MORALE

By JOSEPH GEOGHEGAN

"If thy people go out to battle against their enemy."
1 Kings, 8, 44.

MORALE is a feeling of confidence and competence in the conduct of an enterprise.

This definition needs some enlargement. Morale is a feeling, an emotional state, not an intellectual opinion, and is thus like all emotions a variable; it can be either good or bad. It is a feeling of confidence, confidence in the outcome, confidence in cause, comrades and leaders. It includes a feeling of competence, of personal capability, self-confidence, if you wish. Lastly, morale requires a positive issue, relatively a major one, for the term has no bearing in situations without such an appeal.

Application of the word may properly be made to an individual or to an aggregate of individuals. The latter, however, must possess one definite characteristic, that of being homogeneous in the sense of free association, purpose and sympathy, as in a street crowd, a regiment or a nation. The purport of the following remarks is intended to consider more particularly aspects of morale in the case of the last.

It is important at the outset to recognize clearly that the motivations of a crowd differ radically from those of an individual. The herd instinct, a very strong one, has to be taken into account. While this is active at all times to a slight extent, encouraging behaviour in harmony and consistency with the welfare and custom of the community, it can become, and indeed would appear to be so constructed as to be capable of becoming, a paramount feeling. This is particularly the case in the presence of danger. The ranks close up, there is a reduction of personal individuality, the unicellular organism has, as it were, become part of a multicellular whole.

Furthermore, this effect brings about a reversion to impulse and action of a more primitive type, more of a childish pattern, more of the deeper mind-stuff, the unconscious. The mechanism involved is interesting and pertinent to the issue. The herd instinct operates by an intensive heightening of the suggestibility of all the component units, the people in the crowd. This feature requires emphasis. Suggestibility is definitely outside or beyond the control of the individual and is not necessarily agreeable in any sense with his own interests. It is a simple sharp response immediate and direct to the stimulus of the moment, akin perhaps to a conditioned reflex. The strength of suggestion in a group is very strong; the individual has little or no option but to obey, for it is the emotional side which is employed, not the rational. When the individual merges in the mass his rational mind sinks with him; he ceases to be himself. It is a waste of words to appeal to the intelligence of a crowd; it is only their emotions that listen.

Arising out of, and indeed a component part of, the instinct of the herd is the need of leadership. The pack at all times demands a strong dominant personality in front; in the presence of trial or danger the need becomes insistent and incidentally much more decisive. We then feel the rightness of the right man in the right place with a confidence past question.

With the leader the members of the herd feel a strong identification; he exemplifies in himself the

genius of the pack, something louder, coarser, bigger, but something utterly and vividly the presentment of each and everyone. His qualifications are curious; he need have served no long apprenticeship, he need have no particular intellect, but he must have personality and character. He must have the prestige which follows not the reality of achievement but the appearance of it. Finally, he must still be the common man, like the wolf leader, only one jump ahead of the rest. All the members want to see clearly in front the visible embodiment of their own feelings.

After these brief references to certain aspects of the basic material, the factors influencing morale may be considered. Both the physical and psychological sides are involved but the effects of the former are more evident in a detrimental sense.

Factors Tending to Increase Morale

Bearing in mind that morale refers to an emotional tone, the first and probably the most important factor tending to improve confidence and competence in the conduct of an enterprise is *the sense of unity* engendered by the increased contact with our fellow-men, the closing of the ranks. This has both its physical and psychological sides and indeed they are very closely intermingled. In ordinary civil life man is gregarious only in a narrow range, in his work, profession, game, club and so on; in times of danger or distress the need for support, the strength in unity, and vice versa, the insecurity of isolation, converge. They encourage the need for the company of our fellow creatures by the bond created in a renewed community of interest. This fresh warmth of feeling again fortifies courage and fills the individual with a new and special strength. It is the heightening of this impulse which leads to a notable breakdown of social distinctions and local prejudices. Comradeship and the team-spirit are the visible evidence of a common purpose. There is a strong exaltation of both the patriotic and the human sides, all the more so when the combative and aggressive feelings are allowed approved outlet in identification with a greater whole.

This sense of fulfilment in unity gives a new steadfastness and energy to each member of the pack; it increases altruism and tends to add a moral strength to morale. For the national interests so obviously link up with the highest moral aims and purposes of humanity. They are thus strengthened by the indirect appeal to the noblest aspirations of the individual, the conviction of a righteous purpose, the strong association of duty with a deep religious feeling. These feelings may be consciously enhanced by the deliberate inculcation of a high moral aim, by the 'indoctrination' of the public in a sacred fellowship, by the stress laid upon a positive ideal which directly relates national need with a spiritual purpose.

Conversely, the enemy personifies all evil. The same instinct of the herd that brings the ranks shoulder to shoulder for the common good, that gains strength with every fresh evidence of national righteousness, vehemently denies to the enemy any shred of justification. He so blatantly represents the negation of all good, he so deliberately runs counter to every law of God or man, he carries with him such a foul string of barbarities that it becomes only right and proper to smite him hip and thigh. Old Testament phrases come readily to the tongue to express the feeling.

The groundwork for this sense of unity will have been prepared not only by education in the young in the geography and history of their native land, but also by the cultivation of a political philosophy that brings the genius of the nation into the closest relations with the highest ethical principles. Self-defence is not enough, it is too negative; there should have been a long and careful preparation tending to dignify the responsibilities, nay the duties, of the nation with a positive, a moral goal. Phrases such as "England, My England", "this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England", the white man's burden, the commonwealth of nations, and so on, become eventually part and parcel of everyday thought, and are accepted as self-evident truisms. It will not, of course, be overlooked that this attitude is by no means the sole prerogative of any one nation; an identical purpose is apparent in the use of such words as *Aryan*, *superman*, *Herrenvolk*, *Lebensraum*, etc. The principle has very general application.

Second to this sentiment of unity comes the feeling of *confidence*. This includes many of the relationships of the herd animal, notably so when herd consciousness is stimulated afresh in time of trial. Certain aspects stand out: these are cause, comrades, leaders and equipment.

Confidence in the cause wherein all are engaged implies two angles of approach: confidence in its essential rightness and confidence in its result. The first depends largely upon the depth of that intense emotional feeling we call patriotism; this again arises from a continuity of effects which may be summarized as nature and nurture, which co-operate to encourage the sense of nationality. The famous lines beginning "Breathes there a man with soul so dead" may be recalled to illustrate the passionate association of patriotism with what is regarded as the highest side of mankind. Conversely, from the very strength and urgency of this feeling springs the sharp resentment at the insolence of alien attack. "Ourselves alone!"

This sense of nationality, this patriotism, wells up 'as it were' under pressure from great depths; it is a trained and disciplined emotion, partaking of a certain splendour and assured of a genuine approval. The ground has been prepared not in one but in many generations and needs but a touch to set it all aglow with faith in the right and in the result. Then speaks in no hesitating voice confidence in the high abiding virtue of our cause and the sweet certainty of success. It may again be remarked that there is no material difference between the feeling in Moscow, Madrid, Manchester or Munich.

Confidence is also felt in comrades. This will be at once enhanced by the direct recognition of an equality of service and an equality of sacrifice. The positive evidence of mutual resolve and support, the visible activity on the part of everyone around to the same great purpose, all for one and one for all, encourages the feeling of comradeship and co-operation, which again reacts to strengthen personal endeavour: "Duke's son, cook's son, son of a millionaire" and so on. In service alone can be found peace and satisfaction; if it be denied, discouragement, anxiety and restlessness are felt.

But an equality of sacrifice plays an equal part. The press of conscription on everyone, the fracture of all social distinctions in the ranks, the subordination of the individual pattern in the need to keep step, the acknowledged severity of an income tax that strikes at incomes not at wages, and perhaps

most real of all, the daily lists of casualties—names from both the castle and the cottage—bring out afresh mutual trust and *esprit de corps*. Everyone can do his bit!

Confidence must further be felt in leaders and equipment. It will be at once understood that the multiple millions of a modern nation need not a leader, but leaders. There will be many graduations of place and post, all of which have weight and effect. Selection on the part of any section of the public, if allowed free play, will be spontaneous and accurate; it will be natural and will choose a natural leader. Conversely, the capacity to select efficient deputies must be one of the cardinal qualities of leadership.

Equipment again can have decided influence on confidence. The recognition of efficiency to our personal knowledge in the tools to hand, not only the ones *I* use but the ones *we* use, at once improves confidence in every sense. The dark silence of the Navy in the North Sea, the swift and generous issue of gas-masks and the sudden surprise of balloons over London, all had immediate and heartening effect. Like the symbol of the 'tin hat' or the realization of the tremendous technical resources of the United States behind us, they offer additional justification for confidence.

Confidence further extends to the individual in relation to himself and may then be more properly described as a feeling of *competence*, competence in his own conduct in the enterprise. Self-respect and self-esteem at once improve with the search for the personal share, by the genuine attempt to take up and perform serious and important tasks and in particular by their co-ordination with a common effort. Personal ambition is thus brought into the closest association with comrades and country, strengthened by the conviction of moral rectitude, and is directly linked up with the call of duty. This again reacts to strengthen the sense of responsibility and capability which are enobled by self-approval, encouraging the fullest realization of the self in complete alignment with the realization of society.

The personal side is directly increased by the new feeling of place and position, by news in the exploits of one's own or associated groups, by the exaltation of personal bravery and courage, by the evident approval of public opinion and senior officers, by promotion, real or anticipated, by pride in uniform and equipment, by new surroundings wherein one starts as it were from scratch, by the close feeling of linkage with the nobler episodes of national history, and last but not least by the increased and obvious admiration of the other sex.

All three factors tending to increase morale intimately interact. The increased sense of unity with one's fellow-men, the team-spirit of mutual effort, confidence in the righteousness of our cause and the certainty of the outcome, and the fresh zeal of personal ambition, combine to stimulate a high and ardent spirit in the common man.

Factors Tending to Decrease Morale

Interest in the subject of morale has come sharply to the fore largely by reason of the quantity and quality of the numbers actually involved in the conflict. For practical purposes the exposure to, indeed the frequent reality of bombing, turns everyone into a combatant—worse than that, a combatant deprived of the reasonable outlet of an aggressive reply; this involves a high degree of strain. Besides

the quantity, the crude mass of people thrust willy-nilly into this affair, the quality is poor. It is poor in the sense that there has been no calculated preparation for the occasion, none of that assiduous training of both emotion and intellect whereby is created the disciplined unity of the soldier. It is very doubtful if deliberate effort in that direction could be made practicable; more than that it is still more doubtful if it could succeed. The Germans have made attempts by the training of youth and by the distribution of trained agents, but their methods are questionable and their assessment must await future consideration.

Again, the press of warfare fell formerly on a selected portion of the population, selected in age and physique, whose aggressive combative feelings were deliberately led towards an optimum outlet. War took on then for the ordinary adventurous youngster a very satisfactory appeal; it became rather a great game, the greatest of games. But this can no longer describe the situation to-day. 'Total war' has thrust dirty fingers deep into the intimate consciousness of almost every human being, often with a quick sense of acute personal danger. Moreover, it is no longer a short sharp shock calling for gallant bearing, courage and dash; it has become a vehement and prolonged period of tension demanding the deliberate cultivation of a savage resolve.

These are not the days of petty personal vicissitude but of a great upheaval involving directly the selected purposes of humanity. The strain has to be borne by the common man and woman, by loose masses of humanity half developed, half educated, anxious and insecure. Tension so widespread, so severe, so unfair, has brought sharply to the fore visible and unpredictable stresses. It is indeed time to consider and to cultivate morale.

The most important factor tending to reduce morale is a state of *chronic fatigue*. The term is not intended to be used in any restricted sense but is employed to indicate that all-round deterioration of well-being which is brought about by prolonged under-nutrition, by continued insufficiency in the quantity of food and in its quality. Mere bulk of food in no way compensates for a lack of balance and proportion in its components, particularly as regards its freshness. A similar result, though slower in production and less in effect, follows upon long hours of wearisome labour, insufficient or broken sleep, bad housing, bad cooking, bad ventilation. Of these, states of nutrition are the most important for our present purpose. Reference is, of course, intended rather to effects on large masses of the population than in an individual sense, though the latter is more quickly evident and understood.

Adequate, sufficient and satisfactory food is a prime necessity to everyone; a decent meal makes all the difference. Chronic under-nutrition saps the vitality and reduces physical and nervous tone and resistance in a manner akin to prolonged ill-health. It does more; by its appeal to very elementary instincts and needs it creates an urgency tending to override all other considerations. Bread becomes more important than victory; a hungry man will walk up to a machine-gun. Nutrition is further impaired by the other detrimental conditions mentioned. They may be commonplace enough but their incidence is increased in war-time. Their supplementary influence will be readily understood. The consequent ill-effects will be aggravated by psychological conditions encouraging discontent, the blatant

evidence of waste, waste in every sense of material and effort, misdirection, reduplication, bad management, personal frictions, distrust and ridicule. But it is probable that the merely physical has the more lasting and more severe effect.

Fear is another important factor causing deterioration of morale. It is related to fatigue, but the former tends to be primary; in states of chronic fatigue fear will the more readily arise, but states of fear do not produce the same fatigue effects.

Conditions responsible for fear in one form or another are, of course, manifold, but there is one the importance of which cannot be over-rated; this is isolation. Under strain and stress swiftly follows an intolerance of solitude, physical or mental. The need of the mere physical contact with our fellow-men is very urgent, and if frustrated or hampered brings about restlessness, impatience and anxiety. While this applies of course to the individual, it plays an important part in the group-mind. The knowledge of friends and allies who are near, able and willing to help, strengthens purpose and confidence by the feeling of support. Isolation, real or apparent, produces or aggravates manifestations of insecurity and impotence, and thereby sensitizes the fear-sense.

Fear has several forms; panic is a "gigantic and senseless dread", apprehension is a continuing anticipation of danger, and fright involves surprise or sudden shock. The effect of mere noise may be here remarked on; this is a primitive fear stimulus, evident in all the preliminaries or actualities of combat from the roar of the lion to the trumpets of a mighty host. The present War is unpleasantly noisy, though the stimulus would not appear to have been deliberately sought by either side. Another point which may be referred to is the production of acute states of fear or shock, the so-called 'shell-shock', and of chronic states of anxiety by continuous recurrence of slighter degrees of very genuine strain against which there is neither defence nor reply.

An index, useful as a rough guide to the extent of fear in a given population, is found in the prevalence of rumour. The stimulus of fear, not necessarily of danger, sensitizes the collective mind, so that an attitude arises swiftly credulous of information reinforcing and fortifying this emotional tone. The degree of fear, more particularly of apprehension, and conversely the degree of confidence, will be reflected in the prevalence or otherwise of rumour. No such situation arises, of course, unless the gravity of the threat be considerable, but that alone does not suffice, a heightening of fear must be added. The same attitude explains the unfounded suspicions of 'fifth column' influences recurrent in a timid, distrustful, over-anxious population. These indicators are worth watching. Apparent lack of progress, even news of serious setbacks, has little or no effect upon a population whose tone is good; for example, the reaction in England to the sinking of two battleships and the loss of an army in Singapore.

Inertia and depression manifest themselves as a result of monotony or inactivity. Just as privations lead to fatigue, and danger, real or imaginary, to fear, so the persistence of long wearisome hours, lack of interest, lack of variety, of change, bad weather conditions, night-work, black-out, home-sickness, distasteful associates, and in particular monotony, monotony which appears to serve no useful purpose, lead to a degradation of moral or physical energy which calls for special remark. There is a loss of sense of proportion, a pre-occupation with oneself,

a lack of interest in and capacity for work, a depression of stamina.

Periods of inactivity, complete or partial, when circumstances refuse any reasonable outlet of energy, particularly useful energy, is another form of monotony having similar effect. It is important to recognize that change and variety of occupation and interest represent for human beings a form of rest, physical and mental. The Germans take this point seriously, encouraging frequent holidays and strenuous physical exertion on the part of higher officials.

As in the case of those tending to improve morale, factors of a deteriorating nature may well be multiple and indeed often are. They then tend to exaggerate the respective reactions. States of chronic fatigue from one cause or another clear the ground for fear and depression; conversely, situations likely to produce the latter will aggravate the unpleasant sensations of fatigue.

Conclusion

Morale, more particularly in its national aspects, requires serious attention. The problem in the case of the disciplined soldier is much easier, something concrete has been prepared to work on; it is a very different matter with the shifting unstable masses of a civil population exposed to novel and dangerous stresses. The strain is not merely physical; all sorts of real and imaginary threats hang darkly upon the horizon, stripping away ancient securities and landmarks.

It will not have escaped notice that some, at any rate, of the factors concerned with morale can be directly influenced by deliberate effort, by taking thought. Such effort need not solely derive from authoritative sources but should reasonably come within the province of every responsible person.

Both sides in this Second German War—the Second Punic War—have advantages and disadvantages. The stability and resolution of the Allies may be set against the plasticity and discipline of the Axis peoples. That on the whole the balance would appear to favour the former need not encourage neglect of a factor of increasing, perhaps ultimate, importance.

REFERENCES

- "German Psychological Warfare". Survey by the American Committee for National Morale. (New York, 1941.)
 "The Nation in Arms". By General von der Goltz. English translation. (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd., 1903.)
 "The Crowd". By Gustave le Bon. English translation. (London: Fisher Unwin, 1903.)
 "Instincts of the Herd". By Wilfred Trotter. (London: Fisher Unwin, 1919.)
 "Fear and Courage". By Edward Glover. Penguin edition. (1940.)

WILD LIFE IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS*

By SETON GORDON, C.B.E.

THE War has little affected the Western Highlands. It has, of course, been in the favour of those animals and birds which are sometimes classed as vermin. But I think that this is a narrow-minded and repellent term, given by those whose lives were formerly devoted to the care (and then the destruction) of the red grouse.

This is the third early summer season that the Highland deerstalker and the Highland gamekeeper

* Substance of a lecture at the Royal Institution on May 29.

have been on 'active service', and the most noticeable result of this absence is the spread of the fox. The fox has now become a menace to crofters and sheep farmers in a number of West Highland districts. More than forty lambs were killed last spring near us in Skye.

The wild cat is also on the increase, although not to the extent that might have been imagined. A deerstalker wrote that he recently found the carcass of a wild cat at a golden eagle's eyrie. There must have been a great fight before the eagle was able to kill the cat—unless indeed the King of Birds had happened to come upon the cat asleep. I have visited many eyries of eagles, but I have never seen a wild cat brought as prey, although I have seen the remains of a stoat more than once. A deerstalker once described to me a tremendous onslaught by a golden eagle upon a wild cat. The eagle swooped on the cat thirty or forty times, with its great talons ready to grasp it. Once, as the eagle came very near, the cat sprang into the air, striking at the eagle with its claws. The spring was so great a one that the stalker saw the whole of the cat for a second suspended in mid-air.

During the month of May, some years ago, my wife and I had a 'hide' at a golden eagle's eyrie on a rock up a lonely glen. We stayed with the stalker in the only house in the glen, and from the stalker's house to the eyrie was a distance of two miles or more. There was a blackbird living near the stalker's lodge. One night my wife had taken an all-night watch in the hide. Eagles sleep very late (for birds) since there is no necessity for them to search for the early worm, and the birds and beasts on which they prey are not usually in evidence until the sun is well up. The blackbird had taken a flight far afield that morning, and before sunrise flew up and perched in the small rowan tree that grew beside the eyrie. Here he began to sing and his song awakened the sleeping eagle on the eyrie. The eagle aroused herself, and glared balefully at the blackbird, which at once flew off to more healthy surroundings.

In the West Highlands is a high cliff where a pair of eagles and a pair of ravens nest. It is astonishing how hard the eagles are mobbed by the ravens, which attack them in the air for half an hour at a time. The ravens have to fly at their topmost speed to keep in touch with the eagle during its downward swoop. The eagles very occasionally turn half-heartedly upon their persecutors, but for the most part treat the attacks with indifference. Only last week I saw this eagle attacked previously by a pair of kestrels. Upon occasion I have seen two eagles attacked in the air by a single raven. Golden eagles do not often nest on cliffs beside the sea. I have seen one eyrie in this site, and the ground at the head of the cliff was honeycombed with rabbit burrows, so that the eagles had not far to fly for food for the two eaglets in the eyrie.

Near that eagle's eyrie is a colony of fulmar petrels. In the British Isles the fulmar is increasing to a remarkable extent. In the year 1878 there was only one colony in Britain, and that was on distant St. Kilda, an island group lying some fifty miles west of the Outer Hebrides. Whether the surplus stock originated on St. Kilda itself it is impossible to say, but at the present day the fulmar nests along the coast of Sutherland and Wester Ross; it has established colonies upon Skye and the Outer Hebrides; upon Mull and the small islands lying to the west of Mull. From Mull, or perhaps from Barra Head, it has spread to