



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

Volume Two

CHAPTER XLV



The miracle in Russia

No less fine was our Bill in the personal relationships of life. Charming and jovial, he was a splendid companion, dependable in every emergency and especially in difficult situations. A staunch and brave friend, Bill insisted on accompanying Sasha when the latter was in danger of attack by San Francisco detectives because of his work in behalf of Mooney. On Sasha's journey to various cities Bill acted as his self-constituted body-guard, and it afforded me great relief to know that any person attempting to do violence to Sasha would meet with the additional resistance of our stout-hearted Bill.

With the first news of the miracle that had taken place in Russia, Shatoff began organizing the thousands of his radical compatriots eager to return home. Like a true captain of a ship he had determined to see everyone safely on his way, without thought of himself. He would go last, he told us, when we urged that his experience and abilities would be more valuable in Russia than in America. He remained until his own departure had grown almost perilous.

I had known for some time of the presence in New York of Mme Alexandra Kolontay and Leon Trotsky. From the former I had received several letters and a copy of her book on woman's share in the world's work. She had asked me to meet her, but I had been unable to spare the time. Later on I had invited her to dinner, but she was prevented by illness from coming. Leon Trotsky I had also never met before, but I happened to be in the city when an announcement was made of a farewell meeting which he was to address before leaving for Russia. I attended the gathering. After several rather dull speakers Trotsky was introduced. A man of medium height, with haggard cheeks, reddish hair, and straggling red beard stepped briskly forward. His speech, first in Russian and then in German, was powerful and electrifying. I did not agree with his political attitude; he was a Menshevik (Social Democrat), and as such far removed from us. But his analysis of the causes of the war was brilliant, his denunciation of the ineffective Provisional Government in Russia scathing, and his presentation of the conditions that led up to the Revolution illuminating. He closed his two hours' talk with an eloquent tribute to the working masses of his native land. The audience was roused to a high pitch of enthusiasm, and Sasha and I heartily joined in the ovation given the speaker. We fully shared his profound faith in the future of Russia.

After the meeting we met Trotsky to bid him good-bye. He knew