law and order were obviously keyed up for trouble.

Among the "alien enemies" in the hall and on the platform were men and women prominent in the field of education, art, and letters. One of them was the distinguished Irish rebel Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington, the widow of the pacifist author murdered in the Dublin uprising the previous year. A lover of peace and an eloquent pleader for freedom and justice, she was a sweet and gentle soul. In her was personified