

SOME ELEMENTS TO UNDERSTAND KENNEDY'S ADDRESS IN WEST BERLIN

(Questions 3-4)

3) This statement refers to the political and social life in the USA in the 1960s:

The Black Americans were victims of **racial segregation**: according to the law, they were '**separate but equal**'. It means that they must use their own places in buses, restaurants, toilets... which were systematically different from the Whites' places. This division was especially strong in the southern states such as Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina for instance (where slavery was used as a social and economic system longer than in the North)

Some changes occurred however, more or less easily:

- 1954: segregation was forbidden at school
- 1955: A seamstress (= couturière) **Rosa PARKS**, refused to seat down in the Black part of a bus in Alabama.
- In 1963: **Martin Luther King**, a Black minister of Georgia, proposed non-violent demonstrations and Civil disobedience to fight for equal rights after a racist attack on a Church in Alabama (4 Blacks were killed).

On August, 28, he made his famous speech beginning with '**I have a dream**', the dream of a tolerant America, where Whites and Blacks can live together in peace with no racism or prejudices. This speech was made, as a symbol, in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC (President Lincoln abolished slavery in 1863, it became the 13th Amendment of the US Constitution in 1865).

Kennedy denounced on TV this situation: Blacks must not be second-class citizens in a country which is supposed to lead the 'free world'.

-In 1964, Segregation was abolished by the **Civil Rights Act** but discrimination has not ended, even nowadays.

So Kennedy recognized in his address, with honesty, that the USA has still to improve the situation of his inhabitants (*democracy in not perfect*).

4) Kennedy used his project of 'New Frontier' to give hope to the West Berliners. Indeed, one of the major goal of his term was to give a « **new Frontier** » to conquer to the US nation. In 1933, the Democrat Roosevelt proposed a « **New Deal** » and 30 years after, Kennedy believed in other conquests such as:

- Equal Civil Rights for the Blacks
- Medical Care (une Sécurité sociale)
- a better urban life, with better living conditions
- the conquest of space (especially the project to walk on the moon...)

A website to visit with interest:

www.mlkmemorial.org (Mémorial inauguré le 16 octobre 2011 par Barack Obama au sud de la Maison Blanche)

