

"That He's My Dog!"

By JOHN PALMER GAVIT

BARRING only those biological activities indispensable to the perpetuation of the species, the most popular pursuit of mankind always has been that of telling other people how to behave. Grasping for power to make them do it; contriving environment, especially including education, so that they will have to do it—do it automatically. Children, servants and domestic animals are the principal victims of this ancient process; but it is applied generally to the weak, to the conquered, to those hypnotized by slogans and old sayings; to those who endure dutifully what Walt Whitman called "the never-ending audacity of elected persons." The procedure of political dictators with regard to people in the mass is only a large-scale variant of it. In the raw it consists of compulsion through fear, by physical force with penalties varying from spanking to capital punishment; its less obvious forms include bribery and the promises of the demagogue. Underlying all these is the technique of training, all the way from the cradle to the grave; habituating the subjects of it not only to do it but to like to do it—anyhow to regard it as a god-ordained duty. "Conditioning reflexes."

It doesn't go quite back to the Garden of Eden. If one may judge by what used to be accepted as the official annals of that place and of the proceedings antecedent thereto, the Creator seems not to have regarded dictatorship as desirable. Had Eve's reflexes, not to mention Adam's, been effectively conditioned by long training and fear in respect of fruit and reptiles, she would have "reacted negatively" to that famous seduction, and . . . well, lots of things would have transpired, if not better anyway differently. It would appear however, to have pleased the Almighty, having set in motion the mundane experiment, including the more or less human race, to leave it to its own devices—to let man find out for himself, and be governed by his own experience.

WE are very slow in taking the hint. Few really believe in it. A very nice young American couple, well loved friends of mine, uncommonly fervent in their concern about human progress and the welfare of the world, have lately become enamored of Communism, or whatever may be the latest name for the vast social experiment going on in Soviet Russia. The other day I heard one of them avow the determination that their baby, at the point of beginning conversation, should learn first the word "Lenin." 'Twas said with tongue in cheek, a verbal chip-on-shoulder challenging battle; but it afforded me the more amusement because I know that one factor in their state of mind is rebellion against the conventional routine of religion and social philosophy soaked and drilled into them in their own childhood! Much of the tyranny over children in the world is a getting square for what the parents suffered at the hands of theirs. Nevertheless it was inadvertent expression of the age-old technique of "conditioning reflexes" of little children so that they will ever after react automatically and favorably to the faith of the parents—by saturating their infancy with the sacred names and shibboleths. It is by no means confined to the conservative; the Reds are just as bad.

Lately I have been deriving edification from rereading some of the contributions to a symposium of articles by well

known persons, published not long ago in one of our most rebellious journals-of-opinion under the general caption, "If I Were Dictator." The symposium affords exceptionally interesting illustration of the state of mind congenitally resident in all of us. Of the idea that the principal trouble with dictatorship, whether of individuals, parties, classes or mobs, is in the kind of folks who exercise it. Things would be very different for the better if the power lay with *me*; if *my* ideas were in force; if only the dominant authority could represent *my* opinions, interests, creed, party, class, nation, race.

ONE of these writers runs fairly out of breath and ingenuity in enumerating what he calls "a few"—nearly one hundred in fact—of the things he would do, enact, compel, for the reordering of the world. Things varying in importance and difficulty from conscripting his fellow-citizens in their persons and possessions "for necessary civil purposes" to the extinction of obnoxious insects! A distinguished university president, deprecating any such exotic tyrants as Stalin or Mussolini, would "lodge leadership" in big business men who were "really big, thinking socially and acting nationally." He would bring things about by persuasion, but "with appropriate threats in the background." Most amusing of all is the platform of one of the most uncompromising of our pacifists and non-resistants, who would abolish . . . would serve notice . . . would exile . . . would remove from our statute books by a stroke of the pen . . . would be as rigid as the soviets in such-and-such matters. Most of all, he would have absolute freedom of speech and teaching, without any limit until—until somebody proposed to limit it! In *that* event, "if anyone sneaked in and said, 'I believe in liberty and freedom of speech but there are limits'—away with him to durance vile, upon a prison-farm in Alaska! In this dictator-ruled Utopia nobody shall limit liberty and freedom of speech—except the dictator.

Some of the contributors of course see the point; they do not take themselves very seriously; nearly all of them realize that they are spouting hot-air. One of the best begs the whole question by "assuming that I possess"—then why dictatorship?—"a thumping majority of public opinion." "I appoint an obedient cabinet and forty-eight obedient governors"—sounds Tammanyesque to me. And he abandons the whole position by declaring that "if the office is to be maintained by machine-gun, I quit." Better still is the program presented on the outside by one who didn't contribute to the symposium; the sole plank in his platform was: "I would resign."

I expressly disavow intent to sneer at or make light of this symposium or any contribution to it. These discussions of and proposals for the common welfare and the solution of the mighty problems which bedevil the world are useful, suggestive, necessary. They belong in the practice of free speech. They add to and modify the material of enlightened public opinion, the common wisdom, society's self-criticism and aspiration. In the development of the individual and social mind as well as in the field of biology Nature's technique is to scatter ideas both wise and foolish (so hard to know which is which!) as well as seeds and pollen, with lavish indiscriminate hand, wheat and tares alike falling upon good soil and stony ground, with reliance in the long run upon the hazards of circumstance and unlimited time and the slowly accumulating wisdom of experi-

ence, to isolate and protect and fructify the truth—whatever that may turn out to be.

Those who dally with the idea of dictatorship of any kind will find fruitful reading in Count Sforza's illuminating study of the post-war dictatorships in Italy, Hungary, Jugoslavia, Poland, Spain, Turkey and Russia, including the thus far abortive attempts to install fascism, sovietism, or to restore monarchism, in Germany.¹ Among other impressive disclosures in this highly informing and inspiring volume, which naturally is most intimate and emphatic with reference to Italy, the author's own country, is the text of Mussolini's own original program, "which he wrote in 1919 for the creation of his *fasci*." No better example could there be of the fine breathings of liberty in the "before taking" output of revolutionary aspiration, as contrasted with what despotism always comes to in the saddle:

Italian Republic . . . A National Constituent Assembly . . . Decentralization of the executive power . . . Autonomous administration . . . by means of their own legislative organs . . . Sovereignty of the people, exercised through a universal, equal and direct franchise . . . the people to reserve to themselves the initiative of referendum and veto. Abolition of the political police . . . Magistrates elected independently of the executive.

Liberty of opinion and conscience, of religion, of associations, of the press . . . Abolition of secret diplomacy . . . Etc., etc.

Possibly Signor Mussolini secretly still believes all this and in his heart more or less ruefully contemplates what his machine has done to it. Remember Frankenstein. But in the light of it see what has happened to liberty in Italy. See for a mild example the oath, recently prescribed for all teachers: of perpetual allegiance to the king and his royal successors; most especially to the Fascist regime. Only twelve out of 1225 university professors, at the price of their professional existence, refused that humiliation. The point is that with however fair promises and protestations, dictatorship takes possession, it never fails to degenerate into despotism, in forms and excesses depending upon place and circumstances, but essentially ever the same. As Count Sforza says, "to rule by fear degrades rulers and ruled alike."

All dictatorships eliminate the best from public life; the courageous servants, the critical minds, the creative brains.

AT the very best of it, dictatorship, enforced obedience to outside authority, like martial law in a catastrophe, is justifiable only in a widely recognized emergency; at the earliest possible moment it must abdicate and restore self-control. As Count Sforza puts it, "The danger past, the successors to dictatorship should hasten to remove themselves and account for everything they did. Account for everything. . . . Perhaps the whole problem of democracy in the present world lies there."

Deep in all of us lies that lust for power, that delight in *being obeyed*, salve especially for such as feel themselves deficient. Stevenson had it in mind when he wrote, in the *Child's Garden of Verses*, the delicious *Looking Forward*:

When I am grown to man's estate
I shall be very proud and great,
And tell the other girls and boys
Not to meddle with my toys.

The late Nathaniel C. Wright, well known as editor of numerous newspapers, used to tell a story of a boyhood playmate. Approaching his friend's woodshed one morning, he heard therefrom intermittent shrieks, as of some creature in mortal agony. Within he found his chum, with a newly-acquired puppy, upon whose tail he was grinding from time to time with a sharp and jagged stick; hence the shrieks.

"George, what in the world are you doing to that dog?"

Without looking up from the grim ritual and grinding down again, the other boy replied:

"I'm teaching this little such-and-such that he's *my dog*!"

¹ EUROPEAN DICTATORSHIPS. By Count Carlo Sforza; foreword by Edward M. House. Brentano's, 257 pp. Price \$3 postpaid of Survey Graphic.

So even in the minor matters of daily life it is not easy to identify motives. Seldom are they simple; seldom what they purport to be. Father *may* be licking Johnny for Johnny's good, with the familiar "it hurts me more than it does you," or some similar form of parental buncombe. Quite as likely is it that he is licking Johnny chiefly because he is angry at some affront to his own authority and dignity; not oblivious of the fact that also he is bigger than Johnny.

SO in the larger fields, social, political, international, it is well to look for the cat under the meal. Look for instance at the Philippines. As long as it seemed that they would be a source of profit, glory or other advantage to us, we were glib enough with pious phrases, about the "White Man's Burden," "Benevolent Assimilation" and all that other applesauce with which after the Spanish War we salved our consciences and sought to present some sort of alibi out of "decent respect to the opinions of mankind." And we went on, contriving to find that "the Constitution follows the flag" only to the extent that it seems at the time to be to our interest to have it do so. Latterly, finding that free trade with our Philippine colony embarrasses us with commercial competition, we discover that the demand of the Filipinos for independence is morally justified, and under a smokescreen of pious language can hardly wait to throw them over to the outside of the tariff wall, to sink or swim as best they may.

Upon authority which I think sufficient I hear that the Japanese onslaught upon Shanghai was not in the least in accordance with a considered determination of the government at Tokyo; but was an exploit of the Japanese navy upon its own initiative. According to this plausible version of the business, the Japanese army had exhibited notable efficiency and celerity in Manchuria, thereby winning enviable *kudos*.

"How now?" says the navy to itself, "this is all very fine business for the army; but where do we come in?"

Whereupon, overnight and without so much as a by-your-leave to the civil government, under the guise of determination to obliterate the headquarters of the Chinese boycott located there, the Japanese war vessels descended upon Shanghai. A little later they visited also other ports of China, hunting down this and that in the way of pretexts, including newspaper "insults to our royal house"—any stick to beat the dog. They even demanded the removal from the Chinese language of that peculiarly hateful word, applied to them by the Chinese, signifying something between a dwarf and a monkey. As it turned out, they bit off more than they could chew; the enterprise proved to be much more difficult than it had looked in the prospectus. Of course, as usual in such things, once begun it had to be gone through with; all the enginery of patriotic fervor had to be enlisted in Japan, including, also as usual in all countries in such matters, the suppression of every form of liberal protest. One of the worst examples of that was when a group of army officers dragged Dr. Inazo Nitobe out of the hospital at risk of his life, to make him apologize for having said (as was alleged) that "militarism is more dangerous than communism."

And now Japan, deep in industrial and economic depression, finds herself up to the neck in the expenditures of war and hurt irretrievably in the estimation of the whole world; a fact to which, regardless of the bluster of her present spokesmen, her people are acutely sensitive. It is all very well for Japanese blow-hards and die-hards to threaten resignation from the League of Nations; some of them no doubt mean it, and it may be done; but wiser and more far seeing Japanese know that it would be moral suicide. Social suicide, too. It is greatly valued for Japan's "face" to be joined as an equal in any world-organization. The gall for the Japanese in the repudiation by the United States of the Lansing-Ishii "gentleman's agreement" governing Japanese immigration was in the

fact that it put them on a par with the Chinese. Fancy them deliberately shutting themselves out of any organization of the great nations of the world, including the World Court, leaving China in!

The spirit of force, of repression and strangling of protest and proposal, distasteful to the hearer, is all but universal. Very rare indeed is that person who can listen tolerantly, forever vigilant against himself, conscious that his own deepest conviction on *any* subject may be mistaken. Rarer still he who can hear without the impulse to silence the proposer, suggestions of changes threatening his own material interests and rights as he conceives them. "Liberty in details, unity in essentials" is a fine-sounding phrase; but it begs the question by assuming that anyone knows beyond room for dispute what *are* the essentials. What seems axiomatic to one often precisely fits the other fellow's definition of nonsense. Furthermore, *tempora mutantur*—seeming and widely accepted "essentials" of one time, situation or stage of development and knowledge are constantly turning out to be no longer essential or even altogether false. And we are forever consciously or unconsciously confusing our own notions, motives, interests, intentions, with the ideas and projects, so to speak, of the Almighty. Like the little girl who said she couldn't understand how all those Methodists and Baptists could expect to be happy in Heaven, or to go there at all for that matter, since God was a Presbyterian.

Try to visualize in action the operations of any sort of dictatorship in our own country. Consider the difficulty we have now in finding capable and honest persons to direct our

public functions. I do not myself know anybody whom I would trust with dictatorial powers, or with any powers not strictly limited by law and subject to the free play of public protest. No government can be either safe or honest without an active opposition. It is of the essence of both Fascism and Sovietism in practice that no worth-while opposition is tolerated.

The immense and perplexing problems in which the whole world is now enmeshed will require the utmost of human wisdom, expressed and precipitated under stress of unprecedented conditions in free discussion actuated by the interplay of conflicting interests. There is no other way. Wisdom and disinterested public spirit are neither confined to nor absent from any class. So far as my observation goes, native intelligence and devotion to human welfare is not more prevalent among stock-brokers or bankers than among grocers or bricklayers. As for the futilities of debate and procedure in Congress, they are embodiments of business precision and dispatch compared with the proceedings of the typical college faculty. Out of the common brains, impelled by the common peril, must come the solutions. There is no other way. Futile the search for the super-man, wise enough and good enough to restrain his own lust for power, and to recognize, curb and eliminate the brutal, the corrupt, the self-serving "yes-men" who inevitably surround him, stultifying his best intentions, his fairest and most alluring prognostications. Any fool, as Cavour once said, can rule—for the time being—by martial law; but that rule requires continually intensified force. And with increase of pressure comes nearer and nearer the explosion. Self-government, for an individual or a people, is the sole way of progress.

Tuileries Gardens

By HAROLD T. PULSIFER

C HILDREN of France with hoop and ball,
 With hoop and ball,
 With hoop and ball;
 I watch your slender figures dance
 The green leaves fluttering over all.
 The dust your flying footsteps spurn
 It drifts like smoke from phantom guns,
 And is there one of you who runs
 To mark the mystic flames that burn
 In this dear soil, from this dread ground,
 Or any ears to catch the sound
 Of vanished voices floating by
 Above the tumult of your cry?
 Lift up your eyes from hoop and ball,
 From hoop and ball,
 From hoop and ball;
 Behold a thronging host arise:—
 These gardens echo to their call,
 They play your games and dream your dreams
 Upon these stones, beside this grass;
 A little while and then they pass.
 Now suddenly the sunlight gleams
 On flashing blades and crowded ranks,
 The caissons roll, the harness clanks:—
 These weeping women, marching men
 When shall they play and dream again?
 Oh turn away from hoop and ball,
 From hoop and ball,
 From hoop and ball;
 And mark the cries of them that slay
 And maenads shrieking over all!
 These staring skulls that wore the crown,
 These white throats laced with flaming red,

These bloody smocks that clothe the dead,
 These shattered fragments of renown;—
 How swift they follow, follow after
 High merriment and elfin laughter;
 And do they still crowd close behind
 Your feet so light, your eyes so blind?

So close they are to hoop and ball,
 To hoop and ball,
 To hoop and ball;
 But yesterday a shooting star
 Burst where your very footsteps fall.
 Black fear was in its murky breath
 And hate was in its iron soul.
 It chose an altar for its goal,
 This messenger of sudden death!
 How long, how long will you be free
 Laughing, to face eternity?
 And shall your children's children hear
 Death's brazen bugle ringing clear?

Who knows but now with hoop and ball,
 With hoop and ball,
 With hoop and ball,
 Some spirit with unclouded brow
 Will solve the riddle of it all;
 And kindled by these ghosts to flame
 Shall tower forth in God-like wrath
 And sweep this terror from the path,—
 This ancient dread, this primal shame?
 Spirit be swift with flag and drum,
 The hour is nigh, is come, is come;—
 Clear visioned as the soul of France:—
 Be braver than her bravest lance!