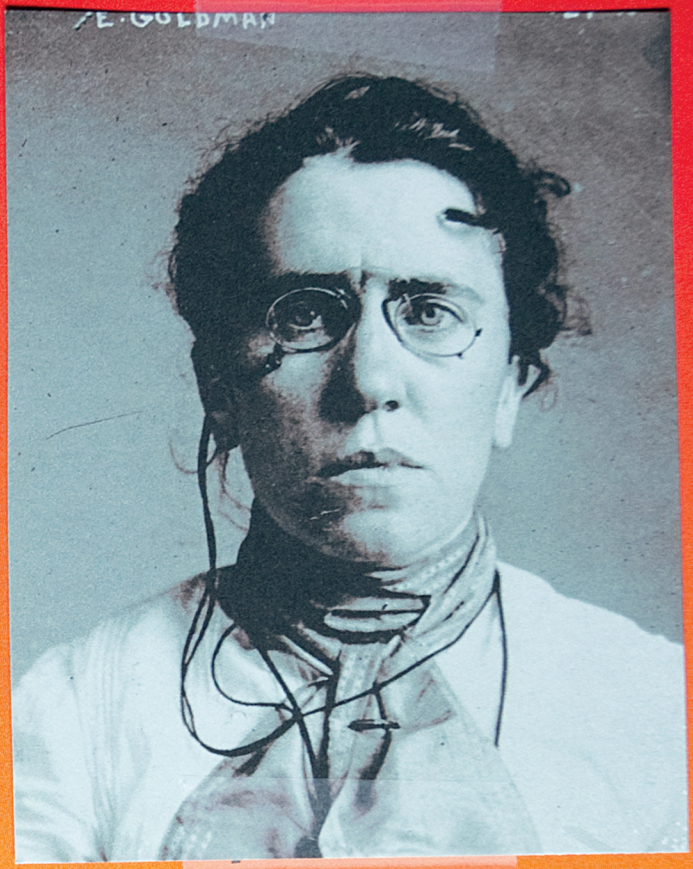
E. GOLDMAN

Emma Goldman

The

Assassination of McKinley

1.

On September 5, 1901, I came to St. Louis for the purpose of selling a new kind of album, which my friend Ed Brady had invented in collaboration with another man, his partner in the venture. The following day, September 6, I canvassed every important stationery and novelty store in the city for orders for Ed's firm, but I failed to interest anyone in my samples. Only in one store was I told to call the next day to see the boss. As I stood at a street-corner wearily waiting for a car, I heard a newsboy cry: "Extra! Extra! President McKinley shot!" I bought a paper, but the car was so jammed

that it was impossible to read. Around me people were talking about the shooting of the President.

Carl Nold, who had done so much for my dear Sasha (Alexander Berkman), had arrived at my house before me. He had already read the account. The President had been shot at the Exposition grounds in Buffalo by a young man by the name of Leon Czolgosz. "I never heard the name," Carl said, "have you?"

"No, never," I replied.

"It is fortunate that you are here and not in Buffalo," he continued. "As usual, the papers will connect you with this act."

"Nonsense." I said. "The American press is fantastic enough, but it would hardly concoct such a crazy story."

The next morning I went to the stationery store to see the owner. After considerable persuasion I succeeded in getting an order amounting to a thousand dollars, the largest

I had ever secured. Naturally I was very happy over it. While I was waiting for the man to fill out his order, I caught the headline of the newspaper lying on his desk: "ASSASSIN OF PRESIDENT MCKINLEY AN ANARCHIST. CONFESSES TO HAVING BEEN INCITED BY EMMA GOLDMAN. WOMAN ANARCHIST WANTED."

By great effort I strove to preserve my composure, completed the business, and walked out of the store. At the next corner I bought several papers and went to a restaurant to read them. They were filled with the details of the tragedy, reporting also the police raid of the Isaak house in Chicago and the arrest of everyone found there. Isaak was then editor of the anarchistic *Free Society*. The authorities were going to hold the prisoners until Emma Goldman was found, the papers stated. Already two hundred detectives had been sent out throughout the country to track down Emma Goldman.

On the inside page of one of the papers was a picture of McKinley's slayer. "Why, that's Nieman!" I gasped. The same Nieman who had asked me for anarchistic literature some time ago at one of my lectures in Cleveland!

When I was through with the papers, it became clear to me that I must immediately go to Chicago. The Isaak family, Hippolyte Havel, our old comrade Jay Fox, a most active man in the labor movement, and a number of others were being held without bail until I should be found. It was plainly my duty to surrender myself. I knew there was neither reason nor the least proof to connect me with the shooting. I would go to Chicago.

Stepping into the street, I bumped into V., the "rich man from New Mexico" who had managed my lecture in Los Angeles some years before. The moment he saw me he turned white with fear.

"For God's sake, Emma, what are you doing

here?" he cried in a quavering voice. "Don't you know the police of the whole country are looking for you?"

While he was speaking, his eyes roved uneasily over the street. It was evident he was panicky. I had to make sure that he would not disclose my presence in the city. Familiarly I took his arm and whispered: "Let's go to some quiet place."

Sitting in a corner, away from possible eavesdroppers, I said to him: "Once you assured me of your undying love. You even made me an offer of marriage. It was only four years ago. Is anything left of that affection? If so, will you give me your word of honor that you will not breathe to anybody that you have seen me here? I do not want to be arrested in St. Louis— I intend to give Chicago that honor. Tell me quickly if I can depend on you to keep silent." He promised solemnly.

When we reached the street, he walked away

in great haste. I was sure he would keep his word, but I knew that my former devotee was no hero.

When I told Carl I was going to Chicago, he said that I must be out of my senses. He pleaded with me to give up the idea, but I remained adamant. He left me to gather up a few trusted friends, whose opinion he knew I valued, hoping they would be able to persuade me not to surrender myself. They argued with me for hours, but they failed to change my decision. I told them jokingly that they had better give me a good send-off, as we probably should never again have an opportunity for a jolly evening together. They engaged a private dining room at a restaurant, where we were treated to a Lucullan meal, and then they accompanied me to the Wabash Station, Carl having secured a sleeper for me.

In the morning the car was agog with the Buffalo tragedy, Czolgosz, and Emma Gold-

man. "A beast, a bloodthirsty monster!" I heard someone say. "She should have been locked up long ago." "Locked up nothing!" another retorted. "She should be strung up to the first lamppost."

I listened to the good Christians while resting in my berth. I chuckled to myself at the thought of how they would look if I were to step out and announce: "Here, ladies and gentlemen, true followers of the gentle Jesus, here is Emma Goldman!" But I did not have the heart to cause them such a shock and I remained behind my curtain.

Half an hour before the train pulled into the station I got dressed. I wore a small sailor hat with a bright blue veil, much in style then. I left my glasses off and pulled the veil over my face. The platform was jammed with people, among them several men who looked like detectives. I asked a fellow passenger to be kind enough to keep an eye on my two suitcases while I went in

search of a porter. I finally got one, walking the whole length of the platform to my luggage, then back again with the porter to the check-room. Securing my receipt, I left the station.

The only person in Chicago who knew of my coming was my good friend Max Baginski, to whom I had sent a cautious wire. I caught sight of him before he saw me. Passing him slowly, I whispered: "Walk toward the next street. I'll do the same." No one seemed to follow me. After some zigzagging with Max and changing half a dozen street-cars we reached the apartment where he and Millie ("Puck") lived. Both of them expressed the greatest anxiety about my safety, Max insisting that it was insanity to have come to Chicago. The situation, he said, was a repetition of 1887; the press and the police were thirsty for blood. "It's *your* blood they want," he repeated, while he and Millie implored me to leave the country.

I was determined to remain in Chicago.

I realized that I could not stay at their home, nor with any other foreign comrades. I had, however, American friends who were not known as anarchists. Max notified Mr. and Mrs. N., who I knew were very fond of me, of my presence and they came at once. They also were worried about me, but they thought I would be safe with them. It was to be only for two days, as I was planning to give myself up to the police as quickly as possible.

Mr. N., the son of a wealthy preacher, lived in a fashionable neighborhood. "Imagine anybody believing I would shelter Emma Goldman!" he said when we had arrived in his house. Late in the afternoon, on Monday, when Mr. N. returned from his office, he informed me that there was a chance to get five thousand dollars from the *Chicago Tribune* for a scoop on an interview. "Fine!" I replied. "We shall need money to fight my case." We agreed that Mr. N. should bring the newspaper repre-

sentative to his apartment the next morning, and then the three of us would ride down to police headquarters together. In the evening Max and Millie arrived. I had never before seen my friends in such a state of nervous excitement. Max reiterated that I must get away, else I was putting my head in the noose. "If you go to the police, you will never come out alive," he warned me. "It will be the same as with Albert Parsons. You must let us get you over to Canada."

Millie took me aside. "Since Friday," she said, "Max has not slept or taken food. He walks the floor all night and keeps on saying: 'Emma is lost; they will kill her.'" She begged me to soothe Max by promising him that I would escape to Canada, even if I did not intend doing so. I consented and asked Max to make the necessary arrangements to get me away. Overjoyed, he clasped me in his arms. We arranged for Max and Millie to come the

next morning with an outfit of clothes to disguise me.

I spent the greater part of the night tearing up letters and papers and destroying what was likely to involve my friends. All preparations completed, I went to sleep. In the morning Mrs. N. left for her office, while her husband went to the *Chicago Tribune*. We agreed that if anyone called, I was to pretend to be the maid.

2.

About nine o'clock, while taking a bath, I heard a sound as if someone were scratching on the windowsill. I paid no attention to it at first. I finished my bath leisurely and began to dress. Then came a crash of glass. I threw my kimono over me and went into the dining room to investigate. A man was clutching the windowsill with one hand while holding a gun in the

other. We were on the third floor and there was no fire-escape. I called out: "Look out, you'll break your neck!"

"Why the hell don't you open the door? Are you deaf?"

He swung through the window and was in the room. I walked over to the entrance and unlocked it. Twelve men, led by a giant, crowded into the apartment. The leader grabbed me by the arm, bellowing: "Who are you?"

"I not speak English—Swedish servant-girl."

He released his hold and ordered his men to search the place. Turning to me, he yelled: "Stand back! We're looking for Emma Goldman." Then he held up a photograph to me. "See this? We want this woman. Where is she?"

I pointed my finger at the picture and said: "This woman I not see here. This woman big—you look in those small boxes will not find her —she too big."

"Oh, shut up!" he bawled. "You can't tell what them anarchists will do."

After they had searched the house, turning everything upside down, the giant walked over to the bookshelves. "Hell, this is a reg'lar preacher's house," he remarked. "Look at them books. I don't think Emma Goldman would be here." They were about to leave when one of the detectives suddenly called: "Here, Captain Schuettler, what about this?" It was my fountain pen, a gift from a friend, with my name on it. I had overlooked it. "By golly, that's a find!" cried the captain. "She must have been here and she may come back." He ordered two of his men to remain behind.

I saw that the game was up. There was no sign of Mr. N. or the *Tribune* man, and it could serve no purpose to keep the farce up longer.

"I am Emma Goldman," I announced.

For a moment Schuettler and his men stood there as if petrified. Then the captain roared:

"Well, I'll be damned! You're the shrewdest crook I ever met! Take her, quick!"

When I stepped into the cab waiting at the curb, I saw N. approaching in company of the *Tribune* man. It was too late for the scoop, and I did not want my host recognized. I pretended not to see them.

I had often heard of the third degree used by the police in various American cities to extort confessions, but I myself had never been subjected to it. I had been arrested a number of times since 1893; no violence, however, had ever been practiced on me. On the day of my arrest, which was September 10, I was kept at police headquarters in a stifling room and grilled to exhaustion from 10:30 A.M. till 7 P.M. At least fifty detectives passed me, each shaking his fist in my face and threatening me with the direst things. One yelled: "You was with Czolgosz in Buffalo! I saw you myself, right in front of Convention Hall. Better confess,

d'you hear?" Another: "Look here, Goldman, I seen you with that son of a b—— at the fair! Don't you lie now—I seen you, I tell you!" Again: "You've faked enough—you keep this up and sure's you're born you'll get the chair. Your lover has confessed. He said it was your speech made him shoot the President." I knew they were lying; I knew I had not been with Czolgosz except for a few minutes in Cleveland on May 5, and for half an hour in Chicago on July 12. Schuettler was most ferocious. His massive bulk towered above me, bellowing: "If you don't confess, you'll go the way of those bastard Haymarket anarchists."

I reiterated the story I had told them when first brought to police headquarters, explaining where I had been and with whom. But they would not believe me and kept on bullying and abusing me. My head throbbed, my throat and lips felt parched. A large pitcher of water stood on the table before me, but every time

I stretched out my hand for it, a detective would say: "You can drink all you want, but first answer me. When were you with Czolgosz the day he shot the President?" The torture continued for hours. Finally I was taken to the Harrison street police station and locked in a barred enclosure, exposed to view from every side.

Presently the matron came to inquire if I wanted supper. "No, but water," I said, "and something for my head." She returned with a tin pitcher of tepid water which I gulped down. She could give me nothing for my head except a cold compress. It proved very soothing, and I soon fell asleep.

I woke up with a burning sensation. A plain-clothes man held a reflector in front of me, close to my eyes. I leaped up and pushed him away with all my strength, crying: "You're burning my eyes!" "We'll burn more before we get through with you!" he retorted. With short intermissions this was repeated during three

nights. On the third night several detectives entered my cell. "We've got the right dope on you now," they announced. "It was you who financed Czolgosz and you got the money from Dr. Kaplan in Buffalo. We have him all right, and he's confessed everything. Now what you got to say?"

"Nothing more than I have already said," I repeated. "I know nothing about the act."

Since my arrest I had had no word from my friends, nor had anyone come to see me. I realized that I was being kept *incommunicado*. I did get letters, however, most of them unsigned. "You damn bitch of an anarchist," one of them read, "I wish I could get at you. I would tear your heart out and feed it to my dog." "Murderous Emma Goldman," another wrote, "you will burn in hell-fire for your treachery to our country." A third cheerfully promised: "We will cut your tongue out, soak your carcass in oil, and burn you alive."

On the fifth day after my arrest I received a wire. It was from Ed, promising the backing of his firm. "Do not hesitate to use our name. We stand by you to the last." I was glad of the assurance, because it relieved me of the need of keeping silent about my movements on business for Ed's house.

The same evening, Chief of Police O'Neill of Chicago came to my cell. He informed me that he would like to have a quiet talk with me. "I have no wish to bully or coerce you," he said. "Perhaps I can help you."

"It would indeed be a strange experience to have help from a chief of police," I replied, "but I am quite willing to answer your questions."

He asked me to give him a detailed account of my movements from May 5, when I had first met Czolgosz, until the day of my arrest in Chicago. I gave him the requested information, but without mentioning my visit to Sasha or the names of the comrades who had been my hosts.

As there was no longer any need of shielding Dr. Kaplan, the Isaaks, or Hippolyte, I was in a position to give practically a complete account. When I concluded—what I said being taken down in shorthand—Chief O'Neill remarked: "Unless you're a very clever actress, you are certainly innocent. I think you are innocent, and I am going to do my part to help you out." I was too amazed to thank him; I had never before heard such a tone from a police officer. At the same time I was skeptical of the success of his efforts, even if he should try to do something for me.

Immediately following my conference with the chief I became aware of a decided change in my treatment. My cell door was left unlocked day and night, and I was told by the matron that I could stay in the large room, use the rocking-chair and the table there, order my own food and papers, receive and send out mail. I began at once to lead the life of a society lady, receiv-

ing callers all day long, mostly newspaper people who came not so much for interviews as to talk, smoke, and relate funny stories. Others, again, came out of curiosity. Some women reporters brought gifts of books and toilet articles. Most attentive was Katherine Leckie of the Hearst papers. She possessed a better intellect than Nelly Bly, who used to visit me in the Tombs in 1893, and had a much finer social feeling. A strong and ardent feminist, she was at the same time devoted to the cause of labor. Katherine Leckie was the first to take my story of the third degree. She became so outraged at hearing it that she undertook to canvass the various women's organizations in order to induce them to take the matter up.

One day a representative of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* was announced. With joy I saw Max, who whispered to me that he could secure admission only in that capacity. He informed me that he

had received a letter from Ed with the news that Hearst had sent a representative to Justus Schwab, whose saloon was then one of the most celebrated meeting places for radicals in New York, with an offer of twenty thousand dollars if I would come to New York and give him an exclusive interview. The money would be deposited in a bank acceptable to Justus and Ed. Both of them were convinced, Max said, that Hearst would spend any amount to railroad me. "He needs it to whitewash himself of the charge of having incited Czolgosz to shoot McKinley," he explained.

The Republican papers of the country had been carrying front-page stories connecting Hearst with Czolgosz, because all through the McKinley administration the Hearst press had violently attacked the President. One of the newspapers had cartooned the publisher standing behind Czolgosz, handing him a match to

light the fuse of a bomb. Now Hearst was among the loudest of those demanding the extermination of the anarchists.

"Twenty thousand dollars!" I exclaimed. "What a pity Ed's letter arrived too late! I certainly would have accepted the proposal. Think of the fight we could have made and the propaganda!"

"It is well you still keep your sense of humor," Max remarked, "but I am happy the letter came too late. Your situation is serious enough without Mr. Hearst to make it worse."

Another visitor was a lawyer from Clarence Darrow's office. He had come to warn me that I was hurting my case by my persistent defense of Czolgosz; the man was crazy and I should admit it. "No prominent attorney will accept your defense if you ally yourself with the assassin of the President," he assured me. "In fact, you stand in imminent danger of being held as an accessory to the crime."

I demanded to know why Mr. Darrow himself did not come if he was so concerned, but his representative was evasive. He continued to paint my case in sinister colors. My chances of escape were few at best, it seemed, too few for me to allow any sentimentality to aggravate it. Czolgosz was insane, the man insisted; everybody could see it, and, besides, he was a bad sort to have involved me, a coward hiding behind a woman's skirts. His talk was repugnant to me. I informed him that I was not willing to swear away the reason, character, or life of a defenseless human being and that I wanted no assistance from his chief.

The country was in a panic. Judging by the press, I was sure that it was the people of the United States and not Czolgosz that had gone mad. Not since 1887 had there been evidenced such lust for blood, such savagery of vengeance. "Anarchists must be exterminated!" the papers raved. "They should be dumped into the sea;

there is no place for the vultures under our flag. Emma Goldman has been allowed to ply her trade of murder too long. She should be forced to share the fate of her dupes."

It was a repetition of the dark Chicago days. Fourteen years, years of painful growth, yet fascinating and fruitful years. And now the end! The end? I was only thirty-two and there was yet so much, so very much, undone. And the boy in Buffalo—his life had scarce begun. What was his life, I wondered; what the forces that drove him to this doom? "I did it for the working people," he was reported to have said. The people! Sasha also had tried to do something for the people in his attempt on Frick's life; and our brave Chicago martyrs, and the others in every land and time. But the people are asleep; they remain indifferent. They forge their own chains and do the bidding of their masters to crucify their Christs.

3.

Buffalo was pressing for my extradition, but Chicago asked for authentic data on the case. I had already been given several hearings in court, and on each occasion the district attorney from Buffalo had presented much circumstantial evidence to induce the State of Illinois to surrender me. But Illinois demanded direct proofs. There was a hitch somewhere. I thought it likely that Chief of Police O'Neill was behind the matter.

The chief's attitude toward me had changed the behavior of every officer in the Harrison street police station. The matron and the two policemen assigned to watch my cell began to lavish attentions on me. The officer on night duty now often appeared with his arms full of parcels, containing fruit, candy, and drinks stronger than grape juice. "From a friend who

keeps a saloon round the corner," he would say, "an admirer of yours." A matron presented me with flowers from the same unknown. One day she brought me the message that he was going to send a grand supper for the coming Sunday.

"Who is the man and why should he admire me?" I inquired.

"Well, we're all Democrats, and McKinley is a Republican," she replied.

"You don't mean you're glad McKinley was shot?" I exclaimed.

"Not glad exactly, but not sorry, neither," she said. "We have to pretend, you know, but we're none of us excited about it."

"I didn't want McKinley killed," I told her.

"We know that," she smiled, "but you're standing up for the boy."

I wondered how many more people in America were pretending the same kind of sympathy with the stricken President as my friends in the station-house.

Buffalo failed to produce evidence to justify my extradition. Chicago was getting weary of the game of hide-and-seek. The authorities would not turn me over to Buffalo, yet at the same time they did not feel like letting me go entirely free. By way of compromise I was put under twenty-thousand-dollar bail. The Isaak group had been put under fifteen-thousand-dollar bail. I knew that it would be almost impossible for our people to raise a total of thirty-five thousand dollars within a few days. I insisted on the others being bailed out first. Thereupon I was transferred to the Cook county jail.

The night before my transfer was Sunday. My saloonkeeper admirer kept his word; he sent over a huge tray filled with numerous goodies: a big turkey, with all the trimmings, including wine and flowers. A note came with it informing me that he was willing to put up five thousand dollars toward my bail.

"A strange saloonkeeper!" I remarked.

"Not at all," the matron replied. "He's the ward heeler and he hates the Republicans worse than the Devil."

I invited her, my two policemen, and several other officers present to join me in the celebration. They assured me that nothing like it had ever before happened to them—a prisoner playing host to her keepers. "You mean a dangerous anarchist having as guests the guardians of law and order," I corrected. When everybody had left, I noticed that my day watchman lingered behind. I inquired whether he had been changed to night duty. "No," he replied, "I just wanted to tell you that you are not the first anarchist I've been assigned to watch. I was on duty when Parsons and his comrades were in here."

Peculiar and inexplicable the ways of life, intricate the chain of events! Here I was, the spiritual child of those men, imprisoned in the city that had taken their lives, in the same jail,

even under the guardianship of the very man who had kept watch in their silent hours. Tomorrow I should be taken to the Cook county jail, within whose walls Parsons, Spies, Engel, and Fischer had been hanged. Strange, indeed, the complex forces that had bound me to those martyrs through all my socially conscious years! And now events were bringing me nearer and nearer—perhaps to a similar end?

The newspapers had published rumors about mobs ready to attack the Harrison street station and planning violence to Emma Goldman before she could be taken to the Cook county jail. Monday morning, flanked by a heavily armed guard, I was led out of the station house. There were not a dozen people in sight, mostly curiosity-seekers. As usual, the press had deliberately tried to incite a riot.

Ahead of me were two handcuffed prisoners roughly hustled about by the officers. When we reached the patrol wagon, surrounded by more

police, their guns ready for action, I found myself close to the two men. Their features could not be distinguished: their heads were bound up in bandages, leaving only their eyes free. As they stepped to the patrol wagon a policeman hit one of them on the head with his club, at the same time pushing the other prisoner violently into the wagon. They fell over each other, one of them shrieking with pain. I got in next, then turned to the officer. "You brute," I said, "how dare you beat that helpless fellow?" The next thing I knew, I was sent reeling to the floor. He had landed his fist on my jaw, knocking out a tooth and covering my face with blood. Then he pulled me up, shoved me into the seat, and yelled: "Another word from you, you damned anarchist, and I'll break every bone in your body!"

I arrived at the office of the county jail with my waist and skirt covered with blood, my face aching fearfully. No one showed the slightest

interest or bothered to ask how I came to be in such a battered condition. They did not even give me water to wash up. For two hours I was kept in a room in the middle of which stood a long table. Finally a woman arrived who informed me that I would have to be searched. "All right, go ahead," I said. "Strip and get on the table," she ordered. I had been repeatedly searched, but I had never before been offered such an insult.

"You'll have to kill me first, or get your keepers to put me on the table by force," I declared. "You'll never get me to do it otherwise."

She hurried out, and I remained alone. After a long wait another woman came in and led me upstairs, where the matron of the tier took charge of me. She was the first to inquire what was the matter with me. After assigning me to a cell she brought a hot-water bottle and suggested that I lie down and get some rest.

The following afternoon Katherine Leckie

visited me. I was taken into a room provided with a double wire screen. It was semi-dark, but as soon as Katherine saw me, she cried: "What on God's earth has happened to you? Your face is all twisted!" No mirror, not even of the smallest size, being allowed in the jail, I was not aware how I looked, though my eyes and lips felt queer to the touch. I told Katherine of my encounter with the policeman's fist. She left swearing vengeance and promising to return after seeing Chief O'Neill.

Toward evening she came back to let me know that the chief had assured her the officer would be punished if I would identify him among the guards of the transport. I refused. I had hardly looked at the man's face and I was not sure I could recognize him. Moreover, I told Katherine, much to her disappointment, that the dismissal of the officer would not restore my tooth; neither would it do

away with police brutality. "It is the system I am fighting, my dear Katherine, not the particular offender," I said. But she was not convinced; she wanted something done to arouse popular indignation against such savagery. "Dismissing wouldn't be enough," she persisted.

"He should be tried for assault."

Poor Katherine was not aware that I knew she could do nothing. She was not even in a position to speak through her own paper: her story about the third degree had been suppressed. She promptly replied by resigning; she would no longer be connected with such a cowardly journal, she had told the editor. Yet not a word had she breathed to me of her trouble. I learned the story from a reporter of another Chicago daily.

4.

One evening, while engrossed in a book, I was surprised by several detectives and reporters. "The President has just died," they announced. "How do you feel about it? Aren't you sorry?"

"Is it possible," I asked, "that in the entire United States only the President passed away on this day? Surely many others have also died at the same time, perhaps in poverty and destitution, leaving helpless dependents behind. Why do you expect me to feel more regret over the death of McKinley than of the rest?"

The pencils went flying. "My compassion has always been with the living," I continued. "The dead no longer need it. No doubt that is the reason why you all feel so sympathetic to the dead. You know that you'll never be called upon to make good your protestations."

"Damned good copy," a young reporter exclaimed, "but I think you're crazy."

I was glad when they left. My thoughts were with the boy in Buffalo, whose fate was now sealed. What tortures of mind and body were still to be his before he would be allowed to breathe his last! How would he meet the supreme moment? "I did it for the people," he had said. I paced my cell trying to analyze the probable motives that had decided his purpose.

Suddenly a thought flitted through my mind—that notice by Isaak in *Free Society*!—the charge of "spy" against Nieman because he had "asked suspicious questions and tried to get into the anarchist ranks." I had written Isaak at the time, demanding proofs for the outrageous accusation. As a result of my protest *Free Society* printed a retraction to the effect that a mistake had been made. It had relieved me and I had given the matter no further thought.

Now the whole situation appeared in a new light, clear and terrible. Czolgosz must have

read the charge; it must have hurt him to the quick to be so cruelly misjudged by the very people to whom he had come for inspiration. I recalled his eagerness to secure the right kind of books. It was apparent that he had sought in anarchism a solution of the wrongs he saw everywhere about him. No doubt it was that which had induced him to call on me and later on the Isaaks. Instead of finding help the poor youth saw himself attacked. Was it that experience, fearfully wounding his spirit, that had led to his act? There must also have been other causes, but perhaps his great urge had been to prove that he was sincere, that he felt with the oppressed, that he was no spy.

But why had he chosen the President rather than some more direct representative of the system of economic oppression and misery? Was it because he saw in McKinley the willing tool of Wall Street and of the new American imperialism that flowered under his administration? One of its first steps had been the

annexation of the Philippines, an act of treachery to the people whom America had pledged to set free during the Spanish War.

McKinley also typified a hostile and reactionary attitude to labor: he had repeatedly sided with the masters by sending troops into strike regions. All these circumstances, I felt, must have exerted a decisive influence upon poor Leon.

Throughout the night thoughts of the unfortunate boy kept crowding in my mind. In vain I sought to divest myself of the harassing reflections by reading. The dawning day still found me pacing my cell, Leon's beautiful face, pale and haunted, before me.

Again I was taken to court for a hearing and again the Buffalo authorities failed to produce evidence to connect me with Czolgosz's act. The Buffalo representative and the Chicago judge sitting on the case kept up a verbal fight for two hours, at the end of which Buffalo was robbed of its prey. I was set free.

Ever since my arrest the press of the country had been continually denouncing me as the instigator of Czolgosz's act, but after my discharge the newspapers published only a few lines in an inconspicuous corner to the effect that "after a month's detention Emma Goldman was found not to have been in complicity with the assassin of President McKinley."

Upon my release I was met by Max, Hippolyte, and other friends, with whom I went to the Isaak home. The charges against the comrades arrested in the Chicago raids had also been dismissed. Everyone was in high spirits over my escape from an apparently fatal situation.

"We can be grateful to whatever gods watch over you, Emma," said Isaak, "that you were arrested here and not in New York."

"The gods in this case must have been Chief of Police O'Neill," I said laughingly.

"Chief O'Neill!" my friends exclaimed. "What did he have to do with it?"

I told them about my interview with him and his promise of help. Jonathan Crane, a journalist friend of ours present, broke out into uproarious laughter. "You are more naïve than I should have expected, Emma Goldman," he said. "It wasn't you O'Neill cared a damn about! It was his own schemes. Being on the *Tribune*, I happen to know the inside story of the feud in the police department." Crane then related the efforts of Chief O'Neill to put several captains in the penitentiary for perjury and bribery. "Nothing could have come more opportunely for those blackguards than the cry of anarchy," he explained. "They seized upon it as the police did in 1887; it was their chance to pose as saviors of the country and incidentally to whitewash themselves. But it wasn't to O'Neill's interest to let those birds pose as heroes and get back into the department. That's why he worked for you. He's a shrewd Irishman. Just the same, we may be glad that the quarrel brought us back our Emma."

I asked my friends their opinion as to how the idea of connecting my name with Czolgosz had originated. "I refuse to believe that the boy made any kind of a confession or involved me in any way," I stated. "I cannot think that he was capable of inventing something which he must have known might mean my death. I'm convinced that no one with such a frank face could be so craven. It must have come from some other source."

"It did!" Hippolyte declared emphatically. "The whole dastardly story was started by a *Daily News* reporter who used to hang round here pretending to sympathize with our ideas. Late in the afternoon of September 6 he came to the house. He wanted to know all about a certain Czolgosz or Nieman. Had we associated with him? Was he an anarchist? And so forth. Well, you know what I think of reporters—I wouldn't give him any information. But unfortunately Isaak did."

"What was there to hide?" Isaak interrupted. "Everybody about here knew that we had met the man through Emma, and that he used to visit us. Besides, how was I to know that the reporter was going to fabricate such a lying story?"

5.

I urged the Chicago comrades to consider what could be done for the boy in the Buffalo jail. We could not save his life, but we could at least try to explain his act to the world and we should attempt to communicate with him, so that he might feel that he was not forsaken by us. Max doubted the possibility of reaching Czolgosz. He had received a note from a comrade in Buffalo informing him that no one was permitted to see Leon. I suggested that we secure an attorney. Without legal aid Czolgosz would be gagged and railroaded, as Sasha had been in the Frick case.

Isaak advised that a lawyer be engaged in the State of New York, and I decided to leave immediately for the East. My friends argued that it would be folly to do so; I should surely be arrested the moment I reached the city, and turned over to Buffalo, my fate sealed. But it was unthinkable to me to leave Czolgosz to his doom without making an effort in his behalf. No considerations of personal safety should influence us in the matter, I told my friends, adding that I would remain in Chicago for the public meeting that must be organized to explain our attitude toward Czolgosz and his *attentat*.

On the evening of the meeting one could not get within a block of Brand's Hall, where it was to be held. Strong detachments of police were dispersing the people by force. We tried to hire another hall, but the police had terrorized the hall-keepers. Our efforts to hold a meeting being frustrated, I resolved to state my position in *Free Society*.

"Leon Czolgosz and other men of his type," I wrote in my article, entitled, "The Tragedy of Buffalo,"

> far from being depraved creatures of low instincts are in reality supersensitive beings unable to bear up under too great social stress. They are driven to some violent expression, even at the sacrifice of their own lives, because they cannot supinely witness the misery and suffering of their fellows. The blame for such acts must be laid at the door of those who are responsible for the injustice and inhumanity which dominate the world.

After pointing out the social causes for such acts as that of Czolgosz, I concluded:

> As I write, my thoughts wander to the young man with the girlish face about to be put to death, pacing his cell, followed by cruel eyes:
>
> *Who watch him when he tries to weep*
> *And when he tries to pray,*
> *Who watch him lest himself should rob*
> *The prison of its prey.*

> My heart goes out to him in deep sympathy, as it goes out to all the victims of oppression and misery, to the martyrs past and future that die, the forerunners of a better and nobler life.

I turned the article over to Isaak, who promised to have it set up at once. The police and the press were continuing their hunt for anarchists throughout the country. Meetings were broken up and innocent people arrested. In various places persons suspected of being anarchists were subjected to violence. In Pittsburgh our good friend Harry Gordon was dragged out into the street and nearly lynched. A rope already around his neck, he was saved at the last moment by some bystanders who were touched by the pleading of Mrs. Gordon and her two children. In New York the office of the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* was attacked by a mob, the furniture demolished, and the type destroyed.

In no case did the police interfere with the

doings of the patriotic ruffians. Johann Most was arrested for an article in the *Freiheit* reproducing an essay on political violence by Karl Heinzen, the famous '48 revolutionist, then dead many years. Most was out on bail awaiting his trial. The German comrades in Chicago arranged an affair to raise funds for his defense and invited me to speak. I gladly consented.

Returning to the Isaak home after the meeting, I found the proofs of my article. Looking them over, I was surprised by a paragraph that changed the entire meaning of my statement. It was, I was sure, no other than Isaak, the editor, who was responsible for the change. I confronted him, demanding an explanation. He readily admitted that he had written the little paragraph, "to tone down the article," he explained, "in order to save *Free Society*."

"And incidentally your skin!" I retorted hotly. "For years you've been denouncing people as cowards who could not meet a dangerous

situation. Now that you yourself are face to face with one, you draw in your horns. At least you should have asked my permission to make the change."

It required a long discussion to alter Isaak's attitude. He saw that my view was sustained by the rest of the group—his son Abe, Hippolyte, and several others—whereupon he declared that he renounced all responsibility in the matter. My article finally appeared in its original form. Nothing happened to *Free Society*. But my faith in Isaak was shaken.

On my way back to New York I stopped off in Rochester. Arriving in the evening, I walked to my sister Helena's place in order to avoid recognition. A policeman was stationed at the house, but he did not know me. Everyone gasped when I made my appearance.

"How did you get by?" Helena cried. "Didn't you see the officer at the door?"

"Indeed I saw him, but he evidently didn't

see me," I laughed. "Don't you folks worry about any policeman; better give me a bath," I cried lightly. My nonchalance dispelled the family's nervous tension. Everybody laughed and Helena clung to me in unchanged love.

All through my incarceration my family had been very devoted to me. They had sent me telegrams and letters, offering money for my defense and any other help I might need. Not a word had they written about the persecution they had been subjected to on my account. They had been pestered to distraction by reporters and kept under surveillance by the authorities. My father had been ostracized by his neighbors and had lost many customers at his little furniture store. At the same time he had also been excommunicated from the synagogue.

My sister Lena, though in poor health, had also been given no peace. She had been terrorized by the police ordering her daughter Stella to appear at headquarters, where they had kept

the child the whole day, plying her with questions about her aunt Emma Goldman. Stella had bravely refused to answer, defiantly proclaiming her pride and faith in her Tante Emma. Her courage, combined with her youth and beauty, had won general admiration, Helena said.

Even more cruel had been the teachers and pupils of the public school. "Your aunt Emma Goldman is a murderess," they had taunted our children. School was turned to a hideous nightmare for them. My nephews Saxe and Harry had suffered most. Harry's grief over the violent death of his hero was more real than with most of the adults in the country. He deeply felt the disgrace that his own mother's sister should be charged with responsibility for it. Worse yet, his schoolmates denounced him as an anarchist and criminal. The persecution aggravated his misery and completely alienated him from me.

Saxe's unhappiness, on the other hand,

resulted from his strong feeling of loyalty to me. His mother and Aunt Helena loved Emma and they had told him she was innocent. They must know better than his schoolmates. Their boisterous aggressiveness had always repelled him; now more than ever he avoided them. My unexpected appearance and outwitting the officer on guard must have quickened Saxe's imagination and increased his admiration for me. His flushed face and shining eyes were eloquent of his emotion. He hovered near me all evening.

It was balm to my bruised spirit to find such a haven of love and peace in the circle of my family. Even my sister Lena, who had often in the past disapproved of my life, now showed warmest affection. Brother Herman and his gentle wife lavished attentions upon me. The imminent danger I had faced, which still threatened me, had served to establish a bond between my family and me stronger than we

had ever felt before. I wanted to prolong my happy stay in Rochester to recuperate from the ordeal of Chicago. But the thought of Czolgosz tormented me. I knew that in New York I could make some effort in his behalf.

At the Grand Central Station I was met by my brother Yegor and the two chums who had spent that wonderful month with us in Rochester long before the Czolgosz misery. Yegor looked distressed; he had tried hard to find a place for me, but had failed. No one would rent even a furnished room to Emma Goldman. Our friends who happened to have a vacant room would not run the risk of my staying with them for fear of being evicted. One of the boys offered to let me have his room for a few nights. "No need to worry," I comforted Yegor. "I am taken care of for the present, and in the meantime I will find an apartment."

After a long search for a flat I realized that my brother had not been exaggerating. No one

would have me. I went to see a young prostitute I had once nursed. "Sure, kid, stay right here!" she welcomed me. "I'm tickled to death to have you. I'll bunk with a girlfriend for a while."

6.

The encouraging telegram I had received in Chicago from Ed had been followed by a number of letters assuring me that I could count on him for whatever I might need: money, help and advice, and, above all, his friendship. It was good to know that Ed remained so staunch. When we met upon my return to New York, he offered me the use of his apartment while he and his family would be staying with friends. "You won't find much changed in my place," he remarked, "all your things are intact in the room that is my sanctum, where I often dream of our life together." I thanked him, but I could

not accept his generous proposal. He was too tactful to press the matter, except to inform me that his firm owed me several hundred dollars in commission.

"I need the money badly," I confided to Ed, "to send somebody to Buffalo to see Czolgosz. Possibly something can be done for him. We also ought to organize a mass meeting at once." He stared at me in bewilderment.

"My dear," he said, shaking his head, "you are evidently not aware of the panic in the city. No hall in New York can be had and no one except yourself would be willing to speak for Czolgosz."

"But no one is expected to eulogize his act!" I argued. "Surely there must be a few people in the radical ranks who are capable of sympathy for a doomed human being."

"Capable perhaps," he said doubtfully, "but not brave enough to voice it at this time."

"You may be right," I admitted, "but I intend to make sure of it."

A trusted person was dispatched to Buffalo, but he soon returned without having been able to visit Czolgosz. He reported that no one was permitted to see him. A sympathetic guard had disclosed to our messenger that Leon had repeatedly been beaten into unconsciousness. His physical appearance was such that no outsider was admitted, and for the same reason he could not be taken to court. My friend further reported that, notwithstanding all the torture, Czolgosz had made no confession whatever and had involved no one in his act. A note had been sent in to Leon through the friendly guard.

I learned that an effort had been made in Buffalo to obtain an attorney for Czolgosz, but no one would accept his defense. That made me even more determined to raise my voice in behalf of the poor unfortunate, denied and forsaken by everyone. Before long, however, I became convinced that Ed had been right. No one among the English-speaking radical

groups could be induced to participate in a meeting to discuss the act of Leon Czolgosz. Many were willing to protest against my arrest, to condemn the third degree and the treatment I had received. But they would have nothing to do with the Buffalo case. Czolgosz was not an anarchist, his deed had done the movement an irreparable injury, our American comrades insisted.

Most of the Jewish anarchists, even, expressed similar views. Yanofsky, editor of the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, went still further. He kept up a campaign against Czolgosz, also denouncing me as an irresponsible person and declaring that he would never again speak from the same platform with me. The only ones who had not lost their heads were of the Latin groups, the Italian, Spanish, and French anarchists. Their publications had reprinted my article on Czolgosz that had appeared in *Free Society*. They wrote sympathetically of Leon,

interpreting his act as a direct result of the increasing imperialism and reaction in this country. The Latin comrades were anxious to help with anything I might suggest, and it was a great comfort to know that at least some anarchists had preserved their judgment and courage in the madhouse of fury and cowardice. Unfortunately, the foreign groups could not reach the American public.

In desperation I clung to the hope that by perseverance and appeals I should be able to rally some public-spirited Americans to express ordinary human sympathy for Leon Czolgosz, even if they felt that they must repudiate his act. Every day brought more disappointment and heartache. I was compelled to face the fact that I had been fighting against an epidemic of abject fear that could not be overcome.

The tragedy in Buffalo was nearing its end. Leon Czolgosz, still ill from the maltreatment he had endured, his face disfigured and head

bandaged, was supported in court by two policemen. In its all-embracing justice and mercy the Buffalo court had assigned two lawyers to his defense. What if they did declare publicly that they were sorry to have to plead the case of such a depraved criminal as the assassin of "our beloved" President? They would do their duty just the same! They would see to it that the rights of the defendant were protected in court.

The last act was staged in Auburn prison. It was early dawn, October 29, 1901. The condemned man sat strapped to the electric chair. The executioner stood with his hand on the switch, awaiting the signal. A warden, impelled by Christian mercy, makes a last effort to save the sinner's soul, to induce him to confess. Tenderly he says: "Leon, my boy, why do you shield that bad woman, Emma Goldman? She is not your friend. She has denounced you as a loafer, too lazy to work. She said you had

always begged money from her. Emma Goldman has betrayed you, Leon. Why should you shield her?"

Breathless silence, seconds of endless time. It fills the death chamber, creeps into the hearts of the spectators. At last a muffled sound, an almost inaudible voice from under the black mask.

"It doesn't matter what Emma Goldman has said about me. She had nothing to do with my act. I did it alone. I did it for the American people."

A silence more terrible than the first. A sizzling sound—the smell of burnt flesh—a final agonized twitch of life.

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