

power to enforce, just as they were counting on my self-immolation to provide them with the means of their plan—so throughout the world and throughout men's history, in every version and form, from the extortions of loafing relatives to the atrocities of collective countries, it is the good, the able, the men of reason, who act as their own destroyers, who transfuse to evil the blood of their virtue and let evil transmit to them the poison of destruction, thus gaining for evil the power of survival, and for their own values—the impotence of death. I saw that there comes a point, in the defeat of any man of virtue, when his own consent is needed for evil to win—and that no manner of injury done to him by others can succeed if he chooses to withhold his consent. I saw that I could put an end to your outrages by pronouncing a single word in my mind. I pronounced it. The word was '*No*'.

"I quit that factory. I quit your world, I made it my job to warn your victims and to give them the method and the weapon to fight you. The method was to refuse to deflect retribution. The weapon was justice.

"If you want to know what you lost when I quit and when my strikers deserted your world—stand on an empty stretch of soil in a wilderness unexplored by men and ask yourself what manner of survival you would achieve and how long you would last if you refused to think, with no one around to teach you the motions, or, if you chose to think, how much your mind would be able to discover—ask yourself how many independent conclusions you have reached in the course of your life and how much of your time was spent on performing the actions you learned from others—ask yourself whether you would be able to discover how to till the soil and grow your food, whether you would be able to invent a wheel, a lever, an induction coil, a generator, an electronic tube—then decide whether men of ability are exploiters who live by the fruit of *your* labor and rob you of the wealth that *you* produce, and whether you dare to believe that you possess the power to enslave them. Let your women take a look at a jungle female with her shriveled face and pendulous breasts, as she sits grinding meal in a bowl, hour after hour, century by century—then let them ask themselves whether their 'instinct of tool-making' will provide them with their electric refrigerators, their washing machines and vacuum cleaners, and, if not, whether they care to destroy those who provided it all, but not 'by instinct.'

"Take a look around you, you savages who stutter that ideas are created by men's means of production, that a machine is not the product of human thought, but a mystical power that produces human thinking. You have never discovered the industrial age—and you cling to the morality of the barbarian eras when a miserable form of human subsistence was produced by the muscular labor of slaves. Every mystic had always longed for slaves, to protect him from the material reality he dreaded. But *you*, you grotesque little atavists, stare blindly at the skyscrapers and smokestacks around you and dream of enslaving the material providers who are scientists, inventors, industrialists. When you clamor for public ownership of the means of production, you are clamoring for public ownership of

the mind. I have taught my strikers that the answer you deserve is only: 'Try and get it.'

"You proclaim yourself unable to harness the forces of inanimate matter, yet propose to harness the minds of men who are able to achieve the feats you cannot equal. You proclaim that you cannot survive without us, yet propose to dictate the terms of our survival. You proclaim that you need us, yet indulge the impertinence of asserting your right to rule us by force—and expect that we, who are not afraid of that physical nature which fills you with terror, will cower at the sight of any lout who has talked you into voting him a chance to command us.

"You propose to establish a social order based on the following tenets: that you're incompetent to run your own life, but competent to run the lives of others—that you're unfit to exist in freedom, but fit to become an omnipotent ruler—that you're unable to earn your living by the use of your own intelligence, but able to judge politicians and to vote them into jobs of total power over arts you have never seen, over sciences you have never studied, over achievements of which you have no knowledge, over the gigantic industries where you, by your own definition of your capacity, would be unable successfully to fill the job of assistant greaser.

"This idol of your cult of zero-worship, this symbol of impotence—the congenital dependent—is your image of man and your standard of value, in whose likeness you strive to refashion your soul. 'It's only human,' you cry in defense of any depravity, reaching the stage of self-abasement where you seek to make the concept '*human*' mean the weakling, the fool, the rotter, the liar, the failure, the coward, the fraud, and to exile from the human race the hero, the thinker, the producer, the inventor, the strong, the purposeful, the pure—as if 'to feel' were human, but to think were not, as if to fail were human, but to succeed were not, as if corruption were human, but virtue were not—as if the premise of *death* were proper to man, but the premise of *life* were not.

"In order to deprive us of honor, that you may then deprive us of our wealth, you have always regarded us as slaves who deserve no moral recognition. You praise any venture that claims to be non-profit, and damn the men who made the profits that make the venture possible. You regard as 'in the public interest' any project serving those who do not pay; it is not in the public interest to provide any services for those who do the paying. 'Public benefit' is anything given as alms; to engage in trade is to injure the public. 'Public welfare' is the welfare of those who do not earn it; those who do, are entitled to no welfare. '*The public*', to you, is whoever has failed to achieve any virtue or value; whoever achieves it, whoever provides the goods you require for survival, ceases to be regarded as part of the public or as part of the human race.

"What blank-out permitted you to hope that you could get away with this muck of contradictions and to plan it as an ideal society, when the 'No' of your victims was sufficient to demolish the whole of your structure? What permits any insolent beggar to wave his sores in the face of his betters and to plead for help in the tone of