

Huey Long Dynasty Lives 20 Years After Slaying

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BATON ROUGE, La. (AP).—The "Kingfish" leaned back and watched the lights on the electric voting machine blink obediently.

The time: 20 years ago Sept. 8. The scene: The state legislature of Louisiana.

The man: Sen. Huey P. Long, political dictator of Louisiana and probably the closest approach to a dictator this democracy has known.

The "Kingfish" wanted certain bills passed and had convened the legislature to do it. Long's bills were being passed at the rate of one a minute with the aid of the electric voting machine.

Hitler couldn't have done it any faster in the Reichstag.

When a legislator became confused and pushed the "no" button, the gaily dressed Senator sent one of his hard-eyed bodyguards down the aisle to guide the lawmaker's hand to "yes."

Satisfied with the speed and the overwhelming majorities, the "Kingfish" strode out of the chamber into the lobby and toward the governor's office.

On his heels was his retinue of bodyguards.

From behind a pillar stepped a young doctor.

There was a burst of pistol shots. When it was over Long was staggering holding his stomach, mortally wounded.

The doctor lay on the floor riddled with bullet holes.

Long died a few hours later. The death throes of his dictatorship took years and even today Huey Long remains the dominant figure in Louisiana and the Long dynasty is carried on by two brothers and

a son, is the most powerful single force in state politics.

Long is a martyred hero to some, a dead tyrant to others.

He rapidly cemented his complete control of the state. Nothing was too small for him to decide from the appointment of a state policeman to the floating of million dollar highway projects.

His handpicked candidate, with the singularly appropriated name of O. K. Allen, succeeded him as governor when he went to the Senate seeking to expand his power on a national scale.

Important state business was not transacted without the Kingfish giving the word whether he was in Washington or not. The afternoon before he was shot he sat in the governor's office receiving all callers, giving them the "okay" on this, a "no" on that, dispensing patronage to his friends and trouble for his enemies.

With Long died the dreams of a new American political order. Death cut off his often shouted cries of "share the wealth" and "every man a king."

Huey had himself elected to the Senate and approached Washington—spouting homilies and quoting from the Good Book and prophecy—of things to come—like an angry bull. No one in the twentieth century has yet rivalled the stir Huey caused on normally blasé Capitol Hill.

But Dr. Carl Weiss, a brilliant Baton Rouge eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, put an end to Kingfish's crusade with a single bullet from an "outlaw" .32 calibre pistol on that night of Sept. 8, 1935.

Today, with "share the wealth" an empty slogan in old newspaper files and most of Huey's lieutenants long since dead or scattered into anonymity, the dynasty that he founded lives on. It lacks the burning dedication of the Kingfish's day, and the platforms sometimes bear no resemblance to those of the slap-dash Huey, but it is there.

Brother Earl, one-time (1948-1952) governor of the state, is on the comeback trail, aiming for an unprecedented second term in the governor's chair.

Dr. George Long, for many years a Pineville dentist, now serves as congressman from the eighth Louisiana Congressional District.

Julian, a third brother, is a Shreveport attorney and keeps well out of the limelight, even as he did when Huey was in his prime.

And Russell, eldest son of the Kingfish, has followed his father's footsteps into the Senate. But the likeness ends right there. A study of Senate roll calls reveals that Sen. Russell Long, more likely than not, prefers to take a stand at variance with the stand his father might have been expected to take. Even Huey's foes concede that Russell is an apt lawmaker.

Huey's widow also lives quietly in Shreveport. His daughter, Mrs. Rose McFarland, and a second son, Palmer Reid Long, all of Shreveport, have rarely been in the news since the 1930's.