

VICTORY HAS A PRICE

Dollars are important but no substitute for policy, writes Earl Browder. Timely military action, true coalition, maximum production, a strong home front . . . some of the ingredients of policy.

IN THE summer of 1943 the war was in its twelfth year, if we begin to count with the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. It is ten years old if we count from Hitler's assumption of power in Germany. It is eight years since Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia. Or six years since the Nazi-inspired insurrection against the Spanish Republic. Five years ago Czechoslovakia was betrayed at Munich. Four years ago in September, Britain formally declared war. Two years ago on June 22 the Nazis launched the invasion of the Soviet Union which has been the chief military phase of the entire war. And on December 7, 1941, Japan struck at Pearl Harbor to end the American illusion of being a benevolent spectator in the world storm. One can take his choice as to the length of the war by choosing which date he counts as the crucial one on which the war began in earnest for him. But whether the war is considered in its twelfth or second year, the year of 1943 has, for the first time, presented the anti-Axis world with the clear prospect of victory—if we are prepared to pay the necessary price.

What price victory? After the war of 1914-18 such a question came to symbolize the mass disillusionment with the fruits of victory.

Today we must examine the price of victory more thoroughly than ever before. We have faced its alternative, the price of defeat, and found in it the destruction of everything which gives value to life for a long time to come. It is only when the perspective of defeat has been unconditionally rejected that the price of victory can be realistically weighed.

The first installment we must pay on the price of victory is the unconditional subordination of every other interest or goal to the single end of victory. That is the kind of war this one is. It is for keeps, and the stakes are everything that stands for human progress. Any half-heartedness in this war finally results in defeatism. We must be prepared to pay, in rising installments, everything that victory demands. And no matter how much we have paid, default on any single installment *may* result in the immediate loss of victory and *certainly* brings penalties.

That is the basic problem, stated in the vulgar terms of the market place.

ONE can state the issue, of course, in noble and high-sounding phrases. On this plane victory is a jealous goddess who bestows her favors only upon those who woo her with complete devotion and single-mindedness. Since, however, the American

people and especially our ruling circles are much more familiar with markets, prices, installments, etc., than they are with goddesses and their jealousies, I choose to use the more familiar language. The essential meanings are the same.

The price of victory is, of course, not expressed solely in dollars. Above all victory demands those unpurchasable qualities of courage, devotion, understanding, out of which can be built the *policy* which victory demands.

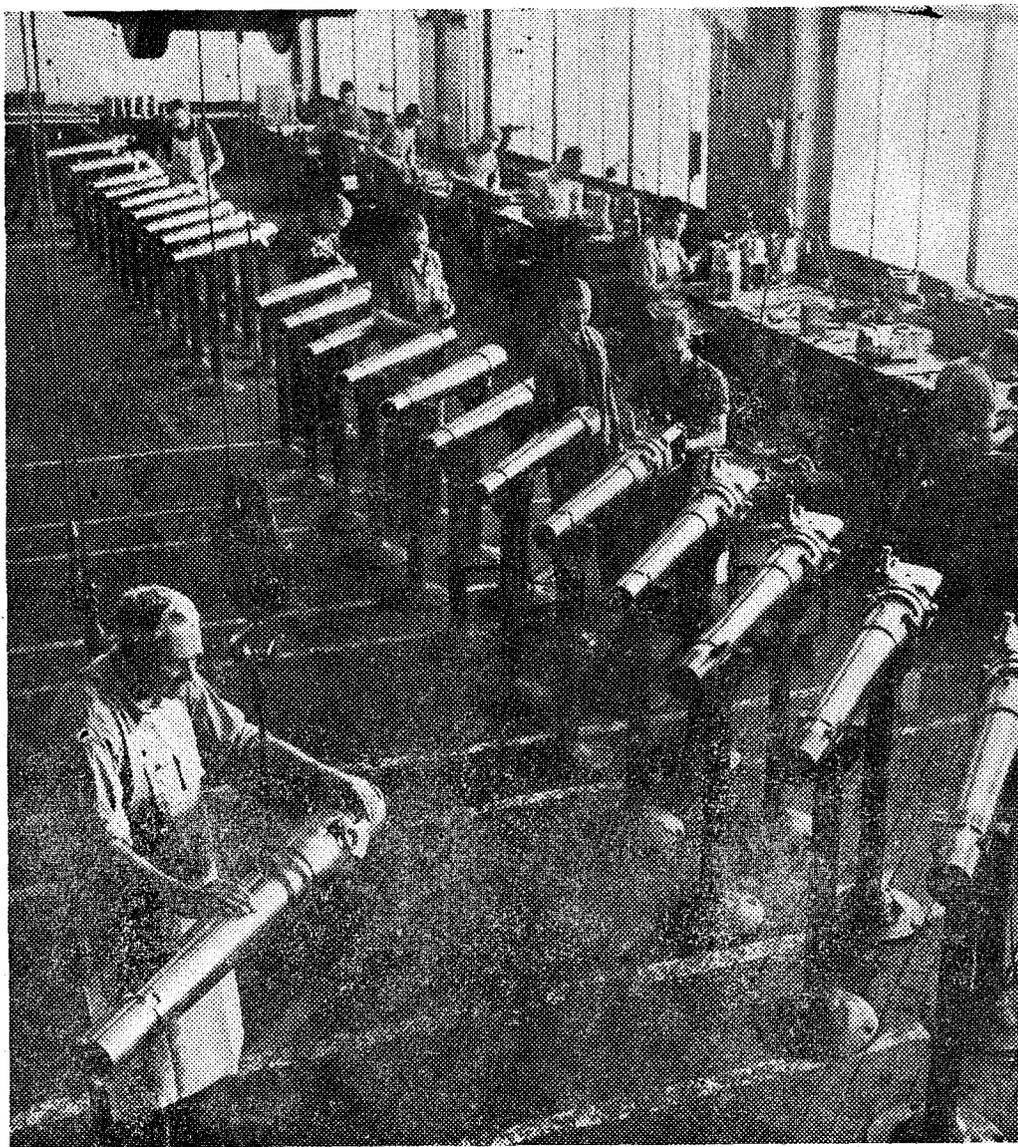
Even these unpurchasable things, however, find a negative expression in dollars. When they are lacking we suffer penalties which multiply the dollar cost of victory. It has been estimated, for example, that the US war budget for one and a half years has been over 265 billions of dollars, many times more than that of all previous wars combined—although our fighting participation in the war, expressed in casualties, has been but a fraction of the year and a half we spent in the war of 1914-18. This enormous dollar-price-of-admission into the current war is not merely the measure of a higher war technique; it represents, above

all, the dollar penalties imposed upon our nation for our past crimes against courage, devotion, and understanding in the cause for which we now must fight—the cause of human solidarity and progress. The police court of history has levied enormous fines upon us, as it were, for our past cowardice, disloyalty, and sloppy thinking.

The dollar price of victory is thus a variable factor; it rises enormously with every weakness and shortcoming in policy, it is greatly reduced by every bold and correct improvement in policy. Those who see the price of victory exclusively or mainly in terms of dollars, therefore, are bad leaders who will surely lead us to defeat if we go with them. The source of most of the mistakes or crimes of Congress in this war has been its misunderstanding of this question, its conception that when it had voted unlimited dollars for the war budget it had done its duty and could then go on to play its traditional politics, in the most light-minded manner, with the unpurchasable factors of policy—which include our own war leadership, national unity, relations with our allies, and so on.



Timely military action—which means the opening of a real second front in western Europe—is the major factor of a policy for victory. The photo above shows British soldiers in Sicily, in the first Allied invasion of European territory—a good beginning but far from a second front to smash Hitler quickly.



Production—at maximum—another vital ingredient of policy.

I am not, of course, arguing that the necessary price of victory does not include a dollar price along with the best of policies. Dollars in the service of policy, as many dollars as necessary, are indispensable. But dollars as a substitute for policy can only purchase disaster. And we still make more use of dollars than correct policy, our money is more active than our brains. This is the main obstacle that still stands between us and victory.

THERE has been little resistance in the US to the adoption of war budgets. But there has been enormous resistance to every step in the formulation of those policies necessary or most conducive to victory.

The problem is not resolved by translating dollars into armaments. This step is, of course, of the greatest importance and not so simple as the average congressman believes. Armaments are much closer to the price of victory than dollars, and the country learned, with the May and June lag in production, that unlimited dollars cannot bring unlimited armaments, nor even insure a steady increase in armaments. But it is necessary to insist, again and again, before we can properly solve even this

limited problem of production, that armaments are important only in the service of policy and can never be a substitute for policy. Armaments, like dollars, expended without the guidance of a sound over-all policy, lead not to victory but only to greater expenditures and finally to defeat.

Experience of both the Allies and the Axis goes to prove this fundamental axiom of the price of victory. Ten years ago the anti-Axis countries held the overwhelming preponderance of money, armaments, and strategic positions; but because they lacked adequate policy—that is, they did not know what to do and how to do it—the Axis had by 1939 so reversed the relation of forces that it was questionable whether its domination of the world could be prevented by any means. By 1943 this is again reversed so that the anti-Axis coalition has the military preponderance, thanks to the exploits of the Red Army, brought into action by Hitler's "intuition," plus the first appearance of *common policy* in the anti-Axis camp.

The problem of victory over the Axis is to ensure that there is not a third reversal of this relationship, which would result from a breakdown of policy in the Allied coalition.

AT THIS point a new feature appears in the problem of the price of victory. The victories of the Soviet Union over the Nazis are so fundamental that already they seem to guarantee against a possible revival of Axis preponderance. Consequently there has arisen in America and Britain the thought that the military and political price of victory has already been paid in full, or almost in full; that the Red Army will do the bulk of the fighting which remains to be done; that Britain and America can relax, mark time, and allow the ripe fruits of victory to fall into our laps. It is a theory that from now on, by and large, victory is for us without price.

This thought exerts a dangerously seductive influence which is not lessened by the fact that it is not always openly expressed but operates, even unconsciously, as the implicit justification for a thousand minor acts and policies which total up to gradual withdrawal from full prosecution of the war. How else can we in the United States explain the absolute drop in war production in May and June, the insurrection against the President by Congress, the complacency which has greeted the outbreaks of civil war by the fifth column in Detroit, Los Angeles, Beaumont, Mobile, and other places, the toleration and encouragement given by the press to John L. Lewis' strike-wave conspiracy, and in general the sharp crisis that arose on the home front in the summer of 1943? We expect the rise of fifth column activities, in response to Hitler's dire need; but it becomes highly dangerous when the country meets it with smug complacency, born of the feeling that the danger of defeat in the war has passed, that victory has been handed to us on a silver platter by the Soviet Union.

That thought is an illusion as dangerous as the one which Chamberlain brought back with him from Munich in 1938. It is, in fact, a revival in a slightly different form of the old Munich program. If it is not scotched, and quickly, it will have results equally unfavorable for the world, and for us.

VICTORY for the United States in this war has its price, which we have not paid and which we must pay. Any effort to avoid the price of victory can end only in our own defeat and dishonor.

That price of victory is not only in dollars. It is in timely military action, in fighting, in dead and wounded, in that full effort which strains all the physical and moral resources of the nation. It is in the organization of the home front, the welding of a united people, the organization of the economy, the achievement of maximum production, the building of morale. *It is, above all, in the cementing of an unbreakable coalition of Britain, the Soviet Union, and our own country, as the indispensable heart and head of the United Nations, the*



OBSTRUCTIONISTS

2ND Front

Grosz