

PROFESSOR SELIGMAN
REBUTTAL

If I were the coal miner in Pennsylvania, I think that was the miner that was mentioned. I should say that the answer had already been given by Mr. Nearing. (Laughter). Mr. Nearing said that he wanted Socialism in order that no surplus shall be produced. That is my objection to Socialism. (Applause). The World has progressed in civilization only because every generation did not consume all that it produced, but that it laid by a surplus. (Applause). Under Socialism, ladies and gentlemen, not alone will no surplus be laid by but from my point of view, the conditions of production will be so far inferior that even the amount available for consumption on the part of the laborer will be less than it is today. If I were therefore an intelligent coal miner, I would say I should rather live in the coal mines of Pennsylvania with a chance at all events once in a while of getting something to eat rather than to live under a condition let us say like that of China today, where without capitalism, starvation is not alone intermittent but almost continuous. (Laughter).

Now, the second point; we have heard the old story retold to us that life is impossible for the working man because the capitalist owns the job and does not need the working man. How long would the shareholders of the United States Steel Corporation if that were all they had to live on—how long would they continue to enjoy their luxuries if the workmen all stopped work permanently? (Applause). Does the workman need the job giver any more than the job giver needs the workman? And my point is where you have those conditions under which leadership can develop to create new jobs, the workman will be far better off than where he has control alone of his own job. (Slight applause). Don't mistake me. One point in which Mr. Nearing did not meet me at all, but which I trust he will meet in his rebuttal is this: that while we may be entirely favorable to the aspirations and the hopes and the desires of the great mass of the working population, he must prove that forces are not at work under capitalism which will meet and realize those hopes and those aspirations. Now, Mr. Nearing says, "I put my chief argument on the score of liberty." Let us see what we can make of that. We have at the present time a form of socialism in operation, the only

realization of a practical socialism on a large scale with which the world has ever been confronted. How does the workman fare there with liberty? By chance, I happen to have in my possession a reprint of some of the official documents and statements issued during the last few months in Russia and I shall take up part of my time by reading how it stands with liberty under socialism. First, I have the resolution of the Petrograd government printing office workers of two months ago. "Our work day lasts twelve hours. We are compelled to work in two shifts in the paper department of our factory and we have to work both Saturdays and Sundays. No exception is made with regard to women; since August 15th, overtime work has become compulsory."

There you have liberty. (Laughter and applause). In the second place, I have extracts from *The Metallurgist*, an organ of the metallurgical workers. "At our factory, absolute submission to the administration of the plant has been established. No arguments or interference with its orders on the part of the workers are tolerated. At our factory, failure to report for work without permission is punishable by forfeiture of extra food. The same punishment is meted out for refusal to do compulsory overtime work. For being late on the job, two days food are deducted." And here comes the resolution of all the Petrograd workers on September 5th, as a result of the liberty of Socialism: "We feel as if we were hard labor convicts where everything has been subject to iron rules. We have become lost as human beings and have been turned into slaves." There is your socialistic liberty. (Great applause). And how does socialism deal with the strike? Let me read you the report of the decision of the Commissar of the special commission at the railway works. "All active strikers shall be turned over to the Extraordinary Commission for the purpose of sending them to forced labor." And what does the commission do? Here is the report. "The strike at our works ended, thanks to numerous arrests among the strikers. Concerning the fate of twelve of our workers, we have no news. The Extraordinary Commission refuses all information about them. As far as we can learn they have been shot." There is liberty under socialism .

And finally, the last extract that I shall read to you is the report of the President of the Petrograd Commune to a delegation from the workers of a certain city who complained of being starved and not getting enough to eat. "Yes, we do admit," he says, "that the food allowance is insufficient, but at the same time we also know full well—this has been taught by real life—that as long as the worker or plain citizen is busy obtaining food he takes no interest in politics. Just give the workingman enough to eat today and you will hear him cry tomorrow for civic liberties. Our object," says the socialistic government "is to keep the workers just from dying; and that is what we are doing." (Applause). What is the use of prating about these beautiful ideals, the fabric of the imagination? As soon as you get socialism into practice and mind you, Messrs. Lenin and Trotzky would be very wroth if you accused them of being anything else but socialists—as soon as you get socialism into practice, you get the very same results that you will get whenever a body of determined, and intolerant men attempt to realize their misguided ideal. Now then, I think I have disposed of liberty under Socialism to my satisfaction at least (laughter)—mind you, furthermore what I have read is borne out by the socialist writers themselves. Take Mr. Cole who has just been mentioned; To quote from one of his works, he says that "State socialism is a bureaucratic and prussianizing movement. His substitute is the milk-and-water guild socialism which has made little progress even among our parlor socialists in this country. It scarcely deserves a refutation because it is bound to be so inefficient, bound as even its latest advocates tell us, to result in all sorts of competition between the Guilds and bound to result in this very absurd state of affairs where you will have an Industrial Parliament and State and then some super-monstrosity on top of it. It scarcely deserves the discussion of intelligent people. The real socialism with which we have to cope is the socialism of which Mr. Nearing speaks, the socialism of Lenin, the socialism of Trotsky, the socialism of those who start out with beautiful ideals and who are compelled by the grim facts of everyday life to seek to do away with starvation through tyranny.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, another point to which Mr. Nearing did not reply, is the progressive character, not of the disease but of the remuneration to the workers. Mr. Nearing himself is responsible for a book on wages and from the same statistics which he utilizes, another writer, Professor King, has constructed a book which sums up the matter very much better perhaps than in almost any other production. (Laughter).

In 1850 the average wages were \$204. In 1910, the average wage—mind you, the average wage of the average workman, taking the low and high altogether, had gone up to \$507. Allowing for the difference in the purchasing power of money, wages had risen from 1850, \$147 up to 1910, \$401. Now, gentlemen, I ask Mr. Nearing whether he denies these facts, and if not, how he explains that there is not a progressive tendency in capitalism. (Laughter).

Now, let us come to another point that he makes. He said that a great deal is gotten by individuals for which they do not labor. All that is produced by the worker, practically all is filched from him by the recipient of profits and interest. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I think many of you know of some of the things that have been accomplished in this country. When Mr. James J. Hill, the great Empire builder, built one of the trans-continental railroads which have brought about the cheapening of products and the diversification of consumption of which I spoke, did he not contribute to production? When Mr. McCormick invented and finally utilized the reaper and the thresher and the mower, which have revolutionized the work of the farmer and the whole life of the community and built up a fortune, did he not contribute to production? When Mr. Westinghouse invented the air brake and finally reaped a fortune by utilizing it in the uttermost parts of the world, did he not contribute to production? And when our friend Mr. Ford with whose general philosophy perhaps I am not in entire accord, (laughter) when he brought down the price of automobiles, the automobiles that are used by the workmen all over this country in going to and from their daily work (hearty laughter)—I passed by a factory the other day and found that there were 550 automobiles. They did not happen to be all Ford auto-

mobiles— and I stepped in and said: "To whom do they belong?" And I was told: "Each one of these belongs to a workman in this factory. They come every morning and go back every evening." Now then, could those fortunate workmen say that Mr. Ford has been able to heap up his millions by simply taking them, filching them, stealing them, from the men in his employ? Ladies and gentlemen, there we come to the real inwardness of the whole situation. I do not deny that there is theft. I do not deny that there is robbery. I do not deny that there are bad people as well as good people, but I do say that the essence of the capitalist system today, that the essence of profits today, of legitimate profits is not theft, but service and that people in the long run cannot under modern conditions, in the long run and under normal conditions make great profits unless they really do service for the community. The distinction that is sought to be made by the socialist that the private capitalist is a thief and that the socialist community alone gives service flies in the face of all the progress that has been made during the last few decades. And finally we come to Mr. Nearing's reference to War. I do not deny that War has been due to all manner of causes. We have had dynastic wars. We have had personal wars. We have had religious wars. We have had trade wars. We have had capitalistic wars. But that is no reason for ascribing all wars to capitalism or for saying that if we were to have socialism, war would come to an end. And moreover, so far as capitalism is concerned, mark again these progressive symptoms and manifestations. We are a capitalistic nation. What have we done with Cuba? What have we done with the Philippines? (Laughter). What we have done is to educate them, to develop their economic resources, to put them in the position where they are almost ready, and will soon be entirely ready for self-government. (Laughter). I maintain that a capitalistic community which is able to say that it can deal with its colonies, in the spirit of what I call progressiveness, that such a community is not entirely destitute of hope.

And now finally, I want to ask Mr. Nearing two questions: first, if he is a socialist, does he believe in Lenin and Trotsky (Laughter), and second, if he believes in Lenin and Trotsky does he think that the kind of liberty that is given under that

socialism is symptomatic of socialism in general? (Prolonged applause).

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Nearing has twenty minutes for rebuttal (Applause).