



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

Volume Two

CHAPTER XLV



The prosecution is resourceful

unable to secure a competent man for May 18. The State had evidently been apprised of that fact; therefore the stenographic detective was very convenient for the prosecution.

We produced a number of witnesses to show that the phrase "we believe in violence and we will use violence" had never been uttered by me or any other speaker at our gatherings. Our first witness was Leonard D. Abbott, admired by everybody for his charm and respected even by the most conservative for his sincerity. He had presided at the meetings of May 18 and June 4. He denied emphatically that I had used the words attributed to me at the Harlem River Casino or anywhere else. In fact, he told the Court, he had been somewhat disappointed with my speech, because he had expected a more extreme attitude. As to my having advised young men not to register, that could easily be disproved by a letter I had sent to the gathering at the *Mother Earth* office on May 9, Leonard stated.

His testimony was supported by a conscientious objector who related that he had gone to our office for advice about registration and had been told by us that we preferred to leave registration or military service to the conscience of those eligible for the draft. After him came Helen Boardman, Martha Gruening, Rebecca Shelley, Anna Sloan, and Nina Liederman. These women had all worked with us from the very beginning of the No-Conscription campaign, and they reiterated that they had never heard us urge anyone not to register.

The Federal Attorney demanded that we produce the original text of my letter, insinuating that the contents had been changed in the transcription. He knew that the original copy, like most of our other papers and documents, had been confiscated in the raid and was now in his possession. Yet he had the effrontery to make the demand. He did not produce the letter; it would have belied the charge against me.

However, the prosecution was resourceful; other devices were tried out. Now it was an attempt to play on the prejudices of the jury by creating the impression that our witnesses were mostly foreigners. Much to the chagrin of Federal Attorney Content, it soon developed that most of them had a background older than his own. Helen Boardman, for instance, was the sort of foreigner whose ancestors had come over in the Mayflower, and Anna Sloan was of old Irish-American stock. He had the same poor luck with our men witnesses, among whom were John Reed, Lincoln Steffens, Bolton Hall, and other "real" Americans.