

CONTENTS

Introduction	7
8th–1st Centuries BC – The Classical Orators	11
<i>c.</i> AD 26 The Sermon on The Mount – Jesus of Nazareth	17
1096 The Council of Clermont – Pope Urban II	22
1381 When Adam Delved and Eve Span – John Ball	27
1588 Elizabeth Reviews the Army at Tilbury – Elizabeth I	30
1653 Dismissing the Rump Parliament – Oliver Cromwell	34
1794 The Political Philosophy of Terror – Maximilien Robespierre	38
1814 Farewell to the Old Guard – Napoleon Bonaparte	42
1851 Ar’n’t I a Woman? – Sojourner Truth	46
1863 The Gettysburg Address – President Abraham Lincoln	50
1877 I Will Fight No More Forever – Chief Joseph	55

1913 Freedom or Death – Emmeline Pankhurst	59
1915 Ireland Unfree – Patrick Pearse	63
1916 Speech from the Dock – Sir Roger Casement	68
1916 There Is No Salvation for India – Mohandas Gandhi	73
1939 First Soldier of the German Reich – Adolf Hitler	78
1940 Three Wartime Speeches – Winston Churchill	83
1940 L’Appel du 18 Juin – Charles de Gaulle	91
1941 Speech on the Anniversary Celebration of the October Revolution – Joseph Stalin	95
1941 A Date Which Will Live in Infamy – President Franklin Delano Roosevelt	102
1944 Speech on St Crispin’s Day – Laurence Olivier & William Shakespeare	108
1944 Speech before D-Day – General George S. Patton	113
1947 A Tryst with Destiny – Jawaharlal Nehru	117
1960 Wind of Change – Harold Macmillan	121
1961 Inaugural Address – President John F. Kennedy	126
1963 I Have a Dream – Martin Luther King	132
1964 The Ballot or the Bullet – Malcolm X	139
1980 The Lady’s Not for Turning – Margaret Thatcher	144
1987 Tear Down This Wall! – President Ronald Reagan	150
1990 Freedom From Fear – Aung San Suu Kyi	157
1994 Let Freedom Reign – Nelson Mandela	162
2001 Declaration of War on the United States – Osama bin Laden	169
2002 The Axis of Evil – President George W. Bush	173
2003 Eve of Battle Speech – Colonel Tim Collins	179
2008 Victory Speech – Barack Obama	185
Sources and Acknowledgements	191

1963

I HAVE A DREAM

MARTIN LUTHER KING
(1929–1968)

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation ended American slavery in the Unionist northern states. Two years later, with the Civil War over and the slave-owning Confederacy defeated, the captive millions toiling in the southern cotton fields looked forward to a new dawn of freedom.

For a while, it looked like that dawn had come. Despite violent objection in the South, the occupying federal troops protected the black population's right to freedom, and the vote.

But in 1877, the troops withdrew, leaving the South in the hands of radical Democrat politicians called 'the Redeemers'. Black voters were prevented from registering. Racist paramilitaries like the Ku Klux Klan formed lynch mobs. Before long, a string of segregation laws had

I H A V E A D R E A M

designated 'whites only' train carriages, cafés, drinking fountains and waiting rooms.

Into this apartheid USA was born Martin Luther King Jr. As the son of a respected Baptist preacher and civil rights activist, it was no surprise when young Martin announced an 'inner urge' to 'serve God and humanity'. By 1955 he had a doctorate in theology and had followed his father into the Church.

By 1963, Dr King, with his ringing preacher's tones and knack for rhetoric, had become a leader of the growing civil rights movement, demanding an end to segregation and legal discrimination. So it was that he found himself, late that summer, facing a vast crowd in Washington, where, under the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial, he gave the following extraordinary speech.

— T H E S P E E C H —

[. . .]

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, 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 their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is

I H A V E A D R E A M

still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination ... And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

[King continued with his prepared speech. It was powerful stuff, laden with references to the Founding Fathers and the Constitution – a blazing tirade at the injustices suffered by his people. Finally, having said his piece, he reached his intended conclusion:]

[. . .]

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. And some of you have come from areas where your quest – 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.

[At around this point, as King was about to sit down, the gospel singer Mahalia Jackson called to him from the crowd: 'Tell them about your dream, Martin. Tell them about the

I H A V E A D R E A M

dream.’ Hearing her, King began to extemporize and it is at this point that the speech really comes alive.]

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And 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

I H A V E A D R E A M

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, and 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, and 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.

And this will be the day – 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 Pilgrim's pride,

From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.