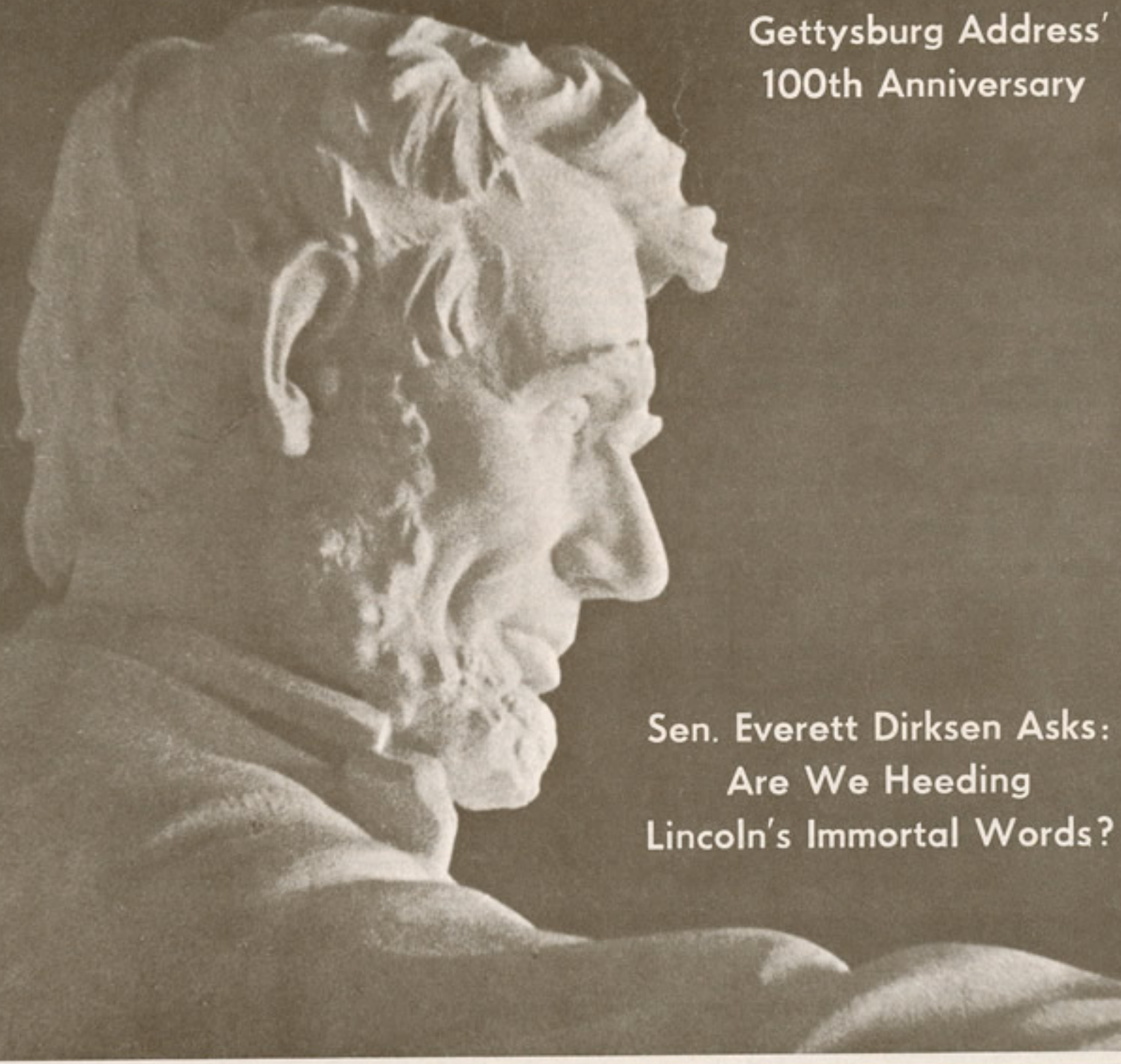


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Gettysburg Address'
100th Anniversary

Sen. Everett Dirksen Asks:
Are We Heeding
Lincoln's Immortal Words?

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Are Lincoln's Immortal Words Being Heeded by U.S. Now?

By Senator EVERETT DIRKSEN



One hundred years ago, a man from Illinois stood at Gettysburg, the destiny of a nation upon his shoulders and the cares of conflict graven upon his face.

From thousands of patriot graves, men who had fallen beneath a July sun were speaking to him. From his anguished soul he was trying to speak to and for them.

He was uneasy. In ink and pencil he drafted and redrafted the remarks which he was invited to make. His mind struggled to embody in few words a message suited to the occasion, setting forth the reason for the conflict, the duty still at hand, and the hope for the future. Yet, out of deep humility, he was impelled to say that it was not the words of the living which would be noted and remembered but only the deeds of heroes who had fallen there for the Union.

The New Nation

Consider then his words. He spoke of our forefathers—those who were there before him and brought forth a new nation. They were but one of many generations who had gone before, a part of the endless stream which flows through time and history and gives continuity to our national life.

Each generation added to the inheritance which it received from those who had gone before, enriched it and transmitted it to those who were to follow.

The new nation which they wrought was conceived in liberty and dedicated to equality.

How freely those words come to the tongue in all parts of the earth—liberty and equality. And what strange meanings are read into them.

Men speak of liberty even as it is being extinguished before their eyes. They speak of liberty, even as it is being transformed into a strange gospel. Men speak of liberty, even as her domain shrinks and

she struggles for survival. Men speak of liberty even as such heresies as "Better Red than Dead" rise up to be embraced by those who have forgotten freedom's price. But the man from Illinois spoke only of that liberty which ennobles and dignifies the individual and preserves his Godly image.

Immortal Prose

Then came the deathless question which continues to roll down time's corridor with each generation. Can a nation so conceived and so dedicated long endure?

What strange doubts assail this timid generation of today as it beholds the challenges to both liberty and equality.

We seem beset with fear not faith, with doubt not confidence, with compromise not conviction, with dismay not dedication.

We are drenched with the literature of fear and doubt. Survival has become the main theme. The fall-out shelter from which the stars of hope and courage cannot be seen has become the symbol of our fears and misgivings.

Are we to become fearful, unworthy legatees in a blessed, united land where the earth is fertile to our every need, where the skills and ingenuity of men are boundless, where the burdens are bearable, where decent living is within the reach of all, and where the genius to produce is unlimited?

Perhaps we have lost our sense of continuity. Perhaps we have forgotten that we move in that same endless stream which began with our forefathers and which will flow on and on to embrace our children and our children's children. If we have, there will have gone with it that sense of individual responsibility which is the last best hope that a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to equality can long endure.

Comes then the reminder from the Man from Illinois. Men died and are sleeping who fought under a July Gettysburg sun that the

nation might endure, united, free, tolerant, and devoted to equality.

The task was unfinished. It is never quite finished.

Freedom is never fully won at any given time or place.

From Runnymede and the Magna Carta until now is seven-and-one-half centuries.

Has there been a generation in which liberty has not been challenged in one form or another?

In the day of our forefathers, the challenge was from a King and his ministers to a people.

When our Capital was burned by the British in 1814 it was an imperious sovereign against an infant land.

When the Man from Illinois stood at Gettysburg one hundred years ago, it was the challenge flowing from one of the unsolved problems in the Constitution.

Three score years ago, it was a helpless island people against a foreign tyrant.

Twice in our own time, it was the challenge of autocracy and dictatorship versus freedom and self-determination.

And today, it is the challenge of Cold War born strangely enough in the crucible of hot war. It is the challenge of a despotic, deceitful system with its own prophets, its own holy book, its own specious promises of salvation, its own image of man as a creature without dignity or the everlasting hope of another more glorious life.

But the challenge to freedom is not limited to forces from without. It embraces also those individuals and groups who are unceasing in their efforts to expand the powers and functions of the central government and have it intrude more deeply into the affairs of the people.

These—all these—are the continuing challenges to freedom and the task of the defenders is never finished.

Comes now the shining hope and the duty with which the Man

from Illinois charged his countrymen.

The hope—a new birth of freedom. But can there be a birth without labor and pain?

Dare we in this soft age believe when men shrink from pain and sacrifice that a new birth of freedom and a new sense of mission can come without pain?

And then the further hope that self government shall not perish. He did not mean government of the few but of all. He did not say government by the few but by all. He did not say government for the few but for all.

But the key to all is government by the people for the certain way to lose the precious power of self-government is failure to use it.

So spoke the man from Illinois one hundred years ago.

His imperishable words are as fresh today as when they were uttered.

Need Still Here

The problem today is the same as in his day—whether in this uneasy, fevered world, this or any nation founded on liberty and equality can long endure.

The duty is the same—the duty imposed upon us as a part of that endless procession of men and women to build and ennoble this good land and carry on the unfinished work.

The bonds are the same, for the living cannot separate themselves from their obligation to the dead.

The need is the same—for a new birth of freedom as the lamps of liberty go out in many places, either by force and brutality or by default.

The challenge is the same—for this generation to come out of the gloomy shelters of defeatism and despair and assert freedom's cause under God to all the world with the same vigor and purpose which marked the course of the Man from Illinois.

His name you know—Abraham Lincoln.