Birmingham Campaign

- In 1963, Martin Luther King's group the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) decided to go to Birmingham, Alabama to protest.
- Governor George Wallace believed in 'segregation now, tomorrow and forever.'
Martin Luther King on Birmingham...

"Birmingham is probably the most segregated city in the United States. It’s ugly record of police brutality I known in every section of the country. It’s unjust treatment of Negroes in the courts is notorious. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city. "
Birmingham (‘Bombingham’) in 1963

Racist Police
Chief Bull Connor

Most violent Klan in USA

Most segregated city
In the South

Pro – segregation
Governor
• King arranged a march through the city to campaign for desegregation in shops and public places

• Him and his co worker Reverend Shuttleworth were arrested for planning the march

• They were released in time to march on April 20th
• I guess it is easy for you who have never felt segregation to say 'wait'. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers and drown your brothers and sisters...you will know why it is difficult to wait'

Letter from Birmingham Jail, 1963
What happened?

- **Children brought on to the march - to embarrass police if they used brutality**
- **Marchers arrested by order of Police Chief (Bull Connor)**
- **Connor turned water cannons on protestors**
- **Dogs sent on protestors**
- **Police used brutality**
- **Fire Dept used water cannons directly on protestors**
- **Many protestors arrested**
By day four, both protestors and local business owners were worried about the marches (but for different reasons)...

**The Deal**

If marches ended, local businesses would desegregate lunch counters, changing rooms etc within 90 days.
• Once the Klan heard about the deal, they rioted

• Fire-bombed Black churches

• A motel protestors were staying at was fire-bombed

• Protestors attacked by state troops as they evacuated

• Forty injured
Remains of the Gaston Motel, Birmingham, April 1963
Many shops and building were destroyed in the riots
Stores who agreed to the deal were fire-bombed
The KKK were responsible for starting the riots
They enjoyed close links to Bull O’Connor’s Birmingham police force
Results of Birmingham, Alabama 1963

- World was shocked by police treatment of protestors
- The Civil Rights demonstrators appeared to win since Birmingham agreed to desegregate
- Public sympathy for Civil Rights was High - JFK saw this and realised a law change was needed
• The protest damaged King’s support (using children etc)
• Many innocent and nonviolent protestors were beaten by the police or Klan
• Three students were murdered in Mississippi in spin-off violence along with Mississippi NAACP leader
• Black Americans in Birmingham felt they were treated worse than before after the protest
March on Washington 8/28/63

A. Philip Randolph organized the first march in 1941, Leader of the BIG SIX and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union...focused on jobs.

James Farmer: CORE organized 1961 Freedom Rides...focused on freedom.

Whitney Young, Jr: National Urban League, NUL wanted end to black unemployment.
Dr. King: head of SCLC focused on brotherhood

Roy Wilkins: head of NAACP...wanted justice

John Lewis: head of SNCC wanted equality
June 11, 1963: President John F. Kennedy announced a new civil rights bill focusing on voting rights & desegregation.

June 22, 1963: Kennedy met with the Big Six and asked them not to hold the march for fear it would sabotage his bill.
MADISON, WIS. -- AUG. 27 -- MARCHERS HEAD FOR WASHINGTON. A group of 38 persons from the Madison area boarded a chartered bus today to travel to Washington for the massive civil rights march on Wednesday. The bus was scheduled to pick up marchers from Beloit and Janesville, among other communities. The Madison delegation is headed by the Rev. George W. VanVleet, pastor of the St. Paul Methodist Church.

WISCONSIN TO WASHINGTON

RIGHTS-150 YEARS OVERDUE
Crowds march to the Lincoln Memorial

People came from all over... 2000 buses, 21 trains & 10 planes. CORE's Brooklyn chapter walked 230 miles to the march.

250,000 marchers arrived

Marchers walked down Constitution and Independence Avenues from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial
MARCH ON WASHINGTON
FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM
AUGUST 28, 1963

LINCOLN MEMORIAL PROGRAM

1. The National Anthem
   - Mrs. Mildred Davis

2. Invocation
   - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

3. Remarks
   - Mrs. Coretta Scott King

4. Remarks
   - John Lewis, Constable & NAACP

5. Remarks
   - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

6. Remarks
   - Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, President, Morehouse College

7. Remarks
   - Mrs. Coretta Scott King

8. Remarks
   - John Lewis, Constable & NAACP

9. Remarks
   - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

10. Remarks
    - Mrs. Coretta Scott King

11. Remarks
    - John Lewis, Constable & NAACP

12. Remarks
    - Mrs. Coretta Scott King

13. Remarks
    - John Lewis, Constable & NAACP

14. Remarks
    - Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, President, Morehouse College

15. Remarks
    - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

16. Remarks
    - Mrs. Coretta Scott King

17. Remarks
    - John Lewis, Constable & NAACP

18. Remarks
    - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"WE SHALL OVERCOME"
“I Have a Dream”

• 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 color 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.
This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a 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. 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 curvaceous slopes 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.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to 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!"
The international and national press descended on Washington. More than 2000 press passes were issued, an unheard of number in the history of news reporting.

The march was a worldwide SUCCESS.
It was the greatest assembly for a redress of grievances that this capital has ever seen.

The three major television networks spent over $300,000 (more than twice the march committee's budget) to broadcast the event. CBS covered the rally "gavel to gavel," from 1:30 to 4:30, canceling popular shows.

“There was no violence to mar the demonstration... at times there was an air of hootenanny about it as groups of schoolchildren clapped hands and swung into the familiar freedom songs.

“It was the greatest assembly for a redress of grievances that this capital has ever seen.”

NY Times August 29, 1963
Birmingham Church Bombing

- On Sunday, 15th September, 1963, a white man was seen getting out of a white and turquoise Chevrolet car and placing a box under the steps of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Soon afterwards, at 10.22 a.m., the bomb exploded killing Denise McNair (11), Addie Mae Collins (14), Carole Robertson (14) and Cynthia Wesley (14).