

Lancaster University Modern Languages Submission

Me and the boys about to send a message of acceptance and freedom to the entire planet on June 26, 1963.



This meme is in reference to JFK's famous speech, made at the Berlin Wall, on June 26th 1963, wherein Kennedy stated 'Ich bin ein Berliner' in a message of solidarity with the people of Berlin, East and West as well as to the entire planet. A message that: we can't let ourselves divide one another.

This speech is relevant to the theme as Kennedy could have simply said a nice short speech condemning the actions of the Eastern Bloc, and expressing his support of Germany to protect American interests. Instead, he states that the *proudest* thing someone could say in that day and age was 'Ich bin ein Berliner'. In taking the minimal effort to learn even a small phrase (which is admittedly of questionable accuracy) Kennedy transformed his speech into a greater message; he, and the entire planet was in support of Berlin and was in essence a Berliner - a person who desired freedom and to live in harmony with one another, yet was squashed under the boot of authoritarianism. This statement also makes Kennedy's followup more impactful, urging people to 'come to Berlin' to see the effects of what the dictators in Eastern Europe were doing to the German people. In this way, Kennedy's learning of a language built a bridge from the free world to the entrapped Berlin, a bridge that couldn't be broken by even the greatest weapons.

This message is especially relevant given the recent passing of the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, reminding us that we should always remember that whilst authoritarianism can divide a country for years, it can never truly prevail over the free human spirit. To quote Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* 'So long as men die, liberty will never perish'