

EX-PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S ADDRESS

MR. CHANCELLOR, comrades, and you men and you, my friends and men and women of New Jersey, I esteem myself fortunate in being able to be here to-day and to act as one of those transferring this noble gift, which is to commemorate not only Abraham Lincoln, but all the men who dared and suffered and died in the Civil War. And I wish most heartily to congratulate the Post, and all those concerned in acquiring this statue, on their wisdom in having selected a sculptor who could embody the soul of Abraham Lincoln in his work. And I would like to give one word of advice to some other Posts of the G.A.R. I hope they will copy your example, and when they erect statues will choose sculptors able to make statues worth erecting. The biggest man and the biggest feat in our history should be commemorated by the very best there is in the sculptor's art, and that has not always been done in the past.

When you choose a soldier you do not take him because he has good domestic qualities; you choose him because he is a good shot and marcher and knows the right way to run when the guns begin

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to sound. Isn't that so? And in the same way, I want you to choose a sculptor, because he knows his job.

You have done it, and so you have commemorated here in fit form one of the two greatest statesmen that this country has ever had, one of that very limited number of great men whose greatness is for all the world and for all the ages.

There never was a great cause more absolutely embodied in a great man than the cause of union and freedom. The cause of order and liberty, the greatest of causes, was embodied in Abraham Lincoln. I speak in no momentary fervor, but as expressing what I am sure will be the absolute verdict of history, when I say that of all the wars with which history deals, the verdict will be that the war in which you men here to-day were victorious was the greatest war for justice, and was the most just of all wars, that the world has seen since history began.

No other contest during the time of which we have record, certainly no other contest since civilization dawned on this earth, was as supremely important to all the nations of mankind as this.

I need not say to you men who wore the blue that I know that I utter your sentiments. when I say on behalf of all of us that I know that our brothers of to-day, the men whom you fought, who wore the



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gray, struggled with all valor to do the right, as it was given them to see the right. I acknowledge that in the fullest way. I am myself half of southern blood. Kinsfolk of mine wore the uniform of the South as others wore the uniform of the North. I acknowledge that heartily; and yet I wish to insist, with all the strength that is in me, that the victory for the Union, the victory won under the lead of Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses Grant, was vital not only to the future of this nation, but to the future of mankind.

If you had failed in the Civil War it would have meant more than your own failure, for it would have meant that nine-tenths, perhaps all, of what was worth doing as the result of the Revolutionary War would have been undone.

If the men of 1776 had won freedom, only that freedom might turn into an anarchy tempered by slavery, then their fight would not have been worth performing. The success of you who followed Grant, and Sherman, and Thomas, and Sheridan, and Farragut—all of whom followed Lincoln—the success of you men rounded out the work of Washington, and made that work worth doing from the standpoint of ages.

Ours was the first experiment in popular government on a continental scale. Before our time there had been republics, but they were either small in

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territorial extent, or, if large, they lasted for but a brief period after the time of their expansion, as was true in the case of the Roman republic. We were to prove by our success or our failure here on this continent whether self-government by the people, for the people, and of the people, should be possible, should continue on the face of the earth.

You warred for the Union of the American people. You warred for the abolition of slavery throughout the whole world, for it failed everywhere if it failed here. You warred also for the success of genuine popular government throughout the continents and the hemispheres.

Every reactionary, every despot, every believer in oligarchy, every man who hated and despised democracy throughout the world wished you to fail; he wished you to fail, not that he cared anything for your opponents, but because he wished ill to both of you, because he wished to see this country become helpless by war, a reproach among the nations of mankind.

We here to-day owe the supreme debt that we do owe to these veterans of the Civil War, because there is not one man of us here who could walk with his head as high as he now carries it, if it had not been for the deeds done by the men of the dark days from '61 to '65.

I believe with all my heart in peace, and in arbitra-

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tion as a means of getting peace, as long as you get righteousness with the peace. But whenever the conflict comes between peace and righteousness, I am loyal to the past of the republic and I stand for righteousness.

Ordinarily, peace is the hand-maid of righteousness, but now and then there come occasions, such as you faced in '61, where you have to choose between two great and terrible alternatives, where neither choice is free from dreadful attending circumstances; but where, if the nation has in it the qualities that fit it to be a nation, it will choose the difficult path even if that path leads to war rather than surrender all the things that make a people great in history.

I wish to call your attention to the prime fact that differentiates this struggle of ours in '61, as it differentiates our struggle in 1776, from some other struggles that have been undertaken in the name of liberty and that have worked at the best an alloy of good and evil, instead of working as ours worked the absolute good alike of the victor and vanquished and of all mankind.

Study the speeches of Abraham Lincoln, study his writings, and in those speeches and writings you will find that he appeals ten times to his fellow citizens in the name of their duties, for once that he appeals to them in the name of their rights.

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And when he considers himself—search his speeches—you will hardly once find that he speaks of his own rights. But there is not a speech in which he does not dwell upon his duties; there is not a speech which does not show that he was thinking all the time of his duty and how he should perform it.

That was as true of Washington as it was of Lincoln. Washington realized, as Lincoln did, that only to insist upon our rights and to fail to perform our duties would mean that we would go down to the bottomless gulf of national impotence and mischief.

Contrast that with what that great and able body, the Representative Assembly that gathered to inaugurate the French Revolution did, when, in 1789, they passed a bill of rights, but after full debate rejected a proposal to consider their duties. I do not suppose that that produced the horrors that followed in the French Revolution; but it was symptomatic of the spirit that did produce those horrors. They were due to the fact that those men thought only of their rights and not of their duties, and that they spoke to the people only of their rights and not of their duties and feared to speak to them of their duties.

That is what made the difference in the outcome of the French Revolution and of our Revolution and our Civil War.

Lincoln never appealed to his countrymen by ask-

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ing them to consider their selfish interests. If he had, "My Captain" would never have been written; if he had, it would never have been read to-day. He appealed to his countrymen, ever, always to remember their duties, to remember that they had to atone for what the nation had done and left undone in the past, and that, however bitter the atonement might be, they were to drink the cup to the bottom, and to say that not their will but the will of the Lord should be done, and that His mercy and righteousness were perfect.

Read Lincoln's speeches, read the Gettysburg speech, read the second inaugural, read the first inaugural. They are alive with the spirit of duty. The invocation he makes is to his countrymen to follow the commands of Jehovah, to live up to the great rules of righteousness. He never promises them ease. He never flatters them. He asks them to show themselves worthy of the mighty men who had gone before them, and, above all, he asks them not to prove false to their trust, to remember that they hold in their hands the destinies of the future of mankind.

And now, friends, it is a good thing for us to come together to-day to commemorate Abraham Lincoln; to commemorate the deeds of the men who half a century ago marched to battle for the Union and for the slaves. It is a good thing. But it is a mighty

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poor thing if we confine ourselves only to praising the men of the past and do not seek to emulate their deeds in the present.

The true way in which we, the men and women of to-day, can show that we do in our souls, and not merely with our lips, pay homage to the men of the mighty past, is to face our work, our duties, to-day in the spirit in which they faced their duties.

We face no great crisis such as you faced. Our duties are easy and simple compared to yours. But every generation has its task, and the generation can well do its task only if it sets about performing it in the spirit in which the great tasks of the past were done. It is just as it is in war. If Uncle Sam's people should have to go into battle in the future, they will go in with different tactics from yours, but they will have to go in with the same spirit that marked the men of Gettysburg and Vicksburg if they are to win.

We have to beware of two attitudes—the attitude of failing to live up to the spirit of the past, and the attitude of refusing to make any changes, simply because these changes were not needed in the past.

If you in '61 had carried the flintlock of Washington's Continentals you would have made a poor fist of your fighting. If Uncle Sam now sent his boys in khaki to war with black powder, muzzle-loading muskets or rifles, they would make a poor fist of it.

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Keep the spirit, and make any changes necessary in conditions to meet the changed conditions. You did that in war. Let us do it in peace. You fought for justice and liberty; you fought for justice as between man and man. We are loyal to the spirit of Abraham Lincoln only when we try to shape our legislation of to-day so as to do justice between man and man; and we cannot do it by remaining loyal to the old flintlock type of law.

There were excellent laws for the flintlock period which were just as good then as the flintlock musket was for the wars of that period; but they are outworn now. We have had a great change in industrial conditions. We have to change our laws and therefore the spirit in which legislators, executives and judges approach the construction of those laws. We have to change those laws just as you have to change weapons from time to time.

The spirit of the law must be the same. We must have order and we must have justice. You cannot get justice without order. The mob is the negation of liberty; the Anarchist is a worse foe of liberty than any tyrant can possibly be.

The murderer, the dynamiter, whether he commits his infamy in the name of labor or of capital, is hostile to the spirit of this republic, and whenever we get the chance at him we will meet him as you met your foes.

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It is our business to check alike the arrogant greed of the conscienceless wealthy, and the greedy and murderous violence of the man who attacks wealth in lawless fashion; and we must do both or we are recreant to the spirit of Abraham Lincoln and of those who supported Abraham Lincoln in his work.

It is our duty to try to bring about a nearer approximation to the reign of justice, of decency, of fair dealing in the industrial, the social, the economic and political worlds. We must stand for clean politics and clean business.

We must insist that the wage worker gets his rights, that he has a chance to earn a living wage, to keep himself, his wife and his children in decency and comfort as American citizens should be kept. It is our business to help him in every legitimate way achieve those ends; and it is also our business to put a stop to murderous violence even if it is indulged in nominally to help achieve those ends.

In turning this statue over to the Mayor, on behalf of this municipality, I ask that we do now what Abraham Lincoln asked this people to do forty-eight years ago; that we dedicate ourselves as we dedicate this monument; that we dedicate ourselves to the service of the ideals for which this man stood, and that we prove our faith in him and his teachings, not merely by praising him for what he did in facing

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the issues of a buried past, but by working in his spirit, his spirit of love of liberty, of love of justice, of insistence upon order as the handmaid of liberty and justice; and that we apply that spirit to the issues of the living present as he and you worked in that spirit to solve the issues of the great and buried past.

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A MEMORIAL



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