

## MODULE 4: Page 170

### JF Kennedy

Dallas November 22, 1963: during an official visit to Texas, the American President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated as he rode in an open car. The assassin, a fanatic named Lee Oswald, was immediately arrested but, after two days, he too was killed by Jack Ruby. About forty years have passed since Kennedy's death but it is still an unsolved mystery.

That day in a school in Dallas a teacher let his pupils clap their hands wildly because "the friend of the negroes had finally received the punishment he deserved"<sup>1</sup>.

Kennedy was the first Catholic President of the United States. He was born in 1917, was educated at Harvard and took part as a PT boat commander in the Pacific during World War II. There he demonstrated great bravery<sup>2</sup> when, after a Japanese destroyer had sunk his boat, he swam to a safe island, saving a wounded American sailor.

Since his election campaign he had shown great interest in solving the Black question and, when he was elected in 1960 he received more than 70 percent of the Black vote. One of the first acts of the new President was to support the rights of Black Americans against racial discrimination in jobs, schools and other areas of life.

In May 1963, when a peaceful Black demonstration was violently repressed by Police with incendiary bombs and dogs released into the crowd Kennedy made a very moving<sup>3</sup> speech on TV. He said that America was a free country. But if it was free for the white people why wasn't it free for the black people? He asked if white people considered themselves second class citizens. If they didn't, why should blacks? This rhetoric style was very effective<sup>4</sup>.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Meritava</li><li>2. Coraggio</li><li>3. Commovente</li><li>4. Efficace</li></ol> |
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### Activities:

1. Give a short account of Kennedy's life and of his struggle for the emancipation of Black Americans.
2. Explain in a short report why Kennedy can be compared to another great American President, Abraham Lincoln. (go to page 166 of New Trends Millennium)