



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

Volume Two

CHAPTER XLV



We outline our case

Sasha followed the prosecution with a brief outline of our case. He declared that the charge of conspiracy was the height of absurdity, considering that he and his co-defendant had openly propagated anti-militarism for twenty-eight years. It was therefore a conspiracy known to a hundred millions of our population. As Sasha continued talking, presenting our case with keen logic and incisive manner, some of the jurymen seemed impressed and showed lively interest. Content did not fail to take note of it. At the first opportunity he picked up a copy of *Mother Earth* of July 1914. I had quite forgotten that several copies of that issue had been left in our office. Some of the boys and girls who had participated in the employment campaign that Sasha had organized and in the demonstration after the Lexington tenement explosion had long drifted out of our ranks. Most of them had proved worthless, carried away by momentary excitement, but their violent effusions had unfortunately remained in cold print and they were now taken advantage of by the prosecution. Content proceeded to read the choicest bits, straining to impress the jury that all of us sponsored physical force and the use of dynamite. "It is true, Miss Goldman was at that time absent on a tour," he remarked, "and she could therefore not be held responsible for the articles in this particular number." It was an attempt to throw the entire burden on Sasha. I was on my feet before he got through. "The prosecutor knows perfectly well," I declared, "that I am the owner and publisher of *Mother Earth*, and that I am responsible for everything that appears in the magazine, whether I happen to be present at its publication or not." I demanded whether we were being tried for ancient history; otherwise it was difficult to understand why an issue that had appeared three years before the United States went into the war, which had neither been held up by the postal authorities nor objected to by the State of New York, should now be used in the case. It was irrelevant, I declared. But my objections were ruled out by His Honour.

Every day increased the tension in court. The atmosphere grew more antagonistic, the official attendants more insulting. Our friends were either kept out or treated roughly when they succeeded in gaining admittance. On the street below, a recruiting station had been erected, and patriotic harangues mingled with the music of a military band. Each time the national anthem was struck up, everybody in court was commanded to rise, the soldiers present standing at attention. One of our girls refused to get up and she was dragged out of the room by