



Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*

Volume Two

CHAPTER XLV

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We succeed in securing Sasha's release

cation of the extent to which the press would go to help dispose of undesirable elements.

The Federal grand jury brought in an indictment charging us with conspiracy to defeat the "selective" draft. The maximum penalty for this offence was two years' imprisonment and ten thousand dollars' fine. Our trial was set for June 27. I had only five days to prepare for my defense, while Sasha was still in the Tombs. It was imperative to concentrate all our energies on raising his bail.

But there was Ben, once more unable to face a vital issue and emotionally torn betwixt and between. No court decision had yet been handed down on his appeal from the Cleveland conviction. He had returned to New York when we began our No-Conscription campaign, and with his usual energy he had thrown himself into the work. All went well for some weeks, and then Ben again became, as he had so often before, a prey to his emotional upheavals. This time it was the young woman of his Sunday class. She was neither in danger nor in want, and her child was not expected for months to come. But Ben succumbed. At the very height of our anti-war campaign he left for Chicago to join the prospective mother. His failure to remain at his post at such a critical moment both exasperated and pained me. In vain I sought to explain away his apparent lack of stamina and courage by remembering that he could not have foreseen our arrest. Yet he had not returned when he knew that we were already in custody. Did it not prove breach of faith? The thought that Ben would deny me in my hour of need was tormenting. I felt deeply grieved and humiliated at the same time.

At last we succeeded in procuring the twenty-five-thousand-dollar cash bond demanded for Sasha, and on June 25 he was released from the Tombs. We were entirely at one regarding our trial. We did not believe in the law and its machinery, and we knew that we could expect no justice. We would therefore completely ignore what was to us a mere farce; we would refuse to participate in the court proceedings. Should this method prove impractical, we would plead our own case, not in order to defend ourselves, but to give public utterance to our ideas. We decided to go into court without an attorney. Our resolve was not due to any dissatisfaction with our counsel, Harry Weinberger. On the contrary, we could have wished for no abler attorney and more devoted friend. He had already rendered us services far beyond any monetary recompense, and he had done so although full