

---

# SUMMATION SPEECH AT THE TENTH NATIONAL CONVENTION\*

By EARL BROWDER

COMRADES, we have worked hard for five days, and I think that our work will bear fruit. Our convention has registered its message in the working class of America and throughout the entire country. The whole thinking population of America will be engaged in the next weeks in evaluating our convention. We ourselves must begin to form our judgments upon our convention as we close our work to go back to our states and cities.

A few things we can already say about our convention with a certain degree of assurance. We can say that this convention registered the coming to maturity of our Party in American political life. Our Party has not been concerned in this convention with the details of our inner Party organization, with the wranglings between individuals or groups, or with the small problems that are of interest only to our Party or its immediate sympathizers. The dominating theme of this convention, that which stood out above everything and determined everything here, was the problems of the fate of the whole American people. And the fate of the entire world.

We were not examining these problems merely as spectators, as people

with an intellectual curiosity, to find out what is going to happen to America and to the world. We have been examining these problems with the understanding that we will have something to say about what happens to America and to the whole world. That is what I mean when I speak of the growing maturity, the coming to a full, mature, political life of the Communist Party of the United States.

A second thing we can say about our convention, in keeping with our broad, clear, democratic program, is that we have conducted the work of this convention on the basis of democracy—not a mere conventional democracy, not a mere surface observance of certain rules inherited from the past, but the living democracy of collective work as we have learned the meaning of collective work from our great teachers, Lenin and Stalin.

A great democratic program can only be carried out by thorough, complete, democratic organization, and one of the outstanding features of this convention was a demonstration to the whole world that the fullest and most complete democracy is precisely the instrument for obtaining the fullest and most complete and most enthusiastic unity. I think everyone in this convention has not only had the benefit of the words and the opinions

---

\* Closing address delivered at the Tenth National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., in New York, May 31, 1938.

of others; every man and woman in this convention has had opportunity provided in an organized fashion to make his or her contribution to the whole convention. And it is this great collective contribution of more than 700 delegates from all over the Union that has been the power behind this great Tenth Convention.

I do not think there is another organization of any kind in the United States that could point to so complete an example of the practical working out of democracy as this convention has shown. I do not think there is a single delegate in this hall who came to this convention with something on his heart, with something on his mind, that he needed to clear up with the cooperation of all his fellows, who is going to go away from this convention unsatisfied. I do not think there is anyone who came here with something he felt must be said, who will go away feeling that his thought was not adequately expressed. Am I correct on that? (*Thunderous applause—"yes—yes."*)

I could speak at great length upon this subject, a subject that is nearest to my heart—the mastering of this great problem of how to make democracy work. By learning how to make democracy work in our Party and how to make democracy work in the mass organizations of the people, we are going to master the lesson of how to make democracy work in the government of the United States.

There is just one more feature of our convention I want to speak about, and I know very well that I am ignoring very many important and outstanding features of this many-sided convention. But I want to speak about

the importance of the participation in this convention of our delegations from the Southern state and the significance this has for all of America, the significance this has in the further maturing of the Negro liberation movement.

The South in America has for generations been the stronghold of reaction, the one place in America where modern capitalism was fused—in its most parasitic aspects—with remnants of feudalism, of pre-capitalist society; and on the basis of that fusion of parasitic capitalism and pre-capitalist survivals, the South has played a deadly role in the political life of all America.

But that old "solid South" is melting away. We see the signs of it not only in those great political developments I spoke of in my report, but we know how to evaluate the significance of the appearance of even a small Communist Party. We know the enormous significance of the appearance at this convention of a delegation from the states of the South, which took place right along side by side with the delegations from all over America, and dealt with the problems of the South in exactly the same way and with the same perspective that our Party is dealing with the problems of all America.

We must draw a certain conclusion from that for the political perspective for all America. I want to speak about a certain phase of our work which is of the most burning significance for the people of every part of the country—that is, the organization of the Negro liberation movement to involve the whole mass of the Negro people. This movement embraces the

great majority of the Negroes in the North. It is only beginning to embrace the main masses of the Negroes there, where the Negroes have their feet upon the ground, on the land, down South.

Important as our work is among the Negroes in the North, let us never forget that this work gets its main importance because it gives us channels to reach and organize and rouse the main mass of the Negro people on the land in the Southern states. And we who want to change the course of our country, who want to turn our country away from that path that is charted out for it by the economic masters of our land, who want to block once and forever the road to reaction and fascism, if we are really practical politicians, we must keep our eyes on the South. Not only our Southern comrades, but the entire Party has the task to win the South for the democratic front.

Next year we will have our twentieth birthday party. Our Party will be twenty years old in 1939. Our Party has had quite a checkered history and has passed through a protracted childhood. That is past. But we don't forget the tremendous political lessons that must be learned by all the new tens of thousands that are streaming into our Party, from the past of our Party. The history of our Party must be made the living possession of every Communist in America, and going from this convention, let us focus our eyes on the twentieth anniversary and make the period from now to the twentieth anniversary of our Party a period of the education of our Party in the lessons of its own history.

Anniversaries are very valuable things. They are periods of stock-taking and revaluation periods from which we draw most profound lessons from our experiences. You remember the great political fruits that we got out of our campaign of the observance of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Constitution of the United States. We can draw the same kind of fruits from our coming observance of the twentieth anniversary of the Communist Party. This is necessary if we are to equip our Party to meet the tremendous responsibilities that it has taken upon itself.

Enthusiasm is a splendid thing, and a very necessary thing. But enthusiasm alone is nothing, and enthusiasm which is not disciplined may even become dangerous. The basis of discipline is knowledge, and we must discipline our great and growing Party with the knowledge of its own history and how we came to be what we are. And the only way in which we can do that is to master the basic theories of Marxism-Leninism.

That is the great task before us, which brings me to another point that I want to emphasize very briefly—study and school work. This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of our Workers School, a tremendously important institution, the work of which has played quite a role in making such a convention as this possible; it has blazed the way for the great crop of schools that are growing up all over our country. We should prepare to give a fitting anniversary celebration to the Workers School, to show how much we appreciate it and understand what it has done. But again, I always want to say when I speak of

schools, that schools are mainly important as places that teach people how to study outside of school, and the task of each and every one of us is to study, study, study.

Anyone who gets so deeply involved in detailed work that he never finds the time to study will quickly find he has lost his way in the details of his work. You cannot properly direct any detailed work unless you are constantly increasing your knowledge and mastery of theory.

The next point I want to speak about is the significance of this convention of the appearance of the fraternal delegates from some, I believe eight, countries. Our comrades from other lands, by their presence here, have added something of inestimable value to all of our work. Their being here has permeated this convention from beginning to end, with the spirit of international solidarity, of international brotherhood of the workers of all lands. I don't have to use our time, as we are prepared to close this convention, to send flowery bouquets from us to our leading comrades in all the various Parties. That is important also. And this convention has already recognized the importance of that.

But in speaking of the enormous significance of the number of delegates from our brother Parties here, I only want to try to give some expression to the fact that we have realized something out of this. It has deepened all of our thought and all of our work, it has welded this convention together and steeled its unity even more than would have been possible without their presence here among us. And especially is this true

of our comrade from France, who by his presence here is restoring the old traditional association of the French and the American peoples that we want to develop more and more.

Especially is this true of our comrades from the Latin American countries, whose peoples are rising in growing movements in the same direction in which the democratic masses of the United States are going. We know very well that the United States cannot take this path successfully, unless we help these forces in the Latin American countries to draw their peoples onto the same path, hand in hand with us. And their presence here among us is a sign that we are going to succeed in welding the continental unity of the democracies of the Americas.

It would be impossible to close this convention without a special word for our Filipino brothers. They are here from half way around the world, to be with us in this convention, and they represent a Party which, though small, is one of the classical examples of the self-sacrifice and heroism that lays the foundation for a Communist Party. The crimes of American imperialism in the past has bound our fate with that of the Filipino people, and the struggle for Filipino freedom and independence becomes an organic part of the struggle for democracy in the United States.

We have missed very much from our sessions here the face of our good, old-time friend, Tim Buck, from Canada; but we have been very glad that we had four of Buck's closest collaborators with us. Our Canadian brother Party is facing the opening of a Central Committee Plenum in

a few days, and right at this same time Comrade Buck was called to the capital of Canada to give advice to the Royal Commission that is re-examining the Constitution of the Dominion.

One other features of our deliberations, something that has colored all our thoughts and feelings, something that has served further to steel us for the tasks and struggles to come, was the sad news about our dear Comrade Doran, who symbolized the hundreds and hundreds of the best boys America ever produced, the boys who have written one of the most glorious pages of all history on the battlefields of Spain.

We must from this convention go out with a great crusade to assure that America as a whole is going to justify the sacrifice of these boys, by throwing the power of American behind the cause of democracy, represented by Republican Spain. And as we do this great political task, as we take up that enormous task of helping the Chinese people move more quickly towards their inevitable victory, let's also remember that in the weeks immediately before us, all friends of Republican Spain have a special task in making a great drive to enable the Friends of the Lincoln and Washington Brigade to meet their growing responsibilities. There are a number of American boys wounded and incapacitated who are preparing to come home. Some of them are already in France. The Friends of the Lincoln-Washington Brigades must and will take care of these boys. And I hope that when their special appeal goes out in the next few days it will find a hundred per cent response from

every committee and every branch of the Communist Party of the United States.

Our Young Communist League, that is, the youth delegation in this convention, has very properly and fittingly proposed that the Party should assume a special task in helping to build up the Y.C.L.; our Party should engage in a recruiting campaign for young people in the League in honor of the memory of Dave Doran. A Party that recruited 25,000 members in the course of its recruiting drive, if it would turn its hand to the matter—a little more energetically, could bring 5,000 members into the Y.C.L. in the next few weeks.

Finally, just a word about the perspective of building our Party. A year ago if we got in 5,000 new members in a chunk, it looked like a great big number, didn't it? But today 5,000 doesn't look so big. Before the month of June is over, I am sure that we shall have passed the hundred thousand mark, counting Party and Y.C.L. The first hundred thousand is the hardest. The second hundred thousand should come in easy.

I don't want to set any quotas for you, but I wonder, if we would all turn some serious attention to the question, how many months it would take for us to get that second hundred thousand. And we have the perspective before us now of growing in terms of hundreds of thousands.

But again, we have to check our enthusiasm a little bit and discipline it in order to remind ourselves that we are not going to get the hundreds of thousands of new members in our Party until we first learn to do something we haven't yet learned; we

haven't learned how to circulate in hundreds of thousands our *Daily Worker*, *Midwest Daily Record* and *People's World*. This is the weakest spot in all of our work, the circulation of our daily press, something which we cannot congratulate ourselves on at all. This is one of the things that we must keep in our minds as we go away from our convention. And unless this is in your minds, the convention has failed in one of its central tasks.

There isn't much more to say except this: I think that we all agree, and I am only speaking what you all have been thinking. As we turn from

this Tenth Convention to go to our places of work throughout the country, we are going with a feeling that behind us is a tremendous power, that we represent a power of the growing mass movement coming from the people. By our work, and by the message that we will take from this convention to the workers, the broadest masses of the American people, we are going to strengthen that mass movement of the people, give it organizational form and consciousness, and lead it to the victory, the final victory of democracy in America, which means the victory of socialism.