

WE SHALL OVERCOME!

DOCUMENTARY OF THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

AUTHORIZED RECORDING, PRODUCED BY THE COUNCIL FOR UNITED CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERSHIP

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

JOAN BAEZ / PRESIDENT KENNEDY / DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. / MARIAN ANDERSON / ODETTA
RABBI JOACHIM PRINZ / BOB DYLAN / WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR. / JOHN LEWIS / ROY WILKINS
WALTER REUTHER / PETER, PAUL AND MARY / BAYARD RUSTIN / A. PHILIP RANDOLPH



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Council for United Civil Rights Leadership

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR.
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Co-chairmen

Participating Organizations

National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People

National Urban League

National Council of Negro Women
N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and
Educational Fund, Inc.

Congress of Racial Equality

Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee

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• The Council for United Civil Rights Leadership is grateful to the Educational Radio Network for making its tape recordings available, and to Joan Baez (Vanguard), Marian Anderson (RCA Victor), Odetta (RCA Victor), Bob Dylan (Columbia) and Peter, Paul and Mary (Warner Bros.) for their cooperation and support.

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43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A. 10023

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: R68-463

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UNIVERSAL

WE SHALL OVERCOME

I. Joan Baez - "We Shall Overcome"

Right here on the stage at present Joan Baez has once again gone before the microphones on the podium and is beginning to entertain the vast audience. Let's listen to Joan Baez.

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome some day.

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand
We'll walk hand in hand, some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome some day.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid today,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome some day.

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome some day.

2. President Kennedy's Press Conference

From an official viewpoint now, President Kennedy made a statement at his press conference of August 21st on what he sees happening on this march, and we thought we'd play the highlight from President Kennedy's press conference.

"The purpose, of course, is to attempt to bring to the attention of the Congress and the country the strong feeling of the good many thousands of citizens. August 28th is a chance for a good many people to express their feeling, but it's hard for them, a lot of other people to travel, because of money, many of them have jobs, so that I think that what we're talking about is an issue that concerns all of our people, and must in the final analysis be settled by the Congress and by the Executive Branch working with 180 million people. This is an effort, however, to bring focus to the strong concern of a good many citizens, so I think as I said before in that tradition I meet with the leadership in which I think it appropriate that these people and anyone else who feels concerned should come to Washington and see their Congressmen." (President Kennedy at his Press Conference on August 21st.)

3. The Introduction for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"A philosopher of a non-violent system of behavior in seeking to bring about social change for the advancement of justice and freedom and human dignity, I have the pleasure to present to you Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr."

A great deal of applauding here, a great deal of waving of placards and signs. A chant begins, more applause, women are waving handkerchiefs, hands are waving as they greet Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"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."

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.

But one hundred years later the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and 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 a shameful condition.

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, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." 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. 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 life our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice the reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. 1963 is not an end, but a beginning. 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 tranquility 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.

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. 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. The marvelous 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 they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

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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?" 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 highways 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 our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For white only." We cannot 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.

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, 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 slaveowners 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 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.

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.

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 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.

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. 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 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 mole hill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring, and when this happens,

When we allow 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!"

Fellow Americans, fellow Americans -- please keep your seats...

Smiles everywhere, tremendous applause for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

4. Miss Marion Anderson

We would like to do for you "He's Got the Whole World In His Hand."

He's got the whole world in his hands,
He's got the big round world in his hands,
He's got the wide world in his hands
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got the wind and the rain in his hands,
He's got the moon and the stars in his hands,
He's got the wind and the rain in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got the little bits of babies in his hands, (3x)
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got you and me brother in his hands,
He's got you and me sister in his hands,
He's got you and me brother in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got everybody in his hands,
He's got everybody in his hands,
He's got everybody here right in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands.

SIDE TWO

1. Odetta -- "Oh! Freedom"

This is David Edwards on the stage filling in for Malcom Davis. We are presently being entertained by Odetta, the world renowned Negro folk singer. She's been singing "Oh! Freedom," one of the traditional songs of the Movement. Let's go to Odetta now on the stage.

"....to that land, where I'm bound.
Oh, lead me to that land,
Where I'm bound...."

Oh come with me to that land,
Come with me to that land,
Come with me to that land
Where I'm bound...."

2. Rabbi Joachim Prinz

I now have the pleasure to present to you Rabbi Joachim Prinz, President of the American Jewish Congress. Rabbi Prinz:

"I wish I could sing! I speak to you as an American Jew. As Americans we share the profound concern of millions of people about the shame and disgrace of inequality and injustice which makes a mockery of the great American idea. As Jews we bring to the great demonstration in which thousands of us proudly participate a two-fold experience, one of the spirit and one of our history. In the realm of the spirit, our fathers taught us thousands of years ago that when God created men, he created him as everybody's neighbor. "Neighbor" is not a geographic term; it is a moral concept. It means our collective responsibility for the preservation of man's dignity and integrity. From our Jewish historical experience of three and a half thousand years we say our ancient history began with slavery and the yearning for freedom. During the Middle Ages my people lived for a thousand years in the ghettos of Europe. Our modern history begins with the proclamation of emancipation. It is for these reasons that it is not merely sympathy and compassion for the black people of America that motivates us. It is above all and beyond all God's sympathies and emotions a sense of complete identification and solidarity born of our own historic experience.

Friends, I was a rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime. I learned many things. The most important thing that I learned in my life, and under those tragic circumstances, is that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problems. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful, and the most tragic problem is silence. A great people which had created a great civilization had become a nation of silent onlookers. They remained silent in the face of hate, in the face of brutality, and in the face of mass murder. America must not become a nation of onlookers. America must not remain silent -- not merely black America, but all America. It must speak up and act from the President down to the humblest of us. And not for the sake of the Negro, not for the sake of the black community, but for the sake of the image, the dream, the idea, and the aspiration of America itself. Our children, yours and mine, in every school across the land, every morning pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States and to the Republic for which it stands, and then they (the children) speak fervently and innocently of this land as a land of liberty and justice for all. The time, I be-

lieve, has come for us to work together, for it is not enough for us to hope together and it is not enough for us to pray together. To work together, that this children's oath pronounced every morning from Maine to California, from North and South, that this oath will come a glorious, unshakeable reality in a morally united America. Thank you.

3. Bob Dylan -- "Ballad of Medgar Evers"

I would like now to introduce a young singer from New York, Bob Dylan.

4. Our next speaker, Floyd McKissick, National Chairman of Congress of Racial Equality, who will speak instead of our good friend and brother James Farmer, who is now in prison in Plaquemine, Louisiana. We all send our prayers on behalf of our brother Jim Farmer. We will now hear from brother McKissick.

"The message that I shall give to you today was written by Jim Farmer in a Plaquemine Jail. And I shall give his message now. ...and dignity and act without fear. Some of us may die, like William L. More or Medgar Evers, but our war is for life, not for death, and we will not stop our demands for freedom now. We will not slow down. We will not stop our militant peaceful demonstrations. We will not come off the streets until we can work jobs befitting our skills in any place in the land."

(The policemen here are certainly having a difficult time holding the crowd behind the fence. We return now to Philip Randolph.)

"...Brother John Lewis."

"We are tired. We are tired of being beaten by policemen. We are tired of seeing our people locked up in jails. We are told, be patient. How long can we be patient? We want our freedom and we want it now. We do not want to go to jail, but we will go to jail if this is the price we must pay for love, brotherhood and true peace. I appeal to you ... to get in the streets of every city and hamlet of this nation ... until the revolution is complete. We must get in this revolution and complete this revolution. In Mississippi, in Georgia, in Alabama, in Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and all over this nation, it's masses on the march for jobs and freedom."

(Bob Dylan -- "Ballad of Medgar Evers" --)

Our next speaker is the brilliant Executive Director of the National Urban League, Whitney M. Young, Jr., one of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.

"Brother Randolph, fellow Americans. The National Urban League is honored to be a participant in this historic occasion. Our presence here not only reflects the Civil Rights community's increased respect and awareness of the Urban League's role, but most important it says and I hope loud and clear, that while intelligent maturity and sanity dictate that as Civil Rights agents we use different methods, we are all united as never before on the goal of first class citizenship for all Americans now."

Mr. Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People:

"Isn't it a great day? I want some of you to help me win a bet. I want everybody out there in the open to keep quiet, and I want to hear yelling and thunder from all those people who are out there

under the trees. Let's hear you... Now, every one in the trees... My friends, we are here today because we want the Congress of the United States to hear from us in person what many of us have been telling our public officials back home. And that is, we want freedom now! We came here to petition our lawmakers to be as brave as our sit-ins and our marchers, to be as daring as James Meredith, to be as unafraid as the nine children of Little Rock, and to be as forthright as the Governor of North Carolina, and to be as dedicated as the Archbishop of St. Louis."

Fellow Americans, I now have the opportunity and pleasure to present to you a great American, Walter Reuther, President of the United Automobile Workers of America, and vice-president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations. Walter Reuther:

"...this rally today to be the first step in a total effort to mobilize the moral conscience of America, and to ask the people in Congress of both parties to rise above their partisan differences and enact Civil Rights legislation now. The job question is crucial, because we will not solve education or housing or public accommodations as long as millions of Americans, Negroes, are treated as second class economic citizens and denied jobs. As one American, I take the position if we can have full employment and full production for the negative ends of war, then why can't we have a job for every American in the pursuit of peace?... Fair employment within the framework of full employment, so that every American can have a job. I am for Civil Rights as a matter of human decency, as a matter of common morality. But I am also for Civil Rights because I believe that freedom is an indivisible value, that no one can be free unto himself, that when Bull Connor with his police dogs and fire hoses destroy freedom in Birmingham, he is destroying my freedom in Detroit. And let us keep in mind since we are the strongest of the free nations in the world, we can not make freedom secure excepting as we make freedom universal so that all may enjoy its blessings. Let us understand that we cannot defend freedom in Berlin so long as we deny freedom in Birmingham. Let this be the beginning of that great crusade to mobilize the moral conscience of America so that we can win freedom and justice and equality and first-class citizenship for every American, not just for certain Americans; not only in certain parts of America but in every part of America, from Boston to Birmingham, from New York to New Orleans, and from Michigan to Mississippi. Thank you."

5. Peter, Paul, and Mary -- "Hammer Song"

"... I ring out changes, I ring out warning,
I'd ring out love between the brothers and sisters,
All over this land..."

6. Bayard Rustin -- The Demands

I want to introduce now Brother Bayard Rustin, who will read the Demands of the March on Washington Movement. Everyone must listen to these demands. This is why we are here. And now, Bayard Rustin, Deputy Director of the March, will read the Demands.

"Friends, at 5 o'clock today the leaders whom you have heard will go to President Kennedy to carry the Demands of this revolution. It is now time for you to act. I will read each Demand and you will respond to it, so that when Mr. Wilkins and Dr. King and the other eight leaders go they are carrying with them the Demands which you have given your approval to.

The first Demand is that we have effective Civil Rights legislation, no compromise, no filibuster,

and that it include public accommodations, decent housing, integrated education, and the right to vote. What do you say?

Number 2: they want that we demand the withholding of Federal funds from all programs in which discrimination exists. What do you say?

We demand that segregation be ended in all public school districts in the year 1963.

We demand the enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment, the reducing of Congressional representation in states where citizens are disenfranchised.

We demand an Executive Order banning discrimination in all housing supported by Federal funds.

We demand that every person in this nation, black or white, be given training and work with dignity to defeat unemployment and automation.

We demand that there be an increase in the national minimum wage so that men may live in dignity.

We finally demand that all of the rights that are given to any citizen be given to black men and men of every minority group, including a strong F.E.P.C. We demand!

7. A. Philip Randolph -- The Pledge

And now ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Randolph will read the Pledge. This is a Pledge which says our job has just begun. You pledge to return home to carry on the revolution. After Mr. Randolph has read the Pledge, I will say 'Do you so pledge?' and you will say, 'I do pledge.'

The Pledge: Will you stand.

Standing before the Lincoln Memorial on the 28th of August, in the centennial year of emancipation, I affirm my complete personal commitment for the struggle for jobs and freedom for all Americans.

To fulfill that commitment, I pledge that I will not relax until victory is won.

I pledge that I will join and support all actions undertaken in good faith in accord with time-honored democratic tradition of non-violent protest, or peaceful assembly and petition and of redress through the courts and the legislative process.

I pledge to carry the message of the March to my friends and neighbors back home and arouse them to an equal commitment and an equal effort. I will march and I will write letters. I will demonstrate and I will vote. I will work to make sure that my voice and those of my brothers ring clear and determined from every corner of our land.

I will pledge my heart and my mind and my body, unequivocally and without regard to personal sacrifice, to the achievement of social peace through social justice.

"Do you so pledge?" "I do pledge."

8. Joan Baez -- "We Shall Overcome"

"We shall overcome,
We shall overcome,
We shall overcome some day,
Deep in my heart I do believe
That we shall overcome some day."