



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

Volume Two

CHAPTER XLV

We plan a meeting at Forward Hall

The next morning the *World* proclaimed that "Rioting accompanied the meeting of the No-Conscription League at Hunt's Point Palace. Many were injured and twelve arrests made. Soldiers in uniform sneered at the speakers. After adjournment the real riot began in the adjacent streets."

The alleged riot was of editorial making and seemed a deliberate attempt to stop further protests against conscription. The police took the hint. They issued orders to the hall-keepers not to rent their premises for any meeting to be addressed by Alexander Berkman or Emma Goldman. Not even the owners of places we had been using for years dared disobey. They were sorry, they said; they did not fear arrest, but the soldiers had threatened their lives and property. We secured Forward Hall, on East Broadway, which belonged to the Jewish Socialist Party. It was small for our purpose, barely big enough to seat a thousand people, but no other place was to be had in entire New York. The awed silence of the pacifist and anti-military organizations which followed the passing of the registration bill made it doubly imperative for us to continue the work. We scheduled a mass meeting for June 14.

It was not necessary for us to print announcements. We merely called up the newspapers, and they did the rest. They denounced our impudence in continuing anti-war activities, and they sharply criticized the authorities for failing to stop us. As a matter of fact, the police were working overtime waylaying draft-evaders. They arrested thousands, but many more had refused to register. The press did not report the actual state of affairs; it did not care to make it known that large numbers of Americans had the manhood to defy the government. We knew through our own channels that thousands had determined not to shoulder a gun against people who were as innocent as themselves in causing the world-slaughter.

One day, while I was dictating letters to my secretary, an old man came into the *Mother Earth* office and asked for Berkman. Sasha was engaged in the rear room. Engrossed in work, I did not take the time even to invite the caller to sit down. I pointed to the back, indicating that he might enter. In a few minutes Sasha called me in. He introduced the visitor as James Hallbeck, for years a subscriber of *Mother Earth* and the *Blast*, whom he had met in San Francisco. The name was familiar to me and I remembered the man's ready response to our appeals. Sasha told me that the comrade wanted to make a