"To solve the world problem we must recognize and treat it as such—not as a national problem nor as a collection of national problems, for it is neither. It is a problem concerning the world as a unit, and it must be met with a sense of world unity, world cooperation and management not heretofore sufficiently present in the international parleys. It must be solved with simplicity, honesty and decision—with spirituality instead of materialism. And it must be met with the viewpoint of to-morrow."

It is Mussolini speaking in Palazzo Venezia, Rome, in the great Sala del Mappamondo that is his study. Across that massive desk of his upon which have been drawn the solutions of the Italian problems of the past decade, in a series of conversations, I am asking the Italian Premier, creator of the Corporative State, what would be his solution of the problems of the world—what he believes is wrong with the world, how in his judgment government can best help business, how he would adjust capital and labour, what in his opinion should be done to meet the present crisis and to avoid depressions in the future. In its economic, political and social uncertainty, in its provincial insularity, the world to-day is not unlike the Italy before the march on Rome. The problems to-day confronting many other nations and the world, in kind, are not unlike the problems that were given into Mussolini's charge in 1922, when made Italy's Prime Minister.

The world is already entering upon to-morrow, but for the most its Governments and its discussions are of yesterday. True, the problems remaining to us from yesterday must be solved before we can advance, but they must be solved with the viewpoint of to-morrow. We keep trying to apply the solutions of yesterday, and they do not fit, for they are too puny and complex for the newer simpler greater into which we are evolving.

"The present crisis is not a period of alternation within an epoch. It is the beginning of transition to another era. The world is making ready for a new order—it has outgrown the old.
Part of the past is dying, much is dead, and the future is being born. The peoples of the world are beginning to awaken to a sense of new values, something new within themselves that has been lying dormant until now. These new values and forces are mainly spiritual. It is the task of the leaders of the world to assist evolution. They must discover what the new forces are, they must be brave enough to discard what is already dead or dying, and to devise systems in which the new is actively substituted for the old. Many of the difficulties with which we are struggling are confusions of the issue and are not the real problem."

"What would be an example?

"Perhaps even the problem of peace. Even that may not be so vital as we think it is, peace in the sense we have always interpreted it—political peace between nations. Perhaps the problem of peace already has been solved in the spirit of man, needing only recognition by the world conferences to make the solution tangible and effective.

"Man's wants continue to be the same as they have always been, but he is beginning to realize that he will have to find another way to obtain them. The masses already know the answer within themselves. They realize that it is not by fighting that they can get what they want, but by working—by team-working, in which the United States is so able—that is, by cooperation.

"For the moment," he answers further, "we have the anachronism of national representatives solemnly discussing the technicalities of means of warfare and limitations of armaments in a world where every one wants only to work! It is another peace, the cessation of another war that is the immediate and vital problem—the cessation of the economic war—in which it is daily becoming more obvious that there can be no victory."

Since in attempting a solution the first essential is to see the problem itself clearly, to "see it steadily and see it whole," I ask, "What is your analysis of the major difficulty that is crippling the movement and, therefore, the life of the world to-day?"

"I find our civilization to be dual," Mussolini replies, "both economic and political. It is composed of economic elements maladjusted to each other and of political elements maladjusted to each other and to the economic."

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"Certain of our elements have outgrown their coordination?"

"Yes, just as there is, for example, a period of awkwardness during the development of a child's body when nature's energetic building of bones outstrips her coordination of them."

"Then we have at last," I venture, reflecting on his words, "the machine that writers of fiction have been fond of prophesying, a machine grown beyond human control—a system-machine that man made and set going, and at first found to be a true horn of plenty pouring forth for
him all the wealth of the world, only to develop it with such energy that it has become greater than he, has acquired a momentum of its . . .

"Exactly . . . and the horn of plenty turns out to be a Juggernaut! The difficulty is that capitalism has ceased to be an instrument and has become a divinity. The normal has become abnormal. The physiological pathological.

"Man's economic system has grown beyond his mental grasp and therefore, beyond his control," Mussolini resumes his analysis, "his economic system has become international and has outgrown his economic consciousness, which has remained nationalistic. And on the other hand there is the reverse situation: that his political consciousness has become international, outgrowing his political system, which has remained nationalistic. Herein is the difficulty encountered but not recognized at the peace conferences. By strange anomaly it is his political consciousness and not his economic consciousness that has kept pace with his internationally growing economic machine.

"So, lured by the rich fruits of economic adventuring, man has forgotten to care equally how he is governed! Seeking control of the external world for material benefits alone, he has let its spirit elude him and, therefore, he has lost it. In his passion to control the world, man has lived too much outside himself, and he has, therefore, lost control of himself, which means that he has lost control of the world. Indeed, he has doubly lost the world that he would gain, for he has lost both the inner world and the outer. We may not so soon again confuse the means with the end. Persistent failure in the stock market has served to teach us that the only investment that is sure of dividends is life.

"However, it is precisely the vastness of this economic reach that has served to bring about an international political consciousness that might otherwise have been delayed.

"The difficulty is that, though man has an international consciousness and an international system, there is lack of adjustment, for one is political and the other is economic. His economic system being greater than his political system, they are no longer geared together. Therefore, parts of the world machine have stopped running and the others are running badly.

"From this inactivity results the depression.

"Man must study the vast economic machine that he has built until he has expanded his consciousness to grasp it. He must study the economic relationships that have developed, stretching across mountains, across oceans, even around the earth—economic States whose antipodes are linked as vitally as New York's suburbs are linked with page 227

New York: the territories that produce the raw materials and fuel with the territory of the factory, and that in turn with the territories of the consumer --- often the ends of the earth.
These international economic relationships are invisible on the maps, but they are none the less real.

"We need new maps! These relationships are the great unknown, whose reality is making itself more felt each day. No solution of the world problem can be successful that does not definitely take count of them."

From the international I turn to the national. "What would be your solution of the national problem of the modern State?"

The national problem of the modern State, shared by the States in common, is only the international problem on a smaller scale," Mussolini answers. "The same development of economic interests and boundaries that has been taking place among the States has been taking place also within the States. For example, the continual proposals among citizens of the United States for economic committees, industrial congresses and 'organized control of industry' are a recognition of the importance in the present-day national life of these economic interests. This transformation has come about in Italy as well as elsewhere.

My solution of the problem in Italy is the Corporative State, Italy's interpretation of cooperation, functioning now for six years.

"Since civilization in Italy to-day, like civilization elsewhere in the world, is mainly industrial-economic," he explains, "we have, therefore, in our reform made the government of Italian civilization industrial-economic. Our legislation has always aimed at being intensely practical, dealing with things as they are and letting theory follow, not precede, fact. Since purely territorial politically, interests have been outgrown and no longer have any meaning politically, we have not directly represented them in the Corporative State. The people of Italy are no longer divided into categories according to provinces, but into categories of greater significance —that is, as workers, producers.

"We have seven such categories or 'corporations'—of industry, of agriculture, of commerce, of sea and air transportation, of land and inland-water transportation, and of the professions and arts—comprising all the material and spiritual forces of the nation. The corporations are in turn divided into confederations of employers and employed.

" For convenience of reunion and discussion of common interests we have subdivided these various confederations territorially into syndicates. But these are divisions only for convenience. The divisions of significance are the industrial ones.

" It means that voting is no longer done from the less significant viewpoint of residence, but from the viewpoint of man's major interest, his occupation.

" Thus the persons composing each of the corporations just named vote for representatives within their class and send these representatives to the Chamber of Deputies, which in Italy
might be called a House of Industrial Representatives. It will be noted that exactly the same People are represented as before. The difference lies in the grouping, according to occupation instead of residence—a fundamental difference.

"But it must not be thought that the constitutional reform meant merely a substitution of economic-social interests for territorial interests. There is another change, again simple but fundamental, in the national interpretation of representative and representation."

He is referring to the fact that, though the corporations are seven number, they have, in reality, in the idea of the Corporative State, been coordinated to form one corporation only, which is Italy. Therein is the meaning of the Corporative State, a union of corporations of production, employers and employed, themselves mutually incorporated to form one major corporation, the State. Thus the Corporative State purposes that the energies of the nation be no longer dispersed but concentrated, coordinated. Though separate in function, their action is unified.

My eyes rest on the giant fasces decorating the fireplace opposite. I cannot refrain from commenting on how perfect a symbol it is—the rods representing the corporations, all of them bound together by the national colours into a compact mass. "E pluribus unum"—the symbol of union used also on American dimes.

"Yes, the bands of national colours binding the rods well symbolize the new national meaning of representation. For the function of each Deputy now is to represent, not, as it was before, a political party, nor yet the transportation or agricultural or other category by which he has been elected, but to represent Italy, Italy as a unit, the welfare of the entire Italian people—even if in some special case the welfare of the nation might mean to vote against the temporary interest of the class or corporation. He brings the point of view of his occupation to the Chamber, but his vote must be not financial nor industrial but Italian.

"Such a vote is, however," he adds, "always in the ultimate interest of the Deputy's particular category for—and this is an essential tenet of my Government—the only way to assure the welfare of any part or of all parts is to assure the welfare of the whole. It is this lesson," he observes, "that the present world crisis is teaching us, continuing to teach us on a large scale—a lesson we must learn if we are to solve the world problem."

"How essential does Your Excellency consider the hierarchic element of your economic State?"

"The factors of the Corporative State have been coordinated in the form of a hierarchy for the same reason that an army is organized as a hierarchy. That is to say, efficiency—first essential in a nation like Italy without natural resources, forced to compete with the world economically to live—the efficiency that comes only from concentrated power and concentrated responsibility, enabling the nation to act as a unit. Italy for the past decade has wished to apply
to the reconstruction and production of peace the same conserved, concentrated and directed energy that has been applied in the past only to war.

"In addition," he resumes after a brief pause, "the Italian State is a hierarchy because this is the form into which the Italian people naturally organize, the two classic examples being the Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church.

"But the hierarchy is not, needless to say, an essential part of economic representation.

"The Corporative State," he concludes, "is the externalization of Italy's spiritual unity. After centuries of foreign oppression, a half-century of revolution brought her her geographic unity. She then had to pass through the travail of the World War and of subsequent socialism communism to attain the unity of her spirit.

"It is this unity more than anything else that has been responsible for Italy's decade of progress; for unity alone makes possible that conservation, concentration and direction of energy that is the solution of the national problem as well as of the international problem—of all problems in the human or scientific world."

"What solution would Your Excellency advise for the problem of capital and labour?" I ask Mussolini at the beginning of the next conversation.

"In answering how I would solve the capital-labour problem," Mussolini replies, "I can only say how I have solved it in Italy.

"The Corporative State is, as I have said, a Government organized along lines of production, prime essential for the life of a modern nation. Since production is uninterrupted when capital and labour are in harmony and interrupted when they are at variance, and since uninterrupted production is necessary for the mutual welfare of both capital and labour and for the welfare of the nation, the Corporative State eliminates all class struggle and substitutes class cooperation. It stands for the equilibrium of opposed interests.

"For the regulation of capital and labour and the perfection of production we have made a special Charter of Labour, one of the fundamental documents of our revolution, a social contract which substitutes new economic principles for those of the French Revolution which we have abandoned." The Charter of Labour to which Mussolini refers recognizes capital and labour as organs of the State equal in importance, duties and rights, and subordinated individually and collectively to the higher interests of production. In the Italian idea all economic forces must converge to one aim, the augmentation of production and, therefore, of wealth, which alone can assure improving conditions for all workers and citizens of the nation. Since strikes and lock-outs interfere with production, strikes and lock-outs are outlawed; and
capital-labour courts are provided for the settlement of them, so that the rhythm of national life
and production may go on uninterrupted.

" The Charter of Labour," Mussolini comments, "protects and encourages private initiative and
private ownership, considering them as a most valuable instrument of national life—and
integrates them into the State."

The Charter of Labour provides also for Government assistance of production in times of crisis
when production is unable to carry on alone. During the present depression producer after
producer has appealed to me for aid," Mussolini relates. "At such times the State rallies the
banks to the assistance of the industries and the industries to the assistance of the workers for
the ultimate good of all classes. It seeks

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through scientific means to coordinate production and consumption, to reduce the cost of
production in coordination with falling prices, to calculate consumption in advance of
production.

" And the Governments of the world," he adds, "can no longer remain disinterested in the
destiny of the nations' economic interests, especially after this world experience of crisis."

" Has the State found it possible to give assistance in all cases of appeal?" I ask.

" No, for the State has assisted, as the Charter of Labour provides, those industries that are
serious and fundamental, and has permitted to die wild-cat industries irresponsibly conceived
and directed, schemes for the exploitation of the public and detrimental to the soundness of the
national body economic. The State has also at various times discouraged too large a proportion
of business given to luxuries, this because Italy, relatively a poor nation, needs her manual and
financial energy for necessities. But, even in a country more richly endowed with natural
resources, there is serious danger where luxuries are the major business. In the interest of the
nation—as well as in their own interest—too large a proportion of luxuries should be avoided,
for in time of economic crisis, such as the present, there is money only for necessities, and the
failure of the luxury industries imperils the entire country."

" How can a nation overcome the depression and avoid the recurrence of financial crises?"

" Through unity and spirituality.

" Spirituality, together with its sister unity, is what the world to-day needs most. Therefore,
together with cooperation, my answer as to how the modern nation should meet this depression
and avoid further depressions is that the State should recognize the power and value of the
nation's spiritual resources as equal in importance to its natural resources, and study and
conserve them accordingly."
"As I have mentioned, without natural resources Italy a decade ago set herself the task of wiping out a tremendous national deficit, of paying her war debts, of achieving economic integrity. To attain this I stimulated first of all the spirit of the Italian people. Whatever Italy has achieved of economic vitality and reconstruction has been mainly through spiritual resources (students of the basis of our economics know how true this is), through a substitution of courage, tenacity and work for the iron, coal, gold and oil which we lack. We know the power of the spirit in Italy to-day, for New Italy, with its schools, roads, bridges, hydro-electric plants, aqueducts, workmen's houses and reclaimed marsh-lands, is primarily a creation of the spirit.

"First, we have been careful to incorporate the spirit as well as the body of industry into the Corporative State. Industry, as you will have observed, has been interpreted by us in a large sense to mean intellectual and spiritual industry as well as manual. The intellectuals as such have been organized and incorporated into the nation along with the bankers and farmers. And, for example, considering the talent or genius of men of science engaged in research as one of the most valuable and indispensable resources of the country, the State has established and organized under its direct patronage a National Council of Scientific Research to guarantee material and spiritual well-being to men of science, the State itself to coordinate their activities with the needs of industry, farming, commerce and administration. We have founded the Italian Academy to protect and advance the literary, artistic, scientific and historical work of the nation. There is also the National Institute of Fascist Culture directed by the philosopher Giovanni Gentile, the Historico-Diplomatic Commission, Annual Congress of the Philosophers, the annual Book Fairs, Government literary prizes, critical editions of the Latin and Italian classics, expositions of the fine arts—all of them fields of spiritual life directly sponsored by the State, as much a part of Government activity as its issuance of currency or its enforcement of the law.

"Second," the Italian Premier enumerates, "is the direct interest of the State in education. One of New Italy's first reforms was in education --- for the development of character as well as mentality, and the integration of character with life. The Italian Government acts for the cultivation of man's spiritual wealth through its Ministry of Education, as important in the State as its Ministry of Marine.

"And third, through government by intelligence. In the making of our laws, as in all our activities, we call regularly on the country's intellectual resources, appointing specialists to our commissions, a large proportion of them university professors. We have aimed to substitute political scientists for politicians in a desire to make laws worthy of the people's respect: we believe that the only happiness and well-being are in harmony with the law. We exalt the law, for the ideal law hampers only those tendencies of man that are less worthy and frees all that are more desirable. In such law is true freedom."
"In the State direction of farming we have commissions, mostly of professors of agriculture, giving expert advice to all the farmers of Italy, helping in the selection of seeds, fertilizer, machinery, and in the Government land reclamation and so on. No State can afford to be indifferent to agriculture, since it is the very basis of life and, therefore, of prosperity."

"And the Dopolavoro? " I refer to the national Italian "after-work " recreational and cultural institutions for the workers.

" Yes, there is the Dopolavoro, too, one of the most important elements of my Government. I feel that the Dopolavoro, with its various branches of instruction, artistic, physical, social, hygienic, together with its theatres, libraries, excursions and the like, is vital ; for man's increasing leisure is one of the major problems of every State, offering, as it does, possibility for peril or growth according to the opportunities afforded by the environment. And certainly our State censorship of recreation is one of our most effective means of conserving spiritual and mental energy, especially the censorship of the cinema, with its vast powers for either moral decadence or recreational wholesomeness. Then there are the Public Works, the Protection of Maternity and Infancy, the organizations of young people—all among the various channels we utilize to incorporate spiritual energy into the State."

In the Public Works, to which Mussolini refers, Italy, again through a special Ministry, instead of subsidizing idleness and lowering morale

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through a dole, directs such funds into the improvement of the country —the erection of public buildings, workmen's houses, roads and reclamation projects, solving at the same time in large measure the problem also of the unemployed war veteran.

" Through the organizations of girls and boys and young men," the Premier comments, touching again upon the concept that the future is at least equal in reality to the present, "we transmit to Italy of to-morrow the unified national consciousness and the spiritual ideal of our country.

" Direction and development of the spirit, that is my answer to your question as to what the world needs most to meet this material crisis and to avert further crises."

About ten years ago Mussolini defined the goal of Italy as that of becoming a nation without which it would be impossible to conceive the future history of humanity. I recall that definition to him.

" Yes," he replies, "and I feel we are nearer that goal precisely because we have aimed for it."

" And what would you consider as a worthy goal for the World ?"
"Life and life more abundantly, the only true and worthy goal of man. Life is the motive of all man's actions, however blind, and, even though his sense of its meaning be clouded, the goal of our civilization and of all civilization. We must consciously recognize this goal and use our intelligence to achieve the spirit and unity that are the only means to attain it.

"Our international conferences have failed in so far as their sense has been divided and materialistic. They would succeed at once if they kept paramount harmony and the considerations of the spirit. 'Considerations of the spirit in economic conferences?' it will be asked. By all means! In our economics is just where we have needed the spirit and where we have lacked it most—therefore, our disintegration. Let man face and know his own soul, and our problem is solved. One man can do much. A group, spiritually united, can perform miracles."

It is the end of the concluding conversation. Mussolini rises from his desk and goes to the window from which he has looked upon the upturned faces of so many crowds of Romans. He stands there gazing beyond the monument of modern Italy and beyond the Colosseum and Forum of the past into the future. "This is the world of the future," he describes it, "a world of more abundant life such as we have not known before. This is the new world that we are entering, where man will be more truly free for—well, as America defines it, 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'

"With our intelligence, our spirit, we have made our civilization," he resumes again in Italian, "with our spirit we must save it." It is the spirit, then, which is our pathway to the future, over chaos. What is I dying in our civilization is only a false idea.

'New Italy has a battle cry of peace. It is 'A Noi!'—'It is ours!'—"Mussolini looks down at the Piazza that has often thundered back to him that cry—"the responsibility, the danger, the glory.

"A new era is dawning --- the era of the future, and we men of to-day, only we, can be its creators."