



Otázka: Martin Luther King

Jazyk: Angličtina

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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on 15 January 1929 in Atlanta – the capital of Georgia. His name at birth was Michael King. His father – also named Michael – changed both their names to Martin Luther in honour of the German Protestant reformer Martin Luther. Martin Jr. was a middle child, he had an older sister Willie Christine and a younger brother Alfred Williams.

After graduating from Morehouse College and becoming a minister, he went on to study theology in Boston. While in Boston, Martin met Coretta Scott, to which he got married in Alabama in 1953. They had 4 children.

In December 1955 Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give her seat to a white person on a crowded bus in Montgomery, Alabama – a city known for segregated public spaces. After that Martin met with other activists and planned a protest, that would later become known as the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The Boycott lasted over 380 days. Even though Martin got arrested, the Boycott ended successfully and racial segregation in transportation was proclaimed unconstitutional.

In January 1957 Martin and other 60 activists founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which held non-violent protests across the US to promote the civil rights reform.

On August 28th 1963, King helped lead a huge march attended by more than 250 000 people in Washington D.C., where he called for equality and gave one of the 20th century's most powerful speeches at the Lincoln Memorial called „I have a dream.“ The most known part goes



like this:

„I have a dream that my four 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.“

The time and place weren't chosen randomly. It was actually the hundreth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 and declared that all slaves living in the Confederacy states were to be set free. Slavery was completely abolished 2 years later in 1865 by the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution.

In 1964, at 35 years old, Martin became the youngest person ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize. When he found that out, he decided to donate the prize money (over 54 000 dollars) to the Civil Rights movement.

Also in 1964, partly due to the March on Washington, the US Congress proclaimed racial discrimination illegal. This was one the greatest accomplishments for the Civil Rights movement. In the following year, president Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. Prior to this legislation, there were still areas, where African Americans weren't allowed to vote. Later on, Martin also focused on international peace and spoke strongly against the Vietnam war.

On April 4th 1968, Martin was shot while standing on a balcony outside of his hotel room in Memphis, Tennessee. He was only 39 years old. His assassin was James Earl Ray, a former convict and a strong segregationist.

To honour him, every third Monday in January is now a public holiday in the USA – MLK day.