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TWO VIEWS ON MUSSOLINI

On page one in this issue of the

RECORD we reprint two Canadian

editorials on Benito Mussolini, the

Prime Minister of Italy. The two

are in arresting contrast.

The Globe recognizes the fact,

which is as outstanding as a moun-

tain in the midst of a plain, that the

overwhelming majority of all

classes of the Italian people honor

Mussolini with a confidence seldom

or never given so wholeheartedly

to any statesman by his fellow

countrymen. "Throughout the

whole of Italy, in every city and

town and village in the country, he

is accepted as a political and econ-

omic saviour, destined to unify the

people and lead them through their

present perils and difficulties to a

great national future."

In this connection we may quote

from an article by Senator Count

Cippico in the New York Times. He

asserts vigorously that Fascism

does not rest on force but most

emphatically on the "consent of the

governed" among all classes of the

population. And he gives this con-

crete instance by way of proof:

"I remember coming from

Geneva to Vicenza last September

(i.e. 1924) in order to meet Mussolini

and some Cabinet Ministers who

were there for the day. It was at

a time when the opposition press

campaign displayed its greatest

bitterness. I found myself near

the Italian premier, surrounded by

thousands and thousands of people

who had listened to his speech. As

soon as the speech was finished, the

surging wave of the multitude

broke the lines of blackshirts and

surrounded all of us. I saw Musso-

lini lifted to the shoulders of delir-

ious throngs and made the hero of a

tremendous demonstration.

"The day after at Geneva I asked

my colleagues of the foreign dele-

gations if either Mr. Ramsay Mac-

Donald or M. Herriot, leaders of

the socialist and radical parties of

their respective countries, could

ever experience such an immediate

and unprotected contact with the

crowd. The same scene has hap-

pened throughout Italy both in the

north and in the south—everywhere

where Mussolini has brought the

charm of his great personality. If

this is not consent of the governed,

I wonder what government in the

world is based on consent."

The Globe heads its editorial

"Mussolini, the Dictator"; and it

says that "the new State which he

is creating on the ruins of the old

constitutional system is essentially

despotic in character. But it is a

despotism which makes an appeal

primarily to the patriotism of the

people, and especially to the youth

of the country. It is an appeal for

discipline and work on the part of

the individual as his contribution to

a great national movement to make

Italy powerful and prosperous. And

it is all the more effective in that

the people still remember the

conditions which prevailed at the

close of the War, and which threat-

ened the land with anarchy and

ruin."

That is it, precisely. We must

remember that "the old constitu-

tional system" was in ruins before

Mussolini touched it. Dictator,

Mussolini may be; it all depends on

our definition of terms. But Dicta-

tor or Prime Minister he is the

head and front of the Italian Gov-

ernment by the will of the Italian

people. What government in the

civilized world today is more truly

"democratic" in any true and real

sense of that much abused term?

The forms of democracy, universal

sufrage, representative govern-

ment, and the like, were intended

primarily to save the people from

oppression by irresponsible author-

ity, by giving the people the means

whereby they could voice their will.

One cannot read much on the sub-

ject without being forced to, the

conclusion that many writers com-
pletely lose sight of the end in the
glorification, almost the deification,
of the means. Even if the use or
abuse of these means should defeat
the very end for which they were
instituted it is 'reactionary' even to
recognize the fact.

Richard Washburn Child, some-
time American Ambassador to Italy,
later travelled from country to
country in Europe, "in an attempt,"
as he said himself, "to find out how
democracy was succeeding in
Europe or why it was failing." He
wrote a series of very interesting
articles embodying the results of
his observations. He tells us that
"today there is a tremendous tide of
cynicism about democracy." And he
tells also of the almost universal long-
ing for a strong and capable leader,
for a dictator if you will. "Do you
believe," he quotes a big industri-
alist in Germany as asking, "that
the mass has the passion to be pos-
sessed of passion to govern? You
are mistaken. The passion of
humanity is to be well governed."

"After all," writes Mr. Child,
"the power of a dictator who has
the will of the people behind him is
not far removed from the power of
a prime minister who happens to
have an overwhelming majority. Both
can dictate to a parliament." To
the specious objection that Bal-
win is the free choice of the English
people and Mussolini obtained power
by force of the Fascist militia, he
says: "The truth remains that both
men have been given great powers
because one people by election and another
by spontaneous direct action, approved
at the time by the great majority,
have had the instinct for strong
administrative government and
have followed that instinct."

A striking proof of this is a
despatch from Paris this morning.
Inquiries were made in the Cham-
ber as to the financial policy of the
new Government. "I am the policy
of the coming Government was the
reply of M. Briand."

Substitute Mussolini for Briand
and it would give cold chills to a
lot of people.

The Free Press scornfully tells of
Mussolini's Socialist days, of snobs
and snobbery, of sycophants and
parasites. The tone of the whole
article betrays a somewhat start-
ling and unaccountable feeling of
enmity toward Italy's Prime
Minister.

Take the concluding paragraphs:
"The pinnacle is a dizzy one, but
it has its parallel. There were
those in ancient Rome who com-
plained of the great dictator, Ju-
lius, when he had climbed to
similar heights:

"He doth bestride the nar-
row world
Like a Colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep
about
To find ourselves dishonorable
graves."

"The recent outbreaks against
Signor Mussolini reveal such men in
the Italy of today."

The great Julius is, of course,
Julius Caesar who, by his conquest
of Gaul, became the foremost man
in the world. He extended Roman
civilization to Western Europe and
later to England. And the bedrock
on which the Christian civilization
of Europe rests is the civilization of
ancient Rome. Julius was truly
great. His name will ever live
because of his achievements and
their permanent results. But the
Free Press, if we may take the
meaning that seems obvious,
admires the great Caesar's murder-
ers? And then, apparently with
grim satisfaction that the breed has
not died out, tells us that "the
recent outbreaks against Signor
Mussolini reveal such men in the
Italy of today."

"Outbreaks!"

Referring, presumably, to the
cowardly plot to murder Mussolini,
which was foiled by the police; we
consider "outbreaks" as a triumph
of euphemism. But let that pass.

The Free Press insinuates that
Mussolini is a snob whose head is
turned by flattery, a charlatan
drunk with power, who lives a life of
oriental luxury. A biographer found
that the name Mussolini was one of
distinction in the fourteenth cen-
tury. As everybody knows this is
no unusual trait of biographers.

We may have read the life of some
great Englishman whose biographer
did not "dig and delve" into the
ancestry of his subject; but at the
moment we do not recall a single
one. However, the Free
Press scornfully notes that this
biographer of Mussolini is "deter-

mined that a blaze of glory shall at
all points beat upon the career of
the man to whom Italy has com-
mitted the charge of reconducting
her into the paths of imperialism."

For this sin, if it be a sin, of his
biographer the Free Press makes
Mussolini responsible. "This quick
change of front," says the Free
Press, "on the part of a man of not
distant very humble origin, and who
was not a great while ago suspected
of a desire to tear down rather than
to build up the fabric of Italian
imperialism, is a commentary on
the character of Mussolini himself
and also upon traditional tendencies
in human nature."

As a comment on all this it will
be sufficient to place in juxtapo-
sition the concluding paragraphs
from the editorial in the Globe:

"He boasts his plebeian extraction
and ruthlessly disregards class
distinction in carrying out his pro-
gram of national restoration. The
laborer is the basic unit of his
system, and every citizen, to fit into
his scheme, must serve in the
capacity for which he is best adapted."

"His is a plan for binding indis-
solubly together the whole people
and inspiring them with ideals for
the supremacy of the State, through
which the prosperity and happiness
of the individual will be assured.

And, in his opinion, no such assur-
ance can be hoped for without the
stimulation of all the energies of
the nation through collaboration
between social classes, together with
a high respect for morality and
religion."

"Imperialism!" We have heard
the word spoken with respect, even
with a reverence that was almost
religious. Indeed we have heard
apostles of imperialism exult in
almost to a religion. We have
been exhorted to "think imperially."

But imperialism in connection with
Italy and Mussolini seems to be a
different sort of thing. If not
inspired it is silly. But perhaps it
is introduced only to round out the
Free Press writer's contemptuous
contrast of Mussolini, past and pres-
ent. If ardent desire and tireless
work to make Italy united, prosper-
ous and happy at home as well as
respected abroad be "imperialism"

then Italy has committed to Musso-
lini "the charge of reconducting her
into the paths of imperialism."

The two articles on Mussolini
which we have been discussing and
contrasting, as well as innumerable
other references, have suggested the
desirability of dealing at some
length with the career and accom-
plishments of this most interesting
figure in the public life of the world
today.

Just now we want to emphasize a
fact, an outstanding fact, an
incontrovertible fact; and that is
that Mussolini—call him Prime
Minister, dictator, tyrant, savior
of his people, or anything else—
governs Italy because it is the
will of the Italian people that
he and none other shall do so. And
those alarmist defenders of democ-
racy should not ignore, or obscure,
or by insinuation deny this patent
fact. For it is good democratic
doctrine that governments derive
their just powers from the consent
of the governed.

THE BOUNDARY QUESTION

The daily press carries despatches
that are gravely disturbing, not to
say ominous, with regard to the
outcome of the Irish Boundary Com-
mission. Professor Eoin MacNeill,
the Free State representative, placed
his resignation as Commissioner in
the hands of the Free State Govern-
ment and it was accepted. At this
writing conferences between repre-
sentatives of the Free State, Ulster
and British Governments are being
held with the view to coming to
some settlement by agreement.

In order to get a clear conception
of the question in issue it is well to
reread the Article of the Anglo-
Irish Treaty under which the Com-
mission functions. This clause of
the Treaty constitutes the Com-
mission's terms of reference.

The Treaty was made between
England and Ireland—all Ireland.
But Article XII, gave to Northern
Ireland the right to contract out of
the Free State by presenting within
a month an address to His Majesty
to that effect by both Houses of
Parliament of Northern Ireland.

Then follows the second paragraph
of Article XII, which qualifies and
limits the right conferred on Nor-
thern Ireland in the preceding
paragraph. Northern Ireland pre-
sented to His Majesty such an
address.

The second part of Article XII
reads:

"Provided, that if such an
address is presented, a commission
consisting of three persons, one to
be appointed by the Government of
the Irish Free State, one to be
appointed by the Government of
Northern Ireland, and one, who
shall be chairman, to be appointed
by the British Government shall
determine in accordance with the
wishes of the inhabitants, so far as
may be compatible with economic
and geographic conditions, the
boundaries between Northern Ire-
land and the rest of Ireland, and
for the purpose of the Government
of Ireland Act of 1920, and of this
instrument the boundary of Nor-
thern Ireland shall be such as may
be determined by such Com-
mission."

It is well to note that the terms
in which the Boundary Question
was referred to a Commission are
the precise terms, word for word,
in which the Boundary between
Germany and Poland in Silesia was
provided for in the Treaty of
Versailles. The paramount con-
sideration in both cases was to be
the wishes of the inhabitants.

Incidentally this consideration
might be modified by economic and
geographic conditions.

In the German-Polish case a pleb-
iscite was taken to ascertain the
wishes of the inhabitants; in the
case of Ireland no plebiscite was
taken.

Northern Ireland truculently
refused to be bound by the second
part of Article XII. While taking
advantage of the privilege granted
in the first part Craig's Government
refused to appoint a Commissioner.
During the sitting of the Com-
mission Northern politicians con-
tinued to hurl defiance at the Com-
mission and the British Government
if an acre should be taken from
Northern Ireland without its own
consent. More recently forecasts
of the finding of the Commission
were printed in Belfast papers and
likewise in the ultra-Unionist press
of England. These forecasts were
ominous, indicating that in violation
of the spirit and letter of the Treaty
Northern Ireland was to be given
all and more than its most trucu-
lent spokesman claimed. Three or
four weeks ago the London corres-
pondent of the Manchester Guard-
ian wrote: "There is not the
slightest doubt that all these fore-
casts have originated from Belfast
... and that they have been
intended to influence the Commis-
sion." Discussing the motives of
the Belfast Government in broad-
casting these forecasts the Guard-
ian correspondent writes:

"The psychology of the propaganda
seems to be that if you can only
forecast a report sufficiently unjust
to the Free State it may create in
the minds of the Commissioners a
feeling that this is what is expected
of them, and that therefore they
will incline that way. I should
think myself that the psychological
effect on the Commission—though I
believe there is none—would be
exactly the contrary, and that the
more Belfast publishes a Belfast-
made boundary the more the Com-
missioners would be driven to disap-
point Belfast. I hope that the Free
State side will not fall into the
same error."

And he adds that the plain, public
and legal duty of the Commissioners
is to ignore all such attempts to
influence their decision and "to
draw the boundary between North-
ern Ireland and the Free State
mainly 'with regard to the wishes
of the inhabitants' of the Border
areas."

The resignation of Professor
MacNeill is not reassuring; indeed
it is profoundly disturbing; but,
pending the outcome of the nego-
tiations now going on, we can only
hope and pray for the best. The
worst is appalling to contemplate.

The Manchester Guardian is the
finest type of newspaper published
anywhere. It embodies the best
English traditions and is fearlessly
loyal to them. This morning's
paper carries the following Cana-
dian Press despatch. Though not
directly pertinent to the present
Irish difficulty, few readers will fail
to see its relevancy. It must be
borne in mind that one of the in-
dictments on which the Communists
were found guilty was that of in-
citing to mutiny. The incitement
to mutiny over the Home Rule Bill
will be remembered by most of our
readers.

The despatch reads:

"The Manchester Guardian, Liberal,
while admitting the illegality of the

acts of the Communists who were
sentenced yesterday to imprison-

ment, says there are few people

who do not detest their doctrines,

and suggests the popular confidence

of the English people in the admini-

stration of the law is not what it

was fifteen years ago, when mem-

bers of Parliament circularized a

battalion of the Grenadiers in Lon-

don, inciting them to mutiny in the

interests of the Conservative party.

The Guardian continues: "The

field-marshal took a hand in the

dirty work of seducing the soldiers

from their duty."

"Lord Birkenhead gleefully pro-

phesied, as some of the sanguine

Communists do now, that the army

would break in the Government's

hands if ordered to enforce the law

where the law was extremely dis-

tasteful to his own party."

"Lord Carson boasted that 'the

army is with us.'"

"Lord Carson was made a judge.

Lord Birkenhead was made a lord

chancellor."

The Guardian concludes by saying
that it would be childish optimism
to expect that such causes would
be without their effect and suggests
that the good name of British crim-
inal justice is not altogether safe in
the hands of the present home
secretary, Sir William Joynson-
Hicks, under whose department the
movement against the Communists'
activities has been begun.

If the Manchester Guardian's
ideal of British fair play and even-
handed justice is shared in some
degree by the Government and peo-
ple of England then the threatening
clouds which lower over Anglo-Irish
relations will be dissipated as the
morning mists before the rising
sun.

FLAG FLOURISHING
BY THE OBSERVER

On October 18th, the Toronto
Telegram published an article
which began as follows: