

JOHN F. KENNEDY'S SPEECH ON CIVIL RIGHTS * i**Some New Ideas for Teaching English****Bernhard Kettemann**

This paper intends to demonstrate how Kennedy's speech of June 11, 1963 on Civil Rights may be seen to mark both the end, as well as the rhetorically successful climax of a slow-moving low-key policy on racial integration, driven forward by executive orders and speeches. To this end, the article will firstly concern itself with the Civil Rights Movement, secondly with Kennedy's position on Civil Rights, and with a rhetorical analysis of his speech. Finally it will present some ideas for teaching, using different approaches, though relying heavily on the Microsoft Encarta 97 Encyclopedia on CD-ROM. The text of the speech is in the appendix. In order to allow comparisons between this speech and the one held by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the same topic two months later on August 28, 1963, I have also included the text of King's speech in the appendix.

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1. Civil Rights - History and Situation

The Civil Rights Movement encompasses all organised attempts to establish an equality of rights for blacks, as well as the elimination of racial prejudice in the USA. Following the work of various precursors, such as the Anti-Slavery Society, founded in 1833, the successful foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) in 1919 marked the beginning of this movement. On a number of occasions, it took legal, political and social actions in an attempt to fight discrimination.

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Clearly, the Civil Rights Movement's most prominent period in American politics began on May 17, 1954, when the Supreme Court, as a result of a court case called by the NAACP (the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*; Thurgood Marshall, Howard Law School, pleading against racial segregation) declared racial segregation in schools, universities and other public institutions unconstitutional, thus bringing to an end the era running from 1896, during which the operative principle was "separate but equal". Separate but equal meant that Blacks had separate schools, railroad cars, buses, restaurants, bars and recreational facilities, but that they rarely were equal. The various civil rights organisations organised boycotts and demonstrations in an effort to establish equal civil rights in the southern states. The most significant of these events were:

- 5.12.1955: Organisation of the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala., where Ms. Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give her seat up to a white person;
- 1957: High school desegregation in Little Rock, Ark., with severe rioting (cf. Eisenhower's speech of September 24, 1957);
- 1960: College student lunch-counter sit-ins in Greensboro, NC;
- 1961: Organisation of the Freedom Rides for the desegregation of long- distance buses, with violent action towards the participants in Anniston, Ala. and Birmingham, Ala;
- 1. 10. 1962: Successful admission of James Meredith as the first black student at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss., carried out under the protection of Federal Marshals, the Mississippi National Guard and units from the military police, following severe rioting;
- May 1963: Demonstrations in Birmingham, Ala., during which police set their dogs on the young protesters;
- 11. 6. 1963: Admission of Vivian Malone and Jimmy Hood as the first two black students at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Ala. This was carried out despite the contrary wishes of Governor George Wallace ("segregation forever") and prompted Kennedy's speech on the evening of June 11, 1963;
- 28. 8. 1963: Organisation of the March on Washington for Freedom and Jobs, in which 200,000 people participated. It was at this event that Martin Luther King, as chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, gave his famous speech "I have a dream" in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

This led to an acceleration in Civil Rights legislation. In addition to the rather insufficient Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960, two important acts were passed: The Civil Rights Act of 1963 (concerning civil rights and equal opportunity), introduced by Kennedy in 1963, and passed in July 1964; and the Voting Rights Act (relating to the abolition of the qualifying examination required of blacks for voter registration), introduced by Johnson in 1964, and passed in August 1965.

In 1964, M.L.King, leader of the Civil Rights Movement, was awarded the Kennedy Peace Prize and the Nobel Peace Prize. He began to concentrate his efforts particularly

upon social discrimination, also in connection with the war in Vietnam and issues of the Left. On April 4, 1968, M.L.King was shot in Memphis, Tennessee.

Since around 1966, the Civil Rights Movement has split off into different directions, and the individual organisations, e.g. CORE (Congress for Racial Equality), SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) or Black Panthers went their own ways, as regards philosophy and strategy. Today, it is mostly the economic and social developments that occupy the foreground of political discussion.

2. Kennedy and Civil Rights

We may assume that Kennedy began to work for the integration of the black population soon after the 1954 Supreme Court's decision against racial discrimination. In the beginning, Kennedy's efforts were relatively hesitant and cautious, demonstrating his consideration as a Democrat in the face of the rigid position by Democrat members of congress from the southern states and their white voters. With an increasing sensitisation of the population, brought about by non-violent action and protests against the violence on the part of the police and mobs, Kennedy began to follow his aims more intensively, eventually concluding his efforts with the introduction of a corresponding draft bill. Four years previous to this, on April 16, 1959, he had already given a speech on Civil Liberties to the yearly conference of the National Civil Liberties Clearing House.

He justified his stand against racial discrimination, not only as being necessary in the name of justice, but also with a national security argument: that the potential of the black population should be harnessed in a move to fill the educational and technological gap between the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. In his 1963 speech however, he justified his stand purely on ethical and moral grounds.

In 1960 the Democrats' party program of Los Angeles was given the title "The Rights of Man" and included a marked Civil Rights component, in which legislation was called for. At the beginning of his presidential campaign, Kennedy sometimes introduced this phraseology into his election speeches. Later, he emphasised the possibility of bringing about improvements by executive order. He named one of the authors of the platform, Harris Wofford (Howard and Yale Law Schools), as his adviser on Civil Rights.

Shortly before the election, M.L.King was arrested in Atlanta, during a peaceful demonstration against racial discrimination in restaurants, and then sentenced to several months hard labour on an alleged offence against Road Traffic Regulations. Kennedy called Coretta King and committed himself fully to King's cause.

In his Inaugural Address of January 20, 1961 he only touched upon the surface of the problem, referring to "those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world". Subsequently however, he took several small and cautious steps in the direction of equal rights for blacks and whites, as the initiator of various executive orders and reports:

- 25.2.1961: Message to the Commission on Civil Rights on the desegregation of schools
- 7.3.1961: Establishment of a Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity
- 12.4.1962: Statement on Equal Opportunity in Housing
- 22.6.1962: Equal Opportunity Agreements with suppliers to the Pentagon
- 24.6.1962: Establishment of a Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces
- 13.9.1962: During a press conference condemnation of white obstruction to black voters' registration; this was followed by the announcement of a draft bill, designed to help blacks in their fight for the right to vote
- 30.9.1962: Deployment of the National Guard and the army for James Meredith's matriculation at the University of Mississippi. Kennedy explained the reason for this course of action in a radio and television address
- 28.12.1962: Proclamation by the President on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation made by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863: "Whereas the goal of equal rights for all our citizens is still unreached, and the security of these rights is one of the great unfinished tasks of our democracy..."
- 28.2.1963: Message to the Congress urging the enactment of civil rights legislation
- 12.5.1963: Radio and television speech following racial unrest in Birmingham, Ala. (including a bomb attack on Martin Luther King's house). In this speech, he threatened to deploy the National Guard and justified his course of action
- 11.6.1963: Radio and television address on the subject of Civil Rights following the deployment of the National Guard for the matriculation of Malone and Hood at the University of Alabama, in Tuscaloosa
- 19.6.1963: Special Message to the Congress on Civil Rights and Job Opportunities (Equal accommodation in public facilities, desegregation of schools, fair and full employment, community relations services); introduction of the Civil Rights draft bill.
- 28.8.1963: Statement on the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom
- 9.9.1963: Statement on Desegregation in the Schools of Alabama
- 18.9.1963: Remarks to the Conference on Voter Registration

On the one hand, Kennedy's failure to pass any actual legislation on civil rights contradicts his promise made on September 1, 1960 in the course of his election campaign. On the other hand, the above list certainly documents the amount of measures taken for the introduction, extension, and consolidation of Civil Rights. It is evident that this was a central issue in Kennedy's domestic policy (together with education policy, the Space Program and the Peace Corps). For strategic reasons he

chose to work on the level of executive order for a long time, until he finally succeeded in introducing a draft bill into Congress, with the Democrats having the majority, 40% of these however, were representatives of the southern states.

3. The Rhetoric of his Speech of June 11, 1963

The University of Alabama was the last university in the South to undergo the difficult process of racial integration in the USA. On May 16, 1963, a court ordered the university to allow the admission of the two black students, Malone and Hood. The university was ready to admit the students, however Governor Wallace opposed this move. Several unsuccessful meetings between Wallace and the federal authorities took place, and in the morning of June 11, 1963, he stood in front of the "schoolhouse door" blocking entry. At 15.30, after General Graham had ordered the intervention of the National Guard, he finally allowed Graham to pass. Malone and Hood were then matriculated without any further trouble.

The President had reserved broadcasting time for the evening during the early afternoon, with the outcome of the confrontation still unclear. This meant that he and Sorensen only had a few hours to prepare the evening's speech. After a short presentation of the events and their history, Kennedy came very quickly to his central message:

„We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution. The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.“ (§9 and 10)

The public's approval of any message is facilitated through a speaker's high reputation, his credibility, attractiveness and the situation in which and to which he makes the address. In this case, the speaker is the President of the USA addressing the whole nation in his moral appeal from his office. The more general and far-reaching the identification possibilities offered by a speaker, the more successful he will be in generating consent and support and creating meaning. To this end, Kennedy uses as points of identification the Bible (§9), the American Constitution (§9), the ideals of freedom (§12, 28), equality (§3,5,10,13,29,30,32,33), justice (§10) and human decency (§27). These are all fundamental myths and national beliefs for which Americans have traditionally stood. Furthermore, he immediately reduces the abstract nature of these terms, addressing the public directly, getting them involved and also bringing the issue onto a personal plane: "[...] whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated (§10)."

In this respect, Kennedy acts in sharp contrast to his predecessor, Eisenhower, who in a comparable situation, on September 24, 1957; on the occasion of the riots in Little Rock, Arkansas, gave a factually orientated, objective speech:

„[...] the President's responsibility is inescapable. [...] As you know, the Supreme Court of the United States has decided that separate public educational facilities for the races are inherently unequal and therefore compulsory school segregation laws are unconstitutional.

Our personal opinions about the decision have no bearing on the matter of enforcement; the responsibility and authority of the Supreme Court to interpret the Constitution are very clear. Local Federal Courts were instructed by the Supreme Court to issue such orders and decrees as might be necessary to achieve admission to public schools without regard to race - and with all deliberate speed.“

However, in the course of his earlier speech of September 30, 1962, Kennedy still argues in terms similar to Eisenhower's for the deployment of the Mississippi National Guard to ensure the successful matriculation of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi:

„[...] my responsibility as President was therefore inescapable. I accept it. My obligation under the Constitution of the United States was and is to implement the orders of the court with whatever means are necessary, and with as little force and civil disorder as the circumstances permit.“

In his speech of September 30, 1962, he remains mainly committed to his predecessor, but then departs from the rather formal and legal line of argument with an emotive plea of identification to his audience: "You have a new opportunity to show that you are men of patriotism and integrity. For the most effective means of upholding the law is not the State policeman or the marshals or the National Guard. It is you." For him the important point is not the simple acceptance of racial integration against a background of peace and order, as Eisenhower had stressed before, but an active, complete commitment towards the accomplishment of this cause. It still is a matter for "the law", government, and external legislation. Only with the present speech in question, of June 11, 1963 does the issue become a matter of "internal" law, a moral obligation.

The public's agreement to the semantic labelling of the speaker is nurtured with generalised, simplified and polarised statements on aspects of reality: "this is a land of the free except for the Negroes" (§12). This sympathy is further strengthened through the establishment of a clear, political and moral antithesis to the advocates of racial segregation, and in particular, to the Governors of Alabama, Wallace, and Mississippi, Barnett with the reference to "a series of threats and defiant statements" (§1). Kennedy draws upon socially relevant myths: "Now the time has come for this nation to fulfil its promise" (§13) and high-value words, for example, freedom (3x), fair, courage, equality (2x), orderly, law (6x).

As a result of the public sympathy generated by his speech a new social reality is being created: being in favour of racial segregation becomes socially unacceptable. This is the difference between Kennedy and Eisenhower, who left moral leadership in this issue to the courts.

The formal quality of a political speech also influences the audience. It is common knowledge that certain stylistic features trigger off particular reactions and can lead to

applause and approval: lists of threes create an impression of competence, rhetorical questions convey certainty of thought, argumentative strength and a readiness to involve the audience, inversion and topicalisation serve, as a result of their departure from the normal word order, to add weight to the substance of the statement and thus increase the audience's attention. Parallelisms of syntactic structures facilitate acceptance of the content expressed within them, and fill the public with emotion, as people take delight in recognising already familiar structures. The technique of repeating statements, which are unchanged in structure and content, also serves to increase the audience's memory; as do phonetic figures, such as alliteration and assonance.

Kennedy uses a great deal of parallel-structured contrasts, for example based on verbs: "Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognising right as well as reality" (§17) or based on quantifiers: "the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened" (§3). Parallel-structured repetition through increasing semantic-associative-emotional variation (food, education, political say) can be found in §10:

„If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the colour of his skin changed and stand in his place?“

The following list of three is marked by its slightly varied syntactic parallelism, and its increasing tension from its negatives: "This is not a sectional issue [...] Nor is this a partisan issue [...] This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone [...]" (§9), is brought to an end with the impressive: "We are confronted primarily with a moral issue" (§10).

A list of three, made up of anaphoric parallelisms, is to be found in: "It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talk" (§15).

The statistical presentation of the unequal living conditions of the black and white populations (§7) is presented effectively in its grim reality, skillfully contrasted to and thus introduced by lists of three and cohesive repetition used in describing an ideal state of affairs.

„It ought to be possible for American consumers of any colour to receive equal service [...], without being forced to resort to demonstrations in the street, and it ought to be possible for American citizens of any colour to register and to vote [...] without interference or fear of reprisal [(§5)]. It ought to be possible, in short, for every American to enjoy [...] without regard to his race or his colour. In short, every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated. But this is not the case [(§6)]. The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section of the Nation in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby born in the same place on the same day, one-third as much chance of completing college, one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man, twice as much chance of becoming unemployed,

about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$10,000 a year, a life expectancy which is seven years shorter, and the prospects of earning only half as much.“ (§7)

An impressively compact repetition ("They are not yet freed from") is to be found for example in §11, embedded in a semantic contrast in the form of a chiasmus: (free - not fully free - not fully free - free) before and after it:

„One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free. They are not yet freed from the bonds of injustice. They are not yet freed from social and economic oppression. And this Nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free.“ (§11)

Rhetorical questions are used for example in §10, as (slightly varied) parallelism: "Then who among us would be content to have the colour of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay?" One further rhetorical question contains three syntactic parallelisms within one sentence:

„[...] but are we to say to the world, and much more importantly, to each other that this is a land of the free except for the Negroes; that we have no second-class citizens except Negroes; that we have no class or cast system, no ghettos, no master race except with respect to Negroes?“ (§12)

Phonetic patterns of various sorts are also in no short supply in this speech. A few examples will suffice: Alliteration occurs for example, in "promote and protect" (§4), "party politics" (§8), "content with the counsels" (§10), "fires of frustration" (§14), "by token moves or talk" (§15), "recognizing right as well as reality" (§17), "American life or law" (§18). The phonetic figure of assonance is present e.g. in: "in race has no place" (§18), "we preach freedom [...] we mean it," "class or cast" (both in §12). Consonance of the final phoneme cluster, is to be found in "courts, streets" (§8, 22), "talents, rights, streets" (§31).

A statistical analysis of text comprehensibility shows the text to be rather demanding, with a Flesch Reading Ease Score (a complex, standardised measurement of text comprehensibility, according to A.R. Flesch) of 53 (on a scale of incomprehensible = 0 to 100 = fully comprehensible). As a comparison, Bush's Acceptance Speech of August 18, 1988 has a reading of 74 on this scale. The main reasons for this are a relatively large proportion of passive constructions (16%, Bush: 4%), the large number of hypotaxis (in contrast to the small number of parataxis); furthermore a relatively large number of subordinating constructions, (e.g. as, because, if, that, when) in relation to the expected high frequency of coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or). This effect is further intensified through Kennedy's relatively large proportion of long sentences (long = more than 40 words) 14% (Bush: 1.3%) compared to a relatively small proportion of short sentences (short = less than 14 words) 32% of the total number of sentences (Bush: 62%). Syntactic complexity is certainly one of the telling features of Kennedy's stylistic profile.

4. Conclusion

Even this short analysis shows that Kennedy's speech of June 11, 1963 employs various rhetorical techniques extremely effectively. The speech is particularly impressive because of the strong personal *engagement* of the President. But the speech also represents a highpoint of his period of office as regards content. He presents himself as a figure of moral leadership, working for a just cause, with regard to the basic values of the American society. His line of reasoning runs both on the rational and logical, as well as on the emotional and personal level. Politically, his announcement of the introduction of the long awaited Civil Rights draft bill was particularly important, since it showed him to be not only a moraliser, but also a person who understood how to act politically at a favourable point in time. The change in consciousness engendered among large sections of the white population was historically important for the relationship between the two races. Any public stand for racial segregation was now considered socially unacceptable. This change was achieved as a result of a far-reaching and persuasive performance, the basis of which was the political will for integration, and which, until this point in time, had never been attempted with such stringency and single-mindedness by any government in the face of its public.

This speech thus represents (at least for me) a singular achievement in eloquence, purpose and result. It is as such well worth discussing and could be used as a starting point for an interdisciplinary project in English and in History and German classes.

5. Ideas for use in class

Preparatory material and background information to familiarize the pupils with the issues involved and the vocabulary used in the speech can easily be accessed with the help of a CD-ROM, the Microsoft "Encarta 97 Encyclopedia".

You could start e.g. with looking up "Civil Rights and Civil Liberties", and/or "Civil Rights Movement in the United States", and/or "King, M. L., Jr.". Let different groups of pupils look at different parts of the articles, e.g. History, Civil Rights in the U.S., Religious Freedom, Freedom of Speech, Press, and Assembly, Minority Rights, etc. Show them how to look up unfamiliar words with the "dictionary"-facility (e.g. *inalienable*, just double click the word in the text). Show them how to move to other articles by clicking on the highlighted links provided within the articles (e.g. lynching, slavery, NAACP etc).

The teacher could also ask the pupils to start "browsing", to read on "horizontally" in related articles using the "pinpointer", "word search" and "wizard" facilities (e.g. Kennedy, John Fitzgerald, The Emancipation Proclamation, The Constitution of the United States). Ask your groups to summarize their findings by transferring parts of the texts and pictures to their word-processors and doing lots of altering, deleting, reformulating. Print-outs of parts of the texts should be distributed for additional backgrounding and familiarizing tasks as homework. Group rapporteurs report back to the class from the summaries. Additional searching for specific topics that arise from

the discussion can be done on the spot as the need arises e.g. "immigration", "minorities", "racism" and "xenophobia".

MS-Encarta 97 also offers two interesting and appealing interactive multimedia collages related to our topic, "Influential Thinkers" and "American Speeches" (the collages are only available from the "de luxe edition" if run under Windows 95). The less fortunate will have to do with short videos of King speaking on non-violence, short soundtrack samples of "We Shall Overcome", M. L. King's speech and Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and a short video sequence from the March on Washington on August 28, 1963, besides several photographs, e.g. Little Rock Central High (1957), or Ms Rosa Parks disobeying the Montgomery, Ala., law that required her to give up her seat on a bus to a white person in 1955.

I believe that these short visual and audio stimuli provide enough motivating relational and emotional backgrounding that is actually wetting the pupils' appetite for the "real thing" and thus preparing the ground for the viewing of or listening to Kennedy's speech on "Civil Rights". If time allows and perhaps in the form of an interdisciplinary project, teachers could additionally discuss Martin Luther King's speech "I have a dream" of August 28, 1963. To allow for this comparison I have included the text of Martin Luther King's speech "I have a dream" of August 28, 1963.

Later on, the speech can be read and listened to (or excerpts watched on video), summarized and discussed from different angles, e.g. content, purpose, style, delivery, manipulative strategies, audience reactions, outcomes. This is the point where restructuring may set in. Adding new pieces of information at certain points may change the whole system of the stored information. New connections are made possible. This CD clearly offers many more possibilities, but they are relatively easy to explore on your own.

Here are some sample questions and exercises that could be used in connection with this speech (text in the appendix):

1. What is Kennedy's main concern in his speech of June 11, 1963?
2. Define the main topics of Kennedy's speech.
3. What is the use of rhetorical figures in general?
4. Give some examples of three-part lists.
5. Give two examples of rhetorical questions. Why does a speaker use rhetorical questions?
6. What is the reason for the use of syntactical parallelisms?
7. Which words are frequently used in this speech? Why do you think that certain words are repeated?
8. Talk about the historical importance of Kennedy's speech.
9. Choose two or three paragraphs of Kennedy's speech and make an analysis of content and rhetorical figures.
10. What is your personal opinion / impression of this speech?

11. Compare Kennedy's speech to the speech of a present politician? Is there any difference to be noticed and if so, which differences did you find?
12. Which are the strategies that make this speech a convincing political speech?
13. Can you think of any changes in the language between 1963 and 1998, e.g. different words being used?
14. Compare this speech to the one held by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. on August 28, 1963. (I have also included the text of King's speech in the appendix).

Almost all of Martin Luther King's speech and a small part of Kennedy's text are available on audio tape. The full texts are included in this article as an appendix. Use this to construct listening comprehension exercises using Eclipse, Storyboard, or Gapmaster, or Pinpoint (with both texts) .

While the Microsoft "Encarta 97 Encyclopedia" clearly is a source of inspiration, and listening comprehension and vocabulary work are important, do not forget to move from the virtual to the real world, by having a look at the Council of Europe's "all different - all equal" - campaign poster with the three identical brains of an African, European, and Asian, opposed to the smaller one of a racist, or United Colours of Benetton's advertisement with three identical "white", "black" and "yellow" hearts. I think that this approach naturally combines the use of hyper- and multimedia with the content of cultural relativity. And it combines authenticity of language material and topicality of issues with media, message and language awareness raising. I consider this highly desirable.

6. Appendix: Texts

6.1. Kennedy

Source: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. John F. Kennedy. Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President. January 1 to November 22, 1963. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1964, 468-471. (Original pagination and columns have been inserted in [], paragraph numbering (§) by B. Kettemann)

Text: Radio and Television Report to the American People on Civil Rights, Delivered from the President's Office at 8 p.m. on June 11, 1963 by President John F. Kennedy [p. 468, col.1]:

Good evening, my fellow citizens.

§ 1 This afternoon, following a series of threats and defiant statements, the presence of Alabama National Guardsmen was required on the University of Alabama to carry out the final and unequivocal order of the United States District Court of the Northern District of Alabama. That order called for the admission of two clearly qualified young Alabama residents who happened to have been born Negro.

§ 2 That they were admitted peacefully on the campus is due in good measure to the conduct of the students of the University of Alabama, who met their responsibilities in a constructive way.

§ 3 I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents. This Nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.

§ 4 Today we are committed to a worldwide struggle to promote and protect the rights of all who wish to be free. And when Americans are sent to Vietnam or West Berlin, we do not ask for whites only. It [p.468, col.2] ought to be possible, therefore, for American students of any colour to attend any public institution they select without having to be backed up by troops.

§ 5 It ought to be possible for American consumers of any colour to receive equal service in places of public accommodation, such as hotels and restaurants and theatres and retail stores, without being forced to resort to demonstrations in the street, and it ought to be possible for American citizens of any colour to register and to vote in a free election without interference or fear of reprisal.

§ 6 It ought to be possible, in short, for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or his colour. In short, every American

ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated. But this is not the case.

§ 7 The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section of the Nation in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby born in the same place on the same day, one-third as much chance of completing college, one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man, twice as much chance of becoming unemployed, about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$ 10,000 [p.469, col.1] a year, a life expectancy which is 7 years shorter, and the prospects of earning only half as much.

§ 8 This is not a sectional issue. Difficulties over segregation and discrimination exist in every city, in every State of the Union, producing in many cities a rising tide of discontent that threatens the public safety. Nor is this a partisan issue. In a time of domestic crisis men of good will and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics. This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone. It is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets, and new laws are needed at every level, but law alone cannot make men see right.

§ 9 We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution.

§ 10 The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the colour of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay?

§ 11 One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free. They are not yet freed from the bonds of injustice. They are not yet freed from social and economic oppression. And this Nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free.

§ 12 We preach freedom around the world, and we mean it, and we cherish our freedom here at home, but are we to say to the world, and much more importantly, to each other that this is a land of the free except for the Negroes; that we have no second-class [p.469, col.2] citizens except Negroes; that we have no class or cast system, no ghettos, no master race except with respect to Negroes?

§ 13 Now the time has come for this Nation to fulfil its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or State or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them.

§ 14 The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South, where legal remedies are not at hand. Redress is sought in the streets, in demonstrations, parades, and protests which create tensions and threaten violence and threaten lives.

§ 15 We face, therefore, a moral crisis as a country and as a people. It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talk. It is a time to act in the Congress, in your State and local legislative body and, above all, in all of our daily lives.

§ 16 It is not enough to pin the blame on others, to say this is a problem of one section of the country or another, or deplore the fact that we face. A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all.

§ 17 Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as reality.

§ 18 Next week I shall ask the Congress of the United States to act, to make a commitment it has not fully made in this century to the proposition that race has no place in American life or law. The Federal judiciary has upheld that proposition in a series of forthright cases. The executive branch has adopted that proposition in the conduct of its affairs, including the employment of Federal personnel, the use of Federal facilities, and the sale of federally financed housing.

§ 19 But there are other necessary measures which only the Congress can provide, and they must be provided at this session. The old code of equity law under which we live [p.470, col.1] commands for every wrong a remedy, but in too many communities, in too many parts of the country, wrongs are inflicted on Negro citizens and there are no remedies at law. Unless the Congress acts, their only remedy is in the street.

§ 20 I am, therefore, asking the Congress to enact legislation giving all Americans the right to be served in facilities which are open to the public - hotels, restaurants, theatres, retail stores, and similar establishments.

§ 21 This seems to me to be an elementary right. Its denial is an arbitrary indignity that no American in 1963 should have to endure, but many do.

§ 22 I have recently met with scores of business leaders urging them to take voluntary action to end this discrimination and I have been encouraged by their response, and in the last 2 weeks over 75 cities have seen progress made in desegregating these kinds of facilities. But many are unwilling to act alone, and for this reason, nationwide legislation is needed if we are to move this problem from the streets to the courts.

§ 23 I am also asking Congress to authorize the Federal Government to participate more fully in lawsuits designed to end segregation in public education. We have succeeded in persuading many districts to desegregate voluntarily.

Dozens have admitted Negroes without violence. Today a Negro is attending a State-supported institution in every one of our 50 States, but the pace is very slow.

§ 24 Too many Negro children entering segregated grade schools at the time of the Supreme Court's decision 9 years ago will enter segregated high schools this fall, having suffered a loss which can never be restored. The lack of an adequate education denies the Negro a chance to get a decent job.

§ 25 The orderly implementation of the Supreme Court decision, therefore, cannot be left solely to those who may not have the economic resources to carry the legal action or who may be subject to harassment.

§ 26 Other features will be also requested, including greater protection for the right to [p.470, col.2] vote. But legislation, I repeat, cannot solve this problem alone. It must be solved in the homes of every American in every community across our country.

§ 27 In this respect, I want to pay tribute to those citizens North and South who have been working in their communities to make life better for all. They are acting not out of a sense of legal duty but out of a sense of human decency.

§ 28 Like our soldiers and sailors in all parts of the world they are meeting freedom's challenge on the firing line, and I salute them for their honour and their courage.

§ 29 My fellow Americans, this is a problem which faces us all -in every city of the North as well as the South. Today there are Negroes unemployed, two or three times as many compared to whites, inadequate in education, moving into the large cities, unable to find work, young people particularly out of work without hope, denied equal rights, denied the opportunity to eat at a restaurant or lunch counter or go to a movie theatre, denied the right to a decent education, denied almost today the right to attend a State university even though qualified. It seems to me that these are matters which concern us all, not merely Presidents or Congressmen or Governors, but every citizen of the United States.

§ 30 This is one country. It has become one country because all of us and all the people who came here had an equal chance to develop their talents.

§ 31 We cannot say to 10 percent of the population that you can't have that right; that your children can't have the chance to develop whatever talents they have; that the only way that they are going to get their rights is to go into the streets and demonstrate. I think we owe them and we owe ourselves a better country than that.

§ 32 Therefore, I am asking for your help in making it easier for us to move ahead and to provide the kind of equality of treatment which we would want ourselves; to give a chance for every child to be educated to the limit of his talents.

§ 33 [p.471, col.1] As I have said before, not every child has an equal talent or an equal ability or an equal motivation, but they should have the equal right to develop their talent and their ability and their motivation, to make something of themselves.

§ 34 We have a right to expect that the Negro community will be responsible, will uphold the law, but they have a right to expect that [p.471, col.2] the law will be fair, that the Constitution will be colour blind, as Justice Harlan said at the turn of the century.

§ 35 This is what we are talking about and this is a matter which concerns this country and what it stands for, and in meeting it I ask the support of all our citizens.

Thank you very much.

6.2. King

Source: Tapescripts, paragraphing and paragraph numbering (§) by B. Kettemann.

Text:

I have a dream.

Speech delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963 by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

§ 1 I am happy... I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

§ 2 Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.

§ 3 But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregations and by the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.

§ 4 In a sense we have come to our nation's Capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

§ 5 It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of colour are concerned. Instead of honouring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds'.

§ 6 But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check - a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

§ 7 We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of *now*. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. *Now* is the time to make real the promises of

Democracy. *Now* is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. *Now* is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. *Now* is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

§ 8 It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning.

§ 9 Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquillity in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

§ 10 But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds.

§ 11 Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

§ 12 The marvellous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

§ 13 And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, 'When will you be satisfied?'

§ 14 We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highway and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

§ 15 I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the

veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

§ 16 Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

§ 17 I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

§ 18 I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

§ 19 I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

§ 20 I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

§ 21 I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

§ 22 This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

§ 23 This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrims' pride,

From every mountainside
Let freedom ring.

§ 24 And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania! Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvacious peaks of California! But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee! Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

§ 25 When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!'
