



## Source 4

**Extract from King's speech, 29 August, and a British embassy comment on it, 30 August 1963**

(4a: © Estate of Martin Luther King, Jr; 4b: Catalogue ref: FO371/168485)

### Questions

1. What do you think King was referring to in the first two lines in source 4a?
2. What was his "dream"?
3. What does the "American dream" mean in the history of the USA? (This will help you understand what King meant when he said that his dream was "deeply rooted in the American dream".)
4. Why do you think this is such a powerful speech?
5. Look at source 4b. Do you think these are fair comments on King's speech? Give your reasons.



# HEROES & VILLAINS

King & civil rights > March on Washington

## Source 4a

... 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.

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.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, 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."

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

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of 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.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

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 plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. 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. ...



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## Source 4b

It was Dr. King who most roused the crowd. His message was one of hope, looking towards racial progress in Christian brotherhood. At the same time he managed to convey the tragic quality of the Negro's struggle in a way which touched the hearts of his listeners. His appeal was clearly aimed at white Americans as well as his own followers. It must have been hard for all but the thoroughly bigoted not to have felt some sense of shame at the Negroes' lot. This was no doubt Dr. King's purpose.