

Police Education

Emma Goldman

January 1907

Our criticism of the police brutality at the arrests on October 30th seems to have done the “Safety” Department some good.

True, the word Anarchism still affects them like the proverbial red rag, but they have at least learned to perform their “duty” in a more or less decent manner.

After dogging our steps for nine weeks, their “perseverance” and “tenacity” have at last been rewarded.

Sunday, January the 6th, the police closed our meeting held under the auspices of the “Mother Earth” Club, and arrested the Chairman, John R. Coryell, Alexander Berkman and myself.

The Criminal Anarchy of the Chairman consisted in a five-minute talk on the educational aims and purposes of the “Mother Earth” Club. Comrade Berkman was guilty of even a more heinous crime—he had not spoken at all, but he is known to have enjoyed for many years the paternalism of Pennsylvania.

A criminal Anarchist, aged 15, who happened to be at the door when the detectives passed, was taken along to complete the quartet.

Three weeks previously I had delivered the same lecture—Misconceptions of Anarchism—before the Brooklyn Philosophical Association. And though the heroes of the American Third Section—the newly created Anarchistic Squadron—were present, no arrests followed. Even detectives are not so stupid as not to understand that their Cossack tactics at Anarchistic meetings could not be profitably applied to non-anarchistic elements. It might wake the law-abiding citizen to a realization of the true state of affairs.

Our hearing before the Police Court Magistrate resulted in our being held for further “examination.” Comrades Coryell and Berkman were held in \$1,000 bail each, while my bond was set at \$2,000.

Inspector McLaughlin asked me, quite naively, whether I did not intend to cease my agitation. On being told that I would not change my course, the wise man informed me that I am hereafter to be arrested every time I speak upon a platform.

We, too, have learned a lesson. Tis no more a question of free speech. It is a conspiracy against the spread of Anarchism.

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