

instance, at a time like this, when there's such a desperate shortage of iron ore, is there any sense in my wasting money, labor and national resources on making old-fashioned steel, when there exists a much better metal that I could be making? A metal that everybody wants, but nobody can get. Now is that good economics or sound social efficiency or democratic justice? Why shouldn't I be allowed to manufacture that metal and why shouldn't the people get it when they need it? Just because of the private monopoly of one selfish individual? Should we sacrifice our rights to his personal interests?"

"Skip it, brother," said Fred Kinnan. "I've read it all in the same newspapers you did."

"I don't like your attitude," said Boyle, in a sudden tone of righteousness, with a look which, in a barroom, would have signified a prelude to a fist fight. He sat up straight, buttressed by the columns of paragraphs on yellow-tinged paper, which he was seeing in his mind:

"At a time of crucial public need, are we to waste social effort on the manufacture of obsolete products? Are we to let the many remain in want while the few withhold from us the better products and methods available? Are we to be stopped by the superstition of patent rights?"

"Is it not obvious that private industry is unable to cope with the present economic crisis? How long, for instance, are we going to put up with the disgraceful shortage of Rearden Metal? There is a crying public demand for it, which Rearden has failed to supply."

"When are we going to put an end to economic injustice and special privileges? Why should Rearden be the only one permitted to manufacture Rearden Metal?"

"I don't like your attitude," said Orren Boyle. "So long as we respect the rights of the workers, we'll want you to respect the rights of the industrialists."

"Which rights of which industrialists?" drawled Kinnan.

"I'm inclined to think," said Dr. Ferris hastily, "that Point Two, perhaps, is the most essential one of all at present. We must put an end to that peculiar business of industrialists retiring and vanishing. We must stop them. It's playing havoc with our entire economy."

"Why are they doing it?" asked Taggart nervously. "Where are they all going?"

"Nobody knows," said Dr. Ferris. "We've been unable to find any information or explanation. But it must be stopped. In times of crisis, economic service to the nation is just as much of a duty as military service. Anyone who abandons it should be regarded as a deserter. I have recommended that we introduce the death penalty for those men, but Wesley wouldn't agree to it."

"Take it easy, boy," said Fred Kinnan in an odd, slow voice. He sat suddenly and perfectly still, his arms crossed, looking at Ferris in a manner that made it suddenly real to the room that Ferris had

proposed murder. "Don't let me hear you talk about any death penalties in industry."

Dr. Ferris shrugged.

"We don't have to go to extremes," said Mouch hastily. "We don't want to frighten people. We want to have them on our side. Our top problem is, will they . . . will they accept it at all?"

"They will," said Dr. Ferris.

"I'm a little worried," said Eugene Lawson, "about Points Three and Four. Taking over the patents is fine. Nobody's going to defend industrialists. But I'm worried about taking over the copyrights. That's going to antagonize the intellectuals. It's dangerous. It's a spiritual issue. Doesn't Point Four mean that no new books are to be written or published from now on?"

"Yes," said Mouch, "it does. But we can't make an exception for the book-publishing business. It's an industry like any other. When we say 'no new products,' it's got to mean 'no new products.'"

"But this is a matter of the spirit," said Lawson; his voice had a tone, not of rational respect, but of superstitious awe.

"We're not interfering with anybody's spirit. But when you print a book on paper, it becomes a material commodity—and if we grant an exception to one commodity, we won't be able to hold the others in line and we won't be able to make anything stick."

"Yes, that's true. But—"

"Don't be a chump, Gene," said Dr. Ferris. "You don't want some recalcitrant hacks to come out with treatises that will wreck our entire program, do you? If you breathe the word 'censorship' now, they'll all scream bloody murder. They're not ready for it—as yet. But if you leave the spirit alone and make it a simple material issue—not a matter of ideas, but just a matter of paper, ink and printing presses—you accomplish your purpose much more smoothly. You'll make sure that nothing dangerous gets printed or heard—and nobody is going to fight over a material issue."

"Yes, but . . . but I don't think the writers will like it."

"Are you sure?" asked Wesley Mouch, with a glance that was almost a smile. "Don't forget that under Point Five, the publishers will have to publish as many books as they did in the Basic Year. Since there will be no new ones, they will have to reprint and the public will have to buy some of the old ones. There are many very worthy books that have never had a fair chance."

"Oh," said Lawson; he remembered that he had seen Mouch lunching with Ralph Eubank two weeks ago. Then he shook his head and frowned. "Still, I'm worried. The intellectuals are our friends. We don't want to lose them. They can make an awful lot of trouble."

"They won't," said Fred Kinnan. "Your kind of intellectuals are the first to scream when it's safe—and the first to shut their traps at the first sign of danger. They spend years spitting at the man who feeds them—and they lick the hand of the man who slaps their drooling faces. Didn't they deliver every country of Europe, one after another, to committees of goons, just like this one here? Didn't they scream their heads off to shut out every burglar alarm and to break every padlock open for the goons? Have you heard a peep out of