

--The Meaning of Morale--

The word "Morale" has been very loosely used to describe that quiescent state of group spirit in which no individual has any complaints to make. The term might be equally well applied to a herd of cattle quietly grazing on a hillside as to a group of human beings. It is a poor word, a negative word as customarily employed, Morale is much more than stupid passivity.

Morale is in its best sense a condition of the spirit which arises from good discipline and its eternal companion; confidence. It does not describe the state of mind of men who are indifferent and inactive, but whose spirits are keyed to a high pitch of group activity and whose individual and collective courage does not know the meaning of defeat and disillusion.

Morale is thus the foundation stone of victory. It is as necessary in the pursuit of peace as it is on the battlefield. It is the sine qua non of the preservation of justice among men. It must be brought into being before democracy or any other ideology can be saved. Without it we are a house divided against itself. We must build it as it can only be built; through a rebirth of high discipline. We only perpetuate our wounds by licking them. We must cut off the part that offends the whole body. We must leave nothing to lucky accident in the improvement of our spirits. We can and we will build morale.

Most of the goodness of men has arisen out of crises which they have faced. When some basic right has been threatened or some event has stirred the souls of men they have come forward as one to reassert the right and the just. And yet very often men do not recognize crises until they are past. They need the perception and the watchfulness of their leaders to keep them aware of situations and issues. They need the strength and the will of their leaders in order to turn every event to the advantage of good discipline and confidence. They need the fervency of high purpose in their leaders as a lash to inspire self-respect and group loyalty.

America is to-day in the midst of a crisis. Her leaders must now more than ever assume the responsibility for her morale. As educators and leaders of young men we must not for one instant relax our vigilance in bringing to the attention of our young men all things which will inspire their hearts to an increased devotion to our country, our government, our faith, and our future. We must reassure and reassure; we must drive our young men to alertness, interest, and obedience, for their own preservation and for victory against any foe. And the greatest foe that we shall meet is fear. It must have no place in our hearts, else it will captivate us all, and devour us one by one.

Let us set up a ledger for America. To even the blindest of our people it must appear that we as a people, and as a democracy, are still solvent. We are in the red nowhere, but have a vast undivided surplus of advantages which if revealed will make all of us wealthy in the richness of the good life. We, as Americans, can reproduce for ourselves the courage of our fathers, and the richness of their spirit. United we can and will defend and advance everything American; we can and we will defend and protect the Constitution and its bill of rights; we can and we will defend and advance every free institution of America that has brought her to the pinnacle of Christian history. We can achieve a lasting peace, and we are determined as one that no threat of fire and hail shall bring America to her knees before any false creed or god.

they are lacking in that objectivity and significance that only comes from continuity of effort and a more than transient purpose.

However, when hosts and guests, farmers old and farmers new, are properly introduced to each other and helped by a third element more or less exclusively devoted to this purpose, these two elements together can become partners in a group in which tradition and change mix again. In other words, we discount the possibility of basing the future of Vermont on purely static communities or purely dynamic movements, as of old. We propose instead to make the perpetual and proper mixture of farmers old and settlers new, the principle of one economic machine. The two elements contain essential values for the functioning of the machine. We cannot expect neither that the old farmers will overthrow their traditions nor that the new settlers understand their values. But both elements together possess the tools for planning and building up the mixed economy recommended by every expert in a cooperative effort.

So far, the resettlement programs known to us have nearly always segregated the farmers old and the farmers new. The very names used in the neighborhood of settlement projects: "Sub-commercial group," "Government farmers," etc. point to this trend towards segregation. In our process, the farmers old and the settlers new would come to know each other and consider each other as full partners in the future of their community.

We shall try to set this process in motion in the following way:

We plan to acquire an area of from 700 to 1500 acres

situated between several of our towns within the Council's district, to ask Camp William James to build a reception center able to receive from 5 to 15 new families or settlers at a time, to start a cooperative sheep ranch, a timber salvage cooperative, and similar activities on this land as a project open for participation to the existing farmers, and served by the new settlers, for an ample training period, in the capacity of foresters, shepherds, etc. on the place. The place would also serve as a social center and thereby lend dignity to the newcomers and to their relations with the community. Since Camp William James would be a third social group, on a younger age level, offering and receiving hospitality, the integration of the three elements should not offer any serious difficulty as our experience so far already has proven. I may refer here to the letter by Ed. Flint as printed in the Congressional Record of the United States Senate, page 507. As the social activities, so will the economic cooperatives comprise the farmers old and new.

Whenever a member of the reception center feels ready, he may move on to a farm in one of the nine towns or anywhere else. And certainly if he employs the help of the Farm Sec. As., or has learned his lesson well, his economy will be treated as a part of the whole economic development. In this manner he would neither have to flood the dairy market as a competitor nor have to remain in the subcommercial group, but perhaps specialize his production for consumption and cooperative exchange.

The government so far has helped every group separately;

the farmers old through the triple A, the extension services, etc.; the settlers new through FSA, the campers through the CCC. We now ask it to contemplate the potentialities of a perpetual interplay between these three groups. Only if the government releases their creative powers can these groups stimulate each other mutually in a common effort.

For this purpose these groups must be allowed to face each other and to cooperate with each other. Financially, it would be necessary to recognize that funds for Extension Service, Resettlement and CCC may supplement each other. For example, while a loan can be given to a subcommercial farm by FSA, CCC cannot protect and increase the security of this loan by curing the desperate shortage of labor on this same farm. The AAA offers phosphate and lime and plans programs for the farmers to plant legumes which shall retain and enrich the soil; they should also strengthen the human fabric by admixing youthful and educated helpers to the old-timers. Many more farmers would make use of the AAA programs if somebody could put the lime on their fields. And the conservation of the soil is not their individual concern; it is of national importance. While they build new houses and even community centers and town halls, they do not fill them with significance and dignity, which only comes from the banding together in unselfish companies. The CCC is for the needy and pays relief wages, and by this false vocabulary, the green uniform does not invest its carrier with the distinction of a voluntary servant. The members of Camp William James were not allowed to

state in the questionnaire the simple truth: that they wish to serve their country. They have to profess that they are 'needy'. These barriers of law and indolence are untenable.

We feel certain that as soon as the government becomes conscious of the segregational trends of its present policy, it will abandon them. Pigeonhole a man, and his stature shrinks. We also are positive that the people of Vermont and American youth are ready for and sympathetic to the vital integration between Council and Camp as here proposed.

If we do not exploit these qualities all three, stability of the integrated community, mobility of the adventurous youth, and eagerness to get settled of the young married couples, we must abandon all hope of keeping either our country well populated or our population well settled. No other way has been shown us by which to satisfy the needs of human nature and of economic change, simultaneously.