

them since? Didn't they scream that they were the friends of labor? Do you hear them raising their voices about the chain gangs, the slave camps, the fourteen-hour workday and the mortality from scurvy in the People's States of Europe? No, but you do hear them telling the whip-beaten wretches that starvation is prosperity, that slavery is freedom, that torture chambers are brother-love and that if the wretches don't understand it, then it's their own fault that they suffer, and it's the mangled corpses in the jail cellars who're to blame for all their troubles, not the benevolent leaders! Intellectuals? You might have to worry about any other breed of men, but not about the modern intellectuals: they'll swallow anything. I don't feel so safe about the lousiest wharf rat in the longshoremen's union: he's liable to remember suddenly that he is a man—and then I won't be able to keep him in line. But the intellectuals? That's the one thing they've forgotten long ago. I guess it's the one thing that all their education was aimed to make them forget. Do anything you please to the intellectuals. They'll take it."

"For once," said Dr. Ferris, "I agree with Mr. Kinnan. I agree with his facts, if not with his feelings. You don't have to worry about the intellectuals, Wesley. Just put a few of them on the government payroll and send them out to preach precisely the sort of thing Mr. Kinnan mentioned: that the blame rests on the victims. Give them moderately comfortable salaries and extremely loud titles—and they'll forget their copyrights and do a better job for you than whole squads of enforcement officers."

"Yes," said Mouch. "I know."

"The danger that I'm worried about will come from a different quarter," said Dr. Ferris thoughtfully. "You might run into quite a bit of trouble on that 'voluntary Gift Certificate' business, Wesley."

"I know," said Mouch glumly. "That's the point I wanted Thompson to help us out on. But I guess he can't. We don't actually have the legal power to seize the patents. Oh, there's plenty of clauses in dozens of laws that can be stretched to cover it—almost, but not quite. Any tycoon who'd want to make a test case would have a very good chance to beat us. And we have to preserve a semblance of legality—or the populace won't take it."

"Precisely," said Dr. Ferris. "It's extremely important to get those patents turned over to us *voluntarily*. Even if we had a law permitting outright nationalization, it would be much better to get them as a gift. We want to leave the people the illusion that they're still preserving their private property rights. And most of them will play along. They'll sign the Gift Certificates. Just raise a lot of noise about its being a patriotic duty and that anyone who refuses is a prince of greed, and they'll sign. But—" He stopped.

"I know," said Mouch; he was growing visibly more nervous. "There will be, I think, a few old-fashioned bastards here and there who'll refuse to sign—but they won't be prominent enough to make a noise, nobody will hear about it, their own communities and friends will turn against them for their being selfish, so it won't give us any trouble. We'll just take the patents over, anyway—and those guys

won't have the nerve or the money to start a test case: But—" He stopped.

James Taggart leaned back in his chair, watching them; he was beginning to enjoy the conversation.

"Yes," said Dr. Ferris, "I'm thinking of it, too. I'm thinking of a certain tycoon who is in a position to blast us to pieces. Whether we'll recover the pieces or not, is hard to tell. God knows what is liable to happen at a hysterical time like the present and in a situation as delicate as this. Anything can throw everything off balance. Blow up the whole works. And if there's anyone who wants to do it, he does. He does and can. He knows the real issue, he knows the things which must not be said—and he is not afraid to say them. He knows the one dangerous, fatally dangerous weapon. He is our deadliest adversary."

"Who?" asked Lawson.

Dr. Ferris hesitated, shrugged and answered, "The guiltless man."

Lawson stared blankly. "What do you mean and whom are you talking about?"

James Taggart smiled.

"I mean that there is no way to disarm any man," said Dr. Ferris, "except through guilt. Through that which he himself has accepted as guilt. If a man has ever stolen a dime, you can impose on him the punishment intended for a bank robber and he will take it. He'll bear any form of misery, he'll feel that he deserves no better. If there's not enough guilt in the world, we must create it. If we teach a man that it's evil to look at spring flowers and he believes us and then does it—we'll be able to do whatever we please with him. He won't defend himself. He won't feel he's worth it. He won't fight. But save us from the man who lives up to his own standards. Save us from the man of clean conscience. He's the man who'll beat us."

"Are you talking about Henry Rearden?" asked Taggart, his voice peculiarly clear.

The one name they had not wanted to pronounce struck them into an instant's silence.

"What if I were?" asked Dr. Ferris cautiously.

"Oh, nothing," said Taggart. "Only, if you were, I would tell you that I can deliver Henry Rearden. He'll sign."

By the rules of their unspoken language, they all knew—from the tone of his voice—that he was not bluffing.

"God, Jim! No!" gasped Wesley Mouch.

"Yes," said Taggart. "I was stunned, too, when I learned—what I learned. I didn't expect that. Anything but that."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mouch cautiously. "It's a constructive piece of information. It might be very valuable indeed."

"Valuable—yes," said Taggart pleasantly. "When do you plan to put the directive into effect?"

"Oh, we have to move fast. We don't want any news of it to leak out. I expect you all to keep this most strictly confidential. I'd say that we'll be ready to spring it on them in a couple of weeks."

"Don't you think it would be—advisable—before all prices are