

# Greater Caribbean Strongmen: Leadership Styles in Louisiana and Cuba in the 1920s and 1930s

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TESI DOCTORAL UPF / 2016

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*Para Rubén, hoy y siempre*



## Acknowledgements

Writing a doctoral dissertation is often conceived as a lonesome task. However, it is thanks to the support and help of numerous people throughout the years that this dissertation has been possible. I feel extremely lucky and I am deeply grateful to all of them. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Enric Ucelay-Da Cal for his kindness, ideas, and mentorship, as well as his always-constructive feedback. It has been a true honor listening, learning, and discussing with him the contents of this text. I would also want to thank him, and his wife Dorsey, for so generously putting their tremendous and impressive library at my disposal, which contains countless jewels for historians, and has helped me greatly with sources that otherwise I could not have obtained. I also thank my co-supervisor Josep Pich Mitjana for his constant support and encouragement throughout the process and after many years of working together at the Department of Humanities (USQUID). To both of them I owe the grant FPI (ref. BES-2012-051957) that has allowed me to pursue this research and to attend several conferences worldwide, as well as the opportunity to collaborate with the research group GRENS (Grup de Recerca en Estats, Nacions i Sobiraniaes) at UPF.

I am very grateful to those who have assisted me in the archives and libraries where I have done research. Sean Benjamin and the rest of the staff working at the Louisiana Research Collection (LaRC) at Tulane University in New Orleans were incredibly helpful and patient with my constant requests, and were particularly respectful of the odd fact that a Spaniard was doing research on Huey Long. Also at Tulane University, Christine Hernandez and Verónica Sánchez from the Latin American Library Special Collections at Howard-Tilton Memorial Library helped me find very useful Caribbean sources. In Baton Rouge, Germain J. Bienvenu and the rest of the staff working at Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, were extraordinarily efficient and friendly, and provided me with dozens of useful sources. I would also like to thank the staff of the other centers I visited, including the Williams Research Center at the Historic New Orleans Collection, the New Orleans Public Library Archives, and the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City. From my own institution, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, I thank Ramon Vendrell Olivé, from the library interloan service, and

Jordi Morell, for their valuable assistance. At UPF I would also like to thank Cinta Campos and Salomé Alamillo from the IUHJVV for their administrative help.

I am very grateful to the World History Association for letting me participate in several of their conferences in the past years, which are always enriching experiences in a refreshing and friendly environment often rare in academia. I thank professor Laura Mitchell, from UC Irvine, for introducing me to Kris Lane from Tulane University, who has been exceptionally generous on more than one occasion in helping me get funding to do research in Louisiana. In that sense, I thank Molly Hansen for helping me find accommodation in New Orleans and for her friendship. From the WHA, I also want to thank Marc Gilbert for his energy and feedback, and the opportunity to collaborate with him in *The Middle Ground Journal*. Similarly, I thank Alfred Andrea and his wife Juanita for their generosity and friendship. And Winston Welch, for helping us set up a fantastic symposium with admirable calmness and efficiency. Finally, at the WHA I am grateful to my colleagues who have made this journey more fun and interesting: Alex Holowicki, Amy Elizabeth Manlapas, Sarah Hamilton, Nick Russell, and many others.

Preparing this dissertation at Universitat Pompeu Fabra has been truly fulfilling because of the colleagues and friends I have made along the way. I thank the doctoral students at Institut Universitari Jaume Vicens Vives for making this challenging and emotional task much more easy to cope with. I thank Carles Badenes and Gennadi Kneper for their long friendship, good times, and support. Also, Alfonso Colorado, Manuel Castellano, and Marcel Farinelli. To Verónica Peña for her reassurance and help. I also thank Oriol Regué for his encouragement and his own self. To Betlem Castellà for her general love for life, and for her constant assistance. Karo Moret has been an amazing source of knowledge about Cuba and I thank her for all the books, sources, and ideas she has provided me. And, last but not least, I am truly grateful to Núria Sallés (almost Dr. Sallés) for her wonderful selflessness, intelligence, and friendship, and for having listened to me rumble on and on endlessly countless times.

I want to thank my friends and family for their probably undeserved faith in me. To Marta Navarro, Míriam Roqueta, Marçal Valls, and Adrià Alberich for making life

more fun and, although probably not quite understanding why I do what I do, always showing support and companionship. To Julia Nuño de la Rosa, who has also “suffered” the experience of writing a dissertation and survived, for innumerable coffee breaks and talks on how to make the most of it. To Pere Cowley for his years of friendship. I thank Mireia Burrull, with whom I had the first contact with the university in 2004, and who has been a rock in my life ever since.

To my Mexican family, Pilar, Rubén, Ismael, Jorge, Bárbara, and Ainhoa, and all the rest, for making me realize that, in truth, you are home when the others make you feel so.

I thank my parents, Conxa and Ignasi, for giving me a wonderful life, and for their unconditional support in all my endeavors. You are the best parents anyone could hope for. To my sister, Núria, and to Ferran and Adrià, for, although not expressing it directly, always being there anytime anywhere. To my brother, Bernat, and Anna and Duna, for their love and support. To all of you, thank you for having tolerated five years of Huey Long, which is almost as long as Louisiana had to endure.

And, finally, I thank Rubén. It is difficult to put into words how grateful I am to him for all his attentions, proofreading, ideas, help (which, yes, include your wonderful maps), constant support, and his ability to make me feel better in a few seconds. Thank you for having been there throughout the process, and having stayed until the end. Someone once said I was the culmination of someone’s fortune. I believe fortune has been kind to both of us.

Barcelona, September 12, 2016



## **Abstract**

During the 1920s and 1930s dire economic conditions in the Greater Caribbean facilitated the rise of political regimes led by peculiar strongmen. This dissertation offers a comparative analysis on the leadership styles of senator Huey Long from Louisiana and president Gerardo Machado of Cuba, who rose and fell during the interwar period in the broad space of the Greater Caribbean. Long and Machado found similar solutions to analogous problems their respective societies were experiencing. They both favored the development of expensive public works programs and created political discourses aimed at empowering poor farmers. At the same time, and thanks to these policies they were able to accumulate unprecedented power. This comparison enables a better understanding of the shape that politics took in this complicated period in history, and suggests a reassessment of simplistic culturally biased explanations influenced by the idea of American exceptionalism by transcending politically determined frontiers.

## **Resumen**

En los años veinte y treinta del siglo XX condiciones económicas adversas que ocurrieron en el Gran Caribe catalizaron la emergencia de regímenes políticos liderados por peculiares *strongmen*. Esta tesis ofrece un análisis comparativo del estilo de liderazgo del senador Huey Long de Luisiana y el presidente Gerardo Machado de Cuba, dos políticos que gobernaron en los años de entreguerras en el amplio espacio del llamado Gran Caribe. Long y Machado aplicaron soluciones similares a problemas análogos en sus respectivas sociedades, como fue el desarrollo de extravagantes programas de obras públicas y la creación de discursos políticos destinados a dar voz a granjeros pobres, mientras que acumulaban un poder sin precedentes. Esta comparación permite una mayor comprensión de las formas políticas que se desarrollaron en este complicado periodo y, trascendiendo fronteras políticamente determinadas, sugiere un replanteamiento de explicaciones simplistas y culturalmente predeterminadas, influenciadas por la idea del excepcionalismo norteamericano.



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## **Abbreviations**

LaRC: Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans.

LLMVC: Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge

THW: T. Harry Williams Papers

HPL: Huey P. Long Papers

LSMHC: Louisiana State Museum Historical Center, New Orleans

UMDC: University of Miami Digital Collections



# INTRODUCTION

## 1. Premise and objectives

The interwar period is mostly remembered for the rise of fascism in Europe, which eventually led to World War II. In hindsight, the development of fascism was the most significant political movement of the 1920s and 30s as it was directly responsible for the tragic repercussions of the global conflict of 1939-1945. Thus, historiographically, fascism has overshadowed the emergence of other complex leadership styles throughout the globe during this period. These smaller-scale movements ought not to be disregarded as, in the decades leading up to the great conflagration of the twentieth century, the citizens of some countries outside of Europe were more affected by the evolution of unconventional local regimes than by fascism.

For example, in places in 1920s and 30s Greater Caribbean, the transregional unit of analysis for this dissertation, people witnessed the rise and fall of strongman leadership styles that permanently transformed their societies. Analyzing these local movements from a regional comparative perspective provides new insights into how social and economic turmoil shaped the interwar period, not just in Europe but also across the globe. This dissertation aims at expanding our understanding of these crucial decades by exploring the political development of Louisiana and Cuba through a comparative analysis of two rulers, elected governor of Louisiana in 1928 and later senator Huey Pierce Long (1893-1935) and president of Cuba between 1925 and 1933 Gerardo Machado y Morales (1871/3-1939), both of whom governed, thrived, and then fell in a context of severe economic crisis. This choice of comparison is intentionally innovative, but not just for the sake of originality. The contrast is relevant insofar as it proposes a paradigm change as regards to conceptual and geographic approaches to both these figures. This comparative case study can provide new insights into the transformations of mass politics across national boundaries by looking at the Greater Caribbean as a unit of analysis and studying Long and Machado as strongmen who share similar leadership styles rather than focusing on their ideological differences.

The dissertation strives to achieve its goal by transcending two traditional dichotomies: “North” and “South”, and “left” and “right”. In the first case, this thesis debunks traditional perspectives that imply that the two politicians belonged to two different political environments. Historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto has attacked the idea that the United States merits being considered historically separated from the rest of the world, arguing that “many of the supposedly good things about US exceptionalism, such as the dynamic wealth creation, the democracy, the accessibility of opportunity, the cult of civil liberty, the tradition of tolerance [...] [A]ll these are common virtues and evils of many modern societies, throughout and indeed beyond the Americas”.<sup>1</sup> However, many still content that the United States is a unique space of “democracy and freedom” in the Western hemisphere, while Latin America is often related to backwardness, laziness and corruption.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as historian Mariano Plotkin pointed out, Latin America is commonly understood as a place of “permanent crisis”.<sup>3</sup>

The weight of American exceptionalism has stopped previous scholars from attempting such an in-depth comparison, despite the fact that contemporary observers were quick to suggest a striking resemblance between Long and Machado. For instance, in his 1935 study of Long, leftist journalist Carleton Beals wrote: “Louisiana had sunk to the lower level of despicable despotism (except for actual torture and murder) of the hated tyranny of Machado in Cuba. The difference is that the mass of Louisianans liked it, while the Cubans [...] had the guts and wisdom to fight and overthrow Machado”.<sup>4</sup> From a similar

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<sup>1</sup> Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *The Americas: A Hemispheric History* (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 17. J. Fred Rippy, *Latin America: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), 406.

<sup>2</sup> Cuban philosopher Jorge Mañach referred to the United States as “veladores de la libertad”, in Jorge Mañach, *Teoría de la frontera* (Barcelona: Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1970), 114. For more on American exceptionalism, see: Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); Arnon Gutfeld, *American Exceptionalism: The Effects of Plenty on the American Experience* (Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2002); Godfrey Hodgson, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). As for Latin America, Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy analyzed this “backwardness” in a section he entitled “Major Causes for Retardation”, which the author attributed mainly to climate conditions, racial composition, and Spanish and Portuguese heritage, in J. Fred Rippy, *Latin America: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), 536-540. For a study on stereotypes applied to Spain, mainly Spaniards’ disdain for work, see Ruth MacKay, «*Lazy, Improvident People*»: *Myth and Reality in the Writing of Spanish History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Mariano Plotkin, “Introducción: América Latina y sus crisis”, *Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas). Dossier: América Latina y sus crisis* 62, nº 1 (January-June 2005): 14.

<sup>4</sup> Carleton Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1935), 377.

point of view, reporter Westbrook Pegler, far to the right of Beals, concluded also in 1935 that: “There is no difference between the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado in Cuba and Huey Long in Louisiana except that up to this time Huey has not found it necessary to get rough”.<sup>5</sup> The same year, biographer Forrest Davis described Long as a “Latin-American revolutionist, ‘stomping’ down from Winn [the Louisiana parish where Long was born], a political Pancho Villa with a horde of poor whites at his back, to overthrow the old régime in a State gripped by ‘foreign’ capital, city politicians and planters”.<sup>6</sup> In the decades following the demise of their respective regimes, commentators continued to draw the same comparison without going into detail. In a 1946 article, *Time* magazine called Machado “Cuba’s Huey Long”.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, scholars have only scratched the surface of such comparative study. The main biographer of Long, historian T. Harry Williams, proposed in his 1969 study that leaders like Long “were not politicians in the ordinary sense of the word. They were more like *caudillos* in a Latin country”.<sup>8</sup> On his part, political scientist Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., argued: “At bottom, Huey Long resembled, not a Hitler or a Mussolini, but a Latin American dictator, a Vargas or a Perón. Louisiana was in many respects a colonial region, an underdeveloped area; its Creole traditions gave it an almost Latin American character”.<sup>9</sup> This dissertation further develops these observations presenting the first methodical and extensive comparative analysis between Huey Long and Gerardo Machado.

Thus, the thesis transcends predominant historical narratives about the interwar period through a comparative analysis that challenges historiographical paradigms that maintain an artificial frontier between the United States and Latin America. By looking into Louisiana in 1920s and 30s, ultimately this thesis questions the biased concept of American exceptionalism, the Pelican State serving as an interesting middle ground given its shared culture and history with other parts of the Greater Caribbean. Louisiana

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<sup>5</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough”, *Reading Eagle* (Pennsylvania), February 18, 1935, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Forrest Davis, *Huey Long: A Candid Biography* (New York: Dodge Publishing Company, 1935), 271.

<sup>7</sup> “Cuba: Lost Milestone”, *Time*, April 8, 1946, [content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,852772,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,852772,00.html)

<sup>8</sup> T. Harry Williams (1969), *Huey Long* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 369.

<sup>9</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston and Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin and Riverside Press, 1960), 68.

shared profound historical roots with its island neighbors to the South, as is shown by many scholars of the colonial period and the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> This dissertation proposes to use a similar approach for a later period and for political rather than economic or cultural history, placing Louisiana in the Greater Caribbean. The purpose of using this transnational unit of analysis for the 1920s and 30s is to avoid repeating historiographical tropes depicting the United States as an imperial aggressor and Latin American countries as passive or, at best, reactive entities.

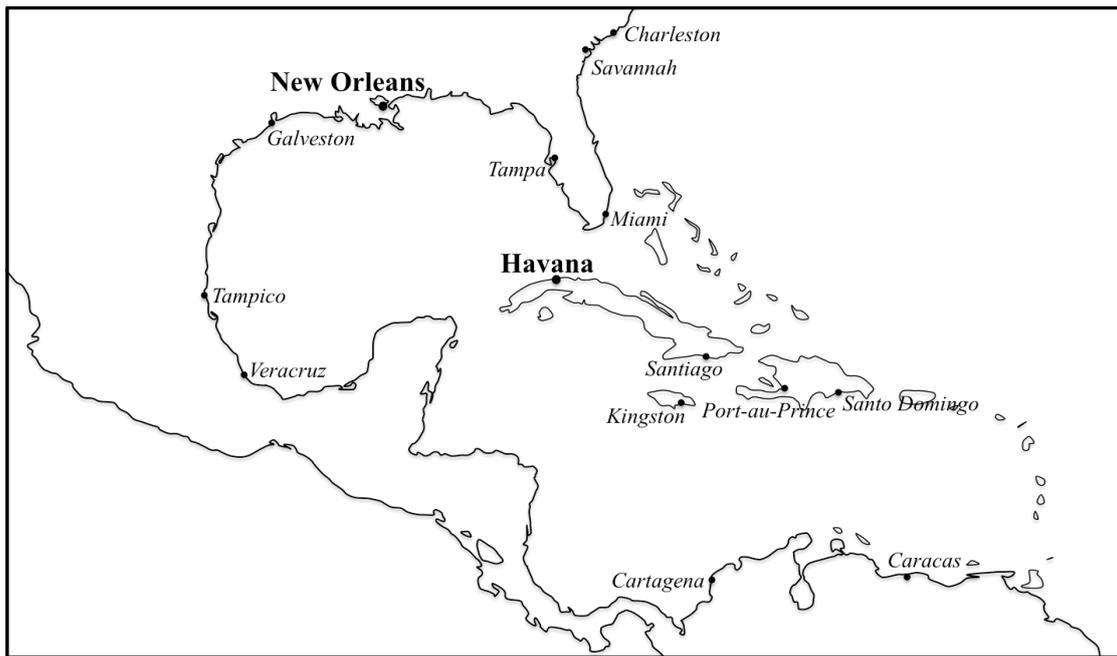
On the contrary, Louisiana and Cuba shared a common history of economic strife and social upheaval, which led to the establishment of unconventional regimes. Historian John McNeill, Jr., has applied the Greater Caribbean unit of analysis to study the impact of tropical disease in the late colonial period. McNeill describes it as a large area that encompasses “the Atlantic coastal regions of South, Central, and North America, as well as the Caribbean islands themselves [...] from Surinam to Chesapeake”.<sup>11</sup> More recently, historian Stuart B. Schwartz has used this unit of analysis to study hurricanes in the region from the colonial period to the present, thus presenting a refreshing environmental history approach. The author insisted: “From Charleston to Cartagena or Veracruz to Bridgetown, similar vegetation, similar landscapes, similar rhythms of life, and similar products had made the Caribbean societies sisters”. Schwartz adds: “All had in some way or to some degree experienced European colonization, destruction of indigenous population, African slavery, plantation regimes, the creation of multiracial societies”. One of these commonalities was climatology—for instance, tsunamis, droughts, earthquakes, and epidemic diseases—, which has created a “transnational’ unity of experience”.<sup>12</sup> This great region has been connected through its main port cities. Both Cuba and Louisiana are “gulf states” that have been brought close together through maritime exchanges.

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<sup>10</sup> Some interesting and innovative works in this respect are: Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom Louisiana and Cuba After Slavery* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Kirsten Silva Gruesz, “The Gulf of Mexico System and the ‘Latinness’ of New Orleans”, *American Literary History* 18, n° 3 (Autumn 2006): 468-495; Daniel E. Walker, *No More, No More: Slavery and Cultural Resistance in Havana and New Orleans* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> John Robert McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sea of Storms: A History of Hurricanes in the Greater Caribbean from Columbus to Katrina* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).



*Fig. 1: Map of the Greater Caribbean. Map by Rubén Carrillo*

A focus on the Greater Caribbean enables suggesting innovative connections that reveal the limitations of national-centered approaches and outline a fresh perspective on historical phenomena.

The second dichotomy challenged by this thesis is political. Instead of looking at Long as a left-wing radical and Machado as a Liberal Party leader who, nonetheless, overall leaned more towards right-wing policies, the chief argument posits that both politicians carefully crafted for themselves the image of strongmen. This term refers to politicians that have a particular style of rule more than a specific common ideology. Other terms that have been used in the same sense are “dictator” or “tyrant”, although these seem to be more politically biased.<sup>13</sup> Sociologist Daniel Chirot published a study on the global phenomenon of tyrannies by looking at the common traits between different twentieth-century political leaders throughout the world.<sup>14</sup> For this thesis, however, “strongmen” will be used, for it better encapsulates the complexities of both Long and Machado.

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<sup>13</sup> For a theoretical analysis on tyranny, see Roger Boesche, *Theories of Tyranny, from Plato to Arendt* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Daniel Chirot, *Modern Tyrants: The Power and Prevalence of Evil in Our Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

“Strongman” as concept was previously used by historian Hugh H. Hamill, Jr., in his 1966 study of Latin American dictators throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, although the author narrowed the term exclusively to Latin America.<sup>15</sup> Twenty years prior, in his chapter about Mexican president Plutarco Elías Calles, who ruled between 1924 and 1928, author James Meyer defined him as a “strong man”.<sup>16</sup> In the 1980s, professor of foreign policy Barry Rubin published a study on “Third World” strongmen, populist, and coup makers.<sup>17</sup> The author, however, did not provide a specific definition of these terms and used a very clearly divided narrative between the “Western world”, land of democracy, and the “Third world”, land of what the author called “modern dictators”—historian Niall Ferguson put forward a similar notion in his problematic concept of the “west and the rest”.<sup>18</sup> Also, Rubin offered an oversimplified and stereotypical analysis on Latin America, arguably influenced by the ideas of the Black Legend,<sup>19</sup> by using arguments such as: “All the key institutions [in the nineteenth and early twentieth century] militated against a strong democracy”.<sup>20</sup> A few decades earlier, British author and journalist George Pendle concluded in his chapter problematically entitled “Latin American characteristics” that, in fact, Latin Americans belonged to a “distinct variety of the human species”.<sup>21</sup> This dissertation will question these biased perceptions.

More recently and accurately, the idea of strongmen has been employed to elaborate a transnational political history in another predominantly agrarian area of high conflict. Speaking of “Balkan strongmen”, German historian Bernd J. Fischer has argued that, although they cannot easily be generalized, “as authoritarians, the interwar Balkan strongmen possessed considerable authority in all the traditional branches of government, but were still to a certain extent limited by a constitutional system that

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<sup>15</sup> Hugh M. Hamill, *Caudillos: Dictators in Spanish America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>16</sup> James A. Magner, *Men of Mexico* (Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co., 1942).

<sup>17</sup> Barry M. Rubin, *Modern Dictators: Third World Coup Makers, Strongmen, and Populist Tyrants* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Julián Juderías, *La leyenda negra y la verdad histórica* (Madrid: Tip. de la Rev. de Arch., Bibl. y Museos, 1914). See also MacKay, «*Lazy, Improvident People*», 218-220.

<sup>20</sup> Rubin, *Modern Dictators*, 111.

<sup>21</sup> George Pendle (1963), *A History of Latin America* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), 223.

provided for some form of parliamentary and political life”.<sup>22</sup> This description fits very well to represent the political trajectory of both Long and Machado. Furthermore, Fischer posits that in the 1930s this type of politician revoked or rewrote the constitution, an attitude that once again echoes decisions made by the Caribbean strongmen—as will be seen, Long was accused of ignoring the state constitution of Louisiana, and Machado modified the Cuban Magna Carta in order to extend his term in power.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the ultimate goal of these leaders was to modernize their territories by, for instance, industrializing and educating society. However, they often achieved these aims through nepotism and corruption.<sup>24</sup> Finally, “strongmen” “provided some economic stability and security” in a time of severe economic depression, although “brutality [...] was certainly not uncommon”.<sup>25</sup> Thus, this thesis argues that Long and Machado can be best designed using this concept.

Moreover, this dissertation innovates in applying the term “strongmen” to the 1920s and 30s Greater Caribbean in order to avoid falling in the trap of trying to define these politicians with traditional labels, such as “fascist”, “communist”, “populist”, “demagogue”,<sup>26</sup> “anti-American”, or “anti-Cuban”.<sup>27</sup> Rather than focusing on what ideology imbued these politicians, the dissertation analyzes how Long and Machado developed their leadership styles in response to specific economic, social, and environmental conjunctures.

As for delimiting the geographic unit of analysis, it is worth recalling historical essayist Mark Kurlansky’s assessment that “the first problem in writing about the Caribbean is defining it geographically”.<sup>28</sup> For instance, in 1940 Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy

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<sup>22</sup> Bernd Jürgen Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of South Eastern Europe* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), 3.

<sup>23</sup> Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen*, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen*, 8, 14.

<sup>25</sup> Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen*, 17..

<sup>26</sup> For instance, political theorist Michael Signer has emphasized the use of this term in Michael Signer, *Demagogue: The Fight to Save Democracy From Its Worst Enemies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> German historian Peter Amann referred to Long as a “*point d’interrogation idéologique*”, in Peter H. Amann, “Les fascismes américains des années trente: aperçus et réflexions”, *Revue d’histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et des conflits contemporains* 32, n° 126 (April 1982): 75.

<sup>28</sup> Mark Kurlansky, *A Continent of Islands: Searching for the Caribbean Destiny* (Reading: Da Capo Press, 1992), x.

offered demographical data about the Caribbean but the author added that the numbers shifted depending on whether the reader wanted to include southern Mexico or not.<sup>29</sup> Generally speaking, the Greater Caribbean more often than not conjures ideas related to weather patterns rather than as a unit of historical inquiry. Thus, as shown by scholar Silva Kirsten Gruesz: “The fact that meteorology is virtually the only representational system in the popular imaginary that apprehends the Gulf of Mexico [a part of the Greater Caribbean] as a whole [...] suggests how powerful the spread of continentalism and territorial nationalism [...] militates against our ability to see it as a coherent space of social interaction”.<sup>30</sup> In fact, careless reference easily confuses the Gulf of Mexico between Cuba and the US coast with the Caribbean Sea, which the island chain from Jamaica to Trinidad, of the Greater and the Lesser Antilles, separate from both the Gulf and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the coast of Mexico, Central and South America. Precisely for the easy link across the Gulf between New Orleans and Havana, I take McNeill definition of the Greater Caribbean in order to provide a transnational analysis of the politics of this region. I do this because I share historian Franklin Knight’s view that:

Political boundaries do not necessarily make, or conform to, cultural boundaries. The concept of the Caribbean [...] emphasizes cultural commonalities rather than political chronology, without neglecting the importance of the latter. [...] [T]he region comprises one culture area in which common factors have forged a more-or-less common way of looking at life, the world, and their place in the scheme of things. All the societies of the Caribbean share an identifiable *Weltanschauung* [world-view], despite the superficial divisions that are apparent.<sup>31</sup>

More specifically, Louisiana and Cuba are both spaces with a common history of monoculture agriculture, slavery, and the struggle between the lower echelons of society and the landed plutocracy empowered by the plantation economy. Scholars Jon Smith and Deborah Cohn favor the term “Plantation America” over “the South”, arguing that: “American scholars [ought to] stop speaking about ‘the South’ as if its borders were

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<sup>29</sup> J. Fred Rippy, *The Caribbean Danger Zone* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1940), 5. That is not the perception of all scholars. For instance, Americanist historian Dexter Perkins began his study on the region by assuring: “The area of the Caribbean is not difficult to define”, for the author was convinced the territory was encircled by the islands and “continental mass” which generated an “inland sea”, in Dexter Perkins, *The United States and the Caribbean* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 1.

<sup>30</sup> Gruesz, “The Gulf of Mexico System and the ‘Latinness’ of New Orleans”, 473.

<sup>31</sup> Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), xi.

clear [and] start thinking of the Southern plantation as the New World paradigm rather than the exception within American exceptionalism”.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Cuba has been incorporated into historical discussions of the United States by Elliot Young, who included the island in what he calls “Greater North America” in his discussion of coolie migration to Cuba, although in his unit of analysis Young includes all of the United States.<sup>33</sup> Another concept that has become useful to refer to the Caribbean area is “American Mediterranean”, which also includes the Gulf of Mexico. Historian Lester D. Langley, for instance, used it on his 1960s study on the historical rivalry between the United States and Europe for the control of the region.<sup>34</sup> Previously, in 1940 Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy had also employed the idea of the American Mediterranean when analyzing what the author called “the Caribbean danger zone” due to the supposed totalitarian threat occurring at the time.<sup>35</sup>

Louisiana and Cuba share the distinction of being frontier spaces, or perhaps even they are contained within a common frontier zone. In this sense, we might consider political scientists Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, and György Márkus’ work on “Soviet societies” in Eastern Europe as a transregional frontier space with a common political development.<sup>36</sup> Mexican historian Bernardo García Martínez has reflected upon these spaces by arguing:

Los espacios territoriales por excelencia son los nacionales [...] Hay otras fronteras menos perceptibles y a menudo fluctuantes que delimitan espacios culturales, lingüísticos, étnicos, económicos, etc. Estos espacios pueden tener muchas expresiones diferentes y no son territoriales en el sentido estricto del término, o no siempre lo son. Por lo tanto, es común hallarlos superpuestos, entremezclados, compartiendo y enlazando sus respectivos espacios. Son definidos, a veces, como áreas de influencia.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Jon Smith and Deborah N. Cohn, “Introducción: Uncanny Hybridities”, in *Look Away!: The U.S. South in New World Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>33</sup> Elliott Young, *Alien Nation: Chinese Migration in the Americas from the Coolie Era through World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 3.

<sup>34</sup> Lester D. Langley, *Struggle for the American Mediterranean: United States-European Rivalry in the Gulf-Caribbean, 1776-1904* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976).

<sup>35</sup> Rippy, *The Caribbean Danger Zone*, vi.

<sup>36</sup> Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, and György Márkus, *Dictadura y cuestiones sociales* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1986).

<sup>37</sup> Bernardo García Martínez, “El espacio de (des)encuentro”, in *Encuentro en la frontera: mexicanos y norteamericanos en un espacio común*, ed. Manuel Ceballos Ramírez (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2001), 22-23. Due to the fact that there are numerous quotes in Spanish throughout the dissertation, these will not be italicized, except when they constitute three words or less. All quotes in other languages other than English or Spanish will be italicized.

Cuban philosopher and writer Jorge Mañach, who analyzed the different types of frontiers including the ideological, the political, the economic, and the cultural, reflected upon this topic in the following terms:

Geográficamente, la frontera es ante todo un *situs*, un sitio, un lugar de confluencia y contacto de áreas distintas. Como toda situación, implica un sistema de relaciones. Éstas son, por lo pronto, las que existen entre las dos zonas contiguas que la frontera separa; pero también las que se establecen entre la frontera misma y toda la masa social que ella perfila.<sup>38</sup>

When discussing the manner in which both Machado and Long presented themselves to the public and the appeal they elicited among their voters, one cannot escape bearing in mind the theories put forward by sociologists Norbert Elias, the founder of figurational sociology,<sup>39</sup> and Pierre Bourdieu, especially their ideas of *habitus* and *situs*, as well as for their concern with processes, rather than states.<sup>40</sup> *Habitus* is a structure of preferences that influences the way people see their society, and their place and behavior within it. According to Bourdieu, the *habitus* of people directly correlates to their “social class”.<sup>41</sup> It is relevant to note that most scholarly research on the matter has neglected the fact that German sociologist Charlotte Lütken already used this term in her study on North American society in 1929. When analyzing the role of the frontier in the making of the United States, Lütken argued that in the frontier “se formó el *habitus* espiritual y el modo de pensar económico”.<sup>42</sup>

This terminology comes into play when understanding Long’s and Machado’s ability to adopt the dispositions of the “working class” electorate and becoming a member of the lower strata of society, despite their not-so-humble beginnings. By emulating the behavior and, especially in the case of Huey, openly challenging basic rules of etiquette—for instance, the famous green silk pajama incident, which will be further analyzed—, they were able to attract “working class” voters, while alienating elites,

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<sup>38</sup> Mañach, *Teoría de la frontera*, 32.

<sup>39</sup> His most influential work is regarded as the foundational work in this field of sociology: Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process. Vol. I: The History of Manners* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969); and Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process. Vol. II: State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

<sup>40</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinción: criterios y bases sociales del gusto* (Madrid: Taurus, 1988). For more on Bourdieu, see Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu and Culture* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2000).

<sup>41</sup> Bourdieu, *La distinción*, 99-108.

<sup>42</sup> Charlotte Lütken (1929), *El estado y la sociedad en Norteamérica: contribución a la sociología del capitalismo americano* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1931), 26.

which in turn garnered them even more support from the masses. Without falling into the trap of geographical and historical determinism, Elias's ideas are useful in thinking about the ways the *habitus* of the population of Louisiana and Cuba, which combined to produce the rise of Long and Machado, can be understood as stemming from features of their common past, as both places belong to the larger unit of the Greater Caribbean.<sup>43</sup>

Elias's breaking apart of the notion that individual agency, and social and geographic context or structure are separate serves as a good starting point to delve into the project of understanding the lives of two politicians who have been traditionally thought of as belonging to radically distinct places, and political traditions (structures) and who have been historiographically charged with excessive personalism and breaking from traditional paradigms of leadership (agency). During (and after) his lifetime, Long was referred to time and time again as an "anti-American," his actions considered abnormal.

Mañach, however, saw very clear differences between the United States and Latin America, for he understood the two spaces had separated, as he called them, "psychologies".<sup>44</sup> Mañach further developed this quite problematic concept when writing:

En los Estados Unidos, los elementos primitivos residuales—el indio, la progeñe inmediata de los conquistadores españoles—y los adventicios—el negro, los inmigrantes europeos—carecen de importancia a los efectos de esa tonalidad general: representan, a lo sumo, influencias muy marginales y oblicuas en determinadas regiones. En la América Latina [...] los elementos indígenas y afros han penetrado más la cultura de ciertas zonas; pero no hasta el extremo de diferenciarlas esencialmente del patrón criollo.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> For Elias's exploration of the historical roots of the German *habitus* and its connection to the rise of Hitler, see Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> Mañach affirmed, "Es obvio que los americanos del Norte y del Sur [...] tenemos modos muy distintos de sentir, de pensar y de actuar", in Mañach, *Teoría de la frontera*, 93. The author added, "Al norte se acentúan los [valores] que tienen que ver con la razón, la acción y la realidad concreta; al sur los que atañen a la sensibilidad, al sentimiento y a la forma", in 126-127. In relation to this archaic conception, Fernández-Armesto has complained: "Can the peculiar achievements of the United States and Canada be attributed to mental qualities—a distinctive 'mind-set'? [...] This hardly seems worthy of serious consideration; it is obviously a partisan overgeneralization. Yet it remains a common opinion that Americans—the US. kind—are essentially 'practical', whereas most other Americans are imaginative. South of the border, dreams take over from dollars, artists from craftsmen, creative minds from constructive ones [...] 'Getting things done' is a Yankee speciality; the Latins never get further than arguing and struggling about what those things should be", in Fernández-Armesto, *The Americas*, 200.

<sup>45</sup> Mañach, *Teoría de la frontera*, 92-93.

This thesis will challenge such a conception by analyzing the state of Louisiana within a broader context, a territory in the United States that better encapsulates Mañach's definition of a Latin American country rather than his conception of the US.

While Frederick Jackson Turner's notorious idea of the East-to-West frontier generally prevails in historical discourses of the United States,<sup>46</sup> this thesis offers an alternative North-to-South (but also South-to-North) frontier somewhat proposed in 1932 by Jackson Turner himself in another less recognized book about sectionalism in the US, which won the Pulitzer Prize the year after its publication.<sup>47</sup> To define "section" Jackson Turner used the meaning American philosopher Josiah Royce attributed to "province", that is: "[A]ny one part of a national domain which is geographically and socially sufficiently unified to have a true consciousness of its own ideals and customs and to possess a sense of its distinction from other parts of the country".<sup>48</sup> Although Jackson Turner's analysis mainly focused on sections within the political boundaries of his native country, in his study he called for an in-depth analysis of sections beyond the traditional borderlines:

American sectionalism has been very inadequately dealt with by our historians. Impressed by the artificial political boundary lines of states, they have almost entirely given their attention either to national or to state history, or to the broad division of North and South, overlooking the fact that there are several natural, economic, and social sections that are fundamental in American historical development.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, Turner, in his study of sectionalism, spoke of the "belts" as spaces with specific continuities, such as the "black belts" or the "Bible belt", and so forth.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1921). Jorge Mañach was a great admirer of Jackson Turner's thesis on the frontier, in Mañach, *Teoría de la frontera*, 114.

<sup>47</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner (1932), *The Significance of Sections in American History* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1959).

<sup>48</sup> John Joseph McDermott, ed., *The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce: Logic, Loyalty, and Community. Vol. 2* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 1069. Also quoted in Jackson Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History*, 45.

<sup>49</sup> Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History*, 8. For instance, the early-twentieth century historian suggested that the US "South" could be studied separately but looking at the connections among the sections of the Atlantic Plains, the Piedmont, and the Gulf Plains, in 12-13. Turner emphasized that throughout US history there has been a constant sectionalism of West and East, in 32-33.

<sup>50</sup> Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History*, 307.

Following this trend, British historian Alistair Hennessy claimed: “By replacing the horizontal comparison with a vertical one between North and South America, there may be a better a chance of getting [...] [readers] to realize that the United States is a foreign country and not just an eccentric version of the British experience”.<sup>51</sup> The vertical approach enables transcending archetypical narratives of US history as a watertight phenomenon, and forces a dialogue with other historical narratives in order to produce a holistic analysis of a fluid space such as the Greater Caribbean. Such an attempt is grounded in the belief that “comparisons need not necessarily be confined to similar situations but may be used to provoke discussion and open up new perspectives”.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, it also adds complexity to the history of the United States, for, as proposed by Fernández-Armesto: “There are other US histories than the Standard Anglo narrative: in particular, a Spanish history, rolling from south to north and intersecting with the story of the Anglo frontier”.<sup>53</sup>

American journalist and writer Colin Woodard has argued that the United States is divided into eleven different “regional cultures”, such as the “Far West”, “Yankeedom”, “New Netherland”, “First Nation”, and “El Norte”. Interestingly, the author attributes the “Part of the Spanish Caribbean” region only to southern Florida.<sup>54</sup> As for Louisiana, Woodard has pinpointed the complexities of the state by including most of it to the “Deep South” classical region, but configuring its southern territories into a separate “New France” area. Thus, the area of New Orleans configures a rare separated entity within the Union, for to some extent “southern Louisiana resisted assimilation, remaining a land apart right into the twenty-first century”.<sup>55</sup>

New Orleans has often been placed in-between the Anglo and Latino spheres of the Americas. In the 1930s, Forrest Davis described the Crescent City as “a vivid patch,

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<sup>51</sup> Alistair Hennessy, *The Frontier in Latin American History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 5.

<sup>52</sup> Hennessy, *The Frontier in Latin American History*, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Our America: A Hispanic History of the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), xxviii.

<sup>54</sup> Woodard could have arguably included the Pelican State in this region—particularly taking into account the failed attempt at annexing Cuba in the mid-nineteenth century. See Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973).

<sup>55</sup> Colin Woodard, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America* (New York: Viking, 2011), 205.

tropical in color, festally Latin on the hem of Anglo-Saxon Uncle Sam's dun coat", where the national character of its inhabitants fluctuated from French, to Spanish, to American.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, journalist Craddock Goins wrote in the mid-thirties: "New Orleans is a Latin city. It has a typically Latin outlook, a genial, cheerful philosophy of happiness".<sup>57</sup> Hence the off-cited touristic pitch of the "Big Easy". Decades later, author and musicologist Ned Sublette has cleverly assessed that "in the Spanish empire, New Orleans had been *el norte*; [and after 1803-1821] it [became] the American South".<sup>58</sup> The cultural imprint of Latin America in Louisiana even prompted writer Jonathan Daniels in 1938 to describe the Pelican State as a Caribbean Republic: "[Louisiana] was a State almost perfectly planned for the growing of Huey Long. It is not a true Southern State for all the negroes [*sic*] and the heat. It is in spirit and character rather a Caribbean republic".<sup>59</sup> Most recently, Gruesz concludes that isolating New Orleans "as different and exceptional by refusing to see its linkages to the transnational Gulf of Mexico allows us to disavow the relation between the prosperity of the US and the abject poverty of Latin America in general", and calls for a restoration of "this lost historical context [...] [in order] to better understand the relationship between one 'South' and another."<sup>60</sup>

Thus, a comparison between Latin America and Louisiana is not an entirely new approach. However, most comparisons have been used to analyze historical processes in the late colonial period and the nineteenth century, focusing primarily on economic issues and cultural encounters. This thesis is innovative in that places the comparison in the twentieth century and deals with political history.

To delve deeper into the particulars of this comparison, some parallels common to many territories throughout the Greater Caribbean as they relate to Louisiana are worth pointing out. The Pelican State is certainly a peculiar entity within the Union.

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<sup>56</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 216.

<sup>57</sup> Craddock Goins, "The Drunken Tyranny of Huey P. Long: A Close-Up View of Louisiana's Blunderbuss", *Real America*, vol. 4, n° 4, December 1934, 10, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 14, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118.

<sup>58</sup> Ned Sublette, *The World That Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver to Congo Square* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2008), 242.

<sup>59</sup> Jonathan Daniels, *A Southerner Discovers the South* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1938), 231.

<sup>60</sup> Gruesz, "The Gulf of Mexico System and the 'Latinness' of New Orleans", 491.

Territorially, it is the only state divided by parishes instead of counties—a total of 64—, there is a strong Catholic population, and the Roman Law code is uniquely preferred over the tradition of English Consuetudinary Law, common to the rest of the forty-nine states. But there are also various sub-frontiers once again dividing North and South Louisiana. As Thomas O. Harris argued in 1938: “North and South Louisiana are far apart. Generally speaking, Latins [*sic*] occupy the lower end of the state; and (still generally speaking) nordics [*sic*] the upper end”. Moreover, according to Harris, in the 1930s North Louisiana grew cotton, while the South was rich in sugar, and, in the midst of Prohibition, “on the liquor question, South Louisiana [was] wet and North Louisiana dry”, and while South Louisiana leaned towards Catholicism the North was mainly Protestant.<sup>61</sup> No one forgot that the South was rebel in 1861 but in the North of the state there was a strong unionist sentiment, willing to fight for its own stand.<sup>62</sup> These divisions translated into the characteristic atmosphere of New Orleans, interestingly described by southern journalist Hodding Carter:

The city dominated the state: New Orleans, the nation’s Mecca of the fleshpots, smiling in not altogether Latin indifferences at its moral deformities, and, like a cankered prostitute, covering those deformities with paint and lace and capitalizing upon them with lewd beckoning to the stranger. Beyond New Orleans, in the south, French Louisiana, devoutly Catholic, easygoing, following complacently its backward glancing patriarchs, suspicious of the Protestants in the north. And in central and northern Louisiana, the small farmers, principally Anglo-Saxons; bitter, fundamentalist Protestants, hating the City and all its evil works, leaderless in their disquiet and only vaguely aware that much of what they lacked was in some way coupled with the like-as-like office seekers whom they alternatively voted into and out of public life.<sup>63</sup>

Beyond cultural aspects, early twentieth-century Louisiana shared many economic characteristics with its neighbors to the South. In the thirties, journalist Carleton Beals pointed out that the standard of living in the Pelican State was “approximately 60 per cent lower than in the northern states”, adding that “culturally and economically,

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<sup>61</sup> Thomas O. Harris (1938), *The Kingfish. Huey P. Long, Dictator* (Baton Rouge: Claitor’s Publishing Division, 1968), 29-30. For an analysis on the Prohibition and US society in the 1920s, see Aurora Bosch, “Los violentos años veinte: Gánsters, prohibición y cambios socio-políticos en el primer tercio del siglo XX en Estados Unidos”, in *La historia a través del cine: Estados Unidos, una mirada a su imaginario*, ed. Coro Rubio Pobes (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Sally Jenkins and John Stauffer, *The State of Jones: The Small Southern County That Seceded from the Confederacy* (New York: Doubleday, 2009).

<sup>63</sup> Hodding Carter, “Huey Long: American Dictator”, in *The Aspirin Age, 1919-1941*, ed. Isabel Leighton (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), 345.

Louisiana is closer to Peru than to Wisconsin or Indiana”,<sup>64</sup> while, according to historian Matthew Schott, illiteracy was high.<sup>65</sup>

One of the most relevant historical connections between Cuba and Louisiana is sugar. Throughout the nineteenth century, in both regions this commodity became the main motor of the economy and social organization. The sugar plantation system shaped society in terms of race relations, and of the wealth of Louisiana and Cuba.<sup>66</sup> As Spanish historian José A. Piqueras has argued, “el cultivo de caña y su posterior procesamiento empleando trabajo forzado configuró la composición étnica de la población, las relaciones sociales, la forma de gobierno y la cultura de las islas [del Caribe]”.<sup>67</sup> Due to the Haitian revolution begun in 1791, Saint Domingue lost its global protagonism in the production sugar, and was substituted by Cuba.<sup>68</sup> Renowned Cuban historian Manuel Moreno Fraginals wrote: “Entre 1790 y 1830 la Isla pasa de una posición secundaria en los mercados de azúcar y café a ser el primer productor mundial”.<sup>69</sup> Cuba historian Ramiro Guerra Sánchez already shared that same perspective in his 1927 study of sugar in the Antilles.<sup>70</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century, Cuban production grew rapidly between 1840 and 1860.<sup>71</sup> In that time, fifty percent of the production exported from the Caribbean island was sugar, most of which had the United States as its destination.<sup>72</sup> In his analysis on the economic history of Cuba,

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<sup>64</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 340.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew J. Schott, “Huey Long: Progressive Backlash?”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 27, n° 2 (Spring 1986): 137.

<sup>66</sup> For a thorough analysis on the sugar economy in Cuba, see Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio: El Complejo Económico Cubano Del Azúcar* (Havana: Comisión Nacional Cubana de la UNESCO, 1964).

<sup>67</sup> José A. Piqueras Arenas, ed., *Azúcar y esclavitud en el final del trabajo forzado* (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002), 11.

<sup>68</sup> Antonio Santamaría García and Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, *Más allá del azúcar: política, diversificación y prácticas económicas en Cuba, 1878-1930* (Aranjuez: Doce Calles, 2009), 16. Historian Rebecca Scott has noted that in Cuba cane had come quite late, while tobacco and coffee, and the practice of cattle raising had been already developed in the island for generations, in Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 18. On the contrary, Cuban historian Ramiro Guerra wrote in 1927 that the sugar industry had begun in the island in the decade of 1590-1600, in Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, *Azúcar y población en las Antillas* (Havana: Cultural, 1927), 40.

<sup>69</sup> Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *Cuba/España, España/Cuba: historia común* (Barcelona: Crítica, Grijalbo Mondadori, 1995), 171.

<sup>70</sup> Guerra y Sánchez, *Azúcar y población en las Antillas*, 49.

<sup>71</sup> Ramiro Guerra wrote that the production of sugar on the island that was exported from the period 1841-45 had been of 12.867,698 arroba (411.766,336 pounds), while in 1856-59 it had risen to 23.139,245 (740.455,84 pounds), in Guerra y Sánchez, *Azúcar y población en las Antillas*, 55.

<sup>72</sup> Nadia Fernández de Pinedo, “Cuba y el mercado azucarero en el siglo XIX”, in *Azúcar y esclavitud en el final del trabajo forzado*, ed. Piqueras Arenas, 274, 281.

historian Julio Le Riverend specified that as early as 1860 sixty-two percent of Cuban sugar exports were destined to the United States, and Great Britain absorbed twenty-two percent, while the metropolis, Spain, only bought three percent.<sup>73</sup>

As for Louisiana, sugar production was strong in the south of the state. Like Cuba, Louisiana would also be influenced by the Haitian revolution in its economy, for the first time sugar was grown profitably was after a refugee escaping from the slave's rebellion named Antonio Morin applied successful Haitian techniques in 1794.<sup>74</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, and after decades of New Orleans being one of the main port cities in the United States, the sugar economy entered a period of decline after American companies moved to the Caribbean or to the Philippines to obtain cheaper lands and labor.<sup>75</sup> But there was a time when, as historian Rebecca Scott points out, “planters and merchants in Havana and New Orleans, part of the same intertwined Atlantic world, kept a close eye on each other. A record-breaking harvest in Cuba could mean lowered profits in Louisiana; a new tariff in the United States could be a blow to Cuban producers”. This same author adds: “At the same time, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico opened the way to the circulation of people, information, and ideas”.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, historian Kenneth Aslakson has concluded that, in fact, “New Orleans’ economy resembled that of the port cities of the Caribbean more than the port cities of the young United States”.<sup>77</sup>

The world of sugar inadvertently influenced another sort of interconnectedness: the appearance and spread of diseases throughout the Greater Caribbean. As McNeill has observed: “The sugar revolutions created a new world of plantations, population increase, ships, and ports—a world almost tailor-made for the yellow fever vector and

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<sup>73</sup> Julio Le Riverend, *Historia económica de Cuba* (Havana: Instituto de Libros, 1967), 179.

<sup>74</sup> Kenneth R. Aslakson, *Making Race in the Courtroom: The Legal Construction of Three Races in New Orleans* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 31.

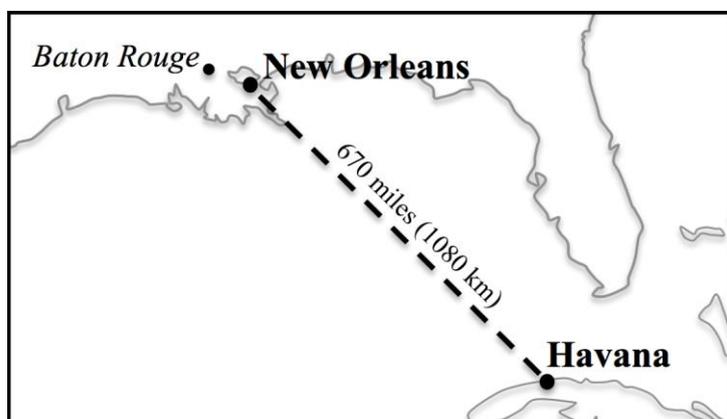
<sup>75</sup> Gilbert C. Din, *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 167. Historian Scott writes: “Louisiana’s world of cane was largely confined to the state’s southern parishes, with their commercial gaze trained on New Orleans”, in Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 6. The author specifies that in the six Louisiana bayou parishes of Lafourche, Terrebonne, Assumption, Ascension, St. Mary, and St. Martin there were about 49,000 enslaved people and “produced 47,000 metric tons of sugar” only in the 1860 season, in 12. In comparison, the central region of Cuba held 69,000 slaves in 1862, in 17.

<sup>76</sup> Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 2.

<sup>77</sup> Aslakson, *Making Race in the Courtroom*, 33.

virus”.<sup>78</sup> The unity of this region can be, therefore, also justified through the study of illness. In the nineteenth century, travelers referred to both New Orleans and Veracruz as “*ciudad de los muertos*” (city of the dead) due to the prevalence of yellow fever, or *vómito* (vomit), as it was commonly known because of its symptoms.<sup>79</sup>

Throughout this region, the main port cities developed in a different way to their respective rural hinterlands. The establishment of the plutocratic sugar plantation economy both in Cuba and Louisiana created enduring and profound inequalities, not least between the wealthy landowners and the slaves they owned. But apart from the asymmetry the plantation complex generated between the haves and have-nots, the economic system accentuated inequalities between the cities and the countryside. In Cuba and Louisiana, the urban-rural divide was acutely evident as there was only one major city in each of these places, Havana and New Orleans, port cities that profoundly shaped the lives of individuals in their respective hinterlands. There were, of course, other urban centers—Baton Rouge and Shreveport, in Louisiana, and Santiago and Matanzas, in Cuba—that engaged in interurban rivalries,<sup>80</sup> but none could really compete with the larger booming emporia.<sup>81</sup>



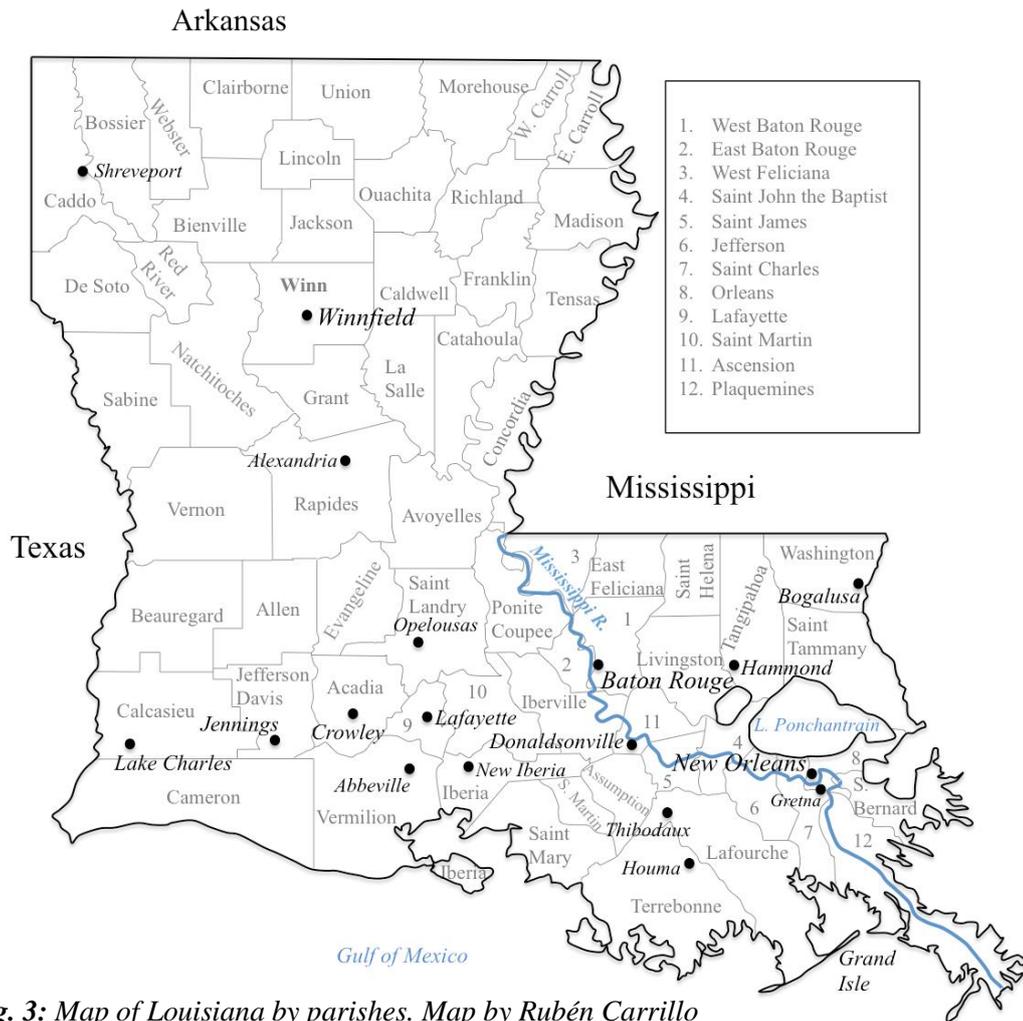
**Fig. 2:** Map indicating the distance between New Orleans and Havana. Map by Rubén Carrillo

<sup>78</sup> McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*, 52.

<sup>79</sup> Gruesz, “The Gulf of Mexico System and the ‘Latinness’ of New Orleans”, 479.

<sup>80</sup> Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, “Llegar a capital: Rango urbano, rivalidades interurbanas y la imaginación nacionalista de la España del siglo XX”, *Papers de la Fundació Rafael Campanals*, nº 137 (1997): 1-60.

<sup>81</sup> In 1907, Havana gathered 39% of the population of the island, in José Luis Luzón Benedicto, *Economía, población y territorio en Cuba (1899-1983)* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica del Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, 1987), 103. Cuban historian Lionel Soto wrote that in 1925 Havana had 500,000 inhabitants, while in 1931 the number had risen by 200,000, in Lionel Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I* (Havana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 1977), 283. In 1910, 20% of the whole population of Louisiana lived in New Orleans, in “Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1910”, U.S. Bureau of the Census, [census.gov/population](http://census.gov/population). See also Aurora Bosch, “Frontera agraria y frontera urbana en Estados Unidos, 1890-1920”, *Estudis d’història agrària* 17 (2004): 179-198.



**Fig. 3:** Map of Louisiana by parishes. Map by Rubén Carrillo



**Fig. 4:** Map of Cuba divided in its six provinces, ca. 1930. Map by Rubén Carrillo

Havana and New Orleans were simultaneously gateways to the outside world that allowed wealth and change to manifest themselves in these territories, and became centers of economic and political power that stagnated any hope for real advancement and prosperity for most of the rural population. The presence of these great cities hindered the development of a rural frontier. British historian Alistair Hennessy believed that this fact determined the political development of Latin American politics. He argued that:

[I]nstead of an expanding frontier, Latin America has produced a contracting frontier in which cities are being engulfed by a rising tide of peasant migrants escaping from the misery of poverty in the countryside and are importing into the cities the residual legacies of rural boss-rule; and that the prevalence of dictatorial government is directly related to the failure of frontiers to produce viable rural communities.<sup>82</sup>

This highly controversial argument clearly represents traditional views on Latin American history by outside onlookers, and neglects the fact that similar scenarios arose in other places, including the United States. The idea that peasant immigrants were to blame for the development of authoritarianism is deeply problematic. However, the weight of cities in the politics of 1920s and 30s in the Greater Caribbean is an important aspect in the story of the rise and fall of both Machado and Long, and clearly something worth exploring. While it is true that both politicians came from the countryside, the popularity of their platforms came partly as a result and as a challenge to urban inequalities. This interesting paradox defined both Louisiana and Cuba, and as far as it concerns the aims of this dissertation, it reinforces the validity and usefulness of a comparison between these supposedly separated worlds. Both Machado and Long hailed from a rural background and, in their respective polities, confronted the established urban elites. Both were considered visionary heroes of the common folk, i.e. poor farmers and planters, who had been withheld from basic social services and economic welfare by the rich in the cities and the “imperial capitalistic” system they represented.

Connected with the idea of urban-rural split, it is worth taking into account the notion of “lumpenbourgeois” or “lumpendevelopment”, put forth by left-wing economic

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<sup>82</sup> Hennessy, *The Frontier in Latin American History*, 26.

historian and sociologist André Gunder Frank, which, once again, vindicates the need for an in-depth comparison between Cuba and Louisiana.<sup>83</sup> Frank's neologism, by way of Marx's famous "lumpenproletariat",<sup>84</sup> comes from the combination of the German word *lumpen* (beggar) with bourgeoisie, and it refers to Latin American elites, mainly industrialists and merchants—mostly located in cities—, that maintained a dependent relationship with the metropolis and foreign investors, thus damaging the chances for local development.<sup>85</sup> These traits were also present, to a certain extent, in the Pelican State, where the interests of big oil companies prevailed over the need for improvement of infrastructure and basic services for the populace. While both Gerardo Machado and Huey Long presented themselves as fighters against this lumpenbourgeoisie, they themselves perpetuated this system: Huey by acquiring his own oil company, and Machado by not abrogating the hated Platt Amendment, and by facilitating American interests on the island.

Lastly, when drawing a comparison between the two polities it is essential to bear in mind that, both in Cuba and Louisiana, politics in the period under study were shaped by Long's and Machado's respective parties. In Cuba the Liberal party had had three presidents elected from amongst its ranks—more than any other party.<sup>86</sup> The Liberals had remained a force to be reckoned with since independence. In the Pelican State, the single-party hegemony was even more striking as the Democrats had dominated politics since the end of the Reconstruction era, and elections were decided solely in the primaries. In both of these contexts, change and reform could only come from "outsiders", strong leaders who could galvanize party support and turn it against itself.

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<sup>83</sup> André Gunder Frank, *Lumpenburguesía: lumpendesarrollo. Dependencia, clase y política en Latinoamérica* (Barcelona: Editorial Laia, 1972).

<sup>84</sup> American political sociologist born in Cuba Samuel Farber defined lumpenproletariat within the "sociology of authoritarianism", in which "classes or groups with a low degree of cohesion, of economic and political organization, and of political consciousness are susceptible to authoritarian leaders", in Samuel Farber, *Revolution and Reaction in Cuba, 1933-1960: A Political Sociology from Machado to Castro* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1976), 18. Latin Americanist Francisco López Segrera used this term in his "Esquema de la estructura de clases de Cuba (1868-1959)" to define the lower social group the author named "Marginados sociales", in Francisco López Segrera, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana (1868-1959): introducción al estudio de las clases sociales en Cuba en sus relaciones con la política y la economía* (Havana: Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba, 1980), 17.

<sup>85</sup> Frank, *Lumpenburguesía: lumpendesarrollo*, 13-14.

<sup>86</sup> The three liberal presidents in Cuba before 1933 were: José Miguel Gómez (1858-1921), Alfredo Zayas (1861-1934), and, of course, Gerardo Machado.

Thus Long and Machado transcended party politics, and developed their own movements, centered on their personal leadership.

## 2. Methodology

In the years it has taken me to develop this thesis, I have been influenced by world and transnational historians, who argue that alternative approaches to the nation-state unit of analysis can enrich and allow deeper and broader historical insights. Africanist historian Patrick Manning has stated: “The world historian’s work is to portray the crossing of boundaries and the linking of systems in the human past”.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, historian Eric Vanhaute has argued that:

[R]esearching, teaching and writing global history has to follow a threefold trajectory: a comparative analysis of societies and human systems, an analysis focusing on connections, interactions, and circulations between societies and human systems, and a systems-analysis, looking at societal (economic, social, cultural) structures as units of analysis.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, methodologically, this dissertation has followed these paradigms of historical inquiry through a comparative analysis of two different politicians in the broader system of the Greater Caribbean, seeking to find new connections between US and Latin American political history. Historian Rebecca Scott has already shown the value of such an approach arguing that a:

Detailed comparative study permits an exploration of structures and choices as they became manifest in actual space and time. Such comparison helps us to spot countercurrents as well as the dominant themes, and to avoid romanticizing or demonizing on the basis of individual events or features [...] Examining the points of similarity and variation between two systems enables us to see the tensions within each, while investigating the sources of their variance from each other.<sup>89</sup>

Simply put: “Comparative history is concerned with similarities and differences; in explaining a given phenomenon, it asks which conditions, or factors, were broadly

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<sup>87</sup> Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 4.

<sup>88</sup> Eric Vanhaute, “Who Is Afraid of Global History? Ambitions, Pitfalls and Limits of Learning Global History”, *Österreichische Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaften* 20, n° 2 (2009): 25.

<sup>89</sup> Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 7.

shared, and which were distinctive”.<sup>90</sup> Thus, this dissertation is a research study as well as an exercise in reconceptualization and evaluation of long-standing historical paradigms.<sup>91</sup>

In his research, political scientist and Latin Americanist Howard J. Wiarda studied the different regions within Latin America using a comparative approach. This author also looked for connections within the Iberian world by looking into Portugal and Spain. More interestingly for this dissertation, Wiarda broadened the lens of his comparison by looking into Iberia and Latin America together with Russia and Eastern Europe. This dissertation is to some extent inspired on this innovative approach.<sup>92</sup>

My method of work for this research has been to collect, analyze, and select as many primary sources regarding both strongmen as possible, mainly in archives in the United States and online digital collections. Although much has been written about Long, I present new archival and periodical sources. As for Machado, although admittedly failing to provide significant new materials from Cuban archives, this dissertation presents extensive analyses of 1920s and 1930s sources, as detailed in the following section, which provide sufficient material for an effective comparison with Long, and lay the foundations for future archival work. In all, the methodology used for this dissertation is innovative and different, for it is not limited to the recompilation of local primary sources from Louisiana or Cuba, but it has the broader goal of comparing and connecting both worlds.

### **3. Sources**

The dissertation utilizes a vast array of sources including newspaper and magazine articles, personal letters, telegrams, political addresses, images, pamphlets, and memoirs. I have also relied on the notes of the interviews carried out by the careful

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<sup>90</sup> Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor, *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2004), xi.

<sup>91</sup> For more on theoretical analysis of comparative history, see James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). These authors stipulate that all studies that use a “comparative historical analysis” approach “share a concern with causal analysis, an emphasis on processes over time, and the use of systematic and contextualized comparison”, in 10.

<sup>92</sup> Howard J. Wiarda, *Iberia and Latin America: New Democracies, New Policies, New Models* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996).

biographer of Huey Long T. Harry Williams. It must be noted that the corpus of sources available related to Long's administration and political life is appreciably larger than that which exists regarding Machado's rule. I have visited both private and public collections, as well as university archives. In New Orleans, I visited the Louisiana Research Collection (LaRC), which houses several collections about Huey P. Long, and the Latin American Library Special Collections (OLAL), where I was able to access most speeches and other documents about Machado, both at Howard-Tilton Memorial Library of Tulane University. I also visited the Louisiana State Museum Collections Historical Center; the Williams Research Center at The Historic New Orleans Collection, and the New Orleans Public Library, Louisiana Division-City Archives. In Baton Rouge I visited the Louisiana State University (LSU) Hill Memorial Library Special Collections, where I perused T. Harry Williams' impressive collection of materials, as well as other several papers about Long. In Mexico City, I visited the Archivo General de la Nación in order to include Latin American newspapers' commentaries on Long. Finally, at the Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, in Barcelona, I found copies of two addresses delivered by Gerardo Machado as president.

I supplemented the absence of Cuban archival sources, which unfortunately I was unable to access in Havana due to time and financial constraints, by resorting to several marvelous digital collections on Caribbean history. The most relevant for this dissertation were: the Louisiana Digital Library (LDL) ([louisdl.louislibraries.org](http://louisdl.louislibraries.org)); the University of Miami Digital Collections, which holds the digitized version of the "Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers" ([merrick.library.miami.edu](http://merrick.library.miami.edu)), a very useful collection featuring letters and other documents related to his administration and his political career. The Digital Library of the Caribbean ([dloc.com](http://dloc.com)) and the George A. Smathers Libraries Digital Collection ([cms.uflib.ufl.edu/](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/)), both at University of Florida, and the Latin American Pamphlet Digital Project at Harvard University ([hollis.harvard.edu](http://hollis.harvard.edu)) have also been invaluable sources of newspaper articles and other primary sources used in this dissertation.

I relied to a lesser degree on other online archives for a variety of topics, including: National Archives at Atlanta ([archives.gov/atlanta](http://archives.gov/atlanta)), the Library of Congress Digital

Collections ([loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html](http://loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html)), the Library of Congress *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers* ([chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov)), the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division ([hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print](http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print)), Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane ([lecomite.org](http://lecomite.org)), the University of Florida Digital Collections ([ufdc.ufl.edu](http://ufdc.ufl.edu)), The American Presidency Project ([presidency.ucsb.edu](http://presidency.ucsb.edu)), the US Department of State: Office of the Historian ([history.state.gov](http://history.state.gov)), American Historical Documents: The Harvard Classics, 1909-14 ([bartleby.com/hc](http://bartleby.com/hc)), the Fundación Fernando Ortiz ([fundacionfernandoortiz.org](http://fundacionfernandoortiz.org)), the Biblioteca Jurídica Virtual by Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México ([biblio.juridicas.unam.mx](http://biblio.juridicas.unam.mx)), and the The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy by Yale University ([avalon.law.yale.edu](http://avalon.law.yale.edu)).

#### **4. Structure**

The dissertation is divided into two broad parts following a rough chronological order. In the first one, which takes a mostly biographical approach, the origin of the two main politicians is studied. The main purpose of this section is to familiarize the reader with these politicians who, Machado in particular, are relatively unknown worldwide. Conversely, the second general section engages more overtly in comparisons between Long and Machado, the discussion following a more thematic, less chronological organization. Although the first three chapters are more traditional in their portrayal of Long and Machado, they provide some new primary sources. However, the core of the thesis, which introduces a more innovative approach, scarcely suggested by previous writers and historians, is contained in chapters four through seven.

Chapters one and two analyze the first years of Huey Long's life and his ascent to power until his election as US senator in 1930. They deal with the consolidation of Long's power and his political machine in his native state, before he entered national politics. Long emerged from a small town in north Louisiana named Winnfield to become the most relevant and known figure in the Pelican State. Thus, he embraced the idea of the "self made man", which he would often use in his political speeches. Not only that, I argue that he politically used that approachable image and presented himself as a "hillbilly", although his origins were not as humble as most contemporaries thought.

Chapter three is an introduction to Gerardo Machado. The knowledge of his childhood and youth is scarce, thus the chapter mainly examines his first years as politician and ends at the beginning of his second administration in 1928. The reason for dividing in half the eight years during which the Cuban president governed the island is that, although characterized for repression and persecution of the opposition, during his first term Machado was most popular. Moreover, this period also saw the development of his main infrastructure and policy projects. On the contrary, his second administration, polemical and tumultuous, began with the process of reelection and ended with his ousting during the 1933 revolution, and merits separate consideration.

The second part of the dissertation picks up the narrative at the time, hardly separated by two years, when the two men were clearly expanding their power beyond what was expected. Chapter four examines the very relevant issue of the complicated relationship Louisiana and Cuba had with the US government and presidency. Therefore, it deals with issues of dependency towards and power projection from Washington to other regions. In the case of Long, the politician developed a conflictive relationship with president Franklin Roosevelt. While at first the senator supported FDR's candidacy at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1932, soon after Roosevelt was elected Long began a fierce campaign against the president. Officially, Long argued, his turnabout was due to the fact that FDR was not as progressive enough for the Louisiana strongman's requirements. I argue that, more likely, Long's enmity was rooted in the Kingfish's aspiration to the presidential office. In the case of Cuba, the island was legally bound to the northern neighbor through the controversial 1901 Platt Amendment, which allowed the United States to intervene in Cuban affairs. Machado would seek to have a cordial relationship with both presidents Coolidge and Hoover, but the congeniality between Washington and Havana turned sour after FDR came to power. The Cuban president would often be criticized for his tendency to facilitate American businesses and for his alleged constant bowing to the powerful United States. I argue that both Long and Machado will use the enmity with the US federal government in order to strengthen their power in their respective regions.

Chapter five examines the techniques used by Long and Machado in order to appeal to their supporters. Their stratagems included a discourse of regenerating society that in the 1920s was perceived by the voters as a solution to the economic and social problems in the Greater Caribbean. An interesting and less explored issue is the complex and at times ambiguous attitude of both politicians towards black population of their two polities. While in Cuba, the race conflict was somewhat swept under the rug, in the United States the issue was out in the open. I argue that the supposed inclusion of blacks in their political program was less sincere than what some observers and scholars have asserted.

In the next chapter, I analyze the consolidation of authoritarian regimes led by strongmen in both Louisiana and Cuba. This was the culmination of Long and Machado's power, which paradoxically but unsurprisingly took place at the same time as opposition movements grew and spread. I argue that, although their rise to power was a consequence of the social and economic crisis, the militarization and "dictatorization" they carried out would start to undermine their leadership.

Chapter seven analyzes the tumultuous situation in 1933 Cuba and the 1935 assassination of Long, which respectively ended Machado's and the Kingfish's regimes. I argue that neither on the Caribbean island nor in Louisiana the regimes could function without their strongmen. Thus, their legacies, although more present in the Pelican State, where some argue Long began a political dynasty,<sup>93</sup> would not come to rival the influence both strongmen had at the height of their power.

## **5. State of the Art**

In general terms, their contemporaries and scholars throughout the twentieth century have treated Long and Machado quite differently. While authors analyzing the politician from Louisiana after his death have considered him colorful rather than a substantial threat, the president of Cuba has been conceived as a tyrant and a ruthless dictator. For instance, Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy literally wrote: "Machado became

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<sup>93</sup> Stephen Hess, *America's Political Dynasties From Adams to Kennedy* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966).

independent Cuba's first tyrant".<sup>94</sup> This difference may be due to the fact that Long was assassinated, thus his memory has been somewhat affected by his "martyrdom". Conversely, Machado was ousted during the "Revolution of 1933", which was a major interruption in Cuban affairs. The Cuban strongman died six years afterwards in exile. Logically, thus affecting the perspective of analysts. The pros and cons of Huey remained open and in debate, while the "horrors" of Machado's rule became a repeated topic. Moreover, Cuban historiography, especially after the 1959 revolution, has avoided studying the Cuban president for obvious political reasons. Authors barely mention any of the improvements carried out under his administration.

As a consequence of these differences, overall, historiography about Long can be divided following a very clear dichotomy: works that present him as a corrupt and evil politician, on the one hand, and those that make the case of Long being almost a saint that improved and saved his native state from decadence, on the other. During the so-called "Long era", which arguably began in 1928 when he became governor and ended in 1940 when anti-Long Democrat candidate Sam H. Jones won the gubernatorial election in Louisiana, the state was divided between *longite* and anti-*longite*. Thus, historiography has mirrored this conceptualization by also being divided into *longite* and anti-*longite* authors. Biographer and analyst Adam Sindler noted so in his 1956 study of the politician: "To great number of Louisianans, Huey Long was either the salvation or the ruination of Louisiana. It is not surprising, therefore, that most judgments on the Kingfish, whether derived from adulation or detestation, are essentially one-dimensional".<sup>95</sup> Long has been amply studied in this way since he was alive, when he was killed, and up to the present. However, the Louisiana politician has been only analyzed within the borders of his native country, as an odd kind of "sectional" or regional phenomenon, and mostly by American contemporaries and scholars. There are few exceptions, such as British historian and novelist H.G. Wells, who became interested in Long in 1935 in a book in which he studied both president Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Huey Long after having met both men.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Rippey, *Latin America*, 406.

<sup>95</sup> Allan P. Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana: State Politics, 1920-1952* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), 98.

<sup>96</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New America: The New World* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1935).

The same could not be said about Gerardo Machado, who has attracted very few researchers to the point that to-date there is no scholarly monograph or biography about the politician, besides those written with propaganda purposes when he was governing Cuba. The books that deal with Machado's regime are mainly about the 1933 revolution, or are general histories of Cuba that dedicate a chapter or two to the *machadato*. In English, Machado was just another tinpot "Latino" dictator, a living trope. In Spanish, Fulgencio Batista, who replaced him as the dominant figure in Cuba until the Castro revolution in 1959 picked up the image and the aura of clichés. Therefore, and as the case of Long, no effort has been put into the internationalization of the Cuban politician. Thus, one of the innovations of this dissertation is to internationalize the study of Long and Machado by putting them into a broader unit of analysis that may help comprehend them better.

Journalist and poet John Kingston Fineran wrote the first biography of Huey Long in 1932. It is interesting to note that the author, who was fervently against the success of the senator of Louisiana and called him "extraordinary mountebank", "mendacious liar", and "distinguished sneak-thief", compared him to Napoleon, the historical figure that represented autocracy before the consolidation of Mussolini's mythology and the rise of Hitler to power.<sup>97</sup> This same perspective can be read in the following biography of the politician, which was published the following year and written by the also journalist Webster Smith. Using a very colloquial and aggressive language, the author was militantly against Long: "Now when the Kingfish of Louisiana doesn't like the way things are going down there, he changes them. He jerks the government structure around until it serves his purposes".<sup>98</sup> One has to bear in mind that these first studies of Long had a clear intention of discouraging voters from supporting him, especially because the 1936 presidential election was getting closer.

But perhaps the most interesting work about Long during these first years was that of journalist Carleton Beals. He was a leftist reporter and an extremely prolific author who

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<sup>97</sup> John Kingston Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon. A Political Biography of Huey P. Long* (New Orleans: John Kingston Fineran, 1932), 172.

<sup>98</sup> Webster Smith (1933), *The Kingfish: A Biography of Huey P. Long* (Kessinger Publishing, 2010), 267.

specialized in Latin American issues.<sup>99</sup> Beals had strong anti-imperialist beliefs and was often considered close to the communists. As quoted in previous pages, in this critical study on Long the author briefly compared Long to Machado because of their style as rulers. In fact, and perhaps in contrast to other authors that suggested the comparison, the journalist was plenty aware of what was the situation in Cuba. He spent some time on the Caribbean island, as well as in Mexico and Nicaragua during the Sandinista revolution in the 1920s, and the result was a book about the dictatorship of Machado entitled *The Crime of Cuba*.<sup>100</sup> The title of this fascinating study, as explained by Beals, came from a conversation the journalist had in 1933 with one Miguel de Araunz, a professor who lamented that Cuba had always been dependent to other countries:

In the Unites States crime is committed by gangsters. In Cuba, it is committed by the tyranny of Machado. He runs a sawed-off shotgun government. But do you know the real crime of Cuba? For nearly four centuries we were bowed under the iron rule of Spain. For nearly a century we fought to throw off that yoke. Not a spot of soil in Cuba is not drenched with the blood of patriots and martyrs. Then came America... You said, to free us... All you did was snatch victory from our grasp... Free Cuba? ... Ha!... We are bound and gagged, hand and soul we are bound... We are bound by your dollars, by your bankers, by your politicians, by your Platt Amendment, by your greedy little politicians who pose as statesmen... Freedom? Our government, our President, is but a puppet of your dirty dollars... And that is the crime of Cuba, my friend.<sup>101</sup>

Beals is possibly the only author that had profound knowledge about both Long and Machado, and consequently published two analyses on each of the politicians. Thus, it can be stated that the comparison the journalist made between them, although brief, is most relevant and well based. The Latin Americanist reporter established the

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<sup>99</sup> Some of Beals' works on Latin America are: Carleton Beals, *Mexican Maze* (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1931); Carleton Beals, *Fire on the Andes* (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1934); Carleton Beals, *America South* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1937); Carleton Beals, *Pan America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940); Carleton Beals, ed., *What the South Americans Think of Us* (New York: R.M. McBride & Co., 1945). For more on Beals, an excellent study is: John A. Britton, *Carleton Beals: A Radical Journalist in Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

<sup>100</sup> Carleton Beals, *The Crime of Cuba* (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1933). This book was published together with striking pictures of Cuban society and especially the 1933 revolution taken by American photojournalist Walker Evans, who would become famously known for his pictures of Great Depression United States. During the trip to Cuba, Evans befriended writer Ernest Hemingway and experienced the turmoil first hand. As an analyst put it: "Evan's month of photographing Havana was divided between indulging his passion for the vernacular and documenting the indigence and festering unrest that plagued the city", in Douglas Eklund, "Exile's Return: The Early Work, 1928-34", in *Walker Evans*, ed. Maria Morris Hambourg (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art in association with Princeton University Press, 2000), 44.

<sup>101</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 34.

foundations for a broader and deeper examination and contrast between Long and Machado that this thesis aims at developing. No such previous analysis has been published, most likely because Cuban and American historiographies of the twentieth century have followed radically separate paths.

The first study of the senator from Louisiana published after his death was journalist Forrest Davis' "candid biography".<sup>102</sup> The author spoke of Huey Long openly and without reservation, concluding, as president Franklin Roosevelt had previously done, that the politician came to be one of the most dangerous men in the United States during the Depression. Similarly, Thomas O. Harris, author of a 1938 analysis of Long, asserted that his dangerousness was due to the fact that "Huey Long was constantly inventing new ways of strengthening his power".<sup>103</sup> However, probably because the so-called Kingfish had already passed away, Harris was a bit more benevolent compared to previous authors, and understood and justified the great popularity Long achieved.

Following Beals but before T. Harry Williams' *magnum opus*, the most relevant work on Long is Harnett Kane's *Louisiana Hayride*. The reporter from New Orleans explored, not only the biography of the main character, but also the economic and social situation of his native state before and after Long's rise to power.<sup>104</sup> This book is most interesting because it was published in 1941, in the midst of the scandals regarding Long's associates, which, as explained in the last chapter of this thesis, ended with several of them in prison charged with corruption and embezzlement. Thus, the publication was part of the disillusionment of the Long era. Kane argued that although "[Long] took Louisiana out of the mud", under his regime "democracy was weak" and "it passed into a state of suspended animation".<sup>105</sup>

These firsts works about Long, and especially Harnett Kane's, published barely a few months before the US entered World War II, all have in common that their authors were fearing that an American type of fascism could take root in the United States. From a

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<sup>102</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*.

<sup>103</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 244.

<sup>104</sup> Harnett Thomas Kane (1941), *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride: The American Rehearsal for Dictatorship, 1928-1940* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1971).

<sup>105</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 144.

perspective of the 1930s, with Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco, American critics of Long found the senator from Louisiana encapsulated an American definition of fascism, thus their goal was to make the American public aware of the supposed menace a regime such as that of Long represented. In this sense, these works resemble to some extent the 1935 novel *It Can't Happen Here* written by Nobel Prize in Literature winner Sinclair Lewis, who through the main character, Buzz Windrip, also warned his readers about the possibility and danger that a ruthless tyrant could be made president of the United States.<sup>106</sup> Although they are fascinating accounts of the political atmosphere of the thirties, the use of epithets such as “fascist” or “communist” in these studies is inaccurate. Huey Long was not an American version of fascism or communism, and the need to compare him to these European political movements emerged in a specific time of turmoil and because of the importance of the so-called “old continent” in the mindset of the authors of that the time period.

After the war, and perhaps as a consequence of its outcome, Long stirred up less interest historiographically. The first relevant work was written in 1956 by historian Allan P. Sindler, who besides writing a biography of Long also put emphasis on the political and social context of Louisiana from the 1920s up to Sindler’s own time.<sup>107</sup> The author remarks the idea of bifactionalism, in terms of sympathy or loathing for the Kingfish, as society in general, the Democratic Party in Louisiana became divided between *longite* and anti-*longite*. The author wrote: “The story of recent Louisiana politics deals, in essence, with the rivalry of these two major factions, Long and anti-Long, in primary after primary and in legislative session after session”.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, Sindler’s main point was that this division was not an appropriate substitution of the traditional two-party system of American politics.<sup>109</sup>

The decade of the sixties saw a bit of revival of the topic of Long. This is arguably due to the popularity, charisma, and controversy that surrounded Huey’s brother, Earl, who had also been governor of Louisiana on three occasions since 1939, and who had died in

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<sup>106</sup> Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1935).

<sup>107</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*.

<sup>108</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 75.

<sup>109</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 39; Lorimer E. Storey, review of *Huey Long's Louisiana: State Politics, 1920-1952*, by Allan P. Sindler, *The Journal of Politics* 20, n° 1 (1958): 234.

1960. Thus, historians followed the trend and brought again the issue of the Longs. In his study *The Longs of Louisiana*, historian and journalist from Louisiana Stan Opotowsky examined three different Longs: the founder of what could be called “dynasty”, Huey, his brother Earl, and his eldest son, Russell—who was US senator from 1948 until 1987—, all of whom became relevant political actors in the Pelican State.<sup>110</sup>

The next relevant study on the politician was 1963 book by journalist Herman B. Deutsch about the Kingfish’s assassination.<sup>111</sup> In the 1920s and 30s, Deutsch had worked at the Louisiana newspaper *New Orleans Item*, therefore, the author had personal experience of Long’s regime. In this work, Deutsch thoroughly related the last days of the senator, his assassination, and the theories regarding his death resorting to witness accounts. The “mystery” of the murder of Long has attracted many authors and readers, who have discussed whether the assassin was Dr. Carl Weiss or Long’s own bodyguards.<sup>112</sup> At the end of the 1960s, historian Henry Dethloff edited a small volume entitled *Huey P. Long. Southern Demagogue or American Democrat?*, in which he compiled several articles about the Kingfish.<sup>113</sup> As can be seen by the title, the issue of categorization was the main thread of the volume.

But, without a doubt, the best-known and recognized study on this peculiar politician is professor of Louisiana State University (LSU) T. Harry Williams’ *Huey Long*, winner of the 1970 Pulitzer Prize for Biography. This is an almost 900-page biography published after ten years of research and close to two hundred and fifty interviews.<sup>114</sup> This book is most relevant because it was developed out of an extensive oral history project, the notes for which remain an invaluable source for Huey Long, which I have surveyed for this dissertation as described in the “Sources” section. The main issue

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<sup>110</sup> Stan Opotowsky, *The Longs of Louisiana* (New York: Dutton, 1960). The author refers to these Longs as the “three generations” by arguing: “Huey was a generation unto himself in Louisiana politics; his brother Earls was certainly his own political generation; and his son, Russell, now is prepared to provide still a third generation of Long politics”, in 13.

<sup>111</sup> Hermann B. Deutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1963).

<sup>112</sup> This last hypothesis is defended by Ed Reed, *Requiem for a Kingfish: The Strange and Unexplained Death of Huey Long* (Baton Rouge: Award Publications/E. Reed Organization, 1986).

<sup>113</sup> Henry C. Dethloff, ed, *Huey P. Long: Southern Demagogue or American Democrat?* (Boston: Heath, 1967).

<sup>114</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*.

behind this thorough work that to-date is *the* fundamental and most referenced study on the subject is that its author is overly apologetic of the politician. Williams was arguably responding to all the previous authors that had badmouthed Long. His thesis was that, after all, the Kingfish's controversial style of rule was a minor side effect of all his positive achievements. It is worth noting that throughout the process of preparing the book, Williams maintained personal correspondence with Huey Long's son, Russell, from the mid-1950s to the 1970s. Russell advised the historian on issues related to his father to the point that the two became acquaintances who socialized together, at times celebrating dinner parties along with their respective wives.

Arguably because of the impact and thoroughness of Williams' work, more than ten years passed until more monographs on Long saw the light. In 1982 historian Alan Brinkley published an excellent analysis of Huey Long in comparison with the "radio priest" Charles E. Coughlin (1891-1979), a Catholic ecclesiastic who received major political audience in the 1930s. This work is exceptional due to the fact that Brinkley was the first (and remains the only) author to fully develop the comparative study on the two contemporary politicians. Thus, the historian challenged the very common and erroneous notion that Long was an exception within the American political system.

Perhaps motivated by the centennial of Long's birth, at the beginning of the 1990s historians William Ivy Hair, Glen Jeansonne, and Suzanne LeVert came forth with several studies on this complex political figure. Specialist in southern history Ivy Hair relied on the biographical approach and began his analysis in Reconstruction era Louisiana, thus offering a broader explanation of Long's rise. The historian was clearly challenging the benign examination of the figure by T. Harry Williams.<sup>115</sup> The most critical among these scholars was Jeansonne, who fiercely attacked Long in his *Messiah of the Masses*, arguing that: "Social justice cannot be dictatorially imposed on any level; that is the perennial promise and ultimate deception of dictators everywhere".<sup>116</sup> On the other hand, in her essay LeVert arrived to more reserved conclusions when she wrote:

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<sup>115</sup> William Ivy Hair, *The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P. Long* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991).

<sup>116</sup> Glen Jeansonne, *Messiah of the Masses: Huey P. Long and the Great Depression* (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1993), 189.

“What Huey Long did bring into the state and national politics was the voice and concerns of the common man”, and that “through his words and his actions, he pushed forward the poor and working man’s struggle for an equal chance at the American dream”.<sup>117</sup> At the end of the century, journalist Garry Boulard analyzed the polemical moment of 1934-35, in which Long harshened his policies against his opponents by using the National Guard. More specifically, Boulard centers his study on the invasion of New Orleans the senator ordered, which indicated the radicalization of his policies.<sup>118</sup> Boulard’s book was certainly innovative, for it focused on what I call the “militarization” of the regime.

Entering into the new century, Edward F. Haas has edited a compilation of documents and articles related to the politician, for the most part composed by scholars and journalists previously published texts.<sup>119</sup> But the most interesting and interdisciplinary study published in recent years is professor of English Keith Perry’s *The Kingfish in Fiction: Huey P. Long and the Modern American Novel*, who uses an interdisciplinary approach.<sup>120</sup> Finally, the last historian that has taken interest in Huey Long is professor Richard D. White in his 2006 biography of the politician.<sup>121</sup> This work, destined to a broader audience, is rather sensationalist in the sense that the author focuses on the many anecdotes and scandals of which Long was the protagonist.

In all, Huey Long has been thoroughly studied by his contemporaries and later scholars alike. However, the main problem with these works is that their format is generally that of traditional biographies, heavily focused on the “what” and the “where”, and less so on the “how” and the “why”. Thus, there is little new information given from one book to the next, besides some specificities and sources. Although this thesis will also include a biographical analysis, the aim is to go beyond and examine the politician in a broader manner in order to innovate and suggest a new perspective on this figure.

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<sup>117</sup> Suzanne LeVert, *Huey Long: The Kingfish of Louisiana* (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 121.

<sup>118</sup> Garry Boulard, *Huey Long Invades New Orleans: The Siege of a City, 1934-36* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1998).

<sup>119</sup> Edward F. Haas, *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History: The Age of the Longs: Louisiana, 1928-1960* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2001).

<sup>120</sup> Keith Ronald Perry, *The Kingfish in Fiction: Huey P. Long and the Modern American Novel* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

<sup>121</sup> Richard White, *Kingfish: The Reign of Huey P. Long* (New York: Random House, 2006).

As stated at the beginning of this section, in contrast with the case of Long, no biographies or monographs on Gerardo Machado have been found, only general studies on Cuba that incorporate the president. Cuban historiography has evaded the subject and, as a consequence, this politician is much less known internationally, having been largely forgotten and obscured by Batista and later Castro. In the second half of the 1920s, when the politician was at the height of his popularity and power, several panegyric works about Machado were published in Havana, most of them commissioned by the *machadista* government. Cuban writer and intellectual Antonio Berenguer y Sed (1864-19??), who was a personal friend of the president's, edited a volume to commemorate the first year of Machado's administration in 1926. The book consisted of an adulatory introduction followed by selected speeches and other documents that were testimony to the supposed greatness of the Cuban leader.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, author and supporter Manuel Franco Varona, unfortunately unidentified, wrote an exaggeratedly favorable book in 1927, in which he referred to Machado as a "messiah" and celebrated all his achievements.<sup>123</sup>

But perhaps the most interesting and interpretative work of that decade is Spanish journalist Pedro González-Blanco's (1879-1961) study of what he called "*autoridad rescatada*" (restored authority). With that expression, the reporter was celebrating the allegedly much needed authoritarian type of regime Machado had implemented in Cuba after years of economic crisis and what the author considered political instability. González-Blanco, who was paid by the Cuban government, made sure to emphasize that Machado was proud to come from the countryside and to not possess any university degrees.<sup>124</sup> The author also listed the improvements carried out under the Machado administration, including the construction of the capitol building in Havana, and of dozens of new public schools to decrease illiteracy.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Antonio Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales: sus discursos y su obra de gobierno. Tomo I, 1925-1926* (Havana: Imprenta y papelería de Rambla, Bouza, 1926).

<sup>123</sup> Manuel Franco Varona, *Machado: su vida y su obra: (con datos, para la historia, sobre el viaje presidencial a Washington)* (Havana: Editorial Martí, 1927), 36.

<sup>124</sup> Pedro González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado, o La autoridad rescatada* (Madrid: Editora Ambos Mundos, 1929), 3.

<sup>125</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 177.

The following works about Machado and his regime were understandably influenced by the revolution of 1933. Thus, throughout the 1930s one can find openly critical studies on the *machadato*, as well as defensive works published after the Cuban president's exile. A relevant piece of the former group is opponent Carlos González Peraza's *Crímenes de un régimen*, in which, as the title indicates, the author narrated several cases of persecution and assassination throughout Machado's administration.<sup>126</sup> The perspective on the politician was clearly vehement, for González-Peraza referred to him as: "La Bestia Humana encarnada en el Presidente [que] lo barría todo sin misericordia. Regía los destinos de Cuba, la patria gloriosa de Martí, un émulo aventajado de Iván el Terrible".<sup>127</sup> In the same year as *Crímenes de un régimen* was published, the aforementioned study by Carleton Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, was released. These works are very valuable primary sources that encapsulate the political and social climate both in the United States and Cuba during the immediate aftermath of the downfall of Machado. In that same line of rejection of the politician, Conservative congressman Carlos Manuel de la Cruz published in 1935 his *Proceso histórico del machadato*.<sup>128</sup> De la Cruz had been a fervent opponent of Machado during his administration and, as will be discussed in this thesis, had asked for the president to resign already in 1930.

Cuban journalist and supporter of Machado, Alberto Lamar Schweyer (1902-1942), writer of polemical works on Cuba and migration and biology, published his analysis on the downfall of the president.<sup>129</sup> Lamar Schweyer's views on democracy were clearly controversial, for he believed it was a political form foreign to the Americas: "La Democracia es y será un concepto abstracto sin realidad política en la nueva cultura americana".<sup>130</sup> With this in mind, the author supported Machado's style of rule and greatly criticized the role played by the United States during the 1933 mediation. The author was particularly fierce with the task carried out by US ambassador in Cuba and

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<sup>126</sup> Carlos González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen* (Havana: Cultural, 1933).

<sup>127</sup> González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 40.

<sup>128</sup> Carlos Manuel de la Cruz Ugarte, *Proceso histórico del machadato; discursos de oposición contra la dictadura, desde sus inicios en 1925* (Havana: Imprenta La Milagrosa, 1935).

<sup>129</sup> Alberto Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado; una página oscura de la diplomacia norteamericana* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1934). Other works that will be used in this dissertation are: Alberto Lamar Schweyer, *Biología de la democracia (Ensayo de sociología americana)* (Havana: Editorial Minerva, 1927); Alberto Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo; una teoría de las inmigraciones* (Havana: Editorial Martí, 1929).

<sup>130</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Biología de la democracia*, 119.

special envoy to deal with the crisis in the island, Benjamin Sumner Welles (1892-1961): “Algún día, tal vez pronto, acaso dentro de algunos años, será preciso enjuiciar la conducta del embajador extranjero que abrió en Cuba los diques a la deserción, las puertas al engaño y el campo a la anarquía”.<sup>131</sup> Through his analysis of Machado’s ousting, the goal of Schweyer was to clean the former president’s image after relentless publicity against him had spread throughout the United States and Cuba—including by Huey Long, who would publish an editorial in his newspaper *The American Progress* condemning Machado’s regime.<sup>132</sup>

Another writer and defender of the Cuban president was José de la Campa González, who composed *Memorias de un machadista: novela histórico social*.<sup>133</sup> In this novelized text, de la Campa looked back at the achievements carried out by Machado, including strengthening of the Cuban economy and freeing Cuba from the dependency towards the United States: “Machado no solo había independizado a Cuba [fortaleciendo la economía del país], pero su obra podía ser el comienzo de la independencia económica de la mayor parte de la América Latina”.<sup>134</sup> In regards to the Platt Amendment, which will be the main issue regarding Cuban-American relations in this period, de la Campa believed that “si no desaparecido había quedado solamente como documento de carácter histórico”.<sup>135</sup> This author even concluded that the crisis emerged on the Caribbean island at the beginning of the 1930s was the United States fault, not Cuba’s.<sup>136</sup>

Finally, the last work published while Gerardo Machado was alive, although in exile, was a 1938 two-volume study written by Cuban historian and journalist Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda (1900-1976).<sup>137</sup> This author is mostly known for his thorough study of the figure of national hero José Martí, who during the independence wars fought next

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<sup>131</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 220.

<sup>132</sup> Huey P. Long, “Shall the Force of America Enslave Another People For Wall Street?”, *The American Progress*, October 5, 1933, 1, 6.

<sup>133</sup> José de la Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista: novela histórico social* (Tampa: El Heraldo Dominical Publishing Company, 1937).

<sup>134</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 381.

<sup>135</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 423.

<sup>136</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 532.

<sup>137</sup> Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Historia documentada y anecdótica del machadato. Tomos I y II* (Havana: Seoane, Fernández y cía., impresores, 1938).

to the historian's father, Gonzalo de Quesada y Aróstegui (1868-1915). His book on the *machadato* is exceedingly nationalistic, but is arguably the most reliable source for that time period.

After Gerardo Machado's death, few authors have shown interest in the figure. In 1956, member of the Partido Liberal and supporter of the Cuban president, Rafael Guas Inclán (1896-1975), published a monograph aimed at the general public that unfortunately has not been found—a clear indication of the lack of scholarly research about this issue.<sup>138</sup> Although it is obviously difficult to assess the contents of the book, because of the amicable relationship Machado and Guas Inclán had, the tone of his study was defensive. Guas Inclán also left Cuba in 1933 to avoid the persecution to *machadistas* during the revolution. Moreover, in exile, the two men maintained correspondence. For instance, a few weeks after the definitive political demise of Machado, the biographer wrote a letter from New Orleans to the former president stating:

Para su personal satisfacción debe bastarle saber la cantidad de placas, letretos, bustos y retratos que al través de la Isla han tenido que destruir, expresivo cada uno de ellos, en términos generales, de una obra de pública utilidad realizada. Cuando el oleaje amaine o sin amainar la crisis económica se intensifique y cada cual vea que sus dificultades no dimanaban del Gobierno, se le hará serena justicia y podrá verse entonces que los hechos más graves de que se le acusan fueron medidas defensivas frente a una oposición jacobina y sanguinaria. Dele Dios salud y podrá ver la reacción de ese mismo Pueblo que, de haber podido, lo habría convertido en antorcha, en el espectáculo brutal que con otros hicieron.<sup>139</sup>

Another author that is worth mentioning is Spanish-born economist and historian Julio Le Riverend, raised in Cuba, who in the 1960s and 70s wrote several works on Cuban history and economy, including analysis on Machado and the context that saw his rise to power.<sup>140</sup> As for scholars that have specifically examined Machado's presidency, in 1971 Roberto E. Hernández, motivated by his Cuban background, presented a masters

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<sup>138</sup> Rafael Guas Inclán, *El general Gerardo Machado y Morales, Presidente de la República y la Organización del Estado Cubano* (Havana: Cuadernos de Divulgación Histórica, 1956).

<sup>139</sup> Letter from Rafael Guas Inclán to Gerardo Machado, October 9, 1933, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, University of Miami Digital Collections, Series I, box 2, folder 5, merrick.library.miami.edu.

<sup>140</sup> Julio Le Riverend, *La República: dependencia y revolución* (Havana: s.n., 1969); Le Riverend, *Historia económica de Cuba*; Julio Le Riverend, *Historia de Cuba: material de estudio para el movimiento de activistas de historia* (Havana: Departamento de Orientación Revolucionaria del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, 1975).

dissertation on the second administration, from 1928 to 1929.<sup>141</sup> It is a very informative and well-researched text in a time when no previous scholar had attempted a thorough historiographical analysis on Machado. Unfortunately, Hernández did not pursue his investigation further.

The abundant Marxist historiography written during Castro's regime in the 1960s and thereafter has basically ignored Machado except as an expression of the "pseudo-Republic", "neocolonialism", and "*imperialismo yanqui*".<sup>142</sup>

But the main topic that has attracted writer's attention in relation to Gerardo Machado is without a doubt the 1933 revolution. Numerous scholars and observers have published accounts on the event. First and foremost, there is the 1977 three-volume history of the 1933 Cuban revolution by Marxist historian and diplomat Lionel Soto, founder of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) in 1965.<sup>143</sup> Historian Ramón Eduardo Ruíz has argued that, in fact, Cuban history can be understood as a sequence of three main revolutions: 1895, 1933,<sup>144</sup> and 1959.<sup>145</sup> Cuban journalist Enrique de la Osa, who went into exile to Mexico during the Machado regime, wrote an account of the year 1933 with a strong Marxist tone.<sup>146</sup> There are several more specific studies on the labor unions' and university students' fight against the *machadato*, such as Mirta Rosell's *Luchas obreras*

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<sup>141</sup> Roberto E. Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado y Morales in Cuba, 1928-1933" (PhD diss., Georgia State University, 1971).

<sup>142</sup> Two examples of this approach to Cuban historiography are: José Cantón Navarro, *Historia de Cuba: el desafío del yugo y la estrella: biografía de un pueblo* (Havana: Editorial SI-MAR, 2000); Juan Vega Vega, *Cuba, su historia constitucional: comentarios a la constitución cubana reformada en 1992* (Madrid: Ediciones Endymion, 1997).

<sup>143</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33*. Years later, this author wrote another study on the 1933 revolution in one volume: Lionel Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933: un momento trascendental en la continuidad revolucionaria de José Martí: ensayo de indagación político-social y económico en un período reciente de la historia de Cuba* (Havana: Editorial Si-Mar, 1995).

<sup>144</sup> Similarly, member of the Cuban Communist Party Raúl Roa affirmed that the 1933 revolution "supone el 1868 y el 1895 en la medida en que el movimiento popular se planteó la reconquista de la soberanía y autodeterminación de Cuba, uncidas desde 1902 a la dominación yanqui", in Raúl Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. II* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1977), 808.

<sup>145</sup> Ramón Eduardo Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución* (Barcelona: Editorial Noguer, 1977), 17. In that sense, this perspective was completely opposite to the repulse Spanish journalist living in Cuba and director of *Diario de la Marina*, Nicolás Rivero, felt for the idea of revolution, which the writer interpreted as a disease in the context of the Mexican revolution, in Nicolás Rivero, "Peste de revoluciones", May 11, 1911, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919* (Havana: Cultural, 1929), 298.

<sup>146</sup> Enrique de la Osa, *Crónica del año 33* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1989).

*contra Machado*, or historian Jaime Suchlicki's analysis.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, there are quite a few memoirs of witnesses of the events, such as Justo Carrillo or Raúl Roa, who told their own experiences as part of the revolt.<sup>148</sup> These works have in common the militant tone. Moreover, unsurprisingly, most of the Cuban analyses about the revolt against regime written after the 1970s have a Marxist bias.<sup>149</sup> One of the most striking examples is a monograph on the history of Cuba published by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR), which concluded that: "La significación histórica del periodo del gobierno dictatorial de Gerardo Machado es capital dentro del estudio de la república intervenida".<sup>150</sup> It is relevant to note, however, that this dissertation will not analyze Cuban processes developed after August 12, 1933—the date Machado went into exile. Thus, although relying on the aforementioned sources, this dissertation is not a study about the 1933 revolution but about the leader who triggered it.

Most recently, in Spain, Francisco Macías Martín presented a PhD dissertation about Machado's administration and Spanish diplomacy.<sup>151</sup> This historian published his doctoral thesis in book format in 2002.<sup>152</sup> But the most fascinating dissertation about the Cuban politician is that of Fritz William Berggren, published in 2001, not accidentally at the University of Miami, the capital of exiles from *castrismo*.<sup>153</sup> The main thesis behind this study is that, due to the communist machine installed in Cuba since ca.1959, Machado has been unjustly considered historically. Thus, Berggren writes this "reinterpretation" in which he problematically justifies and almost supports the Cuban

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<sup>147</sup> Mirta Rosell, *Luchas obreras contra Machado* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1973); Jaime Suchlicki, *University Students and Revolution in Cuba, 1920-1968* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1969).

<sup>148</sup> Justo Carrillo, *Cuba 1933, estudiantes, yanquis y soldados* (Miami: Instituto de Estudios Interamericanos, University of Miami, 1985); Raúl Roa, *La revolución del 30 se fue a bolina* (Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1969).

<sup>149</sup> José A. Tabares del Real, *La Revolución Del 30: Sus Dos Últimos Años* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1973); Jorge Renato Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33: ocaso del machadato* (Havana: Editora Política, 1999); Francisca López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30* (Havana: Editorial Félix Varela, 2000).

<sup>150</sup> Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, *Historia de Cuba* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1985), 579.

<sup>151</sup> Francisco J. Macías Martín, "La diplomacia española ante el 'Machadato' y la crisis cubana de 1933" (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Universidad de La Laguna, 1998).

<sup>152</sup> Francisco J. Macías Martín, *Cuba: crisis política, crisis económica y emigración (1920-1935): la visión de la diplomacia española* (Tegueste, Tenerife: Ediciones de Baile del Sol, 2002).

<sup>153</sup> Fritz William Berggren, "Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation" (University of Miami, 2001).

leader, whom he calls a “very capable and proven leader”.<sup>154</sup> The historian argues: “Machado’s inglorious place in Cuban history is not because he was an evil man or tyrant—but because he lost the battle of violence and revolution waged by his opponents”.<sup>155</sup> Berggren, therefore, could be considered equivalent, regarding Machado, to T. Harry Williams *vis-à-vis* Long.

Finally, in recent years, Marxist author Rolando Rodríguez published a thorough three-volume history of the *machadato*, a work that he dedicates to Fidel Castro.<sup>156</sup> The author most likely took inspiration from the aforementioned historian Lionel Soto’s three-volume history of the 1933 revolution.<sup>157</sup> Although using a broad range of primary and sources, Rodríguez constantly praises heroes such as student martyr Julio Antonio Mella (1903-1929), allegedly assassinated under Machado’s orders in 1929. Thus, once again the work suffers from a political bias.

Lastly, the same year Rodríguez’s study was published, the first of two volumes of a broader history of Cuban leaders by author Roberto A. Solera, a Cuban exiled in Miami, was released—the second was published in 2015.<sup>158</sup> The first volume was a study from the first president of the republic, Estrada Palma, to Machado; the second from Machado to Fulgencio Batista. Interestingly, in this work Machado bridges two different political eras in the history of the island.

As can be seen from this brief overlook, while there has been some interest in Machado, the main issue when dealing with most of these works is the excessive politization of the historical narratives that impede or at least hinder the task of presenting a balanced historical account. Perhaps due to the historical and geographical distance of its author, this dissertation will give a new approach to both Huey Long and Gerardo Machado.

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<sup>154</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 142.

<sup>155</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 160.

<sup>156</sup> Rolando Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república: auge y caída de Gerardo Machado. Tomo I, II y III* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2013).

<sup>157</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33*.

<sup>158</sup> Robert A. Solera, *Cuba: La república de generales y doctores: De Estrada Palma a Machado* (Madrid: El Barco Ebrio, 2013); Robert A. Solera, *Cuba: La república de militares y estudiantes: De Machado a Batista* (Miami: Alexandria Library Publishing House, 2015).

The 1920s and 1930s were a critical period in world history. It is common knowledge that the twentieth century took its shape in large part due to the development of extremist forms of political organization and discourse. However, in order to fully understand this pivotal point in history, it is necessary to look at some of the “peripheral” movements that took place in regions that seemed to have been outside the major centers of upheaval during this time. Both Long and Machado developed political machineries using similar strategies which, I shall argue, were characteristic of a Greater Caribbean strongman leadership style. They pandered to the masses, using regenerative discourses and developing infrastructure and education programs, supposedly upset the interests of big transnational companies—essentially East Coast American juggernauts—, and seemingly catered to black voters, while, at the same time, solidifying their rule and becoming increasingly authoritarian. But before interpreting the reasons behind their policy-making, it is necessary to take an in-depth separate look at their origins and rise to power.



## **PART ONE: PARALLEL LIVES**

### **CHAPTER ONE: ASCENT OF A “HILLBILLY” FROM NORTHERN LOUISIANA**

This chapter focuses on the analysis of Huey Long’s biography and his first years as a politician. The aim is to analyze, on one side, the life of a white southern politician and, on the other, the rare rise of a very popular leader ended by his early death. This is a political biography and therefore his discourses and program will be the guiding thread of the text. During the few years in which Long held public office he became one of the most feared and loved politicians of the United States, challenging president Franklin Roosevelt’s popularity and gathering unprecedented power in his native state, Louisiana. His political program appealed to thousands of people during the Depression Era. Before entering into the comparison with Gerardo Machado in the upcoming chapters, and putting Long into the context of the Caribbean political system, it is necessary to analyze his ascend and success in the United States. The main idea behind the analysis of this southerner’s life is that, besides his multiple enemies, his moments of unpopularity, and finally his assassination in 1935, Huey Long’s movement was a regional success in the context of the Great Depression. There were other politicians and personalities that embraced similar styles and program, what one could call “American bosses” in the 1930s, such as Catholic priest Charles E. Coughlin (1891-1979) or Francis Townsend (1867-1960), but none achieved Long’s acclaim and legacy.

The goal of this chapter is to understand Long, in his own bizarre way, as part of the political tradition of the United States. Besides his program and flamboyant personality, he was the heir of some of the political forms started in the nineteenth century and adapted into the twentieth. The common inquiries historiography has focused on regarding this politician are whether he was a fascist or a communist, and whether he was a demagogue or a democrat. However, instead of trying to categorize or define him, it is probably more interesting to go beyond specific political categories and understand him as a pure American political leader who gathered much power. This will allow going beyond and asking other questions, such as: was Huey Long really a

revolutionary of some kind or just a reformer? Was his political program against modernity? And, more importantly, why did he come to be? The chapter closes with an innovative analysis of the environmental factors that could have aided Long in his rise to power.

## 1.1 The birth of an atypical southern politician

Huey Pierce Long, Jr., was born in August 30, 1893, in Winnfield, a poor small town located in the north-central Louisiana parish of Winn.<sup>159</sup> Originally from Pennsylvania, his paternal grandparents, Mary Lee Long and John M. Long, had moved to Louisiana in 1859. His father, Hugh Pierce Long (1852–1937), known as “Old Hu,” and his family moved to Winnfield the year before Huey was born.<sup>160</sup> Old Hu became a farm owner and therefore was able to provide for his family. His mother, Caledonia Palestine Tison (1860–1913), was of Scottish origin and a devoted Christian, and passed away at fifty-two when Huey was twenty years old. Caledonia’s father, James E. Tison, was a prosperous farmer and stock raiser who ended up owing a considerable amount of slaves.<sup>161</sup>

Huey Long was raised in a comfortable wooden cabin building. Because of its implications within the “Log Cabin” narrative pervasive among many American politicians, there is much polemic among scholars about the characteristics of this house.<sup>162</sup> In his autobiography and speeches Long claimed he came from a poor environment and had grown up in a modest home. Thomas O. Harris wrote in 1938 that “interiorally [*sic*] it was commodious and well-appointed, consisted of six rooms with ceiled walls, and well provided the comforts and conveniences of that day and time”.<sup>163</sup> The year after Huey was born, the family moved to another house, which the sisters

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<sup>159</sup> The middle name “Pierce” was given to him after the doctor who delivered him, Dr. Pierce, in Letter written by George Long to Harley B. Bozeman, published in Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, February 21, 1957.

<sup>160</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 44; Williams, *Huey Long*, 10-11; Hair, *The Kingfish*, 24.

<sup>161</sup> Julius T. Long, “What I Know About My Brother United States Senator Huey P. Long”, *Real America*, September 1933, 37, Herman Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder10, LaRC.

<sup>162</sup> The issue will be discussed further in chapter five.

<sup>163</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 9.

called “the salt box house”.<sup>164</sup> Finally, in 1907 the Longs moved to a luxurious colonial house that could be defined as a mansion, with sixteen rooms and electricity,<sup>165</sup> although it would be destroyed by fire in the 1920s, together with most family pictures.<sup>166</sup> None of the three houses in which Huey lived in his childhood survive today.

The future politician was born the seventh of nine surviving siblings in a Baptist family.<sup>167</sup> His brothers Julius (1879-1965) and, especially, Earl (1895-1960) would be the ones closest to Huey throughout his life. With Julius, who was fourteen years older than Huey, he had a somewhat semi-filial relationship. The older brother supported him in his young adulthood and they even became partners in a lawyer’s firm for a brief period. Not much later, however, they turned into bitter enemies because of their different personalities and Huey’s growing patronizing attitude towards his big brother. As for Earl, who was two years younger, their relationship was complex and easily changed from love to hate and back. Earl would also be elected governor of Louisiana three times after his brother’s assassination, using Huey’s methods, and benefiting from his popularity and martyrdom.<sup>168</sup>

In short, Long was raised in a rural environment typical of the southern US in the transition between the nineteenth and the twentieth century and outside the aristocratic

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<sup>164</sup> This residence would be turned down around 1960 to create a park in memory of one of Huey’s brothers, Earl. Letter from Harley B. Bozeman to T. Harry Williams, March 8, 1965, Harley B. Bozeman papers, Mss. 2431, Correspondence 1840-1941, 1952-1969, Range T:36, box 1, folder 3, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>165</sup> Huey P. Long (1933), *Every Man A King: The Autobiography of Huey P. Long* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 2.

<sup>166</sup> Letter from Harley B. Bozeman to T. Harry Williams, March 8, 1965, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 21, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>167</sup> Their names, in order of age, were: Charlotte Arabella, Julius Tison, Helen Kelley—who died in infancy—, George Shannon, Olive Ray, Clara, Huey P., Earl K., Caledonia C., and Lucille, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>168</sup> However, according to some, he would never possess his brother’s savoir-faire: “There is no comparison between [Huey] and Earl. It’s like comparing a university graduate and a grade schooler. Earl is a good ward politician. But Huey had the personality to carry people along with him. Huey could talk on anything. Earl just talks against people”, Interview to James T. Burns, no date, by T. Harry Williams. Another witness told: “Huey was a more refined politician. Earl dressed and acted like one of us Cajuns. But Earl had more friends. Earl was a good individual operator. Huey was more solid”, Interview to Robert Angelle, no date, by T. Harry Williams. THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

world or the “select circle”.<sup>169</sup> When Huey was born, the United States was facing economic recession, arguably in a similar manner as when Long was assassinated in 1935. Due to the so-called panic of 1893, the country had over 2.5 million unemployed out of a population of about 63 million, and industries and banks were in bankruptcy. In Louisiana, the economic crisis was harsher than in other states of the Union, as shown by the lack of industrialization and high levels of illiteracy.<sup>170</sup> Current political scientist Paul Taggart explained how this economic crisis put bankers, landowners, and railroad companies together as the demons for farmers.<sup>171</sup> When Long was running for governor for the first time in 1924 he stated that Louisiana was the feudal state of the country. Others described the Pelican State as a “banana republic” because of its institutionalized corruption.<sup>172</sup>

As opposed to what his critics would sometimes claim, the state was no idyllic political wonderland before his arrival to politics. As critical journalist and author Carleton Beals pointed out, Louisiana was regionally divided amongst powerful families and economic interests, and Long only followed the typical rise to power, albeit with some changes:

Vice, steamship companies, banana companies, banks, and the Old Ring had run New Orleans as it pleased for thirty years. The Standard Oil ran Baton Rouge. The oil, carbon-black and allied interests ran Shreveport. The sulphur and oil barons ran Lake Charles. The timber wolves ran Bogalusa. The sugar people ran Lafayette. The gamblers and fur kings ran St. Bernard and Jefferson Parishes. The actions of Huey Long merely announced the deplorable decay of American freedom, the decline of politically conscious manhood, which had already taken place and which bid fair to end all free government in this country.<sup>173</sup>

The “Old Ring”, also known as the “Old Regulars” or the “Choctaws”, was a conservative organization which gathered at the so-called Choctaw Club, founded in 1897.<sup>174</sup> They had control over the city of New Orleans and state politics. Historian Garry Boulard explains how they were:

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<sup>169</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 24.

<sup>170</sup> V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1949), 160-161; Williams, *Huey Long*, 186-187.

<sup>171</sup> Paul A. Taggart, *Populism* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), 36.

<sup>172</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 187.

<sup>173</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 375.

<sup>174</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 22.

[I]nvincible, and indispensable. In a city of more than one-half million, where jobs were at a premium and people short of food, the Old Regulars had work. If you were willing to work for them, they could provide work for you: the city and sewerage board alone was worth more than four thousand jobs; there were jobs in the police and fire departments, jobs on public-financed construction projects, jobs hauling garbage, jobs working in city hall. Only through the Old Regulars could New Orleanians gain access to these jobs.<sup>175</sup>

Also, under their rule, the city of New Orleans became the center for sin and vice in the South, for “gambling, whoring, pimping, and illegal night clubs flourished under the indulgent eye of the Ring’s police officials”.<sup>176</sup> Harnett Kane, a journalist writing in the 1930s and 1940s, called the Old Regulars “*the political party of the city*”.<sup>177</sup> As will be analyzed in the following pages, Long would use this situation in his advantage when entering politics by intentionally antagonizing the group. In an interview with journalist Forrest Davis he affirmed: “the State was run by an oligarchy of a few families. All of them lived off the poor”.<sup>178</sup> This prolonged situation arguably made Louisiana a politically complicated place. Authors Michie and Riley, writing in 1939, even argued: “Louisiana has never known democracy”.<sup>179</sup>

The 1890s depression in the southern states of the country had its roots in the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877).<sup>180</sup> Winn, Long’s birth parish, was one of the poorest in the state, and had an anti-secessionist tradition and later a populist movement, or what historian Lawrence Goodwyn called “populist moment”.<sup>181</sup> Historian Glen Jeansonne argues “rebellion and alienation characterized Winn”.<sup>182</sup> Biographer Forrest Davis wrote that Winn parish “raised only one crop in abundance: dissent”.<sup>183</sup> In the convention of 1861 the parish voted against secession

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<sup>175</sup> Boulard, *Huey Long Invades New Orleans*, 40–41.

<sup>176</sup> Thomas Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana* (New York: Putnam, 1960), 17.

<sup>177</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 32.

<sup>178</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 36.

<sup>179</sup> Allan A. Michie and Frank Riley, “Fascism: American Style”, in *Dixie Demagogues* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1939), 108.

<sup>180</sup> For excellent studies on this period, see: Bruce E. Baker, *What Reconstruction Meant: Historical Memory in the American South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Henry Clay Warmoth (1930), *War, Politics, and Reconstruction; Stormy Days in Louisiana* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006); Chungchan Gao, *African Americans in the Reconstruction Era* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>181</sup> Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); Williams, *Huey Long*, 24.

<sup>182</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah of the Masses*, 7.

<sup>183</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 45.

from the Union and a very few people fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War.<sup>184</sup> An author wrote: “Winn differed radically from the romantic image of the Confederate South”.<sup>185</sup> One explanation for this deviation from the norm among other southern states could be that, since the region was extremely poor, there were barely any slaves. As Davis explained, “free, white farmers, the folk of Winn hated the planting aristocracy and opposed the war”.<sup>186</sup> Historian Allan P. Sindler wrote,

In 1860, rural and urban nonslaveholders, each group about equal in numbers, comprised 71 per cent of the white population. Both the distribution of slaveholdings and the outnumbering of plantations by smaller landholdings support the conclusion that a majority of rural free people had no direct stake in the retention of the institution of slavery.<sup>187</sup>

In 1939, historian Roger Shugg had arrived to a similar conclusion when affirming: “A majority of free people in the country were non-slaveholding farmers and not planters with Negroes”.<sup>188</sup> This same author argued that in the 1850s most planters started as humble yeomen working for the most part with no slaves but with their own hands.<sup>189</sup> Journalist Harnett Kane asked, “Why fight to save another man’s slaves?”<sup>190</sup>

In an interview in the spring of 1935, Long’s father, who was then eighty-three years old, asserted:

Didn’t Abraham Lincoln free the niggers and not give the planters a dime? Why shouldn’t Huey take the money away from the rich and still leave’em [*sic*] plenty? [...] Why shouldn’t the white slaves be freed, and their masters left all they can use? Maybe you’re surprise to hear talk like that. Well, it was just such talk that my boy was raised under and that I was raised under. My father and my mother favored the Union. Why not? They didn’t have any slaves.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 45; Hugh Davis Graham, ed., *Huey Long* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 6.

<sup>185</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 24.

<sup>186</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 45.

<sup>187</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 2.

<sup>188</sup> Roger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers During Slavery and After, 1840-1875* (Ann Arbor: Edward Brothers, 1966), 78.

<sup>189</sup> Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 79.

<sup>190</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 37.

<sup>191</sup> James Rorty, “Callie Long’s Boy Huey”, *The Forum*, August 1935, 78, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 27, folder 22, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU); Davis, *Huey Long*, 48–49.

This sentiment of admiration towards Lincoln and the Union separated Winn parish, the Longs, and later the politician, from their “Southernness”, thus configuring a rather unique context that would influence Long’s program and persona.<sup>192</sup> In that sense, it is interesting to note how he decided to publicize the Long part of the family more than his Tison heritage—his mother’s name—, probably to avoid being related to slave owners.<sup>193</sup> Throughout his career the politician would describe himself as “a Mississippi Valley backwoodsman before [being] a Southerner and possessing none of the stricken pride and nostalgias of the unreconstructed Confederates still abounding in those states”.<sup>194</sup>

Not only Civil War politics influenced young Huey. An equally significant development was the rise of populism in the 1890s. In 1891, the People’s Party was founded, and its main newspaper, the *Comrade*, was published in Winnfield.<sup>195</sup> Shugg referred to Winn parish as “the home of local populism”.<sup>196</sup> Approximately fifty populist newspapers were published in Louisiana in the 1890s. This movement rose because, as Sindler argued, “the political uprising of Louisiana’s tenant and small independent farmers during the 1890s was a consequence of the post-bellum continuation of the depressed status of poorer whites”.<sup>197</sup> Historian Richard Hofstadter spoke of “the hard side of populism” and referred to the farmers as “harassed little country businessmen” that fought for “agricultural improvement, business methods, and pressure politics”.<sup>198</sup> Historian Charles Postel has given a new analysis on the political movement by emphasizing that, far from what has been historiographically and collectively understood, the People’s Party was not a rural backward movement but, on the contrary, it postulated alphabetism, advocated a strong role for women, and similar progressive

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<sup>192</sup> Logically, northern Louisiana was not the only place in the US South that had took another path during the Civil War. The most known case of Southern unionism is the insurrection against the Confederacy that occurred in Jones country, Mississippi, between 1863 and 1865 led by Newton Knight, a farmer and soldier who proposed to establish the “Free State of Jones”. Inspired in these events, the movie *Free State of Jones* has been released in 2016. See also Jenkins and Stauffer, *The State of Jones*.

<sup>193</sup> See note 3.

<sup>194</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 284.

<sup>195</sup> The first issue was released on October 3, 1890, in William Ivy Hair, *Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest: Louisiana Politics, 1877-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 209.

<sup>196</sup> Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 270.

<sup>197</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 16.

<sup>198</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 46–47.

ideas.<sup>199</sup> This party would have remarkable and visible impact in Long's thought and political discourse, much discussed by commentators then and now.<sup>200</sup> For instance, historian Lawrence Goodwyn affirmed in the 1970s: "The storied career of the Kingfish, in fact, is rendered partly understandable by the prior experiences of [Hardy] Brian [the leader of populism in Louisiana, who was from Winn] in the Populist era".<sup>201</sup>

The main figures of populism in the South, such as James K. Vardaman (1861-1930), from Mississippi, who was known as 'the Great White Chief', would influence populist politicians in the next century. As mid-twentieth century historian Reinhard H. Luthin put it, "the Populists 'people's captains' of the South perpetuated their kind in extreme form. From them sprang the later school of twentieth-century demagogues—those garish spellbinders who, on the stump, promised seemingly everything, preached from the Bible, assailed the 'nigger', and used histrionics and hillbilly music".<sup>202</sup> In that sense, Vardaman is quoted of having affirmed: "The good ['Negroes'] are few, the bad are many, and it is impossible to tell what ones are... dangerous to the honor of the dominant race until the damage is done".<sup>203</sup> On another occasion, the politician from Mississippi stated: "We would be justified in slaughtering every Ethiop on the earth to preserve unsullied the honor of one Caucasian home".<sup>204</sup> However influenced by them, it should be stressed that Huey Long "was the first Southern demagogue largely to leave aside nigger-baiting and address himself to the irritations bred in the common white by his economic and social status", according to a now dated and polemic book, which nonetheless remains a classic, by journalist Wilbur J. Cash.<sup>205</sup>

After its surge, the People's Party gradually lost support, as Republican and Democrat politicians took over some of the staples of its platform.<sup>206</sup> With the demise of the party, the Socialist Party briefly became a sort of a substitute of the defunct populist party in

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<sup>199</sup> Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>200</sup> Taggart, *Populism*, 38.

<sup>201</sup> Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment*, 194.

<sup>202</sup> Reinhard H. Luthin, "Some Demagogues in American History", *The American Historical Review* 57, 1 (October 1951): 45.

<sup>203</sup> Quoted in Albert D. Kirwan, *Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), 147.

<sup>204</sup> Quoted in Kirwan, *Revolt of the Rednecks*, 146-147.

<sup>205</sup> Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1941), 291-292.

<sup>206</sup> Postel, *The Populist Vision*, 271.

Winn parish, securing a third of the presidential vote in the 1912 election for candidate Eugene V. Debs (1855-1926).<sup>207</sup> Nonetheless, in general, the dissolution of the populists meant that they would not exist anymore as a political party, but they would somehow re-emerge in the form of different political expressions throughout the rest of the twentieth century, Huey Long being one of them.<sup>208</sup>

This was the political environment in which Long grew up and which influenced him. Thus, it can be argued that Huey was a product of his time and not a historically decontextualized exception. Sindler explains it in the following way: Many of the tactics and issues associated with Longism had their origins in the immediate pre-Huey period of politics”.<sup>209</sup> In the 1960s, historian and journalist Charles Dufour argued “it was not the Great Depression, as many believe, that spawned Huey Long as a national figure. It only provided the stage and an eager audience to which Long would utter long-familial lines of an old drama, in a new and modern production”.<sup>210</sup> Similarly, Historian Henry C. Dethloff also defended, “Huey Long’s rise was facilitated by the Populist and Progressive movements which caused significant political and social realignments in Louisiana, and which provided a tradition and an ideology for protest and reform”.<sup>211</sup> Historian Michael Kazin explains how what he calls the “dillusions” of the populist movement reverberated through political expressions of the twentieth century, such as Long’s mid-twentieth century movement.<sup>212</sup> Thus Huey belonged to the political tradition of his country and, according to political scientist V.O. Key, “in his program and tactics he was as indigenious to Louisiana as pine trees and petroleum”.<sup>213</sup> Concentrating his explanation in the parish in which the politician was born, Davis wrote, with a touch of condescendence, how “Huey is a remarkably true-to-type product of Winn parish; its rude economy as well as its semi-literate but rugged radicalism; its

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<sup>207</sup> For an analysis on socialism in the United States, particularly in the Franklin Roosevelt Era, see Aurora Bosch, “Estados Unidos en los años treinta: ¿Un socialismo imposible?”, *Historia Social* 11 (Autumn 1991): 39-55.

<sup>208</sup> Taggart, *Populism*, 43.

<sup>209</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 40.

<sup>210</sup> Charles L. Dufour, “The Day of the Kingfish”, in *Ten Flags in the Wind: The Story of Louisiana* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 258.

<sup>211</sup> Henry C. Dethloff, “The Longs: Revolution or Populist Retrenchment?”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 19, n° 4 (Fall 1978): 403.

<sup>212</sup> Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995), 192.

<sup>213</sup> Key, *Southern Politics*, 157.

hatred for ‘aristocrats’ with the corollary vulgarity of manners; its border truculency, its insistence upon personality and reliance upon the Word of God”.<sup>214</sup>

Winnfield was a little village that, in spite of meager economic and demographic growth at the beginning of the twentieth century due to the arrival of railway and lumber mills, was still in precarious economic conditions during Long’s childhood and youth.<sup>215</sup> The most academically recognized of Long’s many biographers, T. Harry Williams, describes it:

In no part of the town were there any concrete sidewalks. People walked on the dirt or sand streets, which in rainy weather became deep with mud. At all times they had to dodge the cows, hogs, and goats that ran the streets, for Winnfield had no stock law regulating the enclosure of animals. As there was no municipal water system, each home had to have its own well or cistern. Neither was there a public utility system.<sup>216</sup>

Earl Long told this historian: “When we were kids we never saw a train till [*sic*] Huey was 8 and I was 6”.<sup>217</sup> In fact, the depot of Winnfield was built in 1908.

The Longs were amongst the prosperous families in town. In 1900 Long’s father sold some of his land to the railroad, which increased the family’s wealth and afforded them the possibility to send six children to college.<sup>218</sup> Thus it would seem inaccurate to refer to Long as a redneck or a hillbilly, as it so often happens in newspaper articles and in historiography about the politician. An author wrote, “The family was not as poor as Huey would have had people believe”.<sup>219</sup> In a similar fashion, historian Glen Jeansonne wrote in the mid-nineties, “Long exaggerated his early poverty for political effect, but

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<sup>214</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 283.

<sup>215</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 51. A local newspaper published: “Beginning around 1900, Winn parish was definitively a ‘boom’ area, as a number of lumber companies began their cutting of the virgin Winn pine timber”, in “Winn Was ‘Boom’ Area in Virgin Timber Era From 1900 to 1915”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, 1, newspaper clipping, Harley B. Bozeman papers, Mss. 2431, Correspondence 1840-1941, 1952-1969, Range T:36, box 1, folder 10, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>216</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 30–31.

<sup>217</sup> Interview to Earl K. Long, August 28, 1960, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 19, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>218</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 45.

<sup>219</sup> Donald A. Pavy, *Accident and Deception: The Huey Long Shooting* (New Iberia: Cajun Publishing, 1999), 32.

his childhood is certainly not characterized by ostentatious wealth”.<sup>220</sup> Biographer William Ivy Hair affirmed in 1991, “the Longs were not ‘poor white trash’, but neither were they gentry”.<sup>221</sup>

However, it is often assumed he was a self-made man who would rise from the bottom of poverty to the top. For instance, it is a surprise to read Kane, fervidly anti-*longite*, defending “the best evidence indicates that the Longs were originally poor whites, whose fortunes shifted up and down”.<sup>222</sup> The 1960s “radical” historian Shugg compared Long with other politicians of his time, such as Vardaman and his disciple Theodore Bilbo (1877-1947), that is, poor white men at the end of the nineteenth century who came to be candidates for public office.<sup>223</sup> This development was commonly known as the “rise of the poor whites”,<sup>224</sup> or what historian Albert Kirwan called “revolt of the rednecks”.<sup>225</sup> Novelist and journalist born in New Orleans Hamilton Basso (1904-1964) wrote that the Civil War did not free the African Americans, but that it had been the southern middle class.<sup>226</sup> Still, Shugg ends up deconstructing this idea and affirming: “The man who rose from nothing was always the exception, not the rule”,<sup>227</sup> and that the press exaggerated the number of successful cases at the turn of the century.<sup>228</sup> Kane arrived to a similar conclusion, adding that besides the hopes of the humble white people, their dreams were not fully realized, particularly in Louisiana, where the process took longer.<sup>229</sup> Arguably, the Long family was no exception and, contrary to what Huey stated throughout his life, they were already successful.

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<sup>220</sup> Glen Jeansonne, “Huey P. Long, Gerald L. K. Smith and Leander H. Perez as Charismatic Leaders”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 9. A witness told historian T. Harry Williams: “The Longs were better off than the average in Winnfield. In fact the Long home was one of the largest and nicest in town”, in Interview to Rupert S. Whitley, March 15, 1960, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 19, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>221</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 25.

<sup>222</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 39.

<sup>223</sup> Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 274.

<sup>224</sup> Arie Nicolaas Jan den Hollander, *The Tradition of "Poor Whites"* (Chapel Hill, 1934).

<sup>225</sup> Kirwan, *Revolt of the Rednecks*.

<sup>226</sup> Hamilton Basso, “Huey Long and His Background”, *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, May 1935, 666, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 2, folder 18, LSMHC.

<sup>227</sup> Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 278.

<sup>228</sup> Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 277. According to Shugg, the hyperbole was intended to attract immigrants to the United States.

<sup>229</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 28.

## 1.2 Education and early professional career of a “self-made man”

Huey was a hyperactive and curious boy who, according to his father, learned to walk when he was only seven months old.<sup>230</sup> His mother said that his son “had a ‘restless disposition’, but had a quick mind and a bright intellect”.<sup>231</sup> Critical writer John K. Fineran remarked in 1932 that at the time the image Long gave of his childhood was biased: “In his political orations Huey Long has occasionally referred to his own childhood, illustrating his arguments with incidents which were purely imaginary”.<sup>232</sup> As a teenager he was not attracted to farm work, although he knew it well.<sup>233</sup> In school he was a nervous, disperse, and undisciplined student; as historian Alan Brinkley put it: “even as a child, his friends and relatives noticed, he was marked unlike the boys around him. He was bright, outspoken, opinionated, restless (he ran away from home for the first but not the last time at the age of ten), and intensely, consumedly self-centered”.<sup>234</sup> Nevertheless, Long was smart and eager to learn through his favorite readings, *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo’s romantic novels, Shakespeare’s works, and, of course, the Bible. He also affirmed he enjoyed the voluminous *History of the World*, by historian John Clark Ridpath (1840-1900), a mixture of history and anthropology that marked the American culture at the end of the nineteenth century. These books taught Long that strong men achieved their goals and that one should make his own fate;<sup>235</sup> most importantly, from Ridpath young Long learned the importance of “the strong will of the strong man”.<sup>236</sup> As a curiosity and

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<sup>230</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 49. His brother, George, would say about him years later: “Huey wasn’t a bad boy. He had a lot of religious feeling, believed in God and the church, loved good people throughout his entire life. But Huey had too much energy and probably this should be known to parents with children like Huey. There wasn’t much for him to do and not much to keep him entertained. He was an impetuous boy with a lot of energy that just had to be burned up”, Letter from George S. Long to Harley B. Bozeman, July 17, 1957, Harley B. Bozeman papers, Mss. 2431, Correspondence 1840-1941, 1952-1969, Range T:36, box 1, folder 2, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>231</sup> As quoted in Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It -- Huey Long”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, July 11, 1957.

<sup>232</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 8.

<sup>233</sup> “Senator Huey Long Rose from Farm Boy to Dictator of Louisiana”, *The Morning Tribune*, September 9, 1935, 3. His childhood friend Harley B. Bozeman wrote: “He [Long] had an intimate knowledge of farm life. This family farm life familiarity was largely acquired from observation, rather than from any farm work actually performed”, Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It -- Huey Long”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, July 25, 1957.

<sup>234</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 12.

<sup>235</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 55.

<sup>236</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 41.

trademark of his personality, Long wrote down his name in his schoolbooks as “Hon. Huey P. Long”.<sup>237</sup> Besides being an excellent public speaker and having an admirable photographic memory, Long dropped out of Winnfield high school in 1908.<sup>238</sup>

From that year and during the following four he worked as a door-to-door salesman for different companies. He specialized in selling Cottolene, a type of shortening made out of what is assumed a by-product of cottonseed oil and beef tallow, and used as a very affordable substitute for butter. As a salesman Long travelled across Louisiana and other southern states, and witnessed the poverty of the people and the unkempt conditions of the roads and bridges in rural areas, which he would later target in his political program. Due to his admirable memory he was able to remember the names and concerns of the people he met, who years later would become his voters.<sup>239</sup> Following the idea “I can sell anything”,<sup>240</sup> if needed, he would go inside possible clients’ homes and cook using Cottolene, a strategy that was usually successful.

As he would later do in other contexts and for different objectives, Long used the Bible as a method of persuasion. He asserted that, since God forbade the Israelites from consuming pork, Cottolene was more suitable for Christians. Taking on pork in the South was not just a passing fancy, but it was a major challenge to rural and semi-rural ways of life. Long would argue that Cottolene, as opposed to butter, was a vegetable product that did not contain pork fat. Huey was selling more than a cooking product; he was carrying out God’s task.<sup>241</sup> In order to rise his sales, Long organized cooking contests featuring dishes prepared with Cottolene.

In one of these events held in Shreveport, a city in the northwest of the state, Huey met a timid and quiet girl, also from Scottish origin, named Rose McConnell (1892-1970),

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<sup>237</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 35.

<sup>238</sup> Dufour, “The Days of the Kingfish”, 258–259.

<sup>239</sup> Later on as a politician he would keep being attentive to his supporters. One of his dearest friends said: “I have seen him get on the phone and call people all over the state just to chat with them. How are you, how are your family, how are the crops. Of course the man he called felt complimented”, Interview to Seymour Weiss, no date, by T. Harry Williams, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 28, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>240</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 42; Michael Perman, *Pursuit of Unity: A Political History of the American South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 225.

<sup>241</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 42.

and gave her the first prize. She was to become his future wife.<sup>242</sup> This is the story that appears in most biographies of Long, although in his own autobiography he explained he met her at Shreveport High School, although perhaps the Cottolene contest simply took place in the high school.<sup>243</sup> Regardless of the specific circumstances of their acquaintance, they got married in 1913 and had three children: Rose (1917-2006), Russell B. (1918-2003), and Palmer Reid (1921-2010).

Years after, Long would use his honed selling skills in his political campaigns. This experience gave him economic stability and, more importantly, training on how to advertise himself to others. Not only did Long develop persuasive and relational techniques; he also learned about the diversity within Louisiana and adapted his discourse in each region, accordingly. As a travelling salesman, he had to travel outside the Pelican State, which allowed him to visit new states and meet politicians which would later be an inspiration for him, such as Vardaman and his disciple Bilbo, known as ‘the Man’, who became a political figure of great importance in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>244</sup> After the door-to-door sales experience, Long learned that “a leader of the people had to be able to speak in several languages [...] He had to address the masses in such way that even his most subtle distinctions came through to them”.<sup>245</sup>

### 1.2.1 Lawyer Long, defender of the downtrodden<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 51; Sender Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1935), 6.; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 12; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 42; Dufour, “The Days of the Kingfish”, 259; Hair, *The Kingfish*, 42-43; Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 28. Even the newspapers told that same story: “There was romance in the meeting of Huey P. Long and Miss Rose McConnell of Shreveport, which was the direct result of the latter’s skill in cake-making, a skill which she retains today as she presides over her home”, in “New First Lady’s Chief Interests Three Children”, *The Times-Picayune*, May 22, 1928.

<sup>243</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 14.

<sup>244</sup> See also Kirwan, *Revolt of the Rednecks*. Harley B. Bozeman affirmed: “While traveling as a salesman from 1910 to 1914, Huey always attended every political speaking he could here in Louisiana and in other states in which he traveled. Huey learned much of the technique of successful politics from hearing and studying the methods of such big time politicians as Governor and US Senator Jeff Davis of Arkansas, US Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi, Governor Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi and Governor J.Y. Sanders of Louisiana”, Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, December 19, 1957.

<sup>245</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 70.

<sup>246</sup> A witness defined him as a “good crowd lawyer. Huey wanted to take over the case including the judge”, Interview to Judge A.M. Wallace, July 21, 1959, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 24, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

Later on, Long enrolled in the Oklahoma Baptist University to become a pastor and satisfy his mother's wishes, but he quickly discovered he did not have what might be termed the required aptitudes. Certainly, his temperament was rebellious, not reverential. He then turned to law and briefly attended the University of Oklahoma to that end. However, Huey finally became a student at Tulane University Law School in New Orleans.<sup>247</sup> The study of law influenced Long's political beliefs and future political program by introducing him to the idea of the redistribution of wealth. He would later defend his policies quoting Leviticus and Deuteronomy, biblical books which he became better acquainted to in law school. After only eight months attending Tulane—according to Long, he studied between sixteen and twenty hours per day and ended up weighting only 112 pounds (50 kg.)—, Huey convinced the university to allow him to take the state bar exam. He passed.<sup>248</sup> Thus Long became a lawyer on May 15, 1915, when he was twenty-one years old.<sup>249</sup> This formidable story of how Long became a lawyer has been retold in most studies about the politician. Nonetheless, it is relevant to add that he only finished two courses at Tulane University and therefore never earned a law degree from that institution.<sup>250</sup> Bar examination at the time recognized untutored talent, rather than exclusively accepting educational degrees.

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<sup>247</sup> Huey enrolled in Tulane University as a “special student” because he was “unable to meet the requirements”; he had “full privileges in all respects except that he may not become a candidate for a degree”, “applicants for entrance as special students must be at least twenty one years of age” [Huey enrolled on September 28, 1914, when he was precisely twenty one], The College of Law of The Tulane University of Louisiana Memorandum, Excerpts from the *Tulane University College of Law Bulletin*, 1914-1915, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 27, folder 41, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>248</sup> Long's capacity for working long hours was praised years later by the Adjutant General of the Louisiana National Guard, Ray Fleming, who said: “He not only had the best mind but he had the ability to work 20 hours a day. He never became fatigued. He would simply lay back on a chair like this or a couch and sleep five minutes and go on with his work. So supple was his mind he had that ability to keep on for hours. It beat anything I've ever seen”, Interview to Raymond H. Fleming, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>249</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 15-17; Davis, *Huey Long*, 59.

<sup>250</sup> [Long] “completed only two one-semester courses [‘Corporations’ and ‘Federal Procedure’]. [...] He took a Louisiana bar examination in the late spring of 1915. I would suppose that he must have studied law either alone or under the supervision of a Louisiana lawyer [...] Of course, he did not receive a degree from Tulane University”, Letter from Eugene A. Nabors, Tulane University, to T. Harry Williams, October 10, 1956, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 11, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

In 1912, Huey partnered with his brother Julius, who was district attorney for Winn and Jackson parishes.<sup>251</sup> However, their relationship deteriorated when the younger brother wanted to defend criminal cases that the older sibling was prosecuting. Moreover, Huey did not accept Julius as boss. Years later, the elder brother wrote a fierce article against Huey in which he regretted: “I made Huey Long a lawyer. I am largely responsible for his swift political advancement”.<sup>252</sup> However, under Julius’ guidance, as partners they were able to sue giants such as the Standard Oil Company.<sup>253</sup> Some time later, Long opened his own law firm in Shreveport in a small office with only a table and some law books. At first he did not have many clients, but he soon gained popularity among the downtrodden when he kept attacking big companies and banks. He was preparing his path towards politics.<sup>254</sup>

One case worth highlighting happened in 1923 when Long accepted the famous Bernstein case, a big lawsuit against the Bank of Winnfield, the Standard Oil Company, and the Commercial National Bank of Shreveport. E.R. Bernstein, the former vice-president of the bank, sued the institution for defamation after the bank accused him of misbehavior when lending money to oil companies.<sup>255</sup> Huey defended him and won the case earning a sizeable commission with which he would later pay for his campaigns.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 21.

<sup>252</sup> Julius T. Long, “What I Know About My Brother”, 32.

<sup>253</sup> In the case “H.P. and Julius T. Long vs. Standard Oil Co. of LA et al., Suit N° 5533”, Clairborne Parish, the company had been extracting oil from a land that was not his or the leases of which had expired, 1922, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 20, folder 778, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>254</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 92.

<sup>255</sup> Bernstein wrote: “I have reviewed the letter of the Honorable Comptroller of the Currency, and also the copy of the Examiner’s Report, as of July 20th, in which I am severely criticized for three particular loans; namely,

The TEX-LA-HOME OIL CORPORATION  
G.G. GILLETTE  
PARAMOUNT PETROLEUM COMPANY

The Report states that the loans were largely influenced by me and rather intimates the cause of my interest in some of these companies and my individual connection therein [...] The transaction for which I was criticized was certainly not profitable to me, -on the contrary, for out of this I have suffered a very large personal loss. I do not propose to shirk my share of the responsibility of these loans, but I hereby declare that the responsibility for the same was only partly mine as nothing was done without concurrence”, Letter from E.R. Bernstein to the Directors of the Commercial National Bank of Shreveport, September 15, 1920, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 31, folder 1201a, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>256</sup> The lawyer alleged: “Plaintiff [Bernstein] alleges in substance, that whilst he was an officer and director, certain loans were made by the bank after being approved by the Discount Committee, of which he was a member; that said loans resulted in a loss and that the loss was attempted to be saddled upon

Bernstein, as a way to thank his lawyer, would also fund Long's first gubernatorial campaign with 4,600 dollars, at the time a hefty sum.<sup>257</sup> Long used the rest of the money to build a big luxurious house in Shreveport and made the builder design it resembling the Commercial National Bank building, for he argued that "the bank had built the house so he thought the house ought to look like the bank".<sup>258</sup>

It is worth clarifying that the fact that he only worked on cases in which he always defended the "under-dog" was not completely true. Long did occasionally take on corporate clients, but "almost always the cases involved smaller companies suing larger ones".<sup>259</sup> In this short period working as a lawyer on his own, Long established his political ideals. He put himself on the side of those less fortunate and against big corporations, his main enemy throughout his career being the already mentioned Standard Oil Company, an entity which had replaced the railroads in the collective imagination as the primer example of abusive monopoly practice. As biographer Forrest Davis wrote in 1935,

At the age of twenty-four, the impertinent, smilingly reckless rough-neck had become a raw, sweaty St. George. As a lawyer, he had fought the battles of the oppressed; the victims of industrial accident and poor farmers who stood in the path of the lumber

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him; that the losses in question were investigated by the Board of Directors of said Bank, and that that said Board, under date of September 15th, 1920, exonerated him in a resolution that day passed to be forwarded to the Comptroller of the Currency at Washington; that thereafter [six directors and officers of the Commercial National Bank] entered into a fraudulent conspiracy, and as a result of the same, prepared and sent a letter addressed to the Comptroller of the Currency, in which it was stated that the resolution [that Bernstein was innocent of the charges] was erroneous and that plaintiff was responsible for the losses in question [...] [S]ix individual defendants [...] acting in the interest of the bank, fraudulently misrepresented plaintiff to the controller of currency and to others, whereby plaintiff was libelled [*sic*], defamed and humiliated, and whereby they succeeded in extorting from him the aforementioned guaranty. [...] So that in effect he alleges that the formation and carrying out of the conspiracy aforesaid gives him cause of action against all for the slander and defamation, and against the bank for the cancellation of the guaranty", "E. R. Bernstein vs. Commercial National Bank, et al. Appeal from 1st Judicial District Court, Parish of Caddo; Hon. J.H. Stephens, -Judge", No. 25,648, February 26, 1923, 1-2, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 31, folder 1201a, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>257</sup> Letter (copy) from Huey P. Long to E.R. Bernstein, December 30, 1924, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 15, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). Considering inflation, numbers given in dollars throughout the dissertation can be multiplied by fourteen in order to get the equivalent value in present-day currency (2016). For Cuban *pesos*, the same applies, as Cuban pesos had the same value as American dollars in the 1920s and 30s.

<sup>258</sup> Interview to Rupert Peyton, January 28, 1958, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 24, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>259</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 14.

magnates [...] He had baited the Legislature, denounced the corporations and courted the hatred of the old-line politicians. He had challenged the Standard Oil Company.<sup>260</sup>

Previously, biographer John Fineran had a much more cynical image of Long and his interests in defending the poor. Fineran wrote in 1932:

He learned that the general public is much inclined, and often rightfully inclined, to be suspicious of large corporations and to accept whatever is said of them as true. He proceed to use this knowledge politically, denouncing the corporations not only for things of which they were guilty, but blaming them for drouth [*sic*] and flood, thunder and lightning, and for conditions created by politicians of his own sort.<sup>261</sup>

It seems his hatred towards this company had its roots in Long's personal life. In 1918 he had invested a thousand dollars on an oil field named Pine Island located in Caddo parish, which had been discovered in the year prior. The Standard Oil Company used to buy this crude from private investors to sell around the country not refined. Huey made an offer to sell his part to Standard for \$12,000, but the company's president was only willing to pay him up to \$8,000, an amount that Long mistakenly rejected. When World War I ended, Standard Oil refused to use petroleum from independent producers and the business was cancelled, costing Long and others all their investments.<sup>262</sup> Huey called it the Pine Island "freeze out" and criticized that the reason for not buying any more crude oil from Caddo was not that there was no market for it, as the oil giant claimed, but that they were importing it from Mexico.<sup>263</sup> Long spoke of "The Crime Against Pine Island" saying that the "oil monopoly announced that [after December 20, 1918] [...] it would no longer transport, buy, store or refine the independents' oil produced out of Pine Island".<sup>264</sup> It was clear that the Standard Oil had made a sour enemy. As Long years later explained in Baton Rouge on September 22, 1924:

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<sup>260</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 64.

<sup>261</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 9.

<sup>262</sup> John Louis Loos, *Oil on Stream! A History of the Interstate Oil Pipe Line Company, 1909-1959* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 85-86; Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 47; Dufour, "The Days of the Kingfish", 260; Williams, *Huey Long*, 117-118.

<sup>263</sup> Loos, *Oil on Stream!* 86; Williams, *Huey Long*, 118-119. Two other authors wrote the problem was that "the Louisiana Company was faced with a temporary oversupply of crude", in George Sweet Gibb and Evelyn H. Knowlton, *The Resurgent Years, 1911-1927* (New York: Harper, 1956), 464.

<sup>264</sup> Speech of Huey P. Long, "The Pendulum of Civilization", Shreveport, September 1, 1919, 4-5, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 25, LaRC. A journalist wrote a sentence that the reader should bear in mind every time he/she reads a quotation from Long: "Huey isn't very quotable. To try it on paper is to lose all the salty flavor of the man's tongue", in Walter Davenport, "How Huey Long Gets Away with It", *Collier's Weekly*, June 17, 1933, 11.

I put \$1,050 in oil stock. The company made a strike, and I was advised to hold on, and I did hold on. Then the big oil companies, lead by the Standard Oil, issued notices that they would take no more oil from independent producers and my stock wasn't worth forty cents, while oil went to waste. Do you think I can forget that? Do you blame me for fighting the Standard Oil?<sup>265</sup>

To him, the Standard Oil, to whom he referred to as “a criminal octopus”,<sup>266</sup> incarnated the flaws of a society led by big corporations that were putting small companies out of business.<sup>267</sup> His animosity would have a new, less chivalrous, pretext when, as we shall see, he founded his own drilling company in the 1930s. Before that, however, in 1926 he once more invested money on the Tullos-Urania Oil Company, located a few kilometers from Long's hometown.<sup>268</sup> A newspaper witnessed, “Huey P. Long [...] has entered the oil business. Mr. Long, together with a number of associates, recently completed a producer in the Tullos oil field, La Salle Parish, it has become known in local oil circles”.<sup>269</sup> He invested in an oil well that was not producing as much as was expected and the expenses were very high.<sup>270</sup> Long ended up selling his well for \$11,000 in May that same year. With frustration, he expressed, “I am through with the oil business for the present”.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 85-86; Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 38.

<sup>266</sup> Dufour, “The Day of the Kingfish”, 260.

<sup>267</sup> A witness told how “Huey's animus against S.O. [Standard Oil] was political. He always hit the big boys”, Interview to Shelby Kidd, October 27, 1959, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 26, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

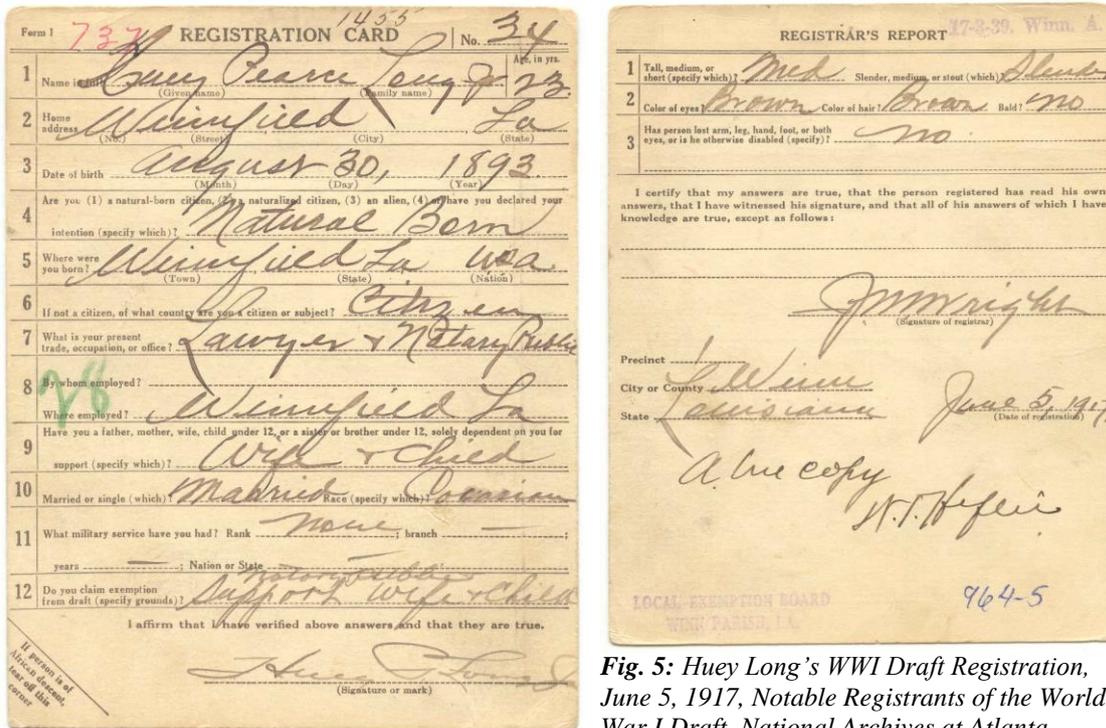
<sup>268</sup> “I am personally drilling an oil well down in Tullos”, Letter from Huey P. Long to Arkansas Pipe and Supply Co., El Dorado, Arkansas, March 29, 1926, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 105, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). Harley Bozeman argued that the discovery of that field was revolutionary for two reasons: first, because it was about one hundred miles away from the closest oil field and, secondly, because “the Tullos-Urania oil production was coming from the Wilcox formation—a formation then considered barren and non-productive of oil and gas”, in Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, September 18, 1958.

<sup>269</sup> “Oil and Gas—Long Takes Oil Fling”, newspaper clipping, May 1, 1926, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 106, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>270</sup> He expressed so in several letters: “The bills are coming in here so fast that I don't know how I am going to survive under the attack. I wish you would please let me know if you are getting any oil out. We seem to be having pretty bad luck. I may find it necessary to come down your say before very long to check up these bills”, Letter from Huey P. Long to J. Boyd “Blondy” Harrell, April 15, 1926. In another letter he wrote: “This well will be my practical ruination if I continue at the rate that I have been going. You advised me into this thing after I had turned it down, so now be sure that you take care of it, you and my friend, brother O.B. Thompson,—my Baptists brothers”, Letter from Huey P. Long to Oscar K. Allen, April 20, 1926. Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 106, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>271</sup> Letter from Huey P. Long to J. Boyd “Blondy” Harrell, May 20, 1926, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 107, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

Long opposed US involvement in World War I because, he argued, it would accentuate the unjust distribution of wealth. He said it was a conflict that did not concern his country, and so affirmed “I didn’t go because I wasn’t mad at anybody over there”.<sup>272</sup> The future governor was exempt to serve in the army because he claimed he was a husband and a father.<sup>273</sup>



**Fig. 5:** Huey Long’s WWI Draft Registration, June 5, 1917, Notable Registrants of the World War I Draft, National Archives at Atlanta. [archives.gov/atlanta/wwi-draft/long.html, National Archives and Records Administration]

<sup>272</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 70; LeVert, *Huey Long*, 39. The full text Long read at the US senate regarding this issue was: “I did not go to that war, Mr. President. I was within the draft age. I could have gone, except for my dependents. I did not go because I did not want to go, even aside from that fact. That question was asked on the floor of the Senate. I did not go because I was not mad at anybody over there, for another reason. I did not go because it was not the first time in history that the sons of America had volunteered themselves as cannon fodder under the misguided apprehension that it was going to be a fight for humanity, when they were used in that way and in the years following, and are used today and will be in the years to follow, for the purpose of centralizing the wealth of the United States and of the world in the hands of a few”, in Huey P. Long, “Way Cry for World Democracy; Today’s Cry for American Dictatorship”, re-printed Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, First Session, March 13, 1933, 2, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

<sup>273</sup> Winn parish Sheriff and Chairman of the Draft Board in Winnfield, W.T. Heflin, certificated that was the situation of Huey Long and so he was exempt to go to war, Certificate dated October 15, 1923, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 87, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge. Some years later, Heflin stated again: “As Chariman of the Draft Board of Winn Parish Louisiana during the War I wish to certify that Huey P. Long was classified four [sic] a being that of a married man with dependents for the reasons certified by the whole board several years ago as follows. He had a wife and one child before war was declared and another child was born during the war”, W.T. Heflin to Earle J. Christenberry, May 12, 1935, Telegram, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 2, folder 10, LaRC.

During this time, before entering politics, Long befriended Samuel James Harper, Jr. (1860-1943), also from Winnfield and state senator of Louisiana from 1916 to 1920. Harper was also against American entrance in the war, as he asserted in different writings:

It seems from what I can observe that we have quite a corrupt political condition in the parish. We have economic questions confronting us which need no corrupt political condition to retard their adjustment. We have an unjust distribution of wealth and income; a few growing immensely rich, while the many are growing poorer. Two per cent of the population of the United States own 60 per cent of the wealth. Sixty-five per cent of the population of the United States own only five percent of the wealth. Thousands of people are suffering on account of corrupt political condition. A corrupt political-economic condition is the cause of the war now going on in Europe.<sup>274</sup>

Harper's most famous and controversial text was the 1917 pamphlet *The Issues of the Day: Financial Slavery, Free Speech*.<sup>275</sup> The state senator argued, contrary to common belief, that the war was enriching Wall Street bankers and opportunists instead of its purported aim of saving democracy. The polemic word "slavery" was being used to refer to the economic adversities white population was experiencing. Harper also proposed a plan for the confiscation and redistribution of wealth, which let the Supreme Court of the United States to accuse him of violating the Espionage Act.<sup>276</sup> This act prevented interference with US entrance to the war or any kind of military insubordination. The official accusation stated that the accused had:

[U]nlawfully, willfully and feloniously, make and put into circulation false reports and false statements with intent to interfere with the operation and success of the military and naval forces of the United States of America, while the United States of America, was and is engaged in a war with Germany and Austria Hungary, the said false reports and false statements being contained in a pamphlet issued and put in circulation entitled, "The Issues of the Day. Financial Slavery; Free Speech. By Senator S.J. Harper,

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<sup>274</sup> Samuel J. Harper, "To the Voters of Winn Parish", *The Winnfield Sentinel*, February 24, 1916, 1, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 2, folder 54, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>275</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 70.

<sup>276</sup> "Case Against Sen. Harper", newspaper clipping, 1918, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 26, folder 1079, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU); Tammie A. McDaniel, "The Politics of Sedition: The Trial of Winnfield's Senator S. J. Harper", *Louisiana History*, vol. 53, issue 1, January 2012, 51.

Winnfield LA”, contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided and against the peace and dignity of the United States.<sup>277</sup>

Socialist Eugene Debs would also accused of violating the act. Together with his brother Julius, Long defended state senator Harper, won the case, and consequently obtained an excellent reputation. Following the steps of Harper, Huey also wrote some inflammatory articles complaining about the distribution of the wealth in the country as a whole and not circumscribed to Louisiana. He composed a letter to the newspaper *The New Orleans Item* published in March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918, under the title “Thinks Wealth Should Be More Evenly Distributed”, where he affirmed that, between 1890 and 1910,

[T]he wealth of this nation trebled, yet the masses owned less in 1910 than they did in 1890 [...] Wealth is fast accumulating in the hands of the few [...] This is a condition, north, east, south and west; with wealth concentrating, classes becoming defined, there is not the opportunity for Christian uplift and education and cannot be until there is more economic reform.<sup>278</sup>

These ideas would remain key throughout his political career.

Long would not only be against the entrance of the US in the world war. He opposed to the Louisiana Liability Act (N° 30) of 1914 and made several speeches against it. This newly approved measure established a system of compensation for workers who got injured or killed on the job, and was passed after the influence of the Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA) of 1908, which only covered railroad employees’ accidents.<sup>279</sup> In case of death, the Louisiana Act granted around \$300 to the family of the deceased, although it most likely was only applied to white workers. According to an author in the 1930s, it “represented at that time a most advanced scheme of workmen’s compensation under court administration”,<sup>280</sup> but Long did not believe so.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> “United States of America vs. S.J. Harper, Suit N° 2355, Western District of Louisiana, Alexandria Division”, February 30, 1918, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 26, folder 1079, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>278</sup> Huey P. Long, “Thinks Wealth Should Be More Evenly Distributed”, *The New Orleans Item*, March 1, 1918. Letter reproduced in Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 24; Davis, *Huey Long*, 72–73; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 45; Graham, *Huey Long*, 25-26; Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 29-30.

<sup>279</sup> H. Alston Johnson and Wex S. Malone (1951), *Louisiana Civil Law Treatise: Workers’ Compensation Law and Practice*, vol. 13 (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1994), 31–32.

<sup>280</sup> Charles W. Pipkin, “Social Legislation” in William T. Couch, *Culture in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 652.

<sup>281</sup> It was a conservative act that persisted with no basic changes until Act N° 538 of 1975; however, together with Texas, Louisiana was the first state in the South to legislate a compensation measure—the

The future governor argued in a pamphlet that the act deprived workers from their rights and insisted that the companies should guarantee between 4,000 and 8,000 dollars worth of compensation. He also defined as “worse than robbery” the fact that the first two weeks a worker was injured, he was not paid his salary, and after that time, he only received one half of his regular wage.<sup>282</sup> Long asserted:

In my fight to repeal this law the laborer leaders have joined me. We assert that it is the purpose of our legislature to decrease litigation that it should be done by some other method other than depriving helpless individuals of their rights [...] As a remedy to prevent litigation, our suggestion is that there be a law passed allowing every laborer a sum of \$7,500 for his life.<sup>283</sup>

It is interesting to note that the defense of workers’ rights would succumb in the following years in Long’s discourse.<sup>284</sup> Years later, Julius Long reproached Huey precisely for not following his promises and ignoring the workers’ needs.<sup>285</sup> Perhaps the governor did it to separate himself from the Socialists and later the Communists. In fact, some would argue that his movement took away votes from the Socialist Party.<sup>286</sup>

Another social aspect in which Long took interest in before becoming a politician was equal suffrage. He involved himself with the issue by donating fifty dollars to the

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rest of the region would reject such a law until after World War I—, in Johnson and Malone, *Louisiana Civil Law Treatise*, 48-49.

<sup>282</sup> Huey P. Long, “Who Rules in Louisiana? An Exposure of the Corrupt Political Methods of the Louisiana Corporations”, 1916?, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 25, folder 1064, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>283</sup> Huey P. Long, “Huey P. Long Blames the Corporations”, *The Winnfield Sentinel*, March 30, 1916, 1. The same article was published in *The Dodson Times*, March 31, 1916, 1. Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 2, folder 54, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>284</sup> Labor activist and journalist Benjamin Stolberg wrote: “To be sure, Long did not trouble about social legislation any more than any of his predecessors. Nor did he ever do a thing for labor”, in Benjamin Stolberg, “Dr. Huey and Mr. Long”, *The Nation*, vol. 141, n°. 3664, September 25, 1935, 346, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 2, folder 15, LaRC. Long did not, nonetheless, forget the issue completely. In 1928 Huey wrote to the House of Representatives to express his support for an employers’ liability act in Louisiana that would take into account the opinions of both the “representatives of commerce and industry and the representatives of labor”, Letter from Huey P. Long to the House of Representatives, July 3, 1928, Huey P. Long papers 1927-1935, Mss. 557, 1240, 1350, 1956, Misc L, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>285</sup> Julius wrote: “He became very close and friendly to certain insurance companies interested in workingmen’s compensation shortly after he became governor, and my requests that he keep his promise about that law fell on deaf ears. Yet he goes about the country telling labor what a great friend of labor he has been. I know of nothing at all that he has done for labor”, in Long, “What I Know About My Brother”, 33.

<sup>286</sup> “Alone among contemporary political figures, he possessed the ability to take away their audiences from the Socialists”, in “Vale, Huey Long”, *The Awakener*, September 15, 1935, 2.

Shreveport Equal Suffrage League in 1918.<sup>287</sup> Long also campaigned in favor and encouraged people to vote “yes” on the poll on women’s suffrage celebrated in Louisiana on November 5, 1918, by saying: “You are called upon the arm of our national leader and president [Woodrow Wilson] in his fight for world democracy and right”.<sup>288</sup> At the end the “yes” lost by only 2,000 votes,<sup>289</sup> which was considered a sort of victory for women’s suffrage.<sup>290</sup>

### 1.3 First tumultuous years in politics

Harper inspired Long to enter into politics. All his short life he had imagined himself as a politician; in fact, a popular anecdote tells how three years after marrying his wife he assured her that first he would become governor, then senator, and, lastly, president of the United States.<sup>291</sup> Since in 1918 he was too young to become US senator—the minimum age was thirty, and Long was twenty-five years old—, he ran for the Louisiana Railroad Commission, which was created in 1898 and administered the transportation system in the state, particularly railroads, steamships, and other types of vessels. The Commission had recently also taken control over oil pipelines, and telephone and telegraph companies.<sup>292</sup>

Apparently, Long first wanted to run for district attorney, but he would have had to campaign against his brother Julius. According to his childhood friend, Harley Bozeman, he allegedly offered him a solution:

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<sup>287</sup> Letter from Mrs. Weaver, President of the Shreveport Equal Suffrage League, to Huey P. Long, November 11, 1918, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 2, folder 60, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>288</sup> Speech from Huey P. Long supporting Woman Suffrage, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 2, folder 65, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>289</sup> “Suffrage Lost By Approximately 2,000 Votes”, *New Orleans States*, November 7, 1918, 1.

<sup>290</sup> The nineteenth amendment, which granted women suffrage, was passed in 1920, in Armantine M. Smith, “The History of the Woman’s Suffrage Movement in Louisiana”, *Louisiana Law Review*, vol. 62, n°. 2 (Winter 2002): 560.

<sup>291</sup> It is interesting to note, though, that he stated the opposite in a speech: “I am not in politics and never expect to run for any office. There is no office within the gift of the people of Louisiana that I would accept”, Speech of Huey P. Long, “Are We Rich or Poor?” no date available, 14, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 25, LaRC.

<sup>292</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 120.

‘Instead of running for district attorney this fall, why don’t you wait and run for Railroad Commissioner in 1918?’ Huey shot back: ‘What the hell is that job?’ I answered ‘I don’t know all about it, but over in Georgia and Alabama, Joe Brown of Georgia and Governor Henderson of Alabama used the Railroad Commissioner’s office as a springboard to the governorship of those two states’ [...] [T]hat night, he had decided to pass up the local district attorney’s race.<sup>293</sup>

After his friend Oscar K. Allen (1882-1936) loaned him \$500, Long campaigned in a most unusual manner for the time, in a style that would become his trademark.<sup>294</sup> As Davis observed, “selling Huey P. Long now, and not Cottolene, he used the same methods”.<sup>295</sup> Journalist Hugh Mercer Blain wrote it plainly, “Huey was a salesman all his life”.<sup>296</sup> The candidate employed posters, pamphlets, and trucks that drove throughout Louisiana spreading his candidacy and program. He also started to dress in a gaudy outfit consisting of a white linen suit combined with colorful shirts and ties, shaping his political persona. After weeks of visiting different towns throughout Louisiana, people began to recognize him. For decades, most voters who lived in rural areas could not meet the candidate they were voting for, and so they greatly valued visits from a politician like Long, who bothered to set food on their humble towns. Political scientist V.O. Key argued that it was this historical alienation of the poor rural whites what led Long to his future political victory.<sup>297</sup> One risky propaganda technique was when Huey knocked on farmers’ doors in the middle of the night asking for their vote. Instead of being offended by the boldness, the farmers appreciated that a politician visited them in such late hours.<sup>298</sup> Journalist Harnett Kane wrote in 1941, “he knew well what the farmers and the small-town people wanted, what they hated”, and so he took advantage of it.<sup>299</sup> Long’s message was clear. Writer Suzanne LeVert stressed in her 1995 study of the politician: “Huey Long was a common man who would fight for the

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<sup>293</sup> Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It -- Why Huey Long Ran for Railroad Commissioner”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, October 31, 1957, newspaper clipping, Harley B. Bozeman papers, Mss. 2431, Newspaper Articles 1956, 1969, box 2, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>294</sup> Huey would afterwards reward Allen with the governorship in 1932, in Elmer Lincoln Irely and William J. Slocum, “The Gentleman from Louisiana: Huey Pierce Long”, in *The Tax Dodgers: The Inside Story of the T-Men’s War with America’s Political and Underworld Hoodlums* (New York: Greenberg, 1948), 89.

<sup>295</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 74.

<sup>296</sup> Hugh Mercer Blain, *Favorite Huey Long Stories* (Baton Rouge: O. Claitor, 1937), 11.

<sup>297</sup> Key, *Southern Politics*, 129.

<sup>298</sup> A witness who was an attorney said: “He’d talk to the farmers even at 10 o’clock at night”, Interview to David Blackshear, June 27, 1957, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 26, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>299</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 47.

rights of the common man. Huey Long was not like other politicians who were serving the interests of big business [...] Huey Long would work hard to supply the poor, struggling people of Louisiana with the basic necessities of life, and more”.<sup>300</sup>

Under the slogan “Vote for a Principle”, Long received the majority of votes in the rural areas, as would repeatedly happen in the future, and won the election in November 6, 1918,<sup>301</sup> against his opponent, Burk A. Bridges.<sup>302</sup> As a member of the Railroad Commission, he had to reduce his cases as a lawyer and took the opportunity to attack his archenemy, the Standard Oil Company.<sup>303</sup> He delivered a speech in Shreveport in which he affirmed the company and its “plutocratic group” was controlling Louisiana.<sup>304</sup> As a commissioner, Long also helped improve the infrastructure of Louisiana.<sup>305</sup>

In 1920 Long supported the gubernatorial campaign of Democrat and freemason John M. Parker (1863-1939), president of the Cotton Exchange and the New Orleans Board of Trade.<sup>306</sup> In a speech he asked the audience, “What kind of democrat you want, a ring special interest politician [his opponent, Frank P. Stubbs], or a white, free, anti-ring democrat?”<sup>307</sup> Once Parker won the election and soon after he thanked Long for his

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<sup>300</sup> LeVert, *Huey Long*, 43.

<sup>301</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 125.

<sup>302</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 31-32. A letter was sent to Long congratulating him for the victory, Letter from Catherine H. Moberly, Director of the Woman’s Bureau at The American Red Cross, to Huey P. Long, November 13, 1918, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 2, folder 60, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>303</sup> Long refused to handle a case, which is not specified in the sources, by saying that although needed the money, but “just simply haven’t the time. The railroad commission is taking up all the time now”, Letter from Huey P. Long to J.J. Long (no relation), October 18, 1919, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 21, folder 838, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>304</sup> Speech of Huey P. Long, “The Pendulum of Civilization”, Shreveport, September 1, 1919, 2, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 25, LaRC.

<sup>305</sup> Several improvement of infrastructure took place after citizens’ requests. For example, order n° 2869, April 27, 1920, commanded the Louisiana and Arkansas Railroad Commissions to build a depot structure and an agent in Webster parish, after a citizen’s request was made the year prior. Another order, n° 2337, April 27, 1920, instructed the Railroad Commission to build a station and provide an agent at Rhinehart, Catahoula parish, after another citizen’s request. Another example is order n° 2340, April 27, 1920, which called for “the erection and establishment of a depot at Fryeburg-Hope”, in Bienville parish, and an agent. Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 35, folder 1307A, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>306</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 78.

<sup>307</sup> Draft of a speech given by Huey P. Long in support of John M. Parker, 1919, 3, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 2, folder 66, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

support, their relationship crumbled.<sup>308</sup> He governed from 1920 to 1924, and during his administration, the relatively progressive 1921 Louisiana Constitution was approved,<sup>309</sup> lasting until 1974. Parker was described by future governor Sam H. Jones (1897-1978) as “the greatest governor the state had in this century”.<sup>310</sup>

Not all future governors believed so. Huey thought that governor Parker would fight against the interests of big oil companies; however, he became a much less progressive politician than some had anticipated.<sup>311</sup> The new governor signed an agreement with Standard Oil stating that the legislature would not impose a severance tax higher than two and a half percent. Both parties agreed on the measure.<sup>312</sup> There was a third party that would not support this “gentlemen’s agreement”. Long started to spew constant diatribes against Parker from the Public Service Commission—the former Railroad Commission, which changed its name after the 1921 constitution was approved—, thus becoming one of his main critics.<sup>313</sup> This pattern of behavior of Long would be seen on several occasions and culminated in his break with president Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) in 1933, as will be further explained in chapter four. Thus it seems that

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<sup>308</sup> “Permit me to most cordially and sincerely thank you for the splendid help you have given me in my campaign”, Letter from John M. Parker to Huey P. Long, January 27, 1920, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 77, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>309</sup> Perry H. Howard, “The Rise of ‘Longism’”, in *Political Tendencies in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 216. According to a magazine, “The revised constitution adopted by Louisiana in 1921 should be held responsible for much of Huey Long’s success in becoming the present virtual dictator of the state. The provisions of that constitution vastly increased the authority of the Governor, and empowered him to appoint the chairmen of the state commissions in charge of conservation, charities, highways, and taxes, in addition to the heads of the Dock and Levee Boards—all important posts in any Louisiana political machine”, in Edgar Sisson, “Huey Long: Dictator of the Delta. Part 2”, *Today*, October 13, 1934, 22. Writer Edgar Sisson published a series of six weekly articles entitled “Huey Long: Dictator of the Delta” in *Today* magazine between October 6 and November 10, 1934. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>310</sup> Interview to Sam H. Jones, April 3, 1961, by T. Harry Williams, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 26, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>311</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 101-103.

<sup>312</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 35.

<sup>313</sup> It is worth noting, though, that, according to some authors, the progressivism of governor Parker has been overshadowed by the work on infrastructure done later by Long. Between 1920 and 1928 the road system of the Pelican State improved considerably and became much more sophisticated. Historian John W. Scott wrote, “Some 1,458 miles of roadway had been added to the state system since 1924, bringing the total mileage under state maintenance in April 1926 to over 4,158 miles; another 643 miles and eighteen bridge projects were under construction; and thirty-five new bridge projects, many begun under Parker, were completed between 1924 and 1926”, in “Highway Building in Louisiana before Huey Long: An Overdue Re-Appraisal”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 44, n° 1 (Winter 2003): 31. On Parker and Long’s relationship see Matthew J. Schott, “Huey Long: Progressive Backlash?”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 27, n° 2 (Spring 1986): 133-45.

throughout his adult life the politician from Louisiana looked for male role models, a sort of father figures, that inspired him and later on he superseded and verbally attacked.

A specific verbal aggression Long made against the Louisiana governor brought him some trouble. In a speech he gave in East Baton Rouge entitled “Gentlemen’s Agreement and Promises”, Long openly accused Parker of having an alliance with the oil giant.<sup>314</sup> The commissioner “charged Governor Parker helped the Standard Oil Company instead of the people” and stated that the company was the one ruling the state of Louisiana.<sup>315</sup> This statement infuriated Parker, who consequently charged Long of criminal libel.<sup>316</sup> After learning about the accusation, Long was not surprised and emphasized:

I have charged that the administration has not kept the promise on which it rode into office and am ready to prove it. Has the ring been destroyed? Has the lobby been run out of the state house? Were the oil laws written by the independent oil operators and anti-corporation lawyers, as promised? [...] I believed him then [during the campaign]. I am sorry [...] The governor’s present methods will have no effect upon me—I fear him just about as little as any man I have ever met.<sup>317</sup>

The commissioner also wrote a letter to the governor, letting him know:

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<sup>314</sup> Huey P. Long, “Gentlemen’s Agreement and Promises”, September 28, 1921, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 77, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>315</sup> “General News in Brief”, *The Era-leader* (Franklinton, LA), October 6, 1921, 1, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064305/1921-10-06/ed-1/seq-1](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064305/1921-10-06/ed-1/seq-1)

<sup>316</sup> [Accusation] “to defame John M. Parker, Governor of the State of Louisiana, and to bring him, the said John M. Parker, Governor of Louisiana, into contempt and disrepute, and disparage his reputation and degrade him in the esteem of the public, and to excite against him the said John M. Parker, Governor of Louisiana, the hatred and contempt of the people of Louisiana [...] The said Huey P. Long falsely charged that the Standard Oil Company is in control of the Government of the State of Louisiana, (thereby inferring that the said Standard Oil Company controls the official acts of the said John M. Parker, as Governor)”, Official document of the accusation, Huey P, Long papers, 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 82, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU); “Louisiana Official Charged with Libel”, *The Bisbee Daily Review* (Bisbee, Ariz.), October 4, 1921, 3, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024827/1921-10-04/ed-1/seq-3](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024827/1921-10-04/ed-1/seq-3); “Parker Charges Long with Criminal Libel”, *The Bienville Democrat* (Arcadia, Bienville Parish, LA), October 6, 1921, 1, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064069/1921-10-06/ed-1/seq-1](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064069/1921-10-06/ed-1/seq-1); “Parker Charged Libel to Long”, *Thibodaux Commercial Journal* (Thibodaux, Lafourche Parish, La.), October 8, 1921, 1, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064094/1921-10-08/ed-1/seq-1](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064094/1921-10-08/ed-1/seq-1)

<sup>317</sup> Statement written by Huey P. Long, 1921, Huey P, Long papers, 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 77, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge.

Now, Mr. Parker, to a friend who gave your his political bread, you have returned a political serpent; the man who put his political cloak about you, upon him have you heaped prosecution and threat of destruction. That's gratitude! [...] Against you I have no ill will or hatred. I simply have watched and fought too long, too hard and at too great a sacrifice to allow your mistakes to cover up the possible hope for future relief.<sup>318</sup>

Julius defended him together with lawyer James G. Palmer (1875-1952) from Shreveport.<sup>319</sup> After a hard fight and even though he was found guilty, Huey was only fined one dollar and thirty days in prison—a sentence which, due to his good behavior, was suspended. The experience, however, did not stop the young lawyer from continuing his attacks on Parker.<sup>320</sup> This issue started or promoted anti-longism in the newspapers, as the following extract from a small publication from South Louisiana—where Long had less support—exemplifies:

Now comes our grouchy Public Utility Commissioner, Huey Long to the front, and after uncorking his vitriolic vial, goes on to spread all manner of abuse and vilification of Governor Parker. The fact is we all know this is Huey's normal condition. He would not be himself if he approved anything, or commended any public service—but his own.<sup>321</sup>

At the same time, the event strengthened Long's popularity.<sup>322</sup> The commissioner, for instance, received support from the Woman's Union Labor League.<sup>323</sup> Louisiana society

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<sup>318</sup> Letter from Huey P. Long to John M. Parker, October 9, 1921, Huey P. Long papers, 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 82, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>319</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 147. Huey named his second son Palmer to show his gratitude towards the judge. He also promised he would support him as a candidate for the governorship, but in the end he was the candidate thus forcing Palmer out of the race, in Julius Long, "What I Know About My Brother", 36, 38.

<sup>320</sup> "Huey Long Is Guilty. Jail and Fine Imposed", *Vernon Parish Democrat*, November 10, 1921, 1, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064278/1921-11-10/ed-1/seq-1](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064278/1921-11-10/ed-1/seq-1); "Huey Long Will Not Be Hushed", *Vernon Parish Democrat* (Leesville, LA), November 17, 1921, 1, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064278/1921-11-17/ed-1/seq-1](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064278/1921-11-17/ed-1/seq-1).

<sup>321</sup> "Bull and Bluster", *Thibodaux Commercial Journal* (Thibodaux, Lafourche Parish, La.), October 8, 1921, 2, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064094/1921-10-08/ed-1/seq-2](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064094/1921-10-08/ed-1/seq-2)

<sup>322</sup> "The judgement against you is only such as Brutus passed upon Caesar and Pontius Pilate pronounced against Christ. You have been proven guilty of nothing but offending the higher up who seeks to ride down the rights of the common people", Telegram from T.W. Perrin, J.H. Finlay, W.J. Renfro, W.B. Martin, W.M. Coleman, Jr., S.J. McKensie, E.H. Hines, R.T. Hodges, B.S. Benton, et al., to Huey P. Long, November 9, 1921, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 77, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU); "Common people with you [...] Looks like you are slated for martyr to rightful cause. Keep up the good fight", Telegram from G.B. Campbell to Huey P. Long, October 12, 1921; "Legion of your friends congratulate and are with you in the stand you have taken against the Standard Oil dynasty", Telegram from E.C. Dawson to Huey P. Long, October 4, 1921, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 82, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

was preparing itself for the political dichotomy between *longite* and anti-*longite* that would characterize the state throughout the following years.

### 1.3.1 Long's first campaign for the governorship

On his thirtieth birthday, in August 30, 1923, Long officially announced he would run for governor under the slogan "Long Our Next Governor", an acronym of his last name.<sup>324</sup> His opponents were Henry L. Fuqua (1865-1926), a protestant from Baton Rouge, and Hewitt Bouanchard (1877-1950), a Catholic of French origin. Long explained his political strategy to win would be:

I'm going to run for governor and tell you how I'm going to win [...] In every parish there is a boss, usually the sheriff. He has forty per cent of the votes, forty per cent are opposed to him, and twenty per cent are in-betweens. I'm going into every parish and cuss out the boss. That gives me forty per cent of the votes to begin with, and I'll hoss trade'em out of the in-betweens.<sup>325</sup>

As he had done during the Railroad Commission campaign, Long went to the rural and isolated areas of the state to persuade farmers to vote for him, for "he always remembered people, names, where he'd met them, what they had discussed".<sup>326</sup> On the stump, he fiercely criticize his opponents:

A vote for Bouanchard, the Crown Prince, is a vote for the continuation of the Parker administration and all the attendant ills of this mis-government [...] A vote for Fuqua is a vote for J.Y. Sanders and the plunderbund he so ably represents. Fuqua's candidacy is that of the Corporations, Monopolies and Big Business [...] A vote for Long is a vote for the people, the common people. Long is of the people and for the people and is going to be elected by the people.

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<sup>323</sup> "So long as he stands for right and just government for the commonwealth of our state and people", Statement signed by Mrs. and Ms. T.H. Call, and Mr. and Mrs. W.F. Corbitt, October 7, 1921, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 77, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>324</sup> "Long Announces, Scores Officials", *New Orleans States*, August 31, 1923, 5; Davis, *Huey Long*, 84; Hair, *The Kingfish*, 126. Long had been playing with the idea some months before, as this statement shows, "Huey P. Long has thrown his hat in the ring as the 'Kid Candidate' for governor in 1924", in Henry C. Braud, "Burnside Notes and Leaks", *The Donaldsonville Chief* (Donaldsonville, LA), November 18, 1922, 2, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034248/1922-11-18/ed-1/seq-2](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034248/1922-11-18/ed-1/seq-2)

<sup>325</sup> Quoted in Williams, *Huey Long*, 181.

<sup>326</sup> Interview to Dave McConnell, March 14, 1960, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 27, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

Long is against the Parker administration.  
Long is opposed to religious strife and discontent and unrest.  
Long is forever and always opposed to the return of the open saloons.  
Long is opposed to J.Y. Sanders and the kind of government he stands for.  
Long will be the Governor of Louisiana in fact as well as in name.  
Good Roads. Get Louisiana put out of the mud.<sup>327</sup>

It was throughout this campaign that Huey established his popular political program, based on building roads and bridges, as well as giving free schoolbooks to children.<sup>328</sup> He also advocated for making natural gas for heating available in New Orleans, among other policies; all without raising taxes. He affirmed the conditions of Louisiana were not that different from a European medieval feudal state, in which private property was concentrated in the hands of a few powerful men and political rights were given according to private privilege.<sup>329</sup> In the United States, where government intervention is commonly seen as dubious and as a potential threat to the free market economy and individual liberty, Long's program was risky. Because of it, Huey would be usually labeled as "communist" and "Bolshevik" throughout his career.

Whatever his selling talents, in this first campaign for governor Long still had to improve his oratorical skills. He exaggerated his gesticulation and spoke in a tone that was too high to the point that sounded strident, especially when criticizing his opponents. A witness told that "he wasn't well known and when he spoke didn't draw enough to hold a meeting".<sup>330</sup> Another revised observer, historian Arthur Marvin Shaw (1896-1953), wrote about the first time he saw the future governor: "I was not impressed. His performance seemed strangely mechanical and uninspired. He had no microphone or loud-speaker and his raucous tones were dissipated in the unique atmosphere of that scorching park".<sup>331</sup> During his speeches, Long gradually "took off his clothes", such as his jacket or tie. This sometimes scandalized refined or traditional

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<sup>327</sup> Campaign pamphlet for Long's candidacy, 1923, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 87, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>328</sup> He guaranteed he would eliminate "text-book fraud", as he called the constant changing and charging of the schoolbooks, in "2,500 Hear Long at Baton Rouge", *New Orleans States*, January 3, 1924, 19.

<sup>329</sup> Speech delivered by Huey P. Long, 1923, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 92, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>330</sup> Interview to Ernest Clemments, March 29, 1960, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 27, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>331</sup> Arthur Marvin Shaw, "The First Time I Saw Huey", *Southwest Review* XXXV (Winter 1950): 60.

audiences. As time went by he became more experienced in politics and, while not changing his manners, he did soften them.<sup>332</sup> On the eve of election day, Long gave his first speech over the radio, which in the upcoming years would become one of his main propaganda tools.<sup>333</sup>

In this first campaign for governorship, Long was strongly criticized by the press in articles and cartoons. The three newspapers that in 1924 were his main detractors were *The Daily States*, *The Times-Picayune*, and *The New Orleans Item*. Nonetheless, Huey took advantage of the situation, as he explained in his autobiography: “The enemy newspapers may have thought that all of the propaganda carried in their columns would do me less than good; on the contrary it redounded to my advantage and greatly pleased the folks of both city and country”.<sup>334</sup>

#### a) The race issue: the reemergence of the KKK

In Louisiana in the 1920s there were marked social and cultural divisions between the Protestant north and the Catholic south,<sup>335</sup> between rural population spread throughout the parishes of the state and urban population of the centers of Baton Rouge and New Orleans, and, finally, between white, Cajun, Native American, Creole, and black population—this latter group will be analyzed in chapter five. As Hair argues, “Louisiana, with its close numerical division of black and white, was one of the most intensely race-conscious of southern states”.<sup>336</sup> Even though African Americans represented almost fifty percent of the population in Louisiana, very few of them were registered in the census to vote because they were forced to show they were literate or even pay fees at the polling booths. Consequently, their political representation was scarce.

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<sup>332</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 203.

<sup>333</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 39.

<sup>334</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 200.

<sup>335</sup> For a Catholic history of the United States written in that period for elementary school children, see William Henry Joseph Kennedy, Leonita Mulhall, and Mary Joseph Dunn, *Today and Yesterday. A New History of Our Country for Upper Grades of Catholic Elementary Schools* (New York; Cincinnati: Benziger Bros., 1937).

<sup>336</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 60.

In relation to that, there was another issue during the 1924 campaign to which the new candidate did not pay much attention, that is, the reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). A journalist had anticipated: “The present campaign will not be based on economical lines, but on KuKluxism or Anti-KuKluxism”.<sup>337</sup> After the Reconstruction Era, despite the enactment of the Jim Crow laws (1876-1965), the KKK had lost its relevance. However, the Klan resurfaced in strength in Atlanta on Thanksgiving 1915 under the leadership of William Joseph Simmons (1880-1945), who would be the first “Imperial Wizard”. The renewed organization expanded its program, including not only its hatred towards blacks, but also anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-foreign-bornism, together with “pure” Americanism, Protestantism and strict morality.<sup>338</sup> Simmons is quoted to have stated that the open immigration policy had derived not to the configuration of a melting pot in the United States, but of a “garbage can”.<sup>339</sup> Up to 1920, the KKK had just gathered a few thousand members and it would not be until the beginning of the 1920s that the organization grew to 100,000 members due to the task of publicity carried out by the Southern Publicity Association, and it rose up to over four million members in 1924.<sup>340</sup> The time of its success was not coincidental. Leading African-American intellectual W.B. DuBois affirmed in 1926: “There can be little doubt that the Klan in its present form is a legacy of the World War”.<sup>341</sup>

In the South the KKK was most popular because it brought back memories of the original Klan founded during the Reconstruction. Their members believed the organization protected the particular way of life of the South. Moreover, after the movie *The Birth of a Nation* by David W. Griffith was released in 1915 the so-called “Lost Cause” came into vogue once again.<sup>342</sup> In the following years, the order would often organize screenings of the movie to attract new members.<sup>343</sup> In November 1922, the “Klonvokation”, the legislature of the KKK, chose Hiram Wesley Evans (1881-1966) as

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<sup>337</sup> Letter from Wyatt Yarbrough to the editor of *The Natchitoches Times*, March 10, 1923, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 87, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>338</sup> Arnold S. Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1962), 2-3, 101.

<sup>339</sup> Quoted in Thomas R. Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2011), 12.

<sup>340</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 7, 12.

<sup>341</sup> W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, “The Shape of Fear”, *The North American Review* 223 (June 1926): 293.

<sup>342</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 16.

<sup>343</sup> Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American*, 8.

their new “Imperial Wizard”, who described himself as the “most average men in America”,<sup>344</sup> probably to find empathy with new members.

In terms of geography, and contrary to common belief, the organization not only had supporters throughout the American South, but also in states such as California and Oregon, and in the Middle West, particularly Indiana and Ohio.<sup>345</sup> The orders’ discourse was appealing to all those Americans frustrated by the complexities of modernity typical of post-war US and nostalgic of old-time religious moral and traditions. In fact, according to historian Thomas R. Pegram, the Klan came to be almost an ordinary part of every-day life in the twenties, because “while secret, Klan membership in many communities was nonetheless an open secret and included public officials, Protestant ministers, and ordinary and prominent citizens alike”.<sup>346</sup>

In Louisiana, the Klan was reestablished in 1920, thus becoming a central issue in the 1924 gubernatorial election.<sup>347</sup> Although the fraternity was not as strong as in other southern states, there are some examples that show its presence in local government. In September 1921, the mayor of New Orleans Andrew J. McShane (1865-1936) condemned the order as un-American and thus the Klan had to close its local office temporarily. In December the following year, a letter bearing the Klan stamp was sent to the mayor of Haynesville, in the north, and to all members of the police force ordering them to resign after being accused of being “shielding bootleggers and lawbreakers”.<sup>348</sup> Du Bois told the horrifying story of how a town named Mer Rouge, located in northeastern Louisiana, practically belonged to the fraternity thus implementing terror, prosecution, and murder not only against blacks but also poor whites, gamblers, and

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<sup>344</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 9; Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American*, 17.

<sup>345</sup> In fact, Indiana and Ohio were the states with the highest number of Klan members in the whole Union. The amounts were of 500,000 and 450,000, respectively. *Ibid.*, 13. See also Leonard Joseph Moore, *Citizen Klansmen the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

<sup>346</sup> Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American*, 6.

<sup>347</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 191–192; Peter H. Amann, “Les Fascismes Américains Des Année Trente: Aperçus et Réflexions”, *Revue D’histoire de La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale et Des Conflits Contemporains* 32, n° 126 (April 1, 1982): 51-52.

<sup>348</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 51.

“bad” women.<sup>349</sup> On one occasion in 1922, Parker, then governor, had to send in the militia.<sup>350</sup>

Therefore, the candidates of the 1924 gubernatorial election in Louisiana necessarily referred to the issue. On one hand, Bouanchard had publicly opposed the reemergence of the Klan. On the other, while Fuqua had openly declared himself an anti-Klan man, some were suspicious that he was secretly giving it his support.<sup>351</sup> A writer stated eight years later: “Most of the Kluxers were pledged to one Henry Fuqua”.<sup>352</sup> Long, however, did not publicly position himself, as a local newspaper of the time published:

Mr. Long says the issue will be whether or not the corporations, of which the Standard Oil is greatest in the State, is to control our affairs. He declares he is not going to lend himself to any fight that is calculated to throw the State into a religious war. On such an issue he refuses to stand ‘on one side or the other’.<sup>353</sup>

The fact that Long was a white Protestant from the north, the region of Louisiana with more supporters of the Klan, made many wrongly suspicious that he was a member of the organization.<sup>354</sup> In fact, as historian Ivy Hair stated in 1991, there were some links that connected Huey with the Klan; for instance, the *Sgt. Dalton’s Weekly*, the most relevant KKK newspaper in Louisiana, was founded in 1922 and published in Winnfield, Long’s hometown.<sup>355</sup>

Huey Long could have never been a member of the KKK because he did not support or focus on its main idea, that is, white supremacy. But by not publicly involving himself

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<sup>349</sup> Du Bois, “The Shape of Fear”, 297-300.

<sup>350</sup> Howard, “The Rise of ‘Longism’”, 217.

<sup>351</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 84. During the campaign, in a speech in Baton Rouge Huey Long had declared that Fuqua would lead Klansmen to vote for him, in “2,500 Hear Long at Baton Rouge”, *New Orleans States*, January 3, 1924, 19.

<sup>352</sup> Louis Cochran, “The Louisiana Kingfish”, *The American Mercury*, July 1932, 282, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 1, folder 1, LSMHC.

<sup>353</sup> “Under Which King?”, *Thibodaux Commercial Journal* (Thibodaux, Lafourche Parish, LA), December 9, 1922, 4, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064094/1922-12-09/ed-1/seq-4](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064094/1922-12-09/ed-1/seq-4)

<sup>354</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 48. A supporter told T. Harry Williams in an interview: “In 1924 campaign Huey was not a Klansman although he may have been made an honorary member by some of the Klansmen in north La. He wanted their votes but he was not an active member”, Interview to Jess Nugent, January 25, 1956, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 27, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>355</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 135.

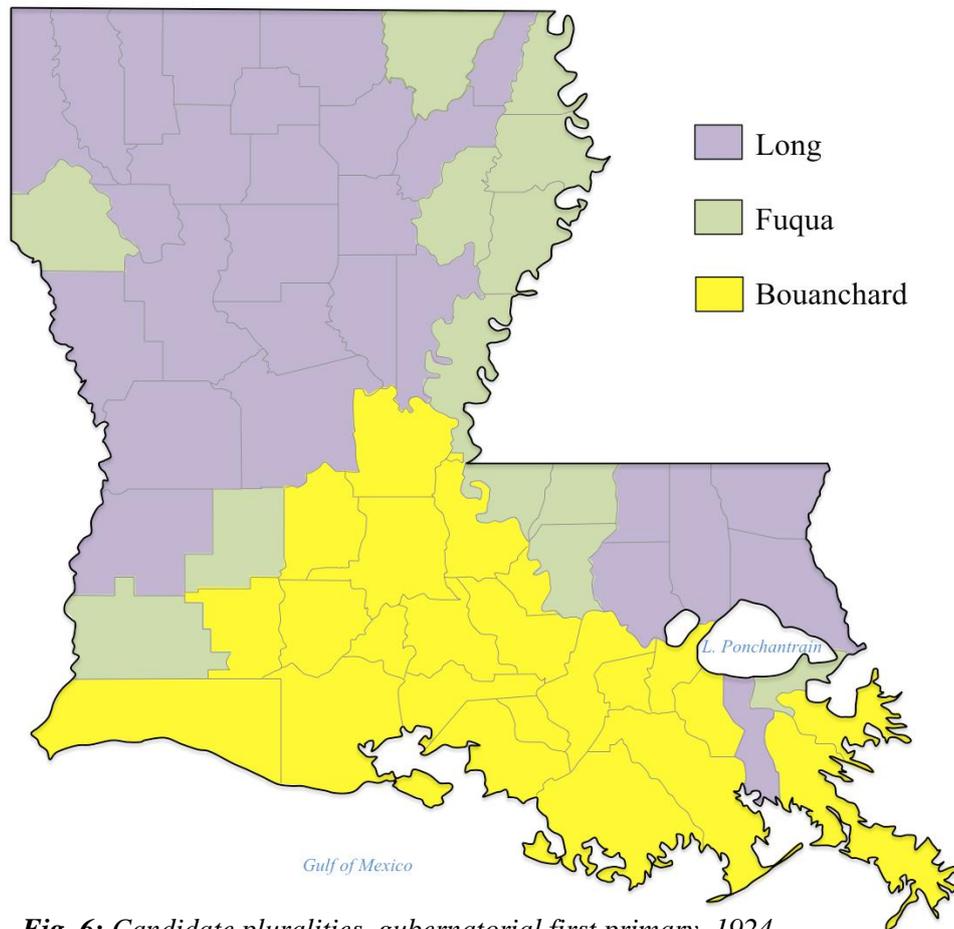
with the Ku Klux Klan issue, Long lost the 1924 election. Perhaps he had in mind the municipal election of Charleston, South Carolina, a year prior, in which the candidate John P. Grace (1874-1940), who was hoping for re-election, stated he was against the so-called “Invisible Empire”, and thus he suspiciously lost.<sup>356</sup> The KKK certainly had a key role not so much in national but in local politics of that time.<sup>357</sup> Regardless, Huey obtained a much higher result than expected and finished third with 73,985 or the 31% of the votes, most of them coming from the northern parishes of the state. Bouanchard obtained 84,162 votes, and Fuqua followed him with 81,382 votes. The following map clearly illustrates that, just as Frederick Jackson Turner concluded in 1932 when discussing the entire nation that “there is a geography of American politics”,<sup>358</sup> so too there was a division between North and South Louisiana.

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<sup>356</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 45.

<sup>357</sup> Nonetheless, historian Arnold Rice argues that the Klan fiercely campaigned against the Democrat governor of New York, Alfred E. Smith (1873-1944), in the 1928 presidential election, in favor of Republican Herbert Hoover, because the former was a Catholic and a “wet”—that is, he was against Prohibition—, and therefore was considered un-American and un-fit for the position, in Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 86-89.

<sup>358</sup> Jackson Turner, *The Significance of Sections*, 192.



**Fig. 6:** Candidate pluralities, gubernatorial first primary, 1924. Adapted from Perry H. Howard's map in *Political Tendencies in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 230. Map by Rubén Carrillo.

After a second primary, Fuqua became the new governor,<sup>359</sup> and took the oath that May.<sup>360</sup> Brinkley states that besides his loosing, “the real story of the 1924 campaign was not Fuqua’s victory, but Long’s surprising strength”.<sup>361</sup> The three candidates had gotten strong support from their voters throughout the process,<sup>362</sup> but Long had often been considered a weak or non serious candidate.<sup>363</sup> However, Huey was now a

<sup>359</sup> “Fuqua Gains; Leads Race”, *New Orleans States*, January 16, 1924, 1; “Baton Rouge Is Proud to Have Its Native Son”, *New Orleans Item*, May 18, 1924, 1; Williams, *Huey Long*, 211; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 28.

<sup>360</sup> “Stage Is Set For Fuqua's Inauguration”, *New Orleans Item*, May 18, 1924, 1, 4; “Gov. Fuqua Takes Oath”, *New Orleans Item*, May 19, 1924, 1.

<sup>361</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 19.

<sup>362</sup> “Big Crowds Hear 3 Candidates End Fight”, *New Orleans States*, January 13, 1924, 1.

<sup>363</sup> “Mr. Long is posing as the clownish agitator of all that is despicable in human nature [...] Thank God, he is not now to be considered as a potent factor in the race”, Speech delivered by Civil War veteran John

noteworthy opponent to the traditional political system of the state. Far from blaming the Klan, Long claimed he had not been elected because it rained on election day, January 15,<sup>364</sup> which diminished the possibility of farmers to go vote. He affirmed, “I have only the rains to blame for not being the next governor”.<sup>365</sup>

Huey believed that by introducing the race issue in his program he might have discouraged white voters. Moreover, since most blacks did not vote, he considered the issue secondary. As LeVert writes, “to Huey, it was a waste of time to have one poor man fighting another poor man while the corporations [were] starving the children of both”.<sup>366</sup> Long vaguely mentioned the Klan a few times during the campaign with sentences like: “I will get the majority of Jews, the majority of Baptists, the majority of Catholics, the majority of Methodists, the majority of Episcopalians, the majority of Klansmen, the majority of anti-Klansmen, the majority of the laborers and the majority of the farmers”, or that he “was against any and all forms of super-rule, Klan rule and any other [...] I am against any unlawful practices by the Klan or anyone else and [...] I favor any legislation that will make it possible for any government to exist except the government elected by the people to administer the affairs of Louisiana”.<sup>367</sup> It is interesting to note that the importance of the Klan issue even had consequences at a national level. Delegates at the 1924 Democratic National Convention celebrated at the Madison Square Garden in New York City debated whether to include an anti-Klan

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C. Seaman in support of the candidacy of Henry Fuqua, November 20, 1923, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 87, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>364</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 86.

<sup>365</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 36. He said: “From the reports that I have at hand, I am convinced that the cold and heavy rain which fell principally in the northern part of the state on election day will make it practically impossible for the remaining returns to overcome the slight leads of my two opponents. No leader of the opposition questions but what I would have received at least 15,000 more majority but for the rains”, Statement of Huey P. Long, 1924, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 90, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). A writer also told the account: “‘It rained in every Long parish’, he told me, ‘and was as dry as powder horn in every anti-Long parish. We didn’t have any roads in those days, and my friends couldn’t get to the polls’, Jerome Beatty, “You Can’t Laugh Him Off!”, *The American Magazine*, January 1933, 118, Collected Magazine Articles About Huey Pierce Long, RG 300, box 1, folder 3, Louisiana State Museum Historical Center.

<sup>366</sup> LeVert, *Huey Long*, 65. The race issue in Long’s political program will be further analyzed in chapter five.

<sup>367</sup> Speeches delivered by Huey P. Long, 1923, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 3, folder 90, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

plank in their program. After a heated discussion among the attendees, a single vote decided that the topic would “safely” be ignored.<sup>368</sup>

### 1.3.2 The “Every Man a King” campaign

After losing the 1924 election, Long ran again for the Public Service Commission and obtained an outstanding majority with 83.9% of the votes.<sup>369</sup> Before the next election for governor, Long worked on his popularity in those areas where he had not obtained much votes for governor.<sup>370</sup> His wife Rose told how Huey reacted after learning he would not win the 1924 election: “He bought a new suit the next day and started running for 1928”.<sup>371</sup> In the 1950s, historian Sindler argued that Long had lost the 1924 election not only because of the race issue but mostly because of religion: he needed to obtain support from the Catholic parishes.<sup>372</sup> Huey’s first response was to campaign for two politicians who appealed to the communities and regions where Long had had trouble. In 1924 he helped Joseph E. Ransdell (1858-1954) and in 1926 Edwin S. Broussard (1874-1934) to win the election as United States senators for Louisiana. They were both Catholics from the south of the state and, even though Long did not fully support their respective policies, the strategy served Huey gain popularity in southern parishes and in New Orleans. In fact, Ransdell was a patrician, a plantation owner as those Huey detested and attacked in his speeches; but Ransdell was very popular and, as William suggests, “by coming to his aid, Huey could erase any impression among Catholics that he had intolerant, Klan-like prejudices”.<sup>373</sup> Long had a similar attitude towards Broussard, which demonstrates he was a true politician. Journalist Kane wrote in the 1940s that, with the candidate’s approval, Long “told the South that he was part French, tickled the Cajuns with his stories, convinced them that he was one of their kind”, and so south Louisiana would from then on be pro-Long.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 76-79.

<sup>369</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 222.

<sup>370</sup> Howard, “The Rise of ‘Longism’”, 229.

<sup>371</sup> Interview to Rose McConnell, March 17, 1960, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 16, folder 27, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>372</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 50.

<sup>373</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 221.

<sup>374</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 53.

In 1927 Long, as was predictable, announced he would run for governor again in the following year's election.<sup>375</sup> His slogan was his famous "Every Man a King But No One Wears a Crown",<sup>376</sup> which would be the title of his future autobiography.<sup>377</sup> The Populist Williams Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) had pronounced these words a few decades earlier in his emblematic discourse "The Cross of Gold", which he pronounced in the 1896 Democratic National Convention.<sup>378</sup> However, Bryan never became as radical as Long insofar as he remained member of the Democratic Party. Because of that, historian Charles Postel doubts Bryan was a real Populist.<sup>379</sup> Kane wrote, "some called Huey another Bryan. But he was to make Bryan a forgotten man among the underprivileged".<sup>380</sup> Bryan had unsuccessfully run three times for the United States presidency, in 1896, in 1900, and again in 1908. In the famous "The Cross of Gold" speech, Bryan attacked the banks and their gold standard, and defended bimetallism. He affirmed: "In this land of the free you need fear no tyrant who will spring up from among the people. What we need is an Andrew Jackson to stand as Jackson stood, against the encroachments of aggregated wealth".<sup>381</sup> Long was similarly inspired by Andrew Jackson, who would often appear in his speeches, and who was considered a hero in Louisiana because of his victory in the battle of New Orleans of 1815.<sup>382</sup>

The ideology behind Long's new political 1927 slogan was that "that the poor of the state had the right of a better life, a life that had been denied to them by the rich individuals and corporations who, until now, controlled the government".<sup>383</sup> His campaign was supported by his interestingly millionaire friend Robert S. Maestri (1889-1974), who became mayor of New Orleans after Huey's death. Long's campaign was centered on the need for building infrastructures throughout the state, such as schools,

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<sup>375</sup> "Long Makes Entry Into Race for Governor", *New Orleans States*, July 17, 1927, 1, 8.

<sup>376</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 90.

<sup>377</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*.

<sup>378</sup> Full text available at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354/>, accessed September 2, 2014.

<sup>379</sup> Postel argues that that was one of the main issues that led to Bryan's failure in the presidential election of 1896, in Postel, *The Populist Vision*, 246, 269-272.

<sup>380</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 54.

<sup>381</sup> William Jennings Bryan, "The Cross of Gold".

<sup>382</sup> See John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson, Symbol for an Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); Frank Lawrence Owsley, *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans, 1812-1815* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1981); Walter R Borneman and Rogers D. Spotswood Collection, *1812: The War That Forged a Nation* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004).

<sup>383</sup> LeVert, *Huey Long*, 70.

hospitals, roads, and bridges, and guaranteeing free textbooks for children in school, improving the penitentiary system, ending political corruption and the monopoly of the “old ring” of New Orleans, as well as providing the city with natural gas.<sup>384</sup> The aspiring candidate promised he would improve the sanitation system of the state and the rights of workers, abolish useless boards and commissions, provide remedies for flood control—which will be the main subject of the last section of this chapter—and emphasized: “To these great purposes, to the proper expenditure of its tax funds and to the elimination of every avenue of waste and of political debauchery my administration shall be most specifically and fervently dedicated”.<sup>385</sup> Austerity would not, however, be one of the characteristics of his administration. In another speech he guaranteed he would fight the power of the Old Ring and “politican bosses” who, according to him, “have been picking the governors for the people for twenty-five years, with slight exceptions”.<sup>386</sup>

As Forrest Davis, perhaps in an exaggerate way, put it in 1935, during the campaign, “[Long] stormed, wept, denounced, pleaded, decided, and promised”.<sup>387</sup> In a similar perception, Fineran stated: “His campaign was one of hysterical vituperation and abuse”.<sup>388</sup> The only difference in this campaign is that this time Long won the election. The other opponents were not as strong or popular as he was. On one hand, there was Riley Joseph “Joe” Wilson (1871-1946), an experienced politician also born in Winn who had been a member of the House of Representatives of Louisiana since 1915, and had the support of the Choctaws and the newspaper *The Morning Tribune*.<sup>389</sup> On the other, there was Oramel H. Simpson (1870-1932), who came from the south of the state,

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<sup>384</sup> George Vandervoort, “Huey Long Fires First Gun in State Campaign for Gubernatorial Honors”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 4, 1927, 1, 14; “Crowd Hears Long Speak in the Ridder”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 8, 1928, 9.

<sup>385</sup> Huey P. Long opening campaign speech in Alexandria LA, August 3, 1927, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 116, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>386</sup> Gubernatorial Campaign statement by Huey P. Long, 1927, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 137, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>387</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 91. In a letter to his publicity campaign manager, Long seemed to be in a sort of campaign rush when writing: “I am feeling fine. Just making three or four speeches a day. Conferring and organizing is simply wonderful work. I am in fine shape today. I can knock’em dead for the next ten or fifteen days. I never felt as well in my lifetime. Keep going”, Letter from Huey P. Long to W.D. Robinson, October 10, 1927, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 16, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>388</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 13.

<sup>389</sup> “Wilson Suited for Position”, *The Morning Tribune*, January 11, 1928, 4.

was not an excellent public-speaker, and had been governor provisionally after Fuqua's sudden death in 1926.<sup>390</sup> During the campaign and dreading Long's growing popularity, these two candidates had spoken of him as a menace and a sympathizer of Russian communism.<sup>391</sup>



**Fig. 7:** Candidates for the 1927 gubernatorial campaign. From left to right: Huey Long, governor O.H. Simpson, and Riley J. Wilson. The Times-Picayune clipping, July 17, 1927, William B. Wisdom collection of Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 3, folder 2, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans.

But Long's rhetoric and persuasive techniques had improved, and his victory was almost inevitable. He was even welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd at Wilson's hometown, Ruston, located in Caddo parish.<sup>392</sup> At a gubernatorial joint debate held on Crowley, in southern Louisiana, Long asserted he was "the candidate of the common herd, a candidate in his own authority and his own right", and that his opponents were there because of "accidents and the call of the purple blood".<sup>393</sup> Kane used a metaphor to describe the politician's style by saying, "he took the gloves off Louisiana

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<sup>390</sup> Hermann B. Deutsch, "Fuqua Dies Suddenly and Simpson Becomes Governor", *The New Orleans Item*, August 8, 1939.

<sup>391</sup> Edwin Adams Davis, Raleigh A. Suárez, and Joe Gray Taylor, *Louisiana: The Pelican State* (Louisiana State University Press, 1985).

<sup>392</sup> "Ovation Is Given to Long in Wilson's Hometown", *New Orleans States*, January 12, 1928, 1. The *Tribune*, however, constantly presented Wilson as a sure winner, for instance in "Wilson's Great Addresses Win Supporters All Over Louisiana", *The Item-Tribune*, January 8, 1928, 8.

<sup>393</sup> George Vandervoort, "Long and Wilson in Joint Debate at Crowley Meeting", *The Times-Picayune*, September 22, 1927, 3.

politics”.<sup>394</sup> Furthermore, Long now disposed of larger economic support and an organization composed of a small circle of confidants, as his brother Earl; the already mentioned Robert Maestri and his friend from childhood Harley Bozeman;<sup>395</sup> the future governor Oscar K. Allen; Seymour Weiss,<sup>396</sup> who would be the manager of the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, where Long would spend innumerable nights, and coronel and newspaper editor Robert Ewing (1859-1931).<sup>397</sup> One last and relevant member was his inseparable young assistant, Alice Lee Grosjean (1905-1994), who was the daughter of a celebrated confederate soldier, about whom Harris said: “It is probable that no other man or woman of his regime ever enjoyed closer intimacy of political communication with the Kingfish than Miss Grosjean. He trusted her with most of his secrets and committed to her most of his plans”.<sup>398</sup> Once Huey won the election, he made her the governor’s private assistant, becoming the first woman to hold that position.<sup>399</sup>

Huey was more organized than in precedent years and now it could be said that a “Long machine” was beginning to be established, or, as Fineran referred to it, his “yes-men”.<sup>400</sup> He no longer had to hang his own propaganda posters or distribute his pamphlets; he had people in charge of those tasks now.<sup>401</sup> Huey had also refined the manner in which he presented himself. He no longer dressed in country boy clothing,

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<sup>394</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 55.

<sup>395</sup> Bozeman wrote a series of articles in the 1950s and 1960s for the newspapers *Winn Parish Enterprise* entitled “Winn Parish as I Have Known It”, in which he explained through stories his experiences in the parish, and particularly his relationship with the Long family. For instance, in one article he explained how he and Huey had met when they were twelve years old on a shoe store in Winnfield, in Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It -- I Meet Huey P. Long, Jr., for the First Time”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, July 11, 1957. Anecdote also narrated in Williams, *Huey Long*, 25.

<sup>396</sup> Despite his last name, there is no relation between him and Long’s assassin, Dr. Carl Weiss.

<sup>397</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 224.

<sup>398</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 252. In fact, he trusted her with all his campaign funds, which Long did not want to put in a bank because he was afraid somebody would take them. Grosjean carried the money in bills and whenever Huey needed them, he called her, in W. D. Robinson to Julius Long, June 1, 1933, Robinson Papers, under seal, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>399</sup> “Private Secretary to the Governor”, *New Orleans States*, May 20, 1928, 8.

<sup>400</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 13. Journalist Kent wrote that “from the day he was elected Governor, Mr. Long shrewdly and calculatingly devoted himself to the construction of a machine that would perpetuate his Louisiana power and retain him in office indefinitely”, in Frank R. Kent, “Our Political Monstruosities. Huey Long and His Mates”, *The Atlantic*, April 1933, 409, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 1, folder 4, LSMHC.

<sup>401</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 265. In the 1923 campaign he even had his wife and children put up posters and send propaganda through mail, in George H. Maines, *Flint News-Advertiser*, November 11, 1955.

but in proper suits that gave an image of a compromised and responsible politician. However, historian Glen Jeansonne believes he still dressed in simple and unsophisticated clothes when he assures, “Long thought he dressed fashionably, but in fact his loud clothes only directed attention to his poor taste”.<sup>402</sup>

In his speeches the candidate did not necessarily talk about a specific topic, but sometimes spoke about general ideas or themes, such as the need to have a better life. During the campaign, propaganda poems and songs were composed expressing broad and vague ideas, such as: “And will sing a solo for / Huey P. Long [...] / The rich hate Long he is a friend / To the poor; / But this old game won’t beat him / Any more [...] / We need a real Governor and / Can hardly wait / For the time to elect Long the / Governor of our state”,<sup>403</sup> or the chorus:

Oh Huey Long, yes Huey Long  
Say He’s the man on whom we all rely  
And every John and Sally,  
To his cause will rally  
We will boost him to the sky  
Oh Huey Long, yes Huey Long  
When he’s in office he will right all wrong  
To make our State the best  
We’ll vote for righteousness  
We’ll cast our vote for Huey, Huey Long.<sup>404</sup>

People sent him all sorts of songs and poems, but his official campaign song was simply entitled “Huey Long”, and its chorus straightforwardly read: “The choice is Huey Long”.<sup>405</sup>

The main goal for these types of discourses was simply to excite his audiences, as he did in the town of St. Martinsville, in Saint Martin parish in southern Louisiana on November 3, 1927.<sup>406</sup> This was the place of origin of the legend of Evangeline and her

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<sup>402</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 49.

<sup>403</sup> John E. Chanler, “Huey P. Long Candidate for Governor”, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 139, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>404</sup> “Victory Song”, Pamphlet for the 1928 gubernatorial election, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 138, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>405</sup> Composed by Y. Arnandez and lyrics by H.F. Stanley, Sr., “Huey Long”, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 140, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>406</sup> “Long Is Back from Tour Through Third”, *New Orleans States*, November 5, 1927, 1; White, *Kingfish*, 33.

beloved Gabriel, two characters that became a model for American liberal reform in the South. The story appears in the 1,399-line narrative poem *Evangeline*, written in 1847 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) in unrhymed dactylic hexameters.<sup>407</sup> The protagonist of the composition is separated from her dear Gabriel on their wedding day because of the expulsion of Acadians from Acadia by British forces during the French and Indian War (1754-1763), or what Acadians call the *Grand Dérangement*.<sup>408</sup> Evangeline speaks her first words in the poem when desperately telling Gabriel in the moment of the forced farewell:

Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we love one another,  
Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mischances may  
Happen!<sup>409</sup>

The heroin of Longfellow's poem is one of these Acadians, who wears the traditional dress of her people—a Norman cap, blue kirtle, and heirloom earrings—,<sup>410</sup> thus becoming a national symbol. In fact, the poem became a sort of origin myth for the Acadians, although it is interesting to note, as Acadian author Carl A. Brasseaux has pointed out, that a non-Acadian New Englander created the source of this mythology.<sup>411</sup> Throughout the story, the main character is desperately searching across the United States and waiting for her beloved for years. A journalist wrote about the piece, “probably few literary stories approach in beauty and poignancy the story of

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<sup>407</sup> Ron McFarland, *The Long Life of Evangeline: A History of the Longfellow Poem in Print, in Adaptation and in Popular Culture* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2010), 45.

<sup>408</sup> Acadia was the name of a region of the French colonies in New France, Canada—mainly Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. After being expelled, the main destiny of Acadians was Louisiana, the descendants of which are the Cajuns, an ethnic group of French-Canadians. Historian Thomas Becnel defines them as “French-speaking South Louisianans who were mostly uneducated Roman Catholics farmers and fishermen”, in Thomas Becnel, *Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana: A Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 5. According to a 1934 magazine article, that year Acadians numbered 400,000 or twenty percent of the population of Louisiana, and comprised a third of the white population, in Sisson, “Huey Long: Dictator of the Delta. Part 2”, 9, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC. See also Francis Parkman (1884), *Montcalm and Wolfe: The French and Indian War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995); Jay K. Ditchy and Institut français de Washington (D.C.), *Les Acadiens louisianais et leur parler* (Paris and Baltimore: E. Droz and Johns Hopkins Press, 1932); William Faulkner Rushton, *The Cajuns: From Acadia to Louisiana* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979); Shane K. Bernard, *The Cajuns: Americanization of a People* (University Press of Mississippi, 2009).

<sup>409</sup> Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1847), *Evangeline* (New York: John B. Alden, 1892), 49, ll. 559-560.

<sup>410</sup> McFarland, *The Long Life of Evangeline*, 4.

<sup>411</sup> Carl A. Brasseaux, *In Search of Evangeline: Birth and Evolution of the Evangeline Myth* (Thibodaux: Blue Heron Press, 1988), 7.

‘Evangeline’”.<sup>412</sup> Huey intertwined this tragic love story to his political program by giving a speech under the mythic oak where Evangeline supposedly waited.<sup>413</sup>

It would become one of Long’s most emotive speeches and one of his most quoted. Huey himself included it in his autobiography:

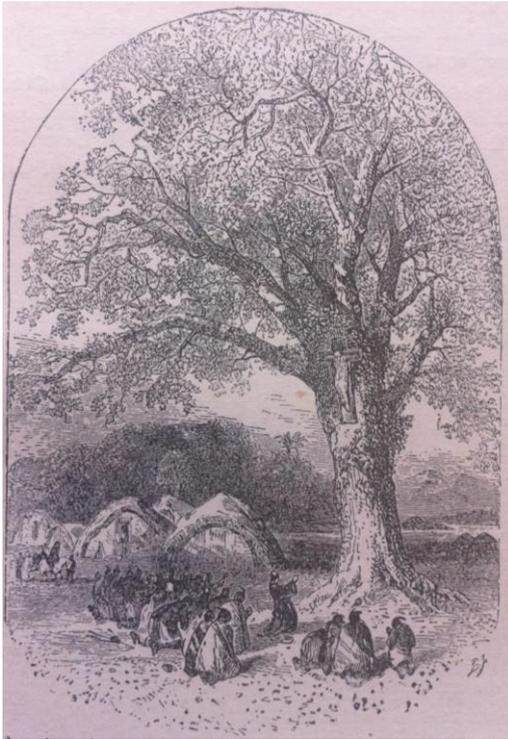
And it is here under this oak where Evangeline waited for her lover, Gabriel, who never came. This oak is an immortal spot, made so by Longfellow’s poem, but Evangeline is not the only one who has waited here in disappointment. Where are the schools that you have waited for your children to have, that have never come? Where are the roads and the highways that you send your money to build, that are no nearer now than ever before? Where are the institutions to care for the sick and disabled? Evangeline wept bitter tears in her disappointment, but it lasted through only one lifetime. Your tears in this country, around this oak, have lasted for generations. Give me the chance to dry the eyes of those who still weep here!<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> George Matthews Adams, “The Evangeline County”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 26, 1930, 8.

<sup>413</sup> Richard Megraw, *Confronting Modernity: Art and Society in Louisiana* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008).

<sup>414</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 99; “Long Is Back from Tour Through Third”, *New Orleans States*, November 5, 1927, 2. This speech is reproduced in most biographies and studies of Long: Davis, *Huey Long*, 92; Williams, *Huey Long*, 274–275; Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 54; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 56–57; Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 20–21; Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 81; White, *Kingfish*, 33; Keith Ronald Perry, *The Kingfish in Fiction: Huey P. Long and the Modern American Novel* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 14; H. W. Brands, *Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (New York: Doubleday Publishing Group, 2008), 398; Michael Signer, *Demagogue: The Fight to Save Democracy From Its Worst Enemies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 111; Perman, *Pursuit of Unity*, 228; J. Michael Hogan and L. Glen Williams, “The Rusticity and Religiosity of Huey P. Long”, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 2 (2004): 156–157; John Adam Moreau, “Huey Long and His Chroniclers”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 6, no. 2 (April 1, 1965): 121; Hodding Carter, “Huey Long: American Dictator”, in *The Aspirin Age, 1919-1941*, ed. Isabel Leighton (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), 349; Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 41-42; Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, December 19, 1957; Herman E. Brunson, “Dr. Weiss, Gone and Forgotten: Who Really Killed Huey P. Long?” (New Orleans: Fair-Square Publishing House, 1957), 20, Hermann Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder 6, LaRC; Kevin Unter, John Sutherlin, and Joshua Stockley, “The Rise, Fall, and Rise of the Kingfish—How Southern Politicians Are Successful in the Face of Overwhelming Stereotypes”, in Alison Slade, Dedria Givens-Carroll, and Amber J. Narro, eds., *Mediated Images of the South: The Portrayal of Dixie in Popular Culture* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), 60–61; David Zinman, “The Meteoric Life and Mysterious Death of Huey Long”, *American History Illustrated*, July-August 1993, 27.



**Fig. 8:** Left: Illustration XXXIX designed by Birket Foster, in Longfellow (1847), *Evangeline* (New York: John B. Alden, 1892), p. 85. Down: Current picture of the oak, by author



Throughout *Evangeline*, its author plays with the reader letting him/her assume there will be a happy romantic ending in which the two characters, after years of being a part, will reunite. However, in the final pages *Evangeline*, who is now a Sister of Mercy working at a charitable hospital in Philadelphia, finally encounters him; “there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible / anguish”:

On the pallet before her was stretched the form of an old  
man.  
Long, and thin, and gray were the locks that shaded his  
temples;  
But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for a moment  
Seemed to assume once more the forms of its earlier  
manhood; [...]  
Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit ex-  
hausted  
Seemed to be sinking down to infinite depths in the dark-  
ness [...]  
Whispered a gentel voice, in accents tender and saint-like,  
‘Gabriel! O my beloved!’ and died away into silence.  
Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the home of his  
childhood;  
Green Acadian meadows, with sylcan rivers among them,  
Village, and mountains, and woodlands; and, walking under

their shadow,  
As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in his vision.<sup>415</sup>

And so Gabriel, after this idealized version of his homeland, this image of Acadia as a paradise-lost—which reflects the author’s own perception of the place—, perishes on her arms.<sup>416</sup>

Ironically, Long evaded to relate the tragic end of the story and in his speech only kept the encouraging spirit of beginning. In any case, the politician chose this poem because it was, at that time, famously known and read by most. Evangeline represented the paradigmatic American woman, with the virtues of patience, domesticity, purity, and submissiveness.<sup>417</sup> Similarly, Brasseaux affirmed that she personified the ideal Victorian woman. Long chose to refer to that character because Evangeline “emerged by the late nineteenth century as perhaps the best known American character, a figure of ‘legendary’ proportions”.<sup>418</sup> Since its publication in 1847, there have been several representations of the poem, in illustration, painting, sculpture, songs, and on stage, making Evangeline one of the most known female characters in American poetry in the decades after the publishing of the poem.<sup>419</sup> It is perhaps a contradiction that a character that represents such a localized and unique culture, as is the Acadian and, therefore, could have been understood as an “otherness” within the anglophile world, came to also represent to some extent and for a brief period of time the American culture.

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<sup>415</sup> Longfellow, *Evangeline*, 96.

<sup>416</sup> McFarland, *Long Life of Evangeline*, 175. Author Herman E. Brunson mistakenly or perhaps satirically wrote that Gabriel refused to marry her and started a family with someone else and therefore Evangeline died mad, which is an example of how the poem was no longer read after World War II, in Brunson, “Dr. Weiss, Gone and Forgotten”, 21, Hermann Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder 6, LaRC.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>418</sup> Brasseaux, *In Search of Evangeline*, 14.

<sup>419</sup> Including John Gilbert (no dates available), F.O.C Darley (no dates available) and Frank Dicksee’s (1853-1928) nineteenth-century illustrations; Samuel Richard’s (no dates available) painting as shown in image XXX; Louis-Philippe Hébert’s (1850–1917) sculpture in Nova Scotia unveiled in 1920; 1919 and 1929 film adaptations by Raoul Wash and Edwin Carewe, respectively; 1913 dramatic adaptation by Robert Traver (no dates available) in 1878 and Thomas W. Broadhurst (1857-1936) entitled “Longfellow’s world-famous poem; an *opéra bouffe* stage version by Edward Everett Rice and John Cheever Goodwin in 1874. In McFarland, “Evangeline Illustrated” and “Evangeline on Stage, in Song, and on the Silver Screen”, *The Long Life of Evangeline*, 93-174. This legend is not completely forgotten in the twenty-first century, as one of the characters of the Walt Disney’s picture *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), set in Louisiana, is a Cajun lightning bug named Raymond, who is in love with a shining star which he calls Evangeline and believes is an unreachable person who watches him from afar. It is worth noting, though, that the image of Cajuns portrayed in the movie is highly inaccurate and offensive.

Back to the 1927 political campaign, Huey was the protagonist of a scandal, as would recurrently happen in the following years. The candidate accidentally encountered former governor Jared Y. Sanders (1869-1944) at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, and the politician accused Long of being a liar, who responded by hitting him in the face.<sup>420</sup> Long was rarely violent, nor was he strong or brave; in fact, he was usually referred to as a coward because he avoided physical confrontation.<sup>421</sup> However, that day he assaulted a former governor and tore off the sleeve of his shirt. After that, he rapidly ran to the elevator escaping any probable violent response of Sanders. As could be expected, the event appeared in most local newspapers and became a precedent of future public embarrassment, as in the case of a bar brawl involving Long, known as the Sands Point affair.<sup>422</sup> At a meeting a few days after the incident with Sanders, Huey was proud to show part of his opponent's shirt sleeve to an audience as a gesture of victory and populism.<sup>423</sup> Long "dared Sanders, 'if you are in the audience!' to come and get sleeve and cuff-link".<sup>424</sup> Huey was profiling his public persona and used these incidents to increase his popularity. His political personality was also taking shape regarding his origins. On one occasion candidate Riley Joe Wilson affirmed he had had to go barefoot during his childhood, to which Long added, "I can go Mr. Wilson one better. I was *born* barefoot".<sup>425</sup> The future Kingfish could not allow another candidate claiming to come from humbler origins than he.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> "Sanders, Long in Fist Fight", *New Orleans States*, November 15, 1927, 1; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 14; Williams, *Huey Long*, 271-272.

<sup>421</sup> Julius wrote that "The only semblance of physical courage I have ever known him to show was in controversies with aged men", in Long, "What I Know About My Brother", 39. Future governor of Louisiana and Long man Richard Leche affirmed: "Huey had the flabbiest hand shake I ever felt. I don't think he liked close physical contact", Interview to Richard Leche, June 12, 1960, by T. Harry Williams. About his hand shake, other witnesses said: "He had one of the weakest handshakes I've ever seen, real flabby", Interview to Judge John T. Hood, no date, by T. Harry Williams; "Huey had a limp handshake. He barely grasped your hand", Interview to William Cleveland, no date, by T. Harry Williams. T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>422</sup> The Sands Point affair will be explained further along in section 4.2.1

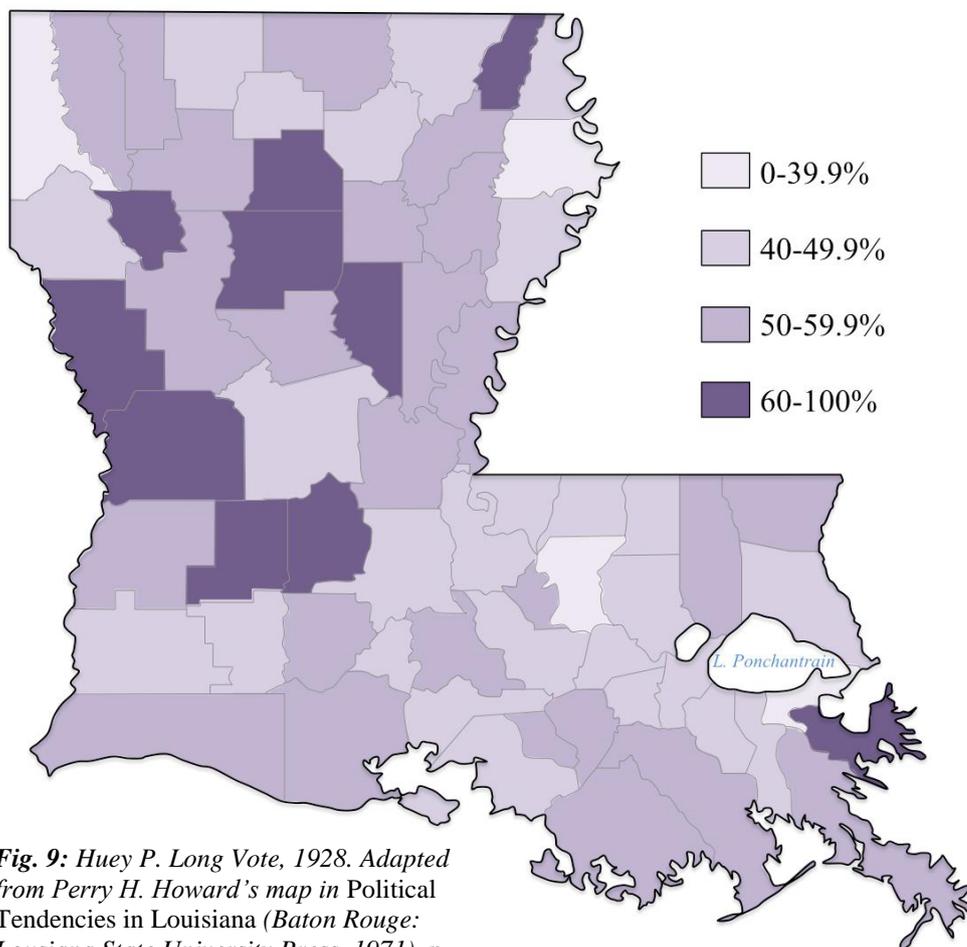
<sup>423</sup> Apparently, a man in the audience asked him why had he run away, which led to his arresting, in "Heckler Arrested After Huey Waves Shirt-Cuff, Boasting of Heroic Combat with 'J.Y'", *The Times-Picayune*, November 6, 1927, 1.

<sup>424</sup> Scaramouche, "Senator Huey P. Long. Clown and Knave", *Real America*, July 1933, 68, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, 1924-1975, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 7, LaRC.

<sup>425</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 33; Williams, *Huey Long*, 250.

<sup>426</sup> In that sense, after Long passed away, one of his colleagues embellished his career and affirmed in front of the US Senate that, as a candidate for governor in 1928, he "was a mere stripling; he was of humble origin; he was unschooled; he was ungrammatical; he had no organization, no power, no influence", in John H. Overton, "Huey Pierce Long. Speech of Hon. John H. Overton of Louisiana in the Senate of the United States", January 22, 1936, 4-5, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 23, LaRC.

Long won the 1928 election held on January 17 becoming the second youngest governor the state ever had.<sup>427</sup> He obtained 126,842 votes, that is, 44% of the total, while Wilson gained 81,747 votes and Simpson 80,326.<sup>428</sup> Harley Bozeman wrote, “I will leave it to your imagination to picture the wild jubilant celebration that took place at Huey’s New Orleans hotel headquarters”.<sup>429</sup> As had happened in the last election in 1924, Huey had mostly been popular in the parishes in northern Louisiana, but this time he also obtained votes in the south, although he “attracted only a slightly higher proportion of the vote in New Orleans than in 1924”.<sup>430</sup>



**Fig. 9:** Huey P. Long Vote, 1928. Adapted from Perry H. Howard’s map in *Political Tendencies in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 234. Map by Rubén Carrillo.

<sup>427</sup> The first one had been Henry Clay Warmoth (1842-1931), who had been elected governor in 1868 at age twenty-six, and who would be impeached and suspended from office. See Henry Clay Warmoth, *War, Politics, and Reconstruction; Stormy Days in Louisiana* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).

<sup>428</sup> “Long Lead Nears 40,000”, *New Orleans States*, January 19, 1928, 1; “Official Returns Show Long Led by 45,095 Votes”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 25, 1928, 1; Howard, “The Rise of ‘Longism’”, 231.

<sup>429</sup> Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, March 26, 1959.

<sup>430</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 55.

In his 1956 book, Allan Sindler found an interesting similarity between this and the 1896 election results, in which the Populist Party was running: “Huey’s 1928 race thus invoked, with more consistency and greater strength, the voting tendencies observed in the 1896 gubernatorial election”.<sup>431</sup> Political scientist V.O. Key also saw similarities when writing in 1949: “In 1928 a fairly close relation prevailed between the distribution of Long’s popular strength and that of the populist candidate for governor in 1896”.<sup>432</sup> At mid-century, sociologist Perry H. Howard also wrote that “frustrated Populist tendencies made up the sociological basis of Longism”.<sup>433</sup> However, while Long received his most keen strength from farmers, it can arguably be said that the geographic divisions that had had such relevance in state politics now blurred because Long’s message appealed to all the underprivileged. As three scholars put it:

Political power in Louisiana had been nearly a monopoly of the coalition of businessmen and planters, reinforced by the oil and other industrial interests. This situation was changed when Long won the hearts and votes of the farmers and other ‘small people’ and created a countervailing power combination.<sup>434</sup>

It is worth noting that Long’s voters were not only poor farmers from rural Louisiana, for, as Williams writes, “the Long movement represented the aspirations of the common people, but in 1927 many of its leaders were of the upper class”,<sup>435</sup> who were in favor of Long’s proposal of infrastructure improvement in Louisiana, one of the poorest states in the Union.<sup>436</sup> The New Orleans Building Trades Council, one of the largest and most powerful labor bodies in the South, which gathered twenty-two organizations, had also endorsed the candidate and expressed so in a pamphlet.<sup>437</sup> But perhaps most authors and scholars that have studied Long’s rise to the governorship have been somewhat limited by the political analysis, neglecting to see how environmental factors weighed in the

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<sup>431</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 57.

<sup>432</sup> Key, *Southern Politics*, 161–162.

<sup>433</sup> Howard, “The Rise of ‘Longism’”, 243.

<sup>434</sup> William C. Havard, Rudolf Heberle, and Perry H. Howard, *The Louisiana Elections of 1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), 15.

<sup>435</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 261.

<sup>436</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 31.

<sup>437</sup> *New Orleans Building Trades Council Endorses Huey P. Long For Governor. Look Upon him as a True, Tried and Fearless Champion of Honest Government and General Uplift*, published by the Long Campaign Committee, September 20, 1927, Twelfth Floor, Roosevelt Hotel, New Orleans, Huey P. Long papers 1927-1935, Mss. 557, 1240, 1350, 1956, Misc L, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

political fortunes of the state and partially explain the victory of the future Kingfish in 1928.

### 1.3.3 The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927

From August 1926 to the summer of the following year, a series of heavy rainfalls caused what became an environmental disaster with colossal consequences in the United States. On April 15, 1927, about 15 inches (380 mm.) of rain fell in New Orleans only in eighteen hours, becoming the heaviest rainfall ever registered in the city.<sup>438</sup> Concerns that the man-made levees built following the line of the Lower Mississippi River would not be able to hold a flood grew. The following day, the main levee of Southeastern Missouri gave way and five days later the levees at Mound Landing, Mississippi, and at Pendleton, Arkansas, also broke. In the following months, other levees would break in some 144 locations.<sup>439</sup>

As a preventing measure and with the approval of the governor of Louisiana—Long’s opponent in the 1927 campaign—, O.H. Simpson, on April 29, 1927, the City of New Orleans detonated thirty tones of dynamite to the Caernarvon Levee, thirteen miles (19 km.) below Canal Street, very close to the famous French Quarter.<sup>440</sup> The goal was to ease pressure on the levees upriver and to lower the water level, thus the explosion would divert high waters from the rich uptown New Orleans neighborhoods to the poorer downriver black populated precincts, such as Saint Bernard and Plaquemines parish.<sup>441</sup> The questionable goal was to “protect the rest of the city”.<sup>442</sup> A witness named George Healy told the account: “The first blast, on Friday, April 29, was a flop, literally and figuratively. Soil blown out of the levee went straight up in the air and then flopped

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<sup>438</sup> John M. Barry, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 15.

<sup>439</sup> Michael P. Powers, “A Matter of Choice: Historical Lessons for Disaster Recovery”, in *There Is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina*, eds. Chester W. Hartman and Gregory D. Squires (New York: Routledge, 2006), 18. For the most famous hurricane in recent history to devastate Louisiana, Katrina, see Douglas Brinkley, *The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (New York: Morrow, 2006).

<sup>440</sup> Barry, *Rising Tide*, 255; Brinkley, *The Great Deluge*, 8.

<sup>441</sup> “Caernarvon Levee Blasted to Release Floodwaters”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 30, 1927, 1; “Looking Back at the Blasting of the Mississippi River Levee at Caernarvon”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 7, 2012.

<sup>442</sup> Brinkley, *The Great Deluge*, 8.

down into the holes in the levee's crown whence it had been blown".<sup>443</sup> There was much expectation in the explosion and wealthy families, as if it were a picnic, even went south to witness the event after obtaining an official permit.<sup>444</sup> The dynamiting would turn out to be, however, unnecessary, because breaks in upper levees had already lessened the height of the river and the pressure of the levees of the city.<sup>445</sup>

Although Calvin Coolidge remained in Washington throughout the crisis, as was common in that time, on April 22 the US president named an envoy that had collaborated with the Red Cross during World War I and was then Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, to deal with the crisis together with the vice chairman of the Red Cross, James Fieser.<sup>446</sup> However, federal aid would not suffice to help the most affected by the destruction: the poor.<sup>447</sup> Authorities urged New Orleans inhabitants to leave their houses to save their lives.<sup>448</sup> It is worth noting, however, that the task carried out by Hoover, who would be referred to by the press as "the Great Humanitarian", and the Red Cross was somewhat exaggerated through publicity, which led to ignore diseases that were beginning to spread amongst those affected by the disaster. As an author put it, the Red Cross "feared that publicizing the peonage, the high number of drownings, and the venereal disease epidemic would dry up the funds that the flood had initiated".<sup>449</sup> Beyond institutionalized help, volunteer work was invaluable throughout the rescue and relief process.<sup>450</sup>

According to historian Pete Daniel, who published a monograph on the subject in 1977, on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the flood killed between 250 and 500 people in seven states and affected ten (Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi). However, the last three states suffered the worst consequences, with 14 million acres being flooded. Overall, the flood caused between

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<sup>443</sup> Pete Daniel, *Deep'n As It Come: The 1927 Mississippi River Flood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 50.

<sup>444</sup> Barry, *Rising Tide*, 256.

<sup>445</sup> Barry, *Rising Tide*, 257-258.

<sup>446</sup> Barry, *Rising Tide*, 262.

<sup>447</sup> "Coolidge Refuses Special Session for Flood Aid", *The Times-Picayune*, April 30, 1927, 1.

<sup>448</sup> "All in Delta Warned to Flee for Lives as Water Rise", *The Times-Picayune*, April 28, 1927, 1.

<sup>449</sup> Daniel, *Deep'n as It Come*, 123.

<sup>450</sup> Daniel, *Deep'n as It Come*, 87, 94.

500 million dollars and one billion in damages, including houses—about 9,000 were completely destroyed—, crops, and livestock.<sup>451</sup>



**Fig. 10:** *The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, Teche Bayou, New Iberia, Louisiana.* H.C. Frankenfeld, "The Floods of 1927 in the Mississippi Basin", *Monthly Weather Review*, n° 29, 1927, [wikimedia commons](#).

Moreover, the Great Flood displaced 700,000 people along the Mississippi river, including over 300,000 African Americans, who were put into relief camps and were plainly referred to as “refugees”. In those camps, many abuses occurred; for instance, black refugees were not as well fed as whites.<sup>452</sup> In that sense, historian Stuart Schwartz argued how

Social and racial distinctions patterned societal response even long after slavery had been eliminated as an institution, and the issue of race, even as in the nineteenth century and in contemporary times it shades into vocabularies of class, has never been far from the way in which governments and peoples of the Greater Caribbean have met the storms.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Daniel, *Deep'n As It Come*, 9-10. This author states that more than a million chickens, 9,000 work animals, 26,000 head of cattle, and 127,000 hogs drowned in the flood, in 62.

<sup>452</sup> Barry, *Rising Tide*, 334. The documentary by Bill Morrison, *The Great Flood* ([United States]: Icarus Films, 2013), offers an artistic approach to this events through a series of footage from the time period accompanied by music.

<sup>453</sup> Schwartz, *Sea of Storms*, xix. The same could be said about floods.

As a consequence of this catastrophe, quite a few black people, tired of the intricacies of the Deep South, including its difficult meteorology, joined the Great Migration from the South to other places throughout the country, mainly urban centers in the Midwest, West, and the East coast.<sup>454</sup> These refugees would often find hostility and opposition in their new homes. Some white refugees also joined the Great Migration. In all, these migration movements shaped the reconfiguration of race, religion, and demographics of the United States of the interwar period.<sup>455</sup> Once on their new home, the white migrants had a particularly relevant impact on racial relations. Some of them joined the Black Legion, an association that was clearly anti-black and where nativism was the main tenant, and carried out the Ku Klux Klan's ideals against African Americans, Jews, and other religious expressions. However, the implication of southerners in these organizations must not be exaggerated, for much of that representation took place in the media, which promoted the image of the southern white as bigot and a "hillbilly".<sup>456</sup>

The Pelican State received \$1,067,336 from the federal government for rebuilding after the devastating flood.<sup>457</sup> It also had to institute a state gasoline two-cent tax to create a \$30,000,000 fund to pay for new hard-surfaced highways, which the floods had demonstrated were sorely needed. The first one to pay for this tax was Alfred D. Danziger, president of the New Orleans Association of Commerce and Long's future personal attorney, who purchased the first gallon of taxed gasoline in New Orleans in a small symbolic ceremony attended by several authorities.<sup>458</sup> Quite certainly, this

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<sup>454</sup> See James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). See also Milton C. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Joe William Trotter, *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

<sup>455</sup> Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora*, 6.

<sup>456</sup> Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora*, 294-295, 297. A direct consequence of the Great Migration was that, in the long term, it produced a so-called "Southernization of America" as well as an "Americanization of Dixie", in 328.

<sup>457</sup> The first check from Federal government for rebuilding after the flood of 1927 was of \$533,668.20, and it stated that the object for which it had been draw was to "Partial reimbursement, flood relief, restoration of roads and bridges", check issued by the Treasurer of the United States, Washington DC., ca. 1928, Mississippi River Flood of 1927 Album, Mss. 4373, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge.

<sup>458</sup> "First Gallon Taxed Gas Sold to A. of C. Officials", newspaper clipping, ca. 1928, Mississippi River Flood of 1927 Album, Mss. 4373, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge.

measure inspired future governor Huey Long who would later implement a five-cent-per-barrel tax on oil to fund his development projects.

In response to this environmental catastrophe, on May the following year the federal government passed the Flood Control Act of 1928. Congress appropriated \$325,000,000 for the building of a more efficient flood control system.<sup>459</sup> This flood changed the perception men had regarding nature: “On the issue of river control, the 1927 flood altered the underlying theory regarding man’s relationship with nature from one of domination to one of accommodation”. The levees had shown to be ineffective, thus a series of reservoirs, floodways, cut-offs, and spillways were added to the system to prevent another disaster of such dimensions to occur.<sup>460</sup> However, in general, when fall came in 1927, “the opportunity to gain national support for reform in the South had disappeared; people quickly forgot about the flood and its victims”.<sup>461</sup> The imprint the flood left was, nonetheless, greater than some would imagine.<sup>462</sup>

Yet not everybody forgot. As journalist John Barry wrote, the “struggle” of the flood “began as one of man against nature. It became one of man against man. For the flood brought with it also a human storm. Honor and money collided. White and black collided. Regional and national power structures collided. The collisions shook America”.<sup>463</sup> In Louisiana that collision had a name: Huey Long. The candidate, who had experienced the flood first hand, would use this situation to his advantage through a discourse of regenerating society. Perhaps that might explain the reason for the support the politician received from the African Americans that remained in the South and in Louisiana in particular, who would generally support his multiple candidacies and the

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<sup>459</sup> Daniel, *Deep’n as It Come*, 150.

<sup>460</sup> Powers, “A Matter of Choice”, 20.

<sup>461</sup> Daniel, *Deep’n as It Come*, 140.

<sup>462</sup> Journalist John Barry wrote a book about the flood in which he concluded that the city of New Orleans was badly affected by it: “[T]he city decayed. Before the flood New Orleans had vastly more economic activity than any city in the South. Decades later, while in the newest New South such cities as Charlotte and Miami—not to mention Atlanta, Dallas, and Houston—thrived and grew, New Orleans fell far behind its old competitors, and banks even in Memphis now dwarf those in New Orleans [...] [The city] had become even more ingrown, and it was dying. Only the port [...] remained vital. The city had become a place for tourists, and picture postcards. Perhaps all this had nothing to do with the 1927 flood. Or perhaps it did”, in John M. Barry, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 411.

<sup>463</sup> Barry, *Rising Tide*, 17.

future 1934 Share Our Wealth program. Moreover, his opponent and defeated candidate to the 1928 presidential election, governor O.H. Simpson, had approved the dynamiting of the Caernarvon levee that had had such terrible consequences to the impoverished neighborhoods in New Orleans, and the victims of Saint Bernard and Plaquemines parishes were outraged by the aftermath of the explosion.<sup>464</sup> They filed suits on the state and demanded claims of a total of \$35 million. Moreover, their attorney would be future *longite* Leander H. Perez (1891-1969).<sup>465</sup> Hence, the situation was perfect for a Long victory.

Thus Huey became the youngest governor in the state's history. Of course, this time, as opposed to 1924, election day was bright and sunny. Long was inaugurated 44<sup>th</sup> governor of the State of Louisiana on May 21, 1928.<sup>466</sup> That same day, a newspaper published an ad paid by different citizens of Winn parish congratulating the politician for his victory.<sup>467</sup> He was also congratulated by diverse people, including New Orleans activist and lawyer Judith Hyams Douglas (1875-1955).<sup>468</sup> In his inauguration speech, Long started by stating: "With the help of which I am assured, a kind Providence permitting, I am hoping to assist our state, its institutions and people to enter the realm of a greater democracy and a better day". He emphasized his compromise in spending state funds only for social purposes and to improve the lives of the taxpayers, and not on extravagance—ironically, though, corruption would be an integral part of his administration.<sup>469</sup> The new governor ended humbly by asking for everybody's help in

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<sup>464</sup> Barry, *Rising Tide*, 351.

<sup>465</sup> Barry, *Rising Tide*, 357-358.

<sup>466</sup> "Long's Inaugural Is Being Planned at Baton Rouge", *The Times-Picayune*, March 15, 1928; "Gov. Long Acclaimed by Record Throng", *New Orleans States*, May 21, 1928, 1; "Notables of State Pour Into Baton Rouge to See Gov. Long Take Office", *New Orleans States*, May 21, 1928, 11.

<sup>467</sup> "A Son of 'Ole Winn'. Congratulations to 'Our Boy', He's Governor Now!" *New Orleans States*, May 21, 1928, 16.

<sup>468</sup> "Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to the office of Governor, and also to state that in all of your constructive work for the State of Louisiana you will have my whole-hearted support, as indeed you should have from every good citizen", Letter from Judith Hyams Douglas to Huey P. Long, February 29, 1928, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 4, folder 142, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>469</sup> Because of that trait, Journalist Kent compared Long to Chicago mayor William Hale Thompson (1869-1944), known as "Big Bill". He wrote: "Their political bloods would match", in Kent, "Our Political Monstrosities", 409-410. See also Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, *Big Bill of Chicago* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953); Douglas Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

carrying out this task.<sup>470</sup> His audience perceived Long's rise in a positive way, because "if a common farm boy like Huey could rise to power there was hope for everyone".<sup>471</sup> Contemporary newspaperman Harnett Kane described the scene in the following way: "The revolution had started. But something else was getting under way, more slowly, more quietly: the diversion of that revolution".<sup>472</sup>



*Fig. 11: Inauguration of Governor Long, May 20, 1928. The Times Picayune, May 22, 1928, 1, William B. Wisdom collection of Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 3, folder 7, LaRC.*

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<sup>470</sup> George Vandervoort, "Long Inaugurated Governor as Huge Throng Cheers", *The Times-Picayune*, May 22, 1928, 1, 10.

<sup>471</sup> Jeansonne, "Huey P. Long, Gerald L. K. Smith and Leander H. Perez", 12.

<sup>472</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 59.

## CHAPTER TWO: ESTABLISHING THE LOUISIANA LONG MACHINE

After winning the second gubernatorial election, Huey Long began his controversial administration in Louisiana. It was a difficult and hectic period, in which great improvements for the Pelican State were developed, particularly in regards to infrastructure and political presence of the downtrodden, but it was also during those years that became very powerful in his native state, arguably beyond need. The aim of this chapter is to understand Huey Long's political ascension. The politician went from being a quite unknown governor, who came on the verge of being impeached, to a radical and even feared US senator. Long established what could be called a "Long machine", in which he gathered unprecedented power in Louisiana. Particularly after the impeachment process in 1929, the governor set up a centralized, controlling, and well-organized political machine in Louisiana. The questionable methods he used, together with his indisputable charisma made him a potential threat to the status quo of Louisiana and later on of the United States.

### 2.1 The "redneck" becomes the Kingfish: Governor Long<sup>473</sup>

He took Louisiana out of the mud [...] Democracy was weak when Huey Long came into power in Louisiana. Under his ministrations, it passed into a state of suspended animation.<sup>474</sup>

Harnett Kane

During his first year as governor, Long devoted himself to carry out new policies to improve the living standards of people in Louisiana, some of which worried the privileged.<sup>475</sup> However, the manner through which he accomplished this was harshly

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<sup>473</sup> As an example of the importance of this period in Louisiana's history, it is relevant to note how Walter G. Cowan and Jack B. McGuire developed a study on all governors of the Pelican State, from the first governor, Pierre LeMoyné (1661-1706), until Bobby Jindal (1971-), and the politician who receives more pages is the Kingfish, in *Louisiana Governors: Rulers, Rascals, and Reformers* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 166-179.

<sup>474</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 144.

<sup>475</sup> His wife told Williams how he barely had time for anything else besides politics. She said: "Huey had practically no recreations. After elected governor the only movie we went to he went to sleep. [...] He didn't have time to play with the children, but did see them at meals. I insisted that the children be at

criticized and led to his impeachment the following year. Long had numerous disputes with politicians from different political positions in the Louisiana House of Representatives, where there were only nineteen *longite*—friends and relatives, supporters of Long—out of one hundred members.<sup>476</sup>

Detractors and supporters alike started to refer to Huey with the moniker “Kingfish”. Long wrote a few years later that, when speaking with president Roosevelt on the phone, he would start the conversation by saying, “Hi, this is the Kingfish”.<sup>477</sup> This was the name of a character of the popular radio show *Amos 'n' Andy*, created in 1928 and aired until 1958. In this comedy, its creators, Charles J. Correll (1890-1972) and Freeman F. Gosden (1899-1982), two white men, played the voices of two black men, thus perpetuating certain condescendence and racism towards African Americans. These two characters had the leading role in a series of absurd and comical stories related to the Mystic Knights of the Sea, a fraternal lodge directed by a character named Kingfish. This leader was a strong and confident man who was always encouraging the two main characters to get into trouble.<sup>478</sup>

There are doubts about whether it was Long who attributed this nickname to himself or if it was someone else. Huey explained he playfully started calling one of his followers Brother Crawford, a character from the radio show and member of the lodge. As a response, this person began calling him Kingfish. A journalist wrote that it was during his time as head of the Public Service Commissioner that he yelled at a meeting: “Oh, shut up! [...] I’m the kingfish in this pond and what I say goes!”<sup>479</sup> Throughout the 1930s, several journalists, mostly anti-*longite*, reacted and referred to this colorful nickname. For instance, Hermann Deutsch wrote in 1939 that the name was born during a meeting for the senatorial campaign. There was some loud argument to which Long would have responded, “Shut up [...], shut up! This is the Kingfish of the lodge,

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meals and close to him”, Interview to Rose McConnell, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>476</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 33.

<sup>477</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 278.

<sup>478</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 312-313. See also the official webpage of the show: [www.amosandy.com](http://www.amosandy.com).

<sup>479</sup> Will Irwin, “The Empire of the Kingfish. Part Three”, *Liberty Magazine*, April 13, 1935, 30, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 27, folder 25, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

talking!”<sup>480</sup> Biographer Forrest Davis also explained in that decade how “the risible monicker, devised by a radio gag writer to suggest Afro-American grandiloquence, became the publicly selected nickname of a politician bidding for power in a country which is believed to crave dignity in its public men”.<sup>481</sup> Finally, reporter Thomas O. Harris stated in 1938 that “both [Long and the radio character] were sharp as needles, and each exhibited in a different way the resourcefulness of genius”.<sup>482</sup> Discussion aside, Long enjoyed having a nickname. After 1928, everybody in Louisiana knew who the Kingfish was. Some time later, so did many across the United States. His popular persona was taking form.

One of the differences between Long and all prior governors of Louisiana was the fact that he would rapidly accumulate great power in his hands, which he justified by saying it was necessary for implementing his political program. The Kingfish began to fill public offices with followers, which warranted the accusation of nepotism by his enemies. As Fineran wrote, “In a short time Earl Long was but one of 68 relatives of the Governor who were drawing the State’s pay”.<sup>483</sup> He put his acquaintance Dr. A. Vidrine as the superintendent at of the New Orleans’ Charity Hospital,<sup>484</sup> Oscar K. Allen and Harley Bozeman in the Louisiana Highway Commission, his law partner Harvey G. Fields (1882-1961) in the Louisiana Public Service Commission, Robert Maestri was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the State Militia—a separate body from the National Guard—,<sup>485</sup> and more in the Board of Health and the Conservation Commission, among others.<sup>486</sup> T. Harry Williams, however, believed that this issue had been exaggerated and that during Long’s first two years as governor there was no more than one third of *longite* in his administration. The historian defensively stated:

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<sup>480</sup> Herman B. Deutsch, “Huey Long Gets the Kingfish Title”, *The New Orleans Item*, August 23, 1939.

<sup>481</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 124.

<sup>482</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 254.

<sup>483</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 18.

<sup>484</sup> “Vidrine Succeeds Leak as Charity Hospital Chief”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 8, 1928, 1, 9.

<sup>485</sup> The National Guard and the State Militia are two separate bodies since US Congress officially split them in the 1933 National Guard Mobilization Act. The former is the federal army unit under the command of a state government and ultimately the federal government. The latter, which contrary to the National Guard cannot be federalized, is composed of “all able bodies” that reside in the state and its members must be over eighteen years old. The members of the National Guard are included to the State Militia. “Composition of the Militia - RCW 38.04.030”, accessed May 31, 2016, [apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=38.04.030](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=38.04.030).

<sup>486</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 48-49.

“Although he exercised a strong control over the policies of the boards and some control over their patronage policies, he did not try to politicalize their whole structure”.<sup>487</sup>

The same year he became governor, in 1928, Long, as other states also—such as California and Ohio—, created the Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI).<sup>488</sup> It was a direct imitation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that Huey would change into a police organization. The governor would use the BCI as his personal guard to the point that it would become to be known as “Long’s Cossacks”.<sup>489</sup> A few years later it was said that the opposition accused Long of using it similar to Stalin’s OGPU.<sup>490</sup> Fineran strongly affirmed:

His creation of the criminal Bureau of Identification to supply him with strong-arm men and gunmen to serve him as his private police, is another example of the type of brute cowardice which so often leads to assassination and other crimes of violence.<sup>491</sup>

Historian Richard White has also analyzed it as a dangerous sign:

It possessed unprecedented power to make arrests anywhere in the state of Louisiana, without warrants, for all violations of the law [...] Secretive and powerful, the BCI provided Huey with a hefty political weapon and signaled an ominous first step toward creation of a police state.<sup>492</sup>

Another way Long centralized the government of Louisiana was by implementing a series of measures that increased his control over state employees. Before starting a state job, each public employee had to sign an undated letter of resignation to prevent conflict if fired. Therefore, dismissing someone because they were not following

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<sup>487</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 295.

<sup>488</sup> The bill which created the BCI stated: “an act creating a State Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, providing for the appointment of a superintendent thereof, together with oxice help, officers and investigators, who shall constitute said Bureau, defining their duties and powers making an appropriation for the salaries and expenses, connected therewith, also providing penalties for the violation of this Act, and declaring an emergency”, *State of Louisiana. Fourth Regular Session of the Legislature under the Adoption of the Constitution of 1921*, June 4 1928, 30, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

<sup>489</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 99; Hair, *The Kingfish*, 281.

<sup>490</sup> Will Irwin, “The Empire of the Kingfish, Part One”, *Liberty Magazine*, March 30, 1935, 26, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 27, folder 25, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). Raymond Moley used the same analogy a few months later, in Raymond Moley, “Huey P. Long”, *Today*, September 21, 1935, 13, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 2, folder 14, LaRC.

<sup>491</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 52.

<sup>492</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 46.

instructions was an easy task. As could be expected, several opponents of the Kingfish considered this policy excessive. Fineran, who witnessed the measure, explained how “a number of such resignations have been accepted and persons removed from office thereby, although the procedure is entirely illegal”.<sup>493</sup> Historian T. Harry Williams, however, argued: “His reasons for demanding the resignations were complex and went beyond a crass desire to grasp control. He asked them of some people because he had reason to doubt their competence or honesty”.<sup>494</sup> Referring to future governor and Long’s puppet, Oscar Allen, Huey’s brother Julius recalled: “I remember when he made Governor O.K. Allen sign [such affidavit]. The Governor broke down and cried”.<sup>495</sup> Allen was no different from the other state employees and so had to submit and obey Huey’s command.<sup>496</sup> Harris criticized Long for this kind of control and compared him to Louisiana Republican governor Henry Clay Warmoth (1842-1931), who ruled from 1868 until 1872, and was the first to implement the resignation issue. The author referred to him in 1938 as a Reconstruction authority: “[O]ne of the greatest political tyrants that ever seized control of a state”.<sup>497</sup>

Most biographers of Long agree that he ignored the Constitution of Louisiana on more than one occasion. A famous anecdote tells how, in one of the sessions of the Louisiana State Senate, while the governor was about to approve a bill, one of the senators ironically yelled, while throwing the Constitution at him: “Maybe you’ve heard of this book”, to which Long answered “I’m the Constitution just now”.<sup>498</sup>

### 2.1.1 Building popularity among the underprivileged

The governor used his influence to push forward one of the milestones in his political career: providing free textbooks for schoolchildren. The bill was approved in a manner

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<sup>493</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 21.

<sup>494</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 294.

<sup>495</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 189.

<sup>496</sup> “Long Has Allen’s Resignation, Says Dudley LeBlanc”, *The Times-Picayune*, June 26, 1932, 1.

<sup>497</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 114. This was a time when Reconstruction was conceived as both a period of decay because of the remains of destruction and despair left by the Civil War, as well as also as a moment of prosperity, peace, and rebirth.

<sup>498</sup> “What the Exchanges Says: Louisiana’s ‘Huey’”, *Dallas Morning News*, November 15, 1930, 16; Barbara Giles, “King Huey of Louisiana: A Portrait of Governor Long”, *Outlook and Independent*, vol. 159, no. 8, October 21, 1931, 237, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 4, folder 19, LaRC; Smith, *The Kingfish*, ii; Davis, *Huey Long*, 98.

that would become the governor's way of doing politics; that is, acting fast—almost in a rush—, using questionable methods, and obtaining his wished result. As biographer Webster Smith testified in 1933: “Now when the Kingfish of Louisiana doesn't like the way things are going down there, he changes them. He jerks the government structure around until it serves his purposes”.<sup>499</sup> Long had already proposed this policy in his program in the election of 1924. To achieve his goal, he planned to raise the severance tax—a tax every state incurred when non-renewable natural sources are extracted—on oil, a measure that would be detrimental to the Standard Oil Company. In the United States, schools budget was collected with taxes paid by each county or parish in the case of Louisiana, and therefore Long's policy was at first rejected. Local school taxes were a delicate issue in the South, especially in the Mississippi delta states, as a poor black majority districts would have no education money—the “separate but equal” 1890 law obviously lay behind this. Thus, by looking into other sources of funding for schools, Long may have been relatively “color blind”. However, the severance tax bill was finally approved with the affirmative votes of 80 members of the House of Representatives against 14,<sup>500</sup> and afterwards it also passed in the State Senate with 25 yeas and 14 nays.<sup>501</sup>

Throughout this process, a problem arose when people from conservative and neighboring parishes of Caddo and Bossier, located in the northwest of Louisiana, refused to receive the books.<sup>502</sup> They were led by the mayor of Shreveport, L.E. Thomas. This politician argued that since religious and private institutions had legal autonomy they could not dispose of the free textbooks. Thus, the argument continued, what Long was proposing was unconstitutional and a violation of the separation between Church and state.<sup>503</sup> To this point, Huey simply answered that he was not

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<sup>499</sup> Smith, *The Kingfish*, 267.

<sup>500</sup> “Free Textbooks Measure Passed by House, 80 to 14”, *The Times-Picayune*, June 14, 1928, 7; “Long's Forces Crush Foes in School Book Fight”, *New Orleans States*, June 14, 1928, 1, 9.

<sup>501</sup> “Severance Tax Passes Senate 25 to 14”, *New Orleans States*, June 28, 1928, 1; George Vandervoort, “Senate Votes Raise in Severance Tax to Benefit Schools”, *The Times-Picayune*, June 29, 1928, 1, 8.

<sup>502</sup> “Caddo's Refusal of Free Books Puzzle to Long”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 6, 1928, 2; “Caddo Parish Will Attack Book Law”, September 6, 1928, 1.

<sup>503</sup> “Another Attack Upon Free Books”, *New Orleans States*, September 5, 1928, 3. Several residents of Caddo wrote a petition that stated: “The courses of study and the school books prescribed by the private, religious and other schools aforesaid not embraced in the public educational system of the State of Louisiana, are different from those prescribed and used in the free public schools of this State, and the Louisiana State Board of Education has no right or authority to prescribe the course of study of the school

giving the books to the institutions but to the children. The governor also insinuated that if they did not support the project, he would paralyze the construction of eighty acres for an airfield in Shreveport, which had been previously approved and which would benefit the community. As could be expected, with these unorthodox methods, the free school textbooks for children bill passed.<sup>504</sup> Fineran explained it in the following manner:

After much discussion and ado, Long offered a compromise, and promised that he would pass the measure if the Parish of Caddo withdrew its school-book suit from the courts and instructed the Caddo legislators to support all his measures in the Legislature. This offer so closely resembles blackmail that it is indistinguishable in its essentials from its cruder relative.<sup>505</sup>

Long's several biographers tell how, while a bank of New Orleans and the Board of Liquidation were discussing the possibility of granting the government a loan of 500,000 dollars to finance the measure, Huey angrily ordered a sandwich at the restaurant in the Roosevelt Hotel while waiting for the resolution. When the waiter brought the food, one of the bankers entered the establishment and informed the governor that the bank had approved the loan for the textbooks. Upon hearing that, Long told the waiter to take back the sandwich and ordered him: "Fry me a steak!" in a celebratory tone.<sup>506</sup>

That school year, the governor ordered to print 600,000 textbooks for children, which increased attendance in school by 15,000 students.<sup>507</sup> The new policy saved the Orleans parish schools \$60,000 per year.<sup>508</sup> Even though it helped decrease illiteracy,<sup>509</sup> the

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books to be used by the children attending the schools constituting no part of the public educational system", Petition to the Honorable Judges of the Nineteenth Judicial District Court in and for the Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, from Emmer Cochran, William M. Guice, Jr., Henry G. Steinau, and Allie H. Tarder, 1928, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 5, folder 152a, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>504</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 66-67; Williams, *Huey Long*, 307-311; Davis, *Huey Long*, 100-101.

<sup>505</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 28.

<sup>506</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 113-114; White, *Kingfish*, 52; Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 49.

<sup>507</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 56.

<sup>508</sup> "Free Textbooks to Save Schools \$60,000 Yearly", *The Times-Picayune*, July 27, 1928, 2.

<sup>509</sup> Writer Mildred Adams wrote that in ten years illiteracy fell to 9.4%, in "Huey the Great", *The Forum*, February 1933, 71, William B. Wisdom collection of Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 3, LaRC. Another author published similar data: "More than 100,000 men and women were taught to read and write in evening schools, and at the end of this drive when the census was taken in 1930 our illiteracy had dropped from 10.5 per cent for the whites in 1920 to 7.3 per cent in 1930; and for the negroes the 1920 figure of 38.5 per cent had been reduced to 23.3 per cent in 1930", in T. H. Harris,

ways in which the bill was approved remain polemical and are still debated. On one hand, historian Williams, always defensive of the governor, affirmed that Long did not act dictatorially or coercively, and that it was his enemies, who were afraid of too much state intervention, that perpetrated a negative image of the politician. In his words, “any kind of state welfare was [considered] socialism, and this particular act of socialism was doubly odious because it was being perpetrated by their former detested fellow townsman, Huey Long”.<sup>510</sup> On the other hand, radical journalist Carleton Beals, writing in the 1930s, believed and criticized, as many did, that Long executed his policies with no regards to the Constitution. He argued: “Helping poor children was one thing: promoting war and merchants’ sales another”.<sup>511</sup> A month before Long’s death, another author argued that the textbooks might have been provided, but that under the Long administration the salaries of teachers were heavily reduced.<sup>512</sup> Years later, historian Glen Jeansonne criticized the techniques Long had employed and affirmed in the 1990s: “[S]ocial justice cannot be dictatorially imposed on any level; that is the perennial promise and ultimate deception of dictators everywhere”.<sup>513</sup>

As can be seen, the debate about whether Long was particularly “radical” or progressive in his ways or just another politician following the ideals of *Realpolitik* remains unresolved. In 1931 some of Long’s friends proposed that every school should have a plaque commemorating the generosity of their governor and his fight to get the books for children. Some of them were effectively placed in certain parishes with the script: “Lawgiver, governor, senator, in grateful appreciation for his efforts in obtaining free school books for the children of Louisiana”.<sup>514</sup> The first plaque in New Orleans was placed in Jackson school, where “following the presentation children of the school marched by saluting [it] [...] and singing ‘Louisiana’”.<sup>515</sup> In other parishes, such as Caddo, the school board refused the plaques, to which the governor’s reaction was

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“Louisiana Sets the Pace in Educational Work”, newspaper clipping, no date, 165-166, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 15, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>510</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 324.

<sup>511</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 96.

<sup>512</sup> Rorty, “Callie Long’s Boy Huey”, 76.

<sup>513</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 189.

<sup>514</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 164.

<sup>515</sup> “Textbook Plaque Is Presented to Jackson School”, *The Times-Picayune*, December 12, 1931, 1.

simply that such an attitude “is all right with me”,<sup>516</sup> adding that “[it] does not hurt a bit”.<sup>517</sup> These plaques were but the smallest physical testaments of Long’s government.<sup>518</sup>

But the governor would leave bigger and more tangible legacies. Huey developed a formidable public works program for the construction of hospitals and schools, as well as building paved roads and bridges in order to improve the transportation system in Louisiana. Among others, his most recognized feat would be the bridge that bears his name to-date crossing the Mississippi through Jefferson parish, on the borders of the city of New Orleans. It was finished on December 1935, when the Kingfish had already passed away, at a total cost of \$9,424,981, then a huge sum.<sup>519</sup> A newspaper described it enthusiastically: “Truly it will be a monument of Progress in Louisiana”.<sup>520</sup> It is worth revising the miles of paved roads that were built under Long’s administration. According to historian Alan Brinkley writing at the end of the century, in 1928 there were 300 miles of paved roads in Louisiana, while in 1935 the number had increased to 3,754.<sup>521</sup> Indeed, the road network of the state had been improved under Long’s

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<sup>516</sup> George Vandervoort, “Long Is ‘Not Hurt’ as Caddo Refuses to Erect Plaques”, *The Times-Picayune*, December 3, 1931, 1.

<sup>517</sup> “Not Hurt a Bit, Says Gov. Long”, *New Orleans States*, December 3, 1931, 2.

<sup>518</sup> As a personal reminder of his achievements, Long framed a telegram—that was most likely hanging from a wall in his office—sent from Geo A. Haddad in Tyler, Texas, to Hoover's vice president, Chas Curtis (1860-1936), wherein the latter commended Huey for contributing to national defense by building “the most perfect permanent safe bridges and roads from every coast of Louisiana to the border of Texas and on to the border of Mexico he has fortified the nation against invisible enemy and not only that he has facilitated the wheel of commerce locally nationally and internationally for our cotton oil sugar salt and other products of our state and given our children free school books to learn more of our nations and enable them to love our country and to become good citizens and maintain forever the honorable traditions of America this true we the tax payers are paying for this most wanted facilities but what of it haven’t we been paying taxes for years past and never had such security facilities and convenient transportation for our nation until the honorable senator Long became governor of our beloved state of Louisiana. As a citizen tax payer of the state of Louisiana and ex-soldier of the AEF [American Expeditionary Force, US troops in Europe in World War I] with my other tax payer friends of the state of Louisiana we wish to extend our heartiest congratulations to our senator Huey P. Long who is fighting for the future and security of our nation”, Geo A. Haddad to Chas Curtis, Telegram, February 22, 1933,

<sup>519</sup> Tonja Koob Marking and Jennifer Snape, *Huey P. Long Bridge* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 7.

<sup>520</sup> “The Huey P. Long Bridge Over the Mississippi”, *The American Progress*, August issue, 1935, 3.

<sup>521</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 30. Numbers, however, are not clear. According to a newspaper, by 1923 there were already 3,000 miles of “improved highways” in Louisiana, although the source does not specify the exact conditions of those roads or whether they were paved, in “576 Miles Good Roads Built in Louisiana in Year 1923”, *New Orleans States*, January 13, 1924, 1. Another source indicated that “when he [Long] began, Louisiana had less than 150 miles of improved country roads”, and that by 1934 the state “had 1,500 miles of hard highways and more than 3,000 miles of semi-hard surface”, in Irwin, “The Empire of the Kingfish. Part One”, 26.

regime.<sup>522</sup> Some authors have remarked how such policies were an obsession of the Kingfish to physically demonstrate his power. For instance, historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., affirmed at mid-century, “Like an ancient emperor or a modern dictator, he specialized in monuments”,<sup>523</sup> more than in the social needs of the people of his native state.

**Fig. 12:** Example of a paved highway in Louisiana, before and under Long administration, near Lake Charles. The picture on the top has marked on the back: “Old brick pavement, lake charles, US 90 East”. The picture on the bottom has the inscription: “Lake charles, US 90 East”. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 28, LaRC. These pictures appear on Long’s autobiography, *Every Man a King*, p. 241.



<sup>522</sup> A journalist emphasized how the governor would improve the road system in the parishes where he was most popular, particularly Winn, while ignoring those who did not support him, in Sisson, “Huey Long: Dictator of the Delta. Part 2”, 22, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>523</sup> Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Upheaval*, 60.

Two such efforts generated considerable uproar. In 1929 Long proposed that the governor's mansion in Baton Rouge should be rebuilt because of its supposed deplorable condition.<sup>524</sup> This once again received criticism because of the futility of the project. The old mansion had been built in 1860 in a typical neoclassic style, and to Long the elderly official residence represented the backward traditionalism he was fighting. Moreover, as the governor explained in his autobiography, the building was falling apart, practically inhabitable: "The old structure was in such condition that living in it comfortably was practically impossible [...] Rats and other vermin ran through the building unrestrained. Half the windows could neither be raised nor lowered. Termites had destroyed the lower sills".<sup>525</sup> At the end of 1928, the Kingfish had a building inspector in Baton Rouge come to look at the house, who concluded that the structure was in bad condition and needed to be completely restored.<sup>526</sup> That inspector wrote that the mansion was "in very bad condition and very unsafe to live in, and I see no hope of ever putting it in such shape as would be practical for a mansion".<sup>527</sup> Symbolically, building a new official residence not only represented comfort to Huey, but also a new, modern, and progressive Louisiana. The new building was finished in 1930, and it curiously and perhaps suspiciously resembled the White House in Washington, which, after all, was another neo-classical southern mansion.<sup>528</sup> It may have been a veiled proclamation of his intentions to aspire to the presidency of the United States in the future. Some certainly suspected as much.

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<sup>524</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 20-21.

<sup>525</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 223.

<sup>526</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 334.

<sup>527</sup> Letter from Geo. W. Garig, Commissioner of Public Parks and Streets in Baton Rouge, to Huey P. Long, October 31, 1928, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 5, folder 154, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). The inspector had previously written: "Pursuant to your request, beg to advise that an inspection of the Governor's mansion, 502 North Blvd. was made and we submit herewith our report and rough sketch covering the termite inspection of the mansion", Letter from M.H. Gandy, from Louisiana Laboratory Supply & Co., to Huey P. Long, October 17, 1928, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 5, folder 154, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>528</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 107.



*Fig. 13: Governor's mansion built under Long administration, now referred to as "the old mansion". Picture by author.*

In the end, Long had the mansion rebuilt, but the most dramatic change to the Baton Rouge skyline was the new state capitol building, inaugurated on May 16, 1932. The old edifice had been built in 1847.<sup>529</sup> To the Kingfish, it represented the archaism of the past, the backwardness of the state, a physical symbol of aristocratic and conservative power in his society. Not accidentally, the capitol had also been the stage of the impeachment that the politician wanted to erase from the memory and physical presence.<sup>530</sup> He would not erect a modest and down-to-earth sized building. On the contrary, the governor proposed a project for the construction of a five-million-dollar skyscraper.<sup>531</sup> As could be expected, criticism arose.<sup>532</sup> Disregarding the opposition, Long gave the job of preparing the plans of the building to a firm for which architect Leon C. Weiss (1882-1953), one of his many friends, worked.<sup>533</sup> Weiss, who also designed the new governor's mansion, went on to draw up the campus and buildings of

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<sup>529</sup> And some of its furniture was intended for emperor Maximilian of Mexico (1832-1867), but after he was executed it arrived to Louisiana, "History of Old Capitol", *Morning Advocate*, November 9, 1930.

<sup>530</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 104.

<sup>531</sup> At the early stages of the plan, Long assured the building would not cost more than \$1,250,000, in "Long Authorized to Obtain Plans for New Capitol", *The Times-Picayune*, January 18, 1930, 1.

<sup>532</sup> George Vandervoort, "Long's \$5,000,000 Capitol Measure Beaten 40 to 18", *The Times-Picayune*, July 11, 1930, 1.

<sup>533</sup> "Long Receives Design for New State Capitol", *The Times-Picayune*, February 18, 1930, 1-2. Leon C. Weiss was not related to Long's assassin, Carl Weiss.

the Louisiana State University—an institution also strongly linked to Long.<sup>534</sup> The architect affirmed the style of the capitol building would be classical, but writer John K. Fineran asserted in 1932 that “the building bears about as much relation to the Acropolis as it does to a hot-dog stand”.<sup>535</sup>



**Fig. 14:** Top: “Architects' design for state capitol”, *The Times Picayune*, February 18, 1930, 1, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 4, folder 7, LaRC. Right: Current Picture of the capitol building. Picture by author.

It is relevant to note that its design was pure art deco, corresponding to the artistic tendencies of the time. Long defended his project by mentioning the Nebraska state capitol in Lincoln, designed by architect Bertram Goodhue (1869-1924), which had cost, according to the politician, seventeen million dollars to build—in reality, the amount was almost ten million; still four more than the building in Baton Rouge.<sup>536</sup> The two buildings bore astounding similarities and are respectively the first and the second tallest state capitols in the United States. Both towers were finished in 1932—although Long’s was built in less than two years, eight less than its counterpart—, and their height is almost the same, although the Kingfish’s was, of course, just a bit taller—137

<sup>534</sup> As explained further in section 2.5.3

<sup>535</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 111.

<sup>536</sup> “Long Defends New Capitol”, *New Orleans States*, December 2, 1931, 2.

meters, as opposed to the 133 meters of the Nebraska edifice.<sup>537</sup> Surprisingly, it seems as if this comparison lacks historical assessment. Be that as it may, the influences of architect Goodhue on the work of Weiss can easily be spotted.



*Fig. 15: Nebraska State Capitol Building in Lincoln.*  
*wikipedia.org*

Apart from the mansion, the bridge, and the capitol, Long fulfilled other spectacular achievements. As the Kingfish had promised during his campaign, he made cheap natural gas available in New Orleans. The Old Regulars had agreed with the New Orleans Public Service Incorporated (NOPSI) in bringing expensive artificial gas, despite a ready

source of cheap natural gas available just across the Mississippi river.<sup>538</sup> Long set out to replace the artificial gas supply with natural gas, thus fixing such visibly awkward situation, which reeked of favoritism. Some of the governor's contemporary critics, such as Beals, asserted that the changeover was a process already started before Long became governor, and criticized the Kingfish for getting all the credit.<sup>539</sup> In fact, the governor carried out this measure in a dubious manner, for he secretly allied with Harry Abel, head of the NOPSI, and brought everyone to believe he had won the battle. In the end, they agreed on charging 90 cents per thousand cubic feet.<sup>540</sup> Nobody realized—or was allowed to perceive—that the price offered by a rival company was just 65 cents and Long had initially promised 70. After the issue, the governor simply appeared as the

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<sup>537</sup> Frederick C. Luebke, *A Harmony of the Arts: The Nebraska State Capitol* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 30.

<sup>538</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 56-57.

<sup>539</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 92-95.

<sup>540</sup> "City Council Calls Long, Agrees on 90C. Gas", *New Orleans States*, July 4, 1928, 1.

hero who finally solved the situation, although in fact he was benefitting from this new arrangement.<sup>541</sup> As Kane put it, Long “had beaten the Ring at its own game”.<sup>542</sup>

Another conflict came from the so-called “deduct box”, a locked container in which allegedly Long kept funding for his political aspirations. During each political campaign, every state worker was supposed to pay a portion of his or her salary to be kept in the box in order to help finance the necessary propaganda. These funds were extracted automatically from their salaries and were directly controlled by the governor. It is said that in every campaign Huey raised between \$50,000 to \$75,000, and that by 1935 the box contained around one million dollars.<sup>543</sup>



*Fig. 16: Copy of the deduct box exhibited at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. Picture by author.*

For instance, during the 1930 campaign for the US senate the deduct box was key to finance Long’s attempt to win. The salaries of state workers were an important part of these funds and, according to some authors, during that campaign their contribution went from two to ten percent of their pay understood as a “voluntary

contribution”.<sup>544</sup> As could be expected, Long was accused of corruption on several occasions regarding the mysterious box. In the summer of 1932, the Treasury

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<sup>541</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 43-44; White, *Kingfish*, 56-57; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 39-43; Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 58; Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 66.

<sup>542</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 65.

<sup>543</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 27; Hair, *The Kingfish*, 276.

<sup>544</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 133. The measure had some support (although this assumption is based on Williams’ interviews and therefore potentially influenced by his personal thoughts in the issue). A Louisiana state employee affirmed he was not against it: “I always gave my 5 per cent. I don’t think that was so bad. I was a beneficiary of the state so why shouldn’t I contribute?”, Interview to W. A. Cooper, no date, by T. Harry Williams. Similarly, a Long man—a colonel from his military staff—argued that people were happy to give because they were grateful for having a job in difficult times, and that “some gave five percent some gave more voluntarily”, Interview to Robert Brothers, no date, by T.

Department sent a few officials to examine the governor's finances and wrote that: "Louisiana is crawling. Long and his gang are stealing everything in the state".<sup>545</sup> Fineran did not hold back when he stated: "Long boasted that he had modernized all the departments of the State; evidently meaning by modernism certain methods and innovations discovered or invented by Al Capone and others of his sort".<sup>546</sup>

Nonetheless, Williams, as always, was supportive of what he believed were Long's good intentions:

His actions were those of a typically pragmatic American politician, one who liked to appear more terrible, and more powerful, than he actually was. His fierce threats were only strategy, designed to frighten his foes. His avowed ruthlessness [...] was a boast rather than an accurate statement.<sup>547</sup>

What happened in the following months demonstrates how various Huey's contemporaries did not share Williams' optimistic opinion.

### 2.1.2 Impeachment

Like a bolt of lightning out of the sky, followed by a clap of thunder [,] came the impeachment charges against Huey Long in 1929. A great movement on the part of political enemies, some few agents of gigantic wealth, with the force and movement of a great python, eyes glittering to crush and then devour, cast its shadows in front of the state house ready to destroy its victim, the governor of the state.<sup>548</sup>

Harvey G. Fields

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Harry Williams. THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 17, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>545</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 27.

<sup>546</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 54. Paradoxically, a witness told an anecdote about how Long "never carried any money, didn't even have any to pay for meals. Once at mansion Mrs. Long came in, 'Huey, I've got to have some money'. He turned to those there and said, 'Have you got a hundred dollars?' They collected it and he handed it to her", Interview to M. J. Kavanaugh, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>547</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 332.

<sup>548</sup> Harvey G. Fields, *A True History of the Life, Works, Assassination, and Death of Huey Pierce Long* (Farmerville: Fields Publishing Agency, 1945), 42.

After one year of Long's administration and all the controversies that accompanied him, the opponents of the governor were ready to take some action. This process brought Huey to the lowest point of his political career: the impeachment attempt of 1929. A newspaper from Shreveport, where there clearly was opposition to Long, anticipated so in a harsh editorial entitled "The End of the Tyranny".<sup>549</sup> The Kingfish's relationship with the Louisiana House of Representatives was a time bomb that would explode sooner than later. Several politicians from Louisiana had started a campaign against Long's policies. In 1929, lieutenant governor Paul N. Cyr (1878-1946), who had at first been a supporter of the Kingfish, accused him of leasing oil land located in the south of the Pelican State to the Texas Company, ending the contract the state already had with the Louisiana Land and Exploration Company on that land.<sup>550</sup> Benign biographer Williams once again situates himself on the side of Long when naively or simplistically stating that Paul Cyr's accusation "was monstrously illogical—he had said that Huey Long, the man who was trying to destroy the oil industry, was in collusion with an oil company".<sup>551</sup> However, as will be explained in further pages, Long greatly benefitted from oil business.

Besides general accusations and the policies he carried out in his first year as governor, there were two specific elements that brought Long to impeachment. That February, his polemic severance tax had been declared unconstitutional. In a special session of the legislature, the governor then raised the taxes five cents on each barrel of oil in order to fund his social programs.<sup>552</sup> Most likely, the governor had taken this idea from the measure taken after the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, when, as explained in the previous chapter, a two-cent tax was applied to every gallon of gasoline. That measure enraged the state's oil businessmen and affected negatively the Standard Oil Company.

A few weeks later, a former bodyguard of the governor named Harley B. "Battling" Bozeman made an astonishing accusation against the governor. This set off an anti-

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<sup>549</sup> "Time to End the Tyranny", *Shreveport Journal*, March 22, 1929, 1; "Impeach Long If Charges Are True Is Asked", *New Orleans States*, March 22, 1929, 1.

<sup>550</sup> "Cyr Scores Governor as Worst of Tyrants", *New Orleans States*, March 21, 1929, 2.

<sup>551</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 350-51.

<sup>552</sup> "Long Proposes Tax on Business of Refining Oil", *The Times-Picayune*, March 17, 1929, 14.

Long campaign.<sup>553</sup> It is worth noting that the bodyguard had been fired just a few days prior the statement, and perhaps his words were influenced by his rage against the Kingfish.<sup>554</sup> He made an affidavit stating Huey had insinuated the suggestion that he assassinate former governor J.Y. Sanders. Bozeman assured the governor had told him: “I mean for you to kill the \_\_\_\_\_ [expletive deleted in the original], leave him in the ditch where nobody will know how or when he got there. I’m governor of this state and if you were to be found out, I would give you a full pardon and many gold dollars”.<sup>555</sup> The crime, it should be added, never took place, but intent is punishable by law. Such grievous allegations would not be ignored and led to the so-called “Bloody Monday”.<sup>556</sup> Due to Bozeman’s declarations, on March 25, 1929, Long was officially impeached charged with nineteen felonies.<sup>557</sup> When the members of the Louisiana House of Representatives were voting whether to approve the impeachment or adjourn the case *sine die*, there was a mechanical incident. An electrical problem occurred when counting the votes, and the system counted far fewer votes in favor of impeaching the governor; the results were sixty-seven “yea” for adjournment, and thirteen “nays”.<sup>558</sup> The Speaker of the House, supporter of Long John B. Fournet (1895-1984), considered the issue closed, and left the premises. The anti-*longite* members of the House were enraged and started fighting with their rivals, and even throwing chairs.<sup>559</sup>

According to Williams, “they assumed that the vote had been faked, that the voting machine had been rigged, that the Long forces had in desperation resorted to an illegal move”.<sup>560</sup> There was a general uproar in the room, and some legislators yelled “You damned crook”, or “The machine is fixed”.<sup>561</sup> Harris portrayed a convulse scene:

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<sup>553</sup> “Bozeman Will Expose Long Is Report”, *New Orleans States*, March 25, 1929, 1.

<sup>554</sup> “Governor Fires his Battling Bozeman”, *New Orleans States*, March 23, 1929, 1.

<sup>555</sup> “Says Long Attempted to Hire Him to Kill”, *New Orleans States*, March 26, 1929, 8.

<sup>556</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 63.

<sup>557</sup> Most scholars agree on that date. However, according to Jeansonne, it was March 24, and LeVert mistakenly states it was the 15<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>558</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 55; Williams, *Huey Long*, 356.

<sup>559</sup> Hermann B. Deutsch, “The Voting Machine Sticks, Brass Knuckles Flash and ‘Bloody Monday’ Turns the Legislature into a Mass of Fighting, Screaming Men; The Impeachment Move Follows”, *The New Orleans Item*, August 17, 1939; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 70.

<sup>560</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 357.

<sup>561</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 59.

Pandemonium broke loose [...] Shouts of victory from the exultant pros were almost drowned out by roars of disappointment from the antis. Fist fights seemed to be waging everywhere—at the desks, in the aisles and corridors, in the rotunda beyond the House chamber. In the cacophony of flying fists, slamming desk lids, yells, and hurled inkstands and rulers, there was small promise of resumption of orderly legislative business.<sup>562</sup>

Louisiana journalist Hodding Carter (1907-1972) wrote in 1949, “Men were cursing, screaming, some sobbing in anger”.<sup>563</sup> Forrest Davis described the episode in the following manner: “not since Reconstruction days [...] had a Louisiana legislature so far forgotten its dignity”.<sup>564</sup> In a similar comparison, Harnett Kane wrote that the “Long régime, in some of its outer manifestations [such as the importance of state militia or the manipulation of election laws], paralleled the Reconstruction”.<sup>565</sup>

The day after the turbulent affair, speaker Fournet publicly apologized and declared there had been a technical mistake, therefore the motion of impeachment was approved.<sup>566</sup> The House of Representatives passed the motion by a vote of eighty-three against three.<sup>567</sup> A group of the governor’s opponents wrote a list of charges against him; they were known as the “Dynamite Squad”, insofar as they wanted to wreck his administration. Its members were Louisiana patricians, such as Cecil Morgan (1898-1999), George K. Perrault (1899-1935), and, last but not least, angry former governor J.Y. Sanders. They maintained good connections with the “Old Regulars”, the already mentioned powerful conservative faction that controlled New Orleans.

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<sup>562</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 55-56.

<sup>563</sup> Carter, “Huey Long: American Dictator”, 350.

<sup>564</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 108.

<sup>565</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 27.

<sup>566</sup> “Fournet Fails to Resign, Fight On to Force Him Out”, *New Orleans States*, March 26, 1929, 1; “Speaker Fournet Apologizes for Mistaken Count”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 27, 1929, 16. The official report stated: “Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana that Huey P. Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana, be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanors in office, incompetency, corruption, favoritism, extortion, and oppression in office and gross misconduct, and that he be brought to trial [...] before the Bar of the Senate of the State of Louisiana”, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 71; “Huey Long Impeached by Louisiana House and Senate Notified”, *Dallas Morning News*, April 7, 1929, 1-2.

<sup>567</sup> George Vandervoot, “House Machinery Is Set in Motion to Oust Governor”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 28, 1929, 1.

The nineteen accusations against Huey were diverse and went from the reasonable to the absurd.<sup>568</sup> In 1935 writer Sender Garlin summarized them as follows: “The charges included bribery, graft, corruption, misappropriation of state funds, violent abuse of public officials, favoritism, intimidation and the hiring of assassins”,<sup>569</sup> as well as carrying a pistol in government buildings—which was and is restricted by law in Louisiana—<sup>570</sup>, and public misconduct, among others.<sup>571</sup> Contemporary pamphleteer George B. Rice analyzed the impeachment, and wrote in defense of the governor by stating: “The whole movement against him was a crime against the character of a man who was trying out a plan to redeem his native state from fifty years of maladministration”.<sup>572</sup>

During the impeachment process, not surprising, Long suffered a depression, during which he barely slept, and was much more nervous than usual.<sup>573</sup> According to author Thomas Martin, who wrote about the Long dynasty in the 1960s, some legislators who were friends with the governor had found him in his room at the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge sobbing on the bed with his face down.<sup>574</sup> Writer Barbara Giles poetically affirmed in 1931: “Huey stalked tragically through the halls and committee rooms of the State House, his swashbuckling manner laid aside for the time. Napoleon had gone Hamlet overnight”.<sup>575</sup> Similarly, Fineran told how the legal attack “reduced the

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<sup>568</sup> William Honan, “Cecil Morgan, 100, Leader of Louisiana Group That Impeached Huey Long”, *The New York Times*, June 19, 1999.

<sup>569</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 8.

<sup>570</sup> The 1921 Louisiana Constitution established that: “A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of people to keep and bear arms shall not be abridged”, Article I, Section 8, Constitution of the State of Louisiana Adopted at the City of Baton Rouge, June 18, 1921. Similarly, in *State v. Chandler*, 5 La. Ann. 489, 490 (1850), the Louisiana Supreme Court held that citizens had a right to carry arms openly: “This is the right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, and which is calculated to incite men to a manly and noble defense of themselves, if necessary, and of their country, without any tendency to secret advantages and unmanly assassinations”. However, there were certain places where carrying weapons was and is illegal, including schools, and government buildings. The 1921 Constitution contemplated the following: “This shall not prevent the passage of laws to punish those who carry weapons concealed”, Constitution of the State of Louisiana, Article I, Section 8.

<sup>571</sup> “Long Repeats Old Charges Against Standard Oil Co.”, *The Times-Picayune*, May 2, 1929, 3.

<sup>572</sup> George Bernard Rice, *True Story of Huey P. Long* ([Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified], 1935), 21.

<sup>573</sup> His wife told Williams she comforted Huey by telling him, “I know you have done the best you can. If you are impeached we can go to England”, Interview to Rose McConnell, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 1, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>574</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 60.

<sup>575</sup> Giles, “King Huey of Louisiana”, 238, William B. Wisdom collection of Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

Napoleonic Governor to tears and hysteria”.<sup>576</sup> At the same time, and as if it were an electoral campaign, Long began to publicize his innocence. In one pamphlet, the governor stated that the state and the newspapers were in the hands of the Standard Oil. Huey asserted: “The fact that the proceedings are illegal means nothing to the Standard Oil Company. They are out to control the State and ram their rule down the throats of the people [sic]. Their money is being poured out like water”.<sup>577</sup> His diatribes against the press were constant, for the Kingfish believed that media was not being truthful to the facts that were happening.<sup>578</sup> In a circular promoting a meeting Long was to hold in Baton Rouge, he insisted on this idea and disclaimed: “Do not dress up come as a man to Baton Rouge and learn the facts of the issue”, obviously emphasizing his support for the “common man”.<sup>579</sup>

The Kingfish’s most famous propaganda writing was a pamphlet entitled *The Same Fight Again: The Standard Oil Company vs. Huey P. Long*. In the text the governor addressed the “people of Louisiana” and asked them: “Has it become a crime for a governor to fight for the school children and the cause of suffering and destitute humanity?”<sup>580</sup> The politician continued: “Who is going to pay for the education of the youth of this land? Who is to care for the blind, the deaf and for insane people that are watched and guarded because there is no room for them at the state schools and

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<sup>576</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 38.

<sup>577</sup> Huey P. Long, “The Pretended Grounds of Impeachment”, 1929, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 37, folder 1352, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>578</sup> For instance, the politician affirmed: “I am going before the people to tell them what the newspapers will not print. I do not even expect to see this in print unless it is forged and misrepresented”, Huey P. Long, “Statement of Governor Huey P. Long”, April 18, 1929. Another anonymous document referred to that same idea by stating: “The big daily newspapers are being paid well, in cash, for their fight for the Standard Oil Company and against Governor Huey P. Long. Also, some of the little country weekly papers are being paid off for the part they are playing in the game, paid off in cash, and with the money of the Standard Oil Company”, no date. Huey P. Long Papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 37, folder 1352, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>579</sup> Circular “State Wide Meeting of the friends of Huey P. Long in Baton Rouge”, April 4, 1929. In another circular promoting the same event, it read: “Watch out for the lying newspapers. They may announce that this meeting is called off, -or that the Governor has resigned or anything else. -Come on to Baton Rouge.-Don't take time to dress up.- A man's a man!”, Circular “State Wide Meeting of the friends of Huey P. Long in Baton Rouge”, April 4, 1929. Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 37, folder 1352, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>580</sup> Circular “The Same Fight Again. The Standard Oil Company vs. Huey P. Long”, 1929, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 2, folder 1, Hill Memorial Library (LSU); Long, *Every Man A King*, 152-53.

hospitals?”<sup>581</sup> Long justified the tax on refining oil by stating that its purpose “was to take care of people that this Old Standard Oil and New Orleans ring combination had neglected or oppressed for years and years”.<sup>582</sup> A few weeks later, the oil giant in turn also published a pamphlet signed by the president of the Standard Oil Company of Louisiana, which gave their side of the story, and defended a company that they understood to be honest and beneficial for Louisiana. In response to an attack the governor had made, saying the entity had stopped paying their taxes, Standard Oil published their numbers, including taxes and wages paid in the year of 1928, and added that Huey’s “statement is so scandalous an insult, and such a grave reflection on the members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, that this company hesitates to dignify it with a comment”.<sup>583</sup>

Not caring much what the oil giant said, Long continued with his speeches and went to different towns of the state where he ended reading his favorite poem, *Invictus*, by William Ernest Henley (1849-1903), particularly the famous verses: “I am the master of my fate / I am the captain of my soul”.<sup>584</sup> On April 20 the governor gave a speech in Hammond, a city about fifty-five miles (88 km.) north from New Orleans, in which he strongly criticized the New Orleans newspaper *The Times-Picayune*. The politician linked the publication to his opponents and accused it of manipulating information in its articles, specifically of reducing the number of listeners at his speeches. Complainingly, Long declared in a teary tone that, “before becoming governor he was making \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year in the practice of law, and that if he is impeached it is the sick, the tubercular, the blind and the insane who will suffer”.<sup>585</sup> Fineran argued that as much as Long tried, he never revoked any of the accusations in a convincing way: “Nothing he said in any of the speeches made on that tour disproved the least part of the evidence which was brought forth at the impeachment trial”.<sup>586</sup> However, the tour was effective:

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<sup>581</sup> “Standard Oil Co. Blamed by Gov. Long for Trouble With State Legislature”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 29, 1929, 17.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>583</sup> D.R. Weller, “To the People of the State of Louisiana”, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC. This statement was published in the *New Orleans States*, May 13, 1929, 5.

<sup>584</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 142-143. Long included the entire poem in his autobiography, *Every Man a King*, 150.

<sup>585</sup> “House Sold Out to Oil Company, Governor Says”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 21, 1929, 14.

<sup>586</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 75.

Long was supported by hundreds of citizens who sent him letters of encouragement and even poems and songs composed to support his “battle”.<sup>587</sup>

The impeachment process started in the State House of Representatives. During the hearings, multiple witnesses referred to the misappropriation of funds spent on, for instance, an expensive car, and lack of accounting during the few months of Long’s administration.<sup>588</sup> As for the accusation of misconduct in public places, there was a witness named Helen Clifford, a “hula-hula” dancer who testified that at one party held for Alfred D. Danziger, Long’s personal lawyer, the governor was “very frisky”, and had made her sit on his lap. She also testified she was one of the six entertainers of the party and that everyone had plenty to drink, at a time when Prohibition was still in force.<sup>589</sup> It is interesting to note that a few months earlier the governor had positioned himself with the prohibitionist.<sup>590</sup> The owner of “The Frolics”, a night club located in New Orleans, also testified that the governor had visited his establishment a few times

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<sup>587</sup> A fan wrote a poem entitled “Our Mad Governor”; a fragment reads: “He’s Mad! Stark Mad! the grafters all declare / He’s Mad because he plays the game too fair. / The sick, the lame, the halt, the blind / Too well provided for the grafters find. / A tyrant, Yes, because they can’t dictate / To him--a way to rob and loot the State / He’s mad! because he dearly loves the poor / Oh yes, he’s mad for that, if nothing more”, by Charles Ettienne, no date. Another follower, an inmate from Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola, composed a poem with the title “Consolation for a Broken Heart”; its last verse was a prayer to God: “And to impeach our noble Governor / Oh God forbid such fate / For it would sever the reign of prosperity / and shock the entire state”, by Sam D. Foster Quartes “G”, no date. Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 40, folder 1416, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). A supportive magazine also published: “[H]e has made a notable record in Louisiana, both as railroad commissioner and as governor. [...] His administration brought in free text books, a great paving campaign, brought natural gas to New Orleans, and reformed the jury list system. [...] His long fight with the New Orleans ring is now being tried in the political arena through impeachment proceedings”, “Hats Off to: Huey P. Long”, *The Sooner Magazine*, vol. 1, issue 8, May 1929, 267.

<sup>588</sup> “House Digs into Long’s Use of Entertainment Funds”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 5, 1929, 19.

<sup>589</sup> George Healy, Jr., “Hula Hula Dancer Says Governor Was Frisky at Studio Party”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 25, 1929, 1, 9; “Hula Hula Dancer Raps Huey Long”, *The Urbana Daily Courier*, April 25, 1929, 1; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 72.

<sup>590</sup> “Governor Long Declares Self Prohibitionist”, *The Times-Picayune*, November 5, 1928, 1. Four years later, when Prohibition had not yet been repealed, he wrote in a telegram: “My wish for Christmas is something for everybody to wear, a place for everybody to live, and after that a nice glass of three and one half per cent beer”, Huey P. Long to Barry Faris, editor of the International News Service, December 2, 1932, Telegram, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 8, LaRC. Finally, on 1933 he wrote that Prohibition “had failed to operate as its proposers thought and intended it should, and I believe its repeal will lend materially in restoring prosperity to the United States”, Letter from Huey P. Long to Arthur G. Bohne, March 24, 1933, Huey P. Long papers 1927-1935, Mss. 557, 1240, 1350, 1956, Misc L. Similarly, he wrote: “As to the Eighteenth Amendment, I am already on record as being for outright repeal, and I believe it will be a means of returning thousands of people to employment”, Letter from Huey P. Long to Jos. A. Bauer, January 6, 1933, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 27, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

in which he heavily drank, sang, and became acquainted with the ladies working there to the point that he was known as “the singing fool”.<sup>591</sup>

After the House hearings ended on April 26, the nineteen charges were reduced to eight, and sent to the Louisiana State Senate for trial.<sup>592</sup> The first accusation directly affected Charles P. Manship (1881-1947), owner of the two main newspapers published in Baton Rouge, *The States-Time* and *The Morning Advocate*. Both publications were anti-*longite*, and had expressed their opposition towards the five-cent per barrel new tax on oil. Long, who felt personally attacked, had threatened Manship by assuring him that if he continued publishing similar opinions, the governor would publicly reveal that the chief editor had a brother institutionalized at the East Louisiana Hospital, in Jackson parish, mental health being a source of shame at that time.<sup>593</sup> Instead of listening to the Kingfish, Manship published a front-page article aimed at the members of the legislature under the title: “This, Gentleman, Is the Way Your Governor Fights”.<sup>594</sup> In his text, the publisher explained how Huey had threatened and ordered him to “lay off of me”.<sup>595</sup> By then, Louisiana business had gone national: *Time* magazine explained the confrontation in the following way:

Upon adjournment it was found that the House, by a vote of 58 to 40, had impeached Governor Huey P. Long on one charge, with more to follow. The charge was: Governor Long, ‘in an attempt to suppress the freedom of the press’, had intimidated Publisher-Critic Charles P. Manship of the Baton Rouge *Daily State Times*, by threatening to expose the fact that Mr. Manship’s brother, Douglas, was in an insane asylum.<sup>596</sup>

Manship stated that, while in 1918 his brother was in France fighting in the Great War, Long was quietly in his native state campaigning for office. In his 1932 book, Fineran

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<sup>591</sup> Thomas O. Harris, “Owner of Frolics Says Huey Led Band in Cabaret”, *New Orleans States*, April 25, 1929, 1.

<sup>592</sup> “House Ends Work, Voting Incompetence Charge, 59 to 39”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 27, 1929, 1, 13; “Trial of Long to Begin May 14”, *New Orleans States*, April 27, 1929, 2; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 92; White, *Kingfish*, 84.

<sup>593</sup> Hermann B. Deutsch, “Manship Case Brings Near Panic to Long Ranks in Oil Tax Fight, Followed by Battling Bozaman [*sic*] and his Claim of a Murder Plan Aimed at J.Y. Sanders, Jr.”, *The New Orleans Item*, August 16, 1939.

<sup>594</sup> Charles E. Manship, “This, Gentleman, Is the Way Your Governor Fights”, *State-Times*, March 21, 1929, 1; Williams, *Huey Long*, 351.

<sup>595</sup> “Manship Stings Long for his Low Attack”, *New Orleans States*, March 21, 1929, 6; Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 57.

<sup>596</sup> “Political Notes: Louisiana’s Long”, *Time*, April 15, 1929.

defended the Manships: “Manship’s brother had served as a soldier [in World War I] while Long was busy dodging the draft and campaigning for office, and had been injured mentally and physically, but was on the way to recover”.<sup>597</sup> And so, for once, Long’s technique did not work as he had planned.

The eight charges the House approved against the Kingfish were: the first, trying to intimidate Manship; the second, attempting to bribe members of the legislature; the third, using public funds inappropriately—Long, for example, had bought a personal car with \$6,000 in money he was supposed to spend on entertaining visiting governors—;<sup>598</sup> the fourth, illegal intervening in the dismissal of a public servant; the fifth, unnecessarily reconstructing the governor’s mansion using public funds; the sixth, establishing a private library with government resources; the seventh, allowing the construction of a defective sewage system and paying the company responsible; and, lastly, the eighth, making all state employees sign a letter of resignation, insulting citizens, firing a professor from the Louisiana State University, and making a corrupt person on probation state employee.<sup>599</sup>

The trial began at the Louisiana State Senate. During the sessions, Huey acted relaxed while wearing a white linen suit and smoking cigars in the room, although it was most likely an act. As Forrest Davis put it in 1935, “he looked as freshly innocent as an angel. But the smile was edged with malice”.<sup>600</sup> Long was called to testify on May 14, to which he “said ‘alright’ and burst into laughter”.<sup>601</sup> The Kingfish’s lawyers based their defense in that the motion was illegal. One of their witnesses was state representative George W. Delesdernier, who gave a polemical speech entitled “The Cross of Wood and With Shackles of Paper”, in which he compared Long to Jesus. A fragment of it read:

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<sup>597</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 59.

<sup>598</sup> Huey wrote he borrowed \$6,000 “for the purpose of entertaining the Conference of Governors” held in New Orleans from November 20th to 24th, 1928, Letter from Huey P. Long to H.S. Conner, November 26, 1928, Huey P. Long papers 1927-1935, Mss. 557, 1240, 1350, 1956, Misc L, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>599</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 380; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 65-66.

<sup>600</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 118.

<sup>601</sup> “Order Huey Long to Face Senate”, *Dallas Morning News*, April 28, 1929, 1.

Nineteen hundred years ago there was a cross of wood erected and a Divine Creature of that time was nailed to the cross. This Divine Creature was going through the country relieving the sick and afflicted, curing the lame and the halt, aiding the deaf and the blind, and driving illiteracy from the country that surrounded Him by teaching salvation to man, woman and child [...] Today there is a creature relieving the sick and the blind [...] and he is being shackled with paper to a cross.<sup>602</sup>

In a similar manner, another representative named James L. Anderson affirmed that the trial Long was going through was similar to that of Christ in front of Pilate.<sup>603</sup>

The governor's public addresses became bitterer after the trial had begun. In a speech given in his hometown, Winnfield, on May 3<sup>rd</sup> the politician, once again, directly confronted the Standard Oil, the "Old Regulars"—whom he called the "old gang"—, the "lying newspapers", and also four men to whom he referred to as "scoundrel". These were his most hated enemies at the time: John D. Ewing (1892-1952)—editor of *The Shreveport Times* and son of newspaper publisher Robert Ewing (1859-1931), who had supported Long during the 1928 gubernatorial election but after both men had become enemies—, Charles Manship, lieutenant-governor Paul Cyr, and attorney-general Percy Saint (1870-1958).<sup>604</sup>

According to Louisiana law, in order to dismiss the impeachment the governor needed fourteen signatures from state senators declaring in his favor. Therefore, Long, besides his continuous tours,<sup>605</sup> started a series of measures to assure the process was stopped. Some scholars claim the Kingfish achieved his goal using illicit methods. The governor

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<sup>602</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 72. Other fragments of this speech emphasized how "nineteenth hundred years ago the Great Teacher who fought for the crippled, the lame, the halt and the blind was damned, vilified, persecuted and then crucified because he went about his work [...] People have followed along in His work since that time. Here and there one has fought and fell and rose again [...] You here, now fighting Huey P. Long, have fought him always. But, it is not Long you are fighting. You are striking at the people who are poor and downtrodden and you are trying to crucify the most real man they have ever had in this state who works for them, fights for the and risks his own position before he would turn them down", George W. Delesdernier, "The Cross of Gold", Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 37, folder 1352, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). A portion of the speech was included in Long's aforementioned circular "The Same Fight Again. The Standard Oil Company vs. Huey P. Long", 1929.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>604</sup> B.L. Kerbs, "Long Scathingly Assails Enemies in Talk at Home", *The Times-Picayune*, May 4, 1929, 3; "Long Barnstorms in N. Louisiana", *New Orleans States*, May 4, 1929, 2.

<sup>605</sup> Which were intensive and a very important part of Long's plan. On one occasion he almost commanded a state senator from Opelousas: "Speaking Opelousas Sunday April twenty-first at seven thirty P.M. Make arrangements", Huey P. Long to Henry D. Larcade, Telegram, April 17, 1929, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 37, folder 1352, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

obtained a document with the signatures of fifteen senators voting against the motion, known as the “Round Robin”.<sup>606</sup> The governor had asked one of his attorneys, Acadian Allen J. Ellender (1890-1972), to draw a draft asserting simply that the impeachment was illegal.<sup>607</sup> The document included:

Therefore, we, the members of the Louisiana State Senate, do respectfully announce and petition: That by reason of the legal irregularities and the circumstances bearing upon the procedure as above outlined, we cannot conscientiously and will not approve the impeachment proceedings and charges preferred against the Governor by the present extra session of the Legislature, or to be preferred under the purported and illegal continuance of said session.<sup>608</sup>

Once it was presented in session, the other twenty-four members of the Senate were astonished, and claimed they did not believe in the authenticity of the signatures above the text. *The Times-Picayune* described it in the following way: “The reading of the document signed by the fifteen senators was followed by a prolonged silence”.<sup>609</sup> Thereupon the fifteen senators were asked to one by one raise and publicly confirm it was indeed their signature.<sup>610</sup> Those men were, in order: Philip H. Gilbert (Assumption parish), Hugo Dore (Evangeline parish), William C. Boone (Claiborne parish), Benjamin H. Ducros (St. Bernard parish), Thomas C. Wingate (Vernon parish), F.E. Delahoussaye (Iberia parish), Fred Oser (Orleans parish), Jules C. Fisher (Jefferson parish), R.B. Knott (Lincoln parish), E.B. Robinson (Union parish), Homer Barousse

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<sup>606</sup> A “round robin” is something that circulates, originally a children’s game. Thomas O. Harris, “Governor Long Escapes Trial; 15 Senators Sign Round Robin”, *New Orleans States*, May 16, 1929, 1, 10; George Vandervoort, “Fifteen Senators Save Long Forcing Court to Adjourn”, *The Times-Picayune*, May 17, 1929, 1, 12.

<sup>607</sup> Becnel, *Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana*, 49.

<sup>608</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 160, 170-171. This particular fragment is commonly reproduced in several works about Long, such as Davis, *Huey Long*, 116-117 and Graham, *Huey Long*, 46. The original text is available in Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 37, folder 1351, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>609</sup> George Vandervoort, “Fifteen Senators Save Long Forcing Court to Adjourn”, 12.

<sup>610</sup> State Senator Johnson affirmed: “I move that the Chief Justice, as each name is called, propound to the fifteen senators the question if the document contains their personal and genuine signature, and if the declaration in that document are their fixed position and decision in this matter”, *Official Journal of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, Sitting as a Court of Impeachment for the Trial of Huey P. Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana*, “Eleventh’s Day’s Proceedings of the Senate Sitting as a Court of Impeachment for the Trail of Huey P. Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana”, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 37, folder 1351, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

(Arcadia parish), T.A. McConnell (Orleans parish), H.L. Hughes (Natchitoches parish), James L. Anderson (Grant parish), and Henry D. Larcade (St. Landry parish).<sup>611</sup>

Journalist John Fineran explained in 1932 that some of them already belonged to the Long machine, while others were persuaded to sign the letter in exchange for interests. In reference to the latter, Fineran emotionally wrote: “There are no words to describe the shame of the men who bring that shame upon them”.<sup>612</sup> In the same path, in his 2006 book historian Richard White affirmed: “Huey used promises, threats, bribes, liquor, women, and any other stimulant he could devise to secure the votes of the fifteen senators”.<sup>613</sup> It was not a secret, for the newspapers mentioned how the supporters received “rewards”.<sup>614</sup> For instance, state senator Gilbert was designated District Judge in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District, and senator Anderson received a job at the Highway Commission at a salary of 350 dollars per month including expenses.<sup>615</sup> As usual, historian Williams put this perspective into context, and argued that senators in favor of the impeachment also employed questionable techniques; he wrote, “Actually, as the evidence makes clear beyond doubt, both sides engaged in some practices that violated the code of pure conduct”.<sup>616</sup> In any case, in May 16, 1929, the motion was adjourned *sine die*.<sup>617</sup> After that decision, letters of congratulation started filling up the mailbox of the governor.<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>611</sup> Harris, “Governor Long Escapes Trial”, 10; Hermann B. Deutsch, “The House Impeaches Huey Long and the Senate Sits in Judgment; At the Last Minute the Famous Round Robin Appears and Huey Is Again Lord of All He Surveys”, *The Sunday Item-Tribune*, August 20, 1939; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 97.

<sup>612</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 97.

<sup>613</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 86.

<sup>614</sup> “Governor Bestows Political Rewards on House ‘Faithful’”, *The Times-Picayune*, May 23, 1929, 1, 3; “Long to Reward Bowie and Knott with State Jobs”, *The Times-Picayune*, June 24, 1929, 1.

<sup>615</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 99.

<sup>616</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 387.

<sup>617</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 183. The official text of the adjournment read: “Mr. P. H. Gilbert moved that the Senate of the State of Louisiana, sitting as a Court of Impeachment, do now adjourn sine die. The motion was agreed to. And the Hon. Charles A. O’Neill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana and Presiding Officer of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, sitting as a Court of Impeachment, declared the Senate of the State of Louisiana, sitting as a Court of Impeachment adjourned sine die”, *Official Journal of the Senate of the State of Louisiana, Sitting as a Court of Impeachment for the Trial of Huey P. Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana*, “Eleventh’s Day’s Proceedings of the Senate Sitting as a Court of Impeachment for the Trial of Huey P. Long, Governor of the State of Louisiana”, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 37, folder 1351, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>618</sup> One person from Litcher LA called Huey “The Phoenix of Success. The Kaiser of Louisiana”, Letter from F. Brigaud to Huey P. Long, May 20, 1929. A citizen from Versailles, Missouri, wrote: “Please accept OUR HEARTIEST congratulations. I say WE because I am simply a representative of the one

Long had been close to political failure and he learned from that experience. After the impeachment was suspended, the Kingfish rewarded the fifteen senators that had supported him, and was aggressively prejudicial to the opponents, “taking revenge on members of the court of impeachment who refuse[d] to acquit him”.<sup>619</sup> The “round robineers” obtained lucrative prizes, state jobs, money, new infrastructure in their respective parishes, and even whiskey—violating, once more, the Prohibition Act. The day after the adjournment *sine die*, Huey invited these fifteen to Grand Isle, in the Barataria Bay, to celebrate his victory by heavily drinking and eating. He surrounded himself with those who had supported him during his dark hour, but the losers were sore to the point that Fineran wrote: “The Robineer type of Legislator seemed well on the way toward becoming a special class or caste, closely resembling the pariah caste of India”.<sup>620</sup> On the other hand, some of the relatives of the senators that had endorsed the motion that held state jobs were fired. Long turned more ruthless after 1929, which became a key year to better understand how the governor progressively accumulated power in his hands. Recent historian Brinkley wrote that: “Long moved in the months and years after the 1929 special session to erect a structure of personal power in Louisiana unprecedented in its extent and often frightening in its implications”.<sup>621</sup> In other words, as biographer Sindler put it in 1956, “the abortive impeachment of Long thus served to intensify his class program and his lust for personal power”.<sup>622</sup>

## 2.2 Reinforced: 1930

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hundred million COMMON every day people, who believe in honesty, justice and good old fashioned DECENCY”, Letter from M.A. Brown to Huey P. Long, May 17, 1929. A married couple from Ansley, Nebraska, told: “We heard with great pleasure on our Radio today, that you had won [...] the Big fight. Congratulations. The New Orleans ring will have a master yet. I believe we have heard all your speeches which have been broadcast [...]. Glad La. school children will have free text books. Neb. has had them 40 years and have yet. We wish you success keep up the good fight”, Letter from Mr. and Mrs. A. N. Grierson to Huey P. Long, May 16, 1929. Huey P. Long Papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 40, folder 1408a, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). A supporter wrote a poem celebrating his victory and enclosed a letter in which he asked the governor what he thought of his writing; the text was simply entitled “Gov. Huey P. Long” and some verses read: “Long had a trial / and it lasted a while / left all of his people / with a great smile / Hallujh I am a Long man / Hallujh Amen / Hallujh I am a Long man / Now down us a gain”, by M. H. Arrant, from Ruston LA, May 20, 1929, Huey P. Long Papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 40, folder 1416, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>619</sup> “Long Strikes Back at Senator, Firing Partner From Job”, *The Times-Picayune*, May 25, 1929, 1.

<sup>620</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 106.

<sup>621</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 26.

<sup>622</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 67.

I used to try to get things done by saying ‘please’. That didn’t work and now I’m a dynamiter.  
I dynamite’em [*sic*] out of my path.<sup>623</sup>

Huey Long

After the impeachment, the newspaper *The Times-Picayune* published on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1929, an editorial stating that no previous governor had disposed of such power as Long.<sup>624</sup> The Kingfish now only trusted the people who had shown loyalty to him. Furthermore, he seemed to be always in a hurry. The politician changed his attitude and style, and became more determined and serious. For instance, Huey reestablished the ancient practice of making convicts from Angola state prison work outside the walls on farms as cheap labor for private businesses. As a sort of legacy of the nineteenth-century cotton plantation system, most of these chain-gangs would be African Americans, as opposed to a more racially diverse hired labor used for the construction of roads.<sup>625</sup>

The Kingfish had reemerged stronger and more confident, and ready to continue the task he had initiated in 1928, particularly the construction of paved roads. However, something was clearly different in 1930: by then, the United States had entered the Great Depression, a negative fact that however would notably benefit the governor. He was already popular before, but his political discourse and program now appealed to much more impoverished people. Huey created dozens of jobs mainly in the building of new roads—according to *The Louisiana Progress*, Long’s newspaper, his program employed 22,220 men, more than in any other state of the Union<sup>626</sup>—, in the police, and in the construction of bridges. By increasing public works, Long was creating employment in times of economic crisis, which consequently also meant the rise of his own popularity.

When speaking about the Great Crash of 1929, the Kingfish always affirmed he had anticipated it years before when alerting the population about the atrocious distribution

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<sup>623</sup> Quoted in Davis, *Huey Long*, 119.

<sup>624</sup> *The Times-Picayune*, November 5, 1930, 1.

<sup>625</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 90-91.

<sup>626</sup> “Louisiana Heads in State Jobs on Road Work”, *The Louisiana Progress*, November 10, 1931, 3. The article was based on an official report released by the Hoover administration, which also added that New York had 20,597 and Pennsylvania 18,960 men working on road building.

of wealth in the country.<sup>627</sup> As a part of the solution to save the economy of the country Huey proposed to remonetize silver, that is, to return to the pre-1873 system. The governor argued the money was “locked in banks” that were then closing in large numbers, which did not allow people to have purchasing power.<sup>628</sup> The measure obtained support from some politicians of the time, especially, as could be expected, from the silver areas in the West. For instance, Democrat senator Burton K. Wheeler (1882-1975) of Montana made a speech in the US Senate on April 17, 1933, in which he stated: “I merely state the bold and undisputed fact that so far unemployment has increased and purchasing power is diminished”.<sup>629</sup>

As Long grew stronger, so did his opposition, which would always follow along. For instance, contemporary Marxist author Sender Garlin, logically critical, affirmed Long did not treat workers properly, and argued that under his regime they earned less money. Historian Glen Jeansonne has supported this idea and affirmed that Long, although defined as a “liberal” in the American sense of the word, did nothing to guarantee security for unions, or eliminate child labor.<sup>630</sup> Garlin also criticized the governor’s treatment of African American people in Louisiana by saying that there were barely any schools for black children and the conditions of those existing were extremely poor. Thus Garlin even drastically stated: “During Huey Long’s entire regime, not a single measure of a social character was passed in the State of Louisiana”.<sup>631</sup>

But the most forceful opposition came from those who had promoted impeachment and who would never stop trying to get rid of a governor that was dangerous to them. A few weeks after the adjournment, in June 11, 1929 this group reorganized in the Constitutional League, a political organization founded in St. Charles Hotel in New

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<sup>627</sup> Long, *Every Man a King*, 290.

<sup>628</sup> Huey P. Long, “The First Thing We Must Do”, *The American Progress*, September 21, 1933, 6; Monica Prasad, *The Land of Too Much: American Abundance and the Paradox of Poverty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 141.

<sup>629</sup> “Senator Wheeler Shows Great Good that Can Be Done by Remonetizing Silver”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 28, 1933, 4.

<sup>630</sup> Glen Jeansonne, “The Apotheosis of Huey Long”, *Biography* 12, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 294.

<sup>631</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 22.

Orleans led by former governor John M. Parker.<sup>632</sup> In only fifteen minutes, during the first meeting they collected around \$100,000 destined to investigate cases of corruption in Long’s administration and reopen impeachment. In their declaration of principles, the League listed nineteen points, which justified their existence and goals. Number five, for instance, stated,

In no case in America has the executive ever before openly sought to destroy the independence of the Legislature and to completely arrogate himself its functions. Such is openly and wantonly done by the Governor of Louisiana. Never before has any considerable portion of any Legislature had its political morals so corrupted as to openly and shamefully become the hired men of the executive for lucrative monthly cash.<sup>633</sup>

Long even reproduced a fragment of this text in his autobiography: “The purpose of the League [...] is to take any steps that may be necessary to enforce and to carry out the provisions of the constitution to prevent Governor Huey P. Long from treating the organic law of the State as a scrap of paper”.<sup>634</sup> Among the League’s criticisms towards the governor was the accusation of nepotism. *The Times-Picayune*, a friend of the newly founded organization, published an article entitled “Long’s Family Draws \$75,849 State Salaries” together with a list of relatives of the governor and their earnings as shown in Table 1. The article concluded: “No other governor in the history of Louisiana has such discreditable nepotism record”.<sup>635</sup>

**Table 1: Members of the Long family on state payrolls:**<sup>636</sup>

NAME	RELATION TO LONG	OFFICE	SALARY (per year)
Huey P. Long		Governor	\$7,500
Earl Long	brother	Inheritance tax attorney, New Orleans	13,949
O. Long Cooper	sister	Teacher State Normal college	2,700

<sup>632</sup> “Parker Denounces Long in Accepting Leadership of Constitutional League”, *The Times-Picayune*, June 12, 1929, 3; “Parker Back from Farm to Enlist in Fight”, *New Orleans States*, June 12, 1929, 1, 20; Long, *Every Man a King*, 183; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 103.

<sup>633</sup> Declaration of Principles of the Constitutional League of Louisiana, Adopted by the Executive Committee at New Orleans, June 25, 1929, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

<sup>634</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 184.

<sup>635</sup> “Long’s Family Draws \$75,849 State Salaries”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 27, 1929, 1.

<sup>636</sup> T. Harry Williams wrote the same list in his notes, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

W.H. Long	cousin	Bureau of Criminal Identification	3,000
A.J. Long	uncle	Superintendent road marketing, highway dept.	3,000
J.C. Long	cousin	Traffic officer, highway dept.	1,500
J.E. Long	cousin	Maintenance division, highway dept.	1,600
T.R. Long	cousin	Maintenance division, highway dept.	1,200
R.R. Long	cousin	Maintenance division, highway dept.	1,200
J.M. Nugent	cousin	Highway commissioner	5,000
C.E. Nugent	cousin	Gravel inspector, highway dept.	1,800
W.R. Nugent	cousin	Maintenance division, highway dept.	1,200
G.P. Eagles	cousin	Supervisor of public accounts	2,400
R.L. Eagles	cousin	Assistant Superintendent, highway dept.	2,700
B.F. Eubank	cousin	Assistant supt. feeble-minded colony	3,000
S.J. Simmons	cousin	Steward East Louisiana Hospital	2,800
W.W. Tison	cousin	President State Normal college	7,200
Lee Tison	cousin	Maintenance division, highway dept.	1,300
C.F. Tison	cousin	Maintenance division, highway dept.	1,400
J.W. Tison	cousin	Maintenance division, highway dept.	1,400
Roy Wright	cousin	New Orleans Charity Hospital	3,000
Dave McConnell	brother-in-law	Bureau of Criminal Identification	2,500
Lee McConnell	brother-in-law	Custodian Shreveport Hospital	2,400
A.L. Jones	cousin	Timber inspector, highway dept.	2,100
TOTAL			\$75,849.40

Source: *The Times-Picayune*, September 27, 1929, 1.

A very similar list would be published some months later by the same newspaper, this time because Francis Williams, chairman of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, made the numbers public after Long had accused him of having his father and a cousin employed at the Commission. The chairman stated that, besides the governor himself, the same twenty-three relatives of the table below draw a total of \$68,849 only in

1929.<sup>637</sup> To these accusations, Long sneered and suggested the League “investigate whether the penitentiary was not perchance feeding some of his relatives free of charge”.<sup>638</sup>

It is interesting to note how American historian Charles E. Chapman argued in his late-twenties study on Cuban politics and history how a successful politician in Cuba “must do what he can to see that all his relatives and his wife’s relatives get jobs that will at least yield them a living wage, or better than that, if possible. This comes about through the curse of family influence, an evil of Hispanic life that is comparatively unknown in the United States”.<sup>639</sup> The table above clearly challenges Chapman’s somewhat idealistic perception of American politics.

When Long found out about the League he did not worry, and comically referred to it as Constipational League or League of Notions.<sup>640</sup> In a speech given in Donaldsonville, about 24 miles (40 km.) south of Baton Rouge, on October 20, the Kingfish affirmed:

The Highway Commission was \$5,000,000 in debt and there was not a dime in the treasury to pay the debt when I became governor [...] but since then we have built 20 miles of paved roads per week and paid off the debt so fast that a group of my enemies have organized the ‘Constipational League’, headed by Chief Constipation John M. Parker. They organized because we were going too fast for them. They wanted to check up and see what we were doing.<sup>641</sup>

*Longite* pamphleteer George B. Rice wrote about the name of the new association: “It was a very high-sounding title, but empty in real intent”.<sup>642</sup> Even its efforts, the League would not prosper nor achieve its goals.

### 2.2.1 The “green silk pajamas incident”

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<sup>637</sup> “Williams Lists 23 of Governor’s Kin on Pay Rolls”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 15, 1931, 11. Will Irwin exaggerated a bit when writing: “In 1929 he had about sixty relatives or connections by marriage on the public pay roll”, in Irwin, “The Empire of the Kingfish. Part Two”, April 6, 1935, 15.

<sup>638</sup> “Long Answers Charge \$75,000 Paid to Family”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 28, 1929; Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 166.

<sup>639</sup> Charles E. Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic: A Study in Hispanic American Politics* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1927), 565.

<sup>640</sup> Long, *Every Man a King*, 183; Davis, *Huey Long*, 126; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 76.

<sup>641</sup> C.C. McCann, “Long Denounces Parker, Ballard in Hot Address”, *The Times-Picayune*, October 21, 1929, 1.

<sup>642</sup> Rice, *True Story of Huey P. Long*, 29.

In addition to creating jobs in a time of severe unemployment, another more eccentric way for the governor to become popular and look more like a man of the people was through exploiting scandals, such as the so-called green silk pajamas incident. Early in March 1930, during Carnival season, the German cruiser *Emden*, which bore the same name as the old vessel from World War I, reached the port of New Orleans.<sup>643</sup> Their authorities, commandant Lothar von Arnauld de la Perière (1886-1941) and the German consul in the city, Rolf L. Jaeger, asked to meet with the governor.<sup>644</sup> When they arrived at the Roosevelt Hotel, where they were supposed to be graciously greeted by the Kingfish, the governor was only wearing green silk pajamas and a robe.<sup>645</sup> The Germans got extremely offended and left the premises in anger. The next morning, the governor, with the help of his friend and adviser Seymour Weiss, went to the *Emden* to apologize for his misbehavior.<sup>646</sup> This time, he was properly dressed and affirmed: “I hope you will excuse my failure to properly bedeck myself.... You see, I come from Winnfield up in the hills.... I know little of diplomacy and exchanges”.<sup>647</sup> The captain accepted the apology and proceeded with the formal meeting.<sup>648</sup> Later, the German commander reported with smoothness: “I wouldn’t think of letting a pair of green pajamas, no matter who wore them, drive me away from New Orleans during the Carnival season”. In addition, he lamented: “It got into the newspapers as it might lead some people to take the matter seriously”.<sup>649</sup> Perhaps people did not take it seriously, but the episode had an unsuspected impact on the media.

The event became so popular that shortly after there appeared several burlesque texts about it. For instance, *The Dallas Morning News* published:

If by any chance Commander Lothar Von Arnauld de la Periere [sic] of the German cruiser Emden calls on you, don’t go down to answer the doorbell in your green

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<sup>643</sup> “Emden Is Here, Hail German Cruiser”, *New Orleans States*, March 2, 1930, 1.

<sup>644</sup> Maurice Denuzière, *Louisiane, Tome 5: L’Adieu au Sud (1924-1944)* (Paris: Fayard, 2008).

<sup>645</sup> Hermann B. Deutsch, “A Startled German Commander Is Received by Governor Long Clad in Equally Startling Loud Green Pajamas”, *The New Orleans Item*, August 22, 1939; Williams, *Huey Long*, 430-433.

<sup>646</sup> “Wrath of German Commander At Green Silk Pajamas Subsides As Huey P. Long Apologizes”, *Dallas Morning News*, March 5, 1930, 1.

<sup>647</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 175; Davis, *Huey Long*, 121-22.

<sup>648</sup> “Huey’s Tail Coat Satisfies Honor”, *New Orleans States*, March 4, 1930, 15.

<sup>649</sup> C.C. McCann, “Captain of Emden Wouldn’t Let Long’s Green Pajamas Drive Him Away from City”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 7, 1930, 1.

pajamas. Gov. Huey P. Long of Louisiana did that the other day, and Von Etcetera got as angry as a dachshund that has just been offered catnip.<sup>650</sup>

The radio also made reference to the peculiar event. At a show in New York reporter Floyd Gibbons (1887-1939) said, “green is pretty loud at that, I suppose the governor might have worn mauve”, clearly a homosexual reference.<sup>651</sup> There even was a quite surreal pamphlet published that same year entitled *The Philosophy of the Green Silk Pajamas: Being the Pajamaisms of a Pajamaist*, in which the author, David Moore Rosenthal, wrote in verse bizarre ideas about the protagonist, to whom he referred to as “the Unique One”, such as “there can be but one ISM for ME—I-AMISM. I AM THE I-AMIST”.<sup>652</sup>

Carleton Beals told how, a few days later, while visiting New Orleans, the Polish countess of Topor Lakopolanski defended Huey to the press in an interesting manner: “People take it too seriously. Mussolini and Primo de Rivera frequently received even royalty while wearing intimate garments”.<sup>653</sup> Not sharing that perspective, in his 2008 book, French historian Maurice Denuzière has called the event a “*humiliation protocolaire*”.<sup>654</sup>

Despite all the hoopla, the populist persona of Long was taking shape and the confidence in him arose. He arguably acted this way in order to create polemic and appear on the newspapers—journalist Harris wrote right after the incident that Long “was back in the headlines”.<sup>655</sup> In his 1941 analysis of Long’s regime, Kane explained that “Huey the Kingfish was finding that he could hit the newspapers more often with this role than with the most earnest of speeches [...] He hated newspapers, but he was making them play his game”.<sup>656</sup> By acting flamboyantly the politician also attracted crowds that could feel empathy with his nonchalant conduct. In fact, a few weeks after

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<sup>650</sup> “The Governor’s Pajamas”, *Dallas Morning News*, March 7, 1930, 14.

<sup>651</sup> “Story of Long’s Pajamas Regales Radio Audience”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 5, 1930, 1.

<sup>652</sup> David Moore Rosenthal, *The Philosophy of the Green Pajamas: Being the Pajamaisms of a Pajamaist*, (New Orleans: [publisher not identified], 1930), 7.

<sup>653</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 176; George N. French, “Mussolini and De Rivera Set Precedent for Long’s Pajamas, Countess Says”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 10, 1930, 1, 7.

<sup>654</sup> Denuzière, *Louisiane, tome 5*.

<sup>655</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 80.

<sup>656</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 80.

the polemical encounter, the governor apologized to an audience in Winnfield not for his behavior but for owning silk pajamas. The Kingfish further argued that he wore them “just trying to show off” in front of the German commander, and promised he would never act in such inappropriate ways again.<sup>657</sup> Moreover, Long assured the pajamas had been a gift and that “he had worn them as the gaudiest and most impressive costume he possessed”.<sup>658</sup> Political scientist Stephen Hess wrote in the 1960s: “The people loved it. Huey was showered with pajamas from admirers; later, pajamas even adorned his campaign posters”.<sup>659</sup>

Long was clearly a leader of the masses. As Williams argued in his lengthy biography: “If Huey Long could receive people in any kind of dress and in any place he chose then people would know how great he was”.<sup>660</sup> Harnett Kane sarcastically attributed the misconduct of the governor to his lack of respect and manners by writing, “His Excellency was not a man of minor delicacies”.<sup>661</sup> Unlike what could seem, Huey carefully prepared his actions to differentiate himself from the rest of the politicians and to make him closer to the “common man”. Recent scholars Hogan and Glen put it in the following way:

Huey Long seemed thoroughly *unlike* other politicians: *unsophisticated*, *unrefined*, and apparently *unconcerned* with his public image. In reality, Long cultivated his comic image as carefully as other politicians strove to appear intelligent or refined. Yet he seemed genuinely rustic, and that rusticity served him well as he developed national political ambitions.<sup>662</sup>

The Kingfish would use this technique innumerable times in the future, such as in a speech he gave at the United States Senate in 1935, in which he affirmed: “I am not undertaking the charge that I am an ignorant. It is true. I am an ignorant man”.<sup>663</sup> Scholars Unter, Sutherlin, and Stockley have contended in a 2012 work: “The specter of

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<sup>657</sup> “Long Apologizes for Wearing Pajamas”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 22, 1930, 3.

<sup>658</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 114.

<sup>659</sup> Stephen Hess, *America's Political Dynasties From Adams to Kennedy* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 421.

<sup>660</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 433.

<sup>661</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 84.

<sup>662</sup> J. Michael Hogan and L. Glen Williams, “The Rusticity and Religiosity of Huey P. Long”, *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7, n° 2 (2004): 158.

<sup>663</sup> Excerpt from a speech given at the US Senate on March 5, 1935, in “Speeches of Senator Huey P. Long”, *The American Progress*, April issue, 1935, 9.

racism, rural poverty, lack of education, and romantic views of the past haunts politicians from the South”.<sup>664</sup> However, it is most likely that Long was embracing this image of the South, or at least three out of the four features, and using it for his personal interest.

A few weeks after the pajamas shenanigan and according to *The Times-Picayune*, Long received a US major-general, Frank R. McCoy, in the new governor’s mansion wearing only underwear, although this time the event barely got any repercussion in the press.<sup>665</sup> It seems the Kingfish acting all “Huey-like” had stopped making headlines; his behavior was not shocking anymore.<sup>666</sup>

In all, as historian Brinkley stated in the 1980s, “Long first came to national attention not by winning elections or building highways, but by wearing a pair of green silk pajamas”.<sup>667</sup> Although during the impeachment the governor began to be nationally known, it was this scandal that put him on the spot of national press. Brinkley also argued that the “lesson he learned from the incident was less the importance of diplomatic niceties than the value of buffoonery in winning national publicity”.<sup>668</sup> Moreover, the politician realized that “clowning, deliberate or accidental, as was this case, would be treated hospitably by a normally hostile press”.<sup>669</sup> It was then that Long became nationally known by his nickname. According to Davis, “the *nom de politique* Kingfish entered into the idiom of the people only after the pajama furor”.<sup>670</sup>

In a more general way and after analyzing the episode, in his 2008 book, Denuzière has described Long in the following way:

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<sup>664</sup> Unter, Sutherlin, and Stockley, “The Rise, Fall, and Rise of the Kingfish”, 84.

<sup>665</sup> “Long Outdoes Pajama Reception; Receives General in Underwear”, *The Times-Picayune*, June 5, 1930; “States and Cities: Undressed Governor”, *Time*, June 16, 1930; Scaramouche, “Senator Huey P. Long. Clown and Knave”, 15.

<sup>666</sup> In fact, it became common for him to wear pajamas when meeting people—most frequently journalists and his staff. Judge Edmund Talbot explained: “One night he [Long] called me to his Audubon Blvd. home. I told my wife I’d be gone 30 minutes. I found him in bed with the boys, he in green pajamas, a gold bed, French type. He was reading them a history of the French Revolution”, Interview to Edmund E. Talbot, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>667</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 36.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>669</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 123.

<sup>670</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 124.

Depuis son accession au pouvoir, Huey se prenait volontiers pour un play-boy. Il n'en possédait ni le physique ni le savoir-faire mondain. À trente-sept ans, avec une face ronde et colorée, un gros nez en trompette, un toupet de cheveux brun-roux frisottés, qui sautillait sur le front quand il s'animait, le menton dodu, partagé par une fossette verticale, l'œil égrillard et le verbe haut, le gouverneur de Louisiane ressemblait à un fils de paysan enrichi, entreprenant et retors. Le canotier ou le feutre incliné sur le sourcil, il adorait se faire photographier au milieu [...] M. Long serrait gravement la main d'un chômeur. Il venait de répéter, une fois de plus, à un électeur: 'Les riches doivent payer et nous partagerons leur fortune!'<sup>671</sup>



Fig. 17: "Huey Long runs the gamut of emotions from A to Z", unidentified magazine, 1933-1935, 18-19, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>671</sup> Denuzière, *Louisiane*, tome 5.

The Kingfish's contemporaries, usually those who were not followers, often described the governor in detail and thus could be somewhat honest, and comment on his peculiar features. Journalist Walter Davenport wrote in 1933:

To see him for the first time is something of a shock. You would expect a picture of power, the intensity of a zealot, the burning eyes of fanaticism, the uncompromising jaw of the crushing autocrat, the lean asceticism of a prophet, the austerity of a despot. But nothing like this. He's pudgy. His cheeks are blotched, flabby. His uncertain nose is red, betokening either bad circulation or entirely too much. His face is weak, willful and there is no discipline in it. But his eyes, soft, protruding robin's eggs, are nevertheless bold. Hit-and-run eyes that roll upward as he talks. And his reddish hair crackles with vigor.<sup>672</sup>

### 2.2.2 Confronting the "lying newspapers": *The Louisiana* and *The American Progress*

Long was always being criticized by the newspapers, whether he was wearing green silk pajamas, putting his relatives in the state payroll, or being impeached. The relationship the governor had with the newspapers and the media in general would be always conflictive throughout his political career. A striking example of this is the account by journalist Hodding Carter. In 1932 this reporter founded his own publication, entitled *Hammond Daily Courier*, in which he criticized the governor in every issue with the goal of getting rid of his administration. Being publicly against the Kingfish was not an easy position. A few years after Huey's death, Carter narrated his own frightening experience being an opponent to the Kingfish's regime:

I still have the threatening, unsigned letters. 'Get out of town, you lying bastard, if you know what's good for you'. Intermittently, for four years, I received threats by letter and telephone, and twice in person. I carried a pistol, kept in my desk during the day and by my bed at night.<sup>673</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> Davenport, "How Huey Long Gets Away with It", *Collier's Weekly*, June 17, 1933, 10. The Kingfish himself referred to that description in the US senate, asserting that the magazine that published such thing, *Collier's Weekly*, was in the hands of the house of Morgan, in Huey P. Long, "J.P. Morgan & Co.'s Magazine Attack on Huey P. Long", re-printed Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, First Session, June 1933, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 1, folder 11, LaRC. One of Long's unconditional supporters wrote a ferocious pamphlet defending the senator and accusing the journalist Davenport of just "carrying out orders when he delivered his perverted, distorted, vilifying article", David Rosenthal, "At the Feet of Mammon", 1933, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 2, folder 21, LaRC.

<sup>673</sup> Carter, "Huey Long: American Dictator", 341.

It must be noted that this dark side of the Kingfish's modus operandi has gotten much less attention from scholars than stories that depict the more attractive and gaudy green silk pajamas persona.

As a reaction against the uncomfortable situation with the press, Long took two actions. The first one was to start his own publication entitled *The Louisiana Progress*, the first issue of which was released in March 27, 1930.<sup>674</sup> It announced that the weekly had begun to back "the present policies of the administration of Governor Huey P. Long".<sup>675</sup> Under the subtitle "The People's Defense", now the Kingfish was able to explain his own and "true" perspective of facts that the "lying newspapers" were distorting. The publication would also serve him as a tool to publicize his feats and persona. Moreover, the governor took the opportunity to condemn his political opponents and spread propaganda of his program through numerous cartoons drawn by artist Trist Wood (1868-1952),<sup>676</sup> which were "more malicious than humorous".<sup>677</sup>

Contemporary anti-longite critic Fineran wrote about the *Progress* that, "from the start, it was poorly written, poorly edited, scurrilous sheet that it remains to this day [1932]". And added: "It was fanatically approbative of Long's administration and fanatically antagonistic to everyone who opposed Long".<sup>678</sup> Another critical contemporary, Harnett Kane, referred to it as: "The most cheerfully venomous regular publication in the nation".<sup>679</sup> And a magazine in 1960 explained how it was "a fair imitation of Hitler's more loathsome propaganda organs".<sup>680</sup> Anticipating future problems, Long set up the newspaper's plant in the state of Mississippi, right across the border of Louisiana, to hinder accusations of libel.<sup>681</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> "Long's Paper, 'Progress' Is Out", *New Orleans States*, March 27, 1930, 2; Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 70.

<sup>675</sup> "Editorial", *The Louisiana Progress*, March 27, 1930, 1.

<sup>676</sup> Who was hired after Long discovered he could draw him quite perfectly: "Trist used to work for Ewing's States [Long is referring to the New Orleans newspaper *States-Item*, whose editor was Robert Ewing]. He used to draw Huey so good, Huey said 'We'll have to go out and hire the fellow'. So he went out and hired him", Interview to Joe David, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 4, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>677</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 86.

<sup>678</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 115.

<sup>679</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 78.

<sup>680</sup> Ben Blake, "The Assassination of Huey Long", *Man's Magazine*, vol. 8, n° 10, October 1960, 93, David McGuire 271, series III, box 2, folder 31, LaRC.

<sup>681</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 74.

In August 24, 1933, the first of the same weekly appeared renamed *The American Progress*, for Long was aiming at improving his reputation on a national scale.<sup>682</sup> The first article read: “The American Progress [*sic*] makes its bow to the people at a time when there exists the greatest need of an aggressive and militant newspaper to champion the causes that are good and to crush the evils presently existing in our midst”.<sup>683</sup> And Huey Long wrote that the paper contained “general information on all vital issues to the people, written in such a way that it can be understood”.<sup>684</sup> His newspapers, however, could be more accurately defined as large bizarre pamphlets of constant Long propaganda in which, for instance, he compared himself to Plato<sup>685</sup> and Maimonides,<sup>686</sup> and all the supposed letters published in the section “Letters We Receive from Our Readers” praised and thanked Long for his task under titles such as “Louisiana Now a Happier Land”,<sup>687</sup> or “Here’s One Man Who’s With Us in the Fight”.<sup>688</sup> In addition, the Kingfish would use his *Progress* to criticize anti-*longite* publications, particularly *The Times-Picayune*:

In Louisiana the newspaper that uses more venom, lies, fact-twisting and misrepresentation than any other in its fight against Huey Long is the *Times-Picayune* [*sic*]. This newspaper is always getting caught in some lie or other. No one in Louisiana believes a word the *Times-Picayune* prints. Thousands of people refuse to even let this *Times-Picayune* in their homes.<sup>689</sup>

Always happy to explain away accusations against Long with erudition, Williams explained how other mass leaders had also founded their respective newspapers, such as governor and US senator Robert M. LaFollete (1855-1925) from Wisconsin and his

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<sup>682</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 85, n. 28.

<sup>683</sup> “Progress Makes Bow with First Issue of Paper”, *The American Progress*, August 24, 1933, 1. In a circular to promote the newspaper, Long asked the readers: “Would you like to see the unvarnished news and the people’s side of public questions? We propose to give a condensed story of the news, and to present the facts to show the underlying cause of human distress and business paralysis in America as seen and foreseen by every leading statesman of this and all other countries, and as warned against by the laws of the Lord”, Circular from Huey P. Long, 1933, Scott Wilson papers, 1921-1978, Manuscripts Collection 233, series II, box 53, folder 17, LaRC.

<sup>684</sup> Letter from Huey P. Long to “Friend”, July 3, 1933, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 16, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>685</sup> “Plato or Long?” *The American Progress*, January 4, 1934, 8.

<sup>686</sup> “Wise Man of Ancient Spain Preached Same Doctrine as Sen. Long”, *The American Progress*, April issue, 1935, 3.

<sup>687</sup> H.R. Davis, “Louisiana Now a Happier Land”, *The American Progress*, January 4, 1935, 5.

<sup>688</sup> ‘Farmer’ Prewett, “Here’s One Man Who’s With Us in the Fight”, *The American Progress*, January 25, 1934, 5.

<sup>689</sup> “Picayune Lie No. 7,631,467”, *The American Progress*, November 23, 1933, 4.

*LaFollete Progressive*, Theodore Bilbo from the Mississippi and *Free Lance*, governor James E. Ferguson (1871-1944) from Texas and *Ferguson Forum*, and governor William H. Murray (1869-1956) from Oklahoma and *Blue Valley Farmers*. The historian was establishing a pattern of behavior in politicians contemporary to the Kingfish, as well as affirming these mass leaders' influence on Long.<sup>690</sup>

The second action Long took regarding journalism was promulgating a series of bills that rose newspapers' taxes fifteen percent and allowed state intervention to lascivious, obscene, or defamatory publications. Without mentioning concrete names, the governor was aiming at disqualifying those newspapers that were reprimanding him, such as *The Times-Picayune* and the *State*. These bills received strong opposition by journalists who demanded freedom of speech, and were led by the already mentioned editor Charles Manship. *Vanity Fair* protested: "This self-styled Kaiser of Louisiana and imitation of Mussolini has recently (in the Louisiana State Legislature) introduced (through two of his political cronies) bills deliberately aimed to impair and destroy the freedom of the press in America".<sup>691</sup> At the end, the risky project was not approved, but it did not stop Long from ignoring opposition and continuing with his political maneuvers. In 1934, the Louisiana legislature approved a two percent tax on the gross advertising receipts of newspapers and other publications that circulated over 20,000 copies per week—that is, the bigger New Orleans papers.<sup>692</sup> The governor was directly punishing the newspapers for being hostile towards him to the point that he referred to the tax as "two cents a lie".<sup>693</sup> But the measure was also seen positively. For instance, George H. Maines (1887-1970), editor of the Louisiana News Service in the 1930s, wrote in 1934:

If this tax has been devised by Senator Huey P. Long for a purpose other than to raise a half million dollars to aid the schools, then the blame must rest with the press there which has been a disgrace to American journalism [...] It seems to have been the object of some Louisiana newspapers to start and keep up a campaign of untrue news, about Senator Long, calculated to present him in the worst possible light before the readers.<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>690</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 456.

<sup>691</sup> "We Nominate for Oblivion", *Vanity Fair*, October 1930, 69, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 5, folder 165, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>692</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 271, 377.

<sup>693</sup> Richard C. Cortner, *The Kingfish and the Constitution: Huey Long, the First Amendment, and the Emergence of Modern Press Freedom in America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 216.

<sup>694</sup> George H. Maines, "The Louisiana Tax on Newspapers", *The American Progress*, August 15, 1934, 4.

After denouncing the measure and calling Long a demagogue and a dictator, thirteen newspapers obtained a Federal injunction opposing the tax by defining it as unconstitutional.<sup>695</sup>

Another media with which Long had some dispute was the radio. *The March of Time* was a political radio news series created by Roy Edward Larsen (1899-1979) in 1931 and run until 1945—in 1935 Larsen created the version for the cinema.<sup>696</sup> The program consisted of a series of comments and news footage, along with impersonations of contemporary public figures. An issue released on April 1935 featured a comical imitation of Huey Long, in which the politician was portrayed as a dictator and a demagogue.<sup>697</sup> The politician did not enjoy listening to the mockery and therefore “introduced into the Louisiana legislature a bill, subsequently passed, which provided for censorship of motion pictures (including newsreels) in that state”.<sup>698</sup>

To make this sort of measure popular and maintain Long’s position as the beloved leader of Louisiana, some authors perpetuated a particularly inflated vision of the governor:

There are those who say that he has no sentiment. That he is cruel and ruthless [...] Huey is all sentiment. He is all heart. He is too good for the foes who tried to put an end to him, the lying hypocrites who pose as benefactors of the people, the tricky parasites in the underworld, and the pious-frauds who try to keep the people submerged while feathering their own nests.<sup>699</sup>

However, some times reality was stronger than supportive texts. On one occasion, the Kingfish broke the camera flash of a *Times-Picayune* journalist because the politician refused to appear in the newspaper. It turns out Long “had refused an interview with the *Times-Picayune* reporter, telling him he had nothing to say for the newspaper”.<sup>700</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> Edgar Sisson, “Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta”, *Today*, vol. 2, n° 24, October 6, 1934, 22, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>696</sup> Raymond Fielding, *The March of Time, 1935-1951* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 8-12.

<sup>697</sup> Fielding, *The March of Time, 1935-1951*, 46, 49. Long used to defend himself from that accusation by stating that a demagogue was the person who did not keep his/her word, and because he carried out everything he promised, he could not be categorized as such, in Davis, *Huey Long*, 38.

<sup>698</sup> Fielding, *The March of Time, 1935-1951*, 53.

<sup>699</sup> Rice, *True Story of Huey P. Long*, 41.

<sup>700</sup> “Kingfish’s Bodyguard Shies at Camera: Long However, Gives Battle”, *The Hammond Vindicator*, July 28, 1933, 1.

### 2.2.3 Rebuilding LSU

Another way the Kingfish sought to ameliorate his image to the public was by engaging himself with the world of academia. On February 1931, Long was invested Doctor Honoris Causa by the Jesuit Loyola University of New Orleans, a Roman Catholic center of high learning.<sup>701</sup>

However, that institution was not the Kingfish's first choice. His official alma mater, Tulane University, rejected to award the honor to the governor and so he had to be content with a Loyola degree.<sup>702</sup> A few months prior, the Kingfish had published his doctorate on the eight constitutions of Louisiana since 1812, simply entitled "Compilation of the Constitutions of the State of Louisiana, 1812-1930",<sup>703</sup> although, according to Jeansonne, "his staff did the work on the book".<sup>704</sup> The university honored him as recognition for the free textbooks for children policy, although critical observer Fineran was suspicious, and stated that



*Fig. 18: Huey Long in Cap and Gown, 1931, Leon Trice Louisiana political photographs, Manuscripts Collection 950, LaRC.*

<sup>701</sup> "Board of Loyola Grants Governor Honorary Degree", *The Times-Picayune*, December 28, 1930, 1, 11; "Notables to See Gov. Long Award", *New Orleans States*, February 1, 1931, 5; Davis, *Huey Long*, 140; White, *Kingfish*, 129.

<sup>702</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 87.

<sup>703</sup> "The text would be published as a book by Ramires-Jones Printing Company that same year. Governor Turns Author and Published Volume on State Constitution", *The Times-Picayune*, March 23, 1930; "Constitutions Listed by Long", newspaper clipping, March 19, 1930. A few followers asked Long for a copy of the text: "Would you be so kind as to mail me a copy of you Compilation of Louisiana Constitutions?" Letter from H.H. Warren, dentist from Oil City LA, to Huey P. Long, March 23, 1930. A law student asks Long to send him a copy of the book because it "would be of great help to me", Letter from L.J. Brunette, New Orleans, to Huey P. Long, April 3rd, 1930. The attorneys at Carroll, McCall & Plough also asked him for a copy, Letter from Joseph W. Carroll to Huey P. Long, March 29, 1930. The College of Law Library at Tulane University requested Long a copy, Letter from May Norman to Huey P. Long, March 31, 1930. Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 5, folder 166, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>704</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 100.

perhaps a group of financiers loyal to Long had influenced the decision.<sup>705</sup> The ceremony of investment started with these words:

The degree is conferred on Governor Long because he has by force of leadership and with the approval of the people guided the state into courses that, under the mercy of God, will bring peace, prosperity and happiness to the state and will make life happier, easier and better for the men, women and children of the state.<sup>706</sup>

In 1930 Long had started to take interest in universities, although his main goal would not be to improve Loyola University or Tulane University in New Orleans, but rather his beloved Louisiana State University—best known by its initials, LSU—in Baton Rouge. It is worth mentioning that other governors had already started the improvement of this institution, as author Forrest Davis remarked: “The Kingfish didn’t build the whole of the university plant. The eminent Bull Mooser and implacable foe of Long, John M. Parker, created much of the physical environment when he was Governor, 1920-24”.<sup>707</sup> Historian John Scott expressed this same idea when affirming that by 1925 the new campus was finished with eight main buildings, the library, and dormitories, among other facilities.<sup>708</sup> Nevertheless, historians have mainly centered their attention on the improvement of the university under the Long administration and have overlooked Parker’s achievements. The reason for that might be because, to some extent, the Kingfish’s political discourse has somehow left an imprint in historiography.

Why did Long invest such considerable effort and resources to improve that university? Anti-*longite* writer James Rorty argued in August 1935 that the Kingfish knew it was “not only a good showpiece but a useful instrument for Fascist ‘co-ordination’ of the middle class. Ninety per cent of the LSU students are for Long”.<sup>709</sup> Aside from attributing to Long the epithet of fascist, the author may have been right. The university was a magnificent space where the governor could influence the new generations, even in the case that he decided to run for the presidency in 1936.

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<sup>705</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 141.

<sup>706</sup> “Loyola Confers Doctor of Laws Degree on Long”, *The Times-Picayune*, February 2, 1931, 2.

<sup>707</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 20.

<sup>708</sup> Scott, “Highway Building in Louisiana”, 9-10.

<sup>709</sup> Rorty, “Callie Long’s Boy Huey”, 76.

Ever politician, Long focused particularly on the band and the LSU football team, the Tigers. The governor attended most of their games and even gave state jobs to the best players. One time in 1934, the Kingfish gave seven dollars to dozens of LSU students so they could pay the train ticket to attend a game in Nashville, Tennessee. The total amount the politician spent for that popular and unusual expense was over \$3,000, and around four thousand students were able to attend the game.<sup>710</sup> *The Morning Tribune* called the governor “Santa Claus Huey”.<sup>711</sup> Each train carrying supporters of their team



was repainted with the colors of LSU,<sup>712</sup> yellow and purple.<sup>713</sup> As could be expected, a month later some fans of the LSU team asked “Uncle Huey” for advice because they wanted to attend a game in Austin, Texas, without having the resources to travel.<sup>714</sup> Long, not being fooled by the college students, simply answered them to “try the hitch-hike method”.<sup>715</sup>

**Fig. 19:** Huey giving \$7 to hundreds of university students to attend a football game in Nashville, October 23, 1934, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 1, folder 17, LaRC.

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<sup>710</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 220.

<sup>711</sup> “Long Hands Out \$3,000 to All Comers”, *The Morning Tribune*, October 24, 1934, 1.

<sup>712</sup> Nelson Springer, “Huey Long: The Amazing Louisiana Senator whose Eccentricities Have Made Him One of the Most Discussed Figures in American Politics and Who Is Planning to Oppose Roosevelt at the Next Election”, *The Sphere*, January 26, 1935, 124.

<sup>713</sup> The coaches also had signs on their sides that read ‘Hurrah for Huey’, and they passed through Mississippi “like a procession of triumph”, T. Harry Williams notes of *New York World-Telegram*, October 27, 1934, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 11, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>714</sup> Weldon Appelt, Edward Neal, Henry Yeager IV, Frank Schleicher, John Melton, Frank Fuentes, Sidney Loveless, and Joe Linepaugh to Huey P. Long, November 27, 1934, Telegram, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 8, LaRC.

<sup>715</sup> Huey P. Long to John Melton, Frank Fuentes, Sidney Loveless, and Joe Linepaugh, November 28, 1934, Telegram, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 8, LaRC.

During his administration Long put his friend James Monroe Smith (1888-1949) as president of the university.<sup>716</sup> The governor spent nine million dollars in LSU: he created a medical school, and constructed buildings for music and dramatic arts studies, a dormitory for girls, a gym, a student center, a bigger football stadium, and the largest swimming pool in the country.<sup>717</sup>



**Fig. 20:** *Top: Dormitories for women at LSU constructed under Long administration. Bottom: Music and Dramatic arts building at LSU School of Music constructed under Long administration. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 28, LaRC. These pictures appear on Long's autobiography, Every Man a King, p. 249.*

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<sup>716</sup> "James M. Smith Inaugural Set Nov. 12 at LSU", *The Louisiana Progress*, November 10, 1931, 5.

<sup>717</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 517; Davis, *Huey Long*, 20.

Critical contemporary Carleton Beals analyzed this intervention as something negative because, according to him, “it marked, despite Huey’s physical improvements, the death of a free university”.<sup>718</sup> The Kingfish respected a certain academic liberty, but banned professors from any defamation of him in the classrooms. One of the most scandalous decisions the Kingfish made was the expulsion of seven students of Journalism who were editors and staff of the university’s paper, *The Daily Reveille*. The incident was messy, as questions of journalism always receive attention from the press. Furthermore, in this case there were particularly angry responses from other university papers, which showed their solidarity with the expelled LSU students. It all started in 1934, when the Kingfish’s long-standing enemy J.Y. Sanders, former US senator, had been elected to the US House of Representatives. The Kingfish thought it would be amusing to organize a pretended assembly at LSU to choose a new Louisiana senator, and so the event was held. However, an angry student wrote to the *Reveille* complaining that the mass meeting had make a mockery of constitutional government and democracy. After Long found out about the letter and the intention of the editors of publishing it, he forbade so by saying “that’s my university and I’m not going to stand for any criticism from anybody out there”.<sup>719</sup> To avoid further similar situations, the *Reveille* was put under the supervision of one of the faculty members, a measure that was taken by the staff at the newspaper as censorship. As a protest, the following issue of the publication included an announcement at the front page stating that under the approval of the Dean of Graduate Department, faculty member James F. Broussard had revised the paper.<sup>720</sup> The next day, the editorial staff was called to a meeting with president of LSU, James Smith, who warned them that if they did not accept such supervision, they would have to resign from the paper. Although they were being paid for the job, all of them did. But the matter did not end here. The students contacted a lawyer and wrote an affidavit explaining the controversy that was then published in a Baton Rouge newspaper, and afterwards went out to all the local media. There was furor. In no time the seven students, who from now on would be referred to as “the Reveille Seven”, were

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<sup>718</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 204.

<sup>719</sup> Errol Laborde, “The Strange Tale of Huey Long and the Reveille Seven”, August 1980, 79 (copy), David McGuire 271, series III, box 3, folder 8, LaRC.

<sup>720</sup> Laborde, “The Strange Tale of Huey Long”, 80.

expelled.<sup>721</sup> They became a sort of celebrities and ended up enrolling at the University of Missouri after being invited publicly by the Dean of Journalism of that institution.<sup>722</sup>

Aside from that controversial incident, LSU greatly improved its facilities and became a somewhat known institution in the country. Thus, while in 1930 that university was listed as the 88<sup>th</sup> university in the United States by standards of size, seven years later the institution had risen to number twenty on the list.<sup>723</sup> The Kingfish, in an exaggerated tone, proclaimed in 1935 that LSU had become “one of the five foremost institutions of learning in the civilized world”.<sup>724</sup> The university truly became his crown jewel. It is recorded that he even compared himself with Frederick the Great:

Long says ‘He [Fredrick the Great] was the greatest --- --- --- [son of a bitch?]<sup>725</sup> who ever lived. You can’t take Vienna, Your Majesty. The world won’t stand for it’, his nit-wit ambassadors said. The hell I can’t’, said old Fred, ‘my soldiers will take Vienna and my professors at Heidelberg will explain the reasons why!’ Hell, I’ve got a university down in LA that cost me \$15,000,000 [once more, the numbers do not match], that can tell you why I do like I do.<sup>726</sup>

In an interview, Long proudly stated: “Look at these boys and girls, getting an education”,<sup>727</sup> to which the interviewer smartly responded: “Perhaps you are educating

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<sup>721</sup> Their names were: Carl Corbin, Jesse Cutrer, David McGuire, Cal Abraham, Stanley Shlosman, Ray Godbold, and Sam Montagne, in *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>722</sup> ROTC officer Troy H. Middleton (1889-1976), who worked at LSU between 1930 and 1936—and became its president after World War II—, said about the incident that “it was bungled. I think Huey told Smith to expel those boys. Smith was afraid of Huey”, Interview to Troy H. Middleton, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 11, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>723</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 520. As senator John Overton expressed in a memorial held one year after Long’s assassination, “He builded [*sic*] the Louisiana State University, a State-maintained institution, from a mediocre college into the greatest seat of learning in the South. He was its very lifeblood from the athletic field to the director’s room”, 74th Congress, 2d Session, House Document No. 480, *Memorial Services Held in the House of Representatives of the United States, Together with Remarks Presented in Eulogy of Huey Pierce Long, Late a Senator from Louisiana*, 39-40, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1936, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 44, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>724</sup> “Louisiana State University Hits Highest Record”, *The American Progress*, April issue, 1935, 8.

<sup>725</sup> As part of his “charm”, Huey Long used rude and plain language. His wife Rose told: “He would say cursing was his worst vice and sometimes would try to stop. He would pay the girls in his office 50 cents for every curse word he would use”, Interview to Rose McConnell, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>726</sup> “National Affairs—Political Note: Share-the-Wealth Wave”, *Time* XXV, n° 13, April 1, 1935, 16.

<sup>727</sup> The Kingfish was proud to announce that those students with no resources would be able to attend LSU paying “what they can” and those who had no means at all would attend college for free in exchange for a job at the campus, in Huey P. Long Radio Address, July 19, 1935, network not given, but printed in

them against you [...] Remember, the state was illiterate when it elected you". After looking at him surprised, the politician laughed.<sup>728</sup>

## 2.3 Aiming at the US. Senate

A few months before he turned twenty-seven—although Long looked much older—, and after all his political success, on July 16, 1930, the governor declared he would run for the US Senate.<sup>729</sup> This announcement took the members of the legislature by surprise because, if he won, his term as governor would not be over by the beginning of his term as senator. The Kingfish promised he would first finish his work as governor of Louisiana, and then move on to the capital of the United States and serve as senator to work for the country as a whole. The reason for that decision was that he did not trust to leave lieutenant governor Paul N. Cyr alone ruling the state; the two had become enemies already in 1929, and Long did not want him to gather too much power in his absence.<sup>730</sup> He jokingly affirmed at a speech in Lafayette that, “even on an airplane trip recently [Long] was careful that the pilot did not cross the state line”,<sup>731</sup> to prevent Cyr the opportunity to displace the Kingfish. When announcing his candidacy, the governor stated that if he lost the election, he would renounce his position as governor and leave it to his opposition. Huey ironically affirmed that, in the case that he won, there would not be much difference if he left the Senate seat empty for a few months, because it was practically empty at the present. By that Long meant that the senator who had hold the position before him had not worked for the needs of the people of Louisiana, and thus his term as senator had been completely useless.<sup>732</sup>

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the Congressional Record of July 22, 1935, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 11, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>728</sup> Sisson, “Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta. Part 6”, *Today*, November 10, 1934, 22, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>729</sup> “Long to Announce Candidacy Today”, *The Times-Picayune*, July 11, 1930, 1; “Long Announces Candidacy For Senate”, *New Orleans States*, July 16, 1930, 1; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 85;.

<sup>730</sup> “Long Will Oppose Ransdell Provided He Can’t Finish Term”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 14, 1930, 1; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 117.

<sup>731</sup> “Long Declares Ransdell Failed to Back Montet”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 4, 1930, 3.

<sup>732</sup> Huey P. Long, “I am in the Dog House”, *Liberty*, November 10, 1934, 30, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 2, folder 13, LSMHC; Davis, *Huey Long*, 133; Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 77.

This criticism was directed at his opponent, Senator Ransdell, who was from northeastern Louisiana, and over seventy years old. Ransdell had been US senator since 1912. The governor had helped him re-win the senatorial election in 1924, but now Huey referred to him as “Old Feather Duster” because of his age and his political conservatism. Suzanne LeVert has written that Ransdell was an easy target for Long, as he personified the stereotype of an old patrician from the South, and, in addition, was a member of the Constitutional League. Contemporary critic Kane defined the senator as “conservative, goateed, with the force of a baby’s rattle against Huey’s steamroller”.<sup>733</sup> Long’s campaign was based on strong diatribes against the senator, especially in cartoons published in *The Louisiana Progress*.<sup>734</sup> At the same time, the senator made an effort to condemn his opponent, calling Long “madman” in his opening campaign speech, as well as saying, “honor and integrity are strangers to his vocabulary”.<sup>735</sup> He had some supporters, particularly those who were fervent anti-*longite*, who referred to the senator as “an honest man” and a “decent citizen”.<sup>736</sup> Nonetheless, Ransdell was not able to defeat Long’s new techniques of propaganda, such as sound trucks. Also, “Huey charged that Ransdell’s chief backer was Sam ZeMurray, the Central American fruit magnate”, who had enriched one of the senator’s nephews.<sup>737</sup> In order to fight against the “Old Regulars”, the Kingfish even founded his own political organization, the Louisiana Democratic Association, led by Joseph O’Hara (1869-1948), who was head of the State Board of Health.<sup>738</sup> The women’s division of the organization was under the direction of Emile Bienvenu, a devoted supporter of Long, as she strongly expressed in a 1931 report of the association.<sup>739</sup>

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<sup>733</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 83.

<sup>734</sup> Long’s supporters also referred to him using the nickname the Kingfish had invented. For instance, a group of workers from the Mineral Division in Monroe LA, gave \$200 to the campaign and enclosed the note: “This will help a bit in defraying the expenses in your Senatorial race against Feather Duster. We are all hoping that you will be successful in giving the old pirate a good licking”, Letter from R.P. Webb to Huey P. Long, July 24, 1930, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 6, folder 179, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>735</sup> “Senator Ransdell Opens Campaign With Review of Record”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1930, 12.

<sup>736</sup> “Joe Ransdell Honest and Straight”, *New Orleans Free Press*, August 16, 1930, 1.

<sup>737</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 132.

<sup>738</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 70.

<sup>739</sup> “I want to take this occasion to thank Governor Huey P. Long for the confidence that he has placed in me, as President of the Women’s Division of the Louisiana Democratic Association. My work, though humble in its capacity, has been inspired by his greatness of heart, soul and mind, for the overwhelming blessing that the State of Louisiana, the City of New Orleans and its people have enjoyed in proven performances at his kind hands”. She encouraged to “support Governor Long in the future [...] in the

Throughout the campaign, Huey's political addresses were more directed toward a local rather than a national audience. A journalist wrote, "Although his road building certainly was not a factor in his 1931 campaign, he used it as a fulcrum to elevate himself, ignoring national issues of the moment".<sup>740</sup> In a small town in southern Louisiana, Abbeville, when speaking about the cruiser *Emden* and the green silk pajamas incident the candidate told an audience, "I have too much Cajan [*sic*] blood in me to be dignified", with a clear intend of finding empathy with his French audience.<sup>741</sup> Of course that remark offended some, as they asked themselves: "Does the governor mean that it is normal or natural for a 'Cajin' not to be dignified?"<sup>742</sup> The Kingfish would also become a sort of "political evangelist", and as one critic retrospectively observed, "there was something Pentecostal about some of his utterances".<sup>743</sup> In his campaign speeches the Kingfish continued complaining about the unfair distribution of wealth and the need for more roads and bridges. He pretended to give the notion of continuity: as senator, he would follow the work he had started as governor.

Because of these ideas, former governor Ruffin Pleasant (1871-1937, governor from 1916 to 1920) defined Long as an "ultra-socialist" whose "views went beyond Karl Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky".<sup>744</sup> Even William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951) published some time later that "the brain of an oriental fanatic, Nicolai Lenin" had inspired both Long and FDR.<sup>745</sup> However, throughout his political career Long would always refuse the epithet and any link of his program with socialism, communism, or fascism. For instance, during an interview a journalist asked him why, given his radical program, he had not turned into a socialist; Long, who was already senator, responded: "Why I'm

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carrying on of the great program he has planned for the State of Louisiana and the city of New Orleans", Emile Bienvenu, *Report of Mrs. Emile Bienvenu, President Women's Division of the Louisiana Democratic Association*, August 1, 1931, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 6, folder 188, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>740</sup> Sisson, "Huey Long: Dictator of the Delta. Part 2", 22, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>741</sup> B.L. Krebs, "Long to Be Less Dignified than Ever, He States", *The Times-Picayune*, August 31, 1930, 1.

<sup>742</sup> "Long's Remarks Called Insult to Acadian People", *The Times-Picayune*, September 2, 1930, 1; "Long Insult to Acadian People", *New Orleans States*, September 2, 1930, 8.

<sup>743</sup> "The Kingdom of the Kingfish", *The New Orleans Item*, August 24, 1939, 12.

<sup>744</sup> "Long Is Declared 'Ultra-Socialist' by Radio Speaker", *The Times-Picayune*, August 22, 1930, 3; Williams, *Huey Long*, 470. Authors Walter G. Cowan and Jack B. McGuire defined him as "neo-socialist" in *Louisiana Governors*, 167.

<sup>745</sup> New York *American*, quoted in Hair, *The Kingfish*, 296.

the only man who can run on the platform of Jefferson and Lincoln at the same time”.<sup>746</sup> The Kingfish denied he had any connections with communism in an interview with Garlin, where he stated: “They [the communists] are a-seeking [*sic*] for the government to own everything. We call for the government to keep out of business. Our plan is nothing but limiting poverty”.<sup>747</sup> In the same way, he rejected the idea of being compared to Hitler, and once he yelled to a reporter: “Don’t linken me to that sonofabitch. Anybody that lets public policies be mixed up with religious prejudice is a plain God-damned fool!”.<sup>748</sup>

In any case, his voters loved him and did not care much for terminology. As novelist and journalist from New Orleans Hamilton Basso wrote in May 1935:

You might try to convince a native farmer of Winn Parish that he is living under a fascist regime [...] but he will not pay any attention. In the first place, the word fascism is not in his vocabulary, and in the second place, he knows that there is a paved highway where the old pike used to be and that his four children get all their schoolbooks free. So he may smile at you, for it is a friendly and hospitable land, and possibly nod his head in what you might take for agreement and then go down to the polls and vote for Huey again. It may be annoying, but that is the way he feels.<sup>749</sup>

European political terms cannot be applied to Long’s particular way of governing, as will be further analyzed in the following chapters when introducing the case of Gerardo Machado of Cuba. In that sense, historian T. Harry Williams wrote: “The trouble with the dictator label is that it has a European connotation and does not fit the American scene”.<sup>750</sup> Historian Hugh Davis Graham, who was specialized in the study of the civil rights movement, further explained in 1970:

The widespread and fearful speculation by liberals in the thirties that Long was a proto-fascist probably tells us more about their preoccupations with Hitler and Mussolini than it does about Huey Long, who was innocent of the kind of systematic ultra-right-wing ideology necessary to sustain fascism—or, on the left, communism. Far too much

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<sup>746</sup> “Huey Long Tells How to End Slump”, *The New York Times*, January 27, 1933, 5.

<sup>747</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 43.

<sup>748</sup> Quoted in Michie and Riley, “Fascism: American Style”, 112.

<sup>749</sup> Basso, “Huey Long and His Background”, 671.

<sup>750</sup> T. Harry Williams, “The Gentleman from Louisiana: Demagogue or Democrat”, *The Journal of Southern History* 26, no. 1 (February 1960): 15.

attention has been devoted to linking Huey Long to European ‘isms’ or to determining whether he was a scoundrel.<sup>751</sup>

That is not to say that in the United States there were not some manifestations of fascism or communism in the form of diverse political movements, such as the German American Bund,<sup>752</sup> or the Silver Legion of America led by William Dudley Pelley (1890-1965),<sup>753</sup> or, on the left, the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), a member of which was anti-*longite* Alexander Bittelman.<sup>754</sup> There were also intellectuals that spread their ideas through their written works, such as pro-fascist and Creole Lawrence Dennis (1893-1977)<sup>755</sup> who understood Long to be “the nearest approach to a national fascist leader”<sup>756</sup> and affirmed that within the politician combined the dominant “traits of LaFitte [*sic*], Capone and William Jennings Bryan”.<sup>757</sup> Regarding Long, however, instead of trying to frame him using European political manifestations, it makes more sense to locate him within the American continent.<sup>758</sup> Long’s program had little to do with European totalitarianisms, for it emerged in a specific and localized context with its own historical and political dynamics.<sup>759</sup> *Time* magazine jokingly stated that Long was neither a communist nor a fascist, that “he is just about as much of a Red, just about as much of a Fascist, as the late Boss Tweed—no more no less”.<sup>760</sup>

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<sup>751</sup> Graham, *Huey Long*, 3. In a similar manner, Hair wrote: “The fascist label does not stick to Huey Long. No European political designation is appropriate”, in Hair, *The Kingfish*, 296.

<sup>752</sup> See also Leland V. Bell, “The Failure of Nazism in America: The German American Bund, 1936-1941”, *Political Science Quarterly* 85, no. 4 (December 1, 1970): 585–99; Susan Canedy, *America’s Nazis: A Democratic Dilemma. A History of the German American Bund* (Menlo Park: Markgraf Publications Group, 1990); Amann, “Les fascismes américains”, 66-67.

<sup>753</sup> See also Scott Beekman, *William Dudley Pelley: A Life in Right-wing Extremism and the Occult (Religion & Politics)* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005).

<sup>754</sup> See also Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism* (New York: Viking Press, 1957).

<sup>755</sup> See also Lawrence Dennis, *Is Capitalism Doomed?* (New York; London: Harper & Bros., 1932); Lawrence Dennis, *The Coming American Fascism* (New York: Harper, 1936).

<sup>756</sup> Quoted in Schlesinger, *The Politics of Upheaval*, 77.

<sup>757</sup> He published so in a newspaper where he was the editor: John Eoghan Kelly, “Beware of the Lunatic Fringe”, *The Awakener*, March 15, 1935, 3.

<sup>758</sup> There are scholars that believe, though, that “similarities between the Kingfish and the European despots certainly existed”, in Edward F. Haas, “Huey Long and the Dictators”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 47, n° 2 (April 2006): 135. Carleton Beals wrote in 1935, “that he was a potential Fascist few can deny”, in *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 410.

<sup>759</sup> For a thorough contemporary analysis on European dictatorships in the 1920s and 30s, see Vera Micheles Dean et al., *New Governments in Europe: The Trend Toward Dictatorship* (New York: T. Nelson and Sons, 1935).

<sup>760</sup> “National Affairs—Political Note: Share-the-Wealth Wave”, *Time*, April 1st, 1935, 17. “Boss Tweed” was a nickname for William M. Tweed (1823-1978), a nineteenth-century politician from New York who had been accused of corruption and scandal, and who would be imprisoned and later escaped. See also Kenneth D Ackerman, *Boss Tweed: The Rise and Fall of the Corrupt Pol Who Conceived the Soul of Modern New York* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005).

In any case, and apart from the discussion of whether Long was a communist or a fascist, or neither, senator Ransdell's political beliefs were much less radical, and stayed in the area of what could be expected from a southern patrician. For instance, regarding the African American people the senator justified:

I have the kindest feelings toward negroes [*sic*], and wish to see them fairly and justly treated in every way, but I do not believe it is for their best interest or that of the dominant Caucasian race for them to be given an equal suffrage, or social equality in our Southern states.<sup>761</sup>

### 2.3.1 Scandalizing his way up

During Long's 1930 campaign for the US Senate a scandal occurred: the kidnapping of Sam Irby and James Terrell.<sup>762</sup> The former was uncle of Long's old assistant, Alice Grosjean, and the latter was her ex-husband. Long had appointed her Secretary of State of Louisiana, becoming the first woman to hold that position.<sup>763</sup> There was suspicion that the governor was having an affair with Grosjean, as the *Time* published: "Last week's appointment which elevated Miss Grosjean to a State office higher than any woman had ever held before in Louisiana set many a gossipy tongue to wagging".<sup>764</sup> Although probable, this was never confirmed, but it was clear Long trusted his employee. Sam Irby had been a chemist in the Highway Commission, but, depending on the source, had resigned the job<sup>765</sup> or had been fired for his incompetence.<sup>766</sup> As revenge, he had threatened to publicly denounce the dubious functioning of the Commission in a way that would directly incriminate Long. Terrell supported Irby because of the rumors of the governor's affair with his ex-wife. At the same time, the anti-*longite* faction led by Attorney General Percy Saint carried out an investigation of

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<sup>761</sup> "Ransdell Backers Undaunted by Threatening Weather", *The Times-Picayune*, August 20, 1930, 3.

<sup>762</sup> Meigs O. Frost, "US Cannot Find 2 Men Kidnaped [*sic*] By Long Officers", *New Orleans States*, September 8, 1930, 1. This reporter, Frost, who was Harvard-educated, had interviewed Newton Knight, the Southern unionist from Mississippi who rebelled against the Confederacy, before Huey Long came to power, in Jenkins and Stauffer, *The State of Jones*, 1-8. As these authors put it: "Newton Knight was a spectacular reminder to Meigs Frost that the South was plagued by bloody internal estrangements", in 4. Jenkins and Stauffer also asserted that Meigs Frost helped end with Long's machine by "exposing his scandal-ridden administration", in 8.

<sup>763</sup> "Gov. Long Appoints Woman Aide, 24, To Be Louisiana's Secretary of State," *The New York Times*, October 9, 1930, 1; "Governor Names Woman to Fill Post of Bailey", *The Times-Picayune*, October 9, 1930, 1; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 140; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 252.

<sup>764</sup> "Political Notes: Long's Latest", *Time*, October 30, 1930.

<sup>765</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 135.

<sup>766</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 89.

the Highway Commission in order to diminish Long's public image.<sup>767</sup> To avoid further scandal and defer Irby's testimony, six days before the election, on the night of September 4, the Bureau of Criminal Identification kidnapped the two men at the Gardner Hotel of Shreveport.<sup>768</sup> Garlin wrote in his pamphlet that Long did it "to prevent him from filing a libel suit against the Kingfish which would have revealed information damaging to Huey's election prospects".<sup>769</sup>

The two kidnap victims were brought to the remote Grand Isle, where Huey planned to keep them until the campaign was over. They supposedly were "being persuaded either by threats and intimidations or by bribes, to withdraw anything they may have said against the Long administration or Governor Huey P. Long personally, and endorse both".<sup>770</sup> The issue generated distress among anti-*longite* and, for example, *The Times-Picayune* published an editorial entitled "Czarism and Terrorism in Louisiana", which started by quoting the Bill of Rights. A fragment read:

Any man and any woman in Louisiana is subject to the same criminal seizure and abduction suffered by Irby and Terrell at Shreveport last Thursday night. The outrage perpetrated against these men is the concern of all Louisianans, a menace to the rights and liberties of all. The offense committed against them is an offense committed against us all and against law, order, justice, and decency.<sup>771</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 133-34.

<sup>768</sup> "Irby Kidnapped from Hotel in Shreveport", *New Orleans States*, September 5, 1930, 1-2; "Busy Day for Gov. Huey Long; Cusses Reporter, Hit in Face, Goes to Court, Guard Is Armed", *Dallas Morning News*, September 8, 1930, 1; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 88. An interesting witness, one of Long's bodyguards, told Williams years later how this was planned: "Earl, Maestri, Plaicini came to H's room to discuss case, what to do to stop Irby from talking. I said I'd get in car and go to Shreveport to get him. If a thing is to be done, the less known about it the better. I said I'd take him to Black River or someplace for a while. Earl: 'Let's take the SOB and kill him'", Interview to Louie A. Jones, no date, by T. Harry Williams. Another participant in the turbulent event, who was member of the Bureau of Criminal Identification, explained to the historian that he received a call that said: "'Say nothing to no one but come down to office and tell your wife you will be gone several days'. I went to office found out Irby and Terrell were at hotel drunk and Irby had threatened to expose Alice Lee [...] We were to get Irby out of town [...] I never handcuffed or touched Irby. We went on to Golden Meadow, where boat met us and took us to Grand Island [...] Irby got nice amount and bet it on Huey in election and won", Interview to Dave McConnell, no date, by T. Harry Williams. T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 4, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>769</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 6.

<sup>770</sup> Meigs O. Frost, "Long Is Still Hiding Kidnaped [*sic*] Men", *New Orleans States*, September 7, 1930, 1.

<sup>771</sup> "Czarism and Terrorism in Louisiana", *The Times-Picayune*, September 7, 1930, 1.

Because of all this fuss there was a change of plans, and two days before the election Long spoke on the radio from the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. He was accompanied by Irby, who assured, perhaps under menace or blackmail: “No one ever kidnapped me or held me in my life”.<sup>772</sup> On the contrary, Irby argued, he had asked Long to be abducted for protection, for he had found \$2,500 under his pillow as bribery from the anti-*longite* to make a declaration against the Kingfish. Supposedly, Irby later would have given this money to Long’s campaign.<sup>773</sup> But, as Harris wrote, “many months afterwards, Irby stated that he had been placed before a microphone and forced to read from a paper which had been handed to him. He was threatened with death if he refused to comply”.<sup>774</sup> Notwithstanding, after the senatorial election had taken place, Irby testified in the United States court that his disappearance had been voluntary,<sup>775</sup> letting everyone assume that “they had been forced to deny the kidnapping under threat of being ‘taken for a ride’”.<sup>776</sup> Long was also asked to testify in court after being charged with conspiracy to kidnap.<sup>777</sup> However, after a few days, the politician was not convicted, and thus the newspapers and their readers forgot the incident.<sup>778</sup> According to Thomas Martin in mid-century, after Sam Irby’s alleged appearance on the radio, people believed their governor, remembered all those roads and bridges he had built for them, and consequently went out to vote for him.<sup>779</sup>

Nonetheless, two years later, in 1932, Irby wrote a book on the experience literally entitled *Kidnapped by the Kingfish*, where he described Long as a brutal dictator, and as the “head of one of the largest and most dangerous organizations of gangsters in this

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<sup>772</sup> State Representative and Long’s henchman Joe Fisher stated: “Huey asked me to talk to Irby and see that nothing happened to him and I gave Huey my word when I took Sam. Then I took Sam down to the Island [...] Huey asked me if I thought that I could get him up to the radio and then get him back”, Interview to Joe Fisher, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 4, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>773</sup> “Terrell Missing As ‘Sam Irby’ Reads Radio Statement”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 8, 1930, 1, 5-A; “The Kingdom of the Kingfish”, *The New Orleans Item*, August 24, 1939, 12; Cochran, “The Louisiana Kingfish”, 285.

<sup>774</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 89.

<sup>775</sup> “Irby Due in US Court at Hearing Tuesday”, *New Orleans States*, September 9, 1930, 1-2; Meigs O. Frost, “Sam Denies Kidnaping [*sic*], Disclaims His Suit”, *New Orleans States*, September 10, 1930, 1, 8.

<sup>776</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 137.

<sup>777</sup> “Long Cited in US Court”, *New Orleans States*, September 6, 1930, 1-2.

<sup>778</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 135-137; White, *Kingfish*; Williams, *Huey Long*, 471-77.

<sup>779</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 81.

country”.<sup>780</sup> Unsurprisingly, Williams did not trust this source and defined it as inaccurate.<sup>781</sup> The book was used as a political tool to criticize the politician. Similarly, attorney Shirley G. Wimberly published a pamphlet at the beginning of the 1930s in which he wrote Irby “was mistreated and tortured”.<sup>782</sup>

This would not be the only time Long got entangled in the case of a missing person. Months later, there was a new scandal that is worth taking into account. On April 26, 1931, the body of Joseph W. Stinson, president of a bank in Gretna, was found in the Mississippi River some five miles from Baton Rouge. The man had been shot at the head and chest in a killing that “seemed to bear the marks of gang methods”, although he was not known to have enemies.<sup>783</sup> Stinson had been sentenced two years prior to six years of prison for embezzlement—he supposedly had stolen 1,836 dollars from the bank in which he worked.<sup>784</sup> In the scene of the crime, Long shouted he knew who the assassin was and promised he would make the name of the murderer public in the next twenty-four hours, but the Kingfish broke the promise and the case went unsolved.<sup>785</sup> The New Orleans newspaper *The Louisiana Guardian* published a critical article on the issue:

That Huey Long and his mobsmen have not used machine guns and left a trail of riffled [*sic*] human bodies along their path to power and wealth, is due solely to the fact that Huey Long has had other and more effective weapons at his command. But this statement is partly in error, for there was at least one riddled human body near that parth: the body of Joe Stinson, State prisoner and parole board employee, whose murderer Long could name, if Long’s own assertion is true. [...] The State of Louisiana has been Long’s racket, and he has exploited it to the limit and is still unsatisfied.<sup>786</sup>

Anti-*longite* Wimberley angrily wrote: “Long has during all that time maintained a thunderous silence on the subject. I know that he knows who killed Stinson and I also

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<sup>780</sup> Sam Irby, *Kidnaped [*sic*] by the Kingfish* (New Orleans: Orleans Publishing Company, 1932), 18. In a letter to his editor, Irby asked fifty percent of the profits of the book and suggests that the edition should be of around 3,000 copies, Letter from Sam Irby to J.J. Fineran, August 19, 1932, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 10, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>781</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 478.

<sup>782</sup> Shirley G. Wimberly, *Unmasking (Crawfish) Huey P. Long* (New Orleans, 193?), 13, Frank Leo Loria papers, 1933-1975, Manuscripts Collection 395, box 1, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>783</sup> “Gov. Long Sifts Prison Murder; No Clues”, *New Orleans States*, April 27, 1931, 2.

<sup>784</sup> “Former Banker, a Prison Trusty, Is Found Slain”, *Chicago Tribune*, April 27, 1931, 8.

<sup>785</sup> “Stinson Inquiry Yields No Clues”, *New Orleans States*, April 28, 1931, 6; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 147–148; Wimberly, “Unmasking (Crawfish) Huey”, 14.

<sup>786</sup> “Comes the Racketeer”, *The Louisiana Guardian*, October 31, 1931, 4.

know that he'll never point to Stinson's murderer in this world".<sup>787</sup> The author was right.

Despite the polemic regarding the Irby-Terrell kidnapping, governor Long won the election held on September 9, 1930,<sup>788</sup> and became senator "reducing the far-famed New Orleans ring to a pulp of abject misery".<sup>789</sup> In fact, he became the "youngest senator and the only individual in Louisiana's history to hold both offices at one time".<sup>790</sup> Long obtained 149,640 votes against 111,451 votes of his opponent, Ransdell,<sup>791</sup> and was congratulated by several citizens through telegrams.<sup>792</sup> This time, moreover, the candidate won in the city of New Orleans because he had made an alliance with its mayor, patrician T. Semmes Walmsley (1889-1942), with whom he had had several disputes in the past, and would have in the future. The first consequence of these results was the dissolution of the Constitutional League the day after the election and after only one year of existence.<sup>793</sup> An anti-*longite* publication reflected upon the results: "If Louisiana can send a proven coward, who has repeatedly been called a thief and a liar, who was impeached by the legislature for criminal acts, to the United States Senate, then all sense of decency and manhood are dead within the state".<sup>794</sup> Nevertheless, the Kingfish rose stronger and more confident. It is said that when learning of the results, he proudly and comically shouted: "I ain't no fish! I'm gonna

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<sup>787</sup> Wimberly, "Unmasking (Crawfish) Huey", 14

<sup>788</sup> "State Committee Sets September 9 for Primary", *New Orleans States*, July 2, 1930, 3.

<sup>789</sup> Walter Davenport, "Yes, Your Excellency!" *Collier's Weekly*, December 13, 1930, 22.

<sup>790</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 136.

<sup>791</sup> "Long's Official Majority Over Ransdell 38,189", *The Times-Picayune*, September 16, 1930, 1; Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 71.

<sup>792</sup> "Accept my congratulations on your splendid victory yesterday", Telegram, Judge F.E. Jones, Jena LA, to Huey P. Long, September 10, 1930. "Accept my heartiest congratulations and wishing you many more victories", Telegram, Ben Jackson, El Dorado, Ark, to Huey P. Long, September 10, 1930. "Proudly joyfully we extend heartiest congratulations in your glorious victory", Telegram, Mr. and Mrs. Chas Jeanmard, Lafayette, to Huey P. Long, September 10, 1930. "I congratulate you on your wonderful victory", Telegram, N.P. Jeffrey, Jeanerette, to Huey P. Long, September 20, 1930. "We extend to your [*sic*] our sincere congratulations in your recent success and are extremely proud of your overwhelming majority it goes to prove without saying that your worth and achievements were greatly appreciated by those who know you", Telegram, Mr. and Mrs. A.M. Johnson, Natchez, to Huey P. Long, September 11, 1930. Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 6, folder 180, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>793</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 75.

<sup>794</sup> "Crooked Long's Sell-Out of the City Election, February, 1930", *New Orleans Free Press*, August 16, 1930, 3.

pick another name, maybe one with a lion or a tiger in it".<sup>795</sup> He had become a strongman.

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<sup>795</sup> LeVert, *Huey Long*, 96.



## CHAPTER THREE: INTRODUCING GERARDO MACHADO, “EL GUAJIRO DE SANTA CLARA”<sup>796</sup>

Gerardo Machado y Morales defined the improvements he had accomplished during the first four years of his administration (1925-1929) as “glorious”.<sup>797</sup> The events that came after 1929 would mark a clear decrease of his popularity in Cuba and the beginning of the end of his political career. This chapter will focus on the relatively unknown Cuban politician, who has been certainly less studied than Long. Using a biographical methodology as in the two previous chapters, the chapter covers the period from his birth in 1871-73 to 1929, when Machado’s second administration started after Congress, under his control, amended the 1901 Cuban constitution to allow him to be reelected. Between 1925 and 1929, the president established his political machine in Cuba and began the era that would be known as the *machadato*—which ended in 1933 when he was overthrown. Similarly to Huey Long, Machado carried out a series of public works that ameliorated the living standards of Cubans and bettered the infrastructure in the country, while at the same time he accumulated great power in his hands and filled his pockets with considerable sums of money.

Both Long and Machado used the “self-made man” rhetoric in order to appeal to the masses. The Cuban president’s first term resulted in four quite successful years, particularly the first two. As French writer and journalist Alfred Fabre-Luce put it in 1934, “*De 1925 à 1927, il est l’idole de la population*”.<sup>798</sup> However, these would be followed by four disastrous ones that ended in the bloody 1933 revolution. The goal of this chapter is to pinpoint Machado’s main character traits, as well as his feats and his weaknesses as Cuban president. Although much more ruthless, the manner in which he governed was in essence rather similar to that of the Kingfish. The Cuba and the Louisiana the two politicians found once they became president and governor were very much alike. Both politicians applied analogous solutions to the problems their

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<sup>796</sup> The term “*guajiro*” refers to a peasant in Cuba, in Enrique Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934: Crónica de nuestro tiempo* (Mexico City: Botas, 1934), 43.

<sup>797</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado y Morales”, 62.

<sup>798</sup> Alfred Fabre-Luce, *Révolution a Cuba* (Paris: Éditions de «Pamphlet», 1934), 11.

respective societies were experiencing through methods that would be vigorously put into question by their opponents.

### 3.1 “Humble” beginnings

Gerardo Machado was born on September 24, 1871 or 1873, depending on the source.<sup>799</sup> He came into the world in a cattle farm named Manajanabo located in the town and province of Santa Clara—now Villa Clara—in central Cuba, which was then a part of Spain. The fact that the date of his birth is unclear indicates the lack of interest in historiography of this politician. Machado’s mother was Lutgarda Morales Yanes, who died during her son’s presidency. His father was colonel of Canarian origin Gerardo Machado Castelló, who fought in the Ten Year’s War (1868-1878) against Spanish misrule. This fact would greatly mark young Gerardo’s ideology and future. Gerardo had two siblings: a brother named Carlos and a sister named Consuelo. As for his background, it can be stated that Machado had no aristocratic origin. In his 2001 dissertation, historian Fritz William Berggren, who is often defensive of Machado—in a similar manner as T. Harry Williams was in regards to Long—writes that his parents

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<sup>799</sup> There is a great deal of confusion concerning Machado’s date of birth. Macías Martín writes he was born on September 24, in Francisco J. Macías Martín, “El perfil de un dictador antillano: el general Gerardo Machado y Morales, Presidente de la República de Cuba (1925-1933)”, *Tebeto. Anuario del Archivo Histórico Insular de Fuerteventura*, nº 15 (2002): 235. On the contrary, it is stated he was born on the 29th in *El Libro de Cuba: historia, letras, artes, ciencias, agricultura, industria, comercio, bellezas naturales. Obra de propaganda nacional*, ed. Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring (Havana: Talleres del Sindicato de Artes Gráficas, 1925), University of Miami Digital Collections, Cuban Heritage Collection Books, merrick.library.miami.edu. Similarly, Spanish newspaper *ABC* published that he had been born on September 29, 1871, in “Boletín del Día. Presidente Machado”, *ABC*, May 20, 1925, 21. A New Orleans newspaper also believed it was on the 29, but in 1873, in “Machado, Exiled Cuban Leader, Dies In US”, *The New Orleans Item*, March 29, 1939, 1-2. Others argue that his birth date is obscure and that it is celebrated on September 24 because it is Saint Gerardo, in Fritz William Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation” (PhD Diss., University of Miami, 2001), 143. As for the year of his birth, in 1924, *The Times of Cuba* published that Machado had been born in 1873, as quoted in “Cuba’s Presidential Election”, *The Literary Digest*, December 6, 1924, 20 and in “Cuba’s Dislike of the Platt Amendment”, *The Literary Digest*, June 6, 1925, 22. After his passing in 1939, a Louisiana newspaper affirmed Machado had been born on September 29, 1873, in “Machado Dies at 67 in Florida”, *The New Orleans Item*, March 29, 1939, 2. However, an author in 1929 remarked Machado was born on September 28 “de 1871, y no de 1873, como dicen algunos de los biógrafos”, in Pedro González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado, o La autoridad rescatada* (Madrid: Editora Ambos Mundos, 1929), 15. Manuel Franco Varona wrote he was born “por el año 1873”, in Franco Varona, *Machado: su vida y su obra*, 21. The safest conclusion is that he was born on September 24, 1871, because the majority of the authors concede in this date. Also, a telegram was found written to Machado on September 24 wishing him “Muchas felicidades”, Carmelo Uriaga to Gerardo Machado, Telegram, September 24, 1933, Series I, box 2, folder 4, University of Miami Digital Collections, Cuban Heritage Collection Books, merrick.library.miami.edu.

“were not well educated or wealthy”.<sup>800</sup> Similarly, historian Calixto C. Masó specified in 1976: “Sus familiares eran campesinos relativamente acomodados”,<sup>801</sup> a sentence that could also be applied to Long, whose parents were also “peasants”. In his 2004 study, historian Richard Gott details: “Machado had humbler origins than earlier presidents”.<sup>802</sup> Like the Kingfish, Machado was raised in a rural environment, although the political use he made of these origins was a bit different from those of the Kingfish. While Huey embraced his rural background to receive more votes, the Cuban president did not exploit it as much. Nevertheless, Spanish journalist Pedro González-Blanco wrote in 1929 that Machado was not ashamed: “No quiere ocultar que viene ‘de abajo a arriba, sin títulos profesionales’”.<sup>803</sup>

He attended school in Santa Clara, but, as Huey Long, he did not last long and soon he left his studies.<sup>804</sup> As a youngster Machado briefly worked as a butcher, a job that would cost two bones from his left hand ring finger after a business rival shot him following a disagreement.<sup>805</sup> He and his father rustled cattle together for some time, thus taking part in the warfare strategy to ruin Spain’s economy on the island during independence struggle.<sup>806</sup> In regards to this unorthodox profession, chronicler Enrique Lumen wrote in 1934 that when Machado’s father was very old and almost unaware of his surroundings, Gerardo tried to motivate him by screaming, “Dad, dad, it’s me!”, with unsuccessful results. Suddenly, a car’s horn was heard and Machado’s parent, believing it was the sound of an ox, yelled: “¡Cógelo, Gerardo, cógelo!”.<sup>807</sup> Carleton Beals referred to both men, father and son, as “turbulent elements in the province of Santa Clara”.<sup>808</sup> Observer

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<sup>800</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 143.

<sup>801</sup> Calixto C. Masó, *Historia de Cuba: (La lucha de un pueblo por cumplir su destino histórico y su vocación de libertad)* (Miami: Universal, 1976), 517.

<sup>802</sup> Richard Gott, “A Republic under dictatorship: Gerardo Machado, the tropical Mussolini, 1925-1933”, in *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 130.

<sup>803</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 3.

<sup>804</sup> Guillermo J. Jorge, “Administración del presidente general Gerardo Machado y Morales. Primer periodo 1925-1929”, in *Ciclo de Conferencias sobre los Presidentes de Cuba, 1868-1933* (Miami: Ramón Guiteras Intercultural Center, 1985), 9.

<sup>805</sup> Berggren has another theory of the incident and writes: “He was shot in battle [during the war of independence] and lost his left middle finger”, in “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 144.

<sup>806</sup> Cuban historian José Cantón wrote that Machado got involved “en negocios turbios relacionados con el trasiego de ganado”, in Cantón Navarro, *Historia de Cuba*, 107.

<sup>807</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934: Crónica de nuestro tiempo*, 41-42.

<sup>808</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 241; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 4, 241.

González-Blanco told the anecdote that the father always slept by himself so that no one could hear “*sus cosas*” in case he talked in his dreams.<sup>809</sup>

As could be expected taking into account their upbringing, Machado—who had recently married his cousin, Elvira Machado y Nodal (1868/1877-19??), with whom he would have three daughters: Laudelina, Ángela Elvira, and Berta—,<sup>810</sup> together with his brother Carlos, joined the pro-independence forces in Cuba in the war of 1895 in his hometown.



*Fig. 21: General Gerardo Machado on horseback, 1895, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series VIII, box 22, folder 1, University of Miami Digital Collection, merrick.library.miami.edu.*

Gerardo became a brigadier general—in the Cuban rebel army, recognized as official. However, historian Lionel Soto argued that the future president had been “un personaje secundario en la lucha libertadora”.<sup>811</sup> Not sharing that perspective, one of Machado’s biographers wrote in 1927: “Jamás trató con despotismo a ningún soldado, a quienes trataba como hermanos”.<sup>812</sup> There is not much information about this early period of the future president’s life. However, an author and friend of Machado, Antonio Berenguer y Sed, who was also from

<sup>809</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 15.

<sup>810</sup> José A. Mijares, “Presidente Gerardo Machado y Morales”, *Nuevo Siglo*, February 17, 2005, 16.

<sup>811</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33, Vol. I*, 202.

<sup>812</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado*, 24.

Santa Clara and who, in 1895, wrote the lyrics of an anthem to his native town, published in 1926 some anecdotes regarding Machado's days in the war, which reflect the politician's supposed braveness and dedication to Cuban freedom.<sup>813</sup>

Thus one of the main differences between the Cuban politician and Huey Long was that Machado was a military man, while the latter was a lawyer who never got involved in the army nor went to war. Machado was the last war of independence veteran president.<sup>814</sup> In fact, once he entered politics he often used this past in his favor. In a 1926 speech, the Cuban president affirmed:

Me he jurado a mi mismo no retroceder ante obstáculos nunca, porque yo ahora, en la Presidencia de la República, procedo del mismo modo que lo hice cuando en el año 1895 me fui a pelear en la guerra de independencia. Estoy aquí, no para buscar halagos, ni comodidades. Estoy aquí, señoras y señores, para sacrificar mi vida, si fuera necesario, por el bienestar y la felicidad de la República.<sup>815</sup>

Orestes Ferrara (1876-1972), an Italian who fought for the independence of the island and who was an acquaintance of the future president—he was the Cuban ambassador to Washington from 1927 to 1932, and afterwards his Secretary of State—, wrote in 1926 how “[e]ntre los jóvenes que en 1898, después de tres años de campaña, volvían a la ciudad con los laureles de la victoria, figuraba uno, apuesto, alto, vigoroso, de abundante cabellera, de mirada penetrante y que ostentaba los galones de general a pesar de tocar apenas los veinticinco años”: Gerardo Machado.<sup>816</sup>

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<sup>813</sup> Berenguer wrote how: “Siendo el General Machado, Jefe de la Brigada ‘Villaclara’, en los días álgidos de la revolución cubana, fue condenado a muerte un soldado de las fuerzas, que había cometido un grave y repugnante delito. Antes de ser pasado por las armas, solicitó ver al General Machado, y una vez en presencia de éste, le suplicó, lloroso y acobardado, el perdón. El General Machado le contestó: ‘Si quieres que Cuba te perdone, muere como un valiente’. Repuesto el reo sufrió la pena valerosamente”, in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 229.

<sup>814</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 3. José M. Hernández refers to the period between 1909 and 1933 as the “era of veteran-presidents”, in *Cuba and the United States: Intervention and Militarism, 1868-1933* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 160. A parallel can be drawn between Cuba and the United States in regards to veteran presidents. In the US, McKinley had been major in the American Civil War. Theodore Roosevelt would be officer in Cuba, and Taft, although he was a civilian, had led the war in the Philippines. Woodrow Wilson became the first full civilian president since Lincoln and Andrew Johnson.

<sup>815</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Discurso del General Gerardo Machado en Oriente*, June 1926, 6, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series III, box 6, folder 1, UMDC.

<sup>816</sup> Orestes Ferrara, “El General Machado Juzgado por el Dr. Orestes Ferrara”, *Revue de L’Amerique Latine*, 1926, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 14.

Cuban independence was achieved after US military presence from 1898-1903, with the signature of the controversial Platt Amendment, which occurred in Havana on May 22, 1903, and was meant to safeguard US interests in the island.<sup>817</sup> As historian Alexander DeConde put it in 1951: “[The amendment] acted as a brake on the sovereignty of the Cuban government”.<sup>818</sup> As Spanish journalist who lived in Cuba Nicolás Rivero Muñiz sarcastically put it in 1903 in *Diario de la Marina*, a newspaper of which he was the director since 1895: “[C]on lo que no estamos conformes es con que el pueblo de Cuba para aceptar la protección americana tenga necesidad de resistir a los instintos de raza, pues o mucho nos equivocamos o el primero o principal de estos instintos es el de vivir”.<sup>819</sup> The document was not, as some have understood it, an amendment to the 1901 Cuban constitution,<sup>820</sup> but an amendment to an existing bill—named *ley sobre Créditos del Ejército*, or Army Appropriation bill—regarding the extension of military presence in Cuba until the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 1902.<sup>821</sup> Cuban professor of Law Juan Vega Vega has argued that because the text had nothing to do with neither the island nor its sovereignty it was not a true amendment, but a “*percha*”.<sup>822</sup>

Its alleged architect was Republican senator from Connecticut, Orville H. Platt (1827-1905), who had proposed it at the US Senate on February 25, 1901.<sup>823</sup> According to professor of law James Brown Scott, however, the senator only acted as a messenger

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<sup>817</sup> The relationship between Cuba and the United States will be further explained in chapter four.

<sup>818</sup> Alexander DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951), 103.

<sup>819</sup> Nicolás Rivero, “Los instintos de la raza”, *El Diario de la Marina*, November 7, 1903, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 84.

<sup>820</sup> Lawyer and writer Néstor Carbonell Cortina argued that the 1901 constitution was an innovative text considering the lack of democratic experience in Cuba at the time: “La Constitución de 1901, vista desde estos tiempos en que se han experimentado grandes transformaciones económicas y sociales, resulta imperfecta e incompleta. Pero estudiada a la luz de la época en que se elaboró, constituye, sin duda, un ingente y patriótico esfuerzo de integración nacional republicana, teniendo en cuenta la poca experiencia democrática de los cubanos”, in Néstor Carbonell Cortina, *El espíritu de la constitución cubana de 1901* (Madrid: Playor, 1974), 58.

<sup>821</sup> Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 13.

<sup>822</sup> Vega Vega, *Cuba, su historia constitucional*, 32.

<sup>823</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 21; Manuel Márquez Sterling and Carlos Márquez Sterling, *Historia de la isla de Cuba* (New York: Regents Publishing Company, 1975), 161. The American report by the Commission of Cuban Affairs stated in 1935: “La Enmienda Platt formaba parte de la Ley de Créditos del ejército de los Estados Unidos, de 1901, pero fue incorporada formalmente en el tratado permanente de mayo de 1903”, in Raymond Leslie Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba: Informe de la Comisión de Asuntos Cubanos* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1935), 4, n. 2. This report was originally written in English: Raymond Leslie Buell et al., *Problems of the New Cuba: Report of the Commission on Cuban Affairs* (New York: Foreign policy Association, 1935).

and the real designer of the amendment was US Secretary of War until 1904 and Secretary of State until 1909, Elihu Root (1845-1937).<sup>824</sup> Thus Historian Charles Chapman argued that the text should have been named the “Root Amendment”.<sup>825</sup> Similarly, Cuban renowned nationalist historian Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring (1889-1964) considered senator Platt, not the father of the amendment, but its godfather.<sup>826</sup> It must be stated that the first Cuban president, moderate Tomás Estrada Palma (1835-1908), who had been inaugurated on May 20, 1902, and who would receive strong criticism for being a sort of American puppet, also signed it.<sup>827</sup> For this endorsement, in a 1985 essay Marxist historian Ramón de Armas referred to Estrada as a “gestor de una intromisión norteamericana en el proceso cubano”.<sup>828</sup>

The amendment would be a crucial text, for it marked the relationship between the United States and Cuba throughout the twentieth century, even after its abolishment in 1934. Historian Ramón Eduardo Ruíz has argued that “en cualquier intento de explicar el nacimiento del nacionalismo cubano, la historia de la Enmienda Platt eclipsa todas las otras”.<sup>829</sup> Scholar Vega Vega further criticized that the amendment had transformed the island into an American colony.<sup>830</sup> While a further analysis of US-Cuban relationships is developed in the following chapter, the Platt Amendment merits a lengthy quotation here, as its derogation was one of Machado’s main promises regarding his stance towards the US. The text featured the following eight conditions:

Art. I.-That the government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes or otherwise, lodgement in or control over any portion of said island.

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<sup>824</sup> Russell H. Fitzgibbon (1935), *Cuba and the United States, 1900-1935* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 80; James Brown Scott, *Cuba, la America Latina, los Estados Unidos* (Havana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1926), 17.

<sup>825</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 141.

<sup>826</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 27.

<sup>827</sup> Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 13.

<sup>828</sup> Ramón de Armas, “Esquema para un análisis de los partidos políticos burgueses en Cuba: Antecedentes, surgimiento y principales características (1899-1925)”, in *Los partidos políticos burgueses en Cuba neocolonial, 1899-1952*, Ramón de Armas, Francisco López Segrera, and Germán Sánchez (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1985), 25.

<sup>829</sup> Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 37.

<sup>830</sup> Vega Vega, *Cuba, su historia constitucional*, 35.

Art. II. That said government shall not assume or contract any public debt, to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the island, after defraying the current expenses of government shall be inadequate.

Art. III. That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba.

Art. IV. That all Acts of the United States in Cuba during its military occupancy thereof are ratified and validated, and all lawful rights acquired thereunder shall be maintained and protected.

Art. V. That the government of Cuba will execute, and as far as necessary extend, the plans already devised or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the sanitation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases may be prevented, thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba, as well as to the commerce of the southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein.

Art. VI. That the Isle of Pines shall be omitted from the proposed constitutional boundaries of Cuba, the title thereto being left to future adjustment by treaty.<sup>831</sup>

Art. VII. That to enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specified points to be agreed upon with the President of the United States.

Art. VIII. That by way of further assurance the government of Cuba will embody the foregoing provisions in a permanent treaty with the United States.<sup>832</sup>

In his political program, Machado would always include the need to derogate this very unpopular amendment, particularly the third clause—which gave the United States the right to intervene in Cuba—, and some other, such as article six, for the politician argued were obsolete.<sup>833</sup> However, these intentions were more a political strategy than a promise he would pursue to accomplish. In that sense, Fitzgibbon wrote: “A comparison of [...] [Machado’s] statements [against the amendment] with his attitude toward the United States as President leads to the conclusion that they were merely designed for home consumption as a clever exploitation of the most popular issue possible for a Cuban politician”.<sup>834</sup>

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<sup>831</sup> Spanish journalist living in Cuba Nicolás Rivero was scandalized by this US appropriation of Cuban land, in Rivero, “¡Se cede la Isla de Pinos!”, *El Diario de la Marina*, November 25, 1903, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 96.

<sup>832</sup> *The Platt Amendment: Treaty between the United States and Cuba Embodying the Provisions Defining the Future Relations of the United States with Cuba Contained in the Act of Congress, 56th Congress, Session II, Ch. 803*, history.state.gov. Text available in Spanish in Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la Enmienda Platt*, 23-24, Manuel Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham: El cesarismo en Cuba* (Mexico: Botas, 1933), 9–10, and Vega Vega, *Cuba, su historia constitucional*, 33-34.

<sup>833</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 640.

<sup>834</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 185.

After the 1895-1898 independence war and while this crucial document was being discussed, Machado turned his interest to politics and the business activity.<sup>835</sup> Shortly after the war, in 1900, he became the mayor of Santa Clara during which period he allegedly eliminated all archives in the *Audiencia* that might refer to his past criminal activities.<sup>836</sup> Student activist against the *machadato*, Inés Segura Bustamante, wrote years later, after obtaining a degree in Psychology: “Desde el punto de vista psicológico, Machado era un psicópata que pudo ocultar sus antecedentes al empezar a tener importancia política cuando ‘fortuitamente’ se quemaron los archivos de su pueblo, incluyendo los de la Audiencia de Santa Clara”.<sup>837</sup> Conversely, in a praising tone, González-Blanco wrote that, as a mayor, Machado “demostró cómo con escasos recursos pueden hacerse milagros de reorganización”.<sup>838</sup> Supporter Manuel Franco Varona similarly wrote: “Laboró con tesón y energía por el mejoramiento de aquella población”.<sup>839</sup>

Although Machado had no education, or at least not a high school or a university degree, the future president felt that the *Partido Liberal* better represented his political ideology. He unsuccessfully ran for governor of the province of Santa Clara in 1908,<sup>840</sup> yet he remained interested in politics, for he served as Inspector General of the Cuban Armed Forces and as *Secretario de Gobernación* under the presidency of liberal José Miguel Gómez (1909-1913), who was also from Villa Clara and was commonly known as “*El tiburón*” (the shark).<sup>841</sup> As *Secretario*, Machado received support from the newspaper that would be his ally years later during his presidency, the *Diario de la Marina*. Its director, Nicolás Rivero, wrote a note in 1911 declaring the publication “*machadista*” by affirming: “Si nosotros pudiéramos tener candidato para la Presidencia

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<sup>835</sup> Machado affirmed in an interview years later: “I have given all my life to business activity, from my early youth”, in Merryle S. Rukeyser, “Machado to Keep Hands Off Sugar”, *New Orleans States*, July 15, 1930, 3.

<sup>836</sup> Hugh Thomas (1971), *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad* (Barcelona: Debate, 2004), 417.

<sup>837</sup> Inés Segura Bustamante, *Cuba siglo XX y la generación de 1930: un documento histórico* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1986), 7.

<sup>838</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 25.

<sup>839</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado*, 26.

<sup>840</sup> Solera, *Cuba: La república de generales y doctores: De Estrada Palma a Machado*, 227. According to Franco Varona, he only lost by seventeen votes, in Franco Varona, *Machado*, 27.

<sup>841</sup> López Segrera, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 60.

de la República, desde luego nos declararíamos machadistas”.<sup>842</sup> In an opposite perspective, Marxist historian Lionel Soto affirmed that while holding that position, Machado “se distinguió por sus brutales represiones antiobreras”.<sup>843</sup> Contradictions aside, he resigned as *Secretario de Gobernación* after a disagreement with the president during the 1912 racial war in the province of Oriente, which will be further explained in chapter five, and because Machado argued Gómez was after reelection.<sup>844</sup> Again, journalist Rivero lamented Machado’s departure:

Al fin se fue Machado [...] Ahora que no manda, hagámosle justicia. Su actitud [...] acreditólo como gobernante previsor y enérgico. Ahora cree que la política reinante va a la disolución del partido liberal, a la anarquía y a la tercera intervención, y por eso se retira, sin que le hayan hecho desistir de su propósito las súplicas de sus mejores amigos. Otra prueba de su entereza y de la firmeza de sus convicciones. Es lástima que hombres así tengan que dejar la dirección de los negocios públicos.<sup>845</sup>

On February 1917 Machado participated in a failed coup carried out by military men called *La Chambelona* to oust conservative president Mario García Menocal (1866-1941), who had won the 1916 general election for a second term through a questionable process that they believed had been an illegal reelection.<sup>846</sup> Reporter Rivero defined the electoral process as a “tragicomedy”, for during those days there were screams in the streets, shots, and general unrest.<sup>847</sup> Professor Jorge I. Domínguez argues that the campaign to reelect Menocal “relied on widespread coercion and electoral fraud”.<sup>848</sup> Thus a few weeks after the election, a group of military men from the Liberal Party rose in arms, threatening to begin a revolution.<sup>849</sup> A participant in the coup from the city of Camagüey, former commandant of cavalry of the National Army, Luis Solano Álvarez, wrote about his experience during the events in a self-aggrandizing monograph published three years later. In this book, its author justified the rebellion by arguing that they were fighting for constitutional guarantees and democracy on the island:

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<sup>842</sup> Rivero, “El ‘Diario de la Marina’, Machadista”, June 10, 1911, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 303.

<sup>843</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33, Vol. I*, 202; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 47.

<sup>844</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 27; Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 314.

<sup>845</sup> Rivero, “Se fue Machado”, April 25, 1912, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 328.

<sup>846</sup> For further analysis on the rebellion, see “The Revolution of February”, in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 362-386.

<sup>847</sup> Rivero, “La tragicomedia electoral”, October 20, 1916, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 392.

<sup>848</sup> Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 16.

<sup>849</sup> Lester D. Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States. A Brief History* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968), 131.

“Creíamos una necesidad de nuestro patriotismo y nuestros deberes apoyar al Partido Liberal”.<sup>850</sup> Solano Álvarez offered a detailed account of the rebellion, describing each city the rebels took. The revolt, however, was easily suppressed by the forces loyal to the chief executive and after military intervention of the United States.<sup>851</sup> Also, desertions increased throughout the last weeks, thus making the success of the cause more difficult.<sup>852</sup> When the revolt was definitely quelled, a court martial took place to judge the actions of the insurgents. However, due to his social position in Santa Clara society, Machado was found not guilty.<sup>853</sup> As for Solano Álvarez, the court condemned him to death penalty, which after an appeal was reduced to life sentence that later on would be also repealed granting freedom for the accused.<sup>854</sup> Many others received prison sentences, and several participants were condemned to death.<sup>855</sup> Years later, when Machado was already president, some military men that had participated in the 1917 uprising demanded Congress to pass an Amnesty law for their case.<sup>856</sup>

Another relevant difference between Huey Long and Gerardo Machado was religion. While the Kingfish was Baptist, the Cuban was “adicto a la santería y no se ocultaba”;<sup>857</sup> that is, he followed some rituals of this set of beliefs that takes from Catholicism as well as traditional Yoruba practices.<sup>858</sup> Machado was moreover a “católico anticlerical”, thus his sociological year was the Christian year, and therefore he celebrated Christmas, Easter, and all Christian holidays. The president-to-be was also

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<sup>850</sup> Luis Solano Álvarez, *Mi actuación militar: apuntes para la historia de la revolución de febrero de 1917* (Havana: Impr. El Siglo XX, 1920), 19.

<sup>851</sup> Historian Jorge Domínguez writes US president Woodrow Wilson sent 17,000 troops to Cuba to fight the uprising, in Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 17.

<sup>852</sup> Solano Álvarez, *Mi actuación militar*, 180.

<sup>853</sup> “Cuba’s Dislike of the Platt Amendment”, *The Literary Digest*, June 6, 1925, 22.

<sup>854</sup> Solano Álvarez, *Mi actuación militar*, 342-346.

<sup>855</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 383.

<sup>856</sup> “Los ex-militares pronunciados en 1917 y su labor”, *Diario de la Marina*, April 17, 1930, 1. Critical with the uprising and the discussion about the amnesty to be given to the military men that participated in it, conservative congressman Carlos Manuel de la Cruz Ugarte demanded in a speech he gave at the Congress in March 15, 1926: “El Partido Liberal tiene un compromiso que cumplir con el grupo de militares alzados en Febrero” and criticized that the military constituted a sort of “casta privilegiada” that was under protection of the progressive party, in Carlos Manuel de la Cruz Ugarte, *Proceso histórico del machadato: discursos de oposición contra la dictadura, desde sus inicios en 1925* (Havana: Imprenta La Milagrosa, 1935), 13-14; Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 144.

<sup>857</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 35.

<sup>858</sup> For more on santería, see David H. Brown, *Santería Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago press, 2003); Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santería to Obeah and Espiritismo* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

a mason, a less known aspect of his life. As a sidenote, its relevant to realize that Huey Long's brother, George, and his puppet O.K. Allen were also masons. In Cuba, Spanish freemasons founded several lodges on the island in the decade of the 1890s with links to other lodges on the Iberian Peninsula, thus the presence of masonry in Cuba was relevant.<sup>859</sup> Since January 6, 1925, Machado achieved the rank of *Maestro Masón* at the *logia del Progreso* of his hometown. In a speech he gave at a mason fraternity Machado affirmed Cuba should be considered as home by the masons, and that the Cuban people were indebted to them for their role during the independence wars.<sup>860</sup> In October 1929, the Cuban president unsurprisingly acquired the highest level inside the masonry, thus becoming *Soberano Gran Inspector General de la Orden* (grado 33) through the Scottish Rite, a title for which he had been suggested in August 1928 and approved by most of the attendees of that meeting. However, it is worth noting that a few years later, while Machado was still president, the Supreme Council expelled him from the lodge, allegedly because of inappropriate conduct. Thus, in the last years of his administration, as will be seen in the last chapters of this thesis, the president lost support from most of the sectors that had been his supporters.<sup>861</sup>

## 3.2 Running for the presidency

In 1924, and after having acquired a handsome fortune—historian Guillermo Jorge writes one million pesos—,<sup>862</sup> Machado decided to run for the presidency of Cuba. He had skills as a businessman, and had become vice-president of the *Compañía Cubana de Electricidad* and executive of the General Electric Company.<sup>863</sup> Machado had also acquired a sugar mill named *La Carmita*, located in the municipality of Camajuaní, which he would own until 1924.<sup>864</sup> These experiences earned him a good reputation

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<sup>859</sup> Juan Andrés Blanco Rodríguez and Alejandro García Álvarez, *Legado de España en Cuba* (Madrid: Sílex, 2015), 89-90.

<sup>860</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 89-90.

<sup>861</sup> For more on masonry in Cuba, see Aurelio Miranda Álvarez, *Historia documentada de la masonería en Cuba* (Havana: Molina, 1933); Francisco José Ponte Domínguez (1961), *Historia de la masonería del Rito Escocés en Cuba* (Havana: Inclán, 2004).

<sup>862</sup> Jorge, “Administración del presidente general Gerardo Machado”, 13. Historian Lionel Soto literally wrote: “Al ser electo Presidente, Machado poseía una sólida fortuna”, in Soto, *La revolución del 33*, Vol. I, 202; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 48.

<sup>863</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 242.

<sup>864</sup> Solera, *Cuba: La república de generales y doctores*, 227.

amongst the business community, thus gaining their support for the 1924 presidential campaign.<sup>865</sup> At the same time, others were suspicious that by running Machado was simply aiming at increasing his personal fortune.<sup>866</sup> However, the campaign he carried out and the program presented granted him the victory. The candidate promised he would find solutions to the economic problems of the country, including dependency to one crop: sugar; the excessive power of foreign, mainly American, intervention in Cuban matters, and the lack of a national banking system, among others.<sup>867</sup> He based his program on defending and embracing Cuban sovereignty, a stance which appealed to most voters. However, as current US historian Louis Pérez, expert in Cuba, puts it, “Machado was too clever to allow advocacy of political reform and defense of national interests jeopardize relations with the United States”.<sup>868</sup> His relationship with the United States would be a complicated one throughout his political career. During the period this chapter addresses, in his speeches he would defend Cuban protectionist measures while at the same time keeping a cordial friendship with president Calvin Coolidge and US businessmen. That would be his pattern until the arrival of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the White House.

His opponent in the 1924 presidential election was Carlos Mendieta Montefur (1873-1960), also member of the *Partido Liberal*. Friend of Machado Orestes Ferrara, who had joined him during the *Chambelona* uprising as the head of the rebellion in the United States,<sup>869</sup> wrote in his thorough memoirs: “El Partido Liberal se encontró muy pronto dividido en dos campos, uno que seguía al General Machado y el otro al Coronel Mendieta”.<sup>870</sup> At the end, Machado was voted to run for the presidency in the convention of his party held on July 31, 1924, leaving Mendieta out of the campaign.<sup>871</sup> As for the *Partido Conservador*, there also existed different factions, the better known being that of former president, Alfredo Zayas Alfonso (1861-1934)—however, he did

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<sup>865</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 7-8; Macías Martín, “El perfil de un dictador antillano”, 236; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 7-8.

<sup>866</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 484.

<sup>867</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 10.

<sup>868</sup> Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), 258.

<sup>869</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 369.

<sup>870</sup> Orestes Ferrara, *Una mirada sobre tres siglos: memorias* (Madrid: Playor, 1975), 270. The author emotionally relates how Machado made him Cuban ambassador in the United States in pp. 285-286.

<sup>871</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 25; Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 127.

not run for reelection because he was not nominated by his party, and thus Zayas decided to endorse Machado—,<sup>872</sup> and the actual candidate and former president in two occasions before Zayas, the aforementioned Menocal.<sup>873</sup> There was a third less relevant party, the *Partido Popular*, which had been founded by Zayas in 1919 after seceding from his original party.<sup>874</sup> It is worth noting, however, that in Cuba the difference between liberals and conservatives was small and did not go beyond some “rhetorical dissimilarities”.<sup>875</sup> Latin Americanist Francisco López Segrera stressed that in both parties the leadership was composed by officials of the *Ejército Libertador* that had fought against Spain, who were now benefitting from the American dominance of Cuban economics and configured what the author called an “*oligarquía caudillista*”.<sup>876</sup> In that sense, the political situation on the island was not that different from primary elections in Louisiana throughout this period.

Once the majority of party members had elected him, the campaign to convince the rest of the population started. In it, Machado spent about fourteen million pesos.<sup>877</sup> Marxist author Rolando Rodríguez, who dedicates his 2013 book to Fidel Castro, argues the candidate was secretly allied to American millionaires, that he had received one million pesos from the House of Morgan and other magnates from New York, and that he represented the best alternative for the “imperialist” forces in the northern country.<sup>878</sup> More specifically, journalist of the *Havana Post* Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda wrote that Machado received monetary support from the “*rico yanqui*” Henry W. Catlin, president of the Electric Bond and Share Company.<sup>879</sup> Carleton Beals specified that Catlin helped the candidate with half a million dollars for the presidential campaign.<sup>880</sup> Thus some of Machado’s opponents argued it was the big companies and their interests

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<sup>872</sup> Spanish newspaper *ABC* simply wrote: “El presidente, doctor Zayas, ha retirado su candidatura”, in “El Ministro de Cuba en Madrid y la Vicepresidencia de la República”, *ABC*, September 2, 1924, 10.

<sup>873</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 30; Macías Martín, “El perfil de un dictador antillano”, 237; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 18-19; Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 484-485.

<sup>874</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 560-561.

<sup>875</sup> Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 162.

<sup>876</sup> López Segrera, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 70-71.

<sup>877</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 15.

<sup>878</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>879</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 31.

<sup>880</sup> Thomas writes it is “more than probable” that, as his enemies stated, Machado received that amount from Catlin, in Thomas, *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad*, 418.

he was representing, and not the people.<sup>881</sup> It was a similar accusation Huey Long received when it was found his multimillionaire friend Robert Maestri was funding his campaign.

Machado's motto throughout the election process was "*a pie*" (on foot) and his program was based on "*agua, caminos y escuelas*" (water, roads, and schools),<sup>882</sup> a promise with which, according to Cuban historian Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda, he managed to metaphorically engage the people of Cuba to a sort of dream state, regardless of their race or origins, and bond them together.<sup>883</sup> With this phrase he was offering something specific and new that no previous politician had proposed, thus making him a very attractive candidate.<sup>884</sup> Similarly to Huey Long, the former cattle rustler looked for supporters all over the country, and even went door to door asking people for their vote.<sup>885</sup> Menocal, on the other hand, was too confident about his candidacy, did not have a specific program, and spent the campaign reminding his audiences of his past great years as president. He came from an aristocratic background that did not appeal to most.<sup>886</sup> Because of his origins as foreman, Menocal's motto, as opposed to Machado's down-to-earth "on foot", was "*a caballo*" (on horse), thus separating himself as a *caballero* from the "common man".<sup>887</sup> The difference between the two candidates was clear in the words they chose. However, as Masó argued, aside from the meaning of the phrase "*a pie*", once he obtained power Machado would in fact distance himself significantly from the Cuban people.<sup>888</sup>

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<sup>881</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 243. This same author would conclude: "Murderous Machado has been not so much President of Cuba as good representative of the Power Trust and the banks", 244.

<sup>882</sup> "La República de Cuba", *Cosmópolis*, year 3, n° 22, September 1929, 22, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series VII, box 18, folder 1, UMD; Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 102. The phrase "water, roads, and schools" reminds of Spanish politician and historian Joaquín Costa's late nineteenth-century motto "escuela y despensa" (school and food), which he developed at a time when Cuba was part of Spain.

<sup>883</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 47.

<sup>884</sup> Solera, *Cuba: La república de generales y doctores*, 228.

<sup>885</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 18.

<sup>886</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 19.

<sup>887</sup> Macías Martín, "La diplomacia española ante el 'Machadato'", 163.

<sup>888</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 518. Similarly, Marxist author José Tabares referred to the "aguas, caminos y carreteras" platform as "insincere", "en un intento de [Machado de] aparecer como hombre modesto y democrata", in José A. Tabares del Real, *La Revolución del 30: sus dos últimos años* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1973), 76.

Machado, who during the campaign was defined as a “caballero amable, fino, bueno, sincero y un político de buena voluntad”,<sup>889</sup> proposed an ambitious political program. The candidate promised, if elected, he would: regenerate the Republic through an honest government, establish a fair relationship with the United States through a just commercial treaty, embrace Pan Americanism through the celebration of conferences, increase the number of schools, persecute inept and corrupt civil servants, end with the practice of government lottery,<sup>890</sup> ensure more autonomy for the Universidad de La Habana, improve the roads across the country, and build a central highway (*carretera central*) that would connect the island from East to West, as well as construct streets, aqueducts, and such. The candidate also focused on the importance of military education for the new generation, and on prohibiting presidential reelection.<sup>891</sup> This last factor was considered anti-democratic; thus, anti-reelectionism would be key in Machado’s discourse for the “rectificación moral del país”, or the regeneration of society.<sup>892</sup> In that sense, a few years earlier, Mexican politician Francisco I. Madero (1873-1913) had founded in Mexico the Anti-reelectionist Party against the sixth reelection of president Porfirio Díaz (1830-1915) in the 1910 Mexican election. Díaz had governed the country since he came to power after a coup d’état in 1876. After decades of what he conceived to be a tyranny, Madero discussed the need for a new head of state in his 1908 book entitled *La sucesión presidencial de 1910*, a publication which would eventually trigger the Mexican Revolution (1910-1923).<sup>893</sup>

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<sup>889</sup> “Boletín del Día. ¿Machado o Menocal?”, *ABC*, October 8, 1924, 17.

<sup>890</sup> According to historian Charles Chapman “the history of the government lottery in Cuba constitutes one of the darkest chapters in the story of the republic”, because of corruption and graft involved, in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 547. For further analysis on lottery on the island, see “The Cuban Government Lottery”, in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 547-563.

<sup>891</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 27; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 31; Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre!*, 47. In the 1925 book about Cuba Roig de Leuchsenring edited, Machado listed forty points of his ambitious political program, including: oppose reelection, modify the Permanent Treaty with the United States, establish a new commercial treaty with the US without customs, intensify the Pan-Americanist spirit, building new schools and giving more autonomy to the university in Havana, change immigration policies radically, constructing a central highway, promote national agriculture and industry, create an efficient Employment Office, pass a law against usury, persecute inept or fraudulent civil servants, repair all the roads, provide abundant water for Havana and Santiago de Cuba, make mortality rates decrease, maintain “sentimientos de honor militar” in the army, and establish military exercises in schools, in Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Programa de Gobierno del Gral. Gerardo Machado”, in *El Libro de Cuba*, ed. Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, 283-284. This list is partially reproduced in Macías Martín, *Cuba: crisis política, crisis económica y emigración*, 126-127.

<sup>892</sup> Carlos González Palacios, *Revolución y pseudo-revolución en Cuba* (Havana: Cultural, 1948), 25.

<sup>893</sup> Francisco I. Madero (1908), *La sucesión presidencial en 1910* (Mexico: [The author], 1909).

Carleton Beals emphasized how, out of four main promises Machado made during the campaign (“administrative honesty, public works, no increase in the public debt, no reelection”), Machado “was to violate all these pledges except public works”.<sup>894</sup> In his 1998 dissertation, Spanish historian Francisco Macías Martín further wrote: “Machado hizo todo lo contrario a lo prometido”.<sup>895</sup> Another very critical author stated that the candidate “podía aprovechar que se enfrentaba a un pueblo ganado por la desesperanza, y en el que muchos estaban dispuestos a llamarse a engaño con el primer flautista que le prometiera al menos algo de lo que deseaba escuchar”.<sup>896</sup> Although this is most likely true, one must not discard the future president’s achievements, for, after all, as Cuban author Adolfo Rivero Caro has put it, “Machado fue un dirigente complejo. Un hombre sin duda autoritario y brutal pero también muy decidido a buscar el desarrollo del país”.<sup>897</sup> This view of the *machadato* seems more sensible than, for instance, Marxist and militant Raúl Roa’s interpretation, which tends to be the most common. Roa wrote that it was the “régimen más hediondo, criminal y rapaz que registra la historia republicana”.<sup>898</sup>

The candidate for the presidency used a very nationalistic discourse in order to appeal to his audiences. Machado spoke about the importance of Cuba’s place in the world by emphasizing its advantageous geographical location:

Basta extender sobre una mesa un mapamundi. Ocupamos nosotros la encrucijada de las rutas comerciales. Les damos las manos por las costas del Pacífico a las dos Américas ricas e inmensas y a la China y el Japón por el canal de Panamá, y nos atravesamos en el camino de las naves que deben llevar a muchos de esos territorios las variadas producciones de Europa.<sup>899</sup>

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<sup>894</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 236.

<sup>895</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 165. On his later book, Macías Martín wrote: “Muy pocas de las [...] propuestas llegaron a cumplirse”, in Macías Martín, *Cuba: crisis política, crisis económica y emigración*, 127. On the contrary, Berggren wrote “he largely delivered on his promises”, in “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 49.

<sup>896</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 32.

<sup>897</sup> Adolfo Rivero Caro, “El periodo republicano intermedio y la crisis de la democracia (1920-1933)”, in *Cien años de historia de Cuba, 1898-1998*, Manuel Moreno Friginals et al. (Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2000), 200.

<sup>898</sup> Raúl Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. I* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1977), 423.

<sup>899</sup> Machado, *Discurso del General Gerardo Machado en Oriente*, 5.

Believing to be the right person to carry out the task, Machado emphasized the need for a clean and honest government through a process of *moralización* that would regenerate politics in Cuba.<sup>900</sup> But politics was not the only thing the candidate wanted to regenerate. In this case, the ascent of Machado to the presidency of Cuba may have been influenced, just as Long, by an uncontrollable factor: the environment. The climate of the Greater Caribbean, with heavy rainfalls and hurricanes, made the regenerative discourse much more effective and literal. The hurricane as an entity was present in Cuban literature, in renowned authors such as Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980), born in Lausanne but raised in Havana, who conceived it as not only a meteorological phenomenon, but as related to divine, even demonic forces.<sup>901</sup> Carpentier wrote about a 1927 hurricane that left terrible consequences in Havana.<sup>902</sup> The novelist remembered in a 1952 article:

[D]ejó una serie de fantasías tremebundas, como marcas de su paso: una casa de campo trasladada, intacta, a varios kilómetros de sus cimientos; goletas sacadas del agua, y dejadas en la esquina de una calle; estatuas de granito, decapitadas de un tajo; coches mortuorios, paseados por el viento a lo largo de plazas y avenidas, como guiados por cocheros fantasmas, y, para colmo, un riel arrancado de una carrilera, levantado en peso, y lanzado sobre el tronco de una palma real con tal violencia, que quedó encajado en la madera, como los brazos de una cruz.<sup>903</sup>

Not surprisingly, only three weeks before the 1924 Cuban presidential election, a category 5 hurricane named “*Diez*” (Ten) arrived at the shores of Havana. It lasted from October 13 to the 19<sup>th</sup>, arriving to the Caribbean island on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The hurricane resulted in ninety dead all in Pinar del Río, the province located in extreme western end of Cuba.<sup>904</sup> As an article published that December reported, “almost complete

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<sup>900</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 23; Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States*, 145.

<sup>901</sup> Carpentier would make a hurricane a character in his first novel, which the author wrote while he was imprisoned by Gerardo Machado in 1927—although the book would not be published until six years later: Alejo Carpentier, *¡Écue-Yamba-Ó! historia afro-cubana* (Madrid: Editorial España, 1933). In one of his late novels, the writer gave an importance to the hurricane beyond a simple climate factor, for in more than one occasion in the novel, it helps the protagonist achieve his goals: Alejo Carpentier, *El siglo de las luces* (Mexico: Cía. General de Ediciones, 1962).

<sup>902</sup> Alexis Márquez Rodríguez, “El Mar Caribe en la vida y la obra de Alejo Carpentier”, *América sin nombre*, n° 19 (diciembre 2014): 103-12.

<sup>903</sup> Alejo Carpentier, “Letra y Solfa”, *El Nacional* (Caracas), October 2, 1952.

<sup>904</sup> *The New York Times*, for instance, told the account of a town in Cuba that had been affected by the storm with twelve dead and over a hundred injured, in “12 Killed and 100 Injured By Storm in a Cuban Town”, *The New York Times*, October 22, 1924.

destruction was wrought over extreme western Cuba”.<sup>905</sup> Cuban meteorologist José Carlos Millás (1889-1965), director of the Observatorio Nacional de La Habana, asserted that hurricane *Diez* had been “one of the most severe ever experienced in our latitudes”.<sup>906</sup> A study on all recorded meteorological phenomena in Cuba has concluded that the 1924 *Diez* has been one of the two most devastating hurricanes in the island’s history, together with a 1846 storm that mostly affected Havana.<sup>907</sup> Hence, just as the 1927 Great Flood might have had an impact on Long’s successful gubernatorial election, hurricane *Diez* arguably prompted the rise of Machado and his regenerative discourse to the presidency.

Machado’s campaign tactics and program were effective, and in the election held on November 1, 1924, the candidate obtained 200,840 votes to his rival Menocal’s 136,154.<sup>908</sup> Moreover, the president-elect won in five out of the six Cuban provinces, except in Pinar del Río, which despite having suffered dearly in the hurricane, remained a stronghold of conservatism.<sup>909</sup> This is because Pinar del Río, being the principal tobacco producer on the island, had a deeply entrenched plantation economy, wherein the whims of the rich and powerful weighed heavily on electoral results. After learning the results, the defeated candidate made a risky statement claiming the election had been fraudulent, although shortly thereafter he had to drop the accusations and accept the results.<sup>910</sup> Conversely, the newspaper *El Herald de Cuba*, backing the *Partido Liberal*, referred to it as “the first free and impartial election ever held in Cuba”.<sup>911</sup> In the eyes of

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<sup>905</sup> W.P. Day, “Tropical Disturbances During the Hurricane Season of 1924”, *Monthly Weather Review*, December 1924, 589.

<sup>906</sup> Charles L. Mitchell, “Notes on the West Indian Hurricane of October 14-23, 1924”, *Monthly Weather Review*, December 1924, 497.

<sup>907</sup> Lourdes Álvarez and Ramón Pérez, “Records”, *SOMETCUBA Bulletin* 7, n° 2 (August 2001), [met.inf.cu/sometcuba/boletin/v07\\_n02/english/records\\_eng.htm](http://met.inf.cu/sometcuba/boletin/v07_n02/english/records_eng.htm).

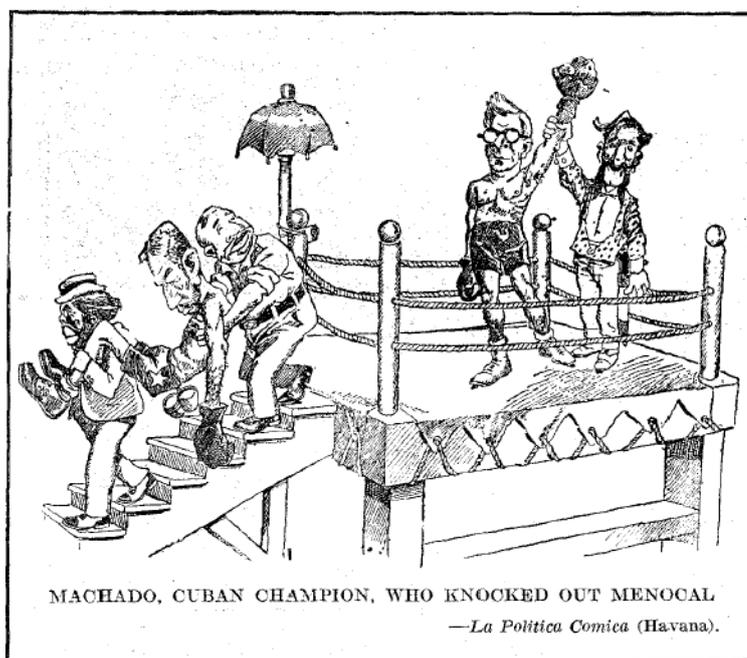
<sup>908</sup> “Cuba Struggles Again for Clean Government”, *The New York Times*, November 2, 1924, 1; “The Cuban Election”, *The New York Times*, November 4, 1924, 1; Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 34; Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 490; Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 32; López Segrera, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 61.

<sup>909</sup> “El General Machado Presidente de Cuba”, *ABC*, November 5, 1924, 23; Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 184.

<sup>910</sup> “Menocal Charges Election Illegal”, *The New York Times*, November 4, 1924, 1; Thomas, *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad*, 418; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 21. *Literary Digest* published: “Gen. Gerardo Machado, Liberal, is elected President of Cuba by a majority of more than 50,000 over former President Mario G. Menocal, Conservative. Menocal charges that his opponent was elected by fraud”, in “Current Events – Foreign”, *The Literary Digest*, November 15, 1924, 90.

<sup>911</sup> As quoted in “Cuba’s Presidential Election”, *The Literary Digest*, December 6, 1924, 20.

a foreign somewhat biased observer, that is, a US publication, the lack of violence in this election was surprising: “Tho bitterness was prevalent during Cuba’s electoral campaign, there seems to have been marked decrease in armed affrays which in some Latin-American democracies have often been the accompaniment of elections”.<sup>912</sup> In a less pejorative manner, Spanish newspaper *ABC* related: “Se han celebrado las elecciones en Cuba con toda tranquilidad”.<sup>913</sup> It must be noted that there had been an attempt on Menocal’s life in the midst of a menocalist rally in Camagüey, where a shooting took place, and ended in the death of five people and dozens of wounded. Machado was accused of being behind the event, although that could never be proven.<sup>914</sup> This incident aside, renowned historian and Hispanist Hugh Thomas argued in his 1971 history of Cuba that the election was celebrated in an environment of surprising calm and tranquility, and that possibly fewer votes than usual were bought in comparison to previous elections.<sup>915</sup> Similarly, current historian Robert Solera defines them as “pulcras elecciones”.<sup>916</sup>



**Fig. 22:** “Machado, Cuban Champion, Who Knocked Out Menocal”, in “Cuba’s Presidential Election”, *The Literary Digest*, December 6, 1924, p. 20.

<sup>912</sup> “Cuba’s Presidential Election”, *The Literary Digest*, December 6, 1924, 20.

<sup>913</sup> “El General Machado Presidente de Cuba”, *ABC*, November 5, 1924, 23.

<sup>914</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 33-34. Spanish newspaper *ABC* related the events: “En la ciudad de Camagüey [...] hubo un choque sangriento entre la Policía y los partidarios del general Menocal. Esperemos que los muertos y heridos no sean seguidos por otros durante la campaña electoral”, in “Boletín del Día. ¿Machado o Menocal?”, *ABC*, October 8, 1924, 17.

<sup>915</sup> Thomas, *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad*, 418.

<sup>916</sup> Solera, *Cuba: La república de generales y doctores*, 229.

Marxist historian Joel James Figarola concluded in the 1970s that: “Machado ganó la postulación debido a su hábil gestión. No era el candidato natural del liberalismo que prefería en ese orden a Carlos Mendieta, pero la capacidad de maniobra de sus lugartenientes y la del propio Machado le hicieron ganador del señalamiento ejecutivo”.<sup>917</sup> The president-elect made a speech a few days after the election thanking his voters for their trust and assuring them he would accomplish each point of his political program. He would establish a “Gobierno liberal y demócrata, recto y justo, de óptima conducta; rígido guardador de la Constitución y el Derecho, modesto y ayuno de vanidad y de pompas” embracing the motto “*Sencillez y Grandeza*”.<sup>918</sup>

A few weeks before his inauguration, Machado made an official trip to the United States to greet president Calvin Coolidge and win the support of the American public.<sup>919</sup> Historian Lionel Soto referred to it as a “pilgrimage” the president-elect made to the northern country to let them know he was “one of them”.<sup>920</sup> He was accompanied by numerous and distinguished personalities from Cuba, including the Cuban consul in Washington and the president of the *Compañía Cubana de Electricidad*.<sup>921</sup> He attended several official receptions, with an eye on places with a major Cuban population like New York.<sup>922</sup> In these events he met a wide variety of American politicians, such as New York Democrat mayor John Francis Hylan (1868-1936),<sup>923</sup> and businessmen, particularly sugar magnates, with whom the politician wanted to maintain good relations and vice versa: “El mundo financiero espera ardentemente su llegada por las posibilidades en relación con nuevos empréstitos”.<sup>924</sup> Machado also met with president Coolidge in an amiable encounter in which the two politicians “se cambiaron muy

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<sup>917</sup> Joel James Figarola, *Cuba, 1900-1928: la República dividida contra sí misma* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1976), 285-86.

<sup>918</sup> Quoted in Jesús María Barraqué, “El Presidente Electo Gral. Gerardo Machado”, in *El Libro de Cuba*, ed. Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, 284.

<sup>919</sup> “El nuevo presidente de Cuba visitará Estados Unidos”, *La Prensa*, March 16, 1925, 8; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 28.

<sup>920</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33, Vol. I*, 208; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 52-53.

<sup>921</sup> “Machado Coming”, *The Times-Picayune*, February 26, 1925, 4; Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 44.

<sup>922</sup> “El Gral. Machado, presidente electo de Cuba, será muy agasajado en Nueva York”, *La Prensa*, March 3, 1925, 1.

<sup>923</sup> “El Gral. Machado fue recibido ayer muy solemnemente por el alcalde Hylan”, *La Prensa*, April 22, 1925, 1.

<sup>924</sup> “Nueva York prepara al presidente de Cuba brillante recepción y banquete”, *La Prensa*, March 30, 1925, 1.

afectuosas frases de cortesía”,<sup>925</sup> and agreed upon extending the friendship between the two nations.<sup>926</sup>

At a luncheon organized by the New York Citizens Committee in his honor at Hotel Astor, Machado made a speech in which he referred to the historical bonds between the two nations, and explained the two goals of his visit to the United States were, on one hand, to greet Coolidge and to intensify the commerce between the two countries, on the other.<sup>927</sup> The president-elect also anticipated that amongst his plans to improve Cuba, “the largest sums possible will be devoted to extending the means of communication, and particularly public roads. The building of the central highway will be undertaken, and thereby the principal centers of population and consumption will be placed in ready inter-communication”.<sup>928</sup> The day after, on April 23, the Merchants Association of New York received Machado at the same hotel. Addressing at them, the Cuban politician remarked the similarities he, also a businessman, had with them and, once more, rejoiced in the connections of the two countries.<sup>929</sup> The National City Bank of New York organized a luncheon in Machado’s honor, and its chairman, Charles E. Mitchell (1877-1955), welcomed the president-elect by presenting him with a golden cigar case.<sup>930</sup>

De Quesada y Miranda analyzed: “Aquella visita ofreció una nota de cubanismo, tan halagüeña para el verdadero sentir patrio que cosechó los aplausos de todos aquellos cubanos que eran enemigos irreconciliables de la Enmienda Platt”.<sup>931</sup> Spanish

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<sup>925</sup> “Entrevista de dos presidentes”, *Hispano America*, April 18, 1925, 1.

<sup>926</sup> “Apoyaré el movimiento panamericano y todo otro esfuerzo por la amistad”, *La Prensa*, April 18, 1925, 1.

<sup>927</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Address of General Gerardo Machado, President-elect of Cuba, Delivered at the dinner tendered to him by the New York Citizens Committee*, April 22, 1925, 1-2, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series III, box 6, folder 1, UMDC. Full speech also reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 81-92. *Literary Digest* published: “At a banquet in his honor in New York, Gen. Gerardo Machado, President-elect of Cuba, commends the United States for its ‘unselfish dealing with Cuba’”, in “Current Events – Foreign”, *The Literary Digest*, May 9, 1925, 77.

<sup>928</sup> Machado, *Address of General Gerardo Machado, President-elect of Cuba, Delivered at the dinner tendered to him by the New York Citizens Committee*, 6-7.

<sup>929</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Almuerzo ofrecido por la ‘Merchants Association of New York’, el 23 de abril, en el Hotel Astor, Nueva York”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 93-96.

<sup>930</sup> Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 117.

<sup>931</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 86.

newspaper *ABC* concluded: “Su viaje ha resultado realmente triunfal (la palabra no es exagerada); sin embargo, las fiestas organizadas en su honor no hicieron de él un adulator del poderío yanqui”.<sup>932</sup> In a very different tone, Communist activist Julio Antonio Mella, argued that the goal of this expedition was “rendir pleito homenaje a la Metrópoli de la América Latina”.<sup>933</sup> More than a political trip, the president-elect’s visit to the United States had been focused on the economic aspect of the relationship between Cuba and the US. As historian Lester Langley argued, Machado’s foreign policy “was anti-American and nationalistic in tone but pro-American in intent”.<sup>934</sup> Thus, “la verdadera finalidad era contactar con los banqueros de Wall Street para hablar de los empréstitos concertados con sus entidades”.<sup>935</sup> The president-elect, however, was much more positive, and in declarations Machado made after his return from Washington he stated that his visit to that country could not have been deeper or more satisfactory.<sup>936</sup> When he was about to embark to Cuba from Key West, Florida, Machado expressed his gratitude to the United States and all the attentions he had received, which, he assured, immediately confirmed that the northern neighbor was a friend of Cuba.<sup>937</sup>

The month after his victory, in accordance with a santería ritual, Machado attended a “bembé [a Yoruba religious celebration] celebrado en su honor”, in which a sheep’s throat was cut in order to cleanse the newly elected president.<sup>938</sup> The crowds were ardent, to the point that “es indescriptible el entusiasmo que reina por asistir a los festivales con que se celebrará la transmisión del Poder Ejecutivo”.<sup>939</sup> As historian Roberto Hernández wrote in his 1970s dissertation, “for the first time since 1902, it looked as if Cuba would have stable and honest government”.<sup>940</sup> Just as what happened

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<sup>932</sup> “Boletín del Día. Presidente Machado”, *ABC*, May 20, 1925, 21.

<sup>933</sup> Julio Antonio Mella, “Cuba, un pueblo que jamás ha sido libre” (Havana: Imprenta El Ideal, 1925), full text reproduced in Julio Antonio Mella, *Documentos y artículos* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 180.

<sup>934</sup> Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States*, 145.

<sup>935</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 172.

<sup>936</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Declaraciones del General Machado acerca de su visita a Washington”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 65.

<sup>937</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Declaraciones hechas por el General Machado en Key West, el día 4 de mayo al embarcar para Cuba”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 119.

<sup>938</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 35.

<sup>939</sup> “Se hacen buenos augurios sobre la futura administración cubana”, *La Prensa*, April 22, 1925, 12.

<sup>940</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 31.

with New Orleans and the Old Ring before the arrival of Huey Long to politics, politicians in Cuba before Machado had long established a corrupt machine, thus “violations of democratic rules were not unusual practices by Presidents before 1924 and were widely practiced by Cuba’s political elite”.<sup>941</sup> Spanish journalist González-Blanco painted a troublesome picture when describing the situation in the country before Machado’s arrival to the presidency. According to the author, there was:

Una burguesía burocrática, cívica y políticamente corrompida, no discriminando a las claras el bien del mal, sin decoro, sin carácter, hombres honestos, en la vida íntima, que en la pública degeneraban en sabandijas o titiriteros, capaces de toda venalidad, de toda infamia, de la mentira, de la falsificación, del robo, de la violencia; un pueblo resignado, humilde, fatalista, sonámbulo, dejándose explotar, como un dromedario de caravana, pueblo en catalepsia ambulante.<sup>942</sup>

Another witness and supporter of Machado, Berenguer y Sed, wrote in 1926 that previous presidents had been spending from the government budget without reprieve or, as the author called it, had been practicing the “política de la mano abierta”.<sup>943</sup>

After covering the sky of Havana with fireworks the night before, the general was inaugurated fifth president of the Cuban Republic on May 20, 1925,<sup>944</sup> a date that was qualified by oppositionist author Carlos González Peraza as “fecha fatídica”.<sup>945</sup> A text published a few weeks before the inauguration spoke of Machado as the hope for Cuba:

Las públicas demostraciones de un regocijo popular inusitado, las incontables manifestaciones de contento que a la manera de retaguardia popular han seguido al triunfo electoral últimamente alcanzado por el partido de las mayorías inmensas, el Partido Liberal, se me antojan anticipados y alegres toques de diana que impacientes, quizá, quieren anunciar al mundo que está muy próximo ya nuestro 20 de mayo venturoso, en el que subirá al Poder el ciudadano ilustre que lo ha ganado en buena lid, circundado por las esperanzas de todo un pueblo, que anhela, que persigue ardientemente la reacción.<sup>946</sup>

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<sup>941</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 22. Thomas tells how on the election of November 1, 1920, won by Alfredo Zayas, there were several instances of fraudulency. For instance, in some towns, there were more votes to the president-elect than people registered to vote, and in others were it was suspected that Zayas had lost, the ballots were not even opened, in Thomas, *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad*, 401.

<sup>942</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, x.

<sup>943</sup> Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 125.

<sup>944</sup> “Fireworks Usher In Cuban Inauguration”, *The New Orleans Item*, May 20, 1925, 9; “Boletín del Día. Presidente Machado”, *ABC*, May 20, 1925, 21.

<sup>945</sup> González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 6.

<sup>946</sup> Barraqué, “El Presidente Electo Gral. Gerardo Machado”, 267.

The author, lawyer Jesús María Barraqué, who would become Machado's Secretary of Justice and would reinstate executions by the old Spanish system of strangulation or *garrote vil*,<sup>947</sup> continued: "La totalidad del pueblo cubano y la opinión general, unánime, se manifiesta confiada y feliz".<sup>948</sup> In the ceremony, two thousand school-children sang the country's national anthem and twenty-one guns were fired to salute to the new head of state. When Machado went out to the balcony of the presidential palace to greet the numerous people gathered in the street, his campaign slogan, "*a pie*" (on foot), was loudly heard.<sup>949</sup> Journalist Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda witnessed the scene and wrote a few years later that there was excitement, that one could hear the car horns, and the enthusiastic ovations coming from the mob. The author believed that: "¡Jamás hubo, probablemente, ningún Mandatario cubano [con] tan entusiasta recepción ni apoteosis como en aquel mediodía el General Gerardo Machado y Morales!"<sup>950</sup> The crowd believed this man was destined to save their country from the debacle; he was believed to be a sort of messiah that had come to turn Cuba into a peaceful and independent nation.<sup>951</sup> Franco Varona literally wrote so in retrospect: "El pueblo batió palmas henchido en júbilo, y recibió alborozado al nuevo Gobernante que se presentaba como el nuevo Mesías, salvador de las instituciones nacionales, carcomidas en ruinas, y prometedora de regeneradoras doctrinas".<sup>952</sup> The president enjoyed such popularity the first four years of his administration. A newspaper described him as "joven, lleno de energías y entusiasmo".<sup>953</sup> Expectations for what he could achieve were high. Historian Charles E. Chapman argued in his study of Cuba in the mid-twenties that the island was politically promising because it was free of handicaps such as difficult climate, distance from international market, serious racial problems—in chapter five, however, this point will be questioned—or extreme militarism. Chapman added that Cuba only needed an honest and competent politician to lead this process and wrote Machado might be the right man.<sup>954</sup> However, the future of the country would not be as many had hoped. As

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<sup>947</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 519. Barraqué was described as "eminente personalidad de sólidos prestigios", in Franco Varona, *Machado*, 107.

<sup>948</sup> Barraqué, "El Presidente Electo Gral. Gerardo Machado", 272.

<sup>949</sup> "Machado Becomes Cuban President", *The Times-Picayune*, May 21, 1925, 6.

<sup>950</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 11.

<sup>951</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 57; Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 21.

<sup>952</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado*, 36.

<sup>953</sup> "General Gerardo Machado", *Hispano America*, January 31, 1925, 1.

<sup>954</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, vii-viii.

an anti-*machadista* pamphlet published in 1933, right before the president's ousting: "Cuando éste subió al poder, nadie hubiera podido prever las terribles cosas de que iba a ser capaz".<sup>955</sup>

### 3.3 "Sin azúcar no hay país" (No sugar, no country)<sup>956</sup>

By 1920 Cuba had achieved a respectable level of prosperity, its culmination being the so-called "*danza de los millones*", in which foreign and local stock holders and landowners were reaping great rewards from the economic system based on the monoculture of sugar.<sup>957</sup> World War I had allowed Cuba to take the place of other sugar producers that were involved in the conflict, so the island became one of the main sugar producers in the world.<sup>958</sup> In numbers, Cuban production had increased from 2,597,732 long tons in 1913-1914 to 3,971,776 in 1918-1919, growing from one seventh of the global output of this crop in the first period to more than a fourth in the latter.<sup>959</sup> At the same time, as Latin Americanist Francisco López Segrera pointed out, the economic dependence on this one product became more evident. This author stated that in 1908 sugar represented 54% of Cuban exports, while in 1919 this percentage had arrived to 68%.<sup>960</sup> Post-war industrialization of consumed food products increased sugar use, so that the prices of this commodity started to grow rapidly, even in the post-war world recession. Thus on May 12, 1920, a pound of sugar was 19 cents, while two days later its cost was 20.5; on the 17<sup>th</sup> the price was 21.5, on the 18<sup>th</sup> it was 22, and the day after it arrived to 22.5.<sup>961</sup>

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<sup>955</sup> Comité de Jóvenes Revolucionarios Cubanos, *El terror en Cuba* (Madrid: Imp. Editorial Castro, s.a., 1933), 35.

<sup>956</sup> Popular saying quoted in Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 102.

<sup>957</sup> Raymond Leslie Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba: Informe de la Comisión de Asuntos Cubanos* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1935), 4. See also Jorge Núñez Vega, "La Danza de los Millones: modernización y cambio cultural en La Habana (1915-1920)" (PhD Diss., Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2011).

<sup>958</sup> Macías Martín, "La diplomacia española ante el 'Machadato'", 67-68.

<sup>959</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 214.

<sup>960</sup> López Segrera, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 59.

<sup>961</sup> Thomas, *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad*, 398; Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 216; Geoff L. Simons, *Cuba: From Conquistador to Castro* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 226.

Disaster was looming in the horizon, and the enriched section of the population dedicated to sugar business would soon be in debt. As if in anticipation to the problems that defined the “roaring twenties”, “Durante la ‘Danza de los millones’ los cubanos de todas las clases sociales gastaron lo que ganaban con gran prodigalidad y prácticamente nada fue a engrosar las cuentas de ahorros o a conseguir mejoras permanentes en los tipos de vida”.<sup>962</sup> Author Enrique Lumen explains the situation regarding workers in the following terms:

[H]abía guajiros, trabajadores a jornal de las fincas azucareras, que llegaban a la capital de la República y pedían en las joyerías de lujo que les vendieran un puñado de diamantes o de perlas. Hasta los simpáticos negritos o mulatos que en las ciudades se dedicaban a oficios domésticos (peluqueros, limpiabotas, etc.), usaban camisas de seda a rayas muy vistosas, que costaban no menos de quince y veinte dólares cada una.<sup>963</sup>

Another author that wrote about the environment within the upper classes that characterized Havana during that time is Marxist economist Óscar Pino-Santos, who narrated in the early 1970s:

Se compraba y vendía azúcar. Se compraban y vendían inmensos cañaverales y pequeños y medianos y grandes, y buenos y malos, nuevos y viejos ingenios. La Habana se llenó de los últimos modelos de automóviles. En el Vedado [one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the capital] comenzaron a echarse los cimientos de suntuosas residencias. El empresario azucarero que lograba abstraerse por varias semanas de aquella atmósfera febril, tomaba pasajes de primera en algún transatlántico y se iba con su familia a Nueva York o a Europa en viaje de placer. Era la Danza de los millones.<sup>964</sup>

However, at the same time as sugar prices rose, the price of other products such as imported goods also increased, thus generating growing levels of inflation in Cuba.<sup>965</sup> At the end of 1920 a sudden collapse of the post World War I sugar economy took place, and the price of the commodity dropped from twenty-two cents a pound to about 3.5 cents in just a few months.<sup>966</sup> The value of Cuban sugar production in 1919 was

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<sup>962</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 5.

<sup>963</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 37.

<sup>964</sup> Óscar Pino-Santos, *El asalto a Cuba por la oligarquía financiera yanqui* (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1973), 85.

<sup>965</sup> Oscar Zanetti Lecuona and Alejandro García Álvarez (1987), *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1837-1959* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 303.

<sup>966</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 166; Thomas, *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad*, 399; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 9.

\$472 million, while in 1922 the number had shrunk to \$267 million.<sup>967</sup> Under the Zayas administration and thanks to US ambassador in Cuba, general Enoch Crowder (1859-1932), the island received fifty million dollars in aid from the United States to alleviate the effects of the crisis, which suspiciously coincided with Zayas' personal enrichment as well as the concentration of Cuban land ownership in the hands of American banks and companies.<sup>968</sup> Author Enrique Lumen wrote in 1934 that: "Asegúrase que entre el presidente y sus familiares sustrajeron más de veinte millones de dólares de los fondos públicos para sus arcas particulares".<sup>969</sup> Similarly, Latin Americanist Russell Fitzgibbon wrote in 1935 that "[Zayas] was entirely discredited, however—his 'family', enlarged by unparalleled nepotism, had battered too greedily on the public treasury".<sup>970</sup> Thus historian Charles Chapman concluded: "Few men ever had a better chance than Zayas to make a distinguished record, and none more dismally failed".<sup>971</sup>

During the early 1920s there were serious issues of corruption and graft, and to some extent that explains the rise of Machado:<sup>972</sup> "The Zayas administration paved the way for the rise of Gerardo Machado and facilitated his popularity among the Cuban people".<sup>973</sup> Latin Americanist Jaime Suchlicki added in the 1970s that Zayas' inefficiency and malfeasance eclipsed the achievements his administration carried out, such as averting US intervention.<sup>974</sup> This crisis led to a new tutelage in Cuba by the northern neighbor.<sup>975</sup> In fact, in 1933 journalist Manuel Márquez Sterling affirmed that sugar had been one of the main problems of the lack of independence of Cuba: "La caña de azúcar no hace felices a las colonias, ni cultos a los pueblos, ni opulentas a las Repúblicas; y la independencia que recabamos en guerra contra España, debimos

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<sup>967</sup> Berggren, "Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation", 91.

<sup>968</sup> For a deeper analysis on Zayas and Crowder relationship, see "Zayas and Crowder, 1921-1923", in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 413-449.

<sup>969</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 38.

<sup>970</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 184.

<sup>971</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 413. This historian further continued in his mid-twenties study of Cuba: "It is difficult to escape the conviction that [Zayas] had been by far the worst President of Cuba and one of the most corrupt rulers any nation in history has ever had", in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 504.

<sup>972</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 168.

<sup>973</sup> Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 12.

<sup>974</sup> Jaime Suchlicki, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 110.

<sup>975</sup> Leland Hamilton Jenks (1928), *Nuestra colonia de Cuba* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Palestra, 1959), 216, 256.

consumarla en guerra contra la caña de azúcar”.<sup>976</sup> Similarly, historian Ramón Eduardo Ruíz pointed out the irony of how after the independence from Spain, Cubans had lost all control of their economic resources to the northern neighbor.<sup>977</sup>

The Cuba that Machado found once he obtained power was similar to Louisiana during this time. Illiteracy was high, particularly among the rural population, and public schools were in urgent need of reform.<sup>978</sup> Segregation between blacks and whites was a fact of life;<sup>979</sup> for instance, the park Leoncio Vidal in Santa Clara had a section for each group, and there even once was a shooting after some *afro-cubanos* had tried to step into the other side of the park.<sup>980</sup> Hospitals were lacking basic surgical material and roads were in dreadful conditions.

In Louisiana women had only very recently been given the right to vote with an amendment to the US Constitution. In Cuba female suffrage would not be approved until 1934, which means that throughout Machado’s regime women were not able to vote. The Cuban president, however, presented himself as a supporter of the suffragists and of women in general. During the severe sugar crisis that the regime experienced in its first years, the president facilitated women to get employment in stores that sold what at the time were described as “feminine products”, such as pharmacies, perfumeries, flowers, or sweets.<sup>981</sup>

The same year Machado became the president of Cuba, a new and yet similar potential problem for the Cuban economy was growing worldwide: sugar overproduction. While in 1924 global sugar production had been 19.6 million tones, the following year it had risen to 23.3 million, 5.2 owing to Cuban sugar. Sooner rather than later the price of this commodity decreased and generated serious problems for the economy. Consequently, new political movements would arise vindicating fairer prices for smallest production

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<sup>976</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 26.

<sup>977</sup> Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 68.

<sup>978</sup> Historian Charles Chapman stated that in 1926 53% of Cuba’s population was illiterate, while 68% of Cuban children did not attend school, in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 592.

<sup>979</sup> The issue of racism in the Caribbean will be further analyzed in section 5.3.

<sup>980</sup> Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 79.

<sup>981</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 67, 85.

sellers.<sup>982</sup> Professor Jorge Domínguez even argues the recession would last until the beginning of the 1940s.<sup>983</sup> The situation became critical to the point that in the spring of 1926 Machado put into effect a law named *ley Verdeja*, which attempted to reduce the production of sugar ten percent, resembling somewhat to Huey Long's Cotton Holiday Plan.<sup>984</sup> In Cuba, the measure slightly increased the price of sugar,<sup>985</sup> at the cost of an increment of underemployment and impoverishment.<sup>986</sup> By the following year, the law had been proven ineffective, as a newspaper article stated in 1930: "President Machado's earlier plans of crop limitation and of co-ordinated selling proved futile as a means of staying the major depression in sugar".<sup>987</sup>

Therefore, a more restrictive piece of legislation called the Tarafa Bill was passed in October 1927 aimed at reducing sugar production, but was rapidly suspended after American bankers and sugar producers protested.<sup>988</sup> It seems as if Machado, who according to a supporter "se lamentaba de la mediana eficacia que la medida había producido",<sup>989</sup> was trying to please the United States and its economic interests first and its country second.<sup>990</sup> However, in the eyes of some publishing companies, the president was doing a marvelous job: "El poder de Resistencia que Cuba ha demostrado frente al bajo precio del azúcar de esta zafra es la prueba más eficaz de la solidez que ha llegado a alcanzar la economía de Cuba, gracias a la admirable política del Presidente Machado en este ramo".<sup>991</sup>

The issue of foreign dominance of local products was, however, very real. In 1927, out of 175 active sugar mills on the island, seventy-five percent could be qualified as "American" or "semi-American", fourteen were owned both by Cubans and Americans,

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<sup>982</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 50.

<sup>983</sup> Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 4.

<sup>984</sup> Le Riverend, *Historia económica de Cuba*, 235. Long's Cotton Holiday Plan will be further explained in chapter four.

<sup>985</sup> Jenks, *Nuestra colonia de Cuba*, 252; Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 153; Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 55.

<sup>986</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934*, 266-267.

<sup>987</sup> Merryly S. Rukeyser, "Machado to Keep Hands Off Sugar", *New Orleans States*, July 15, 1930, 3.

<sup>988</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 219.

<sup>989</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 97.

<sup>990</sup> Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 58-60.

<sup>991</sup> "La República de Cuba", 23.

and ten were managed by Canadians.<sup>992</sup> To put it in broader numbers, “El 60 por ciento de la industria azucarera pertenece a capitalistas de Norte América”.<sup>993</sup> According to the US Department of Commerce, that same year US investments in Cuba amounted to 1,504 million dollars, 800 of which were destined to sugar companies.<sup>994</sup> Among others, there were the American Refinery Company, Hersheley Chocolate Company, and Loft Candy Company.<sup>995</sup> Historian Jorge Ibarra argued in 1992 that this situation had not allowed Cuba to develop its own local bourgeoisie.<sup>996</sup> Similarly, political sociologist Samuel Farber stated that “the Cuban oligarchy in early Republican Cuba was weak”.<sup>997</sup> Cuban historian and 1932 Secretary of the Presidency Ramiro Guerra Sánchez urged Machado in 1927 to free Cuban lands from foreign dominion and distribute them through Cuban peasant families.<sup>998</sup> In a somewhat similar vindication, Machado’s close friend Lamar Schweyer argued in his 1929 book on patriotism that economic penetration is usually transformed into slow conquest which, at the end, generates “laxitud en la nacionalidad, que se mezcla en forma y en espíritu con la dominadora, de quien termina siendo vasalla”.<sup>999</sup> Already in 1905, Spanish journalist Nicolás Rivero lamented that “el día que el número de americanos que hayan adquirido propiedades y establecido industrias en Cuba sea mayor que el de cubanos dueños o exportadores de aquéllas, nadie podrá evitar que la anexión se realice”.<sup>1000</sup>

This situation had of course its origins in the American invasion of the island after the war of independence.<sup>1001</sup> Historian Alejandro de la Fuente writes that already between 1899 and 1905 13,000 investors from the United States acquired about 60% of Cuban

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<sup>992</sup> Jenks, *Nuestra colonia de Cuba*, 216, 258.

<sup>993</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 34.

<sup>994</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 250.

<sup>995</sup> Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States*, 135.

<sup>996</sup> Jorge Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921: partidos políticos y clases sociales* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), 42.

<sup>997</sup> Farber, *Revolution and Reaction in Cuba*, 32. Latin Americanist Francisco López Segrera stated that there was a Cuban bourgeoisie but that it was dependent of the foreign market, therefore it never became nationalistic, in López Segrera, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 43.

<sup>998</sup> Guerra y Sánchez, *Azúcar y población en las Antillas*, 147-148.

<sup>999</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 67.

<sup>1000</sup> Rivero, “La americanización de las tierras”, March 21, 1905, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 175.

<sup>1001</sup> For a thorough study on nineteenth-century Cuba, see Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, *Manual de historia de Cuba (económica, social y política)* (Havana: Editorial Nacional de Cuba: Editora del Consejo Nacional de Universidades, 1964).

rural properties.<sup>1002</sup> Economic historian Leland Hamilton Jenks (1892-1976) reflected in 1928 that, after all, the situation of dominion: “Ha hecho surgir seriamente la cuestión de si puede un país continuar siendo un gran latifundio administrado por propietarios ausentes”.<sup>1003</sup> Marxist historian Joel James Figarola concluded in his 1976 book on Cuba’s first three decades as an independent republic:

Al ascenso de Machado al poder [...] la participación del capital norteamericano en la producción azucarera había aumentado de un 39%, diez años antes, a un 60,3%. El *business-man* President, como llamaban [...] [a Machado] los capitalistas norteamericanos, condujo el gobierno del país como un verdadero ‘empleado de confianza’ al servicio de los intereses de las empresas imperialistas.<sup>1004</sup>

Thereupon US investments in Cuba at the time were bigger than in any other country in Latin America.<sup>1005</sup>

As would happen in Louisiana under the governorship of Long, Machado seemed to belong to a new generation of honest politicians. Consequently, when he first took power Machado was genuinely popular, as people tired of Zayas saw him as a person who could “restaurar el principio de la autoridad y, al mismo tiempo, impulsar el desarrollo económico”.<sup>1006</sup> In the case of the Cuban leader, moreover, a new type of nationalism was needed; one that could stand to American dominance.<sup>1007</sup> One of the measures that enhanced economic protectionism was the Cuban Protective Tariff Law of 1927, which was intended to diversify the economy of the country ending with the dependence on a single crop.<sup>1008</sup> For instance, the production of coffee was stimulated, making it less necessary to import this product, as was the case with petroleum, corn, and cattle.<sup>1009</sup> Moreover, the law “provided state support and government subsidy for

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<sup>1002</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 105.

<sup>1003</sup> Jenks, *Nuestra colonia de Cuba*, 216, 272.

<sup>1004</sup> Figarola, *Cuba, 1900-1928*, 313-314.

<sup>1005</sup> Max Winkler, *Investments of United States Capital in Latin America* (Boston: World Peace Foundation Pamphlets, 1928), 180. This same author remarked how prior to World War I US investments to Latin America amounted to \$1,242,000,000, 82.06% of which were destined to Cuba and Mexico alone, in 5.

<sup>1006</sup> Rivero Caro, “El periodo republicano intermedio y la crisis de la democracia”, 199.

<sup>1007</sup> Jenks, *Nuestra colonia de Cuba*, 247-48.

<sup>1008</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 523.

<sup>1009</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 53-54. The president wrote in his memoirs—which will be further analyzed in chapter five: “Cuba importaba en 1925 trece millones de kilogramos de café. El año antes de abandonar yo la presidencia de Cuba había exportado seis millones

the expansion of national industry and agriculture”,<sup>1010</sup> a policy that made US imports less necessary by making all the imports slightly more expensive.<sup>1011</sup> Consequently, the number of small farms increased between 1925 and 1933, from 2,854 to 4,458.<sup>1012</sup> It is noteworthy to emphasize that the implementation of tariffs had an impact on Cuban society, now able to produce and reinforce its own products.<sup>1013</sup> Thus in the following years, “These adjustments to Cuba’s economic structure alleviated the effects of the Great Depression and the drop in sugar prices”.<sup>1014</sup> Historian Jorge I. Domínguez concluded that Machado’s reputation received as a nationalist was partially induced by the implementation of the 1927 tariff.<sup>1015</sup> However, despite the Cuban president’s policies and best efforts aimed at diversifying the economy, Cuba mainly remained a monoculture country.<sup>1016</sup> As scholar Mercedes Valero González has put it, Machado’s plans to diversify the economy were, in general, unsuccessful.<sup>1017</sup> Nonetheless, as historian Dexter Perkins put it—although being very critical of the *machadato*—, the biggest attempts at diversifying the economy occurred under Machado’s administration.<sup>1018</sup>

### 3.4. Opposition

Opposition throughout the *machadato* would be diverse and evolving. It went from traditional and conservative politicians to revolutionary students, to women organizations, to labor unions. Although opposition would grow, particularly after the

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de kilogramos de café, gracias a la protección arancelaria que se prestó a este producto que fue antaño una de nuestras mayores riquezas. Al hacerme cargo del poder, Cuba era un país importador de maíz. En cambio, en 1932, Cuba exportó cuatro millones de kilogramos del mismo producto que antes compraba. Cuba consumió en 1925 veinte mil toneladas de tasajo, importadas de distintos países y ocho años después Cuba no importó una sola libra de esa mercancía y en cambio, exportó a Inglaterra y al Sur de los Estados Unidos carne fresca”, in Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Memorias: Ocho años de lucha* (Miami: Ediciones Históricas Cubanas, 1982), 57.

<sup>1010</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934*, 261.

<sup>1011</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, “Seeking Permission to Build a Nation: Cuban Nationalism and U.S. Response Under the First Machado Presidency”, *Cuban Studies* 16 (1986): 40.

<sup>1012</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 53.

<sup>1013</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 524-25.

<sup>1014</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 89.

<sup>1015</sup> Domínguez, “Seeking Permission to Build a Nation”, 41.

<sup>1016</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 204.

<sup>1017</sup> Mercedes Valero González, “Hacia una diversificación económica en Cuba: proyectos y prácticas agrícolas (1878-1939)”, in *Más allá del azúcar*, eds. Santamaría García and Naranjo Orovio, 279.

<sup>1018</sup> Perkins, *The United States and the Caribbean*, 160.

tumultuous year of 1930—which will be further explored in chapter six—, at the beginning of the regime it was composed of three major sectors in Cuban society: university students, labor organizations, and the press. Even though working in different spheres, these groups were interconnected by one same desire: to diminish the president’s image, and, in the later period, to oust him. As political scientist Vera Michele Dean argued in the mid-thirties, a dictatorship “creates a society where unquestioning obedience, secured and maintained by force, is substituted for intelligent and often fruitful dissension, where thought on all subjects is strictly regimented, and opposition is driven underground”.<sup>1019</sup>

The year of the election, a young law student at Universidad de La Habana, Julio Antonio Mella, who had already been critic of former president Zayas, called Machado a “tropical Mussolini” in an article published in *Juventud*,<sup>1020</sup> alluding to the Italian dictator that would also very often be compared to Long.<sup>1021</sup> Mella recurrently wrote diatribes against the president in that publication, such as:

El aspecto ridículo de su evolución hacia la escuela fascista, es la bendición otorgada por el pajarraco enjaulado en el Vaticano [pope Pius XI] a su persona, y a todo el pueblo de Cuba. ¡Qué feliz seremos! ¡El Espíritu Santo está con nosotros! [...] Los periodistas asalariados y los hombres esclavizados pueden sentir el mismo placer que las mujeres del vicio al encontrar a ‘su hombre’. Los felicitamos, nosotros estamos bien sin amos.<sup>1022</sup>

This young sarcastic communist activist had a crucial role in the fight against Machado through writings and meetings. His mother lived in New Orleans, a city the protester visited in 1920 before becoming a university student to consider serving in the military.<sup>1023</sup> Just a few months after Machado’s inauguration as president, Mella

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<sup>1019</sup> Vera Micheles Dean, “Attack on Democracy”, in *New Governments in Europe*, Vera Micheles Dean et al., 33.

<sup>1020</sup> Julio Antonio Mella, “Machado: Mussolini tropical”, *Juventud*, March 1925.

<sup>1021</sup> In regards to Cuba and its relationship with fascism and Spain, two Cuban authors wrote a book supporting the Spanish Republic in the midst of the Civil War (1936-1939), in Juan Marinello and Nicolás Guillén (1938), *Hombres de la España leal* (Seville: Centro de Estudios Andaluces, Editorial Renacimiento, 2010).

<sup>1022</sup> Julio Antonio Mella, “Machado: Mussolini tropical”, *Juventud* 11, March 1925, 6, full text reproduced in Mella, *Documentos y artículos*, 169-70. Author Carlos González Peraza would follow this comparison and called Machado “Mussolini del Caribe”, in Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 7.

<sup>1023</sup> Suchlicki, *Cuba*, 112.

founded *La Liga Antimperialista de las Américas*, the main goal of which was to unite a revolutionary Latin America in the struggle against US imperialism. In August 1925 Mella, who had “dotes oratorias, fuerza física y [...] encanto personal”,<sup>1024</sup> met with other seventeen communist militants in what would be the first congress of the *Agrupaciones Comunistas de Cuba*. In that meeting the Cuban Communist Party was founded after the attendees expressed their concerns in regards to the strikes that were occurring in the country due to sugar prices.<sup>1025</sup> According to historian Lionel Soto, the party was founded due to the “madurez de las fuerzas internas de la clase obrera”.<sup>1026</sup> On the opposite ideological side, historian Fritz William Berggren stereotypically wrote that the group was “more committed to violent revolution than to the peaceful construction of Cuban society”. The next month, some of the attendees, including Mella and Mexican anarchist Enrique Flores Magón (1877-1954)—who had been sent to Cuba by the Comintern—,<sup>1027</sup> were prosecuted for sedition, although they were able to escape prison after paying bail. This drove the opposition, led by university students, to strengthen their movement in the belief they were living under a tropical fascist dictatorship.<sup>1028</sup>

Mella would be incarcerated later that year and became one of the main political enemies of the regime. In prison, he wrote a text entitled “Hacia la internacional Americana”, in which the author called for the American international, and began a hunger strike as a protest against the tyrannical government, during which he lost 35 pounds (15 kg.).<sup>1029</sup> He received support from some, especially Cuban intellectuals and the *Club Femenino de Cuba*,<sup>1030</sup> who demanded his liberty. Amongst them, there was writer Rubén Martínez Villena (1899-1934), who would become member of the Cuban Communist Party in 1927, and who invented the derogatory nickname “*asno con*

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<sup>1024</sup> Thomas, *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad*, 423.

<sup>1025</sup> Cantón Navarro, *Historia de Cuba*, 104. It must be noted that this party was later labeled as the “first” Communist Party, while the second and current was founded in 1965, on the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the original party. For more on this topic, see Jorge García Montes and Antonio Alonso Avila, *Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Havana: Ediciones Universal, 1970).

<sup>1026</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I*, 332.

<sup>1027</sup> Jules R. Benjamin, “The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism, 1928-1932”, *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 55, nº 1 (February 1975): 82.

<sup>1028</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 94-99.

<sup>1029</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 114; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 142.

<sup>1030</sup> Further analyzed in chapter six. K. Lynn Stoner, *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Woman's Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 70.

*garras*” (ass with claws) for Machado after he interviewed him to ask for Mella’s freedom.<sup>1031</sup> Martínez Villena was also the author of a critical essay entitled “Cuba, factoría yanqui”.<sup>1032</sup> Due to such popular pressure to the president and support for the incarcerated man that soon transcended Cuba’s borders, Machado arranged for the payment of the bail to release Mella. After nineteen days of hunger strike, the twenty-two year old activist was freed from prison.<sup>1033</sup> He affirmed: “Hoy más que nunca tengo fe en mis ideales. Ellos no son un delito: ellos son los ideales de toda una nueva generación, y de todos los espíritus libres del Continente, que ha sabido protestar contra la injusticia, no porque yo fuese víctima, sino por los ideales que sustento y defiendo”.<sup>1034</sup> In the introduction of a 1976 compilation of writings by the communist militant, it is stated that Mella “logró poner en pie contra la dictadura a todo el indignado pueblo cubano, y estampó en el estudiantado nacional una huella de heroísmo”.<sup>1035</sup>

His safety in the country became, however, dangerous, and therefore he was forced to leave Cuba for Mexico. From that country, the activist would continue his strong diatribes against Machado, and founded the *Asociación de Nuevos Emigrados Revolucionarios de Cuba*. As an anti-machadista pamphlet put in 1933, Mella “continuaba su campaña contra el opresor de su país y sus amos, los imperialistas del Norte”.<sup>1036</sup> The situation became uncomfortable for the Cuban president, and therefore he planned to assassinate the agitator. On the night of January 10, 1929, while walking alongside Italo-American photographer Tina Modotti (1896-1942) in a street in Mexico City, Mella was followed and shot dead allegedly by José Magriñat, who would die during the 1933 revolution.<sup>1037</sup> After Mella died, Juan Marinello took charge of the

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<sup>1031</sup> The full phrase Rubén Martínez Villena wrote to describe Machado was: “Es un salvaje, un animal, una bestia..., un asno con garras” (he is a savage, an animal, a beast... an ass with claws), quoted in Raúl Roa and Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Órbita de Rubén Martínez Villena: Esbozo biográfico* (Havana: Ediciones Union, 1964), 48.

<sup>1032</sup> Rubén Martínez Villena, “Cuba, factoría yanqui”, *América Libre*, April 1927.

<sup>1033</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 117-118; Suchlicki, *Cuba*, 113.

<sup>1034</sup> Julio Antonio Mella, “Declaración de Mella cuando salió de la huelga de hambre”, *El Heraldo de Cuba*, December 24, 1925, 1, full text reproduced in Mella, *Documentos y artículos*, 210.

<sup>1035</sup> Instituto de Historia del Movimiento Comunista y de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba, Introduction to *Documentos y artículos*, by Mella, 8.

<sup>1036</sup> Comité de Jóvenes Revolucionarios Cubanos, *El terror en Cuba*, 40.

<sup>1037</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 138-139; Le Riverend, *La República*, 268; José Sergio Velázquez, *La tiranía en Cuba: el Directorio Estudiantil Universitario de 1930* (Madrid: [s.n.], 1933),

leadership of the Communist Party.<sup>1038</sup> Some Marxist authors believe this murder did not benefit the Machado administration as the president had planned; on the contrary, “la cólera causada por el asesinato entre los obreros y los estudiantes, excedió las fronteras de los centros de trabajo y de las aulas y alcanzó a todo el pueblo”.<sup>1039</sup> Other authors argue that, in fact, the Cuban president was not involved in this killing because it had been the result of a problem within the Communist Party.<sup>1040</sup> Hugh Thomas has rejected this interpretation and written that, beyond the difficulties Mella was having with the party, all clues indicate that the murderer was a henchman hired by Machado.<sup>1041</sup> Whatever the circumstances of his passing were, Mella’s fight and persona transcended his life as he became a martyr for the cause against the *machadato*. Not only for anti-*machadistas* of the time, but for Marxist historiography, Mella, a follower of José Martí’s thought, has become the personification of the revolution, energy, youth, and fight against tyranny. For instance, historian Lionel Soto wrote: “Mella reunía las virtudes exigidas en un gran conductor: riqueza de ideas y profundidad de pensamiento; voluntad de hacer y edificar; alto nivel intelectual; clara y fogosa expresión con la pluma o en la tribuna; carácter independiente y temperamento crítico; magnetismo personal”.<sup>1042</sup>

It is surprising to read how Orestes Ferrara, one of Machado’s closest friends, confessed how he was against the measures the president had employed against Mella and the rest of university students protesting, and criticized how both the university and the administration “creyeron que debían vencer a la juventud estudiantil con la fuerza bruta y cometieron errores sobre errores”.<sup>1043</sup>

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20; Rafael Rojas, “México y las dictaduras caribeñas (1934-1959)”, *Istor: revista de historia internacional* 10, n° 39 (2009): 125.

<sup>1038</sup> Nathaniel Weyl, *Estrella roja sobre Cuba: el asalto soviético al hemisferio occidental* (Guadalajara: Nos, 1964), 123.

<sup>1039</sup> Instituto de Historia del Movimiento Comunista y de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba, Introduction to *Documentos y artículos*, by Mella, 11.

<sup>1040</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 531. Berggren wrote in a note: “Mella was murdered in Mexico in 1929 shortly after being expelled from the Mexican Communist Party. Though some accuse Machado of assassinating him, others point to an intra-party rivalry -- he was accused of misappropriating funds, and it seems a lover’s quarrel was also involved”, in Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, n.4, 101.

<sup>1041</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 435.

<sup>1042</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I*, 335. See the manner in which this historian has portrayed the communist militant also in Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 191-199.

<sup>1043</sup> Ferrara, *Una mirada sobre tres siglos*, 286.

Mella's assassination was interpreted as though it meant there could never be an understanding between the students' movement and the Cuban government led by such a strongman. Mella and others had begun their requests merely in the academic world, with the goal of improving the education in the university. One example of this is the foundation in 1927 of the *Directorio Estudiantil Universitario* (DEU) (Student Directorate), aimed at spreading anti-*machadista* propaganda—<sup>1044</sup> the activities of this organization will be further explained in chapter six. Now, however, the issue had gone beyond the university walls and the movement had become revolutionary, for it intended to reconstruct Cuba in its entirety.<sup>1045</sup> Correspondent of *The New York Times* in Cuba R. Hart Phillips concluded that, overall, "Machado's greatest mistake was his attempt to suppress radical student elements by violence and assassinations".<sup>1046</sup>

As for labor movements, Machado harshly repressed most workers' protests. Several unions were banned and their leaders incarcerated or even assassinated. As Zanetti and García Álvarez showed, Machado's goal "was to split and control the trade union organizations by means of a series of repressive actions, which included the deportation or murder of the most outstanding and steadfast labor leaders".<sup>1047</sup> Amongst the victims, there was Alfredo López Arencibia (1894-1926), founder in 1925 of the *Confederación Nacional Obrera de Cuba* (CNOC), worker's national government body which four years later had some seventy-one thousand members, and the *Federación Obrera de La Habana* (FOH), which, according to historian Lionel Soto, was the "centro aglutinador e impulsor" of the labor movement in Cuba.<sup>1048</sup> López Arencibia was arrested on July 20, 1926, and never heard of again until his decomposed body was found following the fall of Machado. Similarly, a few months earlier, Enrique Varona González (1888-1925), president of the railroad union *La Unión* in Camagüey, was found dead on

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<sup>1044</sup> Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba, 1898-1958* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), 62.

<sup>1045</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 169-170.

<sup>1046</sup> R. Hart Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1959), 5.

<sup>1047</sup> Zanetti Lecuona and García Álvarez, *Sugar and Railroads*, 317.

<sup>1048</sup> *Íbid.*; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 102.

September 19, 1925.<sup>1049</sup> According to historian Calixto Masó, this killing indicated what would be Machado's policies towards labor protesters.<sup>1050</sup>

Increasingly throughout the years of the *machadato*, “strikes were repressed brutally; the administration deported foreign-born union leaders and arrested, exiled, and assassinated national organizers. In addition, it raided and closed labor offices, destroyed union records, and ordered organizations to dissolve”. Already in 1926, the administration approved a decree that allowed the use of armed forces to end strikes.<sup>1051</sup> Beals narrated how “during the first two years Machado destroyed all bona-fide labor organizations of the country, jailing and killing recklessly. This was easy because the cry of ‘Communism!’ could be raised, though scarcely a handful of the numerous labor leaders now languishing in jail without trial for years knew the slightest thing about communism”.<sup>1052</sup> The threat of communism would be constant and used as a justification for the administration's extreme decision and behavior, particularly in the last months of Machado's mandate. Critical of the Cuban president and observer Carlos González Peraza wrote: “El obrero fue lo más perseguido de todo durante los ocho años de dictadura machadista”.<sup>1053</sup> In spite of these relentless measures, until the end of Machado's rule in Cuba, labor organizations posed a serious challenge to the status quo.<sup>1054</sup> Thus historian Fritz Williams Berggren—more often than not defensive of Machado—, who does not acknowledge the aforementioned deaths of union leaders, is mistaken when writing: “Cuba's relatively young industrial labor movement posed few challenges to his administration even though the unions were quite active”.<sup>1055</sup>

Another example of the president's extreme measures against any opposition with “dangerous” political beliefs affected the Canarian population living on the island. In

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<sup>1049</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 205; Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 216-217.

<sup>1050</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 526. González Peraza related the tragedy pompously: “Fue asesinado en Morón en 1926, cuando se dirigía con su esposa e hijo a un cinematógrafo. Dos soldados del ejército lo acribillaron a balazos. Los autores impunemente se marcharon. El cuerpo de Varona cayó a los pies de su señora esposa como una columna de honor, derribada por la fuerza devastadora de un huracán de indignidades”, in González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 15.

<sup>1051</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934*, 264.

<sup>1052</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 246.

<sup>1053</sup> González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 16.

<sup>1054</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 61-62.

<sup>1055</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 62.

1926, after a group of farmers migrated from the Canary Islands to Cuba kidnapped a sugar plantation owner who had been mistreating his workers and set him free after he paid a ransom of 50,000 pesos, Machado ordered the *Guardia Rural* to retaliate. More than forty Canarians—perhaps close to a hundred—, including the kidnappers were hung without a trial. This incident caused outraged among the Spanish community, especially, and as could be expected, the Canary islanders. Machado chose to make an example of them, as a way to show his strong stance against socialist upheaval.<sup>1056</sup>

Machado had a complicated relationship with the press. About adverse publications, the president affirmed:

Procuro alentarla y facilitar sus labores, pero necesito que sea sincera en su oposición, porque siempre cuando me censura algo, en vez de molestarme lo que hago es ordenar inmediatamente una investigación [...] Si he afirmado cien veces que los gobiernos que emplean la fuerza pública y encarcelan a sus adversarios políticos hacen mal, ¿cómo es posible que yo pueda ser tan menguado que utilice los mismos procedimientos para asegurar el triunfo de mi partido?<sup>1057</sup>

However, the relationship was far from cordial. Just as the Kingfish had to create his own newspaper because Long argued none were honest, the Cuban president fought against negative commentaries in print media about his policies and persona by using far more extreme methods than Long. On several occasions just a few months after becoming president, he halted the presses of different newspapers in the country for being detractors of his administration, such as *El Heraldo de Cuba*, *El Diario de la Marina*, and *La semana*. A new publication entitled *El Día*, founded by army major and journalist Armando André Alvarado, came out in June 1925. Not long afterwards, the newspaper published a cartoon of Machado lying on the floor, looking like don Juan Tenorio.<sup>1058</sup> A few days later, the editor was found dead in front of his house.<sup>1059</sup> It

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<sup>1056</sup> Macías Martín, *Cuba: crisis política, crisis económica y emigración*, 146-155.

<sup>1057</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Aseguremos por la independencia económica, la independencia política (discurso pronunciado en la noche del 23 de Junio de 1926 en el Hotel Venus de la capital de Oriente)”, *Por la patria libre: discursos pronunciados por el General Gerardo Machado y Morales, Presidente de la República de Cuba, durante su excursión a las provincias de Oriente y Camagüey del 21 al 26 de junio de 1926* (Havana: Imp. de F. Verdugo, 1926), 23, Special Collections, Latin American Library, Tulane University. Address also reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 207-228.

<sup>1058</sup> The analogy refers to the 1844 play *Don Juan Tenorio: Drama religioso-fantástico en dos partes*, by Spanish writer José Zorrilla. The main character is a womanizer, who also represents white male dominance. An earlier literary depiction of don Juan was given by Tirso de Molina in his 1630 play *El*

seems as if “his osadía le costaba la vida”.<sup>1060</sup> Although there were rumors in Havana regarding presidential responsibility for the crime, Machado denied any accusation and the event was soon forgotten.<sup>1061</sup> Historian José Cantón called it Machado’s first murder.<sup>1062</sup>

In another incident in January 1927 the police entered the building of *El Herald* with no warrant and partially destroyed its facilities and equipment. The event had an impact on the press, and the *Asociación de la Prensa* waited for an explanation from the government, which in turn gave assurance that from then on it would not act against any publication as long as it remained uncritical about the administration.<sup>1063</sup> Not long after, however, in August 1930 Abelardo Pacheco, director of the anti-*machadista* weekly *La Voz del Pueblo*, was assassinated, even though several months prior he had asked for protection from the US embassy because he rightly suspected there was a plot to murder him.<sup>1064</sup>

The president relied on a newspaper named *El Sol*, which he had conveniently bought in order to spread personal propaganda, and one of whose main writers was the Cuban journalist and supporter of Machado, Alberto Lamar Schweyer, who became deputy director of the publication.<sup>1065</sup> Berggren once again positions himself on the side of the Cuban administration when writing: “Despite the slander in the press and various degrees of crack downs on the press in Cuba, Machado’s attempts at repression and censorship were half-hearted at best”.<sup>1066</sup>

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*burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra*. Unfortunately, the cartoon published in the Cuban newspaper *El Día* portraying Machado as don Juan Tenorio has not been founded.

<sup>1059</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 130.

<sup>1060</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 45.

<sup>1061</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 92-93.

<sup>1062</sup> Cantón Navarro, *Historia de Cuba*, 107.

<sup>1063</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 200.

<sup>1064</sup> Bryce Wood, *La política del buen vecino* (Mexico: Unión Tipográfica Editorial Hispano Americana, 1967), 48-49.

<sup>1065</sup> Schweyer was the author of two polemic books supporting Machado: *Biología de la democracia (Ensayo de sociología americana)* and *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado; una página oscura de la diplomacia norteamericana* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1934). When writing about the first publication, Rolando Rodríguez argues Lamar Schweyer defended “la dictadura en ciernes de Gerardo Machado”, in *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 236.

<sup>1066</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 84.

### 3.5 “Machado’s Roman dreams of grandeur”<sup>1067</sup>

One of the characteristic weaknesses of a dictator is to show a much too vulgar haste in perpetuating his name in marble, bronze, or brass.<sup>1068</sup>

Curtis A. Wilgus

During his administration, one of Machado’s main policies was construction and public works. A month after he was inaugurated president of the Republic of Cuba, Machado spoke in Congress emphasizing the need for more infrastructure: “[S]alta la necesidad de comenzar obras públicas para salvar las apremiantes necesidades del pueblo, una vez que todo Gobierno previsor debe preocuparse con gran interés del bien colectivo”.<sup>1069</sup> The president assigned Carlos Miguel de Céspedes (1881-1955) as Secretary of Public Works, also known as “*el dinámico*” (the dynamic) and the “Cuban Julio Verne”,<sup>1070</sup> and a collaborator of Machado’s in *La Chambelona* uprising of 1917.<sup>1071</sup> De Quesada y Miranda described the newly appointed secretary as “inquieto, audaz, de una acometividad asombrosa, el tipo ideal de *promoter*, de revuelta melena, brillándole con impaciencia los ojos miopes”.<sup>1072</sup> Pedro González-Blanco gave his own perception of the man by writing his uncountable virtues which, he argued, made him “uno de los especímenes más acabados del hispanoamericano, capaz de dar ciento y raya al norteamericano más dinámico y emprendedor”.<sup>1073</sup> In a similar pompous fashion, Franco Varona described Céspedes as a “joven abogado de grandes prestigios, hombre de extraordinario dinamismo, de gran talento y de grandes iniciativas”,<sup>1074</sup> and historian

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<sup>1067</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 37.

<sup>1068</sup> Curtis A. Wilgus, *South American Dictators During the First Century of Independence* (Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University Press, 1937), 10.

<sup>1069</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Discurso pronunciado por el Sr. Presidente, General Gerardo Machado, en los salones de Palacio, el día 22 de Junio de 1925, ante los Sres. Congressistas liberales y populares”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 43.

<sup>1070</sup> Orestes Ferrara wrote it was a nickname intended to be sarcastic, in Ferrara, *Una mirada sobre tres siglos*, 281. The secretary was unrelated to the Cuban national hero who fought for Cuban independence, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes (1819-1874). See an hagiographic biography of the Cuban national hero: Herminio Portell Vilá, *Céspedes: El Padre de La Patria Cubana* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1931). His son, who bore his name, was one of Machado’s trustees and was defined as “culto políglota, fino, pero incoloro hombre de salón”, in Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 50.

<sup>1071</sup> Thomas, *Cuba: la lucha por la libertad*, 420.

<sup>1072</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 52.

<sup>1073</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 96.

<sup>1074</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado*, 83.

Guillermo Jorge in 1985 described him as the best Secretary of Public Works Cuba has had.<sup>1075</sup>

On June 1925 Machado presented the Cuban Congress with a program that consisted of 693 specific works, including: 319 roads, 89 aqueducts and sewage systems, 126 pavements in cities and towns, and other 159 projects such as schools, hospitals, as well as the construction of a grand capitol building. The president also planned to improve the Universidad de La Habana with new buildings and a stadium. The program would cost about 380 million pesos. It certainly was an ambitious proposal that received criticism for being unachievable, as well as too costly. The administration answered by assuring they would create a special fund for public works totalling \$96,000,000, which would accumulate mortgages, as well as develop new taxes created for that end, such as taxes on imported luxury products and on capital that was removed from the country.<sup>1076</sup> But perhaps the most relevant were oil taxes; just as Huey Long suggested shortly after in Louisiana, Machado created a tax of ten cents for each gallon of gasoline.<sup>1077</sup>

Congress unanimously approved the bill for the plan, called *ley de Obras Públicas*, the following month, on July 15, 1925.<sup>1078</sup> Four years later, the president said in reference to the law:

La recta recaudación, distribución e inversión de las rentas públicas, reforzadas por las nuevas fuentes de ingresos creados por la Ley de 15 de julio de 1925, ha permitido a mi gobierno llevar adelante la gran obra constructiva iniciada al tomar posesión de la Presidencia de la República con el lema de ‘Agua, Caminos y Escuelas’. La honrada y eficiente gestión de la Secretaría de Obras Públicas ha merecido el aplauso general del país.<sup>1079</sup>

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<sup>1075</sup> Jorge, “Administración del presidente general Gerardo Machado”, 25.

<sup>1076</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 238.

<sup>1077</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 56.

<sup>1078</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 40; Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 73; Solera, *Cuba: La república de generales y doctores*, 232; Soto, *La revolución del 33, Vol. I*, 268.

<sup>1079</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935* (Havana: Grandes Talleres Tipográficos de P. Fernández y Ca. Pi y Margall, 1929), 23, Special Collections, Latin American Library, Tulane University, New Orleans.

His detractors continued to believe that, in a country with such high external debt as Cuba—the number was of about one hundred million dollars—,<sup>1080</sup> and with the ongoing sugar crisis, it was unwise to carry out such an expensive program.<sup>1081</sup> Journalist De Quesada y Miranda criticized: “¡Tal era la pesada carga echada sobre los hombros de un pueblo empobrecido para que el General Machado pudiese anunciar enfáticamente que convertiría a Cuba en una república modelo, en ‘la Suiza de la América’, sin gravar su porvenir con nuevos préstamos exteriores!”<sup>1082</sup> Spanish novelist Alfonso Hernández Catá (1885-1940) wrote in his 1933 anti-*machadista* novel *Un cementerio en las Antillas*,

El plan descabellado de Obras Públicas inició la ruina del país. De él quedaría solo una carretera central, sin eficacia de comercio, pagada a precios enormes a contratistas que muchas veces no trabajaban por cuenta propia, y un Capitolio dispendioso, ‘superior al de Wáshington [*sic*]’, que ojalá no se convierta en panteón de la soberbia. La deuda pública subía, subía, y cuando se escriben estas líneas pasa de 400 millones.<sup>1083</sup>

As seen in the first two chapters, Huey Long was also criticized as being too onerous. Nonetheless, the Cuban president was convinced that:

Con la red de carreteras que vamos a comenzar inmediatamente, tendremos un transporte fácil y poco costoso, para sostener la concurrencia sin disminuir nuestros jornales, y siempre hallarán los productores, en los gobiernos que sucedan al actual, la protección necesaria, experimentados como quedarán por la lección objetiva que habremos ofrecido con los esfuerzos que estamos realizando.<sup>1084</sup>

Moreover, and comparable to Long’s argument, he would justify these expenses by responding that they employed people during the economic crisis. Four years after starting to implement the public works plan, “el Departamento de Obras Públicas ha ocupado un promedio de 20,000 obreros, el 72% de nacionalidad cubana, y ha pagado

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<sup>1080</sup> Masó writes that in 1925 the number of external debt was 99,580,000 pesos. The author adds that when Machado left power in 1933 there was a debt of ninety-seven million only in public works, in Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 524.

<sup>1081</sup> Between 1903 and 1927 Cuba owed US banks a sum of 176,250,000 pesos. By the time the Machado works begun, there was still a debt of over 100,000,000 pesos. Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 75-77, 153, 184; Jenks, *Nuestra colonia de Cuba*, 270.

<sup>1082</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 74.

<sup>1083</sup> Alfonso Hernández Catá, *Un cementerio en las Antillas* (Madrid: Imp. de G. Saéz, 1933), 34.

<sup>1084</sup> Machado y Morales, “Aseguremos por la independencia económica, la independencia política”, 14.

trabajos por valor de más de \$110,782,000”.<sup>1085</sup> Unsurprisingly, the supporting newspaper *Diario de la Marina* published in 1930 very similar data.<sup>1086</sup> Writer Robert Solera remarks in his 2013 book the importance of the workers involved in the construction of public works:

Un verdadero ejército de ingenieros, arquitectos, contadores, abogados, albañiles, carpinteros, electricistas, choferes, inspectores, supervisores cobradores, pagadores, secretarias, jornaleros y hasta ‘policías especiales’ para obras públicas fueron de repente empleados por el departamento que pasó a ser el más importante de todo el gobierno de Cuba.<sup>1087</sup>

The crown jewel of the Public Works endeavor was to be a colossal project: the aforementioned “*carretera central*” or central highway. The connection of the country by means of this project had become vital during Machado’s tenure as, increasingly, the sugar industry of the country had been gravitating gradually towards the East. As historian José Luis Luzón put it: “En el periodo de 1916 a 1926 la polarización hacia el Este de la isla fue absoluta, pues de los 32 centrales [azucareros] de nueva creación 72% se localizaron entre Camagüey y Oriente”.<sup>1088</sup> The enterprise, however, found some detractors who once again argued it would be too costly and would mortgage the Cuban economy in the upcoming decades. It would be 1,129 km. long (701 miles) and cost approximately 110 million pesos.<sup>1089</sup> Its construction began in 1925 and lasted for five years. Writer José de la Campa González, clearly a government spokesman, became enchanted with the feat and the resultant spread of Cuban nationalism, and wrote four years after the overthrow of Machado:

¡Qué obra ha realizado con la Carretera Central! ¡Qué obra! Una carretera sólida, dura, maciza, eterna, que corría de un extremo al otro de la isla, con sus 1,129 kilómetros, sin un cruce de trenes, sin más que alguna que otra curva. Todo comunicado ya. No más Orientales, no más Camagueyanos, no más Villareños, no más Matanceros, no más Pinareños. No más Habaneros. Cubanos solamente.<sup>1090</sup>

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<sup>1085</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 27.

<sup>1086</sup> The newspaper affirmed 17,000 had been employed of which 75% were Cuban: “17,000 hombres en O. Públicas”, *Diario de la Marina*, April 16, 1930, 2.

<sup>1087</sup> Solera, *Cuba: La república de generales y doctores*, 233.

<sup>1088</sup> Luzón Benedicto, *Economía, población y territorio en Cuba*, 44-45.

<sup>1089</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 523. The initial cost of the enterprise was of \$76,000,000, in González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 219.

<sup>1090</sup> José de la Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista: novela histórico social* (Tampa: El Heraldo Dominical Publishing Company, 1937), 316. Translation: What a magnificent work he [Machado] has

This was the very essence of Cubanity or *Cubanidad*, which will be one of the main topics of chapter five. This term, coined during the independence struggle, implied that there existed no racial differences between black and white populations, for everyone was to simply be regarded as Cuban—of course, this was the theoretical political discourse which was not put into practice effectively.



*Fig. 23: Carretera Central, Segunda División, Entrada al pueblo de Madruga, Gerardo Machado government 1925-1933, Cuban Photograph Album Collection. University of Miami. Library. Cuban Heritage Collection.*

*Cosmópolis* magazine believed the highway was the “obra magna más útil” of the Machado administration, and assured it would be the longest paved road existing in America.<sup>1091</sup> At least that is what the president assured Cubans in a 1929 speech in which he spoke of the “*carretera central*” as the “columna medular de la República”: “Constará al terminarse de 1,129km., será la carretera pavimentada más larga de América”.<sup>1092</sup> Orestes Ferrara was also impressed by the construction when he wrote in his memoirs: “La carretera central, cómoda y majestuosa, era un corolario de nuestra Independencia”.<sup>1093</sup>

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done with the Central Highway! What a work! A hard, solid, eternal road, that run from one extreme of the island to the other, 1,129 kilometers long, with not a single railroad crossing, with barely any curves. Everything is communicated now. There is no more Orientales [from the province of Oriente], no more Camagueyanos [from the province of Camagüey], no more Villareños [Villa Clara], no more Matanceros [Matanzas], no more Pinareños [Pinar del Río]. No more Habaneros [Havana]. Only Cubans.

<sup>1091</sup> “La República de Cuba”, *Cosmópolis*, September 1929, 22.

<sup>1092</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 23-24.

<sup>1093</sup> Ferrara, *Una mirada sobre tres siglos*, 282.

Connecting the two ends of the island meant that “el general Machado había intentado realizar el milagro en beneficio de los campos por medio de aquel enlace de comunicaciones: la Carretera Central; pero entonces, y por primera vez, conocía el cubano su propia tierra, sumida, a lo largo de los periodos coloniales y la república, en eminente retraso”.<sup>1094</sup> Nonetheless, the highway provided new jobs for mechanics, taxi drivers, bus drivers, gasoline attendants, chauffers, as well as automobile dealers and auto repair shops.<sup>1095</sup> For this reason, it “significantly benefited lower class and rural residents, much more than the urban middle and upper classes who were accustomed to government patronage, jobs, and money”.<sup>1096</sup> The president argued that the *carretera* allowed the wealth of the country to be more evenly distributed because now most farmers had access to all products, and could sell theirs throughout Cuba. Thus, although the president was not advocating directly for the redistribution of wealth as Huey Long did, he referred to it as a desirable goal to achieve.

The highway was the main road construction of the *machadato*, though other miles were built throughout the period.<sup>1097</sup> The president said so himself: “La construcción de la Carretera Central no ha impedido [...] atender a la construcción, reparación y reconstrucción de 350,000 metros de carreteras auxiliares, y de numerosos puentes en las seis provincias, atención en la que se han invertido algo más de 5 millones de pesos”.<sup>1098</sup> The highway was inaugurated by the president on February 1931,<sup>1099</sup> in a moment of social and political unrest—as will be explained in chapter six.

One of the feats that would characterize Machado’s regime and change the landscape of the capital city was the construction of the capitol building in Havana. To the president, the building symbolized his aspirations for a more autonomous and free Cuba: “Coronación de estos esfuerzos de mi gobierno, es el Capitolio, soberbio y magnífico monumento elevado a la grandeza y a la gloria de la República, como un símbolo de las altas aspiraciones de los fundadores de la patria y un testimonio de la indomable

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<sup>1094</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 292.

<sup>1095</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 42.

<sup>1096</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 90.

<sup>1097</sup> “Cuba Plans Extensive Building of Highways”, *The New York Times*, January 9, 1927, 1.

<sup>1098</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 23-24.

<sup>1099</sup> “La Carretera Central, Lista en Febrero 1931”, *Diario de la Marina*, April 3, 1930, 1.

voluntad de la nación de mantenerse siempre independiente, soberana y libre”.<sup>1100</sup> Similarly, a novelist made one of his characters describe the edifice as a “*bello*”:

Sus paredes, a aquella hora lamidas por el sol, eran como si estuviesen labradas de oro bruñido, y su casco sobre el que flotaba la bandera de la república, parecía un sombrero de oro con una larga pluma de oro. Aquello le hacía sentirse más cubano [...] ¡Qué bonito todo aquello! ¡Qué simetría! ¡Qué buen gusto presidió todo! ¡Qué bien ornamentado! ¡Qué bien calculado y bien medido!<sup>1101</sup>

In 1928 *Cosmópolis* magazine referred to the building by publishing: “El Capitolio, próximo a terminarse, será el primero de América”.<sup>1102</sup> And González-Blanco also praised the eternal flow of the building: “El Capitolio es la primera obra con el criterio civitatenso de resistir a los tiempos y a las injurias de la Naturaleza, y la más alta gloria de Machado en los días de porvenir”.<sup>1103</sup>



**Fig. 24:**  
*Construction of the Capitol building dome in Havana, April 29, 1929, Cuban Photograph Album Collection. University of Miami. Library. Cuban Heritage Collection.*

In opposition, critical author, historian, and architect Robert Segre described the capitol in a 1982 article as one of the regimes’ “*edificios-símbolo*”, an hypocritical representation of the upper-class democratic system in a moment when Cuba was living

<sup>1100</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 26-27.

<sup>1101</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 222.

<sup>1102</sup> “La República de Cuba”, *Cosmópolis*, September 1929, 22.

<sup>1103</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 222.

one of its bloodiest regimes.<sup>1104</sup> Some decades earlier, hostile reporter Carleton Beals satirically pinpointed the resemblance between the building in Havana and its counterpart in the American capital. On that note, in 1998 historian and journalist José M<sup>a</sup> González Ochoa described the building as a “copia infausta del de Washington”.<sup>1105</sup> The journalist commented on the consequent reaction of American tourists who at that time visited the island and rubbed their “eyes in amazement, believing our own Washington capitol has been suddenly bodily transported, so exact the imitation”.<sup>1106</sup> Huey Long received similar criticism in regards to his newly built governor’s mansion and its resemblance to the White House. According to many political activists against Machado, the capitol building was not where Congress met, but the mausoleum of the republic.<sup>1107</sup>

Another task carried out during the *machadato* under the supervision of the Public Works Ministry was the embellishment of Havana. It is said that both Machado and Céspedes wanted to transform the capital into the “Paris of the Caribbean”,<sup>1108</sup> or the “Niza de América”, a term coined by Cuban architect and city planner Pedro Martínez Inclán, and appropriated by Céspedes.<sup>1109</sup> The president hired French architect Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier (1861-1930), specialist on park construction and urban ample spaces, to design the beautification of the city, although some of his projects were never carried out because of lack of funding, in part a consequence of the economic crisis of

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<sup>1104</sup> Roberto Segre, “La Habana de Forestier: los epígonos del modelo Haussmaniano en América Latina”, *Quaderns d’arquitectura i urbanisme*, n° 151 (1982): 19-20.

<sup>1105</sup> José M<sup>a</sup> González Ochoa, *Cuba: colonización, independencia y revolución* (Madrid: Acento Editorial, 1998), 45.

<sup>1106</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 37.

<sup>1107</sup> Activist student Eduardo “Eddy” Chibás (1907-1951) wrote: “La sociedad apática se recreaba en la contemplación de las obras del Capitolio, sin comprender que aquel edificio colosal que se erigía a la vanidad de una oligarquía, no era la casa del Congreso sino el Panteón de la República”, quoted in Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 117.

<sup>1108</sup> Arturo Almandoz, *Planning Latin America’s Capital Cities 1850-1950* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 206.

<sup>1109</sup> Francisco Gómez Díaz, *De Forestier a Sert: ciudad y arquitectura en La Habana (1925-1960)* (Madrid: Abada Editores, 2008), 81, n.23. Martínez Inclán’s full quote was: “La Habana debiera ser, las Canarias de América para el aprovisionamiento de los buques y la Niza de América para todos los pueblos del Norte y aún para los del Sur. El puerto más seguro y mejor equipado del mundo. La ciudad de los jardines y de las flores con el frente de agua más bello de América”, in Pedro Martínez Inclán, *La Habana actual. Estudio de la capital de Cuba desde el punto de vista de la arquitectura de ciudades* (Havana: Imp. P. Fernández, 1925).

1929.<sup>1110</sup> Forestier represented the ideal of a modern architect, who could satisfy the needs of the administration by building parks and “dignifying” Havana with his *Beaux-Arts* architectural style. He also improved the aesthetics of the city through street furniture: he designed benches, sculptures, ornaments, and streetlights. The French builder traveled to the capital of Cuba on three occasions: from December 1925 to February the following year, from October to December 1928, and, lastly, from January to March 1930.<sup>1111</sup> On his first trip, a number of experts accompanied Forestier in order to explore Havana in situ, and develop a general plan for improvement of traffic and beauty of the city, which would be grandiloquent in extreme.<sup>1112</sup> Forestier’s projects highlighted the need for open and geometric spaces through the construction of squares, ample avenues, and parks.<sup>1113</sup>

Forestier focused on the betterment of the upper and middle-class neighborhoods, such as *El Vedado* or the *Víbora*, while abandoning the historical center and the areas where most workers lived. The grandiose *plaza de la Fraternidad* and *paseo Martí* were built, together with the improvement of the cleaning system of the city.<sup>1114</sup>



**Fig. 25:** View of *parque o plaza de la Fraternidad* Fraternity Park in Havana, ca. 1930. Creator: O. De la Torre, Ramiro A. Fernández Collection, box 3, folder 2, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami Digital Collections.

<sup>1110</sup> Edward E. Crain, *Historic Architecture in the Caribbean Islands* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), 34; Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 58.

<sup>1111</sup> Segre, “La Habana de Forestier”, 20, 26.

<sup>1112</sup> Gómez Díaz, *De Forestier a Sert*, 60-61. This study has a beautiful collection of the different plans of Havana as well as other projects of improvement of the city developed such as the capitol building and the university by Forestier, in 56-80. See also Eduardo Luis Rodríguez and Pepe Navarro, *La Habana, arquitectura del siglo XX* (Barcelona: Blume, 1998).

<sup>1113</sup> Gómez Díaz, *De Forestier a Sert*, 78-80.

<sup>1114</sup> “La República de Cuba”, *Cosmópolis*, September 1929, 22.

The justification for such spending was not, according to the president, to pay tribute to frivolous pride, but because “todas las civilizaciones han desarrollado su creciente poder, en el recinto de las ciudades y ellas señalan el apogeo de las culturas [...] Si consigo la conversión de la Habana en una ciudad mundial [...] me gloriaré de haber levantado sobre columnas de oro y granito el derecho de nuestra soberanía”.<sup>1115</sup> However, the president was hiding his need to show an image of modernity that could attract both tourists and investors.

Just as Long had invested money in improving Angola prison in Louisiana, Machado created a new penitentiary called *Modelo*, which was located at the south-eastern *Isla de Pinos* (Isle of Pines), now *Isla de Juventud* (Isle of Youth). This island had been under US control until March 1925 the United States Senate ratified the Isle of Pines Treaty, thus relinquishing in favor of Cuba all claim of title of the territory.<sup>1116</sup> In regards to the ratification, Machado proudly stated: “I am especially gratified and glad that my Administration will start with this important problem solved”.<sup>1117</sup>

Once the construction of the prison began, at a speech in 1929 the president declared:

Corresponde [...] a la Secretaría [de Gobernación] la administración y cuidado de nuestros establecimientos penales, en los cuales se han impuesto métodos de orden, disciplina y trabajo, encaminados a la reforma [...] del recluso [...] El gran penal modelo, en parte terminado ya, en Isla de Pinos, colosal construcción de nuestra época, representa un enorme esfuerzo de sabia, generosa y fecunda previsión social.<sup>1118</sup>

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<sup>1115</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 221.

<sup>1116</sup> Domínguez, “Seeking Permission to Build a Nation”, 45; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 50-51. The Platt Amendment had stipulated: “The Isle of Pines shall be omitted from the boundaries of Cuba, specified in the Constitution, the title thereto being left to future adjustments by treaty”, Article VI. “Island of Pines”, history.state.gov. The island of Pinos had been an attractive spot for American land speculation as well as a vital location for American interests in the Caribbean, in Herminio Portell Vilá (1941), *Historia de Cuba en sus relaciones con los Estados Unidos y España. Tomo IV, La Intervención y la República* (Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing, 1969), 402-403, 407.

<sup>1117</sup> As quoted in “Cuban President and Congress at Odds”, *The Literary Digest*, March 28, 1925, 21. Spanish newspaper *ABC* praised Machado’s task in “Elecciones Presidenciales En Cuba”, *ABC*, November 9, 1928, 10.

<sup>1118</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 17.

Current Marxist historian Rolando Rodríguez jokes when writing, “para eso sí había dinero”.<sup>1119</sup> The new prison, described by Enrique Lumen as a “*penal dantesco*”,<sup>1120</sup> was part of the president’s plan for the moralization of Cuba, “cuyas blancas rotondas, destacándose al pie de marmóreas montañas, son mudas, pero a la vez extravagante la *muestra* de la predilección que el General Machado nunca se cansaba de asegurar profesaba por la Isla de Pinos”.<sup>1121</sup> The prison would harbor up to 5,000 convicts and became the largest and most modern jail in Latin America in that time.<sup>1122</sup> According to a report: “Este penal fue teatro de algunos de los peores actos de brutalidad y de abandono del régimen de Machado”. There was also a prison for women, the only one in the country, where female students that were considered revolutionary were confined.<sup>1123</sup>

All these feats of engineering, spearheaded by the new state capitol building and the “*carretera central*”, help to understand the popular support the “*asno con garras*” garnered: “El pueblo creía en Machado porque veía las obras”; but Rodríguez adds, “lo que no veía ni sospechaba era cómo robaba mediante las colecturías”.<sup>1124</sup> Beals concluded that all the aforementioned constructions represented “Machado’s Roman dreams of grandeur which can conceive of perpetuating fame only in material

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<sup>1119</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 239.

<sup>1120</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 64.

<sup>1121</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 59.

<sup>1122</sup> Segre, “La Habana de Forestier”, 19.

<sup>1123</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 190. Militant and political prisoner Raúl Roa described his experience in that jail in an emotional narrative: “Angustia de estar preso. No ser uno, siendo. Sentir la tremenda impotencia del ‘que quiere y no puede’. Vivir en un patio cuadrado, teniendo por único paisaje un trozo de cielo también cuadrado y la testa desnuda de palmas de una loma. Vivir siempre pendiente de nada. El espíritu es un estropajo, roto y sucio. El cuerpo, una pobre cosa inerte que se aferra, cobardemente, al rancho nauseabundo, como motivo y razón de ser único de su propia existencia. Tenho asco de mí mismo. Quisiera no estar aquí. Quisiera ser un individuo mediocre, sin más inquietudes y afanes que comer y dormir y, alguna que otra vez, cuando el sexo se pusiera majadero, ejercer brutalmente mi oficio de hombre. El calor es asfixiante. Aplana, embota. No bata darse una docena de duchas diarias. Los mosquitos, implacablemente, nos asedian y pican desde que la diana revienta, con el sol, frente a las circulares. A veces, únense a éstos, en temible frente único, cucarachas, moscas, guasasas, grillos, jejenes y más de una rana [...] No puedo evadirme de mí mismo. Estoy dos veces preso. Yo soy esta noche, por encima de todo, el número 122”, in Raúl Roa, “Presidio Modelo”, August 1931-January 1933, reproduced in Raúl Roa, *La revolución del 30 se fue a bolina* (Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), 76-77. Very differently, in his memoirs Machado wrote that political prisoners “recibían trato preferente, aislados de los reos de delito común. Las prisiones de mi gobierno eran amables aunque las envuelve una terrible leyenda [...] Los presos políticos disponían de campos de deporte, de comida especial y no estaban sometidos al reglamento del penal”, in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 40.

<sup>1124</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 137.

showiness”.<sup>1125</sup> De Quesada y Miranda affirmed how Machado, “aunque sin pirámides, [fue] convertido, por la imaginación criolla, en portentoso Cheops”.<sup>1126</sup> On that note, member of the Communist Party and witness of the *machadato* described the central highway as an “obra típicamente faraónica”.<sup>1127</sup> Similarly, Márquez Sterling argued: “Investido de las prerrogativas de un Rey, poco menos que absoluto, desenvolvió el Presidente uno de sus planes más atrevidos: el de Obras Públicas, que implicaba fabulosas inversiones”.<sup>1128</sup> To Machado, the objective of these feats was not only to ameliorate the communications and image of Cuba to the world; they also meant personal enrichment. The president had assured: “Excederse de las partidas que fija el Presupuesto equivale a una defraudación o, por lo menos, a una malversación, y el Gobierno del General Machado no tolera el que, ni con la mejor buena fe, se malverse un centavo del dinero del pueblo”.<sup>1129</sup>

Yet he and the Secretary of Public Works, Céspedes, were main stockholders of the *Compañía Cubana de Construcciones*, who would be in charge of the construction of several of Machado’s projects under the supervision of the Warren Brothers Company of Boston—specifically the construction of the highway in Matanzas and Santa Clara provinces.<sup>1130</sup> An anti-*machadista* journalist, Enrique de la Osa, pointed out the fact that these companies lacked solvency, but that due to Machado’s favoritism Warren Brothers was put in charge of the job.<sup>1131</sup> In fact, in 1935 the US Commission for Cuban Affairs wrote in its report: “Había grandes immoralidades en el plan de obras públicas.

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<sup>1125</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 37-38.

<sup>1126</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 83.

<sup>1127</sup> Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. II*, 794.

<sup>1128</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 51.

<sup>1129</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “De la iniciativa privada depende el progreso de los pueblos”, *Por la patria libre: discursos pronunciados por el General Gerardo Machado y Morales, Presidente de la República de Cuba, durante su excursión a las provincias de Oriente y Camagüey del 21 al 26 de junio de 1926* (Havana: Imp. de F. Verdugo, 1926), 39, Special Collections, Latin American Library, Tulane University.

<sup>1130</sup> Jenks, *Nuestra colonia de Cuba*, 251; Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 72, 182; Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 79. Franco Varona reproduced the report by Céspedes in which he attributed the project to this company: “Debe adjudicarse la subasta en cuanto a la construcción de las obras de la Carretera Central a los licitadores señores Warren Brother Company”, in Franco Varona, *Machado*, 94. Actually, historian Julio Le Riverend critically wrote that “la famosa ley de Obras Públicas fue negociada en las mismas condiciones de fraude, de vínculos personales y de presiones extranjeras que había caracterizado la gestión de todos los gobiernos precedentes. La realización fue objeto de críticas en beneficio de los principales contratistas, su deficiencia y su costo notorio, en perjuicio de la nación la compañía norteamericana llamada Warren Brothers, en la que tenían grandes intereses Machado y un grupo de los co-responsables de su dictadura”, in Le Riverend, *La República*, 250.

<sup>1131</sup> Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 25.

[...] Machado, o lucró personalmente con los contratos para la ejecución de las obras, o permitió que lo hiciesen sus amigos personales y políticos”.<sup>1132</sup> Similarly, nationalist historian Roig de Leuchsenring wrote in 1935, just after the overthrow of Machado: “Estos inmorales financiamientos contribuyeron de manera efectiva al sostenimiento de la dictadura de Machado y con ellos se beneficiaron cuantiosamente el dictador, su secretario de Obras Públicas, Carlos Miguel de Céspedes, políticos, congresistas, altos funcionarios y contratistas, secuaces de la tiranía”.<sup>1133</sup> Similarly, Enrique Lumen directly accused Machado of stealing half of that money by writing that the president invested less than half of the budget, “de lo que se deduce que la cantidad restante fue tomada en provecho propio por Machado, Carlos Miguel de Céspedes y otros políticos y agentes financieros norteamericanos”.<sup>1134</sup>

Although the president had assured foreign loans would not be necessary, the Chase National Bank of New York advanced 70,000,000 dollars to fund the “*carretera central*” project.<sup>1135</sup> This same bank was also behind the construction of Machado’s capitol building, which cost about seventeen million Cuban pesos.<sup>1136</sup> In fact, Machado established a mutually beneficial relationship with Chase National Bank, for his son-in-law, José Emilio Obregón, who had married his daughter Ángela Elvira Machado, was named manager of the Cuban branch.<sup>1137</sup> In all, as Masó argues, “el único modo de hacer frente a todos estos gastos y de cumplir con los empréstitos fue por medio de impuestos”.<sup>1138</sup>

### 3.5.1 Educating Cuba

As for education, under Machado’s supervision, Céspedes created new trade schools in the provinces of Matanzas, Santa Clara, Camagüey, and Oriente; granted scholarships

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<sup>1132</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 430.

<sup>1133</sup> Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring (1935), *Historia de la enmienda Platt: Una interpretación de la realidad cubana* (Havana: Nuestra Historia, 1973), 227-228.

<sup>1134</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 47.

<sup>1135</sup> “To Give Credit to Cuba; Chase National Will Make Advances for \$70,000,000 Highway Project”, *The New York Times*, January 1, 1927, 44; Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 11-12, 420-421; Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 239.

<sup>1136</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 142.

<sup>1137</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 79.

<sup>1138</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 524.

for the less fortunate—3% of local governments' funds would be destined to that end—, and rose the salaries of teachers in rural areas, among other policies. González-Blanco wrote that during the president's first administration 300 new schools, 283 middle schools, 47 high schools, and one rural school were built.<sup>1139</sup> That author concluded that the numbers he provided regarding the advancements in education under Machado had transformed Cuba into one of the “pueblos más cultos del mundo”.<sup>1140</sup> The Cuban government also granted free textbooks for school children, just as Long would do in Louisiana.<sup>1141</sup> The Cuban president affirmed: “Nada nacionaliza mejor que la escuela pública y así se están creando más aulas cada día y se irán aumentando aulas y maestros ambulantes hasta satisfacer totalmente las necesidades de la enseñanza popular”.<sup>1142</sup> In 1929 Machado assured:

Excelentes escuelas con numerosas aulas se han construido en los municipios de Isla de Pinos, Santiago de las Vegas, Cárdenas, Colón, Caibarién, Trinidad, Ciego de Ávila y otros. Se ha terminado el Instituto de Segunda Enseñanza de Camagüey, se realizó la adaptación de la quinta S. Zenón para la Escuela Normal y se han reparado o reconstruido cerca de doscientas escuelas primarias y otros centros docentes en todo el territorio nacional.<sup>1143</sup>

On another occasion, the president stated: “La educación es la única niveladora de los pueblos y de los hombres; es la que crea la igualdad social, hace posible la verdadera democracia, y da al ciudadano el sentimiento de dignidad”.<sup>1144</sup>

But beyond the embellished political discourse, the real situation was a bit different. Although enrollment in public schools increased compared to previous years,<sup>1145</sup> the US Commission of Cuban Affairs warned in 1935 about the poor conditions of rural areas in the country, and remarked how few children had a chance to attend school, which

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<sup>1139</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 177.

<sup>1140</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 179.

<sup>1141</sup> “La República de Cuba”, 22.

<sup>1142</sup> Machado, “De la iniciativa privada depende el progreso de los pueblos”, 41.

<sup>1143</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 24.

<sup>1144</sup> Barraqué, “El Presidente Electo Gral. Gerardo Machado”, 280; Franco Varona, *Machado*, 51.

<sup>1145</sup> De la Fuente writes that by 1926 between 63 and 71 percent of children were enrolled, in De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 141. However, the numbers differed in reference to private schools, where Afro-Cubans were underrepresented both as students and teachers—one must take into account that a good number of these institutions were foreign, mainly American or Spanish, and applied segregationist measures—, 143.

resulted in almost fifty percent of illiteracy among the population.<sup>1146</sup> Historian Calixto Masó asserted that the Machado administration did not center its attention on education as much as it focused on other areas, mainly public work construction, and that the number of teachers was still lower than that of soldiers.<sup>1147</sup> Of course, Masó's last affirmation was a bit demagogical, for most countries have more soldiers than teachers.

Although González-Blanco stated that in 1924-1925 there were 390,583 children enrolled in public schools, while in 1926-1927 there were 449,478, that is, 58,895 more,<sup>1148</sup> Rolando Rodríguez writes that out of 789,000 school children in Cuba in 1927, 380,000 had never stepped on a classroom.<sup>1149</sup> The aforementioned Alberto Lamar Schweyer affirmed in 1927 that fifty-two percent were illiterate, and added that the lack of people who could read and write in Latin America made the territory unfit or unready for democracy.<sup>1150</sup> Thus it can be asserted that the following inflated numbers provided by Fritz William Berggren are inaccurate:

School enrollment increased from 272,892 in 1924 to 484,466 in 1931. Five thousand new schools were built between 1924 and 1934. Literacy rose from approximately fifty percent to over seventy percent between 1919 and 1931. Adult evening schools increased from 73 in 1925 to 102 in 1931. Cuban education was part of Machado's plan to strengthen the island, and he delivered on that promise.<sup>1151</sup>

Machado was an uneducated man. Enrique Lumen simply wrote that he was an "individuo de escasa cultura".<sup>1152</sup> While Huey Long embraced and perhaps exaggerated this trait, the Cuban president simply acted more naturally. Be that as it may, in both cases the result was the same: both politicians found the support and empathy of the unschooled and downtrodden. It is told that the Cuban president once said: "Yo no soy universitario, pero quisiera serlo".<sup>1153</sup> On one occasion, Machado spoke in front of an audience of university students, and confessed and justified he was not a professional, because "mientras muchos estaban en cierta época persiguiendo en el campo a los

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<sup>1146</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 7.

<sup>1147</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 522.

<sup>1148</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 167.

<sup>1149</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la República. Tomo I*, 232.

<sup>1150</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Biología de la democracia*, 100.

<sup>1151</sup> Berggren, "Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation", 55.

<sup>1152</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 42.

<sup>1153</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 168.

cubanos y mantenían la esclavitud con el látigo, mi padre, abandonándome de muy pequeño, se fue a los campos de la revolución. Por eso no soy profesional, y acaso precisamente por no serlo, estimo profundamente a los profesionales”.<sup>1154</sup>

An anecdote can serve as an example of Machado’s lack of education. Once, while pronouncing a speech the president said: “Porque cuando váyamos...”, and one of his peers corrected his phonetics: “Vayamos, General”, to which Machado answered: “Sí, sí, a Bayamo [a Cuban city in the south-east of the country] iremos después...”.<sup>1155</sup> The Cuban was not a farmer per se; nonetheless, he had a peasant’s mannerisms, arguably because of his origins in a rural town. As historian Calixto C. Masó wrote,

Tenía las cualidades buenas y malas del guajiro cubano, era amante de la familia y del hogar, y su esposa doña Elvira vivía sencillamente en el Palacio presidencial, igual que en su casa, sin intervenir en los problemas de gobierno, pero, al igual que los campesinos cubanos, Machado era muy enamorado [...] [E]ra ambicioso y autoritario, tenía grandes pasiones y reaccionaba con violencia, lo que encubría con la simpatía y el don de gentes que le eran naturales, y además era inculto, pues aunque se había pulido con la política y los negocios, continuó utilizando las expresiones peculiares de los campesinos.<sup>1156</sup>



De Quesada y Miranda offered a description of the president in which he emphasized his round glasses as a perhaps failed attempt to make him look more intellectual:

Lo más saliente de su físico era su agrietada cara lampiña, de tez amarillosa, con anchos rasgos campesinos, atenuados, en la vejez, por su pelo canoso, *intelectualizados*, hasta cierto punto, por unos grandes espejuelos redondos de carey, tras de los cuales se movían, inquietos, un par de oscuros ojos pardos, acostumbrados desde la niñez a escrutar, con desconfianza de todo, las veredas de la vida.<sup>1157</sup>

**Fig. 26:** Gerardo Machado, ca. 1928, *wikimedia commons*.

<sup>1154</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Discurso en la Universidad, 17 de Enero de 1926”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 170.

<sup>1155</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 203.

<sup>1156</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 517.

<sup>1157</sup> De Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre!*, 46.

Perhaps the Cuban president took this image from Venezuelan dictator Juan Vicente Gómez (1857-1935), a military general who also wore this look since he took power in 1908 through a coup d'état and until his passing.<sup>1158</sup>

Accessories aside, during one of his multiple visits to the United States, in 1927, Machado surprised his hosts with the fact that “no conocía ninguno de los idiomas cultos de la tierra, a saber, el inglés y el francés y, ¡cómo!, si malamente aquel rudo campesino conocía el castellano”.<sup>1159</sup>

In relation with his task in education, the president focused on improving the Universidad de La Habana in similar fashion as Huey Long did with the Louisiana State University. Machado's main goal was to “regenerate” that university in order to transform it into a modern and proud institution, the best one in the American continent.<sup>1160</sup> He built new facilities in campus—in the Law and Architecture colleges—, and the celebrated eighty-eight steps stairway at the main entrance.<sup>1161</sup>



*Fig. 27: View of the University of Havana with the stairway, 1930, Cuban Photograph Album Collection. University of Miami. Library. Cuban Heritage Collection.*

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<sup>1158</sup> For more on Gómez, see: Manuel Caballero, *Gómez, el tirano liberal: anatomía del poder* (Caracas: Alfadil Ediciones, 2003); B. S. McBeth, *Juan Vicente Gómez and the Oil Companies in Venezuela, 1908-1935* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Tomás Pérez Tenreiro, *Juan Vicente Gómez: ensayo de interpretación militar* (Caracas: [s.n.], 1960).

<sup>1159</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 237-238.

<sup>1160</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Discurso en la Universidad, 17 de Enero de 1926”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 171. Charles Chapman indicated that in 1926 4,499 students were enrolled in the University of Havana, in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 596.

<sup>1161</sup> “La República de Cuba”, 22.

In all, González-Blanco described the university as “uno de los más bellos edificios, que consagrado a estos menesteres haya en el mundo”.<sup>1162</sup> While going over the achievements of his first administration, the president stressed: “Más de 15 millones doscientos mil pesos se han invertido en obras importantísimas, entre las cuales merecen destacarse especialmente la construcción de la Escuela de Ingenieros y Arquitectos de la Universidad, de la Escuela de Derecho, de la Escuela de Aviación”.<sup>1163</sup> Moreover, the president assured that public investment on the institution had grown, for in 1925-1926 the annual budget of the university was of \$877,970, while three years later it had raised to \$1,066,941, thus, he argued: “La Universidad ha visto satisfechas día a día las más grandes aspiraciones de toda su gloriosa existencia”.<sup>1164</sup> Spanish ambassador to Cuba, Manuel Góngora Echenique, who was unsurprisingly a supporter of Machado, visited the university and described its multiple improvements in a book the author began with a warm letter to the Cuban president: “Dentro de la universidad, y en el recinto de sus distintas Facultades, que están insaladas en diferentes edificios, todos ellos de nueva construcción, [...] se encuentran museos, laboratorios, observatorio, bibliotecas y todo cuanto tienda al mejor estudio de las respectivas profesiones”.<sup>1165</sup> It is relevant to note that diplomatic relations between Cuba and Spain under the *machadato* would in general terms be positive mainly during Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship.<sup>1166</sup>

Back to the university, contrary to the success the Kingfish had with his endeavors at LSU, the relationship Machado had with the university throughout his administration

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<sup>1162</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 168.

<sup>1163</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 25.

<sup>1164</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>1165</sup> Manuel Góngora Echenique, *Lo que he visto en Cuba* (Madrid: Imprenta Góngora, 1929), 8. This author ended his account of the visit at the university with a positive yet truly inflated anecdote: “Al despedirnos, los estudiantes no cesaban de estrechar, cordiales, nuestras manos. Emocionado, grité alborozado: ¡Vivan los estudiantes! ¡Vivan los estudiantes!, porque ellos son la nota pintoresca de la ciudad; porque son los precursores de una generación nueva, ansiosa de ideales; porque representan la energía y la intelectualidad de un pueblo; porque serán en lo futuro los que lleven a la vida ciudadana estímulos para toda acción que redunde en provecho de la Patria”, in 12.

<sup>1166</sup> For instance, when the Spanish ambassador to Cuba, Francisco Gutiérrez de Agüera, arrived to Havana in August 1926, the act of presentation of the diplomat’s was “revestido de un ceremonial propio de tales ocasiones, aunque cargado de una brillantez, significación y trascendencia muy superior a la habitual según la prensa habanera y en palabra del propio embajador”, in Macías Martín, *Cuba: crisis política, crisis económica y emigración*, 118-119.

was complicated and deteriorated until the university was closed in 1930 after declaring it was a “seat of Communism”.<sup>1167</sup>

Conversely, four years prior, on May 31, 1926—and, again, as Huey Long would be some years later—, he was invested Doctor Honoris Causa in Public Law.<sup>1168</sup>



**Fig. 28:** Gerardo Machado, “Doctor Honoris Causa con autoridades”, reproduced in *La investidura del presidente de la república, general Gerardo Machado y Morales, en el grado de doctor en derecho público “honoris causa” de la universidad de la Habana, el 31 de mayo de 1926* (Havana: Universidad de la Habana, 1926), p. 217.

The rector, Gerardo Fernández Abreu, and the faculty of the School of Law wanted to acknowledge the grandiose task carried out by the president in the university as well as

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<sup>1167</sup> Benjamin, “The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism”, 74.

<sup>1168</sup> *La investidura del presidente de la república, general Gerardo Machado y Morales, en el grado de doctor en derecho público “honoris causa” de la universidad de la Habana, el 31 de mayo de 1926* (Havana: Universidad de la Habana, 1926). This publication includes the law passed in 1919 under the presidency of García Menocal that allowed the university to invest honoris causa, in *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba*, August 12, 1919, in 15-18. It also contains the minutes of the faculty meeting held on March 11, 1926, in which it was decided to grant Machado the honor, in 35-43. All documents in the book are provided both in Spanish and French, and in some cases also in English. Another member of the *machadato* that would be invested honoris causa was Cuban ambassador to the United States, Orestes Ferrara, who was granted the honor by the University of Florida on June 2, 1930, when the relationship between Cuba and the United States was still cordial: “Grado de Doctor para O. Ferrara”, *Diario de la Marina*, April 14, 1930, 1.

in education in general, which had made the republic more independent and honorable.<sup>1169</sup> The dean of the faculty of law, José del Cueto, who had been an *autonomista* during the war of independence and thus twenty years before would have been Machado's enemy,<sup>1170</sup> made a speech emphasizing: "Con qué orgullo la Universidad abre sus puertas al Honorable Ciudadano que, ganoso de llenar su difícil misión histórica, en el difícil periodo que atravesamos, honra tan señaladamente a la Ciencia y a la Patria".<sup>1171</sup> In the moment of the investment, the rector of the university said: "Habeis demostrado dotes de estadista, gobernante respetuoso de la Ley Fundamental y conecedor de la difícil ciencia de la gobernación, según lo revelan vuestros actos en la Primera Magistratura de la República".<sup>1172</sup> Finally, the secretary of public education and liberal arts, Guillermo Fernández Mascaró, granted the president a medal of honor with Machado's profile on one side, and the national and the university emblems on the other, as a "prueba inequívoca de nuestra estimación".<sup>1173</sup>

Nonetheless, and with some cynicism, the honoree was aware that the university had warranted him the recognition because of his harsh and efficient control of the institution and of rebel students more than as an intellectual or academic honor. In the president's speech that day, which had been written by Lamar Schweyer, Machado "desplegó esa mezcla de vanidad, patriotería y tono autoritario que lo retrataban".<sup>1174</sup> The president openly confessed:

Bien sé yo que al nombrarme la Universidad "Doctor Honorario" no recompensa un talento privilegiado ni una erudición excepcional. Tampoco tendría esta investidura la grandeza que para mí reviste, sino fuera otra cosa que el premio que me otorgan los

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<sup>1169</sup> Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 66.

<sup>1170</sup> *Autonomistas* favored to continue under Spanish rule, albeit with greater autonomy, in Domínguez, "Seeking Permission to Build a Nation", 36.

<sup>1171</sup> José Antolín del Cueto, "Discurso leído, el 31 de mayo de 1926, por el Dr. José A. Del Cueto, Decano de la Facultad de Derecho, en el acto de investidura del grado de doctor en derecho público honoris causa que le fue concedido al general Gerardo Machado y Morales, presidente de la República", *La investidura del presidente de la república*, 71.

<sup>1172</sup> Gerardo Fernández Abreu, "Palabras del Rector de la Universidad", *La investidura del presidente de la república*, 71.

<sup>1173</sup> Guillermo Fernández Mascaró, "Palabras del doctor Guillermo Fernández Mascaró, secretario de instrucción pública y bellas artes, al hacer entrega al doctor General Machado y Morales, presidente de la República, de la medalla conmemorativa de su investidura en el grado de doctor en derecho público 'honoris causa' de la Universidad de La Habana", *La investidura del presidente de la república*, 169.

<sup>1174</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I*, 370.

Profesores por haber terciado en su debate con los estudiantes, poniendo las cosas en su lugar.<sup>1175</sup>

During the celebration of the first year of Machado's administration, a humble Céspedes thanked the president for trusting him with such significant job, and proudly affirmed in his nationalistic speech: "La obra de General Machado en el año que acaba de terminar merece la admiración de Cuba y del mundo entero".<sup>1176</sup> Rodríguez disagrees with Céspedes' praise and writes: "Parecía mentira que un coronel de la Independencia, el hijo del Padre de la Patria, fuera capaz de decir tantas sandeces y verter tantos elogios inmerecidos"—<sup>1177</sup> although, as stated before, it seems the secretary was not related to the national hero. The president, at the same time, commended Céspedes' task and the efficiency of his administration:

Se proyectó por el ilustre Secretario de Obras Públicas, doctor Carlos Miguel de Céspedes (*aplausos nutridos*) [...], un vastísimo plan relacionado con Obras Públicas, cuya ley inmediatamente nos aprobó el Congreso [...] La República no necesita empréstito, porque es tan rica que pronto tendremos dinero para hacer todas las obras planeadas. Ellas se realizarán [...] Se había calculado que la recaudación durante el primer año produciría diez millones de pesos, pues bien, se han recaudado trece millones.<sup>1178</sup>

The president also called Céspedes "hombre de voluntad superior" capable of "concepciones geniales".<sup>1179</sup>

That same year, as explained at the state of the art, a book was published to commemorate Machado's first year as president and commend his work. Its editor, Cuban writer Antonio Berenguer y Sed, who was a personal friend of the dictator, began the text with an extravagant statement: "El General Gerardo Machado y Morales [...] merece la inmortalidad", setting the tone of the book. It consisted of selected speeches, newspaper and magazine articles, and other documents with the goal of adulating the "*asno con garras*" and his administration.<sup>1180</sup> A follower wrote a letter to the compiler

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<sup>1175</sup> Quoted in Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 113; Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 166, and Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I*, 367.

<sup>1176</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 159.

<sup>1177</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 162.

<sup>1178</sup> Machado, "Aseguremos por la independencia económica, la independencia política", 18-19.

<sup>1179</sup> Machado, "De la iniciativa privada depende el progreso de los pueblos", 38.

<sup>1180</sup> Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 3.

of the book expressing his outmost admiration for the necessary task he was carrying out.<sup>1181</sup>

After these first months, Machado's popularity started to grow, although it would only last for a brief period: during the first presidential term. It is no mystery why the politician became so popular. His techniques were similar to those of the Kingfish: Machado dressed in white drill, had a charming personality, and was presenting himself as an unpretentious man of the people.<sup>1182</sup> Moreover, his speeches were appealing and encouraging, for he assured: "Os ha asegurado el Jefe del Estado que su Gobierno será un Gobierno de todos los cubanos, para todos los cubanos y para el bien de todos cuantos con nosotros conviven. Y que no se sentirá satisfecho hasta conseguir su objeto. Señores: ¡Viva Cuba Libre!"<sup>1183</sup> The politician was giving the people some basic needs that had been neglected by previous presidents.

For instance, Machado improved the sanitation system in Cuba. Under his supervision, in 1927 the government sponsored the Instituto Finlay, a health center of medical research for the control of contagious diseases, which was created after a presidential decree passed on January.<sup>1184</sup> Hospitals specialized in the treatment of tuberculosis were built throughout the territory, such as La Esperanza, in a country where that disease was endemic. Additionally, children were vaccinated against typhus in all schools.<sup>1185</sup> Cancer was another of the president's concerns, thus the Instituto del Cáncer de La Habana opened its doors on May 19, 1929,<sup>1186</sup> not coincidentally, the day prior to

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<sup>1181</sup> The letter partially reads: "Te felicito y te aplaudo cordialmente y casi envidia de modo noble, tu iniciativa. Tu obra es buena, ella demuestra tu grandeza de amigo, y tu amor a Cuba [...] Machado se merece el libro, el aplauso intenso y caluroso, el amor de los cubanos y el fuerte abrazo de sus amigos [...] que lo admiramos y respetamos, por ser un magnífico presidente y un gran patriota", Letter from Matías Duque to Antonio Berenguer y Sed, July 8, 1926, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 175.

<sup>1182</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 42.

<sup>1183</sup> Machado, *Discurso del General Gerardo Machado en Oriente*, 14.

<sup>1184</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 200. Carlos Juan Finlay (1833-1915) was a Cuban doctor who, amidst social skepticism, in 1881-1882 discovered that the mosquito *Aedes aegypti* was the carrier and the transmitter of yellow fever, in Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 122. See also McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*, 306-310 An author described the doctor as "uno de los hombres que merecen bien de la humanidad y la gloria médica más alta de Cuba", in González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 197.

<sup>1185</sup> Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 48.

<sup>1186</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 204.

Machado's inauguration for his second term.<sup>1187</sup> Infant mortality also decreased, allegedly from 159.14 in every 100,000 inhabitants to 121.74.<sup>1188</sup> Because of this development in sanitation, González-Blanco was proud to declare: "Cuba es hoy el segundo país sanitario del mundo", and "se coloca Cuba entre las naciones más cuidadosas de su salubridad e higiene públicas".<sup>1189</sup> In a 1929 speech, the president recapitulated his accomplishments in sanitation by listing them: "La terminación del Asilo de Dementes de Mazorra, [...] la construcción del magnífico hospital de Maternidad e Infancia de Santa Clara, la del Instituto del Cáncer [...] valuado en doscientos cincuenta mil pesos, la del Hospital de Jovellanos, y más de quince obras importantes en otras ciudades y poblaciones", which resulted, according to him, in the improvement and enlargement of every hospital in the Republic.<sup>1190</sup>

However, the report by the US Cuban Affairs Committee stated in 1935 that the conditions were far from ideal, for:

Los hospitales, como otras instituciones oficiales, sufrieron mucho durante el régimen de Machado. Los presupuestos de aquéllos se quedaron sin créditos para el necesario equipo científico o las necesidades dietéticas; y aunque se construyó una nueva prisión en la Isla de Pinos, los reformatorios y las cárceles en general se encontraban en condiciones repugnantes que permitían el libre desarrollo de las enfermedades contagiosas. Los más desvalidos de la tierra, los enfermos, los pobres, los locos, los ancianos y los niños, eran las víctimas desconocidas e innumerables de la corrupción administrativa y de la tiranía.<sup>1191</sup>

### 3.5.2 The army

Journalist Carleton Beals clearly stated that "[Machado's] chief instrument of tyranny [was] the army".<sup>1192</sup> Similarly, anti-*machadista* journalist Enrique de la Osa wrote in the 1980s that the military was the "brazo armado de los intereses antinacionales,

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<sup>1187</sup> "Cuba to Inaugurate Gen. Machado Today", *The New York Times*, May 20, 1929, 1.

<sup>1188</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 212.

<sup>1189</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 195.

<sup>1190</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 25, 42. The hospital of Lila Hidalgo was also among the list: "La Inauguración del Hospital Lila Hidalgo, Hoy", *Diario de la Marina*, April 5, 1930, 1; "Han comenzado ya los trabajos para la construcción de hospitales municipales de maternidad e infancia", *Diario de la Marina*, April 6, 1930, 3.

<sup>1191</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 176.

<sup>1192</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 250.

instrumentos del crimen político y fautor de desmanes y arbitrariedades”.<sup>1193</sup> In a speech the Cuban politician gave during a banquet the Armed Forces held in his honor on December 1924, the president-elect showed his confidence in the army and trusted that they would “ayudarme a consagrar la libertad y establecer definitivamente la patria cubana”,<sup>1194</sup> and added: “Este Ejército sostendrá la justicia de mi Gobierno”.<sup>1195</sup> Once he was inaugurated president, in 1926 Machado approved a new *ley Orgánica del Ejército*, which gave the head of state more control over the army than in the previous 1915 law.<sup>1196</sup>

It needs to be clarified that during the *machadato* military expenses did not increase with respect to previous administrations. For instance, during Machado’s first term the president spent 11,019,000.4 pesos on the army, which represented 13.13% of the total budget of the government. Similarly, Alfredo Zayas had spent 10,122,000.9 pesos, which meant 16.09% of the budget.<sup>1197</sup> Also, as armyman Ricardo Adam Silva witnessed, under the previous administration, the 1923 *ley de los Sargentos* was passed, which was aimed at granting prestige to the army by considerably expanding the military budget.<sup>1198</sup> Thus what one could call the militarization of Cuba under Machado came not from an increase of the budget for military purposes, but from the expansion of the army’s influence in all areas of Cuban society. The army would be used as an agent that maintained social order and guaranteed the power of the economic and political elites.<sup>1199</sup>

One of the main differences the Machado administration had with Long’s was the relevance of the armed forces in the government of the former. Although Huey had fully

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<sup>1193</sup> Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 20.

<sup>1194</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Discurso pronunciado por el General Gerardo Machado y Morales, con motivo del banquete homenaje, ofrecido por la oficialidad de las Fuerzas Armadas de la República en el Campamento de Columbia, el día 28 de Diciembre de 1924”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 37.

<sup>1195</sup> *Ibid.* 39.

<sup>1196</sup> “Ley Orgánica del Ejército de 1926”, *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba, Edición Extraordinaria nº 12*, reproduced in Federico Chang, *El ejército nacional en la república neocolonial, 1899-1933* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1981), annex 7, 229-67.

<sup>1197</sup> Numbers extracted from Chang, *El ejército nacional*, 42.

<sup>1198</sup> Ricardo Adams Silva, *La gran mentira: 4 septiembre, 1933, y sus importantes consecuencias* (Havana: Talleres Tipográficos de Editorial Lex, 1947), 17.

<sup>1199</sup> Chang, *El ejército nacional*, 125.

trusted the State Militia and the National Guard in Louisiana, the Cuban was a military man. On the one hand, the Kingfish was a lawyer who had avoided fighting in World War I. General Machado, on the other, had participated in the war of independence, and because of that sacrifice his followers considered him a national hero of sorts. American journalist Westbrook Pegler saw that dissimilarity when writing: “There is a personal difference [between the two politicians]”, and added that “Machado and all his family risked their lives in the field against the Spaniards and his mother had taken to the hills to cook for her husband and the boys. Huey Long is no Machado in this respect”.<sup>1200</sup> The Cuban president and his administration “made a conscious effort to win army support”. But not only that, the administration passed a decree on September 1926 aimed at expanding army jurisdiction to secondary schools, which led to army supervision in education centers, and teaching of marching exercises and basic military science to school students.<sup>1201</sup>

The Machado administration also improved military equipment, introducing a modern air force. In March 5, 1928, a new *Escuela de Aviación* was founded, which was greatly praised by Spanish ambassador Góngora Echenique, who referred to its students as “valerosos militares, que cubren de gloria la insignia cubana con su arrojo, pericia y tenacidad”.<sup>1202</sup> Franco Varona proudly stated in 1927 that “hoy el Ejército Cubano es una institución respetada y admirada por propios y extraños”.<sup>1203</sup> Similarly, González-Blanco wrote: “Han sido innumerables los decretos en los que se provee a la más perfecta organización de las fuerzas de mar y tierra, teniendo Cuba hoy un Ejército que puede servir de ejemplo por su civismo y disciplina a no pocos países de América”.<sup>1204</sup> The always congratulatory Fritz William Berggren explains how the president helped the underdog serve in the military and receive an education, which, according to the author, “speaks not of Machado’s elitism, but of his egalitarianism”.<sup>1205</sup> Conversely, during these years, the army certainly occupied a privileged position in Cuban society. For instance, Beals wrote that while a public hospital patient received a food allowance

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<sup>1200</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough”, *Reading Eagle* (Pennsylvania), February 18, 1935, 4.

<sup>1201</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 56; Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 171.

<sup>1202</sup> Góngora Echenique, *Lo que he visto en Cuba*, 82.

<sup>1203</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado*, 111.

<sup>1204</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 235.

<sup>1205</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 56.

of twelve cents a day, an army mule received thirty-eight cents, implying more possibility for graft. It seems the economic crisis severely affecting other sectors of society, which involved dismissals and reduction of salaries, did not have an impact on this collective. As historian DeConde wrote, Machado “fed and paid well [the army] even when other government employees took salary cuts and their pay was months in arrears”.<sup>1206</sup>

Moreover, the power of the army increased and its presence in society was more palpable. Berggren mistakenly believes that “Machado did not militarize Cuban society—that would not happen until after he was out of office”.<sup>1207</sup> However, a more sensible Hugh Thomas, the renowned Hispanist historian, wrote in his 1971 study of Cuba that the president began to use the army as an extraordinary body of civil servants, which could be seen in most ministries.<sup>1208</sup> Americanist historian Dexter Perkins noted that under Machado’s administration, “the armed forces took direct control in one of the most brutally repressive regimes in Cuban history”.<sup>1209</sup> The growth in power of the army was linked with the raise of corruption. As Suchlicki narrates: “Machado had successfully won over the military through bribes and threats and had purged disloyal officers. He used the military in a variety of civilian posts both at the national and local level, thus increasing militarizing society”.<sup>1210</sup> This situation became so extreme that in the last months of the regime Cuba became “one vast armed camp”.<sup>1211</sup>

### 3.6 The dangerous reelection

Due to his harsh policies towards the communists, university students, newspapers, and other sectors of Cuban society, Marxist historian Rolando Rodríguez calls the system that was established in the country after 1926 a “pax romana”, during which all groups had been silenced, and therefore the “*asno*” could rule as he pleased.<sup>1212</sup> One issue that serves as an example of this behavior is reelection. Machado had promised his

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<sup>1206</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover’s Latin-American Policy*, 104.

<sup>1207</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 57.

<sup>1208</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 429.

<sup>1209</sup> Perkins, *The United States and the Caribbean*, 61.

<sup>1210</sup> Suchlicki, *Cuba*, 116.

<sup>1211</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 251.

<sup>1212</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 172.

administration would last four years and that he, in accordance with the constitution, would not seek to prolongue his power. The president had stated so already during the 1924 campaign believing reelection was ill suited for a liberal politician.<sup>1213</sup> In fact, one of the main points of his political program in 1924 had literally been: “Los Presidentes liberales no pueden reelegirse”.<sup>1214</sup> De Quesada y Miranda wrote: “Era su casi cotidiano juramento de no ir a la reelección”.<sup>1215</sup> When his term ended, his main goal was to continue in politics but in a modest position as mayor of his hometown, Santa Clara, as he had been some years prior.<sup>1216</sup> In a speech the president made in the province of Oriente in 1926,<sup>1217</sup> he clearly stated: “Creo que en nuestro país una reelección presidencial es peligrosa”.<sup>1218</sup> In another address Machado made at the Center of Veterans in Santiago de Cuba he assured: “Yo no necesito la reelección. Yo juro ante los veteranos que no vengo a gestionar mi designación para un nuevo período. Cuando entregue mi Poder volveré a mi casa”.<sup>1219</sup>

His positioning around this matter kept shifting, and soon the president valued the possibility of reelection but only as a burden he had to endure in order to please the majority of the Cuban people who wanted him to remain in power.<sup>1220</sup> He also justified his decision by stating that most of the public works started during his administration

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<sup>1213</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 24.

<sup>1214</sup> Barraqué, “El Presidente Electo Gral. Gerardo Machado”, 278; Franco Varona, *Machado*, 45.

<sup>1215</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 89.

<sup>1216</sup> The president affirmed his future political intentions in a speech he made in Santa Clara on December 31, 1925, after reenacting his arrival to the city after the end of the war of independence in 1898 entering on a horse and wearing a mambí uniform, according to Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 144.

<sup>1217</sup> Until 1976, the province of Oriente included five current provinces: Las Tunas, Granma, Holguín, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo. Nowadays, “Oriente” is still used to broadly refer to that part of the island.

<sup>1218</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Seamos dignos de nuestros mártires (discurso pronunciado delante el Consejo Local de Veteranos de la Independencia de Santiago de Cuba, en la mañana del 24 de Junio de 1926)”, *Por la patria libre: discursos pronunciados por el General Gerardo Machado y Morales, Presidente de la República de Cuba, durante su excursión a las provincias de Oriente y Camagüey del 21 al 26 de junio de 1926* (Havana: Imp. de F. Verdugo, 1926), 31, Special Collections, Latin American Library, Tulane University.

<sup>1219</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Hermosísimas palabras del Gral. Machado en el Centro de Veteranos de Santiago de Cuba”, 1925-1926, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 174.

<sup>1220</sup> Historian Robert Crassweller related a very similar evolution in the political career of the dictator of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Leónidas Trujillo (1891-1961), who in 1933 assured would not run for reelection the next year, but in April 1934 announced he had been nominated for reelection by his political party and gladly accepted, although he assured was only following “the will of men and the wish of women”, in Robert D. Crassweller, *Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1966), 105-106.

would not be finished by 1929 and, therefore, he felt it was irresponsible on his part to leave the country in such conditions. Thus in the summer of 1927 the president announced he would officially seek reelection by altering the 1901 constitution.<sup>1221</sup> Reelection was not a new topic in Cuba at the beginning of the twentieth century. For instance, as has been stated at the beginning of this chapter, president García Menocal had assured himself a second unclear term, and after the end of his second term was approaching had toyed with the idea again in 1920, although to no avail.<sup>1222</sup> But Machado played his cards rather well and the shenanigan triumphed, at least for a brief period. His supporter Pedro González-Blanco narrated: “Hombre que como el general Machado coloca por encima de los intereses partidarios el, como él mismo dice, más principal, más noble, el interés cubano, no podía desoir las voces de quienes lo consideraban insustituible [*sic*]”.<sup>1223</sup> It is ironic that a man who had participated in the 1917 *Chambelona* uprising against the reelection of Menocal, and who had resigned from his post as *Secretario de Gobernación* in 1912 allegedly because of president Gómez’s intention to reelect himself, now all of a sudden believed it to be the right path for him.<sup>1224</sup>

Machado took what historian Jules R. Benjamin called in the 1970s “pseudo-legal”<sup>1225</sup> measures in order to approve an extension or *prórroga* of two more years in the presidency. The president arranged a sort of coalition between the three main political parties, that is, the Liberal, the Conservative, and the Popular, to support him in the process in the form known as *cooperativismo*, a consensus achieved through coercion and favors, and by granting the extension of the term for two more years to senators,

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<sup>1221</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 69.

<sup>1222</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 105; Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 20. In fact, the 1901 Cuban constitution established: “SECCIÓN SEGUNDA. *Del Presidente de la República y de sus atribuciones y deberes* [...] Art. 66. El Presidente de la República será elegido por sufragio de segundo grado, en un solo día, y conforme al procedimiento que establezca la ley. El cargo durará cuatro años y nadie podrá ser Presidente en tres periodos consecutivos”, *Constitución de la República de Cuba*, 1901, Biblioteca Jurídica Virtual, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, biblio.juridicas.unam.mx.

<sup>1223</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 55.

<sup>1224</sup> This had also happened in Mexico, where the aforementioned Porfirio Díaz, once a champion of anti-reelection, “sufragio efectivo, no reelección”, was ousted under the same slogan. For more of the *porfiriato*, see Carleton Beals, *Porfirio Diaz, Dictator of Mexico* (Philadelphia; And London: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1932).

<sup>1225</sup> Benjamin, “The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism”, 78.

representatives, mayors, ministers, and councilmen.<sup>1226</sup> Historian Alejandro de la Fuente argues: “*Cooperativismo* was the most visible indicator of the traditional parties’ incapacity to modernize the political structure of the country and give any concrete meaning to republican democracy”,<sup>1227</sup> and historian Calixto Masó affirms that it “anuló la lucha entre los partidos”.<sup>1228</sup> In all, *cooperativismo* “ended all semblance of party independence and political competition, the traditional sources of anti-reelectionist violence”.<sup>1229</sup> Márquez Sterling had witnessed how, “con el vano pretexto de coadyuvar a la obra patriótica y constructiva del Gobierno, se ligaron entorno suyo los partidos políticos, tan estrechamente solidarizados, que no se oyeron más los acentos vibrantes de la oposición”.<sup>1230</sup> This same author even concluded: “El ‘cooperativismo’ anulaba los impulsos del sentimiento y los de la razón”.<sup>1231</sup> Correspondingly, Enrique Lumen stressed in 1934: “Fue aquí donde murieron los partidos históricos, porque el desengaño del pueblo no tuvo límites”.<sup>1232</sup> With a strong Marxist approach, decades later historian Ramón de Armas passionately argued:

Esta fusión [el cooperativismo] no solo marcó la separación de las masas trabajadoras respecto a la política tradicional de la burguesía cubana y señaló el fin de la hegemonía de los dos grandes partidos [...] sino que marcó, además, el auge—con la fundación en el propio 1925 del primer Partido Comunista de Cuba—de la etapa contemporánea del movimiento de liberación nacional, que en nuestra patria se caracteriza por la entrada en la escena política de las fuerzas verdaderamente y consecuentemente revolucionarias.<sup>1233</sup>

In fact, the establishment of the cooperativista experiment was, to some extent, the elimination of partisanship and implementation of a one-party rule, which, according to political scientist Paul Brooker, “became a real contender for the title of being the century’s preminent form of dictatorship, and its examples can be viewed as being in that sense *the* twentieth-century dictatorship”.<sup>1234</sup> In that sense, historian Sergio López

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<sup>1226</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 260-261.

<sup>1227</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 94.

<sup>1228</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 528.

<sup>1229</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Cuba under the Platt Amendment*, 273.

<sup>1230</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 51.

<sup>1231</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 53.

<sup>1232</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 47.

<sup>1233</sup> Armas, “Esquema para un análisis de los partidos políticos burgueses en Cuba”, 83-84.

<sup>1234</sup> Paul Brooker, *Twentieth-Century Dictatorships: The Ideological One-Party States* (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1995), 1-2. This author, however, does not further discuss the Partido Liberal in Cuba under the *machadato*, only the Castro regime, in 231-238.

Rivero has argued that the most striking aspect of the *machadato* was that the Cuban president moved from a liberal position to the extreme authoritarian right, “arrastrando consigo a quienes hasta ese momento representaban el centro-derecha y el centro-izquierda”, thus leaving a vacuum in the left that would soon be filled by extreme leftist movements.<sup>1235</sup>

The “*asno con garras*” also sought for approval in the United States. After a meeting with Coolidge, the American president gladly accepted the proposal of reelection by stating that Cuban people should have the political government they wished, whichever that may be.<sup>1236</sup>

This *cooperativista* experiment was the result of decades of dominance of an elite composed of veterans of the war of independence. Machado, a veteran himself, had been able to join them together with the economic elites. Historian Louis Pérez argues how the president was the culmination of an age of a certain type politician that was heir to the *caudillos* of the wars of independence.<sup>1237</sup> As the author puts it: “The economic sectors, foreign and domestic, and American diplomacy [...] found comfort in the *machadista* consensus as an arrangement promising to stabilize intra-elite competition for power”.<sup>1238</sup> Thus the process of reelection was, of course, more complex than simply one man’s thirst for power.

As a result of these arrangements, the Cuban Congress approved several resolutions which took the form of amendments to the constitution that permitted the head of state to lengthen the duration of his presidency. All political parties endorsed this, and thus Machado’s term was officially prolonged when on June 20, 1927, Congress passed the

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<sup>1235</sup> Sergio López Rivero, *El viejo traje de la revolución: identidad colectiva, mito y hegemonía política en Cuba* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2007), 60-61.

<sup>1236</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 57; Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 236; Pérez, Jr., *Cuba under the Platt Amendment*, 272; Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 175; Wood, “La política del buen vecino”, 45-46.

<sup>1237</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Cuba under the Platt Amendment*, 257. For more on nineteenth-century Latin American caudillos, see John Lynch, *Caudillos in Spanish America, 1800-1850* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1992); Hugh M. Hamill, *Caudillos: Dictators in Spanish America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992); Enrique Krauze, *Biografía del poder: caudillos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1910-1940* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1997); Alcides Argüedas, *Los caudillos bárbaros* (La Paz: Juventud, 1981); Alcides Argüedas, *Los caudillos letrados* (La Paz: Juventud, 1981).

<sup>1238</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 58.

Constitutional Reform Bill by an almost unanimous vote, and later in the Senate twenty voted yes and two against.<sup>1239</sup> Conservative congressman who witnessed this process Carlos Manuel de la Cruz wrote a few years later how: “La abyección política en que cayeron las mayorías de la Cámara y del Senado, en adulaciones constantes al dictador, llegó al servilismo más degradante y por ellas sintió repugnancia todo el país”.<sup>1240</sup> Machado humbly accepted the modification of the constitution by announcing: “Por mi parte acepto lo que hay en esa Ley de honor y de sacrificio al propio tiempo”.<sup>1241</sup>

Moreover, that bill was finally modified and instead of broadening the administration two years, the president would be reelected for a new term thus extending the machadato six more years to last until May 20, 1935.<sup>1242</sup> Thus the *Official Gazzette of the Republic of Cuba* added the following regulation to the Constitution of the country:

La primera elección que se efectúe después de la aprobación de esta reforma, será en el año de mil novecientos veinte y ocho, para cubrir el cargo de Presidente de la República, y el primer periodo presidencial de acuerdo con la reforma aprobada del artículo sesenta y seis [which established that no President could govern for two consecutive terms], comenzará a contarse desde el día veinte de mayo de mil novecientos veinte y nueve.<sup>1243</sup>

There was a legal problem regarding the manner in which the alteration of the constitution was developed. Machado had hand-picked a constitutional convention that hurried to obey the president’s wishes. Yet according to article 115, all amendments had to be proposed by Congress, and then submitted to a plebiscite.<sup>1244</sup> Prominent lawyers in

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<sup>1239</sup> Benjamin, “The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism”, 67; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 73; Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 115; Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 229.

<sup>1240</sup> De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 7.

<sup>1241</sup> Quoted in Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 116.

<sup>1242</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 131; Vega Vega, *Cuba, su historia constitucional*, 59.

<sup>1243</sup> *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba. Edición Extraordinaria N.º. 6 - Reforma de la Constitución de la República*, May 11, 1928, 4, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series V, box 14, folder 12, UMD. Fragment quoted in Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 62.

<sup>1244</sup> The Constitution established: “TÍTULO XIV. *De la Reforma de la Constitución*. Art. 115. La Constitución no podrá reformarse, total ni parcialmente, sino por acuerdo de las dos terceras partes del número total de los miembros de cada Cuerpo Colegiador. Seis meses después de acordada la reforma, se procederá a convocar una Convención Constituyente, que se limitará a aprobar o desechar la reforma votada por los Cuerpos Colegisladores, los cuales continuarán en el ejercicio de sus funciones con entera independencia de la Convención. Los Delegados a dicha Convención serán elegidos por provincia, en la proporción de uno cada cincuenta mil habitantes, y en la forma que establezcan las leyes”, *Constitución de la República de Cuba*, 1901, Biblioteca Jurídica Virtual, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, biblio.juridicas.unam.mx.

Cuba protested the irregularity through an appeal, but were unsuccessful.<sup>1245</sup> The regime's opponents argued that those maneuvers were unconstitutional thus categorizing the second term of the president as illegitimate. The newspaper *New Orleans States* was a bit condescending with these allegations when publishing: "Some political purists question the constitutionality of the arrangement, but the majority accept the new deal".<sup>1246</sup> Similarly, Spanish newspaper *ABC* related: "Por primera vez un presidente de la República cubana es reelegido no sólo sin complicación, sino hasta con la unanimidad de los partidos", and concluded: "La reelección del general Gerardo Machado ha sido unánime, como merecía serlo".<sup>1247</sup>

That was not the opinion of a segment of the Cuban population. Although González-Blanco wrote that the only ones against reelection were those who were seeking to obtain power themselves,<sup>1248</sup> there were multiple expressions of discontent. Masó wrote that the process of reelection:

No fue bien recibido por la opinión pública, aunque solamente se atrevieron a expresar su repudio los políticos desplazados por el cooperativismo, así como algunos intelectuales y estudiantes de la Universidad de la Habana, aunque no cabe duda de que este hecho señala el inicio del debilitamiento del respaldo que gran parte del país había dado al gobierno.<sup>1249</sup>

This was not the same interpretation journalist R. Hart Phillips gave when writing that:

There was no resistance to the Prorogue Measure, neither by the public, nor by the opposition parties. When Machado made the announcement, which made him a virtual dictator, former president Mario Menocal sat on the platform and clapped his hands benignly. Only Colonel Carlos Mendieta refused to attend the inauguration. Only the students of Havana University protested.<sup>1250</sup>

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<sup>1245</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 255; Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 531. Author A. Armando Alejandro concluded: "Es, pues, absolutamente incontrovertible que el régimen que gobernó a Cuba en este segundo periodo, después de 1929, era ilegal y que, desprovisto de toda juridicidad, se empeñó en mantenerse en el poder, sin ánimo de rectificar, en contra de la voluntad soberana del pueblo", in A. Armando Alejandro, "Administración del presidente general Gerardo Machado y Morales. Segundo periodo 1929-1933", in *Ciclo de Conferencias sobre los Presidentes de Cuba, 1868-1933* (Miami: Ramón Guiterras Intercultural Center, 1985), 13.

<sup>1246</sup> Rukeyser, "Machado to Keep Hands Off Sugar", *New Orleans States*, July 15, 1930, 3.

<sup>1247</sup> "La reelección del presidente Machado", *ABC*, November 2, 1928, 27.

<sup>1248</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 57.

<sup>1249</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 529-530.

<sup>1250</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 5.

But there was relevant political movement against reelection. Ignoring the July 20, 1928, *ley de emergencia electoral*,<sup>1251</sup> which banned the formation of new political parties, a sector of opposition politicians led by former member of the Partido Liberal and Machado's rival Carlos Mendieta founded the anti-*machadista* Partido Unión Nacionalista (Nationalist Union Party) that year.<sup>1252</sup> According to Carleton Beals, however, the organization was "absolutely proscribed, its members [suffered] death and constant persecution".<sup>1253</sup> The *Unión* would indeed be persecuted and banned.<sup>1254</sup> Nonetheless, the party would pose strong opposition against Machado, particularly during his last years as president.<sup>1255</sup> For instance, on May 1930 they released an open letter to the "*asno con garras*" and to Céspedes accusing both of reckless spending and of misappropriating public funds for the construction of public works. Mendieta denounced the administration for unnecessarily raising the taxes and for having borrowed more than \$100,000,000 from US bankers.<sup>1256</sup> Similarly, senator Fausto García Menocal—the brother of the former president—wrote an open letter to the president, which would be published in *El Diario de la Marina*, proposing a new bill to the Senate that would be aimed at reorganizing the existing political parties and repealing all electoral laws passed after 1919.<sup>1257</sup>

Outside the political class there was also opposition to the reelection mischief. Historian Jaime Suchlicki has written how "Machado's decision to remain in power for another term was the spark that ignited student opposition".<sup>1258</sup> University students were involved in several protests in the autumn of 1927, which ended in several of them

<sup>1251</sup> Simons emphasizes how after Congress passed the bill, "the US government made no comment", in Simons, *Cuba*, 237.

<sup>1252</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 175; Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 530.

<sup>1253</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 245.

<sup>1254</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I*, 414.

<sup>1255</sup> In a manifesto signed by Mendieta in 1929, the author called the reelection an "inaudito golpe de estado" and lamented: "Rostros compungidos, discursos incendiarios, patriotería barata y anatemas contra los americanos, tal es el espectáculo que dan en los presentes días los hombres que usurpan el Poder, frente a una posible actuación de la Cancillería de Washington, justamente alarmada por el estado político actual de Cuba, en el que la propiedad y las garantías individuales se encuentran a expensas del capricho y de la pasión de un Gobierno que no es producto de la voluntad pública, que no debe la existencia al recto y ordenado funcionamiento de las leyes, sino a la burla y al desconocimiento de las más esenciales", in Carlos Mendieta, "Al pueblo de Cuba", October 28, 1929, quoted in Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 98-99.

<sup>1256</sup> "Accuse Machado of Reckless Spending", *New Orleans States*, May 7, 1930, 1.

<sup>1257</sup> "El Senador Menocal Propone que se Deroguen las Leyes Posteriores al Código Electoral de Agosto 8-1929", *Diario de la Marina*, April 22, 1930, 1.

<sup>1258</sup> Suchlicki, *Cuba*, 115.

being expelled from the institution.<sup>1259</sup> The main protagonist of these demonstrations was the aforementioned *Directorio Estudiantil Universitario* (DEU) which actively protested against reelection and initiated a process of radicalization among university students, who no longer wanted only to oust the president but also to carry out a social revolution.<sup>1260</sup> There were demonstrations at the university in which shouts against the regime and its leader were heard. Marxist historian Lionel Soto assured that most of university student from all departments participated in these protests.<sup>1261</sup> They resulted in the expulsion of most of the *Directorio* managers and several other students.<sup>1262</sup> Renowned Cuban doctor Juan Antiga Escobar (1871-1939), who was member of the Grupo Minorista, an association of young intellectuals, supported the DEU and the student's fight throughout the *machadato* by arguing in 1927:

Los jóvenes universitarios no han sido comprendidos o, mejor dicho, no se les ha querido comprender. Planearon el ejercicio de un derecho legítimo y fueron atropellados; protestaron la violación de su Alma Mater y fueron violentamente expulsados [...] Nunca en la historia de nuestra Universidad han tenido más razón nuestros muchachos en lo que han pedido: Defender los fueros de la institución contra el abuso de poder; la libre discusión de las ideas [...] Nunca han sido más mesurados, correctos, prudentes y unidos. Nunca se han presentado ante la consideración de pueblo cubano con mayor altivez, dignidad y civismo.<sup>1263</sup>

The 1927 events in the university sphere would be crucial to understanding the student's involvement in the overthrow of Machado the following years. These university students rebelling against the *machadato* would be later referred to as "*la generación*

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<sup>1259</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 12-13; González Palacios, *Revolución y pseudo-revolución*, 25.

<sup>1260</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 54.

<sup>1261</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I*, 398; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 154-155.

<sup>1262</sup> Suchlicki, *Cuba*, 117. Historian Lionel Soto offered a list of twenty-one students that were expelled on December 1, 1927, from one to ten years, and even indefinitely, from the university, in Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I*, 417-418; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 168-169. A Cuban student published an account of the events two years later. He wrote: "[S]e entabló una lucha que provocaron los porrazos de los policías y los culatazos del Ejército, que casi eran insuficientes para acallar los gritos de protesta de los estudiantes a los cuales el pueblo secundaba. Varios estudiantes heridos y otros detenidos fue el balance de aquella primera demostración del descontento universitario a la Tiranía de Machado. Días después, la Universidad era tomada por las fuerzas de la Policía [...] Mas, los estudiantes se acrecentaron en la protesta, y, entonces, el Secretariode Instrucción Pública, acatando los deseos del presidente, dio calor a los Consejos de Disciplina que expulsaron de la Universidad a 62 alumnos", in Velázquez, *La tiranía en Cuba*, 15.

<sup>1263</sup> Juan Antiga y Escobar, *Escritos políticos y sociales. Vol. III* (Madrid: Talleres Espasa-Calpe, s.a., 1931), 136-37.

del 30” (the generation of 1930).<sup>1264</sup> Logically, Marxist author Francisco López Segrera has also vindicated the relevance of the Communist Party in these first strikes against the regime.<sup>1265</sup> This same author concluded that from then on, and until the downfall of the Cuban president in 1933, the Republic would be in a constant state of agitation.<sup>1266</sup> Fidel Castro’s supporter Rolando Rodríguez has qualified Machado’s maneuver as “repugnante para los principios de gobierno republicano, particularmente cuando era para el beneficio de las personas que estaban ahora en los cargos”.<sup>1267</sup>

*Continuismo* is often understood to be one of the main characteristics of Latin American rulers.<sup>1268</sup> While this belief is a stereotypical simplified generalization and one can easily pinpoint cases of leaders throughout the world that stayed in power beyond their term, in the case of Cuba, Machado serves as a Caribbean example. The president had published a pamphlet in which he listed all the achievements undertaken during his administration thus justifying the need for reelection.<sup>1269</sup> And so on November 1, 1928, the “*asno con garras*” won a solitary election in which he had been the only candidate.<sup>1270</sup> In his 1998 dissertation, Spanish historian Macías Marín described them as a “*mero trámite*”,<sup>1271</sup> and journalist Beals as a “fake election”.<sup>1272</sup> Once more, however, the candidate justified his “sacrifice”:

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<sup>1264</sup> Segura Bustamante, *Cuba siglo XX y la generación de 1930*; Suchlicki, *University Students*, 26. It is interesting to note, however, that years later, member of the DEU and the Communist Party Raúl Roa criticized many of the members of this generation by arguing that “la mayoría [de revolucionarios] está cundida de oportunistas, farsantes, politiqueros, mediocres, reaccionarios, ambiciosos y tráfugas”, in Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. II*, 791.

<sup>1265</sup> Francisco López Segrera, “Orígenes, desarrollo y frustración de la revolución de 1933”, in *Los partidos políticos burgueses en Cuba neocolonial, 1899-1952*, 102.

<sup>1266</sup> López Segrera, “Orígenes, desarrollo y frustración de la revolución de 1933”, 109.

<sup>1267</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 226.

<sup>1268</sup> See Hamill, *Caudillos*.

<sup>1269</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Declarations of General Gerardo Machado y Morales regarding his electoral platform as presidential candidate in the elections which will take place on this first of November 1928* (Havana: Rambla, Bouza y Ca., 1928). This text was published in Belgium with some modifications destined to a European audience: Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Le général Gerardo Machado et son oeuvre présidentielle à Cuba” (Brussels: Impr. Odry-Mommens, 1928). Latin American Pamphlet Digital Project at Harvard University, Harvard Library, [hollis.harvard.edu](http://hollis.harvard.edu).

<sup>1270</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Révolution a Cuba*, 15; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 82. *Literary Digest* published: “President Gerardo Machado is reelected President of Cuba for six years”, in “Current Events – Foreign”, *The Literary Digest*, November 17, 1928, 89.

<sup>1271</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 254.

<sup>1272</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 255.

Sería yo [...] un egoísta si no escuchase esas voces de los partidos políticos, de los miembros de la reciente Convención Constituyente, de los componentes de ambas ramas del Congreso, [...] y sobre todo de la gran mayoría del pueblo cubano, que en innumerables ocasiones ha demostrado su adhesión a mi política de actividades continuas y de progreso moral y material.<sup>1273</sup>

In the aforementioned pamphlet the president affirmed he had not heard a single criticism of his regime.<sup>1274</sup> He must not have been listening carefully, for Cuban congressman Carlos Manuel de la Cruz was relentless when he affirmed in a speech given in Congress on March 28, 1927: “Mantenerse en el Poder o prorrogar el mandato, es un golpe de estado”.<sup>1275</sup> In the following years, this sentiment would spread throughout the country. Thus one could conclude that the reelection process was a political tomb Machado was unconsciously digging for himself. As Macías Marín has put it:

Sus principales errores fueron políticos y se cristalizaron en el denominado ‘cooperativismo’ y en la prórroga de poderes, que truncó las ambiciones a corto plazo de determinados sectores de la oposición política. En este sentido, al tiempo que su mandato discurría por el sendero de la dictadura, la crisis económica, auténtico telón de fondo de sus últimos años de gobierno, aceleró las contradicciones y la presión popular y del movimiento obrero.<sup>1276</sup>

In all, Machado’s popularity was severely undermined by his successful attempt at reelection in 1928.<sup>1277</sup> Unaware of the consequences that were to come, and confident in his own capacity to control any challenge, Machado gave his second inaugural speech on May 20, 1929, in the main hall of the new capitol building.<sup>1278</sup> In his presentation he mainly argued for the need for reelection by saying that before his arrival to the presidency the country was in “constante agitación electoral, haciéndose sumamente difícil la acción gubernativa y legislativa, libre y bien dirigida, en servicio de los intereses generales de la nación”, and that reelection allowed “la existencia de

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<sup>1273</sup> Quoted in Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 133. Again, congressman Carlos Manuel de la Cruz was convinced that “esas declaraciones nos llevan de la mano a afirmar que el Presidente de la República es el autor y principal interesado en la reforma constitucional y en la prórroga de poderes”, in De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 68.

<sup>1274</sup> Machado y Morales, “Declarations of General Gerardo Machado y Morales regarding his electoral platform”, 11.

<sup>1275</sup> De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 69.

<sup>1276</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 243.

<sup>1277</sup> Macías Martín, *Cuba: crisis política, crisis económica y emigración*, 183.

<sup>1278</sup> “Cuba to Inaugurate Gen. Machado Today”, *The New York Times*, May 20, 1929, 1; Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 263.

Gobiernos y de Congresos más libremente dedicados a administrar y legislar en beneficio de la nación, exentos de compromisos políticos y de constantes preocupaciones electorales”.<sup>1279</sup> He presented himself as the humble servant of the people who, according to him: “Hizo buena su mi propia determinación [de presentarme para la reelección], tomada después de meditarla hondamente, e inspirada, no en mezquinas ambiciones de mando o de poder, sino en el alto y noble propósito de servir los mejores intereses de Cuba”.<sup>1280</sup> In opposition to this perspective, an anti-*machadista* pamphlet revised the cooperativista process by assuring: “Quería asegurarse, por medio de un buen golpe, una larga temporada en el Gobierno, y lo logró por medio de dos maniobras llenas de cinismo”.<sup>1281</sup> Regardless of that worrisome opinion, Spanish magazine *Cosmópolis* praised the Cuban president by defining him as a self-made man, and assured that thirty-three nations were represented in the inauguration ceremony.<sup>1282</sup> Huey Long also commonly resorted to the self-made man idea. *Cosmópolis*, moreover, admired Machado’s “altas dotes de inteligencia y laboriosidad”, and concluded that he was “uno de los más ilustres de los gobernantes de nuestra época”.<sup>1283</sup> Berggren explains the process of reelection as a lesser evil compared to previous administrations, and believes Machado’s self-justification:

Machado was at the apex of his popularity when his term was set to expire. Believing that the vast majority of Cubans desired him to continue in office, and earnestly desiring to complete his ambitious projects of national reconstruction, Machado sought a second term in office with a cooperative legislative branch. Certainly in their minds this was preferable to turning the government back over to Menocal or risk losing the great progress made under Machado’s administration. His presidency was clearly a radical break from previous administrations.<sup>1284</sup>

The Cuban president was sure of himself, at least officially, as the following quote indicates: “He construido, dicho sea sin jactancia, más numerosas, más importantes y más útiles obras públicas que todos los gobiernos anteriores juntos; [...] he

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<sup>1279</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 4-5. Speech partly reproduced in “La República de Cuba”, 23, and fully reproduced in González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 237-262.

<sup>1280</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 11.

<sup>1281</sup> Comité de Jóvenes Revolucionarios Cubanos, *El terror en Cuba*, 40.

<sup>1282</sup> “La República de Cuba”, *Cosmópolis*, September 1929, 20.

<sup>1283</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>1284</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 61.

proporcionado abundante trabajo a los obreros en un período de casi constante depresión económica; [...] no he descuidado un momento la salud pública”.<sup>1285</sup>

Nonetheless, together with the end of his first term and the unexpected reformation of the constitution that had allowed him to continue in power, the global economic crisis that erupted after 1929 started a period of decline of the *machadato*. His “pax Cubana” was ending. The worldwide economic depression would affect the Cuban economy and society more deeply than any prior crisis, and consequently the opposition against Machado increased in the following years. Macías Martín argues that after 1928 the president “no era ya el hombre capaz de mantener unido el espíritu público, de hermanar voluntades para la consecución de un ideal único”.<sup>1286</sup> In the eyes of his supporters, however, the issue was that Machado was not understood, and that “había tenido la mala suerte de comenzar aquella magna obra en el momento mismo en que el mundo se iba a declarar en bancarrota. Esto, no podían entenderlo así los que actuaban de buena fe y que creían no tener en frente más que a un tirano y un ladrón, y no les convenía entenderlo a los viejos políticos que lo habían desertado”.<sup>1287</sup>

On the contrary, after witnessing the process of reelection, professor Leland H. Jenks wrote in 1928:

La administración de Machado, inaugurada el 20 de mayo de 1925, es típicamente cubana. Ha desarrollado su programa de “moralización” de tal modo, que varios miles de funcionarios han entrado a engrosar las nóminas del Estado. Ha elaborado un proyecto de reforma constitucional que automáticamente eleva de cuatro a nueve años el periodo de todos los altos cargos electivos [...] Hay asesinatos políticos, deportaciones de agitadores extranjeros, encarcelamiento de jefes obreros sin procedimiento judicial. Se gastan millones en un súbito embellecimiento de La Habana, mientras avanza muy despacio la extensión de las mejoras docentes a la plebe semianalfabeta.<sup>1288</sup>

Aside from the rising opposition and the complicated second term of Machado’s administration, the president never publicly regretted the reelection process. Still in

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<sup>1285</sup> Machado, *Manifiesto al país del Presidente de la República General Gerardo Machado y Morales: al iniciar el período presidencial de 1929 a 1935*, 47.

<sup>1286</sup> Macías Martín, “El perfil de un dictador antillano”, 245.

<sup>1287</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 455.

<sup>1288</sup> Jenks, *Nuestra colonia de Cuba*, 250.

1931, in the midst of revolts that would lead to the revolution of two years later, the “*asno con garras*” spoke about reelection in positive terms:

Recompensa generosa de aquel esfuerzo ingente, sanción enaltecedora para mí, fue mi proclamación para un segundo período presidencial. Acto precedido de infinitas demostraciones colectivas, recordándome el deber patriótico de no interrumpir la obra iniciada [...] Cien mil cubanos, en muchedumbre delirante, que llegó a las grandes mismas del Capitolio, mostraron, ante las representaciones extranjeras, la voluntad del sufragio, imponiéndome la permanencia en el poder [...] Lo hice por Cuba y no me pesa.<sup>1289</sup>

In a similar tone, ambassador Orestes Ferrara believed that “si bien cometió errores, en tesis general [Machado] no faltó al propósito de honorabilidad administrativa que se había impuesto”.<sup>1290</sup> After the Sixth Pan-American Conference in 1928, which will be further explained in the following chapter, and the process of reelection, the president had reached his climax as a politician in Cuba to the point that, as an author wrote satirically, “cuando Machado preguntaba la hora, la contestación bien podría ser aun: ‘La que usted quiera, mi General!’”<sup>1291</sup> After analyzing the *machadato*, Masó stated that instead of water, roads, and schools his real political program had been “orden y desarrollo económico” (order and economic development),<sup>1292</sup> which had made him endlessly popular.

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<sup>1289</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Al pueblo de Cuba: a todos: extranjeros y nacionales. En lo hondo de nuestros actuales problemas se esconde la agresión comunista implacable* (Havana: Fernández Solana y Cía., 1931), 8-9, Special Collections, Latin American Library, Tulane University, New Orleans.

<sup>1290</sup> Ferrara, *Una mirada sobre tres siglos*, 278.

<sup>1291</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 152; Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la República. Tomo I*, 230.

<sup>1292</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 534.

## PART TWO: POWER IN THE GREATER CARIBBEAN

### CHAPTER FOUR: DEVIATING FROM “THE NORTH”

Historically, Louisiana’s relationship with the “North” has been a complicated one. Since becoming part of the United States after the 1803 purchase, the intricacies of the Pelican State have made it, as stated in the introduction, a particular entity within the United States, even in comparison to other southern states. One of the issues that come to mind when analyzing this difference is the arguably hierarchical connections with Washington, D.C. Through the analysis of Huey Long’s arrival to the capital after winning the senatorial election, this chapter will focus on the complex and somewhat polemical relationship between the southern state and the federal government, and particularly with its main representative, that is, president Franklin Delano Roosevelt—although Long would also be very critical with its predecessor, Herbert Hoover. The Kingfish’s interaction with US presidents shifted from cordiality to hostility only in a few months.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Cuba’s situation was also complex due to the Platt Amendment and the Treaty of Reciprocity, both signed with the United States after the war of independence, which would be a constant reminder of the island’s subordination to the “North”—the term, “*el norte*”, was used by Cubans themselves at the time to refer to the powerful neighbor.<sup>1293</sup> Historian Norman A. Bailey argued in his 1966 study of dictatorships in Spanish America that, particularly after 1895, the United States had acted as a sort of “international *caudillo*” or “*patrón*” towards Latin American countries—substituting Great Britain in that role—, meaning that through a paternalistic attitude the US had established “feudal” economic relationships with the “South”. In

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<sup>1293</sup> For instance, in his 1926 compilation of speeches and newspaper articles about Machado, Antonio Berenguer y Sed included an article published by the Washington newspaper *Evening Star*. To introduce it, Berenguer entitled the section “Cómo nos ven en el norte”, in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 31. Similarly, author González Palacios wrote in 1948 that one of the main problems of his current Cuba had been “la sumisión espiritual ante el Norte”, which “deshizo la capacidad animadora y directiva de las clases altas del país”, in González Palacios, *Revolución y pseudo-revolución*, 116.

Bailey's words: "The *caudillo* [in this case, the United States] has not only authority but responsibilities, and is expected to be benevolent in his discharge of those responsibilities, while at the same time being firm and efficient in fulfilling them". Moreover, the historian emphasized the extreme unpredictability of the policies of the United States, "seemingly eternally vacillating between direct intervention and absolute indifference, between power politics and idealism", which derived into deep frustration to Latin American viewers.<sup>1294</sup> Cuba serves as an example of these complicated diplomatic dynamics. British author and journalist George Pendle had a somewhat biased conception of US-Cuban relations, influenced by the ideals of American exceptionalism, when writing: "The history of US relations with Cuba [...] is a story, on the US side, of good intentions and self-righteousness, idealism and self-interest, jingoism and exuberant commercialism; and on the other side of inexperience, poverty, and corruption, the desire to have US aid, and the fear of US dominion".<sup>1295</sup> This chapter will challenge this notion by giving agency to Cubans and understanding that the relationship between the two countries was complex. Consequently, Machado's relationship with US presidents was a difficult one. Thus, the second half of this chapter discusses Gerardo Machado's pleasant relationship with both Republican presidents Calvin Coolidge and Hoover, and how the ascent of Roosevelt to the presidency rapidly put an end to them. Both Cuba and Louisiana, thus, were special territories that struggled to be more independent and separated from the designs of Washington.

As shown in the following sections, the relation of the two leaders with the US government was very different. While Long's attitude reflects his personal rivalry with Roosevelt, rather than a defense for "the Lost Cause" southern prerogatives against "yankee" interests, Machado's foreign relations with the big neighbor in the North was a major part of his political discourse. An argument could be made that the fact that both Cuba and Louisiana—along with the rest of the Confederate States at the end of the Civil War—were intervened and occupied by the United States army lends itself to a comparison from this perspective. However, when comparing Long and Machado this

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<sup>1294</sup> Norman A. Bailey, "The United States as Caudillo", *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 5, n° 3 (1963): 314-315. Full article reproduced in Hamill, *Dictatorships in Spanish America*, 211-219.

<sup>1295</sup> Pendle, *A History of Latin America*, 175. This same author defended the questionable idea that in several Latin American countries in the 1920s people preferred to have a dictatorial regime than "to entrust their fate to party politicians", in 187.

angle does not apply because, while, on the one hand, the rhetoric of the former did not reflect this particular aspect of the history of his state beyond the usual tropes of a politician from the South, on the other hand, the “*asno*” had to face head-on the complicated issues that derived from decades of US imperialism and the struggles for the establishment of Cuban sovereignty. Therefore, the text devotes more attention to the historical context when discussing Machado, as it is essential to understand the politician’s stance.

## 4.1 Senator Kingfish

I had come to the United States Senate with only one project in mind, which was that by every means of action and persuasion I might do something to spread the wealth of the land among all of the people.<sup>1296</sup>

Huey P. Long

Long had lived all his life in the South, in Louisiana. Moving to Washington, DC., which geographically is however a southern city, was a radical change he would never fully accept. During the first two years as senator Long was still governor, and so his obligations remained in Baton Rouge. He constantly traveled to his native state by express train and worried his task would not continue was he not there.

As mentioned in chapter two, Paul N. Cyr had been lieutenant governor of the state of Louisiana since 1928, but initiated a dispute with the Kingfish a few months after. Therefore, Long had in his administration a suspicious member that he could not trust. In fact, the governor was correct, since Cyr took advantage of Long’s absence and proclaimed himself governor of Louisiana in October 1931.<sup>1297</sup> The doctor had already threatened he would do so a few days prior.<sup>1298</sup> As Harris explains, “Cyr held that the mere act of filing his commission with the United States Senate removed Long as

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<sup>1296</sup> Huey P. Long, *Every Man A King: The Autobiography of Huey P. Long* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 290.

<sup>1297</sup> “Highway Police Mobilized as Cyr Takes Governor’s Oath”, *The Times-Picayune*, October 14, 1931, 1, 3; Herman B. Deutsch, “Long and Cyr Start Their Comic Opera Fight over Governorship which Finally Comes to an End when Oscar Allen Is Sworn As the State’s New Chief Executive”, *The Sunday Item-Tribune*, August 27, 1939.

<sup>1298</sup> “Dr. Cyr Threatens to Take Oath and Sue to Oust Long”, *The Times-Picayune*, October 3, 1931, 1.

Governor”.<sup>1299</sup> When the Kingfish learned of the irregularity, he ordered the National Guard to surround the capitol building in Baton Rouge. When Cyr realized that the entry to the building was banned, he returned to his hometown, Jeanerette, in defeat and later was forced out as lieutenant governor. He was substituted by faithful *longite* Alvin O. King (1890-1958), who for almost four months would also occupy the position as governor.<sup>1300</sup>

This was not the only time Cyr attempted to overthrow the Kingfish. Again, on January 26, 1932, he tried another time to proclaim himself governor of Louisiana from a room at the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge. Cyr sent a letter to acting governor King asserting: “No other person is entitled to the governorship except myself [...] You are a forcible usurper and intruder into the office and I now make formal demand upon you to vacate the office and deliver the same to me”.<sup>1301</sup> The doctor had announced his intentions days earlier, and the press was aware of the situation.<sup>1302</sup> King responded with a formal letter politely declining his peculiar demand.<sup>1303</sup> Since Cyr had few followers, and his way of acting was dubious, the incident did not become more than an anecdote, which “possessed many of the elements of opera bouffe”, as Harris characterized it.<sup>1304</sup> In fact, as a way of ridiculing Cyr’s behavior, “in Louisiana and in other states, clerks, messenger boys and the unemployed swore themselves in before notaries as Governor of Louisiana”.<sup>1305</sup> Huey Long, however, took the matter seriously and made the following statement: “The help of a just God will not permit our righteous people to be further persecuted or inconvenienced by this traitorous, self confessed imposter”.<sup>1306</sup>

In any case, from then on, Long obtained unprecedented power. During his first years as governor, the Kingfish developed policies to modernize Louisiana, but since he became

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<sup>1299</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 99.

<sup>1300</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 157-159; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 99-100; Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 76.

<sup>1301</sup> “Cyr Takes Oath Laying Basis for Action in Courts”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 27, 1932, 6.

<sup>1302</sup> “Cyr Leaves New Orleans for Baton Rouge”, *New Orleans States*, January 26, 1932, 1, 6.

<sup>1303</sup> “King Quick to Answer Cyr, Suit Seems Next Step”, *New Orleans States*, January 27, 1932, 1.

<sup>1304</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 102.

<sup>1305</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 85.

<sup>1306</sup> Statement by Huey P. Long, 1932, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 6, folder 195, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

senator he increasingly focused on concentrating personal power. On one occasion in the Louisiana State Senate the politician approved forty-four bills in two hours, leaving his opponents defeated and exhausted.<sup>1307</sup> As present-day historian Brinkley affirms, “even many of Huey’s allies admitted that the Louisiana government had become a virtual dictatorship”.<sup>1308</sup> His health was deteriorating due to lack of sleep, restlessness, as well as the effects of the dangerous nightlife of New Orleans, so full of alcohol, restaurants, and other more sinful distracting entertainment. The politician drunk heavily to the point that one of his bodyguards stated: “I saw Huey make the best speech he ever made in his life and he was so goddamn drunk that he couldn’t hold his head up”.<sup>1309</sup> Similarly, a journalist who was accused by Long of having spent time in a mental asylum did not deny it; on the contrary, he wrote: “It might be of some particular interest to the Senator to point out at this moment that the treatment was highly effective for a certain malady that the Senator himself might do well to guard against—alcoholism”.<sup>1310</sup>

At the same time and quite paradoxically, his political program based on the infrastructure improvement was running smoothly. After the senatorial election, the Louisiana House of Representatives approved a generous budget to continue his policies: sixty-eight million dollars for roads, five million dollars for the new state capitol building, and seven million dollars for the bridge that would cross the Mississippi, as well as the policy of the free textbooks for children and the improvement of hospitals, among others.<sup>1311</sup> In 1931 alone, Huey spent seventy-nine million dollars, to the point that, according to current historian Richard White, “[he] was bankrupting

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<sup>1307</sup> A reporter wrote: “There is but one man in the state to be feared. And in Baton Rouge they will tell you quite frankly that the Honorable Huey P. Long doesn’t care a whole lot what you do to the average member of the legislature as long as he is able at a moment’s notice to take his seat and vote as instructed”, in Walter Davenport, “Too High and Too Mighty”, *Collier’s Weekly*, January 19, 1935, 7.

<sup>1308</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 28.

<sup>1309</sup> Interview to Theophile Landry, no date, by T. Harry Williams, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1310</sup> Craddock Goins, “My Answer to Huey P. Long”, *Real America*, April 1935, 32, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 2, folder 17, LSMHC.

<sup>1311</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 139. Only a few days after the senatorial election, Huey called the Legislature of Louisiana to convene in extraordinary session “for the consideration and action upon” a norm “to authorize municipalities to anticipate their revenues from general and special taxes for the purpose of acquiring and constructing works of public nature and to issue certificates of indebtedness payable therefrom” on September 16, 1930, Huey P. Long papers 1927-1935, Mss. 557, 1240, 1350, 1956, Misc L, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

the state”.<sup>1312</sup> As presented in chapter three, this was a very similar accusation Gerardo Machado received in Cuba. Journalist Thomas Harris complained in the 1940s that,

Louisiana’s per capita cost of government in 1931 was \$30.38, ninety-three per cent above the general American average and two hundred and seventy per cent above the minimum. Expenditures out of the General Fund, which paid the general expenses of state government, had increased from \$5,030,504 in 1928, when Long became Governor, to \$7,080,820 in 1931, not to speak of additional departments maintained with special funds.<sup>1313</sup>

In a fervent anti-*longite* pamphlet, its author, conservative Harry P. Gamble, wrote aiming at Louisianans,

When Bombasto [Long] is snugly and distantly engaged in [...] pleasant pastimes, enjoying all of the luxurious accessories of the free spending life, that you will remain back here among the sweating common folk, the yokels and the boobs, the hillbillies and river rats, the urban and the rural citizens, in short, among all of us guys who are whooping it up to pay Bombasto’s notes.<sup>1314</sup>

In spite of this, as should be expected, there were visible results of Long’s expenditure. After four years, the Long administration had built 1,583 miles of cement roads, 718 miles of paved roads,<sup>1315</sup> 2,816 miles of gravel roads, and 111 bridges.<sup>1316</sup> In two more years a new airport built in art deco style would be added to the list of physical improvements in the state: the modern Shushan Airport in New Orleans, which cost about three million dollars, was inaugurated on February 10, 1934. It was named after the president of the Orleans Levee Board, Abe L. Shushan—one of Long’s multiple

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<sup>1312</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 151. Edgar Sisson wrote in 1934 that to that date Louisiana owed \$143,808,500 and that the debt of the state was forty-one percent as large as that of New York, in Sisson, “Huey Long: Dictator of the Delta. Part 2”, 23, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC. Long saw that as a remarkable trait of his administration, when affirming: “When all the other places has [*sic*] been cutting down on schools, we double[d] and tripled and quadrupled our appropriations during the depression... DURING THE DEPRESSION, mind you!” in Monroe Sweetland, “The Student Movement and Huey Long: A Brief Interview”, *The Student Outlook: The Intercollegiate Socialist Review*, vol. 111, n°. 4, April 1935, 10.

<sup>1313</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 145.

<sup>1314</sup> Harry P. Gamble, *Address to the Legislature Convening May 9, 1932: The Strange Case of Louisiana and Huey P. Long* (New Orleans: [publisher not identified], 1932), 13.

<sup>1315</sup> *The Louisiana Progress* too optimistically published “First Thousand Miles of Paved Roads Finished” already in August 18, 1931, 10.

<sup>1316</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 546.

friends. The airport was practically covered with his initials, showing that not only Long possessed vanity.<sup>1317</sup>



**Fig. 29:** Shushan Airport, New Orleans, aerial view, ca. 1932. Labeled on the back: "World's Largest Base for Land and Sea Planes. Constructed Under Long Administration Without Tax Increase". David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 28, LaRC. Appears on Long's autobiography, p. 265.

Logically, *The Louisiana Progress* never ceased to publish Long's accomplishments in improving the infrastructure of the state,<sup>1318</sup> and to insist on the low price of his expenses.<sup>1319</sup> Afterwards, *The American Progress* would continue the task and publish multiple articles celebrating these betterments in a congratulatory tone.<sup>1320</sup> Nonetheless, the amount spent on these achievements was not clear, for "his statistics on highway costs have varied greatly with every speech he has made".<sup>1321</sup> On some occasions, the press released information on the subject, such as *The Times-Picayune*, which published

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<sup>1317</sup> After the scandals regarding the Long machine at the end of the 1930s, which will be further explained, the name of the airport was changed to its current one: New Orleans Lakefront Airport. It was the biggest commercial airport until the 1940s, when it was substituted by the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, in Irey and Slocum, "The Gentleman from Louisiana", 112; Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 30; Vincent Caire, "Historic Airport Terminal Embarks Upon a New Mission", September 2013, accessed November 5, 2015, myneworleans.com.

<sup>1318</sup> "State Prospers Under Long Parade of Progress", *The Louisiana Progress*, July 15, 1931, 1, 3.

<sup>1319</sup> "Louisiana's Roads Strongest; Lowest Cost in the World", *The Times-Picayune*, September 10, 1931, 1.

<sup>1320</sup> For instance, A. P. Tugwell, "Louisiana's Fine Highway System Built by Senator Long and Gov. Allen Exceeds Any New Year's Present the People of State Could Ever Receive", *The American Progress*, December 28, 1933, 3.

<sup>1321</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 153.

a piece stating that the expenses of the highway department in 1931 in Louisiana alone had been of \$50,033,215, being the fourth state in the Union in road expenditures—the first three were New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.<sup>1322</sup> Sindler affirmed that at the end of 1935 and after spending \$133,000,000, “Louisiana had 2,446 miles of concrete roads, 1,308 miles of asphalt, and 9,629 miles of gravel roads”, as well as “over forty major bridges”.<sup>1323</sup>

Aside from giving jobs to hundreds of men for the construction of the roads, the Great Depression was in its high point, and one of its manifestations was the overproduction of cotton. According to economists and legislators of the time, in 1931 the demand of that product would be much lower than the supply. As a solution, Long proposed to interrupt the production of cotton in all states of the American South for a year. This project was entitled Cotton Holiday Plan, commonly known as “Drop a Crop” plan, and, if approved, it would have been put into practice during 1932.<sup>1324</sup> The governor-senator argued that the cotton had not been sold because of overproduction, and that if they paralyzed this, supply and demand would be balanced again. Once more, the politician resorted to the Bible to justify his proposal and advocated to follow Moses’ sabbatical year, according to which every seven years the soil has to be left fallow.<sup>1325</sup>

Fineran believed Long was not really concerned about the issue but realized it was something that several people cared about and, therefore, “it offered an opportunity for the publicity he loved and needed”.<sup>1326</sup> The Louisiana legislature then passed a bill approving a law that prohibited the planting of cotton in 1932. Long continued his efforts to motivate other governors of the South through letters and other methods of persuasion.<sup>1327</sup> However, in the end, politicians were not interested.<sup>1328</sup> Because of its

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<sup>1322</sup> In 1931, New York had spent \$73,924,295; Pennsylvania, \$65,531,387, and New Jersey \$52,859,549, in “Louisiana’s Road Expenses in 1932 Near Top of the List”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 23, 1.

<sup>1323</sup> Allan P. Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana: State Politics, 1920-1952* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), 103.

<sup>1324</sup> Robert E. Snyder, “Huey Long and the Cotton-Holiday Plan of 1931”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, vol. 18, n° 2 (Spring, 1977), 133-160.

<sup>1325</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 86.

<sup>1326</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 154.

<sup>1327</sup> Long received numerous telegrams from supporters all over the South. For instance, state senator F. E. Delahoussaye from Iberia parish LA, wrote: “People in my district are in complete accord with your holiday plan on cotton”, August 20, 1931; Wesley E. Disney, from Tulsa OK, let Long know: “I am entirely in sympathy with every effort in behalf of cotton farmers and admire you [*sic.*] stand”, August

radicalism and criticism the proposal was finally rejected. Specifically, seventy-five percent of the cotton-growing states refused the plan.<sup>1329</sup> It found particular opposition in Texas, which was governed by Democrat Ross S. Sterling (1874-1949), who counterproposed to plant half a crop, an idea that was rejected by Long.<sup>1330</sup> Since Texas produced one third of the cotton of the United States, the law could have never been endorsed without their support.<sup>1331</sup> The senator started then a cotton campaign in which he branded Sterling as a plutocrat, and talked about himself as a friend of the poor. At a radio speech he even affirmed: “I have seen my mother cry because I did not have shoes to wear”.<sup>1332</sup> The case was closed, notwithstanding the vituperation of the Kingfish to the Texan governor.<sup>1333</sup> Sterling was not the only governor who opposed the plan. Democrat Henry H. Horton (1866-1934) of Tennessee referred to it as “un-American” because, he argued, it was not in the government’s jurisdiction to decide whether a

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19, 1931; , J. E. Dicks, from Augusta GA, wrote an encouraging message: “Don’t give up your heroic fight relief or revolution just ahead the people of the South will ever appreciate your noble efforts the people of Georgia one thousand percent with you”, September 17, 1931; A.V. Culpepper, a member of the Monroe County Farm Bureau in Monroeville AL stated: “The citizens of Monroe County all approve your plan to discontinue planting cotton nineteenth thirty two and arrange with farm board to advance six cents this fall and six cents fall of nineteenth thirty two on this year’s crop”, August 31, 1931. Not only politicians sent the governor telegrams, but also other citizens who were supportive of the Kingfish. One W. L. Rhodes from Blakeley GA, told Long: “You are the man of the Hour - Farmers of Early County GA, 90% for your plan. In fact we are for you-anything you want. You are the ONE MAN who will fight for the masses”, September 14, 1931; and another fan named Dr. T. N. Towns from Oneonta AL, pompously wrote: “Moses lead [*sic*] the Israelites, Patrick Henry the Colonies, Long the South”, September 10, 1931. Huey P. Long Papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 43, folder 1456-B, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1328</sup> “Gov. Long’s Cotton Plan Is Studied By South”, *New Orleans States*, August 17, 1931, 1-2. There were lots of telegrams from other politicians that were not so positive for the governor. Several congressmen and senators did not show interest in the subject and refused to attend the meetings Long held because of “sickness” or “previous engagements”. Huey P. Long Papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 43, folder 1456-B, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1329</sup> Cochran, “The Louisiana Kingfish”, 286.

<sup>1330</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 95. The Texan governor had send a representative in his name in one of the meetings—not a good sign for Long—, for he was allegedly indisposed: “Your wire regret impossible to attend cotton conference in person am naming commissioner of agriculture McDonald to represent Texas”, Ross S. Sterling to Huey Long, Telegram, August 17, 1931, Huey P. Long Papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 43, folder 1459, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1331</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 146–147; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 155.

<sup>1332</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 97. Julius rebuffed this idea by stating: “Nothing could be more wholly false”, in Long, “What I Know About My Brother”, 37.

<sup>1333</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 156. A Long supporter from Lafayette jokingly wrote about Sterling: “May I suggest a slogan for governor Sterling I am right its the rest of the world thats wrong”, Durkee Pelletier to Huey P. Long, Telegram, September 12, 1931, Huey P. Long Papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 43, folder 1459, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

farmer should grow or not.<sup>1334</sup> As a newspaper put it, “the idea was dubbed as ‘impractical’ and ‘unsound’”.<sup>1335</sup>

#### 4.1.1 A buffoon in the Senate

The Cotton Holiday Plan serves as an example of the aggressive and overconfident behavior the newly appointed junior senator would have in the following months. The first day he attended the Senate of the United States Long showed up smoking a cigar, even though smoking was not allowed in the building. He took the oath of senator “amid the stir that usually accompanies his every act”.<sup>1336</sup> Kane described his attitude with certain rejection: “He ignored the regulation against smoking, using the clerk’s desk as a depository for his cigar while he took the oath”.<sup>1337</sup> According to the protocol, the senior senator of the state, in this case Edwin Broussard, had to accompany the junior senator to his seat as a gesture of continuity. Neither Long nor Broussard accepted the code because they had become enemies, and therefore Joe T. Robinson (1872-1937), senator of Arkansas, had to escort the Kingfish to his seat.<sup>1338</sup>

Long attended only one third of the meetings of the Senate and was often the protagonist of a buffoonery that made him popular. He was establishing himself as the bull’s eye of the news, as *The New York Times* published in 1933: “Long erupted into the Senate with the typical ‘Kingfish’ style. He hopped all over the place, shaking hands with Senators and introducing himself in defiance of Senatorial property”.<sup>1339</sup> Harris argued that this personality was not an accident but a style Long had chosen on purpose: “The man who believes that Huey P. Long was a vulgarian solely because vulgarity was inherent in his make-up is only reaching half the truth. He was a vulgarian on the political rostrum because he found that it paid dividends in votes”.<sup>1340</sup>

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<sup>1334</sup> “South Is Divided on Long’s Cotton Prohibition Plan”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 18, 1931, 1.

<sup>1335</sup> “Cotton Declines on Poor Cables, Easy Stock List”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 18, 1931, 19.

<sup>1336</sup> “Long Takes Oath and Casts First Vote in Senate”, *Dallas Morning News*, January 26, 1932, 1.

<sup>1337</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 89.

<sup>1338</sup> Nathan Robertson, “Senator Long Is Sworn In, Takes His Seat”, *New Orleans States*, January 25, 1932, 2.

<sup>1339</sup> Russell Owen, “Huey Long Keeps Washington Guessing”, *The New York Times*, January 29, 1933.

<sup>1340</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 94.

As senator, Long continued to act as a buffoon. A journalist wrote that “because of his curious sound of his name and his somewhat picturesque behavior [Huey] has sometimes been called ‘our only Chinese senator’”.<sup>1341</sup> Nonetheless, it was in those years that the Kingfish fully developed his ideology and political program. According to him:

I announced when I came here [Washington] that I had taken my place in the Senate for one main purpose, which was, to break up the swollen fortunes of America and to spread the wealth among all our people—this according to the law of the scriptures and the advice of nearly all our great men of all times.<sup>1342</sup>

Long’s political speeches were commonly centered on national affairs, mainly the problem of the distribution of wealth in the country. He was rarely interested in international affairs; however, as discussed further below, the senator got involved in the Latin American Chaco War, and even in the 1933 Cuban revolution.

The senator would become known at a national level to the point that there were rumors of his candidacy for the presidential election of 1936. A moment in which he publicly announced he would indeed run for the presidency had been on February 1930, although he did it in a comical manner, perhaps to maintain the mystery surrounding the issue. Former president Calvin Coolidge and his wife were visiting Louisiana, and when reporters took a photo of the two men the Kingfish suggested they had just taken a picture of the past and the future presidents.<sup>1343</sup> On another occasion a few years later, Long simply stated: “I am the kind of President that this country needs”, with no further explanation.<sup>1344</sup>

A speech that drove him towards this direction was “The Doom of America’s Dream”, which he gave at the US Senate in April 4, 1932. It was a vital and fierce address that

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<sup>1341</sup> Springer, “Huey Long: The Amazing Louisiana Senator”, 124.

<sup>1342</sup> Letter from Huey P. Long to an anonymous supporter, June 20, 1933, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

<sup>1343</sup> “Coolidges Pose with Long”, *The Times-Picayune*, February 14, 1930, 1; Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 113. Two years later, a supporter wrote a letter to Long referring to that comment and affirmed: “Here’s hoping you make the grade and thus list the State of Louisiana in the column of immortals in furnishing one President of the USA. If you need me at any time command me”, Letter from Frank Dusenbuy (?) to Huey P. Long, January 20, 1932, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 6, folder 202, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1344</sup> Springer, “Huey Long: The Amazing Louisiana Senator”, 124.

criticized the economic policies of Herbert Hoover, and was enthusiastically received by part of the audience. Referring to the future Share Our Wealth movement, Kane wrote that the speech was “hailed by wealth-sharers as their gospel”.<sup>1345</sup> The Kingfish asserted that the American dream had been gradually forgotten, and that if nothing was changed there could be a revolution. As a solution, he proposed to redistribute the wealth of the country, as can be read in the following extracts of the speech, in which the senator used a nostalgic and lachrymose tone, as well as abundant repetitions and exaggerations:

You want to enforce the law, you want to balance the budget? [...] I tell you that if in any country I live in, despite every physical and intellectual effort I could put forth, I should see my children starving and my wife starving, its laws against robbing and against stealing... would not amount to any more to me than they would to any other man, when it came to facing the time of starvation [...] It is no campaign of soak the rich. It is a campaign to save the rich. It is a campaign the success of which they will wish for when it is too late [...] This great and grand dream of America that all man are created free and equal, endowed with the inalienable right of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, [...] this great dream of America, this great light, and this great hope, have almost gone out of sight in this day and time, and everybody knows it; and there is a mere candle flicker here and yonder to take the place of what the great dream of America was supposed to be.<sup>1346</sup>

As Long had grown up at the turn of the century, he had a critical perspective on the use of new technology:

Machines are created, making it possible to manufacture more in an hour than used to be manufactured in a month... but instead of bringing prosperity, ease, and comfort, they (inventions and scientific achievements) have meant idleness... starvation... pestilence [...] God Almighty has warned against this condition. Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan and every religious teacher known to this earth [...] The gangsters have killed hundreds, maybe thousands, to carry out their nefarious rackets to extort money; but the hoarders of wealth have destroyed humanity by millions.<sup>1347</sup>

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<sup>1345</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 89.

<sup>1346</sup> Huey P. Long, “The Doom of America’s Dream”, United States Senate, April 4, 1932, re-printed Congressional Record, 72 Congress, First Session, April 4, 1932, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC. Full text reproduced in: *The American Progress*, May issue, 1935, 14-16; Graham, *Huey Long*, 53-59.

<sup>1347</sup> “The Doom for America’s Dream”, United States Senate, April 4, 1932, *The American Progress*, May issue, 1935, 14-16; Long, *Every Man a King*, 293; Graham, *Huey Long*, 53-59; Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 230; re-printed Congressional Record, 72 Congress, First Session, April 4, 1932, 5, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

In his speeches and writings, Long demanded higher taxes for millionaires and lower ones to the “common man”. His four main enemies were multimillionaires John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937), who founded the Standard Oil Company in 1870 together with industrialist and friend Henry Flagler (1830-1913);<sup>1348</sup> J.P. Morgan, Jr. (1867-1943), owner of the banking institution J.P. Morgan & Co.; Andrew W. Mellon (1855-1937), banker, businessmen, US ambassador to the United Kingdom (from 1932 to 1933) and US Secretary of Treasury (from 1921 to 1932), and Bernard M. Baruch (1870-1965), stock investor and political consultant to presidents Woodrow Wilson and FDR.<sup>1349</sup> Long affirmed about those wealthy men: “Through one of those four can be traced some line leading to every bank, commercial and industrial activity and to the purpose of every governmental undertaking”.<sup>1350</sup>

The senator used the Bible as a book of conduct not only on a personal but also on a political level. Two years after the Kingfish’s death, *longite* writer Hugh Mercer Blain published a small book in which he argued that the politician “was one of the greatest students of the Holy Writ that ever took an active part in public life”.<sup>1351</sup> As many other American politician, he referred to the heroes of his country as role models, stating that they had already fought for a just distribution of wealth. By speaking of Jefferson, Jackson, Bryan, as well as the Bible and the idea of freedom, he was using classic American rhetoric techniques. Historian Charles Postel has presently argued that the Populists of the end of the nineteenth century that influenced Long:

drew from the past that which was familiar and close at hand. They often cited biblical stories as well as Shakespeare, Cicero, Dickens, and other literary sources. They freely quoted personalities from the past—Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Calhoun, and Lincoln—who loomed large in nineteenth-century oratory.<sup>1352</sup>

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<sup>1348</sup> David S. Landes, *Dinastías: fortunas y desdichas de las grandes familias de negocios* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2006), 252.

<sup>1349</sup> See also Landes, *Dinastías: fortunas y desdichas*, 80-117, 239-269.

<sup>1350</sup> Huey P. Long, “Wealthy of America-Tremble!” *The American Progress*, September 28, 1933, 1; “Long Names ‘Six Americans Who Control the Nation’”, *The Times-Picayune*, March 26, 1933.

<sup>1351</sup> Hugh Mercer Blain, *Favorite Huey Long Stories* (Baton Rouge: O. Claitor, 1937), 84.

<sup>1352</sup> Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11.

However, the senator went one step ahead and situated himself among the progressive. To further this political positioning, in the following months he engaged in campaigning for three Democrat candidates in order to increase his national popularity.

#### 4.1.2 Egotistically campaigning for others

His capacity and efficiency for winning elections were now evident, because, even though the three candidates were very different and had varied personalities and styles, they all won their respective election. They were: Oscar K. Allen, who was running for the governorship of Louisiana; Hattie W. Caraway (1878-1950), for the governorship of Arkansas, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, for the presidency of the United States. Wherever Long went, he left an imprint and people remembered him because “his campaigns were always good shows; they combined the best and worst features of a circus hitched to a tornado”.<sup>1353</sup>

##### a) O.K.

Oscar Allen, who had also been born in Winn parish, was not a very intelligent man. He was obedient and obliging, and his relationship with Long was hierarchical and submissive. Fineran defined him as “his ally and errand-boy”,<sup>1354</sup> as well as “weak”.<sup>1355</sup> Because of that, Allen became known in popular satire as “O.K.”. He had been head of the Highway Commission since 1928, and three years later Long hand-picked him as candidate for the next year’s election for governor under the ticket “Complete the Work”.<sup>1356</sup> As a sort of *continuismo* measure, the Kingfish needed a man he could trust and control to be in charge of Louisiana while he was in Washington. In fact, the governor did not allow his brother Earl to be his candidate because he feared he would not be able to tame him. This situation caused trouble within Long’s family, who did not understand how Huey could not support his little brother.<sup>1357</sup> This situation

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<sup>1353</sup> Moley, “Huey P. Long”, 13.

<sup>1354</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 33.

<sup>1355</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 144.

<sup>1356</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 146.

<sup>1357</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 92. Julius wrote: “Our father could hardly stand to see Huey treat his brother Earl that way”, in Long, “What I Know About My Brother”, 36.

embittered the relationship with his elder brother Julius, who started publicly attacking the senator; for instance he affirmed: “[Huey] is not temperamentally fit for great power. He is smart, but he has become puffed up with power. He stands before the mirror and thinks he sees the ruler of the world”.<sup>1358</sup> At the end, Earl presented himself as a candidate for lieutenant governor in an anti-Huey ticket, opposing the Kingfish’s candidate, John B. Fournet (1895-1984).<sup>1359</sup>

Allen would always be Long’s accomplice. Forrest Davis openly wrote: “When I was in Louisiana Governor Allen advised me that he was merely a puppet in the hands of his friend, Long”.<sup>1360</sup> The Kingfish treated O.K. badly and with condescendence, sometimes even yelling at him in front of others: “Oscar, you sonofabitch, shut up!”<sup>1361</sup> A popular joke tells how one day a leaf entered through the window of the governor’s office onto his desk and Allen sign it rapidly believing it was Long’s command because, as Kane affirmed, “he signed everything”.<sup>1362</sup> Later on, newspapers would refer to him as “rubber stamp”.<sup>1363</sup> During the campaign, the senator would limit Allen’s speeches by saying in front of the crowds: “Your time is up, Oscar”, or “All right, Mr. Allen, you’ve said enough”;<sup>1364</sup> or even complaining that he had to listen to him over and over again.<sup>1365</sup> In Jennings, in southern Louisiana, the governor-senator said to the audience: “I want to thank you people for your remarkable patience in listening to the speech O.K. Allen just made. I have heard him make that same speech 100 times”.<sup>1366</sup> However, in his autobiography Long wrote about the future governor in a very different manner, describing him as efficient and prepared.<sup>1367</sup> Similarly, as part of the campaign, some local business published an ad in a newspaper wishing the candidate a happy new year

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<sup>1358</sup> Julius T. Long in “How Huey Long’s Brothers Tried in Vain to Punish Him Politically”, *The St. Louis Star*, January 23, 1932, 2.

<sup>1359</sup> “Earl Long Says He Will Oppose John B. Fournet”, *The Times-Picayune*, July 3, 1931, 1; Davis, *Huey Long*, 148.

<sup>1360</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 34-35.

<sup>1361</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 136.

<sup>1362</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 94; Irely and Slocum, “The Gentleman from Louisiana”, 89; Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 105.

<sup>1363</sup> “Wilbur in Wonderland”, *New Orleans States*, September 15, 1933, 8.

<sup>1364</sup> Samuel Lang, “O.K. Allen Talks at Meetings in Three Parishes”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 18, 1932, 5B.

<sup>1365</sup> Fineran, *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon*, 170.

<sup>1366</sup> George Vandervoort, “Governor Thanks Crowd for Giving Ear to O.K. Allen”, *The Times-Picayune*, December 13, 1931, 18.

<sup>1367</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 118-119, 259.

and affirming “everything is O.K. with us!” and “It’s an O.K. state”, anticipating his soon-to-be victory.<sup>1368</sup>

Allen’s main opponent was Cajun Dudley J. LeBlanc (1894-1971), to whom Long referred to as “Dud”, and who would in the future establish the old-age pensions in Louisiana.<sup>1369</sup> In fact, in his political program he already included a \$30 monthly pension for people over sixty years old.<sup>1370</sup> Huey, contrary to what he defended in his future program Share Our Wealth, criticized this measure by saying that the pensions would cost the State more than sixty million dollars annually, and that, moreover, a third of this amount would benefit African Americans.<sup>1371</sup> In fact, the Kingfish accused LeBlanc of being associated with blacks, to which the candidate responded that he was not.<sup>1372</sup> On another occasion, in Lake Charles, in south-west Louisiana, the candidate declared that both Allen and Long were “Negro [*sic*] lovers”, and that “they’ve demonstrated this by hiring negroes on the highways while you poor [white] people who paid the taxes from which those negroes receive wages are finding it difficult to make ends meet”.<sup>1373</sup> *The Louisiana Progress* played with this idea during the campaign, and there appeared numerous cartoons portraying LeBlanc as a “Negro [*sic*] hater”. For instance, on one occasion Trist Wood draw an angry candidate screaming: “Down with the Negroes! Don’t give them jobs! Let’em starve! Kill’em! Kill’em!”<sup>1374</sup> Once more, it could be seen that Long’s relationship with blacks was, as these examples show, a complicated and confusing one. Be that as it may, the relevant idea is that the African American issue was once more on the table, as had been during the 1924 election.

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<sup>1368</sup> “Happy New Year to You, Mr. Allen”, *New Orleans State*, January 1, 1932, 4.

<sup>1369</sup> “Dudley LeBlanc Enters Race for Governor’s Seat”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 5, 1931, 1, 8. See also Floyd Martin Clay, *Coozan Dudley LeBlanc: From Huey Long to Hadacol* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1973).

<sup>1370</sup> Orin Blackstone, “Cajun Governor Will Be Elected, Asserts LeBlanc”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 18, 1932, 5.

<sup>1371</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 99.

<sup>1372</sup> “LeBlanc Denies Negro Charges”, *New Orleans States*, August 20, 1931, 2.

<sup>1373</sup> Samuel Lang, “LeBlanc Replies to Long’s Attack at Lake Charles”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 3, 1932, 13; Adam Fairclough, *Race & Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 22.

<sup>1374</sup> Trist Wood, “Evolution of Candidates”, *The Louisiana Progress*, September 10, 1931, 1.

More than focusing on what he could offer, during his campaign LeBlanc spent more time criticizing Long, even more than diminishing his real opponent. In his opening campaign speech he called Long a tyrant and his candidate a puppet:

No administration before or since the days of Reconstruction has ever built up or attempted to build up such an organized tyrannical rule; manipulated, dominated, bossed and controlled by one man as has been done by this man, Long. Today he names you a ticket headed by Oscar K. Allen [...] This man Allen is a child in the hands of Long to do as he is told.<sup>1375</sup>

LeBlanc clearly perceived the unbalanced relationship between his opponent and the governor, and did not cease to mention it in his speeches:

[Allen] is simply a creature of Huey P. Long. Says what he is told to say; speaks when he is told to speak; gets up when he is told to get up; sits down when he is told to sit down. Long owns him, body and soul, and when you hear him speak, and when you hear him making charges, he is doing what his master tells him to do. He is not a free agent. He is a political serf.<sup>1376</sup>

However, Long's techniques were unbeatable. In his discourses he reminded the audiences all he had achieved as governor of Louisiana, including free school textbooks, paved roads, schools, hospitals, and insane asylums, and so they needed someone to "complete the work".<sup>1377</sup> Thus, once again, Long obtained victory.<sup>1378</sup> Oscar Allen won the election in January 19, 1932, with 214,699 votes. LeBlanc received 110,048, half of the votes of the winner.<sup>1379</sup> He took the oath as the new governor of Louisiana on May

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<sup>1375</sup> "LeBlanc Opens Campaign with Attack on Long", *The Times-Picayune*, July 5, 1931, 5.

<sup>1376</sup> "Long Is Ashamed of Allen, LeBlanc Averts in Speech", *The Times-Picayune*, January 12, 1932, 5.

<sup>1377</sup> Samuel Lang, "Governor Urges Hearers to 'Complete the Work'", *The Times-Picayune*, January 10, 1932, 10.

<sup>1378</sup> It was expressed as such in several letters addressed to the senator: "I want to congratulate you and the 'Complete the Work Ticket', on the victory of yesterday. The big vote given to our next Governor Allen, was due to you", Letter from Alexander Bonin to Huey P. Long, January 20, 1932. Others read: "We waited to write you these few words of congratulations, knowing that you must have been flooded with tremendous volume of such congratulations, upon the masterful fight which you and your friends have recently conducted in the election of your Governor of Louisiana, O.K. Allen. We know he must be 'OK' because Huey Long said so", Letter from J.G. Baker, Secretary-Treasurer of the Sheffield-Muscle Shoals Chamber of Commerce, Alabama, to Huey P. Long, January 23, 1932. "We will make you president in 1936", Letter from O.L. Jones, State Board for the Blind, Baton Rouge, to Huey P. Long, January 21, 1932. "Congratulations to you for your successfulness in every undertaking you have won the race above all money powers", Letter from J.J. Stinnett, Shreveport, to Huey P. Long, January 24, 1932. Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 6, folder 202, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1379</sup> "Allen Leading with Majorities in Both City and Country", *The Times-Picayune*, January 20, 1932, 1; "Country Returns Show Steady Allen Gain", *New Orleans States*, January 20, 1932, 1; Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 78.

1932 in Baton Rouge, where the “street were gay with banners, flags and bunting”.<sup>1380</sup> Long did not attend the inauguration ceremony because he was in the nation’s capital, but now the Kingfish had assured his political future in Louisiana through his puppet and was ready to fulfill his duties as senator. A few days after the election, Long officially moved north to Washington.<sup>1381</sup>

## b) “That brave little woman”

The next political campaign in which Long participated was the 1932 election for senator in the state of Arkansas.<sup>1382</sup> Hattie Wyatt Caraway was a discrete and shy woman, widow of the senator Thaddeus Caraway (1871-1931), who had been senator since 1921.<sup>1383</sup> After his sudden death on November 1931, over a year before his term ended, his wife assumed his position as US senator of Arkansas. The political situation was odd, for according to state law regulating senatorial tenure, if an officeholder passed away with a certain part of his term still to serve, the governor was to appoint his replacement; if he died before the established time, his successor was to be chosen in an election. Caraway passed away only three days before the governor could have appointed his successor. Thus, the election became obligatory by law. In the meantime, as a gesture of good will, and convinced that the deceased’s wife would only warm the seat for a few months, the state central committee nominated Hattie Caraway senator.<sup>1384</sup>

The woman, however, decided to continue her career in politics and presented herself as a candidate, even though she was not particularly popular nor did she have much experience in politics. Caraway was perhaps encouraged by that senator who she had supported on more than one occasion in the Senate in favor of his policies towards those

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<sup>1380</sup> Helen Gilkinson, “Oscar K. Allen Is Inaugurated Governor”, *New Orleans States*, May 16, 1932, 6.

<sup>1381</sup> “Governor Leaves for Washington to Take Seat in Senate”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 24, 1932, 1; “Associated Press Says Long to Senate. Will Appear Next Week”, *New Orleans States*, January 23, 1932, 1; “Long, Allen Go to Washington”, *New Orleans States*, January 24, 1932, 1.

<sup>1382</sup> Beals, “Clearing Hattie’s Neck”, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 240-247.

<sup>1383</sup> Hattie Caraway, *Silent Hattie Speaks: The Personal Journal of Senator Hattie Caraway*, ed. Diane D. Blair (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979). See also Nancy Hendricks, *Senator Hattie Caraway: An Arkansas Legacy* (Charleston: The History Press, 2013).

<sup>1384</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 583-584.

less fortunate. Long referred to her as “that brave little woman”, a nickname that led his friends to believe he was helping her out of southern chivalry and pity.<sup>1385</sup> Kane stated that “nobody bothered much about her until Huey appeared”.<sup>1386</sup> He certainly changed the candidacy of Caraway “from hopelessness into triumph”.<sup>1387</sup>

What motivated Long to run for that brave little woman?<sup>1388</sup> Brinkley believes it was more than just to help a fellow senator who had been on his side on numerous occasions in the Senate. The historian affirms the Kingfish was trying to get national attention, and so “Arkansas was as good a place as any to begin”.<sup>1389</sup> Historian David Malone also wrote there was something more other than “sympathy” that made Long invest himself in another campaign, and that was the prestige it would give him.<sup>1390</sup> The editor of Caraway’s journal, Diane Blair, has affirmed that by winning the challenging campaign Long would show the country his capacity for transcending Louisiana’s frontiers as well as ridicule senator Robinson.<sup>1391</sup> Williams also affirmed such idea as follows: “He would demonstrate that the influence of Huey Long was not confined to Louisiana but that it could be extended to other Southern states and possibly even to other parts of the country”.<sup>1392</sup> On her part, Caraway affirmed that Long “reminded her of the

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<sup>1385</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 586.

<sup>1386</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 95.

<sup>1387</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 169.

<sup>1388</sup> Long’s campaign manager worried about this decision. He had a conversation with Long: “Huey decided that he wanted Mrs. Caraway to be elected in Arkansas. I tried to reason with him that it was a serious mistake to gamble like this. He would lose a lot of prestige if he went over there and didn’t succeed. I doubted that he could succeed and even if he did there would be a lot of resentment. You don’t know those Arkansas hillbillies. He said, ‘I can elect her, and it will help my prestige’”, Interview to Harvey A. Peltier, Sr., no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 5, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1389</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 49.

<sup>1390</sup> David Malone, *Hattie and Huey: An Arkansas Tour* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1989), 6. Hattie Caraway referred to that idea years later in the eulogy dedicated to the senator: “Senator Long was my political friend, as evidenced by his work in my campaign for reelection. That he had little to gain if I won and much to lose in prestige should my campaign fail everyone knows. I won, and it is indicative of his greatness that I can stand here and assert that he never once presumed upon the fact that his assistance to try to influence my course in matters of legislation”, 74th Congress, 2d Session, House Document No. 480, *Memorial Services Held in the House of Representatives of the United States, Together with Remarks Presented in Eulogy of Huey Pierce Long, Late a Senator from Louisiana*, 35, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1936, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 44, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1391</sup> Blair, *Silent Hattie Speaks*, 22.

<sup>1392</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 587.

neighborhood bad boy who just needed a little proper handling to turn into a splendid fellow”.<sup>1393</sup>



**Fig. 30:** Huey Long on a ferry with Hattie Caraway during the Arkansas campaign, 1932, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 23, LaRC.

The campaign only lasted one week, and was efficient and intense; perhaps a reflection of the Kingfish’s personality. On his way to the northern state, Long stopped at his father’s house in Winnfield for a visit, where they all had some fresh watermelon and a picture to remember the occasion.<sup>1394</sup> Julius told how Huey “had given our father nothing until he made that visit”, but “needed that picture to put in the newspapers of Arkansas to show he was a man who loved his father. He used that picture that way. One of his strongest characteristics is turning every incident to his own glory”.<sup>1395</sup>

Journalist and observer Herman Deutsch called the Arkansas campaign “one of the most amazing in American political annals”.<sup>1396</sup> Long used political pamphlets, in which he included his popular speech “The Doom of America’s Dream”, sound trucks, and gave

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<sup>1393</sup> Adams, “Huey the Great”, 74, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>1394</sup> Hermann B. Deutsch, “Colonel Roden Discovers that History Repeats Itself”, *The Times-Picayune*, July 14, 1963, 4.

<sup>1395</sup> The older sibling explained in the same article how he had asked the Kingfish to invite his father to live in one of the empty rooms of the governor’s mansion, where he had “drunken parties with his puppets”, but the senator had refused, in Long, “What I Know About My Brother”, 34, 36-37.

<sup>1396</sup> Herman B. Deutsch, “Long Marches into Arkansas with Sound Trucks, Full Equipment and Elects Mrs. Hattie Caraway Over the Efforts of a Former Senator and Ex-Governor of the State”, *The New Orleans Item*, August 29, 1939.

four or five charismatic discourses per day.<sup>1397</sup> He released three new brochures entitled “Wall Street Versus the People”, “A Letter from Uncle Trusty”, and “What the Re-election of Senator (Mrs.) Caraway Means to the People of America”.<sup>1398</sup> The senator from Louisiana once more emphasized the dichotomy between the big corporations and the little man—in this case, woman—struggling for a just cause. He expressed so in a letter: “All over this country the senators who are standing by the people are marked for destruction by the big financial masters of Wall Street. Mrs. Caraway is one of the marked ones [...] The fight is on. It is a fight for the people on one side and for their serfdom on the other side”.<sup>1399</sup> The same message appeared in the circulars Long spread through the state of Arkansas. He wrote: “I sat by this lady day after day in the United States Senate and saw Mrs. Caraway cast vote after vote for the rights and liberties of the common man and humanity and against the powers of wealth and finance”.<sup>1400</sup> The Kingfish was addressing audiences he knew very well, for the Arkansas rural areas and farmers were not that different from those in Louisiana.<sup>1401</sup> This campaign was a sort of déjà vu for Long, who knew exactly how to express himself, and what to say and criticize. Moreover, during his youth as a salesman he had travelled to Arkansas and was able to remember some of the anecdotes about his trips, which attracted crowds.<sup>1402</sup> For that, “the audiences were among the largest ever to attend political gatherings in Arkansas”.<sup>1403</sup>

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<sup>1397</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 49; Williams, *Huey Long*, 588. His campaign methods were all new to the candidate. An anecdote tells how Long told Seymour Weiss “he had decided to support her and told me to find out what kind of organization they had. I called Mrs. Caraway and her son in Arkansas and asked them for their mailing lists. They didn’t have a mailing list, they didn’t have a leader, they had absolutely nothing”, Interview to Seymour Weiss, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 5, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1398</sup> Malone, *Hattie and Huey*, 24–25.

<sup>1399</sup> Letter from Huey P. Long to an anonymous supporter, July 19, 1932, Scott Wilson papers, Manuscripts Collection 233, series II, box 53, folder 1, LaRC.

<sup>1400</sup> Circular from Huey P. Long on behalf of Hattie Caraway, “What the Re-election of Senator (Mrs.) Caraway Means to the People of America”, 1932, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 1, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>1401</sup> Harley Bozeman wrote, “Huey, in his invasion of Arkansas in 1932, proved that the Arkansas and Louisiana ‘red-necks and hillbillies’ are of the same breed”, Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, December 19, 1957.

<sup>1402</sup> Malone, *Hattie and Huey*, 28, 30.

<sup>1403</sup> Herman B. Deutsch, “Hattie and Huey”, *The Saturday Evening Post*, vol. 205, n° 16, October 15, 1932, 92, T. Harry Williams papers, Mss. 2489, 2510, 2511, 2512, OS.W, folder 22, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU); Malone, *Hattie and Huey*, 48.

Caraway's opponents were six white male candidates, all with strong possibilities.<sup>1404</sup> Among them there were two former governors, a state Supreme Court justice, and a national commander of the American Legion.<sup>1405</sup> The most powerful of the candidates was senator Joe Robinson, who thought Long a demagogue. The Kingfish and he had had several disagreements in the Senate, as shown in the following article published in *The New York Times*, which refers to a speech given by Long:

Senator Long denounced the 'plutocracy of wealth', demanding a 'redistribution', and said he would vote for Farmer-Laborites and Republicans in preference to Democrats who, 'like the Senator from Arkansas', favored the views of 'Baruch, Morgan and Rockefeller' toward vested wealth.<sup>1406</sup>

Robison could hardly surpass or even compete with Long's persuasive techniques. Given the Kingfish's prominence and as had happened during O.K. Allen's campaign, in the political meetings it seemed it was Huey and not Caraway who was running. Some newspapers were even condescending with the candidate and did not believe she was capable of being a senator. A local periodical from Russellville, Arkansas, described her as "the type of woman I would like to picture as my mother, who seems as if she would be more natural comfortably sitting on the front porch of her home, maybe knitting something for one of her own three sons".<sup>1407</sup> It is interesting to note that these had been named after the apostle Paul, confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest—founder of the KKK—, and the confederate *caudillo* Robert E. Lee.<sup>1408</sup> Without a doubt, Caraway and his family personified the nostalgia for the southern "Lost Cause".<sup>1409</sup>

As in his previous campaigns, Long continued to quote the Bible, which was merely rhetoric, as can be seen in the next anecdote. One day, in the middle of the campaign, an

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<sup>1404</sup> Long noted that and affirmed, "There is no reason to retire Mrs. Caraway just because she is the only woman Senator", in "What the Re-election of Senator (Mrs.) Caraway Means to the People of America", 1932, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 1, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>1405</sup> Hermann B. Deutsch, "Colonel Roden Discovers that History Repeats Itself", *The Times-Picayune*, July 14, 1963, 4.

<sup>1406</sup> "Huey Long Revolts; Quits Senate Posts", *The New York Times*, April 30, 1932.

<sup>1407</sup> *Daily Courier Democrat*, August 4, 1932.

<sup>1408</sup> Deutsch, "Hattie and Huey", 7.

<sup>1409</sup> See also William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996); James W. Loewen and Edward H. Sebesta, *The Confederate and Neo-Confederate Reader: the "Great Truth" About the "Lost Cause"* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010); David R. Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002).

observer asked the Kingfish to what church would he attend mass that Sunday, to which the senator answered: “Me go to church? Why I haven’t been to a church in so many years”.<sup>1410</sup> Talking about his brother, Julius expressed: “A more irreligious, profane man I have never known.” And he added: “It is said in the Scriptures that Satan quoted the Bible to serve his own uses. That is the only reason which has ever caused Huey Long to quote from the Bible”.<sup>1411</sup> In all, Harris theorized the following:

Huey Long had the reputation of being a close student of the Bible. As a matter of fact, he wasn’t. There are two stories extant about the source of the Scriptural knowledge which he displayed so ostentatiously. One was that a central Louisiana preacher supplied him with the Bible references with which he plentifully besprinkled his public addresses. The other was that he found them where nine-hundred and ninety-nine seekers out of every thousand find them—in Bible glossaries and concordances.<sup>1412</sup>

Beals, a leftist, went one step forward and wrote that, “to apply doctrines established for a primitive tribe people as a solution for the complexities of the American life is too absurd to need refutation. But it gets votes”.<sup>1413</sup> The Kingfish also talked about the need for a better distribution of wealth in the country, establishing it as a “national issue of the future”.<sup>1414</sup>

At the end, and as could be expected, Caraway won the election in November 8, 1932, winning in 68 out of the 75 counties of Arkansas,<sup>1415</sup> obtaining as many votes as her six opponents combined.<sup>1416</sup> She became the first woman elected senator in the United States, and was senator of Arkansas until 1945.<sup>1417</sup> There is some debate about the importance of Long’s intervention in Caraway’s political career. Deutsch believed she would have never achieved victory without the Kingfish’s help.<sup>1418</sup> Williams also shared this idea but stated that the senator from Arkansas could have obtained reasonable

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<sup>1410</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 591; Malone, *Hattie and Huey*, 82.

<sup>1411</sup> Long, “What I Know About My Brother”, 56.

<sup>1412</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 251.

<sup>1413</sup> Carleton Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1935), 314.

<sup>1414</sup> Malone, *Hattie and Huey*, 76.

<sup>1415</sup> Malone, *Hattie and Huey*, 97.

<sup>1416</sup> Deutsch, “Hattie and Huey”, 92; Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 247.

<sup>1417</sup> Rebecca Latimer Felton (1835-1930), a suffragist from Georgia, was honored by appointment to the US senate in 1922 but served only for twenty-two hours as substitute for senator Thomas E. Watson (1856-1922) after the latter’s passing and the election of Walter F. George (1878-1957), “National Affairs—The Congress: Lady from Louisiana”, *Time* XXVII, n<sup>o</sup>. 6, February 10, 1936, 12, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 3, folder 24, LSMHC.

<sup>1418</sup> Deutsch, “Hattie and Huey”, 6-7.

results by herself, because of the memory of his late husband and the lack of strong opposition.<sup>1419</sup> Regardless, the success of the campaign arrived to the ears of a certain Democrat who was governor of New York and was running for president.

## 4.2 Fireside chatting with Roosevelt<sup>1420</sup>

At the Democratic National Convention held in Chicago in the summer of 1932 Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected candidate for the presidential election with the votes of the majority of the delegates.<sup>1421</sup> The month before, Huey Long had announced that his state would support the nomination for Roosevelt.<sup>1422</sup> A delegation from Louisiana led by the Kingfish attended the meeting enthusiastically.<sup>1423</sup> Long, furthermore, “impressed the convention with an unexpectedly reasonable presentation of his case”.<sup>1424</sup> One of Roosevelt’s supporters, the politician Edward J. Flynn (1891-1953), narrated in his memoirs how the man from the South, who had a “trumpet-like voice” and was always “surrounded by bodyguards”, visited him in his hotel room and informed he would campaign for his candidate.<sup>1425</sup> Huey’s support was crucial in the Chicago convention because he convinced delegates from other southern states, particularly Arkansas and Mississippi, to nominate Roosevelt. Flynn concluded that “without Long’s work Roosevelt might not have been nominated”.<sup>1426</sup> Not only politicians, but journalists were aware of Huey’s relevance in that event.<sup>1427</sup> The Kingfish knew how important he was and became somehow the “center of the stage.

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<sup>1419</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 592–93.

<sup>1420</sup> This title is borrowed from Roosevelt’s popular radio show *Fireside chats*, which he gave between 1933 and 1944. See also Russell D. Buhite and David W Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

<sup>1421</sup> “Roosevelt Wins Nomination in Wild Stampede”, *The Times-Picayune*, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1932, 3.

<sup>1422</sup> “Louisiana Votes Go to Roosevelt, Announces Long”, *The Times-Picayune*, May 6, 1932, 1.

<sup>1423</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 118; Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 231-233.

<sup>1424</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 301.

<sup>1425</sup> Edward J. Flynn, *You’re the Boss* (New York: Viking Press, 1947), 95–96.

<sup>1426</sup> Flynn, *You’re the Boss*, 101.

<sup>1427</sup> A journalist wrote: “Those who warn that Huey Long is not to be laughed off point out that he proved a formidable, if not indispensable, factor in getting Mr. Roosevelt nominated for President. Many feel that his votes, if not his speech, enabled the Roosevelt forces to win the crucial test vote in the national convention of 1932”, in Diogenes, “Huey Long Is A Factor”, *The Literary Digest*, December 1, 1934, 14.

The eyes of the nation were turned his way, and he loved it”.<sup>1428</sup> The senator presented himself as the unquestionable leader of his state, when he affirmed: “The Democratic Party in Louisiana? I am the Democratic Party in Louisiana”.<sup>1429</sup>

According to his autobiography and as an anecdote, in that event Long met William Jennings Bryan, Jr., the son of the four-time presidential candidate for the Democrats:

In the early hours of the Democratic Convention at Chicago a tall, middle-aged gentleman approached me.  
- Do you know who I am? –he asked.  
- No, but I won’t be surprised if you don’t know whom [*sic*] I am. –I replied.  
- Well, I am William Jennings Bryan, Jr.  
- Well, if you knew me, I believe you’d say that I ought to know you.  
He gave me a gold fountain pen which had been presented to his father by the schoolchildren of Mexico.<sup>1430</sup>

A few months later, Long informed the presidential candidate that the “Southern states ‘were in the bag’” for his campaign.<sup>1431</sup> At the same occasion, he guaranteed: “There was no need for him [Roosevelt] to make speeches down South. They are all going to vote for him anyway”.<sup>1432</sup> The Kingfish believed he had found the politician who would carry on his policies on a national scale and therefore voted for Roosevelt, thus starting an initially cordial though complex relationship. Of all the Democrats who supported and campaigned for the New Yorker, Long was “the most vociferous [...] in pressing progressive views on the candidate”, because he “regarded himself as the spokesman of radicals of both parties”.<sup>1433</sup>

The future president of the United States and the Kingfish of Louisiana were two very different men, with opposite personalities and life experiences.<sup>1434</sup> Roosevelt was a patrician born in New York City who had studied in Harvard and at Columbia Law

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<sup>1428</sup> James A. Farley (1938), *Behind the Ballots. The Personal History of a Politician* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1939), 125.

<sup>1429</sup> Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana*, 46, 107.

<sup>1430</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 305. Anecdote also told in Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 11.

<sup>1431</sup> “Southern States ‘in the Bag’, Huey Long Informs Roosevelt”, *Dallas Morning News*, October 10, 1932.

<sup>1432</sup> “Senator Long Headquarters”, *The Times-Picayune*, October 11, 1932, 6.

<sup>1433</sup> Schlesinger, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 417.

<sup>1434</sup> There is a BA. Dissertation on the relationship between the two politicians by Raffaele Asquer, “‘We, the people are with you’. FDR, Huey Long and their public: rhetorical strategies and political identities” (Università di Pisa, 2008). This is the only study found on the politician produced in Italy.

School, while Long incarnated the classical stereotype of man of the South in the eyes of a northerner—although they were both lawyers.<sup>1435</sup> Roosevelt had been a debonair Secretary of Navy under Woodrow Wilson, and had campaigned for the vice-presidency, and lost, in the 1920 election, only to be struck down by polio. However, this quintessential New Yorker gained an appearance of the South by his association with the spa of Warm Springs, in Georgia, which he bought when he became convinced that warm climate helped his paralyzed legs. The Louisianan “believed that a victory for Roosevelt would advance his doctrines”.<sup>1436</sup> The differences were, however, too significant.<sup>1437</sup>

Long’s campaign was based on strongly criticizing the president, Herbert Hoover, and his administration. In a speech he gave in Kansas the senator affirmed that, during their terms, Hoover and his predecessor, Calvin Coolidge, “went to work for Mellon”, to whom “they had ‘served with distinction’”.<sup>1438</sup> Nonetheless, FDR and Long did not fully trust one other and looked at the other with certain contempt because they were aware that at some point their paths would collide. On July 29, 1932, at the governor’s mansion in Albany, Roosevelt was having lunch with his trustees when Long called. When he hung up after a conversation about the campaign, the guests, who had heard the dialogue, chuckled thinking what a strange character the Kingfish was, with his typical Louisiana accent and flamboyantness. As biographer Conrad Black wrote, “it was easy to underestimate Huey Long because of his outrageous appearance and demeanor, but he was an astute champion of the social underdog in volatile times”.<sup>1439</sup> FDR was aware of that and famously warned his guests: “It’s all very well for us to laugh over Huey, but we have to remember all the time that he is really one of the two most dangerous men in the country”.<sup>1440</sup>

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<sup>1435</sup> A stunning biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt is Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*.

<sup>1436</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 164.

<sup>1437</sup> Catalan writer Juan Guixé wrote an analysis of Roosevelt, in which he described the politician as an honest man who was implementing a reasonable program, in Juan Guixé, *La experiencia Roosevelt* (Madrid: Labor, 1936).

<sup>1438</sup> “Hoover’s Record Assailed by Long”, *The Times-Picayune*, October 27, 1932, 6.

<sup>1439</sup> Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 341.

<sup>1440</sup> Mark Perry, *The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), ix-xi; Schlesinger, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 417-418. In 1935 Forrest Davis dared to affirm: “I submit that Huey P. Long is the most dangerous man in America”, in Davis, *Huey Long*, ix.

The other man Roosevelt was referring to was general Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), from Arkansas, Chief of Staff of the United States Army during the 1930s. MacArthur had a seminal and polemical role in ending the protest led by some 40,000 veterans of war in Washington that were vindicating payment of their bonuses in the spring and summer of 1932. Hoover and Roosevelt had refused to do so because they were in favor of distributing the budget more fairly, not supporting such large payment to a particular group. Long would always be a supporter of the veterans and disagreed with Roosevelt on this point.<sup>1441</sup> Because of his attitude, the senator would even become an honorary member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.<sup>1442</sup> The methods used by MacArthur, who believed the gathering was a breeding ground for “reds”,<sup>1443</sup> were unorthodox, for he approached the protest with a thousand men equipped with six tanks, bayonets, and tear gas grenades.<sup>1444</sup> The following extract explains: “Bajo las órdenes del presidente Herbert Hoover, el general Douglas MacArthur asaltó el campamento con sus tropas e, incendiándolo, echó de Washington al Ejército de Reivindicación, a punta de bayoneta”.<sup>1445</sup> Due to his aggressiveness, “the possibility of general Douglas MacArthur leading a right-wing assault on the presidency existed throughout the 1930s”.<sup>1446</sup> In all, during his administration, Roosevelt feared a revolution might occur: a leftist one led by Long, or a rightist one led by MacArthur.<sup>1447</sup>

On October that same year, the presidential candidate invited his circle to another social event, a dinner party in his residency in Hyde Park, New York, to speak about strategies to win the election. Long attended dressed in a colorful suit, an orchid shirt, and a pink tie. During the meal, Roosevelt’s mother, always a strict snob, asked in an indiscrete

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<sup>1441</sup> He once wrote a letter to an anonymous veteran stating, “I realize that the President [at that time, already FDR] is sincere in his desire to balance the budget, but I cannot agree that it should be balanced at the expense of our veteran friends, who served their country in time of need, willing, if need be, to make the supreme sacrifice, as so many of your buddies have done”, Letter from Huey P. Long to anonymous supporter, June 24, 1933, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 2, folder 9, LaRC.

<sup>1442</sup> “Veterans Pay Honor to Long”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 8, 1933, 16.

<sup>1443</sup> Lucy Grace Barber, “A New Type of Lobbying. The Veterans’ Bonus March of 1932”, in *Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Political Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 84.

<sup>1444</sup> Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 240-241; Barber, “A New Type of Lobbying”, 75-107.

<sup>1445</sup> Jules Archer (1973), *Wall Street: fascismo en la Casa Blanca* (Barcelona: Dopesa, 1976), 21.

<sup>1446</sup> Robert E. Snyder, “Huey Long and the Presidential Election of 1936”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 16, no. 2 (April 1975): 118.

<sup>1447</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 149; Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 242.

manner: “Who is that *dreadful* person sitting next to my son?”<sup>1448</sup> *The Chicago Tribune* referred to that meal and Mrs. Roosevelt’s comments by stating that she “expressed at the dinner table her opinion of Mr. Long and of Mr. Long’s political philosophy in tones so loud that it seemed impossible that the senator had not heard”.<sup>1449</sup> That man might have been “dreadful”, but he appealed to the masses and won all the votes for the candidate in the states where he campaigned. Roosevelt became president after winning 57% of the votes on November 8, 1932,<sup>1450</sup> and Long believed the success was due to his job.<sup>1451</sup> In fact, “the South, successfully invaded by Hoover in 1928, was once more solidly Democratic”.<sup>1452</sup> The Depression had achieved unprecedented levels and thirteen million people in the United States were unemployed.<sup>1453</sup> The Kingfish’s contribution to Roosevelt’s victory was very helpful, but it was not the only factor that explains the victory. The Republican opponent, Hoover, was already quite discredited and only won the 39% of the votes in six states, none of which were in the South—Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Delaware, and Maine, all in the north-east.<sup>1454</sup> A contemporary journalist wrote how “no one any longer takes the Republican party [...] seriously [...] [This] party is as dust in the wind”, and added that the United States is not only ruled by the Democrats but there is a “possibility (not very great, to be sure) that he may be ruled by Huey Long”.<sup>1455</sup>

After the election, Long returned to his tasks in the Senate, his direct diatribes against the other senators, and his endless and overly expressive speeches. As writer Mildred Adams (1894-1980), who interviewed him in 1933, put it:

His body is awkwardly and badly proportioned, but his gestures are as quick as they are ungainly. He rocks on his heels, thrusts his stomach out and threatens his opponent with

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<sup>1448</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt (1961), *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 138.

<sup>1449</sup> John Boettiger, “See Huey Long Prosecution on US Tax Charge”, *Chicago Tribune*, December 22, 1933, 1.

<sup>1450</sup> “Electoral Vote Roosevelt 472, Hoover 59”, *New Orleans States*, November 9, 1932, 1.

<sup>1451</sup> Long affirmed in a circular, “without [my help] it was hardly probable he [FDR] would ever have been nominated”, in Circular from Huey P. Long, “The Share Our Wealth Principles”, 1934, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 5, LaRC.

<sup>1452</sup> “Democrats Sweep Nation”, *The Times-Picayune*, November 9, 1932, 1.

<sup>1453</sup> Bosch, “Estados Unidos en los años treinta: ¿Un socialismo imposible?”, 44.

<sup>1454</sup> *Ibid.* See also Martin Carcasson, “Herbert Hoover and the Presidential Campaign of 1932: The Failure of Apologia” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 349–365.

<sup>1455</sup> Springer, “Huey Long: The Amazing Louisiana Senator”, 124.

it. He jams a fist down into a calf-bound book. He hunches his shoulders, lowers his head, and weaves back and forth like an angry bull [...] Always he puts on a good show.<sup>1456</sup>



*Fig. 31: Senator Long in the middle of a speech, ca. 1934. Wikimedia.commons*

The Kingfish's attacks addressed to the new president would not take long, because the policies under the New Deal were not as progressive as the Kingfish had anticipated.<sup>1457</sup>

Harris argued: "Since the new executive had had much to say about 'The Forgotten

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<sup>1456</sup> Adams, "Huey the Great", 71, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>1457</sup> At a speech at the US senate, Long affirmed in a quite desperate tone: "If I were the President of the United States—an I have only the human impulses that I think any ordinary human being like myself would have—if I were President of the United States and I had gone before the people of the United States pleading against this unjust distribution of wealth; if I had gone before my countrymen complaining of this bloated plutocracy of 1 percent existing in the land of plenty, existing in superluxury, and to the misery of the masses; if I were the President of the United States today who had warned the American people about this terrible calamity and growing canker; if I sat in the White House after having pointed out these difficulties and after having promised a relief and a deliverance from such aggravated and accentuated concentration and disaster; if I were in the shoes of the President of the United States, having pointed out these conditions with the results that are here to prove it; if I were President of the United States and saw Members of the House and Members of the Senate voting against the redistribution of wealth, to which I had dedicated my political lifetime, I would feel that not only had the Congress failed to catch the spirit of the time but had failed to stand by my platform and to aid me in the work I had undertaken", in Huey P. Long, "Limitation of Fortunes—Spreading the Wealth Among the Masses", reprinted Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, First Session, May 12, 1933, 5, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

Man', Long had reason to hope that his scheme to limit private fortunes would be viewed with favor at the White House".<sup>1458</sup> But things would not go as planned.

#### 4.2.1 The beginning of the end of a relationship

Long took advantage of one of the most efficient propaganda mechanisms in that time: the radio, particularly the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), where he spoke about his political program centered on the redistribution of wealth, which he believed the president supported. Jeansonne tells how, "on radio he evoked the same familiarity as Roosevelt did in fireside chats",<sup>1459</sup> although he used a more rustic language.<sup>1460</sup> The Kingfish had already employed the radio for his campaigns in Louisiana, but now he was utilizing the media for national purposes in the same manner as the president. When the two officially became enemies, Huey would use the radio as a way of spreading the mistakes in the president's administration and of criticizing him directly. For instance, the Kingfish harshly said: "He rose into the President's office on the platform of redistributing the wealth. He has done no such thing and has made no effort to do any such thing since he has been there".<sup>1461</sup> After a few months of the new administration, the senator also used his personal newspaper to begin complaining about the president's policies, particularly in the editorial section, in which he often talked directly to him. For instance, he wrote: "Roosevelt can put things in order in America in two months if he dares—dares—dares! [...] GO THROUGH, MR. PRESIDENT!"<sup>1462</sup> Long was worried, and asked his readers:

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<sup>1458</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 129. After a few weeks after Roosevelt was elected, Long demonstrated his support for the future president by saying in the senate: "our great President elect saw the hunger marchers coming long before they came to Washington. He told us away back las May in language and in terms so certain that the blind could see and the deaf could hear that we had the hunger marchers on the way to Washington", in Huey P. Long, "People's Right to Fulfillment", re-printed Congressional Record, 72 Congress, Second Session, December 6, 1932, 3, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

<sup>1459</sup> Jeansonne, "Huey P. Long, Gerald L. K. Smith and Leander H. Perez", 13.

<sup>1460</sup> Hogan and Williams, "The Rusticity and Religiosity of Huey P. Long", 159.

<sup>1461</sup> Huey P. Long, "Our Growing Calamity", NBC speech delivered from Washington on January 19, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 2, folder 4, LaRC. Text also available at THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, 2511, 2512, OS:W, folder 2:1, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1462</sup> Huey P. Long, "I Don't Understand It", *The American Progress*, November 2, 1933, 7. In another editorial, the politician was open to forgive the president: "I now openly declare that regardless of every mistake the Roosevelt administration has made, in the selection of men to run the government and in the

Will he [Roosevelt] let Wall Street use his administration to fight men like me, who are his real friends, who want to see him make good, who love the man for what he has meant when we fought for the cause of human reforms under a banner carrying his name; who will bow a long way to meet his opinion, BUT who sometimes will not say he is right when he is not?<sup>1463</sup>

FDR's campaign manager James A. Farley (1888-1976) argued that the issue was that "Long had tried teamwork for a while, but it was soon apparent that he had to be the lead horse or nothing".<sup>1464</sup> Regardless, Roosevelt did not pay attention to Long's proposals and approved other policies, which the Kingfish conceived as unacceptable, especially the Emergency Banking Act, the Economy Act, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), and the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). In fact, Huey would speak of New Deal's measures as a "plan of robbery, murder, blackmail, or theft".<sup>1465</sup> Already in 1933 there was dispute between the two politicians, during the so-called Hundred Days beginning in March.<sup>1466</sup> The Kingfish criticized, for instance, that the Economy Act reduced half billion dollars from the national budget, therefore affecting the salaries of the common man instead of increasing the taxes of big millionaires. Moreover, the president did not pay the bonuses to the veterans of war because they were too costly. Long was also against the NIRA because of its strong control of salaries and prices, and also its branch, the National Recovery Administration (NRA)—which allowed industries to collaborate with the federal government in establishing prices, fees, and hours of labor—, for the Kingfish asserted it incited the monopoly and power of big businesses.<sup>1467</sup> During his last two years of life, Long never

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discharge and administration of laws, that I will swallow it all, hook, line and sinker, if you will now carry through what you have pronounced as the means of saving a America--breaking up of the big fortunes and spreading the wealth among all the people", in Huey P. Long, "Open Letter to FDR", *The American Progress*, October 26, 1933, 1.

<sup>1463</sup> Huey P. Long, "Democracy Falls For a Trap", *The American Progress*, November 16, 1933, 1.

<sup>1464</sup> Farley, *Behind the Ballots*, 240.

<sup>1465</sup> Deutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case*, 34.

<sup>1466</sup> That year, for instance, there was a dispute regarding who would fill a public position in Louisiana. A newspaper told it in the following way: "The Crawfish is angry. He went to Washington the other day to see Postmaster-General James A. Farley to protest the appointment of Paul B. Habans of New Orleans, one of his political enemies to the post of Federal Home Loan Manager in Louisiana. This is a nice fat Federal appointment and carries with it quite a number of jobs throughout the state of Louisiana. The Crawfish thought that this, as well as other federal patronage in Louisiana, should be his very own to do with as he thinks fit. Obviously President Roosevelt and Jim Farley think otherwise. Precedent dictates that the National Committeeman of a state shall be the dispenser of federal patronage and whenever for some reason he is not available, the state committee chairman shall perform the honors". At the end, of course, the president's word was indisputable. "Huey Raves While Jim Appoints", *The Hammond Vindicator*, July 28, 1933, 1.

<sup>1467</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 60; Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 286.

stopped his attacks towards the NRA.<sup>1468</sup> In 1935 he gave a speech at the Senate where he reprimanded the NRA by calling it “National Ruin Administration”, “Nuts Running America”, and “Never Roosevelt Again”.<sup>1469</sup> At Milwaukee Huey stated: “The NRA is riding to failure. Under the present system we have lords of Wall Street at the top and slaves at the bottom. No man should be entitled to possess more than \$55,000,000”.<sup>1470</sup> In one of his editorials for *The American Progress*, Long stated that one of the policies the NRA was supposed to carry was to redistribute the money:

I have been clamoring for that since the first days of my political life, but how did the NRA propose to put money into the hands of the masses? All of the wealth of this land, all that amounts to anything is tied up in a few hands [...] Therefore, to make such a thing as the NRA, or any other RA successful, I have urged that we should limit the size of fortunes in the United States [...] But for the NRA to have ever expected to succeed in spreading the wealth among the people without taking the wealth from the people who have it, is too preposterous for argument.<sup>1471</sup>

Surprisingly enough, the Kingfish even claimed economist John Maynard Keynes had supported his ideas in an open letter to the president distributed to several American newspapers. According to Long’s newspaper, Keynes said to FDR that the NRA had to come second:

The first thing to do, says Mr. Keynes, is to see that money gets into the hands of the people so that they can purchase some of the things that are swelling our nation’s granaries and warehouses to the bursting point. Then it will be possible to enforce such reforms as are contained in the NRA code without injuring small business men.<sup>1472</sup>

Another of the policies of the New Deal that did not satisfy Long’s expectations was the Banking Act, a document written by bankers that were not aiming at transforming the system but simply tried to stabilize the already existing one through federal funds. Long argued it was a very conservative document written by plutocrats and members of the Hoover administration. According to the senator of Louisiana, with this act there was no

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<sup>1468</sup> “Crawfish Renews His Attack on NRA”, *New Orleans States*, February 24, 1934, 2.

<sup>1469</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 253.

<sup>1470</sup> “Veterans Offer Apology as Long Denounces Press”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 30, 1933, 11.

<sup>1471</sup> Huey P. Long, “Back to the Mark!” *The American Progress*, October 19, 1933, 1-2.

<sup>1472</sup> “Famed Economist Backs Up Long on Spreading Income”, *The American Progress*, January 4, 1934, 1.

guaranty that small bankers would not be eclipsed by big businesses.<sup>1473</sup> One of the Kingfish supporters expressed in a pamphlet—in which he was trying to imitate the senator’s rhetoric—: “The masses of the people have not seen anything as yet from the New Deal that gives any promise of permanent relief”.<sup>1474</sup>

Long was not the only public adversary of Roosevelt. Marine general Smedley D. Butler (1881-1940) explained at the United States House of Representatives in 1934 that the previous year bond salesman Gerald C. MacGuire (1897-1935) had offered him to lead a fascist coup d’état to overthrow Roosevelt from the White House, but he had refused. The general assured that MacGuire “offered him \$3,000,000 with which to raise a Fascist army of 500,000 men to march on Washington”.<sup>1475</sup> This initiative, known as the Business Plot, was motivated by wealthy veterans partly frustrated because of the 1932 failed protest in Washington reclaiming their bonuses. MacGuire denied all the accusations and passed away of natural causes shortly after. After these allegations were made, no one was prosecuted, but there is some debate among historians regarding the real existence of the complot.<sup>1476</sup> Author Jules Archer argues it really occurred, and that, if it had not been for Butler’s testimony, democracy in the country would have been put in jeopardy.<sup>1477</sup> Others believe that, although there was some conspiracy, it never constituted a real threat. Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., wrote: “The gap between contemplation and execution was considerable, and it can hardly be supposed that the Republic was in much danger”.<sup>1478</sup> Regarding the peril of the movement, *Time* magazine published:

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<sup>1473</sup> “Roosevelt Stand on Bank Measure Assailed by Long”, *The Times-Picayune*, June 3rd, 1933, 1, 7; Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 59.

<sup>1474</sup> Bazz Hitt, Jr., *Why Huey P. Long Should Be President: A Message to the Common People from One of the Forgotten Men* ([Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified], 1935), 20, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 14, LaRC.

<sup>1475</sup> “Accuser, Accused and Investigators in ‘Fascist Revolt’ Scare”, *The Times-Picayune*, November 22, 1934, 8.

<sup>1476</sup> Scholars and authors have discussed whether there ever was the possibility of a fascist American movement rising to power in the 1930s. Americanist Godfrey Hodgson wrote, perhaps from a naive perspective, “in the 1930s and 1940s the United States also escaped the political disaster of fascism [...] The fact that fascism never seriously threatened the American political system [...] reflects the strength of the democratic tradition and the political skill of President Roosevelt”, in *The Myth of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 158. See also Brian E. Fogarty, *Fascism: Why Not Here?* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books Inc, 2009).

<sup>1477</sup> Archer, *Wall Street*.

<sup>1478</sup> Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Upheaval*, 83.

If General Butler refused to be ‘the man on the White Horse’ who would lead it into Washington and wrest the Government from Franklin Roosevelt, command would be offered to others in on the scheme—General Johnson [head of the NRA], General MacArthur, the three ex-commanders of the American Legion.<sup>1479</sup>

In that sense, historian Sally Denton writes that after Butler’s story was known there were some who believed he “was associated with a loose-knit coalition of progressive populist”, mainly Long and Coughlin, to oust president Roosevelt.<sup>1480</sup> Long was not aware of this critical situation, but he certainly admired the general, his career and awards, and was in favor of his fight to obtain the bonuses for veterans. *The American Progress* followed Butler’s visit to the veterans of New Orleans in 1933, and published that the military man had affirmed his support to Long’s political program by saying to the press: “I am 100 per cent for Senator Long”.<sup>1481</sup> The newspaper also printed that the general “is also a fiery and determined advocate of repeal of the Economy Act of last March, and for the restoration to disabled veterans of the benefits to which they were entitled prior to that date”.<sup>1482</sup> The general talked about the bonuses as a sort of employers’ liability, and argued that soldiers were employers of the government and therefore deserved to receive acknowledgement for their honorable job. According to him, the war had made 5,000 new millionaires while the soldier was being forgotten.<sup>1483</sup>

In a similar way, Long’s own words were: “I do not care for my share in a victory that means that the poor and the downtrodden, the blind, the helpless, the orphaned, the bleeding, the wounded, the hungry and the distressed, will be the victims”.<sup>1484</sup> While the president was proposing measures in order to deal with the crisis, Huey thought of it to be the perfect moment to rethink and do over the economic system of the country. In spite of the Kingfish’s complaints, his words were not listened and the policies introduced by Roosevelt kept being approved by majorities.<sup>1485</sup> The senator was left

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<sup>1479</sup> “National Affairs: Plot Without Plotters”, *Time*, December 3, 1934.

<sup>1480</sup> Sally Denton, *The Plots Against the President: FDR, a Nation in Crisis, and the Rise of the American Right* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 214.

<sup>1481</sup> “Smedley Butler Tells Veterans of Their Battle”, *The American Progress*, December 21, 1933, 7.

<sup>1482</sup> “General Smedley Butler Will Speal for New Orleans Vets”, *The American Progress*, December 7, 1933, 3.

<sup>1483</sup> F. Edw. Hebert, “Gen. Butler Is Here to Talk to Veterans”, *New Orleans States*, December 8, 1933, 14.

<sup>1484</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 183.

<sup>1485</sup> He expressed his frustration in a letter: “If we succeed to decentralize the wealth, we must keep the move going among the people in 48 states [Hawaii and Alaska became States in 1959] and in the two

with the feeling that during the time they had been political allies FDR had been lying to him. Thus Long's attacks became bitterer in the following months. For instance, in reference to Roosevelt's predilection for spending his holidays on millionaire Vincent Astor's yacht, the Kingfish nicknamed FDR "Prince Franklin, Knight of the Nourmahal",<sup>1486</sup> and his supporters "his goddamned banker friends".<sup>1487</sup> As biographer Conrad Black put it recently, "it was entertaining, but most Americans did not like their chief of state subjected to such indignity".<sup>1488</sup>

The president gained popularity through his New Deal, even in Louisiana, while Long was losing it by criticizing him. 1933 was a dangerous year for the political career of the senator, and some newspapers echoed this situation. For instance, the *New Orleans States* published: "A year from now, while he still may cling to his Senate seat, the odds are his will be a shrunken and despised figure, which no one will notice except to scoff".<sup>1489</sup> *The Atlantic* also proclaimed that the decline was already coming to Long, because after all "his show" was starting to "flop", and "popular interest" in him was decreasing.<sup>1490</sup> However, the complete opposite occurred.

It is worth adding that the Kingfish's lack of decorum and diplomacy in particular circumstances increased people's aversion towards his persona, especially in the northern states of the country, where he was seen as a foreign menace alien to American

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Houses of Congress here in Washington [...] I have less ambition to hold office than I have ever had. I have worked and fought so hard, so long, that if I could see the beginning of the spread of the wealth among the whole people, I would walk out of my public life tomorrow a happy man. One fighting such battles gets nothing except attacks, bricks and knocks", Letter from Huey P. Long to "Friend", March 7, 1933, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 16, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1486</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 86; Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 101. He referred to him as such in a speech in which Long reproached the president for having spent time in Astor's yacht with British aristocrats instead of dealing with American problems. He sarcastically affirmed: "If he doesn't get any better understanding of conditions in this country than he has had in the last two years, it would be a fine thing if Congress made a contract with Mr. Vincent Astor and his five million dollar yacht, not only to take the President out in the British waters to fish for a few weeks, but to keep him there for several more months and trust to luck the country would find its way back to normalcy", Huey P. Long, "The St. Vitus Dance Government", NBC speech delivered from Washington on May 2, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 2, folder 4, LaRC. A fragment of that speech was reproduced in Brunson, "Dr. Weiss, Gone and Forgotten", 21-22, Hermann Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder 6, LaRC.

<sup>1487</sup> Denton, *The Plots Against the President*, 121.

<sup>1488</sup> Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 345.

<sup>1489</sup> Frank R. Kent, "Closing in on Huey", *New Orleans States*, October 5, 1933.

<sup>1490</sup> Kent, "Our Political Monstruosities", 411.

democracy. An incident occurred in August 27, 1933, during a party at Sands Point Country Club in Long Island may serve as an example of how Long's image was deteriorating. As was common, the Kingfish had been drinking and was flirting with numerous women.<sup>1491</sup> A witness sarcastically told: "They say Huey Long had been drinking—that he was drunk. Just think of it. A US Senator drunk! Just think of it. That's something that never happened before".<sup>1492</sup> At one point he went to the men's room and came back half an hour later with a bleeding eye. There is no certain explanation of what happened exactly, but it is probable the senator had tried to urinate between the legs of another man, or that he had stained that man's shoes with urine, and afterwards the stranger had punched him in the face.<sup>1493</sup> Kane describes it comically: "Always the innovator, he stood back, took aim through the legs of the other, but missed his goal".<sup>1494</sup>

In any case, the drunken shenanigan echoed the press and some newspapers referred to the Kingfish as "Huey Pee Long".<sup>1495</sup> The *Dallas Morning News* published a satirical article that was about how people in New York thanked the unknown assailant for his task.<sup>1496</sup> A newspaper from the state of New York published an article entitled "Huey's

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<sup>1491</sup> Long's behavior with women was polemic. His friend Richard Leche affirmed: "Sure, he had relations and affairs with all kinds of women. Once Maestri caught him in his office. He got a woman in trouble in N.Y. and S.W. [Seymour Weiss?] had to go up and pay \$10,000. Once on a train a man invited Huey to his car. On the trip Huey assaulted his daughter. When reproached, he said, 'You gotta try, don't you?'" Interview to Richard Leche, no date, by T. Harry Williams. One of his bodyguards, however, argued Long was always faithful to his wife: "They say he ran around with women. I can tell you I never saw anything of it and as close as I was I would have known. He was devoted to his family. On campaigns he was always in touch with Mrs. Long by phone", Interview to Murphy Roden, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1492</sup> Jack Curley, "Jack Curley, Well Known Sportsman, Offers His Story of How He Acted as Nurse to Huey Long After Incident at Sands Point Club: Put Towels on Kingfish's Eye After He Was Hurt", *New York Enquirer*, September 3, 1933. This person sent a letter to the senator afterwards wishing him a fast recovery, Letter from Jack Curley to Huey Long, September 9, 1933, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>1493</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 264-265. A witnesses told: "The story went that Huey went in [the men's room] while an elderly member of the Club was using the urinal and peremptorily ordered him out of the way as he stated he was in a hurry. The older man is supposed to coolly look over his shoulder at Huey and continue. At this point Al Williams entered the lavatory and Huey continued with what he was preparing to do if the older gentleman had gotten out of his way. The result was that he wet the older man", and then Williams hit Long, Letter from George C. Seybolt to T. Harry Williams, October 20, 1970, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1494</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 103.

<sup>1495</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 186.

<sup>1496</sup> "New York Phones Carry Thanks to Huey's Assailant", *Dallas Morning News*, August 31, 1933, 1.

Black Eye”, which read: “It is a commonly held belief that he got only what he richly deserved”.<sup>1497</sup>



**Fig. 32:** “The Saga of Huey, Huey, Black and Bluey”, The Chicago Daily Tribune, August 31, 1933, 1, cartoonist McCutcheon, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 8, LaRC.

The Chicago Tribune published that a fundraiser had begun to make a gold medal for the person who hit the senator.<sup>1498</sup> In fact, even though it is bizarre and whimsical, an actual medal was made and displayed at the American Numismatic Society in New York after a sort of ceremony was held. It had the inscription in Latin: “*Publico consilia pre re in camera gesta*” on one side, and the translation to English on the other (“By public acclaim for a deed done in private, Sands Point, August 26, 1933). It was about two inches across and two and a half in depth. A fist striking the head of a kingfish, whose crown was falling off, was also depicted. The president of the Numismatic Society, an educated and refined man named Edward T. Newell (1886-1941), said:

I appreciate the honor of accepting this medal commemorating the act of this noble but unnown [*sic*] hero. I feel sure that it will find its place in history along with the medals presented at Marathon. Some day it may hang side by side with the meedal [*sic*] presented by the Emperor Honorium to the general who defeated Alaric, the Goth, the inscription which reads: ‘Triumphator barbarorum’, which means ‘the conqueror of the barbarians’.<sup>1499</sup>

<sup>1497</sup> “Huey’s Black Eye”, *The Troy Times*, August 29, 1933, 4.

<sup>1498</sup> “Medal for Man Who Hit Huey Not Now a Jest”, *Chicago Tribune*, September 2, 1933, 2.

<sup>1499</sup> “Museum Gets Medal Marking Long Smacking”, newspaper clipping, *New York Herald*, no date, 40, Huey published materials 1932-1936, Mss. 2363, box 1, folder 5, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

Thus not only Long was the protagonist of strange and unexpected events.

The newspaper from Chicago further explained that the Kingfish may have been hit by a black musician employed in the club, because Long had said: “Why don’t you stop trying to play white folk’s music? You ought to play good nigger [*sic*] music”.<sup>1500</sup> After a few days of ignoring the subject,<sup>1501</sup> the senator declared that in Sands Point he had been attacked by agents from the house of Morgan, who, according to him, had been hired to murder him.<sup>1502</sup> However the events went, “no public leader could maintain a straight face, to say nothing of his prestige, after the ignominy of a gent’s room ruction”.<sup>1503</sup> The incident also affected the senator’s relationship with mayor Walmsley of New Orleans and the Old Regulars. After a brief period of mutual understanding,<sup>1504</sup> in 1933 Long published a circular entitled “No Combination With Rats and Lice”, in which he openly stated that the mayor of New Orleans and his group had betrayed him during the difficult political times he was living.<sup>1505</sup> Moreover, they supported the New Deal and thanked Roosevelt for all his efforts to improve the situation of the country, leaving Long the probably true feeling of being alone.<sup>1506</sup> Given the critical situation, the senator persisted under the motto: “I was born into politics [...] A wedded man, with a storm for my wife”.<sup>1507</sup>

#### 4.2.2 The break-up

In October 1933, two months after Machado had been ousted from Cuba, Long and Roosevelt ended their political relationship. The president did not want to be linked to the senator’s flamboyant policies or persona, and the former was disappointed in

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<sup>1500</sup> “Medal for Man Who Hit Huey Not Now a Jest”, *Chicago Tribune*, September 2, 1933, 2.

<sup>1501</sup> “Long, Back Home, Remains Silent on Experiences in Journey North”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 31, 1933, 1, 9; “Bruised Brow of Senator Long Has Another Furrow”, *Worcester Evening Post*, September 1, 1933, 1-2.

<sup>1502</sup> “Crawfish in Rage, Puts Convention in Turmoil”, *New Orleans States*, August 29, 1933, 10; Williams, *Huey Long*, 651; Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 65; Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 113.

<sup>1503</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 197.

<sup>1504</sup> Agreement between Huey Long and the Old Regulars, “in the interest of a continuous political peace in the State of Louisiana”, signed by Long and Semmes Walmsley, no date, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 8, LaRC.

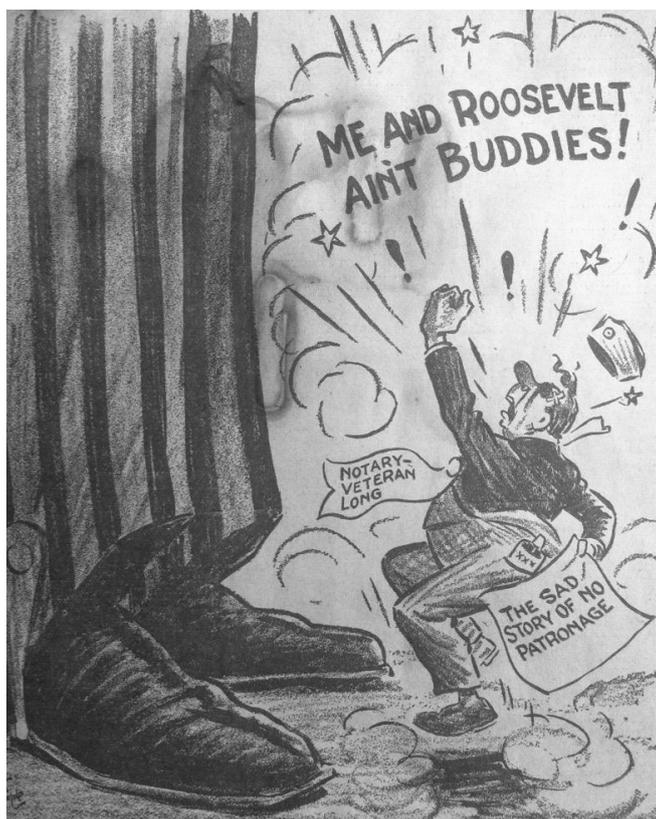
<sup>1505</sup> Boulard, *Huey Long Invades New Orleans*, 71.

<sup>1506</sup> Boulard, *Huey Long Invades New Orleans*, 76.

<sup>1507</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 204.

Roosevelt’s administration. Using an analogy of animals, Long spoke of both FDR and Hoover in the following way: “A hoot owl bangs into the roost and knocks the hen clean off, and catches her while she’s falling. But a scrootch owl slips into the roost and talks softly to her. And the hen just falls in love with him, and the first thing you know, *there ain’t no hen*”.<sup>1508</sup> The first owl, Hoover, acted in a ruthless but direct manner, while the second, Roosevelt, enchanted the pray before devouring it. To Long, there was barely any difference between the two politicians, and that idea appeared repeatedly in his discourses. In another recurring analogy and making use of what he had learned as a salesman, the Kingfish compared the presidents with two medicines. The first one, the high popalorum, was extracted from bark from the top of a tree to the bottom, while the second one, the low popahirum, was extracted from the root of the tree to the top. Therefore, the senator concluded, “Roosevelt and his crowd are skinning us from the ear down, and Hoover and the Republicans are doing the job from the ankle up”.<sup>1509</sup>

As a response, aversion towards Long did not only come from the president, but also from senators in Washington. In the last two years of his life the Kingfish gained enemies at the Senate and elsewhere. He once wrote as a joke: “I can’t go to hell, because that wouldn’t be the kind of place my enemies would want to kick me out of!”<sup>1510</sup> He was, to some,



*Fig. 33: “Communique from the ‘veteran’ of Foreign Wars”, The Times Picayune, August 31, 1933, cartoonist Keith Temple, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 7, LaRC.*

<sup>1508</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 101; Davis, *Huey Long*, 268–269.

<sup>1509</sup> Deutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case*, 50; Alexander Scourby, *Just Around the Corner* (Los Angeles: Republic Pictures Home Video, 1986).

<sup>1510</sup> Long, “I am in the Dog House”, 31.

profoundly aggravating and a radical example of the disenchantment towards Roosevelt's administration. Some less radical senators who evolved in a similar way were Republicans like William Borah (1865-1940, senator of Idaho from 1907 until his death), who would strongly criticize Machado's dictatorship,<sup>1511</sup> and Gerald Nye (1892-1971, senator of North Dakota during 1925-1945).

In the Senate, Long gave inappropriately long speeches but was the center of attention in several occasions, often not connected to foreign policy given his isolationist stance. As Kane put it: "Crowds dropped their work and rushed over at the word that Huey was speaking, to sit spellbound, guffawing, shaking their heads. He took up a staggering portion of the space in the Congressional Record".<sup>1512</sup> On one occasion, he filibustered over fifteen hours in which, for instance, "he dictated recipes for fried oysters and Roquefort dressing".<sup>1513</sup> His speeches in the Senate "became historic, though of course very wearisome, affairs".<sup>1514</sup> Another time, the senator talked from noon until 10 pm. trying to prevent an extension of the National Recovery Act, which he opposed. During his speech he talked about a variety of topics, including "stories about his drunken uncle and the snakes of his native Louisiana", as well as how to make potlikker, a typical southern dish made out of vegetables and accompanied by corn pone.<sup>1515</sup> On a different

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<sup>1511</sup> Irwin F. Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba, 1933-1945* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 10.

<sup>1512</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 119. On June 13, 1935, he added fifty pages to the Congressional Record or 150,000 words, which cost \$5,000 in printing expenses, in "Would-Be Dictator", *Sunday News*, September 7, 1941, 9. Anti-longite militant Hilda Phelps Hammond complained that once in June 1935 he spoke at the Senate until late hours of the night about how to cook oysters: "Hour after hour he had rattled on while thousands of dollars of the taxpayers' money had trickled out of the Treasury to pay for the printing of Mr. Long's word spree", in Hilda Phelps Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1936), 265.

<sup>1513</sup> Stephen Hess, *America's Political Dynasties From Adams to Kennedy* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 425.

<sup>1514</sup> "Would-Be Dictator", *Sunday News*, September 7, 1941, 9.

<sup>1515</sup> Peter Carlson, "A Short History of the Filibuster", *American History*, October 2010. Long also included the recipe in his autobiography, *Every Man a King*, 264. That even generated a debate regarding how to cook potlikker, which led to substantial correspondence between the senator and people all over the country asking him to send a copy of the recipe. On one occasion, a man from Brooklyn heard about the shenanigan on the newspapers and sent a letter to the Kingfish inquiring for the recipe of the Southern dish because "it must be a very good stew [...] [and] it would not be an expensive dish", Letter from Robert E. Scott to Huey P. Long, April 10, 1932. The senator kindly responded enclosing the recipe and emphasizing that "doctors and dietitians" assured him that "potlikker and corn pone contain the most nutritious and healthful food there is", Letter from Huey P. Long to Robert E. Scott, April 12, 1932. Another person from Akron, Ohio, wrote: "We just started a restaurant and would like to have your recipe for Pot Liqueur", Letter from A.L. Rigel to Huey P. Long, May 2, 1932. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 15, LaRC. Another person recommended

occasion, he criticized the political elite of Washington because of how they ate soup.<sup>1516</sup> As much as he tried, however, Long could not compete with FDR, and the rest could feel the administration's resistance.<sup>1517</sup> Future president Harry S. Truman (1884-1972), who was by then senator of Missouri, told in his *Memoirs* how he had a conversation with Long:

I was in the chair the last time Senator Long spoke. All the senators had left the chamber, for that was the usual procedure whenever Long took the floor, and afterward I walked across the street with him.  
'What did you think of my speech?' He asked.  
'I had to listen to you', I told him, 'because I was in the chair and couldn't walk out'.  
He never spoke to me after that.<sup>1518</sup>

It seems as if Long never fully adapted to the US Senate. His colleagues, as earlier mentioned, treated him evasively and, aside from enjoying his performances and his bizarre ways, did not comprehend him. *Time* magazine published that, in fact, Long had no friends in the capital and "as a whole the Senate dislikes and fears him".<sup>1519</sup> Perhaps that was because he treated them "as if they too were a mob of depressed and disfranchised Louisiana farmers, and they naturally resented it".<sup>1520</sup> To some extent, it could be argued that the Kingfish personified Louisiana in the North; he represented a South of "pottlikker" and sultry climate that could not be understood inside the offices in Washington. As Brinkley writes: "[Long] had gambled pitting his popularity against Franklin Delano Roosevelt's, and he had lost".<sup>1521</sup> And so the senator's image deteriorated to the point that Harris wrote: "Except in 1929, Huey Long was never nearer political prostration than he was by the end of 1933".<sup>1522</sup>

Perhaps it was his decreasing popularity that led Long to make some of his most outrageous statements. The senator insinuated secession from the Union if the federal

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that corn pone should not be dunked into the potlikker, as the senator had suggested, but "scropped" (that is, sopping the bread into the soup), in Ray Perkins, "A New National, or Huey Long, Issue", *New Outlook*, January 1933, 41, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 1, folder 2, LSMHC.

<sup>1516</sup> "Kingfish Drinks Soup Right; Right from the Plate", *Washington Times*, December 18, 1933.

<sup>1517</sup> "Board Repudiates Long's Attack on Roosevelt Policies", *The Times-Picayune*, April 13, 1933, 1, 6.

<sup>1518</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Year of Decisions* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955), 145-146.

<sup>1519</sup> "National Affairs—Political Note: Share-the-Wealth Wave", *Time* XXV, n° 13, April 1, 1935, 17.

<sup>1520</sup> Moley, "Huey Long", 13.

<sup>1521</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 67.

<sup>1522</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 140.

government did not respect their needs and claims.<sup>1523</sup> On one occasion, when speaking of his possibilities of beating Roosevelt in the upcoming 1936 election, Kane related, Long stated not only would he win the deep South but would “take it all”; and then went farther, in crescendo, affirming he would have an independent nation of Louisiana and afterwards reunite all those states configuring the Louisiana Purchase. The politician ended by stating he would perhaps even conquer Mexico.<sup>1524</sup> Some months earlier he had referred to that same idea, affirming he would establish a “utopian democracy” in Louisiana.<sup>1525</sup> Thomas O. Harris did not take these statements seriously when writing in 1938: “Many of his expressions revealed the extreme limit of hyperbole”.<sup>1526</sup> By suggesting to make Mexico part of Louisiana or to establish a separate democracy in his native state, Long was merely exaggerating to attract attention. Thus, while Long was playfully delighting his audience with ludicrous claims about secession, in Cuba, Machado seriously faced the very real challenge of conquering more political autonomy for an island which, as we shall see, had a long history of US interference.

### 4.3 Machado and the United States

Nuestra Cuba bien sabes cuan propicia a la caza  
De naciones y cómo soporta la amenaza  
Permanente del Norte que su ambición incuba  
La Florida es un índice que señala hacia Cuba.<sup>1527</sup>

Rubén Martínez Villena

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<sup>1523</sup> “Huey Long Threatens Louisiana Will Secede From Tax-Paying Union If ‘They’ Aren’t Careful”, *The Daily Illinois*, April 23, 1935, 1. In that sense, Long was unconsciously agreeing with Frederick Jackson Turner when he wrote: “We have become a nation comparable to all Europe in area, with settled geographic provinces which equal great European nations. We are in this sense an empire, a federation of sections, a union of potential nations”, in Jackson Turner, *The Significance of Sections*, 37.

<sup>1524</sup> Springer, “Huey Long: The Amazing Louisiana Senator”, 124; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 125–26.

<sup>1525</sup> “Huey Long Offers to Head ‘Kingdom’”, *The Pittsburgh Press*, November 7, 1934, 17.

<sup>1526</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 248. On one occasion, he wrote a letter to a supporter of his redistribution of wealth idea and stated: “We call this a civilized country! The cannibals who ate one another had the best of the argument, compared to our allowing this condition to prevail”, Letter from Huey P. Long to Joseph M. Bowab, April 8, 1933. A few days later, when writing about the “rich class”, he used the same analogy in another letter: “Like cannibals, they are eating one another and here and there a rich man falls victim, while another becomes richer, not only out of the blood of the poor, but even from the fall of another rich one”, Letter from Huey P. Long to anonymous supporter, April 15, 1933. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 2, folder 4, LaRC.

<sup>1527</sup> Rubén Martínez Villena, “Mensaje lírico civil”, 1923, full poem available in Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Órbita de Rubén Martínez Villena: esbozo biográfico* (Havana: Ediciones Union, 1964), 95–100.

These verses belong to a poem written in 1923 that was critical of Cuban president Alfredo Zayas for being a puppet of the United States. The relationship between Cuba and the United States was already complicated before the arrival of Machado in power. However, throughout his administration and as Huey Long experienced himself, Gerardo Machado had a particularly complicated relationship with US presidents, especially with Roosevelt, and with the northern country in general. Similarly to the situation in Louisiana, it seemed as if there was a non-spoken hierarchy that situated Washington in a privileged position regarding Cuba. Machado, however, was very clever in using that situation to his advantage and in his speeches he ambiguously spoke about what his idea of a healthy and mutually beneficial agreement the United States and Cuba should have. Nonetheless, his opponents saw him as a loyal ally of the North. For instance, the reelection process was analyzed as a victory of the desires of the northern neighbor and the compromise the president had with American banks: “Los nacionalistas vieron en la reelección [...] un golpe de Estado sostenido, desde la República del Norte, por las influencias bancarias del ‘Plan de Obras Públicas’”.<sup>1528</sup> Similarly, Cuban Marxist observer Enrique de la Osa argued that Machado’s “tyranny” had been born “en el regazo de Washington, fortalecida a la sombra de Washington y sustentada para oprimir y explotar al pueblo en beneficio de Washington”.<sup>1529</sup> But Machado’s sympathy towards the United States would shift in the last months of his administration.

It is interesting to note how, just as happened with Long in 1933, the Cuban president’s detrimental relationship with FDR influenced the decline of his acclaim and regime that same year. Thus both Huey and the “*asno con garras*” could serve as examples of the strong power of the “North” and the popularity and success of Franklin Roosevelt’s policies inside as well as outside his country. Before looking into Machado’s foreign policy regarding the US, a context of US-Cuban relations must be briefly outlined.

#### 4.3.1 The bone of contention: the Platt Amendment

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<sup>1528</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 63.

<sup>1529</sup> Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 1.

When the Spanish-American war was over and the Peace of Paris between Spain and the US signed on December 10, 1898, the United States still wanted to maintain its influence and control over the Caribbean island after intervening in the conflict.<sup>1530</sup> It must be noted that no Cuban took part in the writing or signing of this text, thus anticipating the sort of hierarchical relationship Cuba and the US would have.<sup>1531</sup> A Joint Resolution, commonly known as the Teller amendment after its proponent, Republican senator from Colorado, Henry M. Teller (1830-1914), had been signed on April 20, 1898, between the two nations. The amendment supposedly granted the United States to aid the island in its hour of need and recognized Cuban people's right of independence.<sup>1532</sup> Cuban journalist and historian Ramiro Guerra Sánchez wrote in 1935, perhaps somewhat idealistically, that the people of the United States were acknowledging, “sin pensar en imperialismos ni en defensas más o menos necesarias, que el pueblo de Cuba *era y de derecho debía ser libre e independiente* [sic: Italics in original]”.<sup>1533</sup> The day after the approval of the resolution, US president William McKinley made the following proclamation against Spanish dominance of Cuba:

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<sup>1530</sup> The first clause of the Treaty established: “Article I. Spain relinquishes all claim of sovereignty over and title to Cuba. And as the island is, upon its evacuation by Spain, to be occupied by the United States, the United States will, so long as such occupation shall last, assume and discharge the obligations that may under international law result from the fact of its occupation, for the protection of life and property”, *Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain*, December 10, 1898, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, Yale University, [avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/sp1898.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/sp1898.asp).

<sup>1531</sup> Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 19; Farber, *Revolution and Reaction in Cuba*, 31.

<sup>1532</sup> It consisted of four clauses: “First—That the people of the Island of Cuba are, and of right ought to be, free and independent. Second—That it is the duty of the United States to demand, and the Government of the United States does hereby demand, that the Government of Spain at once relinquish its authority and government in the Island of Cuba, and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters. Third—That the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, directed and empowered to use the entire land and naval forces of the United States, and to call into the actual service of the United States, the militia of the several States, to such extent as may be necessary to carry these resolutions into effect. Fourth—That the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said Islands except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the Island to its people”, *Joint resolution for the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba and to withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect*, April 20, 1898, American Historical Documents, 1000-1904, The Harvard Classics 1909-14, [bartleby.com/hc](http://bartleby.com/hc).

<sup>1533</sup> Ramiro Guerra (1935), *En el camino de la independencia: Estudio histórico sobre la rivalidad de Estados Unidos y Gran Bretaña en sus relaciones con la independencia de Cuba* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1974), 222.

Whereas by a joint resolution passed by the Congress and approved April 20, 1898, and communicated to the Government of Spain, it was demanded that said Government at once relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and the President of the United States was directed and empowered to use the entire land and naval forces of the United States and to call into the actual service of the United States the militia of the several States to such extent as might be necessary to carry said resolution into effect.<sup>1534</sup>

However, the pragmatic motives for the United States for signing the resolution was far from altruistic.<sup>1535</sup> The United States lacked a strategic bastion in the Caribbean region, and many Cubans grew suspicious due to what historian Charles Chapman called the era of American “ultra-imperialism”.<sup>1536</sup> Historian Roig de Leuchsenring argued that beyond its appearance it was the first of many texts that showed the real imperialistic and political intentions of the United States.<sup>1537</sup> Similarly, Julio Le Riverend asserted that right after the war was over, “desaparecen de la política norteamericana hasta los más débiles vestigios de consideración política hacia las fuerzas revolucionarias cubanas”.<sup>1538</sup> Cuban professor of Law Juan Vega Vega has more recently also coincided with that opinion when writing that the Treaty of Paris in reality made possible the establishment of a military government on the island controlled by the United States, “mediante el cual el imperialismo norteamericano se quitó la máscara de altruismo”.<sup>1539</sup> The main idea behind these legal documents was that, apart from countless well-intended speeches on behalf of the US government, since its inception the relationship between Cuba and the United States was clearly hierarchical. With a touch of irony, American historian Dexter Perkins wrote in the late forties: “It is perhaps worth saying that there are few more honorable chapters in American diplomatic history than the story of our administration of Cuba between 1899 and 1902”.<sup>1540</sup> Less humorously,

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<sup>1534</sup> William McKinley, “Proclamation 411 - Blockade of Cuba”, April 22, 1898. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, [www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=69195](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=69195).

<sup>1535</sup> The notion of the US as a sort of good samaritan was portrayed by Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy, who wrote that the United States had intervened in the Spanish-Cuban war “because of commercial and strategic objectives and humanitarian sentiments”, in Rippy, *Latin America*, 404.

<sup>1536</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 128; Rippy, *The Caribbean Danger Zone*, 149. See also Aurora Bosch, “Cuba y ‘destino manifiesto’ de Estados Unidos”, in *En torno al '98': España en el tránsito del siglo XIX y XX: Actas del IV Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporánea. Vol. 2*, ed. Rafael Sánchez Mantero (Seville; Huelva: Universidad de Sevilla, Universidad de Huelva, 2000).

<sup>1537</sup> Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring (1935), *Historia de la enmienda Platt: Una interpretación de la realidad cubana* (Havana: Nuestra Historia, 1973), 205-206.

<sup>1538</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 1.

<sup>1539</sup> Vega Vega, *Cuba, su historia constitucional*, 27.

<sup>1540</sup> Perkins, *The United States and the Caribbean*, 95.

Lamar Schweyer defined this period and until 1925, the year of Machado's inauguration, as a moment of "moral decadency" and "lack of [Cuban] patriotism".<sup>1541</sup>

Not long after the signing of the Treaty of Paris and the Joint Resolution, the northern country created a much more controversial text that surpassed the suspicion generated by the latter. The Platt Amendment featured a tone that implied quasi colonization of the island. Without hiding its intentions, in 1901 US Secretary of War Elihu Root, who would come to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1912, told the US military governor of Cuba, Leonard Wood (1860-1927),<sup>1542</sup> who was holding that position since 1899: "[The Platt Amendment] gives to the US no right which she does not already possess and which she would not exercise".<sup>1543</sup> On another occasion throughout the conversations that led to the signature of the amendment, Root plainly affirmed that the third clause, which granted US intervention on the island, was simply an extension of the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>1544</sup> On his part, Wood, who defended the need for a paternalistic attitude towards Cuba because he argued that the country had to learn how to establish a stable govern,<sup>1545</sup> asserted: "Por supuesto que a Cuba se le ha dejado poca o ninguna independencia con la Enmienda Platt [...] Con el control que tenemos sobre Cuba, un control que sin duda pronto se convertirá en posesión, en breve prácticamente controlaremos el comercio de azúcar en el mundo".<sup>1546</sup>

Logically, the ultimate goal of the United States, more than granting Cuba's freedom or safety, was to benefit from the dominion of local products and land. Surprisingly,

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<sup>1541</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 105-106.

<sup>1542</sup> Latin Americanist Russell Fitzgibbon wrote about Wood in 1935 that "[he] will undoubtedly rank as one of the greatest colonial administrators in history", in Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 31. Historian Charles Chapman similarly wrote in the mid-twenties that Wood was a "human dynamo" and a "tireless worker", in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 106.

<sup>1543</sup> As quoted in Anthony P. Maingot and Wilfredo Lozano, *The United States and the Caribbean: Transforming Hegemony and Sovereignty* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 14.

<sup>1544</sup> Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 24-25.

<sup>1545</sup> Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States*, 120-121. This historian, actually, referred to the period 1898-1934 as the "era of paternalism", in 151.

<sup>1546</sup> Quoted in Le Riverend, *La República*, 25-26, and López Segre, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 53-54. The project of the annexation of Cuba as a state of the Union goes back to the mid-nineteenth century. In a private letter, Secretary of State and future president James Buchanan (1791-1868) expressed: "We must have Cuba. We can't do without Cuba, & above all we must not suffer its transfer to Great Britain". As geographer Donald W. Meinig analyzed: "Over the next few years several filibustering schemes were given indirect support, and two set out from New Orleans, but none achieved a secure foothold on the island", in Donald William Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History. Vol. II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 155.

however, the image of general Wood in some Cuban primary sources was of a practical and active man, who left a positive legacy on the island.<sup>1547</sup> Even Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy asserted that Wood “gave encouragement and support to the organization of the Cuban Republic”.<sup>1548</sup> In all, as historian Ramón Eduardo Ruíz has pointed out, the Platt Amendment, to which he refers to as an “humiliation”, transformed Cuba into a sort of American protectorate, a term that has been used by numerous scholars.<sup>1549</sup> The northern country had invested about \$50,000,000 up until 1895 in obtaining Cuban raw sugar, thus the enterprise could not be abandoned.<sup>1550</sup> As historian Enrique Gay-Calbó put it in 1926: “Los orígenes de la Enmienda Platt se pueden encontrar en la política tradicional de los Estados Unidos, que necesitan garantizarse la mayor cantidad posible de seguridades para su desarrollo comercial e industrial”.<sup>1551</sup> Consequently, the need to strengthen Cuban nationalism emerged, even if it was on a symbolic level. For instance, the famously known alcoholic beverage “*Cuba libre*” was born then in a bar in Havana under Wood’s military governorship.<sup>1552</sup>

The same day the Platt Amendment was signed, and according to its eighth clause, Cuba and the United States signed the Commercial Treaty of Reciprocity, or Permanent Treaty, which Cuban writer and scholar Herminio Portell Vilá believed reaffirmed “una relación de país sirviente a país dominante”.<sup>1553</sup> Similarly, Spanish journalist Nicolás Rivero suspected in 1903 that “si al final deciden aprobar el tratado de reciprocidad será—y es natural que así procedan—mirando su propia conveniencia [norteamericana]

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<sup>1547</sup> In a textbook for school children, an author stressed the prominent achievements carried out under Wood’s government: “Mandó construir algunas carreteras; inició y dió impulso a importantes obras públicas; aumentó el número de escuelas y mejoró la enseñanza; dió más importancia aun a la sanidad, y facilitó la construcción del Ferrocarril Central”, in Isidro Pérez Martínez, *Resumen de la historia de Cuba* (Havana: La moderna poesía, 1918), 117-118.

<sup>1548</sup> Rippy, *The Caribbean Danger Zone*, 152.

<sup>1549</sup> Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 37, 47. The idea of Cuba as a “protectorate” has also been defended by Cuban Marxist economist Óscar Pino-Santos, in Pino-Santos, *El asalto a Cuba*, 191. Historian Lester Langley affirmed in the sixties that the American protectorate of Cuba ended in 1934, in Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States*, ix. Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy also employed this term in his 1940 study of US-Caribbean relations, by affirming that Cuba had been the first protectorate in the region, in Rippy, *The Caribbean Danger Zone*, 151.

<sup>1550</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 14.

<sup>1551</sup> Enrique Gay-Calbó, “Génesis de La Enmienda Platt”, *Cuba Contemporánea*, nº XLI (May 1926): 61.

<sup>1552</sup> Tom Gjelten, *Bacardí y la larga lucha por Cuba* (Barcelona: Principal de los Libros, 2011), 125. For the disputes between the Bacardí family and Machado, see 152-154.

<sup>1553</sup> Portell Vilá, *Historia de Cuba*, 317.

y no la nuestra”.<sup>1554</sup> Officially, the Treaty was intended to be a US concession to the Caribbean island as compensation after Cuba accepted the Platt Amendment.<sup>1555</sup> In reality, however, it would relegate the country to a suzerainty of the United States.<sup>1556</sup> The treaty assured a 20% tariff reduction to Cuban sugar and tobacco entering the United States, as well as preferential treatment to some American products, such as meat, flour, and raw materials, entering the island. It also evolved into another clause involving the establishment of a US naval base in Guantánamo Bay.<sup>1557</sup> The treaty bolstered better commercial relations between the two countries but, as current Cuban historian Jaime Suchlicki notes, “it also made Cuba further dependent on a one-crop economy and on one all-powerful market”.<sup>1558</sup> Conversely, the newly appointed US president Theodore Roosevelt—who filled the position after McKinley was assassinated in 1901—interpreted the agreement as a step forward to a better relationship between the two nations.<sup>1559</sup> As historian Eric Roorda concluded about Roosevelt’s policies in Latin America: “Roosevelt added a new dimension to the Monroe Doctrine (1823), which pledged security for the Latin American republics against European imperialism. In his interpretation, the Monroe Doctrine implied a responsibility for the United States to correct the problems that provoked European intervention in Latin America”.<sup>1560</sup> In a speech given on 1903, “Teddy” Roosevelt justified the treaty in the following terms:

Este tratado es beneficioso a ambas partes y se justifica asimismo por muchas razones. En primer lugar, nosotros ofrecemos a Cuba su mercado natural. Nosotros podemos darle a ella un beneficio que ninguna otra nación puede darle y por la misma razón de que nosotros la hemos iniciado como una república independiente y, que como ricos, prósperos y poderosos, nos obliga más a extenderle una mano de ayuda a nuestra débil y joven hermana. En segundo lugar, amplifica el mercado para nuestros productos, tanto

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<sup>1554</sup> Nicolás Rivero, “Política yanqui”, November 19, 1903, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 88.

<sup>1555</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 32.

<sup>1556</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 169.

<sup>1557</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 166-169, 175; Le Riverend, *La República*, 36-37; Jaime Suchlicki, “Historical Setting”, in *Cuba: A Country Study*, edited by Rex A. Hudson, (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2002), 34; Portell Vilá, *Historia de Cuba*, 365; Rippy, *The Caribbean Danger Zone*, 154. The text assured that it was aimed at the “deseo de estrechar los lazos de amistad entre ambos países; y con el propósito de facilitar sus relaciones comerciales, mejorando las condiciones de tráfico mercantil entre las dos naciones, han resuelto celebrar un Tratado”, Tratado de Reciprocidad Comercial entre Cuba y los Estados Unidos, *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba*, December 16, 1903 (Havana: Imprenta de Rambla y Bouza, 1903), 3, George A. Smathers Libraries Digital Collection, University of Florida, cms.uflib.ufl.edu.

<sup>1558</sup> Suchlicki, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro*, 104.

<sup>1559</sup> Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 26.

<sup>1560</sup> Eric Paul Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 13.

para los productos de nuestros agricultores como los de nuestros manufactureros, comerciantes y obreros. Finalmente, el tratado no fue meramente concedido, sino demandado [...] por la luminosa consideración de nuestra política internacional.<sup>1561</sup>

As the American Commission of Cuban Affairs stated in 1935: “Ambos convenios sirvieron para estimular la entrada de capital extranjero en la nueva república”.<sup>1562</sup> However, as could be expected, there were opponents to these legal texts who argued they were a violation of Cuba’s independence as a country. Salvador Cisneros Betancourt (1828-1914), member of the 1900 Constitutional Convention, voted against the approval of the Platt Amendment by arguing: “Con dichas relaciones está de manifiesto que los americanos no vinieron a Cuba puramente por humanidad como pregonaban; sino con miras particulares y muy interesadas”.<sup>1563</sup> De Quesada y Miranda believed Cuba had turned into a “factoría, no ya de explotación para la vieja Metrópoli, sino de nuevos amos invasores, de intereses plutócratas de otra habla y raza [...], del capitalismo extranjero”.<sup>1564</sup> Lamar Schweyer wrote in 1929: “Nuestro pueblo cambió riqueza por tierra, para quedar a la larga, sometido a los mercados extranjeros y sin ser dueño de la tierra, estar llamado a ser pobre, triste realidad social de la Cuba de hoy”.<sup>1565</sup> A similar yet less passionate sentiment had been part of the concern after the intervention of the United States in the war of 1895. Already in 1899, the editor of the New Orleans newspaper *The Times Democrat* insisted in his support of Cuban freedom, and stressed how shameful would be for the United States and its reputation to act otherwise:

Si nos decidimos a apropiarnos la Isla, el acto absurdo e ilegal sólo podría realizarse al amparo de una doctrina que se cubra con el derecho; al así proceder el pueblo americano violaría sus propias tradiciones y repudiaría su pasado esplendoroso a los ojos del mundo civilizado. Conducta semejante envolvería un grado de degeneración moral que señalaría la próxima caída de la República.<sup>1566</sup>

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<sup>1561</sup> As quoted in Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 182.

<sup>1562</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba: Informe de la Comisión de Asuntos Cubanos* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1935), 4.

<sup>1563</sup> Salvador Cisneros Betancourt, “Voto particular contra la Enmienda Platt”, reproduced in Hortensia Pichardo Viñals, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba. Tomo II* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1969), 123.

<sup>1564</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre!*, 40.

<sup>1565</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 176.

<sup>1566</sup> As quoted in Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 47.

In his analysis of the history of Cuba, two authors concluded that “la República nació descabezada, y muchos cubanos perdieron la fe en los ideales de su destino”.<sup>1567</sup>

In spite of these concerns, the attitude of Cuban political elites was to allow the approval of the amendment. Roig de Leuchsenring attributed to that sector of society a lack of “serenidad de juicio y alta visión política”.<sup>1568</sup> With a similar perspective, Latin Americanist Francisco López Segrera asserted that throughout the first decades of the Cuban republic the local bourgeoisie was dependent and somewhat submitted to foreign desires, unwilling to end with the economic ties, which incapacitated the island to be fully independent.<sup>1569</sup> It is interesting to note that the amendment was to some extent a Cuban choice, thus in order to devictimize the island one should bear in mind that the responsibility of its consequences should also be ascribed to some of the islanders who were part of that decision process, particularly those who “sólo pensaban en lograr garantías para el desarrollo de sus intereses y sus negocios”.<sup>1570</sup> Logically, this was not the attitude of all Cubans. There were some who were pragmatic, such as journalist and lawyer Manuel Sanguily (1848-1925)—who was part of the Cuban *Convención Constituyente* that approved the bill.<sup>1571</sup> Those argued it was better to have independence with some restrictions than to prolongue the military regime dominated by the United States on the island.<sup>1572</sup>

The results of the Platt Amendment and the Treaty of Reciprocity have been interpreted as both positive and negative. Secretary of Commerce under FDR, Daniel C. Roper (1867-1943), expressed in 1933 that the treaty had been a disaster, particularly after the beginning of the economic recession, in which the United States implemented protectionist measures thus violating the agreement. Roper concluded: “La merma de las exportaciones de los Estados Unidos a Cuba desde \$500,000,000 en 1920 a \$30,000,000 en 1932 y la desmoralización de Cuba, son pruebas suficientes de que el

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<sup>1567</sup> Márquez Sterling and Márquez Sterling, *Historia de la isla de Cuba*, 161.

<sup>1568</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 70.

<sup>1569</sup> López Segrera, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 43.

<sup>1570</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 70, 101.

<sup>1571</sup> The amendment was approved by fifteen in favor and fourteen against, that is, only by one vote, in Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 158-159.

<sup>1572</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 70, 151-152.

tratado no obra en beneficio de ninguna de las dos naciones”.<sup>1573</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring lamented how the treaty had led to the loss of the control of the land and the economy, and the exploitation of natural resources by foreign sugar trusts which only benefitted alien currency and some *criollos*, “lacayos al servicio de estos intereses norteamericanos”.<sup>1574</sup> This author also referred to the Platt Amendment as the crown of the Monroe doctrine.<sup>1575</sup> Similarly, author Enrique Lumen spoke of the amendment as a “unilateral” text, often used by the United States as a pressure weapon over the island.<sup>1576</sup> And, according to Ramiro Guerra, the amendment “no crea a Cuba una situación interior ni internacional distinta, en el terreno de los hechos, de la que la Doctrina de Monroe le crea a toda la América”.<sup>1577</sup> Professor Domínguez insists that Cuba began its independence as a United States protectorate.<sup>1578</sup>

In all, reporter R. Hart Phillips, *New York Times* correspondent to Cuba, argued: “With this setup, it is truly remarkable that an open dictatorship did not emerge prior to the Machado regime”.<sup>1579</sup>

#### a) “Cuban pacification”: 1906

Barely four years after the withdrawal of US military forces on the island once the war of independence was over, the American government made use of the text to intervene during the convulse Cuban revolt of 1906. The military occupation, also known as the Second Occupation of Cuba, would last until 1909. It was the first time the US government took advantage of article III of the Platt Amendment. The first American occupation of the island had ended on May 20, 1902, when the first president of Cuba, conservative Tomás Estrada Palma, was inaugurated.<sup>1580</sup> This is considered the date of the foundation of the Republic of Cuba.<sup>1581</sup> Ironically, the second occupation by the

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<sup>1573</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 186.

<sup>1574</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 190.

<sup>1575</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 196.

<sup>1576</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 25.

<sup>1577</sup> Guerra, *En el camino de la independencia*, 221. See also Dexter Perkins (1941), *Historia de la doctrina Monroe* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1964).

<sup>1578</sup> Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 13.

<sup>1579</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 4.

<sup>1580</sup> Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, 13; Farber, *Revolution and Reaction in Cuba*, 31.

<sup>1581</sup> López Rivero, *El viejo traje de la revolución*, 44.

American military would commence due to Estrada Palma's resignation. In the mid-twenties, historian Charles Chapman described the vulnerability of Cuban politics during the first years of independence in a troublesome manner: "In two years and a half it was no more possible to impart to them [Cubans] any real conception of democratic, republican institutions than it would be to teach a wildcat to be the playmate of a child".<sup>1582</sup> In parallel, however, this author defined Estrada Palma as "honest and incorruptible", and the "best man that could be found" for the job.<sup>1583</sup> The first Cuban president had been reelected on September 1905 amidst a tense environment of "rioting, theft, arson, and even murder" between political parties, particularly the Liberal and the short-lived Partido Republicano de La Habana, the president's party.<sup>1584</sup> The liberals argued there had been electoral fraud.<sup>1585</sup> There was political turbulence on the island, witnessed by journalist Nicolás Rivero, who directed and wrote for *Diario de la Marina* about the tragic events in Cienfuegos, where four or five people died during a street fight a few days before the election.<sup>1586</sup> Chapman also wrote that when the election was approaching, "acts of violence followed one after another until there was something like a reign of terror".<sup>1587</sup>

After months of such unrest, in the summer of 1906, a revolt led by the liberals began, escalating rapidly from 15,000 to 20,000 rebels in the streets throughout the country. They were, however, not well armed nor disciplined. Rivero lamented: "Se arruinará el comercio, se imposibilitará la zafra próxima; pero todavía sucederá algo peor: se nos declarará incapacitados para vivir la vida de un pueblo libre e independiente".<sup>1588</sup> The situation became dangerous to the point that Estrada Palma, a close friend of the United

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<sup>1582</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 150.

<sup>1583</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>1584</sup> Marxist historian Ramón de Armas argued that this party represented the interests of the "gran burguesía antinacional cubana" through their support of the Treaty of Reciprocity with the United States and of big American sugar companies investing in Cuba, in Armas, "Esquema para un análisis de los partidos políticos burgueses en Cuba", 55. Similarly, historian Jorge Ibarra stated that the Republican Party was configured by men who had voted in favor of the Platt Amendment, in Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 235.

<sup>1585</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 114-115.

<sup>1586</sup> Rivero, "La tragedia de Cienfuegos", September 23, 1905, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 194.

<sup>1587</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 186.

<sup>1588</sup> And continued: "Y lo que habrá de ocurrir de aquí a cien años, o quizá nunca, lo veremos nosotros y lo sufrirán nuestros hijos y sólo en inglés lo podrán contar nuestros nietos. ¡Qué desgracia! Y, sobre todo, ¡qué locura!", in Rivero, "¡Lucha entre hermanos!", August 20, 1906, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 214.

States, sent a confidential telegram to US president Theodore Roosevelt requesting him to send two battleships: one to Havana and one to Cienfuegos.<sup>1589</sup> But that was not enough, for the Cuban president requested Roosevelt to immediately also send between 2,000 to 3,000 troops to the capital.<sup>1590</sup> Historian Ramón Eduardo Ruíz put it plainly and wrote that Estrada Palma was confident that the United States “correrían a sacarle de apuros”.<sup>1591</sup> Although military intervention eventually became a reality, the American president complained in a telegram that “the Palma government had been utterly unreasonable” and “has evidently been bent upon forcing us to an armed intervention in their support”.<sup>1592</sup>

It must be added that, besides the political insurrection on the island, on October 1905 a yellow fever outbreak arrived from New Orleans, causing a severe epidemic in Havana, which repeated itself the following fall.<sup>1593</sup> In 1901 army physician William Crawford Gorgas (1854-1920) had led a fierce campaign in Havana for the destruction of the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*, the carrier of the disease. However, four years later the epidemic had reappeared thus increasing the political and social tensions on the island.<sup>1594</sup>

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<sup>1589</sup> “Secretary of State, Cuba, has requested me, in name of President Palma, to ask President Roosevelt send immediately two vessels; one to Habana, other to Cienfuegos; they must come at once”, Frank Steinhart, Cuban Consul in the United States, to US Secretary of State, Telegram, September 8, 1906, Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 200. In Spanish: “El Secretario de Estado de Cuba me ha rogado, en nombre del presidente Palma, que pida al Presidente Roosevelt el envío inmediato de dos barcos de guerra: uno en La Habana y otro a Cienfuegos; deben venir al instante”, reproduced in Pichardo Viñals, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*, 280.

<sup>1590</sup> “President Estrada Palma asks for American intervention and begs that President Roosevelt sent to Habana with the greatest secrecy and rapidity 2,000 or 3,000 men”, Frank Steinhart to US Secretary of State, September 12, 1906, reproduced in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 201. In Spanish: “El Presidente Estrada Palma pide la intervención americana y ruega que el Presidente Roosevelt envíe a La Habana, con mayor reserva y rapidez, 2,000 ó 3,000 hombres para evitar una catástrofe en la capital”, reproduced in Pichardo Viñals, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*, 281.

<sup>1591</sup> Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 51.

<sup>1592</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 119. Theodore Roosevelt was furious, as shown by these further words the president wrote about the situation on the island: “I am so angry with that infernal little Cuban republic that I would like to wipe its people off the face of the earth [...] All that we wanted from them was that they behave themselves and be prosperous and happy so that we would not interfere. And now, lo and behold, they have started an utterly pointless and unjustifiable revolution, and got things in such a snarl that we have no alternative save to intervene”, quoted in Perkins, *The United States and the Caribbean*, 96.

<sup>1593</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 128.

<sup>1594</sup> Margaret Humphreys, *Yellow Fever and the South* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 150; McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*, 311.

After not being able to handle the situation, the Cuban president resigned on September 28, 1906 and, consequently, the very next day Theodore Roosevelt issued a proclamation of military intervention under the Platt Amendment with some 6,000 troops dispatched from the US, which led to three years of a governor imposed by the United States.<sup>1595</sup> This would be Charles Edward Magoon (1861-1920), who had been military governor of the Panama Canal Zone the year prior and who would govern the Caribbean island until US military withdrawal in 1909.<sup>1596</sup> After an agreement with the liberal rebels, the island entered a new period of occupation also called, with a touch of classic American condescendence, “Cuban pacification”. When Cuba regained its “independence” in 1909, journalist Nicolás Rivero celebrated by writing: “¡Viva Cuba libre! ¡Viva Cuba independiente! ¡Viva, sí, independiente y libre, que por mal que lo hagan sus hijos no han de hacerlo peor que los extraños!”<sup>1597</sup>

Although in future crisis such as the 1912 “race war”—a topic analyzed in the following chapter—or the 1917 uprising, US military intervention did not occur, the memory of American occupation remained quite vividly in the minds of Cubans throughout the 1920s. For that reason, Machado’s relationship with the United States would be a complicated one. At the same time, however, the constant presence of the US on Cuban soil in the first decades of independence meant that the island’s culture suffered the beginning of a process of “Americanization”, through which US consumerism and tourism practices spread throughout the country.<sup>1598</sup> Simultaneously, a certain “de-

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<sup>1595</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 121, 124; Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 292-294. An excerpt of the proclamation of intervention read: “To the people of Cuba: The failure of Congress to act on the irrevocable resignation of the President of the Republic of Cuba, or to elect a successor, leaves this country without a Government at a time when great disorder prevails, and requires that pursuant to a request of President Palma, the necessary steps be taken in the name and by the authority of the President of the United States, to restore order, protect life and property in the Island of Cuba and islands and key adjacents thereto, and for this purpose, to establish therein a provisional government [...] established under the authority of the United States”, William H. Taft, Secretary of War, *Proclamation of intervention in Cuba*, September 29, 1906, reproduced in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 211, and Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, Appendix VII.

<sup>1596</sup> Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States*, 128. See “The Magoon administration, 1906-1909”, in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 226-246.

<sup>1597</sup> Rivero, “Restauración de la República”, January 28, 1909, reproduced in *Actualidades, 1903-1919*, 247.

<sup>1598</sup> James D. Cockcroft, *América Latina y Estados Unidos: historia y política país por país* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 2001), 347.

Hispanization” also developed, for Cuba elites believed to be needed in order to fully accept modernization.<sup>1599</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Machado and *el norte*

Similarly to Huey Long, Gerardo Machado was perceived through dichotomies: he was either a savior of Cuba who transformed the country to a safe and free place, or a ruthless dictator that never carried out anything that improved the island. In regards to his perception of the United States, this same approach was employed. Either he was saving the nation and defending his country’s interest, as this following quote indicates:

Vamos bien dirigidos en la nueva campaña por un general experto en victorias, por el Presidente de la República, el propio general Machado, que ha dado la norma de una política internacional cubana por primera vez [...] joven y valiente defensor de la nacionalidad en todos los momentos, ya sea en el ambiente claro y apacible del aula universitaria, ya sea en las batallas a cara descubierta de la tribuna, del libro y del periódico, o en la penumbra de las deliberaciones diplomáticas.<sup>1600</sup>

or he was as a sort of traitor and Cuban sellout in favor of the United States and its evil wishfulness of controlling the island indefinitely. As an example of the latter interpretation, professor of Law Juan Vega Vega put it straightforwardly and defined Machado as a “servidor del imperialismo yanqui”.<sup>1601</sup> In a mimical tone, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias’ history of Cuba concluded that “Machado fue sin duda un lacayo y fiel servidor del imperialism yanqui”.<sup>1602</sup> Cuban Marxist historian José Cantón added that “el imperialismo y la oligarquía vieron en él al hombre fuerte capaz de aplastar el creciente movimiento popular”.<sup>1603</sup>

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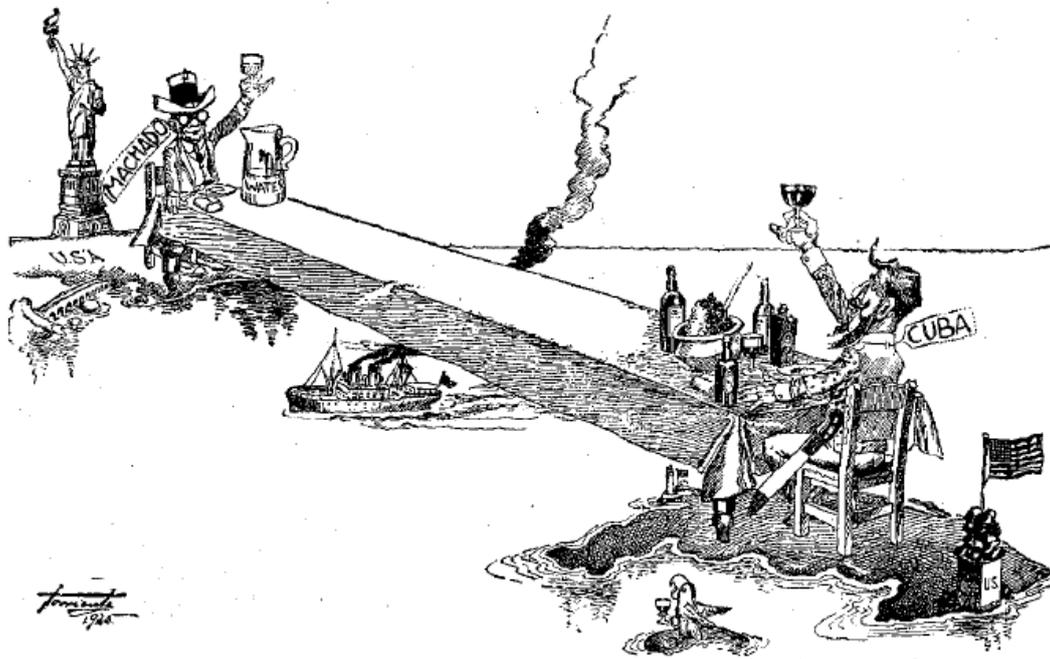
<sup>1599</sup> Núñez Vega, “La Danza de los Millones”, 65. Throughout his work, this author analyzes the cultural transformation of consumer goods in Cuba and the effects of the “Americanization”.

<sup>1600</sup> Gay-Calbó, “Génesis de La Enmienda Platt”, 48.

<sup>1601</sup> Vega Vega, *Cuba, su historia constitucional*, 56.

<sup>1602</sup> Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, *Historia de Cuba*, 580.

<sup>1603</sup> Cantón Navarro, *Historia de Cuba*, 107.



#### CUBA HEARS MACHADO'S PROMISE

THE CUBAN PEOPLE: "Hurrah for you, General Machado! We will back you to the finish in what you say."

—*La Política Comica* (Havana).

Fig. 34: "Cuba Hear's Machado's Promise", in "Cuba's Dislike of the Platt Amendment", The Literary Digest, June 6, 1925, p. 21.

In 1922, however, Machado had already manifested his rejection to the Platt Amendment and had embraced Cuban nationalism when stating: "Ha llegado la hora de restablecer el significado original de Enmienda Platt, convirtiéndola en un órgano sin funciones, que quede como una reliquia entre los anales de nuestra soberanía e independencia".<sup>1604</sup> In a broader sense, the president's acquaintance Alberto Lamar Schweyer wrote in 1929 a book entitled *La crisis del patriotismo*, in which he argued in favor of Cuban sovereignty in the following terms:

El patriotismo es la manifestación superior del sentimiento gregario del grupo social, la forma sintética que adopta en la mentalidad colectiva el impulso interno unificador a que obligan la lucha por la vida y la urgencia de asociación para subsistir frente a las acechanzas del medio y atender a las exigencias del progreso, creador de necesidades

<sup>1604</sup> Published in *El Día*, quoted in Jenks, *Nuestra colonia de Cuba*, 248; Geoff Simons, *From Columbus to Castro*, 1996, 233.

[...] El patriotismo es el sentimiento de defensa de esa zona, la necesidad de luchar por ella para preservar de la ambición exterior su contenido político, sentimental y económico.<sup>1605</sup>

According to Roig de Leuchsenring, however, beyond his political speeches and the political beliefs of those who surrounded him, not a single policy Machado endured was aimed at repealing the Platt Amendment or the Reciprocity Treaty. This author stressed that most of the president's discourses regarding the amendment were given during the 1924 presidential campaign, and soon forgotten. For instance, Machado had assured that, as president, he would prioritize putting an end to both texts, but according to Roig de Leuchsenring, these references were only "*camouflage* a los aviesos propósitos mercantilistas que perseguía y al papel de lacayo del imperialismo yanqui que desempeñaría a lo largo de su gobierno".<sup>1606</sup>

The Cuban president had a contradictory relationship with US presidents. Because of his political beliefs one would assume that Machado would be better acquainted with members of the Democratic Party. However, it was those presidents belonging to the Republican Party that interacted with him more cordially. For instance, Roig de Leuchsenring wrote how Hoover offered Machado's dictatorship support throughout his administration, and thus the author partially blamed the US president of the atrocities committed in Cuba those years, "cuya responsabilidad", the author writes, "comparte ante la historia con el tirano Machado, el presidente Hoover".<sup>1607</sup> This same author stressed how the "*asno con garras*"'s tyranny had been created by Coolidge and further supported by Hoover.<sup>1608</sup> In a related argument, historian Eric Paul Roorda reproduced a quote from a Cuban newsman who affirmed that Hoover's attitude towards Latin America was "a new form of legitimate imperialism: that of cooperation".<sup>1609</sup> Marxist historian Lionel Soto shared this perspective when writing that: "Coolidge y Hoover [...] habían dado desmedido apoyo al tirano, desconociendo, ciegamente, las realidades

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<sup>1605</sup> Lamar Schwyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 22-23.

<sup>1606</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 221.

<sup>1607</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 75.

<sup>1608</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 232.

<sup>1609</sup> Roorda, *The Dictator next Door*, 61.

de Cuba y del mundo, al par que se deshacían, paladinamente, de las opiniones críticas al respecto”.<sup>1610</sup>

Since the beginning of the *machadato*, the Cuban president stressed the need to reevaluate the Platt Amendment, at least in his speeches. Lawyer and historian Enrique Gay-Calbó (1889-1977) argued in 1926:

Y yo creo que estamos en el momento propicio para iniciar la tarea que nos ha de llevar a la revisión del Tratado Permanente en que está convertida la Enmienda Platt. Es la hora de conseguir un tratado de mutuas garantías. El Presidente de Cuba general Machado, con sus manifiestos electorales bien explícitos y sus declaraciones posteriores, se ha convertido en el jefe de esa orientación. Nadie con mayor autoridad que él para conseguirlo. Ese día ha de llegar. Cuba entonces vivirá más tranquila y con mayor gratitud a los Estados Unidos, con una gratitud más leal y más limpia, porque no ha de estar sujeta a interpretaciones de gobernantes que se turnan, sino a los sentimientos cordiales del amor y de la confraternidad continental.<sup>1611</sup>

One of his supporters, the Spanish essayist González-Blanco, stated in 1929: “Para el Presidente Machado la Enmienda Platt es como un hierro viejo, digno de que se le catalogue en el arsenal de la Historia”.<sup>1612</sup> Another author wrote that “Machado había hecho un esfuerzo titánico para independizar su pueblo”.<sup>1613</sup> Historian James Joel Figarola trusted that “la dictadura que inaugura Machado ofrece la coyuntura para el intento de romper nuestras ataduras con Estados Unidos en tanto las nuevas instancias presentes en la política cubana han cobrado la fuerza necesaria para tal empeño”.<sup>1614</sup>

Yet during his administration American business were favored, such as The Cuban Telephone Company, The Havana Electric Railway Company, and, more importantly for this dissertation, the Standard Oil Company of Cuba.<sup>1615</sup> Enrique Lumen wrote that Machado only cared about the support of those companies, of the government in Washington, and of Wall Street, and that “el pueblo cubano estaba condenado por el imperialismo a ser tribu explotada”.<sup>1616</sup> Though this is perhaps an exaggerated

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<sup>1610</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 183.

<sup>1611</sup> Gay-Calbó, “Génesis de La Enmienda Platt”, 63.

<sup>1612</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado, o La autoridad rescatada*, 185.

<sup>1613</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 302.

<sup>1614</sup> Joel James Figarola, *Cuba, 1900-1928: la República dividida contra sí misma* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1976), 263.

<sup>1615</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 228.

<sup>1616</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 63.

statement, the fact that the repeal of the Platt Amendment would not come until 1934, a year after Machado's exile, is noteworthy.<sup>1617</sup> Communist activist Julio Antonio Mella accused the president directly and called him: "Gran farsante que pediste la abolición de la Enmienda Platt. Tú eres la mejor Enmienda Platt, la mejor protección para los intereses imperialistas".<sup>1618</sup> As professor Domínguez writes, Machado had little intentions of really repealing the amendment. He requested it a few times in several speeches, even to the president of the United States, but "the manner in which Machado raised the question, and the lack of other efforts to follow through on this initiative" led to the abolition of the amendment well after Machado was exiled.<sup>1619</sup> In fact, the Cuban president was so ambiguous that he affirmed different things depending on the audience. For instance, on a luncheon given in his honor by the United Spanish War Veterans, he said:

The Cubans, in fact, have conquered their independence twice. Cuba is today one of the countries that more freely exercise their sovereignty in spite of the interpretations that are frequently made regarding the Platt Amendment, accusing the United States of an imperialism that, if it existed, would be the negation of the principles contained in their Declaration of Independence.<sup>1620</sup>

Similarly, in an interview for the *New Orleans States*, in which he was referred to as the "Mussolini of the Caribbean", Machado talked about the country's dependence on foreign investment in the following terms: "That which at the beginning was an essential factor of our rapid development, has in the course of time turned to be one of the direct causes of the present situation [of economic depression]".<sup>1621</sup>

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<sup>1617</sup> In fact, during a debate celebrated in the US Senate on May 30, 1934, in which the abrogation of the Platt Amendment was being discussed, Huey Long made the first of his four speeches on the Chaco War (1932-1935). The senator argued that the Standard Oil Company was secretly financing the Bolivian government to fight against Paraguay. In Michael L. Gillette, "Huey Long and the Chaco War", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 11, n° 4 (1970): 296. This subject will be further elaborated in section 6.2.1.

<sup>1618</sup> Quoted in Figarola, *Cuba, 1900-1928*, 282.

<sup>1619</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, "Seeking Permission to Build a Nation: Cuban Nationalism and U.S. Response Under the First Machado Presidency", *Cuban Studies* 16 (1986): 38.

<sup>1620</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Address of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Cuba General Gerardo Machado delivered at the Opening Session of the 30th Annual Encampment of the United Spanish War Veterans*, October 8, 1928, 5, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series III, box 6, folder 1, UMDC.

<sup>1621</sup> Merrylye S. Rukeyser, "Machado Plans to Meet Tariff", *New Orleans States*, July 14, 1930, 15.

Arguably, Machado was to some extent embracing what would lead to the Good Neighbor policy that both Coolidge and later Hoover were starting to develop.<sup>1622</sup> There are authors, for instance, historian of diplomacy Alexander DeConde, that have argued that this tendency already began with Wilson's presidency.<sup>1623</sup> DeConde remarked, perhaps in a semi-laudatory tone, that it was under Hoover's administration that the bases for the good neighbor policy were set: "As Hoover's Latin American policy was admittedly nonpartisan and was adopted by his Democratic successor, it was in many ways the real beginning of what has come to be popularly known as the good neighbor policy".<sup>1624</sup> Latin Americanist Bryce Wood concluded that, for the most part, in the 1920s the United States no longer needed to intervene in political matters in the Caribbean, thus allowing certain autonomy to countries such as Cuba, particularly in comparison to previous years:

Gradualmente, con ciertas reincidencias y alguna distensión, los funcionarios de Washington fueron incapaces de librarse de la convicción de que el empleo de la fuerza en el Caribe para proteger ciudadanos y propiedades en el exterior no sólo era desproporcionadamente costoso e ineficaz en el fomento de la democracia, sino también positivamente desventajoso a su concepto de desarrollo del interés nacional de los Estados Unidos. El maduramiento de esta convicción forma la primera parte de la historia de la política del Buen Vecino y abarca desde 1920 hasta 1933, inclusive.<sup>1625</sup>

While president, Hoover had manifested his opposition towards the so-called "dollar diplomacy" that the United States had enhanced in previous decades,<sup>1626</sup> and justified:

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<sup>1622</sup> The concept "good neighbor policy" has its roots in the idea of *buena vecindad* (good neighborliness), employed in Spanish correspondence in the beginning of the 1800s to refer to the international relations of the Iberian power. For instance, Spanish minister to the US, diplomat Luis de Onís (1762–1827), used that expression when talking about the attitude of the United States in regards to the soon-to-be independent colonies of Spain. Later on, Elihu Root used the concept of "good neighbor" in 1907 in relation to Santo Domingo. Finally, Hoover would frequently speak of the idea of "good neighbor" in his 1928 speeches, in DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy*, 126-127.

<sup>1623</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy*, 3.

<sup>1624</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy*, 125.

<sup>1625</sup> Wood, *La política del buen vecino*, 4.

<sup>1626</sup> The concept of "dollar diplomacy" was coined by historian Dana Munro in the 1960 to refer to US military intervention in Latin America aimed at expanding its economic interests, in Dana Gardner Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964). Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy defined "dollar diplomacy" as "the employment of the influence of the government in order to protect and promote the investments of citizens of the United States abroad", and added that "Its incentives frequently included consideration of defense strategy, and at times it was characterized by at least a three-fold motivation: financial advantage, strategy, and benevolence", in Rippy, *The Caribbean Danger Zone*, 134.

[I]t never has been and ought not to be the policy of the United States to intervene by force [...] Confidence in that attitude is the only basis upon which the economic cooperation of our citizen can be welcomed abroad. It is the only basis that prevents cupidity encroaching upon the weakness of nations—but, far more than this, it is the true expression of the moral rectitude of the United States.<sup>1627</sup>

In fact, as scholars Anthony P. Maingot and Wilfredo Lozano have noted, president Hoover was aware that between 1898 and 1924 the US marines landed on twenty-one occasions on Caribbean shores, and thus he decided to find another way in which to promote US businesses in that area other than direct intervention.<sup>1628</sup> Therefore, throughout Hoover's presidency, his policy towards Cuba would be a sort of (political) neutrality, even during the first years of the 1930s, when the political situation in the island became chaotic.<sup>1629</sup>

The Cuban president, on his part, was responding to this conviction through a relationship with the United States that had to be mutually beneficial. Beyond the economic and embellished aspects, Machado found more reasons to be linked to the northern country, and that was the love for the abstract concept of "freedom". In a 1925 speech aimed at an American audience, he had referred to the US aid during the 1895 war of independence:

Estamos Unidos no solamente por lazos económicos; nuestra unión es la unión que nace de la realización de un gran esfuerzo, de la coronación con el más lisonjero éxito, de la obra más grande que pueda llevar a cabo el hombre: la de la libertad de un pueblo. En esta obra quedamos unidos por lazos indisolubles de una fraternidad sincera y leal que irá a la posteridad.<sup>1630</sup>

Thus the Cuban president promoted the encounter between the two nations, culminating in the celebration of a big conference intended to advocate the somewhat utopian idea Pan-Americanism. This concept had been one of the points in Machado's program and

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<sup>1627</sup> Herbert Hoover, Address given on April 13, 1929, Washington, DC., reproduced in DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy*, 59-60.

<sup>1628</sup> Maingot and Lozano, *The United States and the Caribbean*, 2.

<sup>1629</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy*, 107.

<sup>1630</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, "Discurso pronunciado por el General Gerardo Machado, por teléfono y radio a la vez, desde el Palacio Presidencial, para ser oído en New York el día de la apertura de la Exposición Comercial Cubana que se celebró allí en Noviembre de 1925", reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 54.

thus would characterize his administration as well as that of US presidents at the end of the 1920s.<sup>1631</sup>

### a) The Sixth Pan-American Conference

The main event that showed the Cuban president's amicable attitude toward the United States was the Sixth Pan-American Conference. To improve his national and international image, Machado invested himself in the meeting, to be held at Universidad de La Habana—probably because the “*asno*” wanted to impress the attendees, especially the United States, with the physical improvements he had developed in the institution—between January 16 and February 20, 1928.<sup>1632</sup> Historian Lionel Soto believed that, to Machado, “era una ocasión propicia para demostrarle a los imperialistas norteamericanos su firme disposición de servirlos hasta el fin”.<sup>1633</sup>

The president released a note to the United Press in which he expressed his wishes for the conference:

El Gobierno y el pueblo cubano muéstranse [*sic*] satisfechísimos de recibir como huéspedes a los delegados de las Repúblicas americanas en la VI Conferencia Panamericana, y demostrar a las naciones hermanas que Cuba siente la misma cordialidad por todas ellas. La Conferencia reunirá a las personalidades políticas más eminentes de los países americanos. Espero y creo que el pueblo cubano renovará, con motivo de la Conferencia, los sentimientos de amistad que tiene para todas las naciones de América. Tengo especial interés en saludar, por medio de la United Press, a los delegados de las 20 Repúblicas americanas y desearles una agradable estancia entre nosotros.<sup>1634</sup>

Berggren reads the event using a positive lens and writes: “Machado’s administration had been so successful in turning around Cuba’s international reputation that he was able to host” it.<sup>1635</sup> President Coolidge was the guest of honor in Cuba in 1928 after Machado travelled to the United States to personally invite him to attend the

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<sup>1631</sup> Orestes Ferrara, *El panamericanismo y la opinión europea* (Paris: Editorial “Le Livre libre,” 1930).

<sup>1632</sup> Richard V. Oulahan, “Havana Conference to Adjourn Feb. 20”, *The New York Times*, February 12, 1928, 1.

<sup>1633</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 171.

<sup>1634</sup> “Mensaje del presidente Machado a los delegados de las Repúblicas americanas”, *ABC*, January 15, 1928, 42.

<sup>1635</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 57.

meeting.<sup>1636</sup> It is debated whether this was the real goal of the trip, or if Machado's intentions were to convince the US president of supporting his reelection process. Historian Julio Le Riverend argued that the conference was an excuse to justify the visit, which was directly aimed at gaining support for his reelection purposes from Washington.<sup>1637</sup> Similarly, Rolando Rodríguez writes that, in reality, Machado was trying to “buscar el asentimiento de políticos y empresarios estadounidenses para sus propósitos continuistas”.<sup>1638</sup> A relevant witness of these events, Cuban ambassador in Washington Orestes Ferrara, narrated: “Acepté la idea que Machado visitara al Presidente Coolidge, con un pretexto que podría traducirse en la realidad, como el invitarlo a que asistiera, en La Habana, a la inauguración de la Sexta Conferencia Panamericana”.<sup>1639</sup> As for Coolidge, who was the third US president ever to leave his country while in office, his reasons for attending the conference were to strengthen the image of the United States in conflictive times in Latin America.<sup>1640</sup>

In his visit to the United States, the Cuban president allegedly asked Coolidge to derogate the Platt Amendment, to which the US president would have answered: “¿Qué molestia les ha traído esa enmienda? y si no les ha traído ningún mal momento, ¿por qué cambiar?”.<sup>1641</sup> Whether this conversation happened or not is still debated. Franco Varona was ambiguous when writing that the extraofficial objective of the trip were “establecer nuevas corrientes comerciales y políticas que permitieran [*sic*] dentro de poco que se anulen los viejos e inútiles sistemas que hoy existen y se aplican en las relaciones internacionales de Cuba y los Estados Unidos”.<sup>1642</sup> In any case, it is worth noting that, as historian Hugh Thomas wrote, few presidents from Latin America visiting the United States had received such attention, banquettes—one of which was hosted by no other

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<sup>1636</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 225; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 161. The president was criticized by the *Partido Conservador* in a speech given at Congress on February 1927. De la Cruz alleged that such trips strengthened the hierarchical relationship between Cuba and the United States, in De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 39-40.

<sup>1637</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 264.

<sup>1638</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la República. Tomo I*, 243.

<sup>1639</sup> Ferrara, *Una mirada sobre tres siglos*, 308.

<sup>1640</sup> The other two previous US presidents were: Woodrow Wilson, who travelled to France in 1918 to attend the peace conference after World War I, and previously Theodore Roosevelt, who visited Panama in 1906 and became the first US president to make a diplomatic trip outside the United States, in DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy*, 10.

<sup>1641</sup> Orestes Ferrara, *Una mirada sobre tres siglos: memorias* (Madrid: Playor, 1975), 311–12.

<sup>1642</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado*, 124.

than the Chase National Bank—,<sup>1643</sup> and receptions as Machado that 1927.<sup>1644</sup> *The New York Times* published that during a luncheon a Wall Street banker told the Cuban president that he wished Machado could rule Cuba indefinitely.<sup>1645</sup> That year could be defined as the culmination of the good relations between the Cuban president's administration and the US government. Franco Varona relates it in the following manner: "Se patentizó de una manera evidente el gran cariño de los Estados Unidos hacia Cuba, de ese noble pueblo americano que veían en el General Machado la personificación gloriosa de una república hermana en ideales de grandeza, de patriotismo, de engrandecimiento y de progreso".<sup>1646</sup>

The US president landed Havana on the battleship *Texas*<sup>1647</sup> and was the first speaker of the Pan American Conference. In his inaugural speech, the president emphasized the need for more self-government and proclaimed his support for equal rights among nations.<sup>1648</sup> He also spoke of the need for a free, independent, prosperous, and peaceful Cuba.<sup>1649</sup> President Machado's inauguration address had similar intentions. The Cuban politician referred to president Coolidge as the "primer magistrado de la más grande de las Democracias", and aspired to arrive to a mutual understanding amongst all attendants towards a more peaceful and just continent.<sup>1650</sup> According to historian DeConde, this would be the last Pan-American gathering in which US imperialism was advocated.<sup>1651</sup>

The main goal of Machado when celebrating this event was to embrace Pan-Americanism. During his campaign for the presidency in 1924, he had stated: "Nuestro panamericanismo, sin prevenciones y sin egoísmos, puede elevarse a las concepciones

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<sup>1643</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado*, 159.

<sup>1644</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, 433; "City Gives Greeting to Cuban President", *The New York Times*, April 26, 1927, 1. Franco Varona gives a detailed account of the visit, in *Machado*, 121-163.

<sup>1645</sup> "Machado Honored by Bankers Here", *The New York Times*, April 29, 1927, 1.

<sup>1646</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado*, 163.

<sup>1647</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 119.

<sup>1648</sup> Richard V. Oulahan, "Coolidge Wins Cheers of Statesmen by Declaration for Self-Government as He Opens Pan-American Conference", *The New York Times*, January 17, 1928, 1.

<sup>1649</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 120.

<sup>1650</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Sexta Conferencia Internacional Americana: Discurso del Excelentísimo Señor Presidente de la República de Cuba, General Gerardo Machado y Morales, en la Sesión Inaugural*, January 16, 1928, 3-4, 10, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series III, box 6, folder 1, UMDC.

<sup>1651</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy*, 124.

más puras y servir como sincero lazo de unión entre los dos continentes, haciendo de nuestra situación geográfica entre el Norte y el Sur el símbolo de una alta función política”.<sup>1652</sup> Historian Eric Paul Roorda has linked Pan-Americanism with the Good Neighbor policy by stating: “By invoking Pan-American feeling, the Good Neighbor policy drew from a long tradition of ameliorative diplomacy between the United States and Latin America”.<sup>1653</sup> In the inaugural session of the conference, Machado defined Pan-Americanism as a “labor constructiva que no supone antagonismos sino, por el contrario, coopera a la paz universal, al mejor entendimiento de todos los pueblos, a la unidad espiritual y moral de las naciones del mundo”.<sup>1654</sup> In order to symbolize these objectives, the conference was quite pompous: “La Sexta Conferencia se distinguió, de las pretéritas, en la pompa de su ceremonial y en la magnificencia de los banquetes y recepciones con que a diario festejaron, gobernantes y plutócratas, a los estadistas de América que honraban a la Ciudad con su presencia”.<sup>1655</sup> In all, Orestes Ferrara, who attended the event, wrote years later that the conference had been a success and set an example to nations all over the globe.<sup>1656</sup>

However, beyond this beautiful and arguably questionable sentiment on the part of Machado, the conference was not free of controversy. The 1927-1933 rebellion led by Augusto Nicolás Sandino (1895-1934) was taking place in Nicaragua against the US occupation of the country.<sup>1657</sup> Furthermore, the difficult situation in Haiti was in the minds of the attendees and observers. The support of the reelection process that Machado had received from the United States the year prior could have been related to these events. The northern country needed an ally in Latin America whose term was not expiring.<sup>1658</sup> The issue of “American imperialism”, however, was ignored during the meetings, but on the streets in Havana people protested.<sup>1659</sup> The Cuban president had had several troublemakers incarcerated, mainly militant students and communists, and

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<sup>1652</sup> Barraqué, “El Presidente Electo Gral. Gerardo Machado”, 279.

<sup>1653</sup> Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door*, 27.

<sup>1654</sup> Machado, *Sexta Conferencia Internacional Americana: Discurso del Excelentísimo Señor Presidente de la República de Cuba*, 6.

<sup>1655</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 59.

<sup>1656</sup> Ferrara, *Una mirada sobre tres siglos*, 313-314.

<sup>1657</sup> In the US Senate a vivid debate took place regarding the need to postpone the debate on the Nicaraguan situation until the Pan-American conference was over, in “Opposes Nicaraguan Inquiry”, *The New York Times*, January 24, 1928, 1.

<sup>1658</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 256.

<sup>1659</sup> “Protest Arrest of 200 in Cuba”, *The New York Times*, January 21, 1928, 1.

some Haitians were even deported in order to avoid uncomfortable situations during Coolidge's visit.<sup>1660</sup> Machado needed to show he was supporting his northern, more powerful, neighbor.

The conference showed that there was a clear division between Latin American nations regarding their relationship with the United States.<sup>1661</sup> Gerardo Machado, who would be severely criticized, defended the US stance towards Cuba and argued that the results of the good relationship between the two countries would be seen in the future.<sup>1662</sup> In one of the sessions of the conference, Machado affirmed: "No nos podemos unir al coro general de no intervención porque la palabra *intervención*, en mi país ha sido palabra de gloria".<sup>1663</sup> Conversely, activist Julio Antonio Mella wrote from his exile in Mexico: "El cumplimiento del programa de la Sexta Conferencia facilita grandemente la penetración imperialista y no da una sola arma a los pueblos débiles para defenderse".<sup>1664</sup> In order to not embarrass the American delegation, it was decided that the topic of US intervention in Latin American countries would be better left for the next conference, to be held in Montevideo in 1933.<sup>1665</sup> About this decision, Mella added: "Suprimiendo las cuestiones 'políticas', sólo quedan las 'económicas', es decir, las del imperialismo capitalista".<sup>1666</sup> In conclusion, the conference "resulted in a narrow victory for North American policy in Latin America".<sup>1667</sup> Years later, a Marxist author would severely criticize the "*tirano*" for his behavior during the event: "En esa Conferencia, el sátrapa de Cuba ganó nuevos laureles a los ojos de los imperialistas con su servil postura, que se tradujo en

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<sup>1660</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre!*, 121.

<sup>1661</sup> Russell Owen, "LATIN FRIENDS WON FOR UNITED STATES BY HUGHES SPEECH; Stronger Alignment of States With Washington Results on Eve of Parley's Last Day. GUERRERO OUT OF PICTURE Salvadorean Vanishes With Dispelling of Intervention Issue by Our Chief Delegate. SOME BITTERNESS REMAINS But Plenary Session Today Is Expected to Ratify Arbitration and Pan-American Union Projects", *The New York Times*, February 20, 1928, 1.

<sup>1662</sup> "Machado Lauds Our Policy; Reviews Cuba's Relations With Washington in Reply to Critics", *The New York Times*, February 8, 1928, 2.

<sup>1663</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 222; Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 122.

<sup>1664</sup> Julio Antonio Mella, "La Conferencia Panamericana es una emboscada contra los pueblos de América Latina", *El machete* 95, December 31, 1927, full text reproduced in Julio Antonio Mella, *Documentos y artículos* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 347.

<sup>1665</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 123.

<sup>1666</sup> Mella, "La Conferencia Panamericana es una emboscada", 347.

<sup>1667</sup> Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 87.

escandalosa defensa pública del intervencionismo y las agresiones yanquis al continente”.<sup>1668</sup>

The Pan-American Conference raised both the confidence Machado had on himself and his administration, but also the inconformity of determined sectors of Cuban society towards the regime. These were unable to freely articulate their demands thus resulting in the explosion that was to come in the following years.<sup>1669</sup> Because of the reciprocal and cordial relationship the president had with the United States government, which approved his process of reelection, “Machado debe haber pensado que la intervención de los Estados Unidos contra su regimen en Cuba era sumamente improbable”.<sup>1670</sup> Therefore, ignoring what was about to come and confident of the success of the meeting, the Cuban president planted a ceiba tree in the recently built by architect Jean-Claude Forestier Parque de la Fraternidad in Havana, which would represent the supposed fraternity amongst all Latin American nations.<sup>1671</sup>

### 4.3.3 Roosevelt enters the scene

Journalist R. Hart Phillips wrote: “The entire island of Cuba celebrated when President Roosevelt was elected and took office”, for they believed he would drastically change American relations with their country.<sup>1672</sup> Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s relationship with Latin American countries has been interpreted as mostly positive with respect to previous administrations. Historian Norman Bailey concluded that FDR was the epitome of what the author called the “benevolent *caudillo* for Latin Americans”.<sup>1673</sup> However, this perspective ought to be reconsidered for, though after 1933 Roosevelt established the praised Good Neighbor policy, it was not a radical change from precedent years. FDR expressed this program in his inaugural address as president on March 4, 1933: “In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he

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<sup>1668</sup> Tabares del Real, *La Revolución del 30*, 91.

<sup>1669</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 520.

<sup>1670</sup> Wood, *La política del buen vecino*, 46.

<sup>1671</sup> Segre, “La Habana de Forestier”, 25.

<sup>1672</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 7.

<sup>1673</sup> Bailey, “The United States as a caudillo”, 217.

does so, respects the rights of others—, the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors”.<sup>1674</sup> However, as historian of the Caribbean Franklin W. Knight put it, “the ‘Good Neighbor’ policy of F.D. Roosevelt enunciated to put a soft glove on the heavy-handed efforts of the early decades, was designed not to foster political independence, but to control it”.<sup>1675</sup> Similarly, historian Irwin Gellman argued also in the seventies that “there was a change in diplomacy under Roosevelt, but it was in mood only. The tactics were altered, not the strategy; the fundamental objectives of the United States in the Western Hemisphere remains constant”; and continued: “While the Good Neighbor Policy put a stop to use of United States troops to maintain order in the hemisphere, the United States continued to work for stability within Latin American states in order to protect American investments”.<sup>1676</sup> More broadly, in the 1950s journalist William Krehm, who had traveled throughout Latin America as *Time* magazine’s correspondent, criticized the supposedly well-meaning of the good neighbor policy because it had left behind countless dictatorships in Central America—the regime the reporter was most concerned about was Dominican Rafael Leónidas Trujillo’s.<sup>1677</sup> The author named these “reliquias de la Política del Gran Garrote”.<sup>1678</sup>

Once Franklin Roosevelt officially began his policy, however, the attitude of the United States towards Latin America shifted, at least in its discourse.<sup>1679</sup> American historian Bryce Wood has argued that the base of the Good Neighbor policy would be precisely

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<sup>1674</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt: “Inaugural Address”, March 4, 1933. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsba.edu/ws/?pid=14473](http://presidency.ucsba.edu/ws/?pid=14473).

<sup>1675</sup> Knight, *The Caribbean*, 180.

<sup>1676</sup> Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 5.

<sup>1677</sup> For an excellent study on the Dominican politician, see Howard J. Wiarda, *Dictatorship and Development: Methods of Control in Trujillo’s Dominican Republic* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1968).

<sup>1678</sup> William Krehm, *Democracias y tiranías en el Caribe* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Parnaso, 1957), 19. Krehm further concluded: “Para Latinoamérica no es suficiente tener un buen vecino. Precisa un sabio buen vecino. O, si no es mucho pedir, un buen vecino con suficiente oído para escuchar el clamor de un continente. En pocas palabras se podría sintetizar ese clamor: Latinoamérica no necesita tanques sino tractores”, in 340. As explained in its cover, soon after writing this controversial book on the good neighbor policy, Krehm lost his job at *Time* magazine and even lost his US citizenship—he was forced to revert to his original Canadian citizenship.

<sup>1679</sup> Carleton Beals did not believe so, for the journalist thought the policy “failed to live up to its high sounding goals and actually disguised the continued expansion of US. power [...] [H]e exposed these evidences of good neighborliness as only fragments of the story. In part, they were a public relations smokescreen that momentarily hid the administration’s real intentions”, in John A. Britton, *Carleton Beals: A Radical Journalist in Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 156.

reciprocity;<sup>1680</sup> otherwise the arrangement between the two countries would be broken. Mexican historian Lorenzo Meyer was less positive when concluding that: “Esta ‘Buena Vecindad’ era, en cierta forma, la tradicional política norteamericana de hegemonía sobre los países de Latinoamérica, pero una hegemonía más refinada y salpicada de un cierto idealismo: mostraba más [...] la zanahoria que el garrote”.<sup>1681</sup> Similarly, historian Jorge Ibarra stated that the Good Neighbor policy meant the implementation of old and new ways in which to subjugate Cuba, in particular, and Latin America, in general.<sup>1682</sup> Historian Roorda believes the policy had been a success, with the only inconvenience that it had strengthened military regimes.<sup>1683</sup> This same author argued that there was also another factor that granted the policy’s right functioning: “The Good Neighbor policy demonstrated to a generation of Caribbean dictators that they were free to run their countries however they pleased, so long as they maintained common enemies with the United States: first the fascist, then the communists”.<sup>1684</sup> Machado clearly understood communism as a foreign threat to Cubanism, and had stated so in several occasions. For instance, in 1931, when his government was having serious problems, the president stated: “Aparentemente estamos en un proceso de oposición interna. En la superficie, esa es la causa. En lo hondo, en la profundidad, lo que vive, lo que se esconde, es una agresión comunista implacable, dirigida por ocultos poderes extranjeros y desenvuelta en Cuba”.<sup>1685</sup>

All this notwithstanding, at the time, the expectations of what the newly elected US president could achieve were high. Writer Hernández Catá expressed so in the following words on his 1933 novel:

El Gobierno de Roosevelt va, según se dice, a rectificar la errónea conducta del de Hoover. Si es así, la política hispanoamericana de los Estados Unidos ha de cambiar, y Cuba no va a seguir siendo inmolada a la sed machadista para que los banqueros de Wall-Street cobren sus intereses exorbitantes. Algunos síntomas indican que las

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<sup>1680</sup> Wood, *La política del buen vecino*, 294.

<sup>1681</sup> Lorenzo Meyer, *México y Estados Unidos en el conflicto petrolero, 1917-1942* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1968), 190.

<sup>1682</sup> Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33*, 1.

<sup>1683</sup> Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door*, 30.

<sup>1684</sup> Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door*, 1.

<sup>1685</sup> Machado, *Al pueblo de Cuba*, 4.

promesas de Roosevelt no serán vanas. Morgan y otros grandes banqueros han dejado de ser intangibles.<sup>1686</sup>

Far from fulfilling expectations, Roosevelt's election "would do nothing to erode the traditional American commitment to intervention in Cuba to protect the business interests".<sup>1687</sup> Thus the relationship with between FDR and Cuba during the first months of the newly appointed US president administration would to some extent be a continuation of previous understandings with the island. It is worth mentioning that, in fact, Machado and Roosevelt coincided in power only five months: from March 4—the date of FDR's inauguration as president of the United States—until August 12, 1933—the date Machado went into exile. As will be further explained in the following chapters, especially when discussing the Cuban revolution, after 1931 the opposition to the Cuban president grew immensely making 1933 his most difficult year as head of state. The environment in Havana was of confusion and uncertainty, for "Hoover mantenía, aunque fuera moralmente, a Machado. Roosevelt, en cambio, no había disimulado sus simpatías por la oposición, y ésta esperaba de él que contribuyera a la caída del dictador".<sup>1688</sup> Nonetheless, the "*asno con garras*" wrote a telegraph to Roosevelt the day of his inauguration hoping to establish a cordial relationship: "En esta hora, difícil en todas partes, los mejores deseos de un completo éxito desde esta República que debe su nacimiento no solo al sacrificio de sus hijos, sino a la noble y decisiva ayuda de los Estados Unidos".<sup>1689</sup>

Kind words aside, things would not work as Machado had planned. The Cuban president did not find the support from the northern neighbor he hoped, thus resulting in the demise of his regime after the intervention of the United States. Machado expressed in his memoirs his disappointment on the new American president, and blamed him for the economic decline and growing dependency of Cuba towards the United States after he came to power:

El proceso iniciado el 20 de mayo de 1925 continuó sin interrupción y sin que se modificara a no ser en detalles de técnicas ajenos al objetivo señalado hasta el mes de

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<sup>1686</sup> Hernández Catá, *Un cementerio en las Antillas*, 86.

<sup>1687</sup> Geoff L. Simons, *Cuba: From Conquistador to Castro* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 246.

<sup>1688</sup> Macías Martín, "La diplomacia española ante el 'Machadato'", 349.

<sup>1689</sup> As quoted in Thomas, *Cuba*, 449.

marzo de 1933, fecha en que tomó posesión el presidente Franklin Delano Roosevelt y las relaciones cubano-americanas sufrieron una total y honda transformación. La política arancelaria de Hoover nos había, ciertamente, empobrecido, pero nos había permitido reafirmar nuestra soberanía y lo perdido en riquezas estaba bien compensado por lo ganado en independencia económica—que vale, al cabo, decir política—la política del presidente Roosevelt nos empeoró por igual en lo económico y en lo político. Hoy [ca. 1934] somos [...] un país menos independiente que en 1932 y a la vez vamos siendo un país más pobre.<sup>1690</sup>

The following quote from Domínguez highlights the irony behind Machado's immobilism in regards to the Platt Amendment, which ended backfiring him: "Although at the outset of his rule Machado mentioned the need to change the Platt Amendment, he did little about it, despite the ironic fact that it was the exercise of U.S. rights under the Platt Amendment that helped to bring Machado down in 1933".<sup>1691</sup> As for the United States, their change of attitude towards the island had to do both with the change of regimes, from a Republican to a Democrat administration, as well as the growing of opponents on the island, which made Machado an unstable and unreliable element for American interests:

In the initial phase of the movement against Machado (1925-1930), the United States had been regarded by most Cubans (more or less correctly) as a major prop of the Havana administration. Consequently, during these years the anti-dictatorial and anti-imperialist aspects of the nationalist movement were compatible. However, when Machado himself became a destabilizing factor, owing to his suppression of the legitimate opposition, United States policy turned first neutral, then hostile.<sup>1692</sup>

FDR's policies would profoundly affect Huey Long's term as senator and Gerardo Machado's tenure as president. Washington's stands towards both Long's Louisiana and Machado's Cuba were of cautious distance. While on the surface level the social-oriented infrastructure developing policies of all three leaders may seem naturally inclined to collaboration, surprisingly enough, it was Roosevelt who was to become the most formidable hurdle set in front of the two regimes. In a manner that seems counterintuitive, both the Kingfish and the "*asno con garras*" managed to establish

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<sup>1690</sup> Machado y Morales, *Memorias: Ocho años de lucha*, 59.

<sup>1691</sup> Domínguez, "Seeking Permission to Build a Nation", 37.

<sup>1692</sup> Benjamin, "The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism", 88.

mutually beneficial relationships with conservative Republicans Calvin Coolidge<sup>1693</sup> and Herbert Hoover. Ideology seemed to have taken a back seat while pragmatic and personalistic approaches to politics prevailed.

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<sup>1693</sup> For instance, the Cuban president said of Coolidge, whom he opposed to FDR, that “él se daba cuenta de que las relaciones cubano-americanas tenían que ser de cooperación y de amistad y no de coloniaje”, in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 67.

## CHAPTER FIVE: BECOMING POPULAR IN DEPRESSION-ERA GREATER CARIBBEAN

This chapter analyses the political tools employed both by Huey Long and Gerardo Machado in order to appeal to their followers. These stratagems were not necessarily sophisticated, but they resulted in what could arguably be called a personality cult. Political scientist Milan W. Svoblik defines it as the “hallmark—and primarily a consequence rather than the cause—of established authority”, and adds that it is intended to “reinforce a dictator’s paramount political standing”.<sup>1694</sup> Its effectiveness lies in the fact that the leader becomes the center of the regime as a sort of messiah or savior. In the case of Long and Machado, both politicians came to power in moments of severe economic and social crisis, and became the voice of those less heard—mainly, the farmers. Thus they were unique, especially when compared to their predecessors, a fact that would ultimately allow them to exceed the traditional purview of their respective offices. Supporters expressed their unconditional loyalty and admiration at every public ceremony.

Huey Long and Gerardo Machado developed their cult of personality resorting to three key strategies: biography, social regeneration policy, and inclusion of blacks. Their respective autobiographies, *Every Man a King* and *Ocho años de lucha*, were intended to tell the “truth” about their administrations and bolster their public image. Alongside these books, both men envisioned and instigated radical policies geared towards tackling the same basic issue: the need for the regeneration of their societies. They took, however, different approaches and developed distinct discourses to achieve this goal. The Kingfish formulated a bizarre new program for the redistribution of wealth in the United States entitled “Share Our Wealth”, thanks to which the senator became an increasingly popular household name throughout the country, particularly in the South. On his part, the Cuban president elaborated a political nationalistic discourse that reinforced the idea of *Cubanidad* as a bulwark against foreign intervention. Lastly, both

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<sup>1694</sup> Milan W. Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 80.

Machado and Long sought to increase their popularity through innovative approaches to gain appreciation among the black population. The Kingfish and the “*asno con garras*” played with ambiguity which enabled them, on the one hand, to be regarded as progressive and inclusive, while, on the other, to refrain from making any substantial changes to their segregated societies. Their political discourse regarding blacks helped create a ground-breaking image of both politicians in respect to their predecessors: not only were they fighting for the poor, but they were also incorporating the poorest of them all.

## 5.1 The men on themselves

### 5.1.1 “One of the most vivid stories ever told”

As a reflection of his egotism and perhaps as a desperate gesture to win back and increase his popularity after the rupture with Roosevelt, in October 1933 Long published his autobiography entitled *Every Man a King*,<sup>1695</sup> which had been his campaign motto in 1928. The book was sold for only one dollar in order to make it affordable for all budgets. In over three hundred pages, the senator narrated the story of his personal and political life from the perspective of a victim and a fighter, using a considerable amount of newspaper sources. *The American Progress* defined it as:

One of the most vivid stories ever told; it is the account of the long hard relentless battle of one lone man against the pack. It is the true picture of just what ends the big corporate interests will go to in trying to crush a single individual who dares possess the courage to oppose them.<sup>1696</sup>

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<sup>1695</sup> It is worth noting that in May that same year William Gale from Hollywood had written a letter to the senator proposing him to write “a novel of approximately ninety thousand words, admitting of film adaptation”. Perhaps that exciting idea influenced and motivated the Louisiana politician to publish his autobiography since the length proposed by Gale corresponds to the extension of the book. Letter from William V. Gale to Huey P. Long, May 5, 1933, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 18, LaRC.

<sup>1696</sup> “Long’s Book, ‘Every Man a King’, Is Out”, *The American Progress*, October 19, 1933, 1.

That same newspaper would publish ads in the following months announcing it as “the book that Wall Street couldn’t suppress”, and that it was “343 pages of red hot facts”.<sup>1697</sup>

Given the tone of the book and the amount of fiction in it, one could classify it as a novel. At the beginning of the text, Long explains his motivations for writing, which were twofold. Firstly, Long’s book coincided with a certain fashionable reedition of Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), the artist of the Renaissance who also wrote an autobiography.<sup>1698</sup> Cellini believed that if a life had been extraordinary it was worth telling about it at sixty years of age. Apparently, the Kingfish, at age thirty-nine, judged he had already achieved that goal. Secondly, Long added that since newspapers, magazines, and biographers were so fascinated with him, and often published lies about him, it was worth to raise his voice and offer the “real explanation” of things.

The book cannot be considered a revelation, since its information is conveniently explained and distorted, but it certainly helps understand the intentions and personality of its author. Long starts by emphasizing his humble origins, as already mentioned, by asserting he was born in a small log cabin. The Kingfish was not the first politician to use that rhetorical device. He was reproducing the American symbol of humble origins of the log cabin, started by American presidents William Henry Harrison (1773-1841) in 1841,<sup>1699</sup> and twenty years later, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865). In that sense, Mexican historian Carlos Pereyra wrote: “La cabaña de Harrison ha sido un tema de repetición, muy gustado hasta los últimos tiempos. Lincoln también tuvo cabaña y la había tenido Jackson”, while both Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt had been raised in a “*casa señorial*”.<sup>1700</sup> It was a mechanism intended to create empathy among a downtrodden audience, as well as to demonstrate that, in spite of coming from a poor background, anyone could become a successful politician, even president; that is, the “all-American” idea of the self-made man.

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<sup>1697</sup> Advertisement appeared in *The American Progress*, November 2, 1933, 5.

<sup>1698</sup> Entitled *Vita di Benvenuto di Maestro Giovanni Cellini fiorentino, scritta, per lui medesimo, in Firenze* (1558-1562).

<sup>1699</sup> Robert Gray Gunderson, *The Log-Cabin Campaign* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957).

<sup>1700</sup> Carlos Pereyra, *El fetiche constitucional americano: de Washington al segundo Roosevelt* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1942), 229.

In an article published at *The New York Times* in 1933 about Long and his origins, journalist Russell Owen argued that “he was born in a farm, and that this farm was very poor”.<sup>1701</sup> The Kingfish’s follower and friend, attorney Harvey Fields, stated after Long’s death that “Huey was born in a log cabin on a country farm in Winn Parish. On this farm [...] [he was] a barefoot boy”.<sup>1702</sup> Nonetheless, in the pamphlet reverend Gerald L.K. Smith (1989-1976), one of the most trusted confidants of the senator, wrote forty years later he affirmed Huey Long’s origins were aristocratic.<sup>1703</sup> That new image was a critical response to those who since then had understood the politician simply as an ignorant man of the South. Smith vindicated a more erudite Long by saying: “His vocabulary was complete, sophisticated and demonstrative and characteristic of a true intellectual. However, he never lost the common touch”.<sup>1704</sup>

As stated in chapter one, it seems Long’s family was not as poor as he claimed, but neither were they rich. Reporter Hodding Carter rightly wrote: “A log cabin, albeit a substantial one, was his birthplace”.<sup>1705</sup> His brother Julius described in detail the house he was born in: “[It] consisted of two rooms made of hew split logs about 20 feet square, sealed overhead with lumber [...] The walls were about ten feet high. A hall about ten feet wide ran between them. There were bed rooms [...], dining room [...], a thirty feet walk ran from dining room to kitchen. It was a good comfortable house”.<sup>1706</sup> One of the politician’s sisters sarcastically affirmed: “Every time I hear of that cabin it gets smaller and smaller”.<sup>1707</sup> Similarly, writer and Hispanist Mildred Adams, who translated José Ortega y Gasset into English, concluded that “his early years on the farm have been told and retold until one can only guess from the aspect of the man how much truth there is under the romanticized picture”.<sup>1708</sup>

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<sup>1701</sup> Owen, “Huey Long Keeps Washington Guessing”, *The New York Times*, January 29, 1933.

<sup>1702</sup> Fields, *A True History of the Life*, 11.

<sup>1703</sup> Gerald L. K. Smith, “Huey P. Long: Summary of Greatness, Political Genius, American Martyr” (Eureka Springs: Elna M. Smith Foundation, 1975), 11.

<sup>1704</sup> Smith, *Huey P. Long*, 13.

<sup>1705</sup> Carter, “Huey Long: American Dictator”, 346.

<sup>1706</sup> Letter from Julius T. Long to T. Harry Williams, April 21, 1961, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 13, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1707</sup> Quoted in Williams, *Huey Long*, 20.

<sup>1708</sup> Adams, “Huey the Great”, 72, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 3, LaRC.

*Real America* published that “the Crawfish [that is how opposition referred to the Kingfish] himself grew up in a pleasant, spacious, ten-room house set among trees in a lawn 300 feet square, on the edge of Winnfield”.<sup>1709</sup> In any case, in *Every Man a King* Long wrote he was raised in a “comfortable, well-built, four-room log house”;<sup>1710</sup> however, throughout the book he defended the idea of humble origins. In fact, the book depicts a constant rivalry between the “common man”, personified by him, and the wealthy and powerful to whom he referred to as “my enemies”. The target buyer of the book was not meant to be an avid literate but someone who was not used to read. For this reason, the vocabulary and expressions Long used were plain and colloquial. Throughout the document and according to his populist personality, he adopted a heroic and teary writing, and portrayed himself as a hero fighting in favor of those less fortunate. The following extract, which reflects upon the election of FDR as president, is a suggestive example of the latter ideas:

The election of Roosevelt [...] seemed to mean that where there was an abundance of food, all the people of the land would be fed; that where there was an excess of clothes, all of the people of the land would be clad; that in the land of too many houses, none would be without shelter above their heads; that all would be possessed with comforts for the day time and the night time, so long as this was a land of plenty. Such were my hopes—my dreams—some say my imaginations, and others claim, my hallucinations; but none the less [*sic*], before and after the nomination of our candidate, before and after his election, I drank of the foundation of a new life as I saw, heard and read of his expounding the principles which had guided my activities throughout my public career. To my heart, such pronouncements were relighting the lamp of ‘America’s dream’.<sup>1711</sup>

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<sup>1709</sup> Scaramouche, “Huey P. Long. Clown and Knave of the US Senate”, 35. A newspaper jokingly published a definition of crawfish, clearly referring to the politician: “Consider the crawfish and his ways. Encyclopedia Americana describes the crawfish as a fresh water crustacean of the family Asticiade. A crustacean is not to be confused with the Vertebrates as the latter poses backbones. Instead of skin or scales, the crawfish has hard and almost impenetrable covering, which serves as a formidable bodyguard against ordinary attack. Although possessed of very strong claws, or pincers, the crawfish is not an aggressive fighter. When alarmed the crawfish moves by a backward action stirring up the mud into a cloud that protects him from any attacker. The adult digs a hole and never wanders far from it. Most of the time the crawfish reposes at the mouth of the hole and emerges only to seize and devour small water creatures. The hole offers not only a fine place to stalk his prey but also immunity (senatorial) from any attack. ‘Like the lobster’, says Americana, ‘the crawfish feeds upon snails, tadpoles, frogs and will not refuse carrion’. Though a fresh water creature the crawfish delights in stirring up mud. Louisiana is noted for its crawfish. In fact one of the largest specimens found comes from this state. Truly a wonderful and significant crustacean is the crawfish”, “Do You Recognize Him?” *The Hammond Vindicator*, July 28, 1933, 4.

<sup>1710</sup> Long, *Every Man a King*, 2.

<sup>1711</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 316. Historical sociologist Monica Prasad entitled her book after Long’s idea of “the land of too much”, according to which overproduction could become a catastrophe for farmers: Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*, xii-xiii.

Artist Trist Wood accompanied the text in the autobiography with political cartoons, most of which would be published in *The American Progress*. These caricatures ridiculed Long's opponents and served as propaganda for his policies. There were also pictures that showed a contrast between the roads, hospitals, bridges, and other infrastructures before and after Long's administration, emphasizing the improvement it had carried out in Louisiana.

*Every Man a King* was received, as Long's policies, in different ways. On the one hand, progressive newspapers understood it as a biography of a liberal politician who narrated his personal struggle with big companies. On the other, conservative and traditional media perceived it as a deceitful work written by a demagogue. The anti-*longite* Louisiana Women's Committee "boycotted department, book, and drug stores offering it for sale".<sup>1712</sup> When analyzing the autobiography, historian Williams timidly suggests: "It was not always completely frank".<sup>1713</sup> It was more than that. As stated before, it could be better understood as a literary fiction in which the Kingfish was shaping a character that would greatly benefit his popularity.

Continuing the same path of populism, in 1934 Long popularized a very catchy song under the same title as his autobiography. It was composed by his friend and director of the band of LSU, Costa Rican José Castro Carazo (1895-1981), and written by the Kingfish himself.<sup>1714</sup> The composer told author Hugh Blain the story of how the senator called him late one night and made him go to Baton Rouge quickly to ask him if he could write the music for some lyrics he had written.<sup>1715</sup> Carazo affirmed: "There is no question, he [Long] had a deep and sincere love for music [...] It was his one means of relaxation".<sup>1716</sup> The song turned out to be so popular that it became the non-official

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<sup>1712</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 202.

<sup>1713</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 646.

<sup>1714</sup> "'Every Man a King' New Song Hit Is Written By Long", *The American Progress*, January 4, 1935, 3. The original sheet music of "Every Man a King" is available at Huey P. Long papers 1927-1935, Mss. 557, 1240, 1350, 1956, Misc L. Carazo would also compose a sort of hymn for the LSU football team entitled "Touchdown": "Shortly before he died we wrote Touchdown for LSU. I did melody, he did words", Interview to Castro Carazo, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 11, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1715</sup> Hugh Mercer Blain, *Favorite Huey Long Stories* (Baton Rouge: O. Claitor, 1937), 29.

<sup>1716</sup> Blain, *Favorite Huey Long Stories*, 31. On another note, the musician told Williams about some habits of the senator: "He was a fast eater, and he ate little. He loved fried oysters--and milk. When I ate with him and others I soon found I was operating wrong. I would order a steak. He and the others would

anthem of Louisiana. Moreover, the senator assured that if he was to run for presidential election in 1936 that would be the music of his campaign.<sup>1717</sup> The lyrics were simple and clear, as were his speeches, dedicated to those farmers and poor people who deserved to live in a more egalitarian society in which wealth was to be fairly distributed:

Why weep or slumber America  
Land of brave and true  
With castles and clothing and food  
for all  
All belongs to you  
Ev'ry man a King, ev'ry man a King  
For you can be a millionaire  
But there's something belonging to others  
There's enough for all people to share  
When it's sunny June and December too  
Or in the Winter time or Spring  
There'll be peace without end  
Ev'ry neighbor a friend  
With ev'ry man a King.<sup>1718</sup>

The culmination of these ideas occurred with the creation of a new and bizarre organization that would gather those “still-forgotten men” of the country.<sup>1719</sup>

### 5.1.2 *Memorias: Ocho años de lucha*

Gerardo Machado wrote a similar memoir only a few months after his ousting from Cuba on August 12, 1933.<sup>1720</sup> In a letter the dictator wrote in 1935 he affirmed the book was ready to be published: “[E]stá ya listo [...] Lleva por título ‘Ocho años de lucha’ y creo que ha de resultar interesante, no solo para Cuba, sino para el extranjero, pues yo lo

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finish and leave and I was struck [stuck?] with the bill. I learned to order what he did and eat at same rate”, Interview to Castro Carazo, no date, by T. Harry Williams, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1717</sup> “Musician Castro Carazo Services Will Be Today”, *The Times-Picayune*, December 30, 1981.

<sup>1718</sup> Lyrics of “Every Man a King”, accessed December 17, 2014, [chnm.gmu.edu/courses/hist409/long/share.html](http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/hist409/long/share.html).

<sup>1719</sup> “40,000 New Societies in Week Springing Up at Long’s Call”, *The American Progress*, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935, 1.

<sup>1720</sup> The end of his regime will be the topic of chapter seven.

he hecho pensando más en los de afuera”.<sup>1721</sup> However, due to the lack of popularity the president enjoyed, particularly after his deposition, the manuscript was soon forgotten. Before he passed away in 1939, the “*asno con garras*” left specific instructions for its publication, but that would not happen until 1982. One of his great-grandsons, Francisco X. Santeiro,<sup>1722</sup> wrote the introduction to the first edition in which he told that Laudelina Machado de Grau, a daughter of the “*asno*”, was able to smuggle the manuscript out of Cuba in the 1970s, and that it arrived to the United States after being kept for a few years in Europe. In the introduction to the book, Santeiro also justified that the reason for publishing the document almost fifty years after the 1933 Cuban revolution was to clarify his great-grandfather’s administration and encourage historians to look upon that period of history with “objectivity” and “impartiality”, and refrain from “calumnious interpretations”.<sup>1723</sup> The book was published in Miami, a fact that is not irrelevant, for this city became the center for exiles of the *machadato* after 1933—before becoming the heart for Cubans escaping Fidel Castro’s regime—, and it was there where Machado would perish and remains buried.

Thus, contrary to Long’s *Every Man a King*, published in the midst of the Kingfish’s regime and controversies, Machado conceived *Ocho años de lucha* as a post-*machadato* document. Its author felt the need to redeem himself and his administration, and this text served as a retelling of the events that had led to his, according to him, unfair exile. The tone is of constant self-justification and defense, as the title of the book entails. It seems as though the author had expected that Franco Varona’s words written in 1927 were to become true, and was now fully disappointed in how his reputation had been wrecked:

No será ahora, cuando se escriban las páginas más brillantes del general Gerardo Machado y Morales, sino cuando termine su período de gobierno, cuando la patria agradecida le levante el monumento de su agradecimiento, aunque éste no se esculpa ni

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<sup>1721</sup> Letter from Gerardo Machado to Fernando Villapol, September 27, 1935, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers Series I, box 1, folder 12, UMDC.

<sup>1722</sup> In 1992, this relative also donated Machado’s papers to the Cuban Heritage Collection at the University of Miami, which has been used for this investigation, in John L Ayala and Salvador Güereña, *Pathways to Progress: Issues and Advances in Latino Librarianship* (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2012), 89.

<sup>1723</sup> Francisco X. Santeiro, introduction to *Memorias: Ocho años de lucha*, by Gerardo Machado y Morales, (Miami: Ediciones Históricas Cubanas, 1982), 7–8.

en mármol, ni en bronce, sino que se eleve en el corazón de todos y cada uno de los cubanos.<sup>1724</sup>

In the memoirs, the author regretted the excess of political and economic power Washington had had throughout the first decades of Cuban independence from Spain, and defended his administration's effort to guarantee the island's sovereignty.<sup>1725</sup> But most of the book's pages, however, are dedicated to narrate the specific events that took place in the spring and summer of 1933, particularly the role played by the mediator sent by FDR, Sumner Welles, of whom the author is furiously critical. After roughly 130 pages, *Ocho años de lucha* ends with an appendix of different documents that contribute to support Machado's side of the story. This recompilation includes the laudatory speeches given by diverse authorities during the ceremony when the president was invested Doctor Honoris Causa, as well as the famous Machado address entitled "To the People of Cuba".<sup>1726</sup>

In the text, its author adopts a defensive tone. As a man with multiple enemies, Machado had had to constantly explain and justify his actions throughout his political career. Thus he created an image of the strong-willed and self-made man similar than that Huey Long had developed for himself. According to the Cuban president, he had been a fighter all his life, especially before becoming president. In 1926 Machado stated so in an apparently humble yet truly arrogant address:

Soy un optimista; pero no soy un soñador. He vivido la vida de la lucha antes de llegar a ser gobernante. Primero fui agricultor, después comerciante, y más tarde industrial. He tropezado con toda suerte de dificultades, he librado toda clase de batallas, pero puedo decir con satisfacción que he salido siempre adelante en mis propósitos; no es extraño que el éxito suela ser el premio concedido por Dios a la perseverancia, y si he hecho bastante solo, no pecaré de iluso al confiar en que en el Gobierno, con los elementos que él brinda y con el concurso de todos los ciudadanos de buena voluntad, fiados ya en la mano del patriota que guía la nave, podré llevar hacia delante el propósito de engrandecimiento de nuestro país, que será el engrandecimiento y la riqueza de gran número de los individuos que lo forman.<sup>1727</sup>

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<sup>1724</sup> Franco Varona, *Machado: su vida y su obra*, 31.

<sup>1725</sup> Machado narrated that before his arrival to the presidency, the country was disorganized: "Daba a Cuba a todos los observadores la sensación de un país desintegrado, con todas las fuerzas morales relajadas, falto de gobierno, entregado al capricho de unos y a merced de la ambición de otros", in Machado y Morales, *Memorias: Ocho años de lucha*, 17.

<sup>1726</sup> Machado y Morales, *To the People of Cuba: To All: Foreigners and Nationals. The Implacable Communistic Aggression Is at the Bottom of Our Present Problems*.

<sup>1727</sup> Machado y Morales, "Aseguremos por la independencia económica, la independencia política", 16.

*Ocho años de lucha* would not see public light until the beginning of the 1980s. Its editors believed the figure of Machado had been unjustly discredited especially by Marxist historiography. Therefore, they were offering an allegedly less biased interpretation of the events inviting the readers to rethink the *machadato* period. In that sense, the impulse to publish it was the same *longite* Gerald L.K. Smith had when, seven years earlier, wrote his pamphlet about Huey Long, *Summary of Greatness*.<sup>1728</sup> Unfortunately for those revisionists, the image of the politician did not change much; opinion, mainly Cuban, kept either ignoring or referring to him as a savage dictator. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that from then on Miami became, even more, a center for *machadistas*. Only three years after the publication of *Ocho años de lucha*, a conference on Cuban presidents took place in the city, in which the panelists gave a sensible yet polemic portrait of the “*asno*” by emphasizing his achievements over his dirty tricks.<sup>1729</sup> It is plausible that the memoirs awoke a sector of Machado supporters that felt that, finally, their perception of the “truth” was being told and in need of support.

## 5.2 Regenerating society

In the 1920s and 1930s, Louisiana and Cuba were extremely poor territories with cultural and socio-economic dissimilarities amongst its citizens. Thus the main question in the discourse of these populist politicians during those decades was poverty, and the goal was to give more political representation to the neglected rural peasants. Hence, the concepts of “wealth redistribution” and “(popular) sovereignty” would often appear on Long and Machado’s speeches and programs.

### 5.2.1 The “Share Our Wealth” movement

On February 23, 1934, Long gave a speech on the radio in which he officially presented his program “Share Our Wealth”, a series of radical measures that he had already

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<sup>1728</sup> Smith, *Huey P. Long*.

<sup>1729</sup> *Ciclo de Conferencias sobre los Presidentes de Cuba (1868-1933)*. Administración del presidente general Gerardo Machado y Morales (Miami: Ramón Guiteras Intercultural Center, 1985).

mentioned separately in previous speeches.<sup>1730</sup> Its main objective was to guarantee that every American citizen had a decent level of life. After the series of failures the year before, he was initiating a movement that would have remarkable repercussion throughout the United States. This was a pivotal moment in the politician's career in which he finally established the central ideas of his political program that in the precedent years had been somewhat ambiguously hidden besides the general slogan "Every Man a King". The Share Our Wealth movement was a strategy aimed at making Long popular again after the dispute with president Roosevelt and the incident at Sands Point Country Club had undermined his public image. The senator was trying to create a new and improved image of himself that would bring him closer to the presidency.

At the radio address, which as usual was full of quotes from the Bible, Socrates, Plato, and some of the classic American heroes, the senator criticized the excessive accumulation of wealth in the hands of the big American fortunes. In numbers, he affirmed that ten men controlled 85% of the resources of the country.<sup>1731</sup> These figures are inflated, for, according to an article published in 2014, at the beginning of the 1930s it was not ten men but rather the richest 10% of the population that controlled 85% of the wealth in the United States. However, it was indeed an unequal society, where the top 1% population of the country controlled nearly 50% of its wealth—and the top 0.01% controlled the 10% of wealth.<sup>1732</sup>

In his radio address, Long added:

God told you what the trouble was. The philosophers told you what the trouble was, and when you have a country where one man owns more than one hundred thousand people, or a million people, and when you have a country where there are four men that have

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<sup>1730</sup> Speech of Senator Huey P. Long, National Broadcasting Company (NBC), Washington, D.C., February 23, 1934, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 21, LaRC.

<sup>1731</sup> Long previously had written that 85% of the national wealth was owned by 5% of the US population and that in 1916 the "wealth was not half so badly concentrated in the hands of a few as it now is", in Letter from Huey P. Long to an anonymous supporter, April 17, 1933, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

<sup>1732</sup> Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, "Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131, n° 2 (October 2014): 48.

got more control over American than all the 120,000,000 people together, you know what the trouble is.<sup>1733</sup>

Therefore, he was proposing to limit the fortunes to a maximum of fifty million dollars, or even ten or fifteen,<sup>1734</sup> and to forbid any individual to earn more than one million dollars per year. In his program, Long also included social measures for the “common man”. He guaranteed a pension of thirty dollars a month for citizens over sixty or sixty-five years old and veterans of war.<sup>1735</sup> Furthermore, he promised to reduce working hours to thirty hours a week in order to avoid overproduction; and he asserted there would be universal free education based on aptitude. Lastly, there would be a strong raise of taxes to income and inheritance.<sup>1736</sup> As historical sociologist Monica Prasad puts it, “progressive taxation became the central issue for Long because the problem that he was trying to solve was, as he saw it, the problem of overproduction and the distortions of purchasing power that it caused”.<sup>1737</sup>

The Kingfish defended each family should dispose of all the typically American material necessities established during the 1920s, that is, a house, a car, and a radio. Through his Share Our Wealth, the senator also promised an annual income of two to three thousand dollars per family—again, the numbers shifted. At the end of the speech, the Kingfish urged the listeners to create Share Our Wealth Societies throughout the country.<sup>1738</sup> In future speeches he would add or modify the numbers.<sup>1739</sup> Vagueness was

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<sup>1733</sup> Speech of Senator Huey P. Long, NBC, Washington, D.C., February 23, 1934, 16, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 21, LaRC.

<sup>1734</sup> The numbers fluctuated and were unclear. In future speeches he reduced this number to five million dollars. Historiography has commonly consented to five million.

<sup>1735</sup> Long had been talking about this idea for weeks before the radio address. For instance, in a speech at the Congress in January 10 he proposed a bill to provide people over 60 a pension to those earning less than \$1,000 per year or owning less than \$10,000, in “Long Calls for Old Age Pensions to Spread Nation’s Wealth”, *The American Progress*, January 11, 1934, 1-2.

<sup>1736</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 276.

<sup>1737</sup> Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*, 144.

<sup>1738</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 693; Glen Jeansonne, “Challenge to the New Deal: Huey P. Long and the Redistribution of National Wealth”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 21, n° 4 (October 1980): 333.

<sup>1739</sup> Long varied the numbers in the following months depending on the speeches or articles. Therefore, when scholars describe the ascent of this movement they use different amounts. For instance, Sindler wrote the program would limit the fortunes over three, not five, million dollars, 84. Kane wrote that at first the limitation of fortunes was as generous as \$100,000,000 and after went down to \$5,000,000, 122. In a speech Long delivered at NCB radio station in 1933, he stated that “if a man has over one million dollars, he will be required to give 1% of all over one million dollars to the government. If he has over \$2,000,000, he will be required to give 2% of all over the two million dollars to the government. Then it

a relevant strategy of his political program, because without specific details the politician could appeal to more people and in the future he would be free to act depending on the course of events.<sup>1740</sup> In the Senate, Long once affirmed that if the country followed his directions they would gather one hundred and sixty-five billion dollars, which would be used to end poverty.<sup>1741</sup>

It was an ambitious and utopian program intended to enlarge the “middle class”, which would become the base of this regenerated and improved society. In that sense, the senator was not far from the ideas of the need for a regeneration of the country that Machado was also proposing in Cuba. Long believed that due to the economic crisis, the middle class had disappeared in the United States and needed to be restored. As Sindler wrote: “There was something in it for everybody: farmers; urbanites; the aged; poorly paid workers; all workers; veterans; and high-school graduates”.<sup>1742</sup> His discourse was based on a dichotomy not marked by religious, ethnic, or national factors, but economic ones: he spoke of a rivalry between “the people” and economic elites. The Kingfish put it simply: “The program says that when a man has got that much, he has got enough and he must leave something for the rest”.<sup>1743</sup> Writer and witness of the events Thomas O. Harris concluded that “Huey Long regarded money as a panacea for all ills—political, social or otherwise”.<sup>1744</sup>

The program was arguably not as revolutionary as could be imagined. Journalist Harnett Kane explained how previous politicians and ideologists had already proposed its main idea, that is, the just redistribution of wealth. Also, politicians of his time had denounced the concentration of wealth; even president Franklin Roosevelt had to some extent pointed that idea out. Historian Michael Kazin thought: “Except for conservative

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will be stepped up to the point that if he has over \$10,000,000, he will be required to give 10% of all over ten million dollars to the government, and finally, when one has over \$100,000,000 he will be required to give all that he has over \$100,000,000, the government thinks he has enough. Then everybody else begins to share, rather than one man to have more than that”, in Huey P. Long, “How American Can Be Adjusted”, March 17, 1933, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC.

<sup>1740</sup> Irwin, “The Empire of the Kingfish. Part Three”, 33. The concept of vagueness will be further developed in chapter six.

<sup>1741</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 130.

<sup>1742</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 84.

<sup>1743</sup> “Thousands Join Share Our Wealth Society As People Approve of Long's Redistribution Program”, *The American Progress*, March 1, 1934, 4.

<sup>1744</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 245.

officeholders who assured themselves the economy was basically sound, political diagnosticians—from Louisiana’s Huey Long to the Communist Party to President Franklin D. Roosevelt—agreed on a malevolent if vague culprit: concentrated wealth”.<sup>1745</sup> Prasad argues how the need to spread the wealth “is a deep-rooted American tradition”.<sup>1746</sup>

What was new or revolutionary about Long’s movement, then, was its impact and scope. One historian wrote that no other politician “had been able to dramatize it, simplify it and popularize it as did the Kingfish”.<sup>1747</sup> Contemporary Hodding Carter assessed that “the [Share Our Wealth] movement was nothing less than a new political party, heir to the yearnings and frustrations of the Populists, the Whiskey Rebels, the Know-Nothings, and the Free Silverites, of all the have-nots of capitalism”.<sup>1748</sup> Sociologist Perry Howard also believed that these ideas came from “Huey’s exposure to the Populism and the backwoods socialism which had flourished in his native hills”.<sup>1749</sup> In a similar way, David Malone wrote decades after: “There was little new or original in Huey’s Share Our Wealth plan. [...] [It] represented an amalgam of ideas from Populism, Technocracy, and the Bible”.<sup>1750</sup> Jeansonne also believes Long’s “contribution was not to identify the problem but to publicize it”.<sup>1751</sup>

As if he were a reverend, the Kingfish preached on the radio that the movement was a divine mandate that appeared in the Book of Leviticus, thus conceiving the Share Our Wealth almost as a religious crusade.<sup>1752</sup> He affirmed that Moses had created the idea behind the plan, but he took “credit for bringing it up to date”. Of course, as an author

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<sup>1745</sup> Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, 110.

<sup>1746</sup> Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*, xiii. According to a journalist, on July 1935 Huey Long’s father affirmed: “People think Share-Our-Wealth is Huey’s idea. It ain’t. He took it in with his mother’s milk. My Pa was a preacher [...] He preached against slavery, share-croppin’ and said there would come when Every Man Would be a King; and wealth would be shared and there would be no more slaves. I must have been about ten then”, Letter from Bentley B. Mackoy to T. Harry Williams, November 18, 1969, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 14, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1747</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 122.

<sup>1748</sup> Carter, “Huey Long: American Dictator”, 354.

<sup>1749</sup> Perry H. Howard, “The Long Era, 1928-1956. Bifactional Politics?” in *Political Tendencies in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 262.

<sup>1750</sup> Malone, *Hattie and Huey*, 79.

<sup>1751</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 123.

<sup>1752</sup> Hogan and Williams, “The Rusticity and Religiosity of Huey P. Long”, 161-164.

wrote in 1934, “biblical scholars disagree with the Long interpretation of the meaning of the passages he quotes most often, but the idea of taking from the rich and giving to the poor sounds almost perfect to the thousands of poverty-ridden farmers and laborers”.<sup>1753</sup> The senator also used *The American Progress* to spread his ideas in several articles, in which he talked about the bright future the American nation was awaiting if they followed his plan. His vision was not progressive at all in regards to women, for he was proud to announce that thanks to his Share Our Wealth program, they could “go back to home” to fulfill their duties as mothers and wives.<sup>1754</sup> Prasad, however, believes “Long was remarkably progressive on questions of race, religion, and gender”,<sup>1755</sup> certainly a debatable statement.<sup>1756</sup>

#### a) Criticism and viability of the program

The Share Our Wealth movement received multiple criticisms by politicians from different political inclinations. In the US Senate, the program did not garner support. Conservative politicians argued it resembled communism with populist touches. Long repudiated this interpretation by stating in an interview: “Communism? communism? Hell, no! This plan is the only defense this country’s got against communism”.<sup>1757</sup> To liberal politicians the program was not progressive enough, since the proposal did not include the collectivization of private property. Actually, “the harshest foes of Long’s proposal were not [...] conservatives, but those who revered the revolutionary philosophy of Karl Marx”.<sup>1758</sup> Journalist Carleton Beals was fiercely critical when he wrote in 1935: “His Share-Our Wealth plan is either demagogic hypocrisy or economic ignorance so abysmal as to inspire awe, a monstrous and tragic joke, which can only bring disillusion and defeat and stave off the real achievement of economic justice”.<sup>1759</sup>

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<sup>1753</sup> Sisson, “Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta. Part 5”, *Today*, November 3, 1934, 20, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>1754</sup> “Let’s Wake Up and Dream of America’s Future”, *The American Progress*, May issue, 1935, 3-4.

<sup>1755</sup> Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*, 134.

<sup>1756</sup> The important issue of race will be further analyzed in section 5.4.

<sup>1757</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 311.

<sup>1758</sup> Edward F. Haas, “Huey Long and the Communists”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 32, n° 1 (Winter 1991): 30.

<sup>1759</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 312.

Marxist Sender Garlin defined the program as “a pretty soap bubble which is economically impossible”.<sup>1760</sup> This same journalist affirmed:

Under his regime [,] wages in the state have declined, hours have been lengthened and the conditions of the workers and sharecroppers—Negro and white—have grown steadily worse. Behind his sweet words about ‘sharing the wealth’ is concealed a ruthless anti-labor program.<sup>1761</sup>

Also Marxist Raymond Gram Swing warned about the perilous spread of the Share Our Wealth clubs into a national scale, and accused Long of being a fascist.<sup>1762</sup> The author wrote: “The man is waiting who is ruthless, ambitious, and indeed plausible enough to Hitlerize America”.<sup>1763</sup> In fact, to the eyes of communists and socialists, the Kingfish would always be feared and rejected for supposedly having connections with fascism. Their principal worry was that Long and the other “demagogue bosses” of the time, such as Catholic radio priest Charles E. Coughlin,<sup>1764</sup> could lead a third party in the country.<sup>1765</sup> The Share Our Wealth platform was also seen with contempt. One of its outmost critics was communist Alexander Bittelman, who wrote a small thirty-page pamphlet entitled: *How Can We Share the Wealth? The Communist Way Versus Huey Long*, in which he argued that the Kingfish’s program could not be pursued without a socialist revolution, and that his promises resembled those of Hitler before he became

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<sup>1760</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 8. This author stated in that work: “Only the program of the Communist Party offers real opposition to Huey Long and his rule”, in 47.

<sup>1761</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 19.

<sup>1762</sup> Raymond Gram Swing (1935), *Forerunners of American Fascism* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 98. According to a newspaper article, in Russia the politician was understood as such: “Russian Communist Opinion Holds Huey to Be Fascist”, *New Orleans Item*, March 11, 1935. Not only contemporaries of Long would use the epithet “fascist” to talk about Long. Several scholars refer to him as a “proto-fascist”, such as Victor C. Ferkiss, “Populist Influences on American Fascism,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (June 1957): 350–373. Sally Denton wrote that Long, “saw himself as the spokesman for the Far Right and Far Left of both national parties –an ‘American Mussolini’ whose passionate anti-elitist rhetoric could lead to the creation of a new third party that would elevate him to the presidency”, in Denton, *The Plots Against the President*, 56-57.

<sup>1763</sup> Swing, *Forerunners of American Fascism*, 107.

<sup>1764</sup> The so-called “Radio Priest” became a very popular figure in the 1930s, for millions of Americans listened to his show. Through a simplistic rhetoric, he advocated for “social justice” and strongly criticized Communists. In the case of Coughlin, there were indeed connections with National Socialism. In the late 1930s, Coughlin began to give anti-Semitic addresses on his radio show and even publicly supported fascist European leaders. See Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*; Donald I. Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: Free Press, 1996); Sheldon Marcus, *Father Coughlin: The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973); Charles J. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965).

<sup>1765</sup> Norman Thomas, “The Third Party Fascist Appeal”, *Socialist Call*, May 4, 1935, 8.

chancellor of Germany.<sup>1766</sup> Long guaranteed that with the implementation of his program there would be comfort and happiness for everybody, but the author believed it would be,

without the need of fighting for it, without overthrowing the political power of the capitalists and establishing the political power of the workers and toiling farmers, without expropriating the means of production owned now by the monopolies, and without building a socialist economy as the first phase of Communism.<sup>1767</sup>

In a similar manner, when socialist Norman Thomas visited Louisiana to meet with the members of the Socialist Party of the state, he affirmed: “His ‘Spare the Wealth’ movement can have only a Fascist future”, and called Long and Coughlin “agents of capitalism”.<sup>1768</sup> Nonetheless, when looking into the program the assessment one can make is that it was far from either fascism or communism, and the aforementioned militants were probably using these epithets to refer to Long mainly due to the political circumstances of the time rather than because of any accurate political analysis. It was a vague and unrealistic program that was shaped to be attractive to impoverished voters in the midst of a severe economic recession. After analyzing the organization a few decades later, Austrian historian Peter H. Amann argued:

*On ne peut qualifier Huey Long et son mouvement de fasciste en se bornant aux faits. Révolutionnaire autoritaire et égalitaire à la manière des tyrans grecs de l’Antiquité, peut-être. Qu’il aurait pu évoluer en direction au fascisme, cela se peut, mais ce n’est que pure spéculation.*<sup>1769</sup>

The viability of the project was uncertain, among other things because there were not enough millionaires in the country as to support the expenditure planned by the Kingfish. Scholar Vernon Louis Parrington stated in the sixties: “These programs [Townsend’s plan, Long’s program, and such] were utopian, for they pointed to a

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<sup>1766</sup> Alexander Bittelman, *How Can We Share the Wealth? The Communist Way Versus Huey Long* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1935), 14. Journalist and labor activist Benjamin Stolberg wrote, “We cannot share our wealth under monopoly capitalism, we can under some form of socialism” and jokingly added, “the New Deal, however, makes no sense under any system, including cannibalism”, in Stolberg, “Dr. Huey and Mr. Long”, 344.

<sup>1767</sup> Bittelman, *How Can We Share the Wealth?* 4.

<sup>1768</sup> Richard Babb Whitten, “Norman Thomas Invades Huey’s Home Territory”, *Socialist Call*, June 1, 1935, 10.

<sup>1769</sup> Amann, “Les fascismes américains des années trente”, 70.

promised land”.<sup>1770</sup> Beals in the thirties had also interpreted it as a utopian program that could never have been put into practice for several reasons. First, there were more poor families in the country than that Huey had affirmed. Also, by analyzing the figures, he estimated that the budget needed would be of 125 billion dollars, while the amount that could be confiscated would not be over 50 billion.<sup>1771</sup> In that sense, reporter Forrest Davis also questioned the program when stating:

The difficulty of liquidating the expropriated tokens of wealth—stocks, bonds, mortgages, etc—to say nothing of land, without undermining the whole edifice of value, he [Long] evades. That leads inescapably, in the opinion of thoughtful economists with whom I have spoken, to an iron grip on the banks, the currency and the whole credit mechanism. That, too, spells dictatorship.<sup>1772</sup>

Similar to this journalist’s perception, historian Brinkley also remarked that it was impossible to transform into cash money invested in the stock market, which represented a substantial portion of the wealth of the rich.<sup>1773</sup> Also, in the United States it was unconstitutional to confiscate goods,<sup>1774</sup> as the first section of the fourteenth amendment indicates:

No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.<sup>1775</sup>

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<sup>1770</sup> Vernon Louis Parrington, Jr. (1947), *American Dreams: A Study of American Utopias* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 195. US senator from Tennessee, Kenneth McKellar, denounced Huey and similar movements by stating: “What sin so heinous has Uncle Sam committed that he should be afflicted with such an unholy Trinity of blood suckers and financial cannibalists as Long, Coughlin, and Townsend? [...] If Hooey doesn’t like the U.S., he should go to some lonely isle in the middle of the ocean-named Sands Point Isle-where he can sing; ‘I’m King of this cocoanut Isle’, where he can use what he wants for money and divide up his cocoanuts every day”, McKellar collection, Memphis Public Library, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 26, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1771</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 311.

<sup>1772</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 282.

<sup>1773</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 73.

<sup>1774</sup> Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 326.

<sup>1775</sup> 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution, July 9, 1868, Article XIV, Sec. 1, accessed December 18, 2014, [memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=014/llsl014.db&recNum=389](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=014/llsl014.db&recNum=389).

Journalist Walter Davenport wrote that Long, being a clever lawyer, was aware that what he proposed was not doable but that he expected to govern the country the way he was governing Louisiana: just as he pleased.<sup>1776</sup>

It was certainly an unworkable program. Sociologist Monica Prasad, however, makes a compelling point when arguing that the main issue behind the movement, that is, the lack of purchasing power, was not a minor problem at all. Although the author recognizes that the solutions Long offered were discardable, the concerns regarding purchasing power dominated the interwar American economy.<sup>1777</sup>

Jeansonne has concluded that essentially the movement was too good to become a reality, and joins in with the majority of economists who after analyzing the proposal concluded the numbers were impracticable. There were not as many millionaires as the politician had anticipated, and it was impossible to “divide assets such as railroads or factories”. Long believed the value of all private possessions to be as high as \$170 billion, while the number was probably around \$80 billion.<sup>1778</sup> The same historian pointed out that “in reality, Long’s impractical plan was more a political ploy than a program of reform”.<sup>1779</sup> Literary historian Vernon Parrington did not hold back when he wrote in 1964: “An arrogant, unscrupulous liar, he cared little for consistency. He had a loud voice, he was persuasive, and he would promise anything”.<sup>1780</sup>

## b) Success and “hope for the “Still-Forgotten Man”

Nevertheless, people did not care much for numbers or the scientific viability of Long’s proposal, and so the Share Our Wealth movement was a success in terms of popularity.<sup>1781</sup> Prasad justifies it by saying that, besides the charisma of the leader, “the ultimate reason for Long’s success was that he was seriously attempting to think

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<sup>1776</sup> Davenport, “The Robes of the Kingfish”, *Collier’s Weekly*, November 23, 1935, 13.

<sup>1777</sup> Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*, 145-146.

<sup>1778</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 123-124.

<sup>1779</sup> Jeansonne, “Challenge to the New Deal”, 336.

<sup>1780</sup> Parrington, Jr., *American Dreams*, 197.

<sup>1781</sup> To turned-conservative journalist Frank R. Kent, movements like that of Long were usually successful because of the existence of universal suffrage and the fact that most voters belonged to what he called “moronic underworld”, in Kent, “Our Political Monstruosities”, 407-408.

through the important economic questions of the time”.<sup>1782</sup> Hundreds of people joined the cause,<sup>1783</sup> the clubs proliferated throughout the country,<sup>1784</sup> and the Kingfish became as beloved as ever. Harris explains how,

‘Share-the-wealth’ clubs spread everywhere. Very soon there was not a parish or township in Louisiana without one [...] The outside response was, perhaps, not as strong proportionately as in Louisiana, but it was strong enough to make the plan an important economic force in most American states.<sup>1785</sup>

Several organizations throughout the United States showed their support, such as the Irish-American Political Unit in Brooklyn, the Foreign Bondholders National Committee in Riverdale, Maryland, and a United Mine Workers Union Local in Denning, Arkansas.<sup>1786</sup> In the middle of 1934 Long received more mail than all of the other senators combined, and even more than the president, to the point that he had to hire twenty-five workers who were in charge of reading and responding to the letters.<sup>1787</sup> Jeansonne specifies that “the mail to the Senate was divided in two trucks: one for Huey, the other for all other senators”.<sup>1788</sup> The Kingfish’s newspaper published:

[Long’s] office has become known as the last refuge and hope for the Still-Forgotten Man. So it has become the busiest spot in the whole capital. Hour by hour postmen parade into Senator Long’s office, bent under the weight of mail bags chuck-full of letters from cities and hamlets, villages and farms in every state in the Union.<sup>1789</sup>

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<sup>1782</sup> Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*, 146.

<sup>1783</sup> “10.000 a Day Join Share-Wealth!” *The American Progress*, April 5, 1934, 1.

<sup>1784</sup> One way to assure that was by sending LSU students with great speaking abilities to other colleges—all expenses covered—and by encouraging them to create clubs and spread Long’s discourse, in John Blair, “Huey Long--Words and Deeds”, *The Student Outlook: Intercollegiate Socialist Review*, vol. 111, n° 4 (April 1935): 8-9.

<sup>1785</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 130.

<sup>1786</sup> Snyder, “Huey Long and the Presidential Election of 1936”, 121-122.

<sup>1787</sup> The content of these letters varied. One kid from New Orleans sent a letter thanking Long for the free school books: “Mama and Papa says if it wasn’t for you I would never get such nice books [...] When I grew up to be a big-man I will tell my boys and girls how good Senator Long was to let me get a little education”, Letter from Kenneth Lods to Huey P. Long, October 11, 1934. Another person from Miami proposed the senator to celebrate a new odd holiday entitled “Razzberry Day”, Letter from W. C. Brewer to Huey P. Long, December 14, 1934. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>1788</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 115.

<sup>1789</sup> “40,000 New Societies in Week Springing Up at Long’s Call”, *The American Progress*, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935, 1. Hamilton Basso reached out to these supporters and said: “It is too much to ask that the senders of these messages stop and consider whether or not his [Long’s] plan is feasible”, in Basso, “Huey Long and His Background”, 672.

Each Share Our Wealth club received copies of Huey’s autobiography and of *The American Progress*,<sup>1790</sup> as well as a manual he had written, which was a miscellany of recommendations for running the clubs and its objectives.<sup>1791</sup> This thirty-two page guidebook started with just a few paragraphs on how each society should have regular meetings “once a week or once each month”,<sup>1792</sup> that there ought to be two committees: one in charge of “the work of securing member”, and the other “to go into other communities and neighborhoods to get societies organized in them”.<sup>1793</sup> Long also wrote that there should not be any dues, and that all expenses were to be paid for from voluntary contributions, but invited all members to “bear in mind that a society can exist and do great work without raising a dime”.<sup>1794</sup> No further specific information as to what the clubs were meant to do was given. The rest of the manual consisted of a curious collection of haphazard quotes by renowned people such as Daniel Webster, Plato, Abraham Lincoln, FDR, and Catholic priest Charles Coughlin, as well as newspaper articles, the speech given by the Kingfish on February 23, 1934, and, of course, his most celebrated address in the Senate, the aforementioned “The Doom of America’s Dream”. The text ended with a poem by John Milton entitled “Comus”, a 1634 masque dedicated to chastity. The verse Long chose to include was not accidental:

If every just man that pines with want  
 Had but a moderate and beseeming share  
 Of that which lewdly pampered Luxury  
 Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,  
 Nature’s full blessings would be well dispensed  
 In unsuperfluous even proportion  
 And she not whit encumbered with her store;  
 And then the giver would be better thanked,  
 His praise due paid; for swinish Gluttony  
 Ne’er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast  
 But with besotted base ingratitude  
 Crams, and blasphemous his feeder.<sup>1795</sup>

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<sup>1790</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 85.

<sup>1791</sup> Huey P. Long, “Why Stand Ye Here Idle?” *The American Progress*, March 29, 1934, 1.

<sup>1792</sup> Huey P. Long, *Instructions for Share the Wealth Society*, 1935, 2, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 11, LaRC.

<sup>1793</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>1794</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>1795</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

The vagueness of the manual is an example of how the main future problem of the organization the Kingfish had not foreseen was the lack of structure and coherence of the Share Our Wealth clubs.<sup>1796</sup> Each of them developed its own functions to the point that, for instance, there were clubs almost exclusively devoted to the veneration of their leader, and those who worked as civic centers that brought together a neighborhood. Brinkley referred to the whole movement as “shifting, volatile, loosely structured”.<sup>1797</sup> Amann even defines the clubs as anarchic “*fan clubs des vedettes du cinéma*”, more than serious societies.<sup>1798</sup>

All this notwithstanding, by the end of 1934 the Share Our Wealth movement had over three million members, and on February the following year the number had risen to seven and a half million with 27,431 clubs spread throughout the United States, mostly in southern states—particularly Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas—, but also in others such as California and New York.<sup>1799</sup> As George Bernard Rice plainly put it in a 1935 pamphlet, the clubs “are now organized like mushrooms all over the country”.<sup>1800</sup> Long’s political program was more radical than the New Deal and could be more attractive to those impoverished due to the Depression. One example of this was given by *Time* magazine in an article that explained how a man named Eugene S. Daniell, who in August 1933 had thrown two gas bombs into the ventilation system of the New York Stock Exchange, was the head of a Share the Wealth club in New York, gathering

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<sup>1796</sup> Long’s personal friend, Seymour Weiss, gave a very different image in an interview with Williams: “The Long organization was a great organization. There was a recognized leader in each of the 64 parishes. In some instances the leader was a member of the legislature or personal friends of Huey’s. There were men upon whom Huey could absolutely depend. Every parish had a leader. Every war in the city of N.O. was organized under a leader, and every precinct had a leader, and Huey depended on those people”, Interview with Seymour Weiss, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 17, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1797</sup> Alan Brinkley, “Huey Long, the Share Our Wealth, and the Limits of Depression Dissidence”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 22, n° 2 (Spring 1981): 121.

<sup>1798</sup> Amann, “Les fascismes américains des années trente”, 70.

<sup>1799</sup> John Franklin Carter, *American Messiahs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), 22; Peter N. Carroll and David W. Noble (1977), *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States* (Harmondsworth, Eng.; New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 340; Hair, *The Kingfish*, 272. Long expressed his support to a man named Martin Friedman from New York, who wanted to organize Share Our Wealth clubs in the city: “I would be very happy yo have your assistance in organizing Share Our Wealth Societies, and furthering the movement in New York city”, in Letter from Huey P. Long to Martin Friedman, April 10, 1935, William B. Wisdom collection of Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 9, folder 26, LaRC.

<sup>1800</sup> Rice, *True Story of Huey P. Long*, 5.

some two hundred people. The publication jokingly affirmed, “Of such stuff is the Share-the-wealth movement”<sup>1801</sup>.

Long put reverend Gerald L.K. Smith in charge of these societies. He was a fervent anti-Semite and anti-communist, but also an excellent campaigner.<sup>1802</sup> The Kingfish overlooked his more unpleasant traits and affirmed that there was no anti-Semitism in the South:

The Jews, we love them all. We believe in the Old Testament just like you folks do up here. There’s no prejudice against anybody in the South, Abe, not even the colored folks. Some people up North just have no understanding of the South, that’s all. Why, two of my best friends, Seymour Weiss and Abe Shushan, they’re Jewish boys, and they’ve done right well for themselves in the South.<sup>1803</sup>

Beals described Smith as “not profound, a little slow on the uptake of ideas, not at all subtle, though clever at evading any real intellectual issue”.<sup>1804</sup> As if it were a crusade and always holding the Bible in his hands, Smith added prayers at the end of his speeches in which he asked God to end poverty with the help of that great man of Louisiana whom he compared to Moses.<sup>1805</sup> At the end of a speech he gave in New Orleans, Smith invited the audience to take off their hats in order to pray “for the young man out of the woods of North Louisiana to lead us, like Moses, out of our bondage and slavery”. He insisted he was not speaking as a politician but “as a minister of holy Christ”.<sup>1806</sup> In a similar tone, in Shreveport, the reverend affirmed:

I want to say to you anarchists, you paid representatives of the feudal lords, you men that are being hired by [...] the Standard Oil Company, etc. to tear down a little bridge

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<sup>1801</sup> “National Affairs—Political Note: Share-the-Wealth Wave”, *Time* XXV, n° 13, April 1, 1935, 17.

<sup>1802</sup> In 1942 he started his own publication, a monthly magazine entitled *The Cross and the Flag*, which greatly influenced the racist ultra-right in the forthcoming decades, and in the 1940s he joined William Dudley Pelley’s Nazi movement. Among other many anti-Semitic references to Jews, he wrote: “Slavery was not introduced to the South by the Southerners. It was introduced by the international Jewish slave traders operating through their Yankee brokers as well as European landlords”, Gerald L.K. Smith, “Crucifying the South”, *The Cross and the Flag*, vol. 19, n° 8, November 1960, 5, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 2, folder 30, LaRC. See also Glen Jeansonne, *Gerald L.K. Smith: Minister of Hate* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

<sup>1803</sup> Bernie K. Hoffer, “Huey Long, Long Ago”, *Saturday Review*, October 17, 1964, 6.

<sup>1804</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 291.

<sup>1805</sup> In that sense, Forrest Davis wrote, “In one of his many attempts at self-realization, Huey unmistakably thinks of himself as a prophet in Israel”, in Davis, *Huey Long*, 43.

<sup>1806</sup> “Press Denounced by Long’s ‘Share Wealth’ Disciple”, *The Times-Picayune*, May 6, 1934, 1.

sign, to burn a few ballots: I call your hand. You said, 'Let's shoot him'. Shoot, but you can't hit him. The Hands of God will misdirect the aim. He is a child of God. A parent of the poor.<sup>1807</sup>

In another talk, imitating his beloved leader, Smith attacked the newspapers *The Times-Picayune* and the *New Orleans States* by saying that they “were in league with the Standard Oil Company”.<sup>1808</sup>

It can be argued that, as Brinkley has pointed out, “Smith’s relationship with Long was a curious, even a disturbing one. His devotion to Huey was so total, so slavish as to seem at times almost unbalanced”.<sup>1809</sup> To the reverend, everything could be explained in terms of “good” and “bad”, and so the economic crisis the country was experiencing was not a result of the capitalist system but a consequence of the decline of moral values. During his speeches, and in a similar manner as Long, he transformed into a showman by using an exaggerated and dramatic rhetoric. He was ready to attack Roosevelt orally, for “Smith was an effective advocate with a bull-like drive, sustained by idealism, tempered by practicality, and fueled by a passion for adventure”.<sup>1810</sup> He was the perfect ally for Long, and when the time came he would be his successor.<sup>1811</sup>

From then on, the Kingfish’s speeches on the radio and in person would be propaganda of the Share Our Wealth program. Anti-*longite* activist and head of the Women’s Committee of Louisiana, Hilda Phelps Hammond (1890-1951), pointed out how the fact that the politician was using the Senate frank to mail propaganda to build up his personal political organization was despicable.<sup>1812</sup> His discourses were comical and at the same time forceful, and he used a direct and simple rhetoric in what resulted a mixture between a sermon and a monologue. One of his favorite analogies was

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<sup>1807</sup> “Stirring Speech On National Scourge of Daily Press Is Made by Rev. Smith”, *The American Progress*, February 22, 1934, 7.

<sup>1808</sup> “‘Money Masters’, Newspapers Hit and Long Lauded”, *The Times-Picayune*, June 8, 1934, 21.

<sup>1809</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 172. Reporter Chick Frampton, who was a Long supporter, even declared that “Huey didn’t like Smith, either as a man or his intelligence”, Interview to Chick Frampton, no date, by T. Harry Williams, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 27, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1810</sup> Jeansonne, *Gerald L. K. Smith*, 37.

<sup>1811</sup> According to Jeansonne, the minister had been working towards this path and “could see himself picking up Long’s fallen scepter and becoming his successor”, in *Gerald L.K. Smith*, 42; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 132-133.

<sup>1812</sup> Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 192, 196.

comparing the critical situation of the United States to a barbecue—a very American tradition. On December 11, 1934, for example, Long vindicated to the United States Congress:

How many men ever went to a barbecue and would let one man take off the table what's intended for 9/10th of the people to eat? The only way to be able to feed the balance of the people is to make that man come back and bring back some of that grub that he ain't got no business with! [Laughter and applause].

Now we got a barbecue. We have been praying to the Almighty to send us to a feast. We have knelt on our knees morning and nighttime. The Lord has answered the prayer. He has called the barbecue. 'Come to my feast', he said to 125 million American people. But Morgan and Rockefeller and Mellon and Baruch have walked up and took 85 percent of the victuals off the table!

Now, how are you going to feed the balance of the people? What's Morgan and Baruch and Rockefeller and Mellon going to do with all that grub? They can't eat it, they can't wear the clothes, they can't live in the houses.

Giv'em a yacht! Giv'em a Palace! Send 'em to Reno and give them a new wife when they want it, if that's what they want. [Laughter] But when they've got everything on God's loving earth that they can eat and they can wear and they can live in, and all that their children can live in and wear and eat, and all of their children's children can use, then we've got to call Mr. Morgan and Mr. Mellon an Mr. Rockefeller back and say, come back here, put that stuff back on this table here that you took away from here that you don't need. Leave something else for the American people to consume. And that's the program. [Applause].<sup>1813</sup>

The style of this discourse was similar to the gospel, particularly in his use of parables as an oratory device. Long spoke of the wealth of the United States as if it was a gift from God, which was meant to be shared amongst all people in the same manner as the Eucharist. A supporter of the Kingfish, who defined himself as “a commoner”, wrote a pamphlet in which he described the politician as “the Moses of today, destined and inspired by God to lead his people out of bondage placed upon them by the Pharaohs of today”.<sup>1814</sup>

The Kingfish accentuated his diatribes towards his enemies in the following months, mainly bankers and big fortunes—the Rockefellers, Baruchs, Mellons, and Morgans, above all—, as well as politicians. In a radio address given at NBC in March 7, 1935, he attacked general Hugh S. Johnson (1881-1942), who was head of the NRA, but would ultimately oppose the New Deal. Long's aggressive speech, in which “he used

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<sup>1813</sup> The full speech was reproduced in his newspaper: “Share Our Wealth Is Real Issue Up To Congress”, *The American Progress*, January 4, 1935, 1, 8.

<sup>1814</sup> Hitt, *Why Huey P. Long Should Be President*, 5.

workaday language, metaphors drawn from the kitchen and barnyard”,<sup>1815</sup> was a response to a declaration Johnson had made accusing the senator of being a demagogue and a menace to the country, referring to him as an “American Hitler”,<sup>1816</sup> and mocking his southern accent.<sup>1817</sup> According to the Kingfish, he had been interpreted as a scapegoat of the Depression when the Roosevelt administration was precisely the one to blame.<sup>1818</sup> This idea would be part of his new program, in which he was enlarging the list of opponents. In the NBC address, Long also included data about the distribution of wealth in the United States, although it is worth noting that these numbers fluctuated depending on the time and place. Jeansonne affirms the senator used the exact same poverty figures in 1918 than in 1934,<sup>1819</sup> as Kane had stressed out before him: “Huey had been depending on Senator Harper’s old figures to convince his listeners. He had not changed them in fifteen years”.<sup>1820</sup>

### c) *My First Days in the White House*

The government he proposed to establish would have been as ridiculous as a cross between a zebra and a hippopotamus.<sup>1821</sup>

Carleton Beals

Beal’s satirical quote encapsulates the eccentricity of Huey Long’s project narrated in this new book, which carries a revealing title. The senator wrote it throughout 1934, but was published posthumously, barely a week after the Kingfish’s death.<sup>1822</sup> However, people were aware that Long was preparing a book, for he had told a reporter about it, stating: “It contains one hell of a lot about what I would do in the White House”.<sup>1823</sup> If the tone and language of *Every Man a King* was already heroic, simple, and pompous,

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<sup>1815</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 263.

<sup>1816</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 120–21.

<sup>1817</sup> Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 344; Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (New York; London: Harper & Bros., 1939), 305.

<sup>1818</sup> The Roosevelt administration, and particularly the New Deal, would often be compared to the fascist policies in Italy. An example is the article by economist William G. Welk, “Fascist Economic Policy and the N. R. A.”, *Foreign Affairs: An American Quarterly Review*, October 1933.

<sup>1819</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 119.

<sup>1820</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 90.

<sup>1821</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 409.

<sup>1822</sup> Deutsch argued that the book would have sold much better had Long been alive used as a campaign document to win the presidency, in Deutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case*, 141.

<sup>1823</sup> “Huey Headed Here on Way to Mansion”, *The Oklahoman*, September 3, 1935, 4.

in this new document he intensified these characteristics. *My First Days in the White House* is a fictitious book about the events that would have occurred in the initial months of an imaginary Long presidency. It is written in first person—although Jeansonne has assured that it was “ghostwritten by [Earle] Christenberry [his assistant] and several journalists”—<sup>1824</sup>, and it consists of a series of imaginary conversations the main character has with different personalities of the American political scene of his time. Long explains how he would constitute his cabinet and execute his Share Our Wealth program. However, as historian Edward F. Haas has pointed out, “it was vague, overwhelmingly optimistic and sadly lacking in details”.<sup>1825</sup>

This work was another sample of the senator’s self-absorption because of the role he portrays himself playing in the book. Long presents himself as a savior or liberator who is constantly adored and thanked by the citizens. Parrington ironically wrote that the book was “the best example of his pamphleteering skills” and “his fictionalized account of what he would do *when* he was elected President. Modesty was not one of his virtues”.<sup>1826</sup> In *My First Days*, he solves numerous problems with serenity, efficiency, and leadership. Moreover and perhaps with a touch of sarcasm, the Kingfish’s political strategy was to surround himself with his old enemies by creating a miscellaneous group of politicians. In his cabinet he included, among others: former president Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce, Smedley D. Butler as Secretary of War, and even Franklin Roosevelt as Secretary of the Navy. Catholic Al Smith (1873-1944), who was against the New Deal, was to be in charge of the nationalization of the banking system. To sum up, this new text was not a real materialization of his Share Our Wealth program; it remained a whimsical narration planned to be used as a political weapon—

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<sup>1824</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 165. Christenberry affirmed so himself in an interview with graduate student at LSU, Michael L. Gillette, when answering the student’s remark: “Well, you wrote the book, so you’re the best person to discuss this”, Christenberry said: “In writing it we were carrying out his [Long’s] thoughts”, Michael L. Gillette transcripts of an interview to Earle J. Christenberry, 1970s [Gillette interviewed Christenberry several times between 1970 and 1973 and therefore the exact date of the transcript available is not clear], 6, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 34, LaRC. Opposing that statement, one of Long’s employers, who had been his secretary from 1923 to 1927, wrote to historian T. Harry Williams that he had been present in the process of writing and that it was false that Long had had no part in it, Letter from Mabel R. Roshton (?) to T. Harry Williams, April 5, 1963, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 13, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1825</sup> Edward F. Haas, “The Presidential Fantasy of Huey Pierce Long”, in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History*, 95.

<sup>1826</sup> Parrington, Jr., *American Dreams*, 197-198.

had its author not died before its publication. T. Harry Williams analyzed it with a touch of sarcasm and approval by writing: “It was a curious book, a mixture of nonsense and wisdom, of frivolity and gravity, and Huey must have thoroughly enjoyed writing it”.<sup>1827</sup> Unfortunately, the historian did not seem to take the document seriously.

In one of its multiple improbable segments the new president constitutes the National Share Our Wealth Committee (NSOWC), which would be in charge of putting into practice Long’s popular program. The most astonishing part of this was that the head of the Committee was to be John D. Rockefeller, Jr., that is, one of the wealthiest man in the country and bitter enemy of the Kingfish. In the book, Rockefeller happily agrees to renounce to his fortune and to lead the board. More members of the NSOWC would be other multimillionaires such as Andrew W. Mellon, industrialist Henry Ford (1863-1947), banker Winthrop W. Aldrich (1885-1974), or businessman Pierre S. du Pont (1870-1954).

*My First Days* was dedicated to “The Lazarus of Today and Tomorrow”, and so the biblical discourse is present throughout its pages. For instance, regarding the success of his policies, Long affirmed:

Foreign countries began to send emissaries and statisticians in groups to explore and study the revived America. I had trouble in finding time to see all my friends from other shores and climes. My general answer became: ‘For all I have not told you, the whole explanation is in the Bible’.<sup>1828</sup>

The ideas and steps narrated on the book never became a reality. Nevertheless, through its numerous clubs and propaganda the Share Our Wealth movement helped Long overcome the political disaster that was 1933. Now he was a politician known all over the country; he was admired and venerated by a lot of people, who saw him as the savior of the Depression. As Harris pointed out,

Apparently dead as a coffin nail in December 1933, politically speaking, Long was not only in complete control of the state, but *was* the state, in December, 1934. Only a

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<sup>1827</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 845.

<sup>1828</sup> Huey P Long (1935), *My First Days in the White House* (LaVergne: Kessinger Publishing, 2011), 140.

genius could have accomplished it, and an altogether ruthless and time-serving genius, not particularly gifted with compunctions of conscience, at that.<sup>1829</sup>

### 5.2.2 Machado, “El Egregio”: *personalismo* and *regeneracionismo*

El progreso político de un país exige como condición esencial la sumisión de grandes masas de hombres a una inteligencia directriz. Cuando entre los valores dominantes en una nación se tropieza con espíritus de la contextura cósmica del general Machado, ese pueblo está en el camino de todas las posibilidades.<sup>1830</sup>

Pedro González-Blanco

Gerardo Machado did not develop such an acclaimed and ludicrous program as Long’s Share Our Wealth. However, the Cuban president’s enormous achievements in public works warranted him numerous epithets fashioned by some advocates, which were a clear expression of popular support. For instance, Jesús María Barraqué named him “*el egregio*” (the distinguished),<sup>1831</sup> other characterizations were: “the savior of the nation”, “the Caesar of America”, or even “the messiah”.<sup>1832</sup> Historian Hernández writes: “To his admirers, Machado was ‘*El Egregio*’, ‘*El Mesías*’, and ‘*El Salvador de la Patria*’”. Furthermore, he was even compared to God, when archbishop of Havana ended a sermon given at the cathedral of the city by saying: “Dios en el Cielo y a Machado en Cuba”.<sup>1833</sup> The president not only received adulation in such form, as Hernández specifies: “City governments made Machado ‘Hijo Adoptivo’ or bestowed on him the title of ‘Exceptional citizen and Protector of the Masses’. Several municipalities even changed their names to “Gerardo Machado”, as well as the airport. And the Club Nacional General Gerardo Machado was founded aimed at continuing the deification of the politician.<sup>1834</sup> Moreover, “although he was not an intellectual, some Cuban intellectuals referred to him as ‘one of the greatest orators Cuba ever had’”.<sup>1835</sup>

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<sup>1829</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 151.

<sup>1830</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 264.

<sup>1831</sup> Macías Martín, “El Perfil de un Dictador Antillano”, 236.

<sup>1832</sup> Cantón Navarro, *Historia de Cuba*, 109.

<sup>1833</sup> Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 102.

<sup>1834</sup> The mottos of the club were “¡Machado es el ‘hombre destino’ de Cuba!”, “¡Machado es el *Hoy!*”, “¡Machado es el *Mañana!*”, or “¡Machado es el *Sol* que nos ilumina y que llega a todas partes!” [Italics in the original], in Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. I*, 443-444.

<sup>1835</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 64–65. Historian Calixto Masó remarked the following irony: “Se le calificó de Egregio, Salvador de la Patria, Hombre Cumbre, Primer Obrero de Cuba y en otras formas ditirámicas, para que después, por esas alternativas de nuestra historia, se le llamara Asno con Garras”, in Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 517. Historian Wilgus wrote for



*Fig. 35: Bust of Machado at the Park of the Military Hospital of Columbia, Havana, March 26, 1928, Herman Beller Photograph Collection, box 1, folder 5, University of Miami Digital Collection.*

The praise towards the president became such that anti-*machadista* author Rolando Rodríguez wrote, perhaps with a touch of sarcasm, that Machado developed an obsession to the point that he made latrines be named after him.<sup>1836</sup> In fact, the president had a double impulse: to build new infrastructure, on the one hand, and to “[ir] poniéndole su nombre a todo”, on the other.<sup>1837</sup> Marxist historian Lionel Soto, however, argued that this “*endiosamiento*” did not come from the masses, but “era hechura de vulgares aventureros y negociantes que emparentaban su labor con la de escribanos y mandarines”.<sup>1838</sup>

Writing in the 1930s, Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy analyzed such pomposities with problematic assumptions and use of terminology:

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nineteenth century dictators that “Whether sincere or deliberately deceptive, the documents of the period always employed expressions suggesting a crisis: liberator, restorer, regenerator, vindicator, deliverer, savior of the country, and so on”, in Wilgus, *South American Dictators*, 18.

<sup>1836</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 4.

<sup>1837</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 254.

<sup>1838</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 49.

Titles, medals, ribbons, uniforms, parades, and ceremonies were in part a pose for political effect, but they also represented a genuine fondness for such display. They were a manifestation of Orientalism, the expression of two Oriental strains, the Spanish and the mongoloid Indian. The dictators were few who did not possess sonorous titles a quarter of a page long or wear decorations covering their entire chest.<sup>1839</sup>

Particularly during the first two years in office, Machado personified the idea that a new Cuba was possible. This was expressed through public display of support in all his appearances<sup>1840</sup> and evolved into a forceful *personalismo*.<sup>1841</sup> This kaleidoscopic term can be defined, as political scientist and Latin Americanist George I. Blanksten wrote, as: “The tendency to follow or oppose a political leader on personality rather than ideological grounds, through personal, individual, and family motivations rather than because of an impersonal political idea or program”.<sup>1842</sup> Through the reelection process, Machado garnered support from all parties regardless of his or their ideology, thus he, the man, and not his program, received acclaim. Hence it seems the analysis of this political phenomenon given by Blanksten can be applied to the “*asno con garras*”.

On the contrary, to look at Huey Long through this lens would not be accurate, for although the Kingfish had a captivating personality and his political machine surrounded him, in Share Our Wealth he developed a specific program, which became his main appeal after 1934. Perhaps it would be better to affirm that Share Our Wealth was the element that distanced him a bit from *personalismo* and binded him to a more specific, if however unfeasible, program. Thus, during his previous career as politician, Long would have exemplified *personalismo* in the United States, a term that has been

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<sup>1839</sup> J. Fred Rippy, “Dictatorships in Latin America”, in *Dictatorship in the Modern World*, ed. Guy Stanton Ford (Minneapolis; London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1939), 178.

<sup>1840</sup> An author wrote, “Machado ascendía cada día más en la consideración del público. Cada vez que aparecía lo aplaudían largamente. En el teatro, especialmente, lo saludaban con ovaciones generales. El pueblo, usando este vocablo en el sentido más amplio, estaba ciertamente contento de un gobierno honrado”, in Ferrara, *Una mirada de tres siglos*, 281.

<sup>1841</sup> It is interesting to note that this word does not translate into English, for “personalism” refers to the philosophical school of thought. Thus in the English language, the term is only used in Spanish. As historian Fernández-Armesto wrote, “you can read what one nation thinks of another by looking at the terms it borrows”, in Fernández-Armesto, *Our America*, 344. Political scientist James MacGregor Burns is an example of this somewhat stereotypical belief when affirming that Latin America is a paradigmatic region of *personalismo*. According to this scholar, these movements are born and die with the leader, thus, as opposed to what happens with political parties, “personal leadership usually cannot be so transferred”, in James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), 267.

<sup>1842</sup> George I. Blanksten, “Political Groups in Latin America”, *The American Political Science Review* 53, N<sup>o</sup>. 1 (1959): 112.

circumscribed to the Latin American scene—to the point that, not accidentally, in the English language the word is kept in its Spanish form. British author George Pendle even affirmed that Latin America was “the continent of *personalismo*”, a stereotypical and false assumption.<sup>1843</sup>

Back to Cuba, author Rolando Rodríguez criticizes Machado’s *personalismo* with an example:

Las loas y los ditirambos, que hacía que se elevaran cada vez a grados más altos, una egolatría, un mesianismo y una megalomanía inherente a su personalidad, se cultivaban mediante actos, como el del 8 de mayo de 1927, en que fue recibido de su viaje a Estados Unidos junto al muelle de Caballería en medio de una apoteosis triunfal [...] Con andar majestuoso, escoltado por su consejo de secretarios, jefes militares, ayudantes presidenciales de impecables uniformes, senadores y representantes, que se disputaban los lugares para tratar de andar más cerca de quien ya se le empezaba a conocer por *El Egregio*, Machado saludaba con la mano y con el sombrero de paño a uno y otro lado mientras sobre él llovían pétalos de flores lanzados por miles de empleados de las secretarías de gobierno, empujados a asistir al mago recibimiento. Machado parecía estar embriagado por una gloria que le viniese del cielo.<sup>1844</sup>

This same author complains when referring to the long applauses the president received everywhere he went, particularly in the theater.<sup>1845</sup> Through this personality cult, the Cuban president wished to “permanecer en el poder teñido de tintes mesiánicos, presentándose como el único capacitado para culminar el saneamiento moral y material del país”.<sup>1846</sup> He and his followers believed him to be the quintessential liberator the island had been waiting for.

His supporters were not only to be found among the political class, but within a wide variety of groups, including the wealthy, businessmen, intellectuals, private institutions, workers, farmers, and other sectors.<sup>1847</sup> But the president was aware that the farmers sided with him the most. Machado wrote that the premier rural social class “por primera

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<sup>1843</sup> Pendle, *A History of Latin America*, 231. The acclaim that historical figures such as George Washington or Abraham Lincoln in the United States received could be easily compared to Simon Bolívar or José Martí.

<sup>1844</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 256.

<sup>1845</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 109.

<sup>1846</sup> Macías Martín, “El perfil de un dictador antillano”, 240.

<sup>1847</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 520.

vez se sentía atendida” by a politician and felt itself to be “parte de la nación”.<sup>1848</sup> The president was aware that his lack of intellectuality made him more appealing to this sector of voters. In that sense, a supporter wrote: “Seguro que han pasado por la Presidencia de la República personas más cultas, pero ninguno ha demostrado tanta enérgica hombría, tanto valor de carácter, tanta emoción de persona que siente la responsabilidad de estar haciendo historia”;<sup>1849</sup> a true self-made man, one may add. On the other hand, as will be further examined in the following chapter, university students were the sector that showed the least support to the regime.<sup>1850</sup> Thus, Berggren is mistaken when he writes: “Most university students, including University of Havana’s student government, looked favorably upon Machado’s administration and supported his second term in office”.<sup>1851</sup>

The more beloved the politician became among certain sectors, the more hatred he inspired in his opponents. With the *cooperativista* experiment, spearheaded after the reelection process, the bipartisanship shared between the Partido Liberal and the Partido Conservador was almost non-existent. Machado himself explained so in his memoirs as a positive feature of his regime: “[A]l inicio de mi gobierno, se detuvo en Cuba la tradicional rivalidad política. Ya no hubo para mí liberales ni conservadores, sino colaboradores”.<sup>1852</sup> Thus, while in Louisiana society was divided between *longites* and anti-*longites*, Cuba was similarly torn between *machadistas* and anti-*machadistas*. Among the latter group there was Carlos González Peraza, who wrote about Machado in 1933:

Gobernante estúpido, sin noción de humanidad, exento de cultura; cobarde hasta realizar todos los crímenes que se le achacan; amigo del exhibicionismo como todo el que, interiormente, se considera inferior y pequeño; inmodesto hasta creerse sabio, sin saber nada; pedante hasta considerarse mentor de sus compatriotas; fatuo y ridículo

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<sup>1848</sup> The full quote reads: “El pueblo y en particular el campesino se sintió apoyado y descubrió ante sí perspectivas que ignoraba y esto lo solidarizó a mi régimen a través de todo el tiempo de mi gobierno. Mis adversarios encontraron siempre el vacío en una clase social que por vez primera se sentía atendida y sintiéndose parte de la nación”, in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 28.

<sup>1849</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, vii. This same Spanish author, who was a paid for his job, added, “En el Poder, muchos nombres ilustres se han obscurecido. El del general Machado se hace cada vez más brillante”, in 54.

<sup>1850</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 520.

<sup>1851</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Interpretation”, 100.

<sup>1852</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 21.

hasta llegar a figurarse que era una Mesías de su pueblo, un semi-dios humano con poderes omnipotentes sobre la tierra.<sup>1853</sup>

The president wrote in his memoirs that when he achieved power, the island was still an economic colony, and that all his efforts had been destined to alter that status quo. In his own words, the Cuban general wrote that his main two goals as head of state were: “Afianzar nuestra personalidad exterior” in order to avoid foreign interference, and “emanciparnos económicamente [...] [L]levarnos a ser algo más que la azucarera de los Estados Unidos”.<sup>1854</sup> The president even argued that he had established a sort of redistribution of wealth in the country thanks to the implementation of the 1927 tariff and the construction of the central highway. The *carretera central*, he went on, permitted Cuban economy to diversify, and new Cuban products to develop without foreign intervention and to circulate throughout the island thus becoming available for all people. Therefore, people in the island, the “*asno con garras*” claimed, lived better in 1930 than in previous years, even taking into account the recession occurring on an international level. In his memoirs, the president even wrote: “Ahora teníamos un incipiente sistema de distribución de la riqueza”.<sup>1855</sup> It was a comparable explanation to the one Long used when affirming that Louisiana would not have entered the depression had it been an independent state ruled by him—a relevant affirmation in regards to Louisiana sovereignty.

In all, the Cuban president suggested all these measures were addressed at regenerating society on the island. Machado stipulated so in several occasions. For instance, in a speech he gave at the Hospital Nacional General Calixto García in 1926, the president said: “[E]stamos en el camino de la regeneración”.<sup>1856</sup> The concept of *regeneracionismo* rapidly evokes the image of Spain at the turn-of-the-century with the crisis that began in the decade of 1880 and emerged particularly after 1898 with the loss of the colony in Cuba, a juncture known as “*el desastre*” (the disaster), which forced Spaniards to rethink the institutions of Spain and the nature of a peninsula without distant overseas

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<sup>1853</sup> González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 7.

<sup>1854</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 11.

<sup>1855</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 27-28.

<sup>1856</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Discurso pronunciado por el Honorable Sr. Presidente de la República en el Hospital Nacional General ‘Calixto García’ el día 27 de Marzo de 1926”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 138.

territories society.<sup>1857</sup> Spanish historian Eloy Fernández Clemente contends that, more than centered on political issues, the crisis was focused on moral and economic elements.<sup>1858</sup> That context of European national crisis, historian Enric Ucelay-Da Cal argues, led to the questioning of the political system, and the “rediscovery of the roots of national identity by new ‘generations’ of ‘intellectuals’”—in the case of Spain, the generation of 1898.<sup>1859</sup> The regenerationists’ main goal was to end with corrupt machines, oligarchy, and caciquism. The main exponent of these ideas was the famous Spanish politician and polymath Joaquín Costa (1846-1911), who formulated twelve points including the need for more administrative autonomy for local governments in order to avoid caciquism, and improvement of primary education.<sup>1860</sup>

Cuba, which even after its independence still somewhat belonged in the orbit of Spain, a sort of Spanish zeitgeist, was inevitably influenced by these political and cultural ideas. In fact, historian Jaime Suchlicki affirmed that the Cuban generation of 1930 was greatly influenced by the Spanish generation of 1898 because of their “humane, spiritual, and tolerant ideas”.<sup>1861</sup> In the Caribbean island of the mid-1920s, however, it should be emphasized that the ideas of *regeneracionismo*, *Cubanidad*, and *personalismo* seemed embodied by Gerardo Machado. He was “esa figura tantas veces soñada y nunca realizada, y de que él, dándose perfectamente cuenta de semejante estado de ánimo nacional, acentuado por el malestar producido por la desastrosa administración de su predecesor, se apresure a anunciar una era de Regeneración en la cual él ha de officiar como Supremo Pontífice”.<sup>1862</sup>

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<sup>1857</sup> Pedro Ribas, “Regeneracionismo: Una relectura”, in *El regeneracionismo en España: política, educación, ciencia y sociedad*, ed. Vicent L. Salavert Fabiani, Manuel Suárez Cortina, and Raquel Álvarez Peláez (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2007), 50.

<sup>1858</sup> Eloy Fernández Clemente, “El Regeneracionismo en Joaquín Costa. Su relación con Cataluña”, in *Dos contemporanis enfrontats, Valentí Almirall (1841-1904) i Joaquín Costa (1846-1911). Actes de les Jornades d’Estudis organitzades pel GRENS de la UPF (Barcelona, 22-24 de Març de 2012)*, ed. Enric Ucelay-Da Cal and Josep Pich i Mitjana (Barcelona: Nova Editorial, 2015), 118.

<sup>1859</sup> Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, “The Restoration: Regeneration and the clash of nationalisms, 1875-1914”, in *Spanish History Since 1808*, ed. Adrian Shubert and José Álvarez Junco (London: Arnold, 2000), 128.

<sup>1860</sup> Eloy Fernández Clemente, *Estudios sobre Joaquín Costa* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1989), 34. All twelve points are listed in pages 36-37. Costa’s most renowned work is Joaquín Costa, *Oligarquía y caciquismo: como la forma actual de gobierno en España, urgencia y modo de cambiarla* (Madrid, 1901). For more on him, see J. García Mercadal, ed., *Ideario de Joaquín Costa* (Madrid: Afrodísio Aguado, 1964).

<sup>1861</sup> Suchlicki, *University Students and Revolution in Cuba*, 32.

<sup>1862</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 44.



*Fig. 36: View of a crowd in Central Park listening to President Machado, ca. 1930. Ramiro A. Fernández Collection, box 3, folder 1, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami Digital Collections.*

Machado was the promoter of the transformation of Cuban society; but he became so applauded also because he was charismatic and was able to articulate the people's needs in an attractive manner. A star member of the generation of 1930, Roig de Leuchsenring wrote in 1925: "Reúne el General Machado un porte excelente y una simpatía sin par [...] Machado *cae bien* en todas partes".<sup>1863</sup> It seems fair to affirm that, although having the fitting political program for his place and time, the Cuban president, as well as the Kingfish, would not have succeeded without their enchanting personalities.<sup>1864</sup> Opinions would change.

### 5.3 The "race issue" in Caribbean political expressions

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<sup>1863</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *El libro de Cuba*, 273.

<sup>1864</sup> The Spanish newspaper *ABC* published after the reelection, "Como se ve, algo importante ha cambiado en Cuba. La República ha encontrado, al fin, al jefe que le hacía falta. El general Gerardo Machado, uno de los héroes de la guerra de la independencia, es un estadista al par inteligente y hábil, que sabe emplear, con igual talento, la persuasión y la energía", in "La reelección del presidente Machado", *ABC*, November 2, 1928, 27. The same newspaper defined Machado's personality as "muy descollante" (outstanding) in relation to his visit to Sevilla for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929, in "Jefes de Estado. S.M. el Rey y los presidentes de las repúblicas que concurren a la Exposición de Sevilla", *ABC*, May 5, 1929, 6.

As presented in the introduction to this chapter, besides the idea of regenerating society, a crucial political innovation of both politicians was the inclusion of Afro-descendants in their political platforms. This section will argue that, although both leaders seemed to challenge traditional views on blacks, their policies towards this collective ultimately failed to bring about substantial change. Therefore, understanding Long and Machado as “defenders of blacks” has been a historical misconception.

### 5.3.1 Huey Long and African-Americans

Long did not include the race issue as a specific subject in his political program, particularly after realizing the KKK issue had been one of the reasons why he had lost his first gubernatorial election in 1924. This has led to various interpretations of Long’s perception of the “race issue” in his country. Some authors have defined him as a convinced racist. For instance, Marxist journalist Sender Garlin wrote in 1935: “The Negro people of Louisiana have no worse enemy than Huey P. Long, Dictator of the State”.<sup>1865</sup> Another communist, Alexander Bittelman, asked: “What has he done to do away with the iniquities of Negro inequality in his state?”,<sup>1866</sup> and added a remark directed at Long: “You could abolish the brutal and disgraceful system of jimcrowism and insure full and complete rights to the Negro people”.<sup>1867</sup> Several decades later, historian Glen Jeansonne defined Long as a plain racist, and stated that “whatever sympathy for blacks he expressed was opportunistic and expedient, neither humanitarian nor color blind”.<sup>1868</sup> Others, on the contrary, have argued he was a quasi defender of the civil rights of African Americans. For instance, historian T. Harry Williams, usually a reliable defender of Huey, wrote: “Long was the first Southern mass leader<sup>1869</sup> to leave aside race baiting and appeals to the Southern tradition and the

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<sup>1865</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 24.

<sup>1866</sup> Bittelman, *How Can We Share the Wealth?*, 6.

<sup>1867</sup> Bittelman, *How Can We Share the Wealth?*, 27.

<sup>1868</sup> Glen Jeansonne, “Huey Long and Racism”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 33, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 266.

<sup>1869</sup> It should be added that there has been vivid scholar debate about whether Long was a “mass leader” or not. Historian Alan Brinkley discusses this in his “Huey Long, the Share Our Wealth, and the Limits of Depression Dissidence,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 22, n° 2 (Spring 1981): 117–34. The purpose of this thesis, as explained in the introduction, is not to discuss specific definitions and therefore when talking about Long the concept “mass leader” will be used, following Williams’ terminology, who borrowed it from social philosopher Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951). According to

Southern past and address himself to the social and economic problems of the present”.<sup>1870</sup>

A moderate analysis is probably a more sensible approach. Long was a man of the South in a particular time period and was culturally influenced by his context: he referred to blacks as *niggers* and treated them at best in a condescending and paternalistic manner.<sup>1871</sup> However, at the same time, the Kingfish included this population in his political discourse because, he argued, he addressed to all poor people living in Louisiana regardless of race.<sup>1872</sup> Once he even stated: “Lincoln didn’t free the slaves in Louisiana. I did”.<sup>1873</sup> On another occasion the politician also exaggerated: “Lincoln freed the black man, but today the white and the black are shackled far worse than any colored person in 1860”.<sup>1874</sup> During a radio address, Long similarly affirmed: “Why did we fight a war over freeing the colored race if both the white and colored people are now to be enslaved under a financial despotism far worse than that which existed when the slave owner held the colored man in bondage?”<sup>1875</sup> It is worth noting that Long had popular support from African Americans, probably because he was the least prejudicial politician of the time in regards to blacks. In April 1930, a journalist wrote: “A striking number of negroes have been attending all of the governor’s meetings and today at some points they formed more than a third of the crowd”.<sup>1876</sup>

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Hoffer, a mass leader possesses certain qualities, such as audacity, iron will, faith in what he believes (which can be himself), brazenness, and will to hate, 111-114.

<sup>1870</sup> T. Harry Williams, *Romance and Realism in Southern Politics* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1961), 76. To contrast, see also Hair, *The Kingfish*, 99, 127, 151, 170-171, 202, 274-275, 303-304.

<sup>1871</sup> A witness told how after Long wrote his speeches and pamphlets, “we would change a few things. Huey would use the word nigger and we would change it. Huey would say ‘You changed my copy, unh?’. I would say ‘Huey, you want to say negro not nigger’. ‘OK, let it go’”, Interview to Joe David, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 4, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1872</sup> In that sense, political scientist Stephen Hess wrote, “It was Huey’s revolution to weld the poor into a viable political force; to make the poor redneck, the poor Cajun, and the poor Negro see that their political common denominator was ‘poor’”, in Stephen Hess, *America’s Political Dynasties From Adams to Kennedy* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 419–20.

<sup>1873</sup> Quoted in Schlesinger, *The Politics of Upheaval*, 56.

<sup>1874</sup> Circular from Huey P. Long, “The Share Our Wealth Principles”, 1934, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 5, LaRC.

<sup>1875</sup> Speech of Senator Huey P. Long, Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), Washington, D.C., January 16, 1935, 2, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 23, LaRC.

<sup>1876</sup> C.C McCann, “State on Verge of ‘Bankruptcy’ in 1928, Says Long”, *The Times-Picayune*, April 29, 1930, 1.

In Louisiana, blacks were barely represented in government. In 1924 there were only 955 blacks registered to vote as opposed to 322,600 whites; that is, only 0.3% of African Americans in the Pelican State could go to the polls. In 1928 the number had risen to 2,054, but in 1936 it remained at 2,043 and the black percentage still was 0.3%.<sup>1877</sup> Historian Adam Fairclough adds that in 1940, after twelve years of longism in the state of Louisiana, black registration had decreased below 1,000 voters, representing only 0.16% of the electorate.<sup>1878</sup> Therefore, throughout his career, the situation of African Americans in Louisiana did not improve nor did it deteriorate; Long did not carry out any policies specifically destined to ameliorate the living condition of black people nor did he promote or ban Jim Crow's laws. The State Capitol building he built in Baton Rouge, for instance, had the mandatory signs separating "white" from "colored".<sup>1879</sup> Americanists Michel Bandry and Jean-Pierre Martin defined him as a "raciste par culture, mais raciste sans haine" (racist by nature, yet racist without hate).<sup>1880</sup>

Blacks were accepted into the Share Our Wealth clubs, although most of those were also segregated.<sup>1881</sup> Nonetheless, since this population was the "poorest of the poor, they found the Share Our Wealth idea highly appealing".<sup>1882</sup> The author of an article published in *Today* magazine was surprised by the interest taken by African Americans on the clubs. However, the journalist also told the story of how two black ministers were not allowed to attend a meeting Long had organized for all clergymen of New Orleans to talk about vice in the city. Although one of them told the person at the door:

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<sup>1877</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 33; Jeansonne, "Huey Long and Racism", 272. The entire population of Louisiana in 1920 was 1,798,509 inhabitants, US Bureau of the Census, *Population of States and Counties of the United States: 1790-1990* (March 1996): 3.

<sup>1878</sup> Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 25.

<sup>1879</sup> Jeansonne, "Huey Long and Racism", 274.

<sup>1880</sup> Michel Bandry and Jean-Pierre Martin, "Huey Long démagogue sudiste", *Revue française d'études américaines*, n° 32 (April 1987): 277. In a similar approach towards blacks, his brother Earl affirmed a few decades later: "I've been a friend of the colored people, and that's one reason the reactionaries are fighting me. We may not be advanced enough to satisfy some of you folks in the North. We segregate the Negroes, and they're happy that way. But we're building 'em new schools and we have the finest colored university in the world—Southern University at Baton Rouge", Interview by Drew Pearson to Earl K. Long, "The Washington Merry Go Round", *Morning Advocate*, August 2, 1959.

<sup>1881</sup> Jeansonne, "Huey Long and Racism", 275.

<sup>1882</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 274.

“Senator Long asked *all* clergymen to come”, they were asked to leave the premises.<sup>1883</sup> In an interview with a New York journalist, the Kingfish affirmed that African Americans would “get the minimum” in the clubs. The politician was also proud to ask another northern interviewer: “Can the negro vote in the North? Well, they can become members of the clubs. In fact, we want them”.<sup>1884</sup>

The Kingfish was interviewed by African American journalist Roy Wilkins (1901-1981), who in time would become a leading civil rights activist, to speak about the role of black people in the politician’s vision. This dialogue was published on February 1935 in the New York magazine *The Crisis*, a publication that had been founded in 1910 by Pan-Africanist and intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois and was the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)—founded in 1909.<sup>1885</sup> The interviewer wrote in a comical tone, referring to the “green silk pajamas incident”: “It is certain that I am not as important as a German naval captain and since Huey had received that worthy some years ago in green silk pajamas, I could not complain when he received me in maroon silk pajamas”.<sup>1886</sup> Long said about blacks:

Don’t say I’m working for niggers [*sic*]. I’m not. I’m for the poor man—all poor man. Black and white, they all gotta have a chance. They gotta have a home, a job and a decent education for their children. ‘Every Man a King’—that’s my slogan. That means every man, niggers [*sic*] along with the rest, but not especially for niggers [*sic*].<sup>1887</sup>

The journalist sensibly concluded: “My further guess is that he wouldn’t hesitate to throw Negroes to the wolves if it became necessary; neither would he hesitate to carry

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<sup>1883</sup> Sisson, “Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta. Part 5”, 20, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>1884</sup> Heywood Broun, clipping, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 15, folder 24, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1885</sup> A very important piece of research on DuBois is Pulitzer Prize winner biography: David L. Lewis, *W.E.B. DuBois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: H. Holt, 2000).

<sup>1886</sup> Roy Wilkins, “Huey Long Says. An Interview with Louisiana’s Kingfish”, *The Crisis*, vol. 42, issue 2, February 1935, 41. Full interview also reproduced in Leslie H. Fishel and Benjamin Quarles, *The Black American: A Documentary History* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1970), 469-473.

<sup>1887</sup> Wilkins, “Huey Long Says”, 52. Similarly, author John Fineran wrote in 1932: “Asked to make the provision that contractors on road work be compelled to give at least a part of the work to white workers, Long answered: ‘If it wasn’t for the experienced negro concrete workers there wouldn’t be a mile of concrete road laid in Louisiana. And another thing you got to consider is Louisiana is 65 per cent nigger [*sic*] and we can’t run them out of the State”’, in Fineran, *The Career of A Tinpot Napoleon*, 142.

them along if the good they did him was greater than the harm”.<sup>1888</sup> And he finally added: “Menace or benefactor, he is the most colorful character I have interviewed in the twelve years I’ve been in the business”.<sup>1889</sup>

In 1934 Long abolished the one-dollar annual poll tax that had been established as part of the Jim Crow laws to prevent African Americans from voting. Because of this measure, he received support from African American US Representative from Illinois Oscar Stanton De Priest (1871-1951), who affirmed: “I am for the man who is for my people. I heartily endorse the program of United States Senator Long because he is making it possible for the negro to vote”.<sup>1890</sup> However, it is doubtful that the Louisiana senator did it to increment black vote. Journalist Sender Garlin argued that “there were other means to discourage” blacks from voting.<sup>1891</sup> In fact, it is most likely that the Kingfish approved the measure so that his poor white illiterate supporters would be relieved of the economic burden.<sup>1892</sup> Hermann Deutsch argued that Long had approved the measure in order to getting rid of the epithet “racist” so easily applied to southern politicians at the time.<sup>1893</sup> The senator was most likely trying to change that image with the 1936 presidential election in mind, where he would have to attract vote from northern states.

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<sup>1888</sup> *Ibid.*

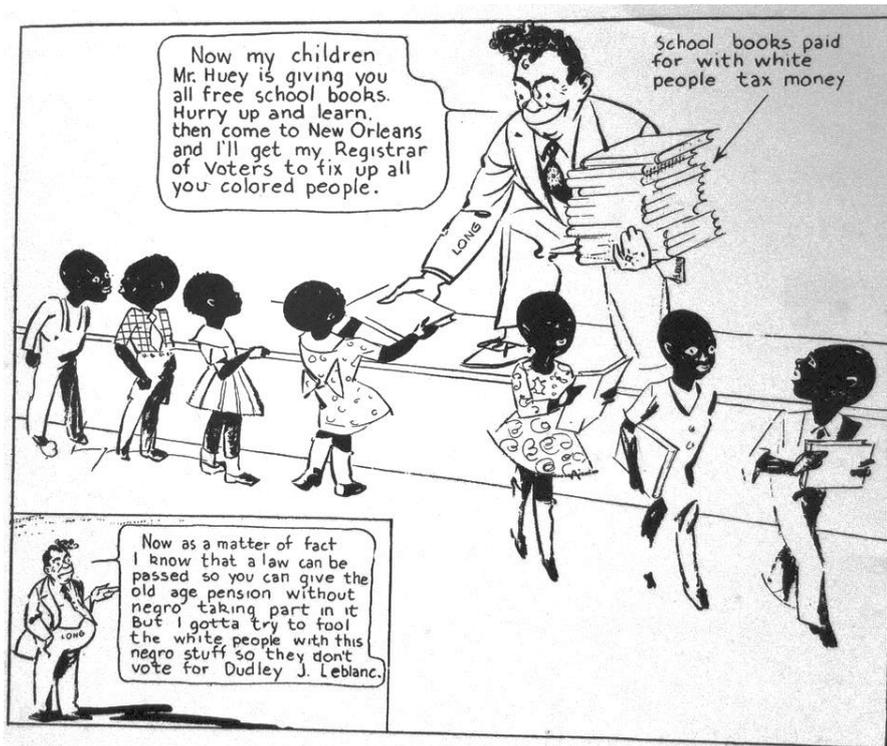
<sup>1889</sup> Wilkins, “Huey Long Says”, 52. In similar vein, two years earlier Mildred Adams had concluded in her interview of the politician: “It is possible to ask Huey anything. He will always reply, though sometimes with more words than meaning”, in “Huey the Great”, 75, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>1890</sup> Circular on poll tax, 1934-1935, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 26, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>1891</sup> Jeansonne, “Huey Long and Racism”, 273. In an opposite but very similar situation, white anti-Long voters of New Orleans were protesting in 1931 because they had problems to vote, a “pretext” which was “founded on a law which requires that voters be able to understand and interpret broadly the general meaning of the United States Constitution and the Louisiana State Constitution. This law was originally intended to prevent negroes and people mentally incapable of appreciating the duties of citizenship from assuming an undue importance and power in Louisiana politics”, in “White Voters Reduced to negro Status by Registrar Barnes”, *The Louisiana Guardian*, June 6, 1931, 1. Writer Barbara Giles also stated in 1931, “In Louisiana, as in most southern states, the negroes are kept from the polls by a registration requirement that they interpret a highly difficult clause of the state constitution. People of New Orleans recently were aroused by the discovery that their registrar, admittedly acting under the direction of Long, was using this ‘grandfather clause’ on the very best families of the Creole city. This would be merely entertaining were it not that only the best families whose names are on the so-called ‘sunk list’ of Long antagonist have suffered disfranchisement”, in “King Huey of Louisiana”, 239, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

<sup>1892</sup> Michael L. Gillette, “Huey Long and the Blacks”, 3, MA dissertation chapter transcript sent to Earle Christenberry on August 17, 1972, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 34, LaRC; Sisson, “Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta. Part 5”, 20.

<sup>1893</sup> Deutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case*, 166.



**Fig. 37:** “Long the Friend of Negroes”, Fort Worth Press, ca.1934, T. Harry Williams papers, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 27, folder 30, Louisiana and Lower Mississipp Valley Collections, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.

Data shows how during the Long administration, and before the abolition of the poll tax, more people had gotten registered to vote, therefore increasing turnout. Thus, besides being a polemical period arguably defined as “dictatorial”, the Long Era witnessed a certain “democratization” of Louisiana.<sup>1894</sup> Political scientists Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter defined the concept of “democratization” as “the processes whereby the rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles [...], or expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations (e.g., nontax payers, illiterates, women, youth, ethnic minorities, foreign residents)”.<sup>1895</sup> Nonetheless, taking into account the numbers given at the beginning of this section, it is most likely that what in truth incremented was poor white vote, not African-American. British historian Adam

<sup>1894</sup> Sociologist Perry H. Howard compared the 1920 and the 1928 election, and concluded that the turnout increased almost one hundred percent in nearly all parishes, in Howard, “The Rise of ‘Longism’”, 235.

<sup>1895</sup> Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 8.

Fairclough wrote that this reform augmented white electorate by some 200,000 thus increasing voter turnout 10%. On the contrary, African Americans were discouraged to vote. Fairclough narrates how in the city of Opelousas, about sixty miles west from Baton Rouge, a black physician named A.C. Terrace registered and was consequently beaten outside the court house, discouraging other African Americans from the town to even attempt to register.<sup>1896</sup>

Marxist Sandler Garlin interviewed R.J. “Bud” Gregory, registrar of voters in New Orleans, who affirmed mockingly, in a very common argument that most of African American were uneducated and thus should not be allowed to vote:

Some of these niggers [*sic*] don’t even know where they were born [...] It’s comical as hell, we get a regular picnic out of it. One nigger [*sic*] was looking over a white man’s shoulder and saw him writing Catholic after ‘sex’. ‘I got it’, says the nigger [*sic*], ‘my sex is Methodist’. And another nigger [*sic*], after the word ‘signature’, wrote ‘Mayor Walsmley’. Oh, sure, they’re coming down here alright, but we’re turning’em [*sic*] down by the hundreds because they don’t qualify. The monkeys just waste our ink and paper.<sup>1897</sup>

When asked about the issue by Garlin, Long screamed that the abolition of the tax would not “change the status of the nigger [*sic*] one damn bit!”<sup>1898</sup> Sandler convincingly wrote: “Certainly Huey had no intention, as some absurdly charged, of increasing Negro voting in Louisiana”.<sup>1899</sup>

Nonetheless, an anecdote that appears in most studies about Long has helped him to be interpreted as a defender of black people. In 1934 Hiram Evans, the “Imperial Wizard” of the Ku Klux Klan, threatened to visit Louisiana and campaign against the Kingfish, to which the senator responded: “That imperial bastard will never set foot in Louisiana”.<sup>1900</sup> However, his statement was most likely motivated by his future plans of becoming president and, therefore, having to appeal to voters in the North of the country.<sup>1901</sup> Moreover, at that time, the Klan was already in decline, and had lessening

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<sup>1896</sup> Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 24-25.

<sup>1897</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 25.

<sup>1898</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 42.

<sup>1899</sup> Sandler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 90.

<sup>1900</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 32.

<sup>1901</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 351.

political power even in places like Michigan. If that visit had taken place a decade earlier, both Brinkley and Jeansonne speculate, Long would have probably remained silent on the issue to avoid offending any possible voters.<sup>1902</sup>

The secret fraternity had lost its popularity at the end of the 1920s, particularly after the 1928 presidential election, in which a Catholic candidate, Democrat Al Smith, found harsh opposition from the KKK, who collaborated with Hoover's victory. By the mid-thirties, Smith would become a fervent anti-FDR and anti-New Deal.<sup>1903</sup> Historian Arnold S. Rice argued that "during the 1920s a great number of officeholders, in both the North and the South, either allied themselves, or flirted, with the Klan. In the 1930s few public officials dared to be friendly toward the order". Several cases of politicians being members of the secret association were revealed during that decade, bringing shame to those involved, who often rejected the accusations.<sup>1904</sup>

One example was Democrat US senator from Alabama Hugo L. Black (1886-1971), who in August 1937 was nominated by president Roosevelt to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, but who, after some journalists did research on his past, the following year had to reveal with embarrassment that he had been a member of the Klan—and, probably, still was, for the Klan had awarded him with a gold "grand passport", that is, life membership. The event, however, did not affect his appointment, and he held the position until his death, nor kept him from being a spokesman for civil rights in the latter part of his career.<sup>1905</sup> Similarly, in 1938, senator from California William G. McAdoo (1863-1941), who had been former president Wilson's campaign manager in 1912 as well as his son-in-law, was also indicted for holding a lifetime Klan membership.<sup>1906</sup> Although "Imperial Wizard" Evans denied the idea, McAdoo was not

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<sup>1902</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 32; Jeansonne, "Huey Long and Racism", 279–80.

<sup>1903</sup> Arnold S. Rice, "War Against Al Smith", *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1962), 85–91; Thomas R. Pegram, *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2011), 214; Michael Newton, *White Robes and Burning Crosses: A History of the Ku Klux Klan from 1866* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2014), 55.

<sup>1904</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 96.

<sup>1905</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-98.

<sup>1906</sup> It is worth noting that president Wilson loved the movie *The Birth of a Nation* and made explicit his enthusiasm. See also Louis Auchincloss, *Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Viking, 2000); John Morton Blum, *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1956).

re-elected in office, arguably because of the scandal.<sup>1907</sup> The KKK had greatly and secretly influenced the American society and politics of the 1920s, and now its power was diminishing.

In order to strengthen its popularity, in the 1930s the organization added a new and contemporary principle in their program: anti-communism, mainly because this political group defended African-American rights.<sup>1908</sup> The fraternity's efforts were, however, unsuccessful and, after Evans retired as the leader in 1939, the second Klan faded until its end in 1944.<sup>1909</sup> According to historian Arnold Rice, the economic depression of the 1930s did not allow families to spend money on anything but their basic needs, and kept them from affording to pay the fees required by the secret KKK. Moreover, the diverse social and political movements that arose in the middle of the decade, such as Townsend's pension plan, William Dudley Pelley's silver shirts, or even Long's Share Our Wealth stole the sympathies of many formerly inclined towards the Klan.<sup>1910</sup>

Returning to Long, in a broad way Jeansonne wrote:

Long may have been as pleasant to blacks as he was to anyone, but the only blacks he knew were bootblacks, valets, and servants. He had no black intimates, appointed none to significant positions, accepted no black advice, entertained no blacks on social occasions.<sup>1911</sup>

An anecdote narrated by journalist Hermann Deutsch illustrates the condescending manner in which the politician treated African Americans; in this case, one of his household employees who one rainy afternoon drove him from New Orleans to Baton

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<sup>1907</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 98-99.

<sup>1908</sup> *Ibid.*, 101. On the relationship between civil rights and "radical" political movements, mainly communism, see Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008).

<sup>1909</sup> The order was dissolved also for tax evasion. After an investigation carried out by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the KKK was due \$685,305. However, after World War II a third Klan(s) would reemerge from Atlanta, Georgia. *Ibid.*, 106, 108. It would regain popularity especially after the decision of the Supreme Court to desegregate public schools in May 17, 1954, and then again after July 13, 1960, when a Catholic was nominated as the Democratic candidate for the presidency, senator John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) of Massachusetts. *Ibid.*, 118, 124. On the third Klan, see also David Cunningham, *Klansville, USA: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights-Era Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); David Mark Chalmers, *Backfire: How the Ku Klux Klan Helped the Civil Rights Movement* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>1910</sup> Rice, *The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics*, 104-105.

<sup>1911</sup> Jeansonne, "Huey Long and Racism", 269-270.

Rouge. Having difficulties driving in the rain, the driver barely missed a collision with another car, and so a startled, even scared Kingfish started yelling. The chauffer then became so nervous that he started driving extremely slowly and carefully, but the car accidentally slipped and one of the wheels in the right stepped out of the road. The automobile began to move uncontrollably, but “this time there was no blast from the back seat. On the contrary! ‘Take it easy, so; ju-u-ust take it ea-ea-easy’, Mr. Long was crooning in a voice as soothing as a mother’s lullaby. ‘So-o-o! That’s the way! Just slow her down ea-ea-easy, boy!’” When the driver was finally able to stop the vehicle, the politician yelled at him: “Get the hell out of this car before I kill you like you just tried to kill me!” And so he left the chauffer in the middle of the road with no means to return. When the politician arrived home at his mansion in the capital of the state driving the car himself, he found the driver was already waiting for him in the hall. Long casually told him: “Well, you made it all right, didn’t you!” With that, the incident was ended.<sup>1912</sup> The fact that, at least, he did not fire the chauffer might help explain Long’s reputation.

Jeansonne adds that, instead of appointing a black person to a relevant public position—as Machado in fact did—, his closest advisors were mostly white males with hard ideas regarding race. The most controversial was “Isleño American”<sup>1913</sup> Leander H. Perez, a fervent racist and defender of states’ rights who was known for his defense of enforced segregation, particularly during the 1960s civil rights movement.<sup>1914</sup> Perez had been

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<sup>1912</sup> Hermann B. Deutsch, “Paradox in Pajamas”, *The Saturday Evening Post*, October 5, 1935, 15.

<sup>1913</sup> Isleño American or Canarian American are the descendants of Canary Islanders that migrated to Spanish Louisiana in the second half of the 18th century, forming a Spanish community in a similar way as the Acadians would form one upon their French roots. Historian Gilbert C. Din argues that children growing up in Isleño families in the 1930s were the last descendants able to speak Spanish, in Gilbert C. Din, *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 176. See also John M. Lipski, *The Language of the Isleños: Vestigial Spanish in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); Samuel G. Armistead, *The Spanish Tradition in Louisiana* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 1992); Samantha Perez, *The Isleños of Louisiana: On the Water’s Edge* (Charleston: The History Press, 2011).

<sup>1914</sup> Jeansonne quotes the January 26, 1964, issue of the *Kansas City Star* according to which Perez stated: “‘Do you know what the Negro is?’ [...] ‘Animals right out of the jungle. Passion. Welfare. Easy life. That’s the Negro. And if you don’t know that you’re naive’. He believed that blacks were too dull-witted to stir up trouble and traced the movement to desegregate southern schools ‘back to all those Jews who were supposed to have been cremated at Buchenwald and Dachau but weren’t, and Roosevelt allowed two million of them illegal entry into our country’”, quoted in Jeansonne, “Huey P. Long, Gerald L. K. Smith and Leander H. Perez”, 19. Samantha Perez wrote about the politician, “Leander Perez, who has been lauded and criticized, dissected and disrobed, by contemporaries and scholars, stands as one of Louisiana’s many colorful politicians. Leander created a political monopoly in Plaquemines and St.

Long's attorney during his 1929 impeachment, and so they had a close relationship.<sup>1915</sup> Gerald L.K. Smith was another of his intimate friends that was not free of polemic. The reverend sided with Adolf Hitler at the end of the 1930s and joined William Dudley Pelley's pro-Nazi Silver Shirts in 1944. Smith also founded his own anti-Semitic organization, the Christian Nationalist Crusade, and his monthly magazine, *The Cross and the Flag*. Like Perez, Smith would loudly defend segregation in his later years.<sup>1916</sup>

There was another relevant issue that puts into question the progressiveness of Long regarding African Americans, that is, federal anti-lynching legislation. The politician was reluctant of supporting the anti-lynching Costigan-Wagner Bill.<sup>1917</sup> The *Kingfish* argued on June 1934 that federal legislation around that matter was unnecessary, for popular hangings in the South had decreased substantially, and assured that under his administration as governor no lynchings in Louisiana had taken place.<sup>1918</sup> Carleton Beals, however, disagreed with the politician and listed numerous cases of violence carried out against black people in the Pelican State at the beginning of the 1930s. The author emphasized the poignant case of Jerome Wilson, who was a convict in a Louisiana jail in Washington parish and was brutally lynched with a hammer by eight white men that entered his cell on January 1935. The next morning, sheriff J.L. Brock, of Franklinton, talked to the press assuring: "There wasn't any lynching. There wasn't a mob either... They were just about six or eight who were going about their business".<sup>1919</sup> Days later, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People sent a

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Bernard Parishes in the first half of the twentieth century. He influenced the outcomes of elections, successfully defended Huey P. Long in his impeachment trial and diverted government funds", in Perez, *The Isleños*, 54.

<sup>1915</sup> See also Glen Jeansonne, *Leander Perez, Boss of the Delta* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2006); Jeansonne, "Huey Long and Racism", 272–277; Jeansonne, "Huey P. Long, Gerald L. K. Smith and Leander H. Perez", 5–21. Similarly, Long also befriended another of his impeachment lawyers, Acadian Allan Ellender, whose views on racism are noticeable, as one biographer remarks: "Ellender's racism was essentially traditional, neither vindictive nor mean. A product of his times, he, like most white southerners, opposed granting more rights and privileges to blacks, whom he considered inferior. Like many segregationists, he professed to like blacks personally", in Becnel, *Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana*, 79.

<sup>1916</sup> Smith was a negationist of the Holocaust: "Smith believed the charge that Hitler had killed six million Jews to be preposterous", in Jeansonne, *Gerald L.K. Smith*, 89.

<sup>1917</sup> Fred Greenbaum, "The Anti-Lynching Bill of 1935: The Irony of 'Equal Justice, Under Law'", *Journal of Human Relations* 15, n° 3 (1967): 72–85.

<sup>1918</sup> Gillette, "Huey Long and the Blacks", 7, Transcript sent to Earle Christenberry on August 17, 1972, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 34, LaRC.

<sup>1919</sup> Adam Fairclough gives a thorough account of the events, in Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 26-29.

telegram to Long asking for him to endorse the Costigan-Wagner Bill, but the Kingfish never replied. The telegram read:

You have the opportunity to make good on your statement in the Senate last spring when Costigan-Wagner federal anti-lynching bill was being discussed that you could control lynching in Louisiana and that you believed the states could wipe out this crime. Stop. National Association for Advancement of Colored People calls upon you as the real head of government in the state of Louisiana to run down and punish lynchers of Jerome Wilson.<sup>1920</sup>

There is no doubt that crime punishment in Louisiana was race-based, as a researcher points out: “Although white and African American suspects were convicted at similar rates during the interwar period, a more finetuned quantitative analysis reveals significant race-based differences in punishment”.<sup>1921</sup>

In regards to the senator and his relation to African Americans, historian Jeansonne concluded: “There was nothing in the program Long discussed in either his autobiography or his manifesto, *My First Days in the White House*, for blacks”.<sup>1922</sup> In all, ten years after the race issue was an obstacle for Long in the 1924 gubernatorial election, his political views regarding African Americans had not changed, and would remain as such.<sup>1923</sup> Historian of civil rights movement Adam Fairclough argues that the senator from Louisiana did not question white supremacy and did not “challenge the structure of local political power that kept African-Americans in subjugation”.<sup>1924</sup> Nevertheless, as we have seen, Long managed to portray an image of sympathy towards blacks by resorting to his favorite tactic: ambiguity.

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<sup>1920</sup> Quoted in Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 356. Partially reproduced in Gillette, “Huey Long and the Blacks”, 8; “Writers Score Lynching; League Protests to President, Long and Louisiana Governor”, *The New York Times*, January 13, 1935.

<sup>1921</sup> Jeffrey S. Adler, “‘Spineless Judges and Shyster Lawyers’: Criminal Justice in New Orleans, 1920–1945”, *Journal of Social History* 49, n° 4 (June 2016): 907.

<sup>1922</sup> Jeansonne, “Huey Long and Racism”, 273.

<sup>1923</sup> However, to some African Americans he became a sort of inspiration, and several of them named their sons after him; for instance, Black Panther born in Louisiana Huey P. Newton (1942-1989), in Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*, 133.

<sup>1924</sup> Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, 21.

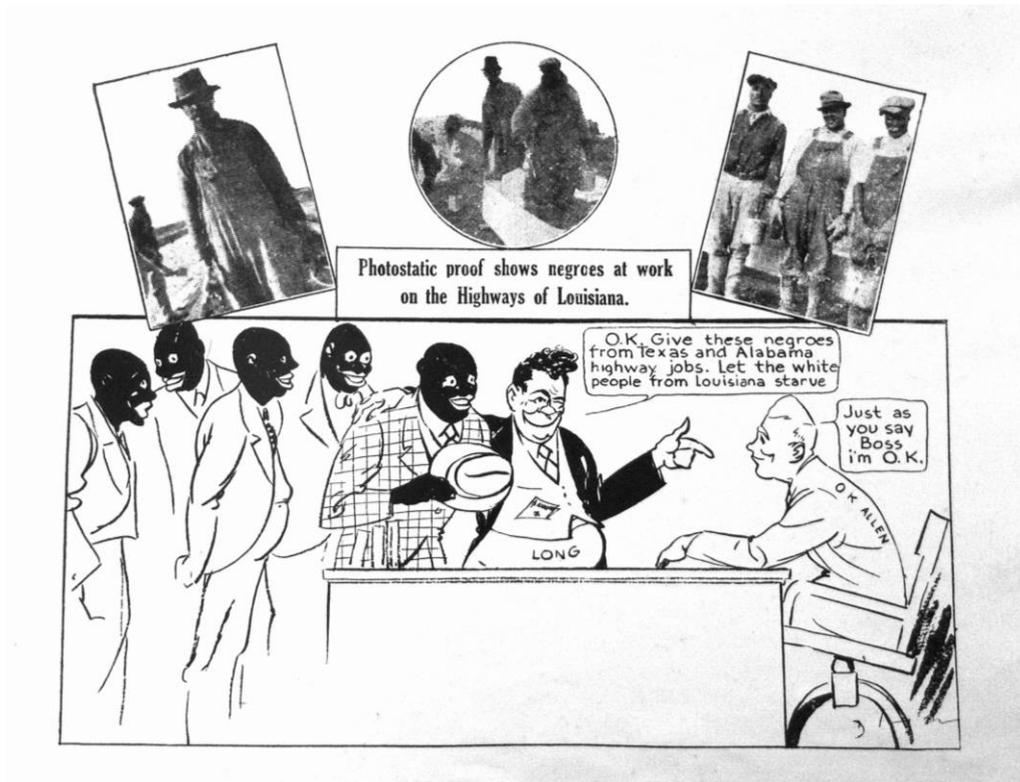


Fig. 38: "Long the Friend of Negroes", Fort Worth Press, ca.1934, T. Harry Williams papers, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 27, folder 30, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.

Before entering into analyzing race in Cuba, it is worth taking a look at historian Charles Chapman's 1927 problematic but not unusual description of the "differences" between Cuban and US blacks in order to grasp misconceptions and the historiographical treatment of race during the period:

The Cuban negro differs from his racial brother in the United States, and many observers claim that the Cuban is the better of the two. He has the courteous Spanish manner and personal dignity; his features have little of the thickness so characteristic of the American negro; he dresses neatly and in reasonably good taste; and he is not domineering or loud-mouthed. He makes a good laborer in the fields, and can be used with success in some of the lighter forms of manufacturing. His faults are those of the race wherever it is found. He lacks morality, as measured by Anglo-Saxon standards, but he confines his amours to people of his own color, and has not been guilty of attacks on white women. He is inclined to idleness, and somewhat addicted to petty dishonesty. He retains a little more superstition, perhaps, than does the negro of the United States, and is reputed to find some medium for its expression in his *ñañigos*, or secret societies.<sup>1925</sup>

<sup>1925</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 582-583.

### 5.3.2 Machado, *Cubanidad*, and the *afrocubanos*<sup>1926</sup>

Similar to Long's, Gerardo Machado's attitude towards the black population of Cuba was an ambiguous one. Throughout the twentieth century, the island did not institutionalize racism in the form of specific legislation as the northern country did through Jim Crow laws, which ordered *de jure* segregation. Thus, in Cuba race-relations were a complex yet puzzling arena. The 1901 Constitution sanctioned universal male suffrage, which brought to the table the role of Afro-Cubans in post-war Cuban society—or, as researcher Tomás Fernández Robaina calls it, “pseudorrepublica”.<sup>1927</sup> During the wars for independence, blacks and whites had fought together—in fact, the former had been more numerous.<sup>1928</sup> It was as though there had been a sentiment of commonality among the “*mambises*”, that is, the Cuban soldiers that fought against Spain. As Fernández Robaina writes, free blacks joined the conflict because of a “sentimiento de pertenencia y una conciencia patriótica”, and adds, “que los esclavos quisieran sumarse a la guerra era lógico, pues se les ofrecía la tan anhelada libertad”.<sup>1929</sup> Moreover, after independence male Afro-Cubans were granted the right to vote.<sup>1930</sup>

That situation, unsurprisingly, did not mean the island was free from racial discrimination. Latin Americanist James Cockcroft argued that “pocos países

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<sup>1926</sup> The term “afrocubano” was popularized by black Cuban writer Gustavo E. Urrutia, in Tomás Fernández Robaina, *Identidad afrocubana, cultura y nacionalidad* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2009), 44. Historian Frank Andre Guridy related how Urrutia initiated the section “Ideales de una raza” (Ideals of a race) in *Diario de la Marina* in 1928 and until 1931, in which he promoted collaboration between whites and blacks in Cuban society, in Frank Andre Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 121–23. Researcher Tomás Fernández Robaina argues that the “Ideales de una raza” “hay que enmarcarlos de lleno dentro del autodescubrimiento del negro y su cultura, que estaba ocurriendo a nivel mundial. No obstante, en particular, en Cuba, esa búsqueda se orientaba, además de a esa identificación, a su ubicación e integración dentro de la sociedad cubana; no como un grupo aparte”, in Tomás Fernández Robaina, *Cuba, personalidades en el debate racial: conferencias y ensayos* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2007), 47.

<sup>1927</sup> Fernández Robaina, *Cuba, personalidades en el debate racial*, 7. It is worth noting, though, that this historiographic opinion is not original in the sense that it has been the discourse used by the Castro regime.

<sup>1928</sup> Historian Rafael Fermoselle argues that Afro-Cubans represented 70% of the soldiers participating on the secessionist side, in Rafael Fermoselle (1974), *Política y color en Cuba: la guerrita de 1912* (Madrid: Colibrí, 1998), 17. Similarly, historian Ada Ferrer writes that at least 60% of the Liberation Army was composed of blacks, in Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>1929</sup> Fernández Robaina, *Identidad afrocubana*, 40.

<sup>1930</sup> In 1907, Afro-Cubans would represent 32% of the voting population, in de la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 11, 55, 58.

latinoamericanos tuvieron un racismo tan virulento como el que hubo en Cuba en los seis decenios anteriores a 1959”. Cockcroft further has explained how, throughout that time, society on the island was completely segregated, including bars and public buildings, and that most of the unemployed were Afro-Cuban.<sup>1931</sup> Moreover, since a considerable number of investors in Cuba were from the United States, their decisions regarding labor market were affected by their tendentious ideas on race, which facilitated the disempowerment of blacks.<sup>1932</sup> Hence two contradictory processes were occurring at the same time in the Caribbean island: on the one hand, the spread of the nationalist idea and rhetoric of an inclusive *Cubanidad*—markedly opposed to a rigidly and “legally” segregated United States—, and the political, social, and cultural realities of black subordination, on the other. The main goal of this dissertation is not to analyze and interpret the complexities of racial issues in Cuba. Thus, this subsection will be necessarily narrowed to an analysis of Machado’s policies and his time.

The idea of *Cubanidad*<sup>1933</sup> was created by Cuban national hero José Antonio Saco, and further developed by “liberator” José Martí in the nineteenth century. The celebrated Cuban anthropologist, ethnologist, and historian Fernando Ortiz Fernández (1881-1969) defined the word in romantic terms:

Un complejo de condición o calidad, como una específica cualidad de cubano [...] La cubanidad para el individuo no está en la sangre, ni en el papel ni en la habitación. La cubanidad es, principalmente, la peculiar calidad de una cultura, la de Cuba. Dicho en

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<sup>1931</sup> Cockcroft, *América Latina y Estados Unidos*, 347.

<sup>1932</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 53.

<sup>1933</sup> This concept is much debated. Just as Miguel de Unamuno differentiated the concepts of *hispanidad* and *hispanía*, one must not confuse *cubanidad* with *cubanismo*. The latter specifically refers to the way Cuban people speak (with expressions such as the word “fruta bomba” instead of papaya or “coco macaco” which is used to talk about an unattractive person) as well as the admiration of all things Cuban, in Fernando Ortiz, “Cubanidad y Cubanía”, *Islas*, vol. VI, n° 2 (January-June, 1964): 91-96. See also Fernando Ortiz, *Un catauro de cubanismos: apuntes lexicográficos* (Harana [sic]: [Publisher not identified], 1923). See also Fredrick B. Pike, *Hispanismo: 1898-1936: Spanish Conservatives and Liberals and Their Relations with Spanish America* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1971). Similarly, the concepts of “cubanía” and “cubanidad” are often intertwined. As two authors put it: “La cubanía describe a los cubanos que se sienten comprometidos con lo más elevado de su historia y cultura y lo expresan [...] en tanto que la cubanidad se manifiesta como una específica cualidad de lo cubano definida por la circunstancia, lo superficial y su naturaleza eminentemente instrumental”, in Patricio Cardoso Ruíz and Luz del Carmen Gives Fernández, *Cubanía y cubanidad: debate en torno a la identidad Cubana: el caso de los cubanos en el sur de la Florida* (Toluca: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, 2007), 7.

términos corrientes, la cubanidad es condición del alma, es complejo de sentimientos, ideas y actitudes.<sup>1934</sup>

Another definition of this complex was given by Lamar Schweyer in his study of patriotism, where the author assured that “la Cubanidad debe ser el sentir y el pensar de todos los cubanos respecto a los problemas básicos nacionales, en una misma forma, sin discrepancias ni reservas”, which meant, above all, the well-being of the entire nation.<sup>1935</sup> This author argued in 1929 that a crisis of the “patriotic feeling” had been occurring ever since the signature of the Platt Amendment due to “corrientes hispanizantes, ausencia de raza autóctona con sentido territorial, inmigración del capital de una sola fuente y ausencia de responsabilidad en la conservación del territorio”.<sup>1936</sup>

A vital part of this *Cubanidad* hinged upon ridding political nationalistic discourses of any reference to race. The goal of the concept in its conception was to bring the country together to fight against Spain regardless of race, in what historian Ada Ferrer calls a “new kind of collectivity”.<sup>1937</sup> The famous words by Martí, “Cubano es más que blanco, más que mulato, más que negro”,<sup>1938</sup> were the main theoretical background that related Cubanness with racelessness. The national hero stressed that Afro-Cubans had to identify themselves as Cubans, rather than belonging to any particular racial group. Mulatto Antonio Maceo (1845-1896), fighter in the war of independence whom Martí greatly admired, embraced this concept and was commonly known as “*titán de bronce*” (bronze titan), referring to his stature and his skin color. Historian Ada Ferrer affirmed that: “The nationalist movement gave rise to one of the most powerful ideas in Cuban history—the conception of a raceless nationality”.<sup>1939</sup> Put into practice, this meant that public schools were not segregated, which led to literacy amongst black and white children to be almost the same in 1931, with less than 3% difference between the two groups.<sup>1940</sup> De la Fuente argues: “If to be Cuban was ‘more than’ being white, black, or

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<sup>1934</sup> Ortiz, “Cubanidad o Cubanía”, 94.

<sup>1935</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 84.

<sup>1936</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 179.

<sup>1937</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 7.

<sup>1938</sup> José Martí, “Mi Raza”, *Patria*, April 16, 1893. On the other hand, Saco had straightforwardly stated that the future of the country depended on increasing white population, as quoted in De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 49.

<sup>1939</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 7.

<sup>1940</sup> De la Fuente writes that in 1899 30% of black children were literate, while thirty years later they constituted 70%, in De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 141.

mulatto, then there was no need even to refer to these particular groups, whose very existence competed with the formation of an inclusive, raceless Cubanness”.<sup>1941</sup> Thus Cubanness put forward the idea of a color-blind society.<sup>1942</sup> Fernando Ortiz stressed the uselessness of the word “*raza*” (race), which he defined as cold and static—probably because of the “*Día de la Raza*” (day of the race), celebrated in October 12 and established in 1906—, as opposed to the warm and dynamic “*cultura*” (culture).<sup>1943</sup> Of course, the idea of a “racial democracy”<sup>1944</sup> was pure theory, because, for instance, multiple practices were aimed at discouraging black immigrants from entering the country and even to practice Afro-Cuban religions impeding the so-called “Africanization” of the country. De la Fuente concludes that, in fact, “whitening was accepted as an intrinsic part of Cubanness”.<sup>1945</sup>

From an outsider’s perspective, that is, the United States, the predominant process of *mestizaje*,<sup>1946</sup> or what Ortiz called *transculturación*,<sup>1947</sup> so characteristic of Cuban

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<sup>1941</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 28.

<sup>1942</sup> Cuban philosopher emphasized this trait through an anecdote: “A mí no me pareció estafalario, sino accidentalmente profundo, el que, en un mítin político en Cuba, un orador negro dijera muy tranquilamente: ‘Porque nosotros los latinos...’”, in Mañach, *Teoría de la frontera*, 100.

<sup>1943</sup> Fernando Ortiz, “Ni racismos ni xenofobias”, *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, Vol. XXIV, Nº. 1 (January-February 1929): 12. For more on Ortiz’s idea of race, see Fernando Ortiz, *El engaño de las razas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975). This anthropologist also claimed the need to study religious and cultural expressions of African origin, mainly in his pioneering works *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros brujos. Apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal* (Madrid: Editorial América, 1906); and *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros esclavos. Estudio sociológico y de derecho público* (Havana: Revista bimestre cubana, 1916).

<sup>1944</sup> This concept has been mostly used in the context of Brazil, but also in Mexico. See France Winddance Twine, *Racism in a Racial Democracy: The Maintenance of White Supremacy in Brazil* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Thomas E Skidmore, *Black into White. Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

<sup>1945</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 51. As a side note, it can be argued that the political leader that enhanced more policies towards whitening the population in the twentieth-century Greater Caribbean was Rafael Leónidas Trujillo from the Dominican Republic, in Kurlansky, *A Continent of Islands*, 49.

<sup>1946</sup> Latin Americanist Luis Duno Gottberg creates the interesting concept “etnopolulism” to refer to the complexities of the inclusion of *mestizaje* into the political nationalist discourse in Cuba. See Luis Duno Gottberg, *Solventando las diferencias: la ideología del mestizaje en Cuba* (Madrid; Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana; Vervuert, 2003).

<sup>1947</sup> Fernando Ortiz (1963), “Del fenómeno social de la ‘transculturación’ y de su importancia en Cuba”, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1973). As opposed to acculturation, which refers only to the transmissions from one culture to another and has a Eurocentric taste, *transculturación* opens its definition to the complex transmutations between multiple participant cultures throughout history, Cuba being a key example of that process. The anthropologist envisioned the neologism in a work that would have repercussions in anthropology and received acclaim from renowned scholar Bronislaw Malinowski, who wrote the prologue of the edition of the book used in this dissertation, in which he affirmed: “Mi respuesta desde el primer momento fue de entusiasta acogida para ese neologismo”, 6.

society, led to an ethnically hybrid population, which meant the loss of “racial purity”: “Miscegenation, American scientists had concluded after substantial research into the subject, resulted in mongrelization”. De la Fuente narrates how a Tulane University professor had stated that this hybridity derived to the “decadence” of the race.<sup>1948</sup> However, it was not only the northern neighbor—in the midst of jimcrowism—that had this perspective on the matter. On the island there were “intellectuals” and “scientists” that followed US ideas, and in 1927 Havana held the first the first Pan-American Conference on Eugenics and Homiculture.<sup>1949</sup> Scholar Stephen Park argues that: “This conference demonstrated the efforts of US scientists to export biologically defined conceptions of race to Latin America”.<sup>1950</sup> In all, the following statement by historian Jaime Suchlicki is overly positive and inaccurate: “Although blacks represented a significant proportion of the total population there was no major racial conflict, the two groups having learned to live together since colonial times”.<sup>1951</sup> While there had been a process of *mestizaje* during which Spaniards had sexual relations with indigenous and black people, the result was not an equal society. As will be explained next, the failure of the supposed pacific coexistence would escalate to armed conflict.

#### a) La “*guerrita*” of 1912

This polemical conflict was the climax of an uneasy environment regarding race during the first years of Cuba as an independent republic. While Louisiana and thus Huey Long’s platform were racially marked by the reemergence of the KKK in the early 1920s, Cuba and therefore Machado’s political program would be greatly influenced by the events that led to the 1912 race conflict that shook Cuba and carried consequences up to the present. In spite of the supposed consideration of black population in the 1901 Constitution and their growing yet scarce presence in public office, Afro-Cubans were clearly underrepresented in Cuban politics. The warm and romantic ideas of Cubanness and “racial fraternity” signified blacks were not left out from politics, but they also brought with them the delegitimation or supposed needlessness of their political

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<sup>1948</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 40.

<sup>1949</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 43.

<sup>1950</sup> Stephen M. Park, “Academic Discourse at Havana: Pan American Eugenics and Transnational Capital in Alejo Carpentier’s *¡Écue-Yamba-Ó!*”, *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 58, n°. 1 (2012): 47.

<sup>1951</sup> Suchlicki, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro*, 103.

mobilization as a group.<sup>1952</sup> If everyone was considered “Cuban”, discussing race might have been considered unpatriotic.

Historian Jorge Ibarra, however, described a more real less idealistic segregated society:

La situación de la población negra, de 1908 a 1912, tendía a ser cada vez más crítica [...] A doce años de fundación de la República no se había erigido una estatua en honor de Antonio Maceo, mientras se habían construido decenas de monumentos en homenaje a luchadores de segunda fila; a las recepciones oficiales del gobierno de José Miguel Gómez no se invitaban a las sociedades negras, pero sí a las sociedades españolas; en los festejos conmemorativos de La Habana, de 1909, no se permitió la participación de negros en calidad de atletas; en la prensa, la crónica policíaca sólo recogía la condición racial de los delincuentes cuando estos eran negros; en los colegios religiosos y privados en general, no se admitían niños negros; en la iglesia, se señalaba un día de ayuno para los blancos y otro para los negros [...]; y, por último, la prensa de los independientes no se cansaba de denunciar innumerables casos en los cuales se hacía evidente la más flagrante injusticia en las decisiones judiciales que afectaban a los ciudadanos de piel oscura.<sup>1953</sup>

In order to vindicate larger black representation in politics, in August 1908 the *Agrupación Independiente de Color*—later *Partido Independiente de Color* (PIC)—<sup>1954</sup> was created,<sup>1955</sup> although it did not become particularly popular, not even amongst Afro-Cubans. The main goal of the party, which was mostly led by officials of the Ejército Libertador and professionals, was to vindicate the rights of Afro-Cubans.<sup>1956</sup> However, the Cuban Senate perceived it as a sort of menace and, consequently, on February 1910 a bill was presented banning any group of people from one specific race to be considered a political party. This bill, once passed, would be called the Morúa law<sup>1957</sup>

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<sup>1952</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 66.

<sup>1953</sup> Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 320-321.

<sup>1954</sup> The first scholarly study of the party was Serafín Portuondo Linares, *Los independientes de color: historia del Partido Independiente de Color* (Havana: Dirección de Cultura, 1950).

<sup>1955</sup> Fernández Robaina argues the goal of this new party was to “promover la incorporación de los hombres negros que deseaban luchar por una sociedad más justa racial, social y económicamente”, in Fernández Robaina, *Identidad afrocubana*, 117.

<sup>1956</sup> Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 319.

<sup>1957</sup> Although popularly known as the “Morúa law”, in truth it was an amendment to the Constitution, in Fernández Robaina, *Identidad afrocubana, cultura y nacionalidad*, 125, n. 10. The text read: “Por cuanto: la Constitución establece como forma de gobierno la republicana; inviste de la condición de cubanos a los africanos que fueron esclavos en Cuba, y no reconoce ni fueros ni privilegios personales. Por cuanto: la forma republicana establecida por la Constitución incluye al gobierno del pueblo para el pueblo, sin distinción por motivos de raza, nacimiento, riqueza o título profesional; [...] No se considerará, en ningún caso, como partido político o grupo independiente, ninguna agrupación constituida exclusivamente por individuos de una sola raza o color, ni por individuos de una clase con motivo de nacimiento, la riqueza o

after its creator, mulatto Martín Morúa Delgado (1857-1910). Historian Aline Helg writes that Morúa Delgado believed there was a sort of improvement from being black—which he related to slavery—to mulatto. The politician also argued that since slavery had been eliminated it made no sense to have separate racial organizations.<sup>1958</sup> Thus the new law allegedly prevented races to be politically represented separately for the sake of *Cubanidad*.<sup>1959</sup> More pragmatically and criticizing from the future, however, historian Melina Pappademos, who referred to the law as “infamous”, concluded that: “In essence, lawmakers sought to prevent not black votes but black (and alternative) political mobilization”.<sup>1960</sup>

The PIC was then legally prohibited with some atrocious consequences. The party was repressed because, as de la Fuente argues, “a racially defined political party was not compatible with the dominant discourse of a racially inclusive Cubanness”.<sup>1961</sup> In the background, always remained the fear of exceptional case of Haiti. The PIC members began a revolt when they were strongly stigmatized as “racist” for attributing more importance to race than to (Cuban) nationalism,<sup>1962</sup> and for allegedly violating “el pensamiento martiano”.<sup>1963</sup> Historian Jaime Suchlicki is somewhat disdainful towards this movement when affirming that their protagonists were simply “frustrated” because of the 1908 “electoral fiasco”.<sup>1964</sup> Suchlicki further argues that the uprising, in which

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el título profesional”, Martín Morúa Delgado, “Enmienda Adicional al Artículo 17 de la ley electoral”, February 11, 1910, reproduced in Pichardo Viñals, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*, 364.

<sup>1958</sup> Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 40–41.

<sup>1959</sup> Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 117.

<sup>1960</sup> Melina Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 4. Leftist author Tomás Fernández Robaina defined the Morúa law as a “campaña contra el PIC”, in Tomás Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba, 1902-1958: apuntes para la historia de la lucha contra la discriminación racial* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1990), 71.

<sup>1961</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 13, 69, 73-74.

<sup>1962</sup> Fernández Robaina argued that the PIC was not a racist party, for their program was not discriminatory at all, nor was it opposed to the mixture of races, in Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*, 68–77. In fact, in the program of the *Agrupación Independientes de Color* it was stated that their goal was to “mantener el equilibrio de todos los intereses cubanos, difundir el amor a la Patria, desarrollar relaciones cordiales, e interesar a todos en la conservación de la nacionalidad cubana, haciendo participar por igual, en la administración a los nacidos en esta tierra”, as quoted in Fernández Robaina, *Identidad afrocubana*, 118.

<sup>1963</sup> Fernández Robaina, *Identidad afrocubana*, 81.

<sup>1964</sup> The PIC obtained less than 2,000 votes, in Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*, 75. It must be noted that the total population of Cuba (dates available for 1907) was 2,048,980 inhabitants, of which 608,967 were black or mulatto, in Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 82.

“several bands of blacks roamed through the mountains”, was “ill-organized”.<sup>1965</sup> However, the rebellion would be cautiously planned, at least at the beginning, for it started on May 20, on the tenth anniversary of Cuban independence, with the participation of between 750 and 2,000 insurrectionists.<sup>1966</sup>

The revolt was particularly intense in the Oriente province, the region with the highest Afro-Cuban population on the island. It was led by mulattos and war veterans Pedro Ivonet (1860-1912) and Evaristo Estenoz (1872-1912), both founders of the PIC and both dead during the uprising. Ivonet lost his life on July 18, while Estenoz died in the hands of the Cuban Army on June 27. It is interesting to note that the assassin of the two men could have been mulatto lieutenant Arsenio Ortiz, who in later years would be appointed military supervisor of the province of Oriente by Machado, where he gained a reputation as a ruthless persecutor of opponents of the regime.<sup>1967</sup> The fact that the “*asno con garras*” could appoint a soldier who fought against the 1912 rebellion indicates, as will be seen in the following pages, that the reputation the president acquired as a supporter of black Cubans easily could be put to test, and be found wanting.

Back in 1912, the United States, led by president William H. Taft (1857-1930), looked at the Cuban race war with wariness and suggested military intervention—which would be basically aimed at protecting foreign properties in the island.<sup>1968</sup> Cuban authors wrote that the US press was inflating the events occurring in Cuba.<sup>1969</sup> The successful goal of Cuban president José Miguel Gómez was to crush the rebellion by all means necessary short of US intervention, according to historian Lester Langley, because he needed to show the northern neighbor that his administration was powerful enough to deal with the crisis on its own.<sup>1970</sup> Thus Gómez took extreme measures, including the massacre of

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<sup>1965</sup> Suchlicki, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro*, 106-107.

<sup>1966</sup> Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 133-134.

<sup>1967</sup> Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 147

<sup>1968</sup> “5,000 Soldiers Ready for Cuba”, *The New York Times*, June 8, 1912, 1.

<sup>1969</sup> Márquez Sterling and Márquez Sterling, *Historia de la isla de Cuba*, 173.

<sup>1970</sup> Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States*, 130. Gómez sent a letter to the president of the US, William Taft, assuring him that any sort of intervention “alarma y lastima el sentimiento de un pueblo, amante y celoso de su independencia, sobre todo cuando ni tales medidas se deciden por previo acuerdo entre ambos Gobiernos, lo que coloca al de Cuba en humillante inferioridad”, reproduced in Pichardo, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*, 367.

blacks and the creation of white militias.<sup>1971</sup> The Cuban president sent 3,000 men commanded by general José de Jesús Monteagudo, a veteran of the war of independence who throughout the conflict would gain the reputation of being ruthless and bloodthirsty, to end the uprising. This man had promoted the creation of military schools to train officials throughout the country.<sup>1972</sup> It is interesting to note the manner in which a textbook for school children published in 1918 reflected upon these historical figures and the 1912 war, with support for the president's actions: "El gobierno de Gómez procedió con rapidez y energía secundado muy eficazmente por el Jefe del Ejército, general Monteagudo, y acabó en muy pocos meses con la revuelta, dando muerte a muchos alzados, entre ellos a sus jefes Estenoz e Ivonet".<sup>1973</sup> Thus, after the conflict, as historian Jorge Ibarra has pointed out, Monteagudo was not processed for his actions nor was he destituted from his position.<sup>1974</sup>

Throughout the race "little war", the United States limited its offer to support, weapons, and supplies, as well as the presence of three warships anchored off the coast of Oriente prepared for what may come.<sup>1975</sup> This situation escalated tensions between blacks and whites, to the point that there were violent attacks in the streets of Havana and lynchings of blacks, in a style that resembled the US South.<sup>1976</sup> Some authors, such as historian Charles Chapman in the twenties, have stated that president José Miguel Gómez might have orchestrated the conflict in order to appear as a hero who ended a rebellion, thus assuring his reelection.<sup>1977</sup> Author Enrique Lumen also insinuated in 1934 that "la llamada guerrita de los negros dícese que fue secretamente inspirada por el propio [José Miguel] Gómez para castigar la insolencia de la 'gente de color, que quería colocarse a la altura de los blancos'. Lo cierto es que murieron centenares de negros y mulatos en

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<sup>1971</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 75-76. An author wrote that in the midst of the revolt, "se daba muerte a cuanto revoltoso era capturado", in Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 222.

<sup>1972</sup> Adams Silva, *La gran mentira*, 33.

<sup>1973</sup> Pérez Martínez, *Resumen de la historia de Cuba*, 126.

<sup>1974</sup> Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 331.

<sup>1975</sup> Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 205.

<sup>1976</sup> Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 141, 146.

<sup>1977</sup> Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 310.

aquella insurgencia”.<sup>1978</sup> The total number of deceased is uncertain, but estimated between 3,000 and 6,000.<sup>1979</sup>

In the end, the year 1912 “marked the end of black mobilization in the island”.<sup>1980</sup> Marxist author Ramón de Armas argued that the PIC had been the only “non-proletarian” movement that aspired at deep social transformations.<sup>1981</sup> The war showed that in any specific moment, a dangerous line separating races could be easily established.<sup>1982</sup> Not only that, but the events created a sort of fear amongst some whites that Cuba could become a second Haiti, then under direct US control.<sup>1983</sup> Moreover, white supremacist took the opportunity to apply some discriminatory measures in order to prevent Afro-Cubans to rebel again, which led to the creation of a Cuban chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in 1928—although it would be dissolved by the Machado administration.<sup>1984</sup> The change in the visibility of segregation after 1912 could be mostly appreciated in public spaces, such as the aforementioned Parque Vidal in Santa Clara. It is relevant to note, however, that segregation was unofficially being implemented heretofore. Historian Frank Guridy refers to another park in downtown Camagüey, a city in central Cuba, in which “black” and “white” areas had existed since

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<sup>1978</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 34.

<sup>1979</sup> Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 146; Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 488. Fernández Robaina refers to these deaths as genocide, in Fernández Robaina, *Cuba, personalidades en el debate racial*, 85. See also Silvio Castro Fernández, *La masacre de los Independientes de Color en 1912* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2002).

<sup>1980</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 55. Fernández Robaina argues that at the end of the 1920s and particularly in the 1930s the Communist Party would be the protagonist in the fight against racial discrimination by including the race issue in their program as a main feature of class conflict, in Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*, 94.

<sup>1981</sup> Armas, “Esquema para un análisis de los partidos políticos burgueses en Cuba”, 77.

<sup>1982</sup> Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 254.

<sup>1983</sup> Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 238. A few decades later, historian Dexter Perkins assured: “It is highly unlikely, however, that any such event [a revolt led by Afro-Cubans] will ever occur again”, in Perkins, *The United States and the Caribbean*, 7.

<sup>1984</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 93. When Machado was overthrown, the Klan was refounded as the KKKK (Ku Klux Klan Kubano) on September 1933. The *Diario de la Marina* published its manifesto the next month in which the organization condemned Cuban *mestizaje*, and, taking the United States as an example, proposed segregation. The KKKK also believed the 1933 revolution had been a “black assault”, in John A. Gronbeck-Tedesco, *Cuba, the United States, and the Culture of the Transnational Left, 1933-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 123; De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 204; Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*, 134-135. However, the Klan would not be successful in the island due to the strong criticism carried out by progressive forces, in Fernández Robaina, *Cuba, personalidades en el debate racial*, 28, n. 25.

the inception of the Cuban republic, although no signs were necessary, for it had become a “custom”.<sup>1985</sup>

As a response to this process and to the raceless *Cubanidad*, and similarly to the creation of PIC a few years earlier, the national counter-discourse movement called *afrocubanismo* was developed in the 1920s: “These discourses reproduced the notion that race was central to the representation of the nation”.<sup>1986</sup> It seems as though this political movement was reformulating Martí’s idea of Cubanness by emphasizing the mulatto Cuban race and *mestizaje* as the main feature of the nation.<sup>1987</sup> This plainly contradicted the island’s theoretical and traditional nationalism based on superseding racial characteristics. Some black organizations were also created in order to spur a commonality between Afro-Cubans in a somewhat hostile environment. As historian Melina Pappademos puts it: “Afro-Cubans transformed the meaning of racial segregation by creating organizations that served as important centers of social interaction and collective empowerment”.<sup>1988</sup>

## b) Machado and race

In his platform of regeneration of society, Machado “provided a fleeting hope”<sup>1989</sup> to Afro-Cubans after the uprising of 1912 and the processes occurred before he arrived to power. The president initially embraced the traditional idea of *Cubanidad*, although his thoughts on the matter and on race were bewildering. The president argued he had fought for Cuban sovereignty all his life. A follower stated that his *Cubanidad* was more than demonstrated by his actions: “Pensad en Machado, pensad siempre en ese hombre grande, en ese patriota intachable que ama a Cuba por sobre todas las cosas, y que, en justa recompensa a sus servicios incomensurables, solo os pide vuestro eterno cariño de hermano!”<sup>1990</sup>

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<sup>1985</sup> Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, 96–97.

<sup>1986</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 11.

<sup>1987</sup> For more on Saco and Martí, see also Josef Opatrný, “La Cubanidad y la nación cubana: José Antonio Saco y José Martí”, *Tebeto: Anuario Del Archivo Histórico Insular de Fuerteventura*, nº 5 (2004): 94–107.

<sup>1988</sup> Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 73.

<sup>1989</sup> Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 175.

<sup>1990</sup> Varona, *Machado: su vida y su obra*, 168-169.

Similarly to the aforementioned nineteenth-century Cuban nationalists, in his program Machado adopted racelessness as one of the beneficial characteristics of Cuban personality as a nation. Thus people believed he represented all Cuba together: the white and the black, the poor and the rich.<sup>1991</sup> But because the president was conscious of the difficulties Afro-Cubans experienced, he had to lure the black vote, for he “promised to support the economic, social, and political betterment of the ‘colored’ race, as well as blacks’ aspirations to ascend to government positions that had been previously closed to them”. Actually, after the events of 1912 and the spread of white supremacy, Machado believed “the republic’s credibility could not be restored without rebuilding the ideal of Cuban racial fraternity”.<sup>1992</sup> Machado’s inclusion of blacks was not politically innovative. In fact, as an author writes, the PIC had already been created as a response to “ese manejo y utilización oportunistas del negro dentro de los partidos convencionales [Liberal and Conservador]”.<sup>1993</sup> However, perhaps what was new in the president’s administration was the impact or positive reaction of a sector of Afro-Cubans to that inclusion, and the fact that the “*asno*”, a white, took interest on the matter.

Seeking popularity once he obtained power, the president appointed several Afro-Cubans to prominent political positions. Amongst them there was war veteran General Manuel J. Delgado, who worked in three relevant ministries—agriculture, interior, and communications—, and Benjamín Muñoz Ginarte, who became chief of agronomic engineers in the Ministry of Agriculture, and was once even sent to Washington, D.C., to attend a conference in representation of the Cuban government.<sup>1994</sup> Other black candidacies would be that of Manuel Capestany, who came to be Undersecretary of Justice and later elected representative in 1932.<sup>1995</sup> Moreover, in 1930 Machado declared the date of mulatto and war of independence hero Antonio Maceo’s death, December 7, a national holiday.<sup>1996</sup>

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<sup>1991</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 65.

<sup>1992</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 91.

<sup>1993</sup> Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*, 122.

<sup>1994</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 38, 91-92.

<sup>1995</sup> Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 156, 198.

<sup>1996</sup> Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 175. The so-called “Titán de bronce” (Bronze Titan) became a national martyr. In 1900 three Cuban anthropologists exhumed his body to investigate whether the greatness of this famous leader could be interpreted through the study of his skull.



**Fig. 39:** “En el círculo político: los senadores de La Habana”, *La Política Cómica*, November 1930, Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, reproduced in Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 93.

All this derived to the common belief that the “*asno con garras*” was the president paladin of blacks. Even Carleton Beals, who in 1933 wrote aggressively about the horrors committed under the Machado regime, admitted: “The Machado Liberal Party, whatever atrocious things may be said about the present despotism, undoubtedly more generously [than the Conservative Party] includes the mestizo and negro elements. Only the Liberal Party has ever given full-blooded negroes prominent positions”.<sup>1997</sup> On the other side of the political spectrum, the aforementioned KKKK would argue in 1933 that blacks had constituted a basic pillar of the *machadato*, most likely to negatively associate Afro-Cubans with the dictator.<sup>1998</sup>

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The experts concluded that it was “closer to the skulls of ‘modern Parisians’ than to those of ‘African blacks’”, thus concluding that “for a person of his race [...] Maceo had been a ‘truly superior man’”, in Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 168.

<sup>1997</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 62.

<sup>1998</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 204; Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 203.

On September 1928, 187 Afro-Cuban societies showed their gratefulness to the president in a ceremony held in his honor, which consisted of a luncheon and an opera performed by black artists.<sup>1999</sup>



**Fig. 40:** Machado attending the banquet held by Afro-Cuban societies in his honor, September 16, 1928, *Bohemia* 20, n° 38, reproduced in Melinda Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), p. 199.

It is relevant to note, however, that the blacks that constituted these societies belonged to the upper classes, for they were intellectuals, government employees, and members of the selective *Club Atenas*, founded in 1917 and arguably the most known Afro-Cuban club in the country. It was composed of professors, engineers, lawyers, architects, and other privileged professionals, and full-membership could only be applied to men. Many of its members would become relevant figures in politics, including the aforementioned Capestany and Muñoz Ginarte.<sup>2000</sup> The name of the Club reveals its elitist and Western character, as Pappademos points out: “The club’s identification with Greek history illustrates the occidentalist orientation of its membership”.<sup>2001</sup> Thus the rest of Afro-Cubans, that is, poor workers, were experiencing at the same time a

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<sup>1999</sup> Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 49, 198.

<sup>2000</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 169-170; Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 49, 198.

<sup>2001</sup> Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 75.

disenfranchisement produced by the economic depression.<sup>2002</sup> It is most likely that this sector was more inclined toward author Alejo Carpentier's depiction of rural blacks in his 1933 novel *¡Écue-Yamba-Ó!*<sup>2003</sup> In the text, which seems a book on anthropology rather than a novel, black people in the countryside protect Afro-Cuban culture as opposed to what they believed to be Machado's fondness of Wall Street.<sup>2004</sup>

The Cuban president's relationship with blacks was somewhat intricate. The politician—again, like Long—, included Afro-Cubans in his program and his plans to improve the island. For instance, induced by him, on June 1925 Congress approved a bill that granted a donation of \$50,000 and some public lands to the *Club Atenas*, where the society was to build its new headquarters.<sup>2005</sup> Researcher Carmen Montero writes: “Tal vez por esta y otras donaciones que Machado hizo a algunas de las asociaciones negras, se dice que el elemento de color lo apoyaba. Es innegable que constituían una fuerza política poderosa y es lógico que los políticos de turno quisieran atraerlos”.<sup>2006</sup> Moreover, some members of the Club were at that time and quite suspiciously also members of Congress, including representative and president of the society Aquilino Lombard, and representative Carmelo Urquiaga.<sup>2007</sup> Machado, allegedly, would have also met with the Club after its affiliates vindicated the need for more Afro-Cubans in powerful public positions; that is how the president would have appointed Manuel Delgado as part of his cabinet.<sup>2008</sup> In all, Machado had a good relationship with several

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<sup>2002</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 38, 92-95. Besides their economic status, there were lots, however, who supported the president unconditionally. González-Blanco recalled a conversation he heard of an Afro-Cuban talking about Machado: “*Ya no tamo [...] como ante. Ahora gobierna Machado, que lleva el timón parejo. Ya no valen influencias*”, in González-Blanco, *El presidente Machado o la autoridad rescatada*, 54.

<sup>2003</sup> Carpentier, *¡Écue-Yamba-Ó!*.

<sup>2004</sup> Park, “Academic Discourse at Havana”, 55.

<sup>2005</sup> The new building would become a symbol of Afro-Cuban elitism, in Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, 58. It would be inaugurated on May 1929, although the costs would exceed 25,000 pesos from the original plan because, according to the Club, new expenses had been necessary in order to maintain the level of luxury of the institution, in Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 197.

<sup>2006</sup> Carmen Victoria Montejo Arrechea, *Sociedades negras en Cuba: 1878-1960* (Havana: Ed. de ciencias sociales. Centro de investigación y desarrollo de la cultura cubana Juan Marinello, 2004), 179.

<sup>2007</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 163, 170. Urquiaga was a supporter and admirer of the president, as he expressed in one of the sessions of the House of Representatives: “[U]no de los más bellos gestos [...] del General Gerardo Machado ha sido el cooperativismo, creo que es aceite que se ha lanzado sobre las alas levantadas; creo que con ello se propende a la confraternidad entre cubanos de distintos campos, puesto que con odio nada se fundamenta”, *República de Cuba. Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Representantes. Decimotercero periodo presidencial. Quinta Legislatura*, vol. LII, n° 14, May 15, 1929, 10, Digital Library of the Caribbean, dloc.com.

<sup>2008</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república. Tomo I*, 79.

Afro-Cuban societies, the *Club Atenas* being the most relevant. Related to this, in his book, author José de la Campa González narrated how a black asked one of his characters: “¿E verda [...] que e clu Epaminonda nombró socio de honó ar generá Machao?—Sí—contestó el negro abombinado—y agregó—No ha hecho ma que su debe, ya el clu Atena nombró socio de honó ar generá hace dia”. To that statement, a white character who hears the conversation adds: “Son clubs de personas de color. Desde que entró Machado son muy estudiosos”.<sup>2009</sup> De la Campa was clearly parodying Afro-Cubans by attributing to them a forced and caricaturized Caribbean accent.

As can be perceived from the condescendence of the white character in de la Campa’s work, the Cuban president was not as accepting of blacks as could seem. During the *machadato*, public practices against Afro-Cubans took place, which may present a contradictory yet sensible image of the president. Although the “*asno*” was believed to be a worshipper of the African deity Changó, god of lightning, and it is argued that he even wore red because it was Changó’s color, the president “became at times extremely repressive of Afro-religion”. For instance, writer Mark Kurlansky told in the early nineties: “Cuban worshippers still recall police and military raids on their ceremonies”.<sup>2010</sup>

But the president would not only repress forms of religion that may have been interpreted as backward and savage,<sup>2011</sup> but also political organizations that promoted universal racial unity, mainly the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded by Jamaican Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) in 1914.<sup>2012</sup> This organization saw its prominence in the 1920s, Cuba being the country with the most branches outside the United States—a total of fifty-two. Afro-Cubans were using the association “to meet their own social, political, and cultural needs” through the ideas of transcultural African

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<sup>2009</sup> De la Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 310. Patronizing attitude aside, these Afro-Cuban clubs were not only focused on recreational activities but also promoted literacy through their libraries and *tertulias*. For instance, *Club Atenas* often organized “tardes literarias” where they discussed Greek classics, amongst other works of literature and philosophy, in Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, 118.

<sup>2010</sup> Kurlansky, *A Continent of Islands*, 86.

<sup>2011</sup> In one of his books on Afro-Cuban religious practices, Fernando Ortiz warned his readers that they would not find “descripciones literarias de escenas misteriosas y envueltas en el velo de lo tenebroso, que tan profundamente sugestionan su infantiles mentes”, in Ortiz, *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros brujos*, 13.

<sup>2012</sup> Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).

Diaspora or, as they put it, “the Negro peoples of the world”, and race pride—which, once more, conflicted with Cubanness. The UNIA in Cuba often held its meetings in the headquarters of Afro-Cuban societies, for, although they were different types of organizations, there was a sort of collaboration amongst them.<sup>2013</sup>

At the end of the 1920s, however, the UNIA began to be seen with contempt by the Machado administration. Because of the economic crisis emerging worldwide and the beginning of the decline of the president in terms of popularity, the government started to look closely to the UNIA’s activities in Cuba, especially in the urban center with the most Garveyite activities, Sagua la Grande, a port-city in the north of the island. The main concern of Machado was that the movement had some links to the former PIC—mainly two of his leaders, Abelardo Pacheco and Domingo Thorndike—, thus his administration claimed there was an incipient danger of a future uprising similar to that of 1912. Moreover, they were accusing the members of this organization as “racist” and “enemies of the white race”. In October 1929, the government, gripping the Morúa law, banned any branches of the UNIA movement in Cuba. Not only that, but Machado had Afro-Cuban Manuel Delgado to be the spokesperson of the decision, who argued that, since the Constitution stipulated equality among races, there was no need for such organizations.<sup>2014</sup> Historian Frank Guridy, however, has explained it better than the secretary of interior and takes into account the historical context:

The Cuban government’s decision to act against the UNIA in Sagua la Grande and other towns on the island was rooted in its attempt to neutralize all sources of discontent in a politically charged period. In the polarized atmosphere of the late 1920s, the Machado government perceived the UNIA as a threat to the president’s carefully constructed image as a friend to Afro-Cubans.<sup>2015</sup>

Aside from that decision, in a few years the UNIA acquired large support in Cuba, to the point that during the 1933 turmoil it represented a challenge and a political competition to the Communist Party of the island.<sup>2016</sup>

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<sup>2013</sup> Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, 62-65, 88.

<sup>2014</sup> Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, 101-105.

<sup>2015</sup> Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, 105.

<sup>2016</sup> Robert Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba: Mass Mobilization and Political Change, 1920-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 98.

The somewhat ambiguity of Machado towards blacks is also exemplified in relation to the issue of public spaces and segregation. On one occasion, during the Second Central American Sport Games held in the Havana Yacht Club in 1930, some black athletes from Panama and Afro-Cuban spectators were not allowed to enter the premises, even though the event was publicized as “public”. Machado attended the event and yet that situation was not fixed until the Secretary of Public Works complained later that the Club should not have hosted a public tournament.<sup>2017</sup> It is a similar situation, explained in previous pages, when two black ministers in New Orleans that were trying to attend a Share Our Wealth meeting were asked to leave the building.

As for immigration, the Cuban president, following the tradition and embracing the conception established in the first years of the republic, publicly and clearly declared Cuba would benefit the most if migrants came from Spain because of that country’s racial and cultural affinities with the island. There was a belief that in order to make a country work, a sort of cultural closeness between groups that coexisted was needed.<sup>2018</sup> The president expressed so in a speech:

La mayoría de la inmigración que está viniendo a Cuba más nos daña que beneficia. Yo quiero para nuestra patria [...] una inmigración permanente, sana de alma y de cuerpo, asimilable por afinidades raciales, laboriosa, honrada, capaz de crear familia en Cuba y darle hijos eminentes al país; la inmigración mejor, la que nos indican todos los antecedentes como la más efectiva y la más conveniente: la inmigración española, de preferencia.<sup>2019</sup>

It must be noted that this aspect was already part of his campaign in 1924. Jesús María Barraqué listed the program the following year in which he included the immigration

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<sup>2017</sup> Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 158. Guridy, in fact, emphasized the bad reputation of the Club in regards to Afro-Cubans: “Cubans of African descent were routinely excluded from the clubs of white Cuban elite, such as the infamous Havana Yacht Club”, in Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, 11.

<sup>2018</sup> In that sense, Lamar Schweyer argued that: “[L]os núcleos inmigrantes de un tronco común son para nosotros más fácilmente asimilables—los franceses, italianos y españoles—que los de origen étnico-histórico distinto, como los alemanes, los rusos y los ingleses”, in Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 76. Similarly, a contemporary author wrote: “Jamás pudo establecerse entre cubanos y chinos, por ejemplo, aun en la época en que estaban ligados a sus amos blancos por contratos sinalagmáticos y recíprocos servicios, un verdadero lazo social”, in González-Blanco, *El presidente Machado o la autoridad rescatada*, 67. This same author emphasized the linkage between Cuba and Spain: “El pueblo de Cuba, ha dicho [Machado] en algunos discursos, llegó a la mayoría de edad y deseó romper los lazos políticos que lo unían con España, aun cuando este hecho no le impida mantener un sentimiento de buena voluntad hacia la madre patria de la cual recibiera la civilización”, in 78.

<sup>2019</sup> Machado y Morales, “De la iniciativa privada depende el progreso de los pueblos”, 40.

policies preferred by the then president-elect. Barraqué quoted Machado of having said about black workers:

No tienen el mismo grado de laboriosidad que los nuestros. Estos elementos no ligan con nuestras clases rurales; no tienen la idea de la estabilidad, de orden y de forma de trabajo. Es preciso traer inmigraciones europeas con familias, y esto puede alcanzarse si abandonando toda pretensión exagerada de llamar a las razas nórdicas a que pueblen nuestra tierra tropical, invitamos a los españoles, a los italianos, a los eslavos del Sur.<sup>2020</sup>

In a more ambiguous manner, Machado expressed a similar idea in a speech he gave during a luncheon given in his honor by the *Club Rotario* in Santiago de Cuba a few months after he was inaugurated president. As could be expected, this club was composed of the wealthiest white businessmen on the island, although the goal of the organization was—and is—to provide humanitarian services around the globe. The definition of “rotary”, according to the proceedings of a meeting the organization held in 1916, was “An ever-widening circle of influence for good”.<sup>2021</sup> The first *Rotary Club* was founded in 1905 in Evanston, Illinois, but expanded throughout the globe ever since. In Havana, the organization established its first club in 1916, becoming the earliest country outside of the English-speaking world to be part of the organization.<sup>2022</sup> Machado, who was an honoree member, said in the aforementioned banquet: “La actual inmigración es indeseable y yo espero que dentro de poco cesará esa corriente para que sean cubanos los que trabajen en la tierra cubana, o bien elementos que arraiguen en el país. En fin, trabajadores con familia”.<sup>2023</sup>

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<sup>2020</sup> Barraqué, “El Presidente Electo Gral. Gerardo Machado”, 281.

<sup>2021</sup> *Proceedings: Seventh Annual Convention of the International Association of Rotary Clubs* (Chicago: Rotary International, 1916), 28.

<sup>2022</sup> Graham Sowa, “Havana Rotary Club’s 100th Anniversary”, *Havana Times.org*, January 8, 2016, [havanatimes.org/?p=115954](http://havanatimes.org/?p=115954). Historian Charles Chapman defined the club in the mid-twenties as “possibly the most respected organization in Cuba”, in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 523. The need for expanding the organization from the Anglo-world to Latin America was expressed in the following terms in 1916: “The work of introducing Rotary in Latin America is most important, in that the Latins, as a rule, have not imbibed the ‘get-to-gether’ spirit, and the Rotary idealism, while there, has never been appealed to or brought out to any extent”, in *Proceedings: Seventh Annual Convention of the International Association of Rotary Clubs*, 89.

<sup>2023</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “En Santiago de Cuba, almuerzo ofrecido por el Club Rotario al General Gerardo Machado”, reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 164.

Thus the Cuban president was implicitly discouraging immigrants from Haiti, Jamaica, and the Antilles in general.<sup>2024</sup> Machado is quoted of having also affirmed that “Cuba’s negro population was already quite as large as was desirable”, a perception also shared by the cultural and economic elites.<sup>2025</sup> De la Fuente argues that, although immigration was motivated by planters aimed at reducing the costs of production with cheap labor, it “operated under the racist assumption that only white laborers, particularly Spaniards, were congenial with Cuban civilization”.<sup>2026</sup> This perception was, however, not new to the Caribbean island. In a 1912 book review of an American book on Cuba published the year prior, an author stated: “The Cubans themselves seem physically incapable of the heaviest work, and the Negroes cannot be counted on, so that many employers have been importing Spanish workers”.<sup>2027</sup>

In all, Machado’s understanding of the nation changed from the inclusive and somewhat idealistic concept of Cubanness to a Cuba preferably configured by a white majority population. His extremist follower Alberto Lamar Schweyer further developed these ideas on race in his essay *Biología de la democracia* (1927), in which the author criticized Mexican José Vasconcelos’ inclusive notion of “*raza cósmica*” (the cosmic race),<sup>2028</sup> and argued *mestizaje* made society in the Americas imperfect:

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<sup>2024</sup> Historian Jorge Ibarra argued that, contrary to common belief, these immigrants strongly participated in the fight for their labor rights. For instance, Antillean immigrants were represented in labor congresses by Jamaican union leader Enrique Shakleton, in Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 156-157. Lamar Schweyer wrote that by 1919 there were 339,082 foreigners living in Cuba, of which the majority (245,644) were Spaniards, 22,620 were Haitians, and 18,539 were Jamaicans, thus the number of people from Spain was three times higher than the other groups combined, in Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 152. Charles Chapman specified that most Spaniards came from Galicia and Asturias, and that in 1923 the official records had 46,439 people from Spain registered, in Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic*, 584. Ibarra wrote that by 1931, 120,309 Antilleans were living in a permanent situation in Cuba, of which 78,838 were Haitian and 40,471 Jamaican. Also, taking the data from the Foreign Policy Association, Ibarra added that between 1903 and 1933 723,381 Spaniards arrived on the island, in Ibarra, *Cuba, 1898-1921*, 163.

<sup>2025</sup> As quoted in De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 52.

<sup>2026</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 46. For more on the Spanish demographical imprint in Cuban society after its independence, see: Blanco Rodríguez and García Álvarez, *El legado de España en Cuba*. These authors wrote that 257,596 Spanish residents lived in Cuba in 1931, the total population being four million. Their presence—the highest in the six decades following independence—put pressure in the saturated job market in a context of economic crisis, in 39-41.

<sup>2027</sup> Review of *Cuba and Her People of Today*, by Forbes Lindsay, *Journal of Political Economy* 20, n° 4 (1912): 434.

<sup>2028</sup> José Vasconcelos, *La Raza cósmica: misión de la raza iberoamericana* (Barcelona: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1925). In it, the author affirmed: “Los llamados latinos, tal vez porque desde un principio no son propiamente tales latinos, sino un conglomerado de tipos y razas, persisten en no tomar muy en cuenta el factor étnico para sus relaciones sexuales [...] Se ha producido y se sigue consumando la mezcla

El resultante social del mestizaje no es el que pretende descubrir la tesis idealista, un poco mística, de José Vasconcelos. Experimentalmente es realizable la comprobación de que las razas impuras tienden más que a la perfección espiritual a la imperfección. La *raza cósmica* como posibilidad trascendente de solución a los problemas políticos y morales de la civilización americana, es una teoría anti-biológica frente a los postulados de la *filogenia social*.<sup>2029</sup>

Moreover, the author added, “solo en aquellos estados en los que el europeo ha predominado socialmente, se ha obtenido una posibilidad de gobierno democrático, amparada por el predominio del blanco”.<sup>2030</sup> Thus this view was practically opposed to that of Fernando Ortiz, who came to be an emblem of *Cubanidad* on the island.<sup>2031</sup> At the end, the concept shifted once more after the fall of Machado.<sup>2032</sup>

Although the president never went so far as to express these ideas in public speeches, the fact that Lamar Schweyer was a supporter and defender of the president is relevant. It is comparable to the controversial acquaintance between the Kingfish and fervent racist reverend Gerald L.K. Smith. How much influence either Lamar Schweyer or G.L.K. Smith had on their respective leaders is difficult to assess. However, both Machado and Long were clearly comfortable with the company and support of such men, thus implying a certain acceptance of their convictions.

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de sangres. Y es en esta fusión de estirpes donde debemos buscar el rasgo fundamental de la idiosincrasia iberoamericana”, in 16-17.

<sup>2029</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Biología de la democracia*, 98.

<sup>2030</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Biología de la democracia*, 100. On *mestizaje*, the writer believed: “El espíritu sin carácter, formado por los múltiples cruzamientos étnicos ha producido un dilatado caos político, necesario para generar la nueva cultura que sólo llegará a su plenitud con la equivalencia de una raza definida”, 123.

<sup>2031</sup> Scholar Stephen Park gives a revisionist and fascinating analysis on Ortiz. He argues that Ortiz illustrates the best example of how the study of Afro-Cuban culture and religion was meant to, one one hand, salvage their heritage while, on the other, control and contain this population through social sciences, specifically eugenics and criminology. Although later he would be known, as stated in this thesis, by coining the term “transculturation”, in the 1920s he specialized on the study of criminology and the Afro-Cuban underworld, in Park, “Academic Discourse at Havana”, 56-57.

<sup>2032</sup> After the fall of Machado, the idea of *Cubanidad* shifted again and in the late 1930 it embraced *mestizaje* as its main trait, just as the *afrocubanistas* movement had proposed the previous decade. As opposed to the “original” Cubanness developed at the end of the nineteenth century, which set aside racial issues, *Cubanidad* now meant the celebration of “a racial and cultural synthesis [...] as the very essence of what was typically Cuban”, which was embraced by poet Nicolás Guillén’s idea of “poetry of mestizaje”, in which he mixed white and black artistic traditions and used Afro-Cuban language, in De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 183. Guillén defended the idea that the union between whites and blacks was necessary for the sake of the nation and that could be achieved by eliminating racial discrimination, in Fernández Robaina, *Cuba, personalidades en el debate racial*, 8. For more on the poet, see Ángel Augier, *Nicolás Guillén* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1971); Carl Dennis Sardinha, *The Poetry of Nicolás Guillén: An Introduction* (London: New Beacon Books, 1976).

After the exile of the Cuban president in 1933, another one of his advocates wrote about the disgraceful disappreciation the people of Cuba were showing towards Machado after all his administration had achieved. The author added a final comparison to this behavior and what he called “black mentality”: “Lo que sucede con Machado es que es un verdadero carácter, y eso nosotros no sabemos apreciarlo, porque entre nosotros abunda mucho la jarana, el destruir y el criticar y darle a la lengua, y el no saber apreciar nada. Tenemos mentalidad de negros”.<sup>2033</sup> Because of this perceptions and regardless of Machado’s supposed openness towards Afro-Cubans, it might not be a coincidence that “Cuban Miami [is] overwhelmingly white”,<sup>2034</sup> for those who went into exile in that city after the 1933 revolution belonged to the white ruling classes that supported Machado—and, later on in the twentieth century, opposed Fidel.

With regards to the evolution of the race issue and the consequent rise of strongmen that seemed to be supporters of equality, Louisiana and Cuba are comparable. When slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865, in Cuba, “*mambises*” were just beginning to preface the rebellion that would emphasize the need to eliminate slavery on the Antillean island. Thus, a hope for equal rights for whites and blacks spread throughout the 1860s and 1880s on the Caribbean island, and briefly between 1865 and 1875 in the US—when Jim Crow laws were begun to be established. The wars of independence in Cuba and the Reconstruction Era in the United States seemed to be promising new societies that would put an end to racial hierarchy. However, reality stroke and was particularly harsh in the northern country. Although the Caribbean island was theoretically more accepting of Afro-Cubans,<sup>2035</sup> the first decades of the twentieth century—particularly after the war of 1912—showed that the situation of blacks was a complicated and unsolved one. These were the societies both Machado and Long found themselves in when they rose to power.

The Cuban president, as did the Kingfish, included blacks in his political program. None of them were defending a segregate society and discursively they could be defined as

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<sup>2033</sup> De la Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 273.

<sup>2034</sup> De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 19.

<sup>2035</sup> Fernández Robaina refers to the PIC as a “Partido que muestra el nivel al cual llegó el movimiento social del negro en Cuba, único en la historia de los movimientos sociales del negro en América”, in Fernández Robaina, *Identidad afrocubana*, 124.

rather progressive, particularly considering how their respective societies treated black people. Be that as it may, in practice neither of the two politicians changed the manner in which Cuba and Louisiana looked at or considered this collective, that is, no significant improvements in that matter were developed nor did racism decrease. However, both politicians used to some extent the racial issue to improve their popular support among the impoverished masses thus gaining the false reputation of being protectors of blacks' interests and rights; a reputation they themselves believed. According to historian Melinda Pappademos, Machado was "so confident in his relations with black civic and political leaders, including with the black masses generally, that he boasted as late as 1931 that there could be no real threat of revolution because many key segments were 'with' him".<sup>2036</sup> Yet this supposed popularity would not last long.<sup>2037</sup>

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<sup>2036</sup> Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic*, 198.

<sup>2037</sup> A Marxist author called it "efimera y transitoria", in Tabares del Real, *La Revolución del 30*, 76.

## CHAPTER SIX: “DICTATORSHIP” IN THE GREATER CARIBBEAN

[Huey Long] could call out the state troops for any and every purpose that might suit the most insane whim—or for no purpose at all. He could have a man beaten because he didn’t like the color of his eyes. In short, he was the law, the state, the power and the glory of dictatorship supreme.<sup>2038</sup>

Craddock Goins

¡¡Sangre!! ¡Sangre y dolor! Ríos de líquido púrpura. Tabletear de ametralladoras. Estampido de bombas. Escopetas recortadas. Cadáveres. Conciliábulos tenebrosos. Hambre. Mentiras. Cadenas. Presidios. Esta fue la obra de los últimos cuatro años de gobierno de Machado.<sup>2039</sup>

Enrique Lumen

The rise of strongmen in the Greater Caribbean came as a consequence of the severe economic depression that had started at the end of the 1920s—as explained in chapter three, in Cuba the sugar crisis had begun in the middle of the decade. Both Huey Long and Gerardo Machado experienced a similar political evolution, for they maximized their power in the last few years of their respective administrations. Thus both regimes would commonly be referred to as “dictatorships”; in Louisiana especially after 1933, once Long left for Washington to fulfill his duties as senator, and in Cuba after the beginning of the second administration of the “*asno con garras*” in 1929. That led to their opponents to erroneously refer to them as “fascists”, a brand of Caribbean or American Mussolinis.<sup>2040</sup> It must be taken into account that at the time, Hitler had

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<sup>2038</sup> Goins, “The Drunken Tyranny of Huey P. Long”, 11, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 14, LaRC. Article also available at Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 2, folder 14a, LSMHC.

<sup>2039</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana, 1902-1934*, 41.

<sup>2040</sup> Spanish writer Hernández Catá claimed in 1933 that Machado could not even be compared with Mussolini or Hitler because of his unparalleled ruthlessness. When wondering how to define the Cuban president, the author pondered: “¿Un dictador? ¿Un tirano? Menos: un asesino nada más. Aun políticamente no puede ponerse a un Mussolini, hombre según nosotros equivocado, mas de entendimiento superior, de cultura profunda; no puede ponerse siquiera a un Hitler, en parangón con Machado: sería calumniarles”, in Hernández Catá, *Un cementerio en las Antillas*, 70.

barely gotten power after the German elections of 1933, and Mussolini was busy with the “pacification” of Cyrenaica (Libya).<sup>2041</sup>

In the literature about Gerardo Machado one commonly sees the epithet “dictator” used next to the president’s name. It seems there is no question about the matter, and that, in spite of his closest followers and colleagues, the public in general and historiography in particular have taken this appellation for granted. The case of Huey Long is rather more intricate by comparison because, contrary to what has happened in Cuba, there has not been a strong rejection of the politician from the state government of Louisiana. In the five decades after Huey’s death, the name Long in the Pelican State still meant politics. Furthermore, there are still some historians and specialists who either do not regard the Kingfish as particularly dangerous, or who just treat him with indulgence condescendence due to his peculiar and charming personality.

All in all, Machado has been historiographically “recognized” as a dictator because of the revolution of 1933, the need of Batista and Grau to justify their democratic credentials, and, finally, the arrival of Fidel to power, which damned all “pseudo-republics” and its origins, except for Martí, Maceo, and Céspedes. Thus the question for most authors lies not in what Machado was but in *when* he finally did become a dictator: already in 1925, or after the reelection. Long, on the other hand, is still beloved in multiple circles and towns in Louisiana, and some historians, followers of the T. Harry Williams school, venerate, justify or play down his actions as ruler.

This chapter challenges these historiographical differences and argues that both the Machado and the Long administrations came to pass from nebulous democracies to states controlled by the leader in every way; that is, what one could call a process of “dictatorization”—as opposed to “democratization”—of both regimes. First, however, there is a section dedicated to the analysis of corporatism, authoritarian regimes, and “constitutional dictatorships” as a theoretical framework for the study of the *machadato*

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<sup>2041</sup> This concept refers to the 1923-1932 war between Italian Libya and local forces against the occupation. It resulted in 225,000 dead, after Italy implemented war crimes, such as mass executions of civilians. See also Anthony L. Cardoza, *Benito Mussolini: The First Fascist* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2006); Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

and the Long era in its essence. Huey Long's political evolution is the subject of the second section. Before entering into analyzing the strengthening of his power through two pivotal moments, a brief analysis of his involvement in the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay will be key to introducing his sudden interest of international, or more specifically, Latin American politics. Afterwards, the 1934 military invasion of New Orleans and the 1935 Square Dealers rebellion will be the focus to understand the senator's later year's derangement, as well as the deterioration of his relationship with Roosevelt and the federal government. Finally, the focus shifts to the even more convoluted 1930-1932 period of Machado's presidency, characterized by the growth of dissent and increase of repression. These actions would axiomatically prompt the downfall of both leaders.

## 6.1 “Authoritarian corporatism” and “constitutional dictatorships” in the Greater Caribbean

Analyzing nineteenth century military leaders in Mexico, historian Enrique Krauze argues that historically there has existed a tendency in Latin American countries to one-man rule leadership.<sup>2042</sup> Previously, Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy argued on several of his writings that there had been so many dictators throughout the history of Latin America that the histories of these countries were mainly biographies of these men.<sup>2043</sup> For instance, Rippy assessed that dictators in Spanish America had “been so numerous, their sway [...] so constant, that the national history of most of the countries of the area [was] to a large extent the biography of these imperious personalities”.<sup>2044</sup> This approach was a step forward of Thomas Carlyle's idea that the history of the world meant the biography of great men—also known as the Great Man Theory.<sup>2045</sup> An example of this is offered by Latin Americanist journalist Robert Crassweller who, when writing about Dominican dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, concluded that the adulation of a leader increased throughout his years as ruler, which was “not unusual in

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<sup>2042</sup> Enrique Krauze, *Siglo de caudillos: biografía política de México (1810-1910)* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1994), 17–18.

<sup>2043</sup> J. Fred Rippy, “Monarchy or Republic?”, in *South American Dictators*, ed. Curtis Wilgus, 16.

<sup>2044</sup> Rippy, “Dictatorships in Latin America”, 178.

<sup>2045</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (New York: A.L. Burt, 1840).

the individualistic and personal tradition of Spanish nations”.<sup>2046</sup> These are oversimplified statements informed by ideas of geographic determinism.<sup>2047</sup> For this reason, these ideas are questionable, since one risks a reification of historical categories in Latin American history. Even so, it must be acknowledged that, from a very superficial viewpoint, some aspects of Machado’s trajectory in Cuba do seem to fit within this paradigm. However, a more in-depth analysis reveals how here too the Carlylean thesis is a straw man argument. Portuguese writer known under the pseudonym Hilda de Toledano (1907-1995)<sup>2048</sup> transformed this notion into a problematic political determinism of “Caribbeanness”, according to which, because of the humid climate of the region, the Cuban president developed irrational passion and erotism that derived into, what she called, his acts of tyranny.<sup>2049</sup> Toledano wrote in 1933:

Si Machado alimentó durante siete años el terror en la isla, la depravación íntima y general, la absorción de estupefacientes, la exportación de todo lo que tenía una tendencia erótica y pecaminosa, la parcialidad absoluta, la injusticia, la ilegalidad y la muerte; si Machado fue un depravado y un criminal, tuvo, para aliviar su condena, un cómplice intachable: el sol. Sí; el sol tropical, que calienta la tierra a cuarenta grados, abruma el espíritu, enardece la sangre y hace sombrar la razón, enfortaleciendo los vicios.<sup>2050</sup>

Huey Long, on the other hand, serves as an example of how these theories can transcend traditional political and cultural boundaries. The senator too epitomized the one-man rule or what sociologist and political scientist John Linz called leaders of “authoritarian regimes”.<sup>2051</sup> Linz further argued that, in the case of Latin America, these types of regimes have some times been expressed in the form of oligarchic democracies, which “have resisted pressures toward further democratization through the persistence of [...]

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<sup>2046</sup> Crassweller, *Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator*, 104.

<sup>2047</sup> Initiated by Friedrich Ratzel, *Politische Geographie* (Munich and Leipzig: R. Oldenbourg, 1897).

<sup>2048</sup> Her real name was María Pía de Sajonia-Coburgo Braganza, who married a Cuban from Camagüey in 1925. Throughout her life, she reclaimed several titles and his position in the Portuguese crown, for she was an illegitimate daughter of king Carlos I of Portugal. See also Isabel Lencastre, *Bastardos reais: os filhos ilegítimos dos reis de Portugal* (Alfragide: Oficina do Livro, 2012).

<sup>2049</sup> The simplicity of this argument hardly elicits any discussion worth having, as already in the late 1940s historian Dexter Pexter challenged that notion by arguing: “There are some very warm regions where a vigorous development is taking place, just as there are some cold ones where progress is slow”, in Perkins, *The United States and the Caribbean*, 5.

<sup>2050</sup> Hilda de Toledano, “Las diversiones amorosas de Machado: La vida galante del dictador cubano”, *El Heraldo de Madrid*, November 2, 1933.

<sup>2051</sup> Juan J. Linz (1975), *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 159–65.

control or manipulation of elections by *caciques*, frequent recourse to the moderating power of the army, [and] undifferentiated parties”, thus they “find themselves on the borderline between modern authoritarian regimes and democracy. They are closer to democracy in their constitutional and ideological conception but sociologically more similar to some authoritarian regimes”.<sup>2052</sup> This, I argue, was the situation in both the case of Cuba and of Louisiana, where the president and the senator, respectively, used semi-legal tools available to them, as well as military or paramilitary formations of police or militia units, to transform their governments into profoundly controlling political machines.

According to political scientists, authoritarian regimes are also characterized by limited political pluralism or monism, as opposed to unlimited pluralism of democracies or nonexistent pluralism in totalitarianism. In that sense, there is a sort of ambiguity in regards to the existence of opposition, for while it is not illegal, it is subjected to “semifreedom” that does not allow it to develop and express in normality.<sup>2053</sup> This point applies better to the Kingfish’s administration, which never officially banned political opposition; Machado, on the other hand, progressively cracked down on opposition, evolving from the reelection pantomime and the *cooperativista* experiment, to the *ley de emergencia electoral*, which directly forbade the creation of new political parties.

Linz also posed an interesting debate of whether authoritarian regimes highlight “ideology” or “mentality”. Although the distinction between the two concepts is complex, there are some characteristics that separately define each one. The first term, more rational, would refer to a system of thought that is intellectually developed, while the second, more emotional, applies to a manner of feeling and thinking which comes to embrace vagueness as a main trait. Thus Linz concluded that, while totalitarian regimes are predisposed to put emphasis on ideology, authoritarian regimes are more inclined toward using “mentalities”. Because of their general lack of ideology, “the reference to generic values like patriotism and nationalism, economic development, social justice, and order” becomes central. This leads to alienation from some sectors of society,

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<sup>2052</sup> Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, 160-161.

<sup>2053</sup> Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, 170.

especially intellectuals and students—,<sup>2054</sup> not coincidentally, the two main opposing sectors against the *machadato*. As pinpointed in previous pages, the lack of a specific program and political vagueness were major characteristics of the two regimes studied in this thesis. For instance, when a journalist asked Huey Long about his political inclination, whether he was liberal or conservative, fascist or communist, the senator from Louisiana simply responded: “Say that I’m *sui generis* and let it go like that”,<sup>2055</sup> which has become one of the most quoted phrases historiography has resorted to when studying the politician.



**Fig. 41:** “The only thing missing”, The Item-Tribune, October 7, 1934, p. 7, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 13, LaRC.

Some authors have coined the term “authoritarian corporatism” to refer to regimes that are somehow located between fascism and liberalism. Corporatism is a complex and motley concept, and it is not the intention of this thesis to discern a consensual definition. However, it has come to be a sort of reified term to be applied mostly to Latin American countries or governments, particularly in the works written in the

<sup>2054</sup> Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, 162-165.

<sup>2055</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 21-22.

1970s. Corporatism was opposed, according to some authors,<sup>2056</sup> to European-inspired liberal regimes that had experienced the “process of modernization” through liberal revolutions and Protestantism.<sup>2057</sup> In order to challenge these conceptions, one could refer to Long’s Louisiana as an authoritarian corporatist state, for, as political scientist Wyn Grant has stated: “Corporatism as a phenomenon [...] can flourish in particular sectors or locations even when it is absent in a country at the national level”.<sup>2058</sup>

Corporatism, which derived into many forms, was developed “to recognize the organic nature of society in the political and economic arrangements of industrial society”. With the risk of oversimplifying, the main goal of corporatist states was to reflect upon the manner in which strong liberalism was affecting its functions. As a solution, they resorted to strengthening moral values, such as social justice or the need for national regeneration, but maintaining private property and capitalism in general through the implementation of an organic system. Corporatist states would organize in corporations that worked as mediators between the state and the citizens, as a type of industrialized medieval guild that united society and foment solidarity and collaboration within its members.<sup>2059</sup> Political scientist Peter J. Williamson identifies six traits that most twentieth century corporatist states had and that could be applied to Long and Machado’s regimes. The first of these characteristics is “a limited and insecure establishment of liberal democracy, with states that were significantly authoritarian in character”. In the early twentieth century, both Cuba and Louisiana featured under-representative governments wherein the poor rarely voted, thus being what political scientists O’Donnell and Schmitter called “uncertain democracies”.<sup>2060</sup> Long and Machado supposedly opened up the participation by giving a voice to the downtrodden. Political scientists O’Donnell and Schmitter explained it in the following terms: “Authoritarian rulers may tolerate or even promote liberalization in belief that by opening up certain spaces for individual and group action, they can relieve various

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<sup>2056</sup> For instance, see Howard J. Wiarda, “Corporatism in Iberian and Latin American Political Analysis: Criticisms, Qualifications, and the Context and ‘Whys’”, *Comparative Politics* 10, n° 2 (1978): 307–312; Howard J. Wiarda, “Corporatist Theory and Ideology: A Latin American Development Paradigm”, *Journal of Church and State* 20, n° 1 (1978): 29–56.

<sup>2057</sup> Peter J. Williamson, *Corporatism in Perspective: An Introductory Guide to Corporatist Theory* (London; Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989), 23.

<sup>2058</sup> Wyn Grant, *The Political Economy of Corporatism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), 4.

<sup>2059</sup> Williamson, *Corporatism in Perspective*, 25–30.

<sup>2060</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule*.

pressures and obtained the needed information and support *without* altering the structure of authority”. This form has been given the name “tutelary democracy” or “liberalized authoritarianism”.<sup>2061</sup>

The second point feature of a corporatist regime, according to Williamson, is: “A political system characterized by a dominant ruling elite”. Once again in both cases there existed very visible “aristocracies” that had dominated the political scene. For instance, in New Orleans the aristocratic Old Regulars had been the main and only decision-makers of the city. In Havana, as seen in chapter five, white ruling classes had prevented the consolidation of a race-based political party (the aforementioned PIC) under the shadow of “Cubanness”.

The third of Williamson’s traits is that “economies were not highly industrialized with industry playing only a minority part in national output and with agriculture [...] being predominant”. Cuba and Louisiana were regions in which agriculture was the motor of economy. On the Caribbean island, a monoculture country, sugar was the main commodity, and thus throughout the 1920s the country suffered a severe series of economic crisis when the prices of this product dropped. Although with an expanding oil industry, in that decade the Pelican State’s economy greatly depended on cotton and sugar, thus also being deeply affected by the global crisis.

To Williamson, the fourth point that characterized corporatist states was that “the industrial sector displayed marked tendencies of structural dualism, with fragmentation at one extreme and at the other high concentration”. In the growing economies of both Louisiana and Cuba, there existed two types of businesses: either small shops, or big (sugar or oil) corporations. Particularly in times of economic hardships it is precisely these types of small companies who are hit the hardest. The bleak state of the economy during the time of both strongmen catalized the emergence of an alarmed populace who had lost their means of sustenance and looked for political patrons who advocated for their cause.

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<sup>2061</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule*, 9.

In connection with the previous issue, Williamson also observes that in corporatist states: “Large capitalists, despite their predominant position in the national economy, were ‘immature’, being dependent upon state support”, and adds that they were related to: “the emergence of a modern large-scale industrial capitalist economy”—his fifth and sixth features, respectively. Both last points refer to the increasing effort to industrialize both territories. In Cuba, Machado strove for diversification of the economy by strengthening the yield of other products different from sugar—albeit unsuccessfully. In Louisiana, Long centered his interest on increasing oil production, including that of his own oil company, the Win or Lose Oil Company, thus giving priority to the economic “development”.<sup>2062</sup> As stated in chapter four, it is most likely that the industrialization endeavors carried out by both Caribbean strongmen were aimed both at simply improving their respective societies, and, at the same time, strengthening their independence from the US federal government: if Louisiana and Cuba transformed into “modern” societies, Washington would have a lesser leeway to intervene in their affairs.

The regimes led by Long and Machado were commonly referred to as “dictatorships”. English historian Alfred Cobban offered a definition of this term. Writing in January 1939, merely nine months before the outbreak of World War II in Europe, Cobban defined dictatorship as “a specific form of political behavior”, specifically:

The government of one man, who has not *primarily* obtained his position by inheritance, but by either force or consent and normally by a combination of both. He must possess absolute sovereignty, that is, all political power must ultimately emanate from his will, and it must be unlimited in scope. It must be exercised, more or less frequently, in an arbitrary manner, by decree rather than by law. And, finally, it must not be limited in duration to any given term of office; nor must the dictator be responsible to any other authority, for such restrictions would be incompatible with absolute rule.<sup>2063</sup>

But perhaps a more accurate term in relation to the *machadato* and the Long era would be “constitutional dictatorship”. Although influenced by the US context in which state intervention is often understood as limitation of individual freedom, in 1948, political scientist Clinton L. Rossiter employed the concept to define powers that appear periodically in constitutional countries in times of national emergency, including the

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<sup>2062</sup> Williamson, *Corporatism in Perspective*, 42.

<sup>2063</sup> Alfred Cobban, *Dictatorship: Its History and Theory* (New York: Scribner, 1939), 21, 26.

United States. This resulted into the establishment of “crisis governments”, the epitome of which was FDR’s administration. In the scholar’s own words: “[I]n time of crisis a democratic, constitutional government must be temporarily altered to whatever degree is necessary to overcome the peril and restore normal conditions”.<sup>2064</sup> Similarly, Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy had assessed in the mid-thirties that Spanish American dictators emerged as a product of their environment, and were mostly the result of crises.<sup>2065</sup> In the same time period, political scientist Vera Michele Dean reflected upon how “finding himself unable to cope with the economic anxieties which assail him on all sides, the individual is ready to surrender a large portion of his liberty in return for economic security”.<sup>2066</sup> Taking it one step further, historian George W.F. Hallgarten argued in the sixties that tyrants and dictators emerged during “*conditions révolutionnaires*” that allowed their development, which in other less extreme circumstances may not have occurred.<sup>2067</sup>

Both strongmen analyzed in this dissertation fit these descriptions: they found justification in the economic crisis their societies were experiencing for an exceptional strengthening of their personal power, which they deemed necessary. Economic depression is the third type of crisis in a democratic nation that Rossiter argued leads governments to resort to dictatorial tools—war and rebellion being the first and the second, respectively.<sup>2068</sup> This type of constitutional dictatorship emphasizes the legislative branch of government.<sup>2069</sup> Machado justified his reelection mainly on these

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<sup>2064</sup> Clinton L. Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in the Modern Democracies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 5. Rossiter dedicates a chapter to analyze Roosevelt’s successful “crisis government”, in 255-264. It is worth remembering the word “dictator” was originally used for the man appointed by the Roman Senate, who was granted especial emergency powers in times of crisis, which he would have to relinquish, once the contingency had passed.

<sup>2065</sup> Rippy, “Dictatorships in Latin America”, 179. This environment, Rippy continued, included “many physical, psychological, and social features which have tended to determine political forms and procedures: geography, racial composition, colonial heritage, intellectual climate, and the long expensive struggle for independence”, in 179.

<sup>2066</sup> Dean, “Attack on Democracy”, 19-20.

<sup>2067</sup> Georges Wolfgang Felix Hallgarten, *Histoire des dictatures de l’antiquité à nos jours* (Paris: Payot, 1961), 9.

<sup>2068</sup> Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*, 6. As for war eliciting the establishment of dictatorships, Italian anti-fascist politician and count Carlo Sforza argued in his study of dictatorships emerged after World War I that: “*Que les dictatures furent loin de représenter une forme nouvelle de pensée politique comme leurs bénéficiaires et les clercs à leur solde ont tâché de le faire croire! Elles furent tout simplement la continuation d’un état d’esprit né dans la guerre, né de la guerre*”, in Carlo Sforza, *Dictateurs et dictatures de l’après guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1931), 239.

<sup>2069</sup> Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*, 292.

terms by modifying the Cuban constitution, as did Long when establishing a continuation of his policies through his puppet governor, O.K. Allen. Moreover, Rossiter pointed out that the main purpose of a “dictatorialized” government was to preserve the independence of the state, also a relevant feature during the *machadato* and the Long era, and that often in cases of extreme abnormality of the functioning of a state martial law had to be declared—as we shall see, Louisiana and Cuba were under martial law for brief periods at the beginning of the 1930s.<sup>2070</sup> Rossiter concluded that, overall, constitutional dictatorships were dangerous because they could lead to the establishment of permanent dictatorships through a coup d’état.<sup>2071</sup>

## 6.2 Huey turns into “dictator” Long<sup>2072</sup>

Never has an American been called a dictator by so many responsible commentators.<sup>2073</sup>

Stephen Hess

Besides the seemingly innocent lyrics of the song *Every Man a King* and the ludicrous contents of his two books, the Kingfish was seriously aiming at becoming more powerful. Even though he planned to be a relevant politician on a national scale, Long would always be intertwined with the politics of Louisiana. In fact, historian Ivy Hair believed that “it was [...] highly unlikely that the Kingfish would have ever transcended the political confines of the Pelican State”.<sup>2074</sup> Author Michael Signer also concluded

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<sup>2070</sup> Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*, 7, 9. Rossiter defined martial law as “a recognition that there are times in the lives of all communities when crisis has so completely disrupted the normal workings of government that the military is the only power remaining that can restore public order and secure the execution of the laws”, in 9.

<sup>2071</sup> Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*, 294.

<sup>2072</sup> There is much debate about whether Long turned to be the dictator of Louisiana. Most scholars refer to him as such. The perspective of his henchmen is also valuable and revealing. Robert Brothers, Huey’s military employee and personal friend, affirmed: “He was [a dictator] to those who opposed him but not to those with him”, Interview to Robert Brothers, no date, by T. Harry Williams. Politician Paul Maloney believed he was a boss, more than a dictator: “I think he wanted to be the boss. HL would listen to reason. Of course, he was ambitious, but a lot of business men got in with Huey Long. They needed HL. He wanted to be boss. No, I wouldn’t say a dictator. But a strong boss”, Interview to Paul Maloney, no date, by T. Harry Williams. THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 21, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2073</sup> Stephen Hess, *America's Political Dynasties From Adams to Kennedy* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 419.

<sup>2074</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 130.

Long “saw very little national political success”.<sup>2075</sup> The authority the Kingfish acquired, however, should not be dismissed outright, for it reverberated throughout the country. At the end of 1933 the senator had established a regime centered on his person that made opposition call him “dictator”.<sup>2076</sup> Not only contemporaries would refer to him using that epithet, but also a future scholar such as Amann, who writes of Long as a

“quasi-dictateur d’un Etat policier”.<sup>2077</sup> According to Brinkley: “Long was destroying the normal functions of basic democratic institutions, turning a government founded on the principle of checks and balances into one directed by a single man”.<sup>2078</sup>

A newspaper published that the representatives in the Louisiana legislature voted in a peculiar manner, for they officially followed protocol, but in reality the votes expressed Long’s wishes. Sometimes the senator



**Fig. 42:** “The State that’s me”, *Today*, October 20, 1934, p. 11, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>2075</sup> Signer, *Demagogue*, 119.

<sup>2076</sup> Raymond Moley, for instance, wrote: “In the University, as in politics, he was a dictator. He did not consult the University’s governing board nor even its president. He made up his own mind and issued orders—a trait which would have made it difficult for any man whom I might have recommended to have endured the position. Long was pathologically impatient. He charged upon his objectives as savagely and as directly as a mad bull. It was his passion for short cuts that marred most of his constructive achievements”, in Moley, “Huey Long”, 13. A reporter referred to Long as “the only dictator known in American political history”, in Kelly, “Why They Can’t Stop the Kingfish”, 33.

<sup>2077</sup> Amann, “Les fascismes américains”, 67.

<sup>2078</sup> Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 69.

approached the microphone of the Speaker interrupting members to explain a bill himself. On one occasion, the House did not receive the required number of votes to pass an amendment, because, as a politician who witnessed the scene affirmed, “Long’s boys had not understood how the Kingfish wanted them to vote”; thus, the House reconsidered and the amendment was made into law.<sup>2079</sup> At times the senator would not even bother to go through the process of voting and would simply tell the clerk: “Make it 11 to 1”, without the formality of a vote.<sup>2080</sup> This childish behavior could be to some extent justified because, as historian Curtis Wilgus wrote in 1937: “Dictators are much like small boys who have never grown up”.<sup>2081</sup> Although the author was mainly referring to South American dictators of the nineteenth century, the quote can be also applied to Long.

Well-established Mexican cartoonist Miguel de Covarrubias (1904-1957), famous for his fashion caricatures in US publications, represented Long on two cartoons that appeared in *Vanity Fair*; the first one, in which he was portrayed wearing a white nightshirt next to Mussolini, was published shortly after the green silk pajamas incident.<sup>2082</sup> The second cartoon is, in this author’s opinion, more interesting because it gives relevant information about the time of its creation. A tiny Huey Long is accompanied by a bigger Joseph Stalin and Benito Mussolini, and a significantly smaller Adolf Hitler—one has to bear in mind it was 1933, thus the latter had just become chancellor of Germany. The Russian and the Italian politicians are clearly represented as dangerous and powerful, while the Austrian and the American are (still) less threatening.

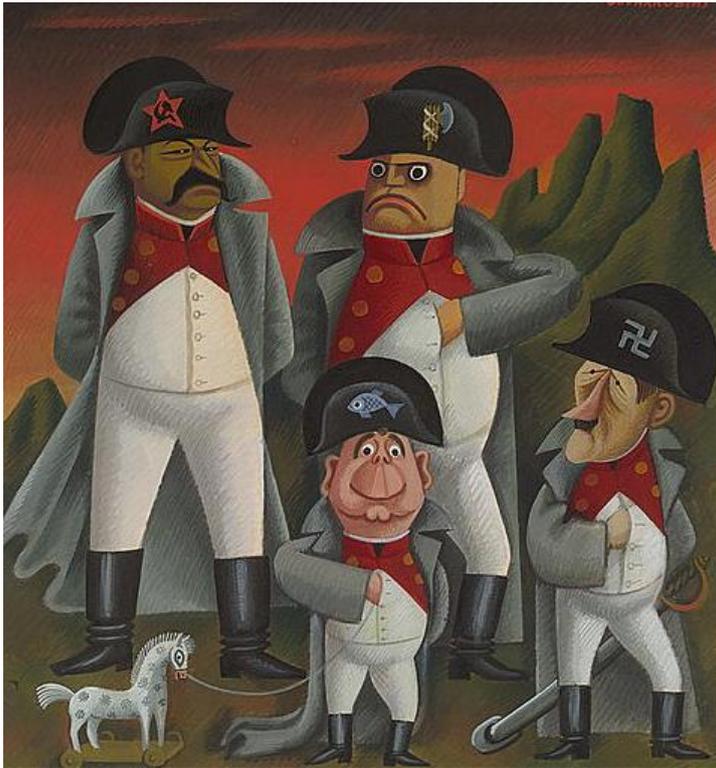
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<sup>2079</sup> “Fights Mark Huey Long’s Coup”, *The Pittsburgh Press*, August 18, 1934, 1-2.

<sup>2080</sup> James E. Crown, “Long at Home: Spurring on the Solons”, *The New York Times Magazine*, July 21, 1935, 3. It seems as if, as Thomas O. Harris wrote in 1938, “Huey Long was constantly inventing new ways of strengthening his power”, in Harris, *The Kingfish*, 244.

<sup>2081</sup> Wilgus, *South American Dictators*, 10.

<sup>2082</sup> The idea that Long was a sort of American Mussolini was widely popular. Author Webster Smith, for instance, wrote that Huey “intended to govern in the fullest sense of the word, as Mussolini governs Italy”, in Smith, *The Kingfish*, 47.



**Fig. 43:** Herr Adolf Hitler and Huey S. ('Hooey') Long versus Josef Stalin and Benito Mussolini, by Miguel de Covarrubias, *Vanity Fair*, June 1933. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA ([hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print](http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print)).

Aside from artistic satirical depictions—which Long most likely saw—to the Kingfish the political system in his native state was far from being antidemocratic or authoritarian. In an interview published at *The New York Times* he made a polemic assertion: “There is no dictatorship in Louisiana. There’s a perfect democracy there, and when you have a perfect democracy<sup>2083</sup> it is pretty hard to tell it from a dictatorship”.<sup>2084</sup> Long also defended himself at the US Senate by saying: “A man is not a dictator who

<sup>2083</sup> In a TV interview in 1990, Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa referred to the regime established in Mexico by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) as the “dictadura perfecta”. His full words were: “Yo no creo que se pueda exonerar a México de esa tradición de dictaduras latinoamericanas. Creo que el caso de México, cuya democratización actual soy el primero en aplaudir, como todos los que creemos en la democracia, encaja en esa tradición con un matiz que es más bien el de un agravante [...] México es la dictadura perfecta. La dictadura perfecta no es el comunismo. No es la URSS. No es Fidel Castro. La dictadura perfecta es México [...] [E]s la dictadura camuflada. Tiene las características de la dictadura: la permanencia, no de un hombre, pero sí de un partido. Y de un partido que es inamovible”, in “Vargas Llosa: ‘México es la dictadura perfecta’”, *El País*, September 1990, [elpais.com/diario/1990/09/01/cultura/652140001\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1990/09/01/cultura/652140001_850215.html).

<sup>2084</sup> “Huey Long Offers Cure For Our Ills”, *The New York Times*, March 26, 1933, 7. Two years after, he would say something similar in an interview: “Dictators have no place in American life. Down in Louisiana we have no dictatorship, but what I call a closer response to the will of the people”, in Russell Owen, “Huey Long Gives His Views On Dictatorship”, *The New York Times Magazine*, February 10, 1935, 3. Historian Glen Jeansonne disagrees with that conception when writing: “Social justice cannot be dictatorially imposed on any level; that is the perennial promise and ultimate deception of dictators everywhere”, in Jeansonne, *Messiah of the Masses*, 189.

does the will of the people”.<sup>2085</sup> Furthermore, thousands of citizens supported the unorthodox government of Louisiana and venerated the Kingfish.<sup>2086</sup> The apologist Harvey Field criticized those who referred to Long as a dictator by writing that “there never was a greater fallacy expressed and imposed upon the reading public than an assertion of that kind”.<sup>2087</sup> In a similar manner, a pamphleteer wrote: “All the big hullabaloo about Huey Long being a dictator of Louisiana and his dictatorial laws is being made by his enemies”.<sup>2088</sup>

There were some who believed the “hullabaloo” and were worried about the unusual power the senator was accumulating. Thomas O. Harris analyzed the politician and criticized the political system that allowed his existence in the following terms:

Huey P. Long proved that under the federal system of states one may be a Democratic governor and an absolute dictator at one and the same time. He demonstrated that in this fair country of ours the Scriptural injunction against worshipping false gods is not to be politically construed. He exposed the inability of American democracy to cope, as a system, with the kind of a political despotism which it was created to destroy. When one studies the career of Huey P. Long he cannot escape the conviction that if dictatorship was possible in Louisiana, it is possible everywhere else in the United States.<sup>2089</sup>

In a similar manner, Kane, a man who lived first-hand this mass movement that was transforming the society of his native state, desperately argued that no other politician had accrued such power before:

He possessed the state government, the Governor, the university, all commissions and departments; the Legislature, the public schools, the treasury, the buildings, and the Louisianans inside them. The courts were his, except in isolated instances, and he had the highest judges. He had a secret police which did anything he asked: kidnapped men, [...] He ran the elections. He counted the votes. He disqualified any man or woman whom he wanted disqualified.<sup>2090</sup>

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<sup>2085</sup> Speech at the US Senate, March 1, 1935, quoted in Harris, *The Kingfish*, 139.

<sup>2086</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 762.

<sup>2087</sup> Fields, *A True History of the Life*, 33.

<sup>2088</sup> Hitt, “Why Huey P. Long Should Be President”, 27.

<sup>2089</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 3.

<sup>2090</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 128.

Similarly, journalist Beals lamented: “The actions of Huey Long merely announced the deplorable decay of American freedom”.<sup>2091</sup>

After visiting New Orleans to write an article, reporter Craddock Goins, who is quoted at the head of this chapter, told his personal experience in the city. He asked several people, from a policeman to a bartender, what they thought about senator Long and everybody avoided the question by saying they had a family to support, or simply that they were not going to respond. There was even one man that showed the reporter a scar he had gotten for badmouthing the Kingfish.<sup>2092</sup> Although the journalist perhaps exaggerated the account, the situation in the city was certainly a difficult one.

Not only contemporaries of Long described him as a dictator. In the 1960s journalist Hugh A. Mulligan wrote:

Before he was done, Huey had the power to appoint and recall all mayors, police chiefs, school teachers. He could reprieve all convictions, including contempt, which gave him control of the judges. The National Guard became his personal army, the state police his personal messenger boys.<sup>2093</sup>

Some decades later, historian Richard White has portrayed an analogous description of the Kingfish’s power:

Huey dominated government commissions, departments, and agencies, the state treasury, the state universities, and the public hospitals. He controlled law enforcement throughout the state [...], an undisclosed number of his secretive Bureau of Criminal Identification operatives, and three thousand national guardsmen who served as his private janissaries [...] All the pieces of a police state were now in place.<sup>2094</sup>

There are some authors that have employed a different carefree tone and have perceived the politician as just a regular man doing his job. For instance, scholars Peter Odegard and Allen Helms wrote in 1938:

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<sup>2091</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 375.

<sup>2092</sup> Goins, “The Drunken Tyranny of Huey P. Long”, 64.

<sup>2093</sup> Hugh A. Mulligan, “25 Years Since His Assassination. The Rise and Fall of Huey Long”, *Ocala Star-Banner*, September 6, 1960, 9.

<sup>2094</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 252.

[Long's] political methods, as developed in Louisiana, are the methods of orthodox American politics of the machine school, plus a little gaudy drama. When he takes personal command of the Louisiana Legislature and of its committee hearings, shouts down opposition, drives through bills that nobody has read, and plays the legislature like a pack of cards, he is only doing a little more openly what many another political boss has done more quietly over his office-telephone.<sup>2095</sup>

The always defensive Williams did not deny the concentration of power in Long's hands, but justified it by arguing it was necessary. According to the historian, the ultimate goal of the Kingfish was to do good and help people, but in order to do so he had to control the state. One of Williams' disciples, historian from LSU Jerry P. Sanson, also conceives the Kingfish in a positive manner by saying: "He grasped the dreams and aspirations of generations of poor Louisianians, adopted them as his own, and made them not merely attainable, but commonplace".<sup>2096</sup> Huey Long himself explained how his multiple enemies made him act firmly: "Everything I did, I've had to do with one hand, because I've had to fight with the other".<sup>2097</sup>

As courageous as this last quote may seem, the Kingfish was already stepping into uneasy territory by ruling Louisiana through his puppet governor, O.K. Allen, while officially holding the office of US senator. Not only that, but the Pelican State became his own playground, where he could do as he wished. He did not hide it. In fact, referring to the Louisiana's legislature, the senator had stated that he could "shuffle'em like a deck of cards. I buy'em like you'd buy a sack of potatoes".<sup>2098</sup>

### 6.2.1 Internationalizing the fight against Standard Oil: The Chaco War

One of the indications of Huey Long's accumulation of power was that he became more interested in international affairs, at least in his speeches. Although historian Michael Gillette argued that "Long was by instinct an isolationist. He was especially resistant to

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<sup>2095</sup> Peter H. Odegard and E. Allen Helms, *American Politics. A Study in Political Dynamics* (New York; London: Harper & Bros., 1938), 438.

<sup>2096</sup> Jerry P. Sanson, "'What He Did and What He Promised to Do...': Huey Long and the Horizons of Louisiana Politics", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 47, n<sup>o</sup>. 3 (Summer 2006): 276.

<sup>2097</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 749.

<sup>2098</sup> Scaramouche, "Senator Huey P. Long. Clown and Knave", 10; Meigs O. Frost, "Huey Long Cracks the Whip", *Today*, August 4, 1934, 10, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, 2511, 2512, OS:W, folder 2:2, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

any form of internationalism which involved Europe or the League of Nations”,<sup>2099</sup> in his last two years he changed that tendency a bit. Throughout 1934 the Kingfish referred numerous times in the Senate to the Chaco War (1932-1935) between Bolivia and Paraguay over the control of the Chaco region, where oil had recently been discovered. After Bolivia had lost its Pacific coast in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883) against Chile, the country became interested in the East and fought for the possession of the region of Chaco aiming at finally having an exit to the Atlantic Ocean through the Paraguay River.<sup>2100</sup>

Since 1921, through its subsidiary in Bolivia, the Standard Oil Company had valuable concessions in the country of 7,400,000 acres of land rich in oil, which would last for a period of fifty-five years. Moreover, the oil giant was capitalized at 5,000,000.<sup>2101</sup> In July 1932, the company expanded and bought oil concessions in the southeastern portion of Bolivia for \$2 million. Because the country had neither sea nor river exits, Bolivia had to turn to Argentina’s state-owned Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF) to export their product; thus the Standard Oil purchased more concessions in Salta, northern Argentina, to build a pipeline that would connect Bolivia’s oil to water, and from there to world market. The neighbor country, however, denied those concessions for reasons that are not explained—perhaps in the interest of maintaining Bolivia as a poor country—, and consequently Standard Oil looked for an alternative solution: Paraguay. They would construct a pipeline in the Chaco region to the Paraguay River, but the country also rejected the idea. Therefore, a three-year war began over this territory, although historian Bruce W. Farcau emphasized it was more about national honor, which was attached to the control of land, than foreign oil companies competing with local governments.<sup>2102</sup> This conflict is worth mentioning because, as will be analyzed in the following chapter when discussing Long’s entanglement on the Cuban crisis which led to the fall of Machado, Huey seems to have only concerned himself

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<sup>2099</sup> Gillette, “Huey Long and the Chaco War”, 304.

<sup>2100</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover’s Latin-American Policy*, 35-36; Gillette, “Huey Long and the Chaco War”, 294.

<sup>2101</sup> Winkler, *Investments of United States Capital in Latin America*, 77.

<sup>2102</sup> Bruce W. Farcau, *The Chaco War: Bolivia and Paraguay, 1932-1935* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1996), 22, 138.

with foreign affairs so long as he was able to stir up debate in favor of his Share Our Wealth ideology and his fight against Wall Street and Standard Oil at the same time.

While the Chaco War has been somewhat studied by multiple witnesses and scholars<sup>2103</sup>—even Pablo Neruda wrote a poem in 1940 entitled “La Standard Oil Co.” based on the conflict—<sup>2104</sup>, the entanglement of Long is moderately known. The Kingfish made four fiery speeches in the US Senate defending Paraguay, for, he argued, the Standard Oil Company was responsible for the conflict and was financing the Bolivian government in order to dominate the oil underneath the Chaco region. In the first address on May 30, 1934, the senator argued that “the forces of imperialistic finance” were to blame for the war and that the Standard Oil was in fact the “promoter of revolutions in Central America, South America, and Mexico”. After this first speech the Kingfish received acclaim from the Paraguayan press, who understood the senator as their savior and defender.<sup>2105</sup> At the same time, after the speech the politician from Louisiana was strongly criticized by Bolivian minister to the United States, Enrique Finot (1891-1952), who assured the senator’s words were “a complete distortion of the truth”, and added that under no circumstances was the Standard Oil backing his country.<sup>2106</sup> After learning about Finot’s reaction, Huey simply accused him of being a “hireling of Standard Oil”.<sup>2107</sup>

Long gave his second speech on June 7, 1934, and was far more relentless, for the senator characterized the oil giant as “domestic murderer”, “foreign murderer”, “international conspirator”, and “set of rapacious thieves and robbers”. The politician

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<sup>2103</sup> Including Bolivian diplomat in Washington Enrique Finot, *The Chaco War and the United States* (New York: L&S Printing Company, 1934). Other sources are: Farcau, *The Chaco War: Bolivia and Paraguay*; William R. Garner, *The Chaco Dispute: A Study of Prestige Diplomacy* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1966); Adrian J. English, *The Green Hell: A Concise History of the Chaco War Between Bolivia and Paraguay, 1932-35* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007).

<sup>2104</sup> One verse reads: “[Los de la Standard Oil] Compran países, pueblos, mares, / policías, diputaciones, / lejanas comarcas en donde / los pobres guardan su maíz / como los avaros el oro: / la Standard Oil los despierta, / los uniforma, les designa / cuál es el hermano enemigo, / y el paraguay hace su guerra / y el boliviano se deshace / con su ametralladora en la selva”, in Pablo Neruda, *Canto General*, “Sección V - La arena traicionada” (Mexico: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1950).

<sup>2105</sup> “Sensational Speech of Mr. Long In the Senate of the United States”, *El Diario*, July 1, 1934, 5, 7-8.

<sup>2106</sup> “Bolivia Is Offended by Speech in Senate”, *New Orleans States*, June 2, 1934, 1. An author wrote: “La denuncia de Long que el gobierno de Bolivia era apenas un títere de la Standard Oil en la guerra del Chaco motivaría una airada réplica del ministro boliviano en Washington, Enrique Finot”, in Luis Agüero Wagner, *Senador Long, defensor del Paraguay durante la guerra del Chaco* (Asuncion: F17, 2005), 61.

<sup>2107</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 215.

also read numerous historical documents, including president Rutherford B. Hayes (1822-1893) award of the land to Paraguay in 1878, to justify Paraguayan ownership of Chaco.<sup>2108</sup> Historian Michael Gillette wrote that after this second address, “Huey P. Long was almost canonized by the [Paraguayan] press”.<sup>2109</sup> In a third speech given on January 17, 1935, the senator became ruthless and criticized the League of Nations’ pronouncement to lift the arms embargo in Bolivia by arguing that the Rockefeller family was behind the decision. The Louisiana politician also reprimanded both Hoover and Roosevelt for allowing the Hayes award to be violated.<sup>2110</sup>

Long delivered his last address on the subject on January 26, 1935. Its title was “Standard Oil or the Monroe Doctrine, Which?”, in which the Kingfish argued that the oil giant was providing the Bolivians with weapons.<sup>2111</sup> The idea that Standard Oil was behind Bolivian government would be defended decades later by Cuban historian Lionel Soto, who argued that the conflict had been “una típica guerra indirecta interimperialista en América del Sur”, and added that “Bolivia, insultada por la Standard Oil Company y el Trust Guggenheim [US ambassador to Cuba]—imperialistas yanquis—se batía con Paraguay, movida por la Royal Dutch Shell—imperialistas ingleses, principalmente—por el dominio de una amplia zona no muy bien delimitada de sus fronteras”.<sup>2112</sup>

Regardless, the Paraguayan government and its citizens praised Long’s words and positioning. Ultimately, in August 1934 they named a fort captured from the Bolivians “*Senador Long*”, and to date a street in Asuncion still bears his name.<sup>2113</sup> *The American Progress* proudly published the news adding the following statement given by Paraguayan Ministry of War in Asuncion: “Thus the Paraguayan army renders homage to the defender of justice who raised his voice in protest against this crime, in the Senate

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<sup>2108</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover’s Latin-American Policy*, 35; Gillette, “Huey Long and the Chaco War”, 300. See also Ari Arthur Hoogenboom, *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior and President* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

<sup>2109</sup> Gillette, “Huey Long and the Chaco War”, 302.

<sup>2110</sup> “Bolivian Arms Embargo Lift Hit by Long”, *New Orleans States*, January 17, 1935, 1.

<sup>2111</sup> Gillette, “Huey Long and the Chaco War”, 307-308.

<sup>2112</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 369.

<sup>2113</sup> “Paraguay Names Fort After Huey”, *Chicago Tribune*, August 19, 1934, to favor “a great crusader for justice”.

of his country”.<sup>2114</sup> A witness of the events wrote to the US Secretary of State a letter informing him:

Senator Long’s remarks in the Senate started another series of attacks on the Standard Oil Company, and the subject is one seized upon by the press whenever it need sensational material or whenever it seems desirable to divert public attention from more delicate matters. As a result, the company has become a symbolic of all the oppressors of Paraguay, and Senator Long is a national hero in the country, ranked with President Hayes as a defender of justice and right.<sup>2115</sup>

There is a fascinating account given by the polemical Paraguayan author Luis Agüero Wagner in 2005 that still praised the Kingfish’s task defending Paraguayans in the struggle. The author has called Long “a la vez real y extraordinario”, and even has insinuated that the senator’s assassination might have had some relation to his involvement in the conflict, when writing: “Huey Pierce Long se había convertido en una molesta piedra en el zapato para quienes habían inspirado y sufragado aquella matanza. Los amos de las finanzas imperialistas tenían ahora un obstáculo de envergadura que se interponía entre ellos y el jugoso botín que buscaban obtener”.<sup>2116</sup>

The reason for Long to get involved in such distant conflict may have been to continue his quarrel with Standard Oil outside the United States thus gaining more international attention. As two scholars put it: “The war gave Huey the opportunity to throw dirt upon the Standard Oil Company [...] Long had successfully ridden the wave of anti-Standard sentiment in Louisiana. He saw no reason why that crusade might not be translated into

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<sup>2114</sup> “Paraguay Names Fort After Senator Huey Long”, *The American Progress*, August 23, 1934, 8.

<sup>2115</sup> Letter (copy) from Meredith Nicholson to the Secretary of State, Washington, DC., August 23, 1934, T. Harry Williams papers, 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 10, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). Another witness observed: “Attacking St. O. [Standard Oil] for financing Bolivia’s war on Paraguay. Class war. If S.O. fighting H, it, like other enemies, likely to be sorry. Huey supposed to have 2 agents in Central Am. working against United Fruit to persuade banana growers to ship independently. Some Latin Am. papers urge boycott of S.O. because of H’s allegations on Chaco War”, Huey branching put into foreign policy, Rodney Dutcher, September 7, 1934, Notes of Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 17, folder 21, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). For more on Long and the Chaco War, see Gillette, “Huey Long and the Chaco War”, 293–311; Finot, *The Chaco War and the United States*; Farcau, *The Chaco War*.

<sup>2116</sup> Agüero Wagner, *Senador Long, defensor del Paraguay*, 8. It is interesting to note that, most recently, this author vindicated the similarities between Long and Republican candidate for the US presidency Donald Trump, in Luis Agüero Wagner, “Huey Long y Donald Trump, olvidados por la prensa”, *Siglo XXI*, June 27, 2016, [www.diariosigloxxi.com/texto-diario/mostrar/463644/huey-long-donald-trump-olvidados-prensa](http://www.diariosigloxxi.com/texto-diario/mostrar/463644/huey-long-donald-trump-olvidados-prensa).

national political advantage for him as well”.<sup>2117</sup> However, as Gillette has pointed out, the involvement of Standard Oil in the conflict may have been much less relevant. While the company was most likely advocating for the Bolivians to win, that does not mean they were controlling its government.<sup>2118</sup> Another possible and more pragmatic reason for Long to get involved in the conflict was that he might be in connection with a movement in several South American countries aimed at stopping their sales of oil to the Standard Oil Company.<sup>2119</sup>

The conflict, during which between 85,000 and 130,000 people from both sides, mostly Bolivians, were killed, ended with the victory of Paraguay and a more than probable satisfaction on the part of the Kingfish.<sup>2120</sup> Soon after, the Paraguayan government nominated the politician from Louisiana “chief peacemaker”.<sup>2121</sup> Long’s involvement in this war is pivotal to understanding the internationalization of his Share Our Wealth discourse and attack to the Standard Oil Company, and also because from that conflict on he would commonly blame the oil giant of being behind several plots to assassinate him.

## 6.2.2 Huey invades New Orleans

On July 30, 1934, 2,500 men of the Louisiana National Guard entered New Orleans and surrounded the city hall in the middle of the primary election campaign to name a Supreme Court judge, two members of congress, and a public service commissioner in what Harnett Kane defined as a “demonstration of broadening dictatorship”.<sup>2122</sup> Militant feminist Hilda Phelps Hammond witnessed, from the headquarters of the Louisiana Women’s Committee on Royal Street, a group of men marching through the French Quarter dressed in khaki and carrying rifles, heading to “guard the registration books”

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<sup>2117</sup> Mora and Cooney, *Paraguay and the United States*, 81.

<sup>2118</sup> Gillette, “Huey Long and the Chaco War”, 310-311.

<sup>2119</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 712.

<sup>2120</sup> Farcau wrote: “The death toll for this terrible little war was what robbed it of any *opera bouffe* quality. No reliable figures are available, but totals of fifty thousand Bolivian and forty thousand Paraguayan dead from all causes are generally accepted”, in Farcau, *The Chaco War: Bolivia and Paraguay*, 230.

<sup>2121</sup> “Paraguay Honors Long as Chaco Peacemaker”, *The American Progress*, July issue, 1935, 10.

<sup>2122</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 109.

or, as she perceived it, “to protect Dictatorship”.<sup>2123</sup> *Real America* referred to Long as the “political Frankenstein monster [...] [that] had suddenly broken out in a red rash of revolutionary poison that reeks from every pore of his skin”.<sup>2124</sup>

This controversial event was the most radical exhibition of police force under Long’s regime, as well as a clear evidence of the dispute between the Kingfish and the mayor of New Orleans, the already mentioned Walmsley, or “Turkey Head”, as Long preferred to call him. There had been a quarrel between the two politicians during the municipal election earlier that year, in which Walmsley had won;<sup>2125</sup> Long was ready for revenge. Through his puppet governor Allen, the Kingfish had declared open war to Walmsley, to the Old Regulars, and to the entire city—where the senator had rarely acquired a majority of votes—by establishing martial law.<sup>2126</sup> According to a journalist: “The city hadn’t seen so much martial terror since fiery old Andrew Jackson took a gang of backwoodsmen and pirates [among them, the famed Jean Lafitte<sup>2127</sup>] to rout the British [during the 1815 Battle of New Orleans<sup>2128</sup>].”<sup>2129</sup> The senator argued that with this measure he was protecting the citizens of New Orleans from the corruption and vice of the mayor, the police of the city, and the Old Ring,<sup>2130</sup> although his main motivation

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<sup>2123</sup> Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 219.

<sup>2124</sup> Goins, “The Drunken Tyranny of Huey P. Long”, 10.

<sup>2125</sup> Long’s candidate for mayor had been John Klorer, Sr., “a colorless but well-regarded New Orleans engineer” and father of the editor of *The American Progress*, in Boulard, *Huey Long Invades New Orleans*, 74. The campaign had been run under the slogan “Honesty and Efficiency in City Affairs”, Circular from Huey P. Long, 1934, Scott Wilson papers, Manuscripts Collection 233, series II, box 53, LaRC. During the campaign, the Klorer ticket was proud to announce that there were two Italian descendants on their list. In a pamphlet, they included a list of Italo-Americans that had served in the Louisiana government, including Long’s personal friend Robert Maestri, in “To the Italian People of New Orleans”, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 27, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2126</sup> Herman B. Deutsch, “When ‘Partial Martial Law’ Was Proclaimed by Governor Allen and How Long Made his Dictatorship a Fact by Taking Over the Election Machinery of City of New Orleans”, *The New Orleans Item*, September 5, 1939; Boulard, *Huey Long Invades New Orleans*, 154.

<sup>2127</sup> See Mitchell Vaughn Charnley, *Jean Lafitte, Gentleman Smuggler* (New York: Viking Press, 1934); William C. Davis, *The Pirates Laffite: The Treacherous World of the Corsairs of the Gulf* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2005); Keagan LeJeune, *Legendary Louisiana Outlaws: The Villains and Heroes of Folk Justice* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016).

<sup>2128</sup> See John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson, Symbol for an Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); Walter R Borneman and Rogers D. Spotswood Collection, *1812: The War That Forged a Nation* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004); Ron Chapman, *The Battle of New Orleans: “But for a Piece of Wood”* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2014).

<sup>2129</sup> Goins, “The Drunken Tyranny of Huey P. Long”, 12.

<sup>2130</sup> There is a thirty-page book that portrays Long as the hero who saved New Orleans from decades of vice and sin: Victor Volero, *The Profane History of Louisiana: From Bienville to Huey P. Long* ([no location]: [no publisher], 1935), David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 7, LaRC.

was to publicly ridicule and scorn Walmsley and the Old Regulars a few weeks before the congressional elections. Three times through the radio, the senator “warned the city administration that unless the ‘lottery kings, racketeering ward bosses, dives and bawdy houses’ were suppressed, he would be obliged to march in”.<sup>2131</sup> Long also announced that his actions were “prompted by the fear that Mayor T. Semmes Walmsley would seize the records of the office”.<sup>2132</sup>

The reaction after this unexpected success was shock and incredibility. The mayor, logically agitated, warned Long:

While some may drop in the defense of New Orleans, we will never surrender to this madman. I warn you, Huey Long, you cringing coward, that if a life is spent in the defense of this city and its right of self-government, you shall pay the penalty as other carpet-baggers have done before you.<sup>2133</sup>

Allen reinforced the militia while the mayor of the city also ordered the deployment of one hundred more policemen. It looked like civil war was about to happen.<sup>2134</sup> Long proclaimed in his newspaper: “Now that the Governor of this State has taken the reins to subdue the rule of the vice lords and underworld kings, every good citizen should uphold his hand by every thought and action at his command”.<sup>2135</sup> Meanwhile, Walmsley reinforced his police<sup>2136</sup> and contacted several personalities in order to ask for help and return sanity to his town. *Today* magazine jokingly published:

The Mayor appealed to the public at large, he appealed to his old-line Democratic cohorts, he appealed to the United States government. He didn't appeal to Bolivia, for that fiery little nation had just named a fort in honor of ‘Senador Long’—the Bolivians know a fighter when they see one, and Huey, earlier, had spoken some kind words for Bolivia on the Senate floor.<sup>2137</sup>

This quote is relevant because, referring to the Chaco War, its author got the facts backwards, for it was the Paraguayans who named the fort after Long and whose side

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<sup>2131</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 217.

<sup>2132</sup> “Long Tells Why Troops Called”, *New Orleans States*, August 1, 1934, 4.

<sup>2133</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 218.

<sup>2134</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 172.

<sup>2135</sup> Huey P. Long, “The Vice Reign in New Orleans”, *The American Progress*, August 15, 1934, 1.

<sup>2136</sup> “Rush to Join Force as 500 More Police Are Sworn In, Armed”, *New Orleans States*, August 1, 1934, 1.

<sup>2137</sup> Sisson, “Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta”, 5.

the senator took during the conflict; not Bolivia.<sup>2138</sup> It shows how little the United States understood or cared about the rest of the continent, and with how little seriousness Huey Long was treated.

In response to the mayor's cry for help, president Roosevelt, almost with indifference, merely "discussed at a press conference the constitutional provision which requires the Federal government to protect the republican forms of any of the States".<sup>2139</sup> A group that would be not only against the president but also against the childish disagreement between the senator and the mayor was the Socialist Party. They held a meeting, which was guarded by the National Guard, criticizing that "both sides to this political dispute, Long and Walmsley, have money to spend on bullets, but nothing to spend for bread".<sup>2140</sup>

The election finally came on September 11, 1934. Both protagonists had agreed on a truce in order for the election to go by peacefully.<sup>2141</sup> However, Long wanted to keep an eye on the process and maintained the troops in the city.<sup>2142</sup> As historian Boulard clearly describes, "it was a stunning victory for Huey and a devastating defeat for Walmsley".<sup>2143</sup> Most of the *longite* candidates won, in what was called "one of the most spectacular campaigns in the history of the state".<sup>2144</sup> *The New York Times* reported the next day:

United States Senator Huey P. Long appeared tonight to have won the most spectacular battle of his political career. Unofficial but apparently accurate returns from today's unprecedentedly peaceful primary election indicated that all four of the candidates who enjoyed his backing in New Orleans were as good as elected to the offices they are seeking.<sup>2145</sup>

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<sup>2138</sup> "Paraguay Issues War Declaration Against Bolivia", *The Times-Picayune*, May 11, 1932, 2.

<sup>2139</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 220.

<sup>2140</sup> "City Police Guard State Troops From Reds' Mass Meeting", *New Orleans States*, August 6, 1934, 1.

<sup>2141</sup> F. Raymond Daniell, "Long and Mayor Declare a Truce; They Agree to Keep Armed Men Away From the Polls at Primary Tuesday," *The New York Times*, September 9, 1934, 33; Sisson, "Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta", 22, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>2142</sup> F. Raymond Daniell, "Long's Troops Stay Despite Protests; New Orleans Civic Groups Declare Armed Forces Hurt City's Business," *The New York Times*, September 10, 1934, 6.

<sup>2143</sup> Boulard, *Huey Long Invades New Orleans*, 170.

<sup>2144</sup> Philip Kinsley, "Long Forces Win in Louisiana", *Chicago Tribune*, September 12, 1934, 1, 4.

<sup>2145</sup> "Louisiana Gives Long a Big Margin in Primary Vote", *The New York Times*, September 12, 1934, 1.

The reasons for these results are unclear, but fear could have weighed heavily on voters before going to the polls. After the incident, Long reemerged as powerful and controversial as ever. He barely needed to govern Louisiana through Allen. Witness and author Hodding Carter would write: “By the spring of 1935, Huey Long owned Louisiana”.<sup>2146</sup>

### 6.2.3 Women’s Committee of Louisiana

In his native state the senator was becoming less popular and a new organization was founded to fight against his government. Among Long’s enemies there was the Women’s Committee of Louisiana, established in March 1933 as a fierce voice against the senator. This association was led by Hilda Phelps Hammond, and was described by Beals as “the nice people”,<sup>2147</sup> who were asking the rest of the country to rescue them from the dictatorship of Huey Long.<sup>2148</sup> *Real America* published that the Committee “comprises women whose work for civic, humanitarian, and philanthropic causes has made them esteemed in their communities”.<sup>2149</sup>

As opposed to Long, Hammond had been born in a wealthy family from the rich Garden District in New Orleans. The year after the senator’s death, she published an autobiography entitled *Let Freedom Ring*, in which the author narrated her and Huey Long’s lives, and how they tangled throughout the politician’s career, and described her fight against the Kingfish through the Women’s Committee.<sup>2150</sup> Hammond told how, in March 1930, her husband was dismissed as the attorney of the Board of the Port Commissioners of New Orleans because he could not be controlled politically.<sup>2151</sup> Williams asserted this was the main motivation for Hammond to start being politically

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<sup>2146</sup> Carter, “Huey Long: American Dictator”, 343.

<sup>2147</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 413.

<sup>2148</sup> Rodney Dutcher, “Crawfish Faces National Drive”, *New Orleans States*, September 2, 1933, 2.

<sup>2149</sup> Scaramouche, “Huey P. Long. Clown and Knave of the US Senate”, *Real America*, August 1933, 76  
William B. Wisdom collection of Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 7, LaRC.

<sup>2150</sup> Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*. She borrowed the title of the book from the lyrics of the patriotic song “My Country 'Tis of Thee”, commonly known as “America”. It was written in 1831 by Samuel Francis Smith and the melody was the same as the English national anthem. “America” served as the US national anthem until the adoption of the current one in 1931. A fragment of the lyrics is: “Land where my fathers died; / Land of the pilgrim’s pride; / From ev’ry mountain-side; / Let Freedom ring”, in Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 26. More on her on Forrest Davis, 127-128.

<sup>2151</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

active.<sup>2152</sup> It seems, however, a poor and oversimplified explanation for a social movement that involved hundreds of people, and went well-beyond one woman's domestic life. A journalist described Hammond as a "handsome, soft-voiced woman with determined eyes which have made more than one senator squirm in his chair".<sup>2153</sup>



**Fig. 44:** "Women Seek Scalp of the Crawfish", *New Orleans States*, September 2, 1933, p. 2, William B. Wisdom collection on Huey P. Long, Manuscripts Collection 282, box 6, folder 9, LaRC. This cartoon was published together with the first article that was questioning Long's methods in Overton's election. Hilda Phelps Hammond wrote: "It was a marvelous article in my eyes", in Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 123. This cartoon was published in various newspapers throughout the country, such as *The Indiana Gazette*, September 14, 1933, 6.

The activist and her association mainly focused their attention and efforts on accusing Long of corruption and fraud regarding the 1932 election of John H. Overton (1875-1948) as a US senator from Louisiana, and vindicated an investigation stating that the Senate "had a duty to perform" in order to unseat both Overton and Long. Overton had been one of Long's attorneys during his 1929 impeachment, and now Huey was returning the favor by procuring him a nice position. In early 1933 a special committee of the US Senate, the chairman of which was Senator Tom Connally (1877-1963) from Texas, investigated Overton. A trial was held in New Orleans accusing both senators of

<sup>2152</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 441, 646.

<sup>2153</sup> Dutcher, "Crawfish Faces National Drive", 2.

funding the campaign with compulsory money taken out of state employees' salaries, of controlling the vote in several parishes of the state, and of using dummy candidates.<sup>2154</sup>

In her book, Hammond described in detail the Overton trial, which she witnessed, and sarcastically wrote about Long's attitude throughout the sessions: "It looked as though at any moment he might whisk a gilt paper crown from his pocket, clap it on his head and throw the chairman out of his place of honor".<sup>2155</sup> Almost wittily, the Long machine did not bother to keep any records, and, in the end, no final charges were filed against both politicians for lack of evidence.<sup>2156</sup>

Thus Hammond and her committee kept on protesting. She accused the US Senate of ignoring a case of fraud and corruption.<sup>2157</sup> The women's leader narrated how a few days after the hearings, in March 5, 1933, twenty-nine women from the old aristocracy gathered in a New Orleans home to configure the Women's Committee of Louisiana, which in a few months would have over 1,500 members.<sup>2158</sup> Beals explains that she "got women's organizations all over the country to do the same".<sup>2159</sup> And although Hammond confessed there was not much support from women organizations, there were a few exceptions, such as the Federation of Women's Clubs of Greater Cleveland, which represented 25,000 females and declared they would cooperate with the Louisiana organization to safeguard American institutions.<sup>2160</sup>

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<sup>2154</sup> Sisson, "Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta. Part 4", *Today*, October 27, 1934, 11, 22, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC. Hammond exquisitely retold the account of several dummies that were called to declare on the witness stand, how most of them were not qualified to hold public positions, and how they were brought out in the open. Their registration fee (\$125) to run for local offices was paid by the Long machine and, once each candidate had appointed the agreed upon names of commissioners who would be counting the votes—ironically, that was a law in Louisiana to avoid corruption—, they were asked to withdraw from the race in order for Long to control the polls. Hammond defined the whole arrangement as a "sham, a fraud, a scheme beyond the imagination of any honest man!". In Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 55-60.

<sup>2155</sup> Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 52.

<sup>2156</sup> "Overton-Broussard Inquiry Session Has Riotous Opening", *The Times-Picayune*, November 16, 1933, 1, 6. After this, former governor Parker also attacked the senator, accusing him of sixty-one charges, including: embezzlement of public funds, blocking attempts to investigate the corrupt condition in Louisiana, kidnapping Irby and Terrell, and rewarding the fifteen round robineers after the impeachment process, among others, in Scaramouche, "Why Is the Senate Silent on Huey P. Long", *Real America*, November 1933, 54-56, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 1, folder 11, LSMHC.

<sup>2157</sup> "Urged to Hasten Crawfish Probe", *New Orleans States*, February 23, 1934, 3; "Women to Continue Fight on Huey Long", *New Orleans States*, June 18, 1934, 1.

<sup>2158</sup> *Ibid.*, 81, 169.

<sup>2159</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 178.

<sup>2160</sup> Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 237.

Long listed her as one of his main enemies in the state in a process he criticizing called “women’s uprising”,<sup>2161</sup> and advised the women of the committee to “stay at home, where the Lord meant for women to stay”.<sup>2162</sup> These remarks would nothing but encourage the committee:

The women have become crusaders, earnest, and determined. They have raised campaign funds in New Orleans by auctioning from an old slave block their heirlooms, mementos, wedding fans and even their personal jewelry. They have spent long hours typing and mailing hundreds of letters to influential officials, to anyone who might be able to help their cause [...] Mrs. Phelps declares that she and her associates will cleanse the government of the state of Louisiana.<sup>2163</sup>

Hammond wrote that she received some of the funding for the organization from volunteer donations by wealthy citizens of New Orleans, who, for the sake of their businesses, wished to remain anonymous.<sup>2164</sup> But when that money was not enough, they indeed put to sell “laces, earrings, Paisley shawls, china of rare make, books with fine bindings, a mirror [...], the rosewood chair of a child, platters and cups, silver, gold”, even a Persian cat.<sup>2165</sup>

Hammond asked in a pamphlet: “Has Mr. Long, the accused senator, been allowed to block an investigation of charges against him?” and: “Does the Senate of the United States no longer care about its HONOR and INTEGRITY?”<sup>2166</sup> Records of her letters to different members of the Senate inquiring them to investigate the Louisiana senators, Long and Overton, show the insistence of Hammond and how sometimes the senators

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<sup>2161</sup> Long, *Every Man A King*, 335.

<sup>2162</sup> Sisson, “Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta. Part 4”, 22, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 15, LaRC.

<sup>2163</sup> *Ibid.* Journalist Kelly also penned that its members “raffle clocks, purses, antique beer bottles, pots, pans, stoves, and old clothes to raise money to carry on the war”, in Kelly, “Why They Can’t Stop the Kingfish”, *Real America*, April 1935, 33, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 2, folder 17, LSMHC.

<sup>2164</sup> Within a few weeks up to July 1933, the author told she collected over a thousand dollars, in Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 110–116.

<sup>2165</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>2166</sup> Hilda Phelps Hammond, “Is the Senate Afraid of Huey Long?” (New Orleans, 1934), 4-5, Ida Weis Friend papers, Manuscripts Collection 287, box 4, folder 1, LaRC. In fact, it looks like the Senate *was* afraid of Long. A senator friendly to FDR confessed to a newspaper: “Frankly we are afraid of him... He is unscrupulous beyond belief. He might say anything about me, something entirely untrue, but it would ruin me in my State. He would have no hesitation in making vicious charges against my moral character. How could I answer him effectively? It’s like challenging a buzz saw... He will go the limit. It is safer for me and the rest of us to leave him alone”, in John Bantry, *Boston Post*, newspaper clipping, March 10, 1935, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 14, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

receiving those letters evaded the subject, perhaps because of their condescendence towards the chief of the Women's Committee or because it did not interest them to investigate the Kingfish. In regards to her first visit at the US Senate, Hammond intelligently wrote: "Contrary to history, the South had really won the Civil War. For every senator—whether from North, South, East or West—fairly wallowed in the doctrine of states' rights whenever Huey Long was mentioned".<sup>2167</sup> She even met with president Roosevelt, although the meeting was overall unsuccessful for the militant.<sup>2168</sup>



*Fig. 45: Hilda Phelps Hammond writing ca.1930, Leon Trice Louisiana political photographs, Manuscripts Collection 950, LaRC.*

The point can be made that Hammond's writings were aimed at empowering women. She was aiming at "the women of America", and encouraged them:

A time has come for American women to act. If suffrage for women is to be more than a meaningless duplication of the efforts of men in politics, the American woman must make a telling contribution to the political life of this country. She must lean when men falter; she must tend the lamp of decency in national government when the spark flickers; she must lift up the torch of honor and justice when men in high places let it fall; she must kindle ceaselessly the light of truth which is the birthright of this nation. This is her duty and the occasion has arisen for her to perform it. Today members of the United States Senate sit in harmful lethargy, indifferent to the protection of the honor and integrity of that body. Calling upon American women to stand by us, and acting on

<sup>2167</sup> Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 100.

<sup>2168</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-134.

behalf of the Women's Committee of Louisiana, I now charge the Senate of the United States with deliberately thwarting the public exposure of the fraudulent and corrupt practices exercised by Huey Pierce Long.<sup>2169</sup>

Hilda Phelps Hammond would often include clippings from newspapers of the day to give an idea of anti-longism in the state to those not familiar with Louisiana politics.<sup>2170</sup> She also wrote a thorough nearly three-hundred page book entitled *Petition to the Senate of the United States* (shortened title), in which she named all the senators involved in the process of not properly investigating the Kingfish, and petitioned the Senate to charge Long of fraud.<sup>2171</sup>

What was the result of her and her association's efforts? Senator Connally from Texas made a report presented at the Senate in which he condemned the use of dummy candidates and recognized Louisiana had a fraudulent system dominated by the Long machine, but concluded there were no means to inquire how much money was collected for the Overton campaign, what was done with it, and whether the newly elected senator was an instigator of the fraud; therefore, there could be no resolution of the subject.<sup>2172</sup> To Hammond, the senators were protecting the Kingfish, and thus there was no decency in government.<sup>2173</sup> To some extent, she, like Long, represented a South, or a Louisiana, that had no place in Washington.

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<sup>2169</sup> Hilda Phelps Hammond, "To the Women of America", Ida Weis Friend papers, Manuscripts Collection 287, box 4, folder 6, LaRC. Text also partly reproduced in Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 193-194.

<sup>2170</sup> In a letter to senator Royal S. Copeland (1868-1938) from New York, who was chairman of the Committee on Rules, she wrote, "As a citizen of this country who is interested in clean honest government, I am writing to you to request that at the earliest possible moment you will exert every effort to assist Congress in bringing to light the many charges that are already on file in the Senate concerning Mr. Huey Long of Louisiana, one of the most corrupt officials that ever was a member of Congress [...] I feel that the US Senate must be notified of the demand of the American women who are interested in decent clean government for an investigation of the charges that have been buried in the Senate concerning Mr. Long [...] I feel that you will help us in the attempt to demand high standards in the members of the United States Senate, no matter from what state they come from", Letter from Hilda Phelps Hammond to Royal S. Copeland, December 30, 1933, Hilda Phelps Hammond papers, Manuscripts Collection 705, box 1, folder 1, LaRC.

<sup>2171</sup> Hammond relates how tiresome and stressful the job of writing the piece was, in Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 258-259. In the *Petition*, the author wrote: "All members of the Senate [are] obviously fearing Long's THREATS uttered on the floor of the Senate", such as "NEVER touch a porcupine unless you expect to get some feathers in you" or "LAY OFF the man whom you WANT to lay off YOU", in Hilda Phelps Hammond, *Petition to the Senate of the United States of Hilda Phelps Hammond on Behalf of the Women's Committee of Louisiana in the Matter of Charges against Senator Huey P. Long and Senator John H. Overton*, 1935, 2, The Louisiana Digital Library, louisdl.louislibraries.org.

<sup>2172</sup> Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 162-164.

<sup>2173</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

Regarding the Sands Point Country Club affair referred to in chapter four, the association “gave a dinner nominally in honor of Andrew Jackson, actually in dishonor of Huey Long. The Battle of New Orleans in 1815 furnished a point of departure to discuss the ‘battle’ at Sands Point”.<sup>2174</sup> Harris explains how “up to the very hour of Long’s death the women’s committee conducted an unceasing campaign to have him unseated [...] [but] the Senate was deaf to their appeals”.<sup>2175</sup>

Hammond was not the only woman leading against the senator. Jewish activist Ida Weis Friend (1868-1963) also serves as an example of women getting involved in politics through anti-longism in the 1920s and 1930s. Friend wrote a statement in which she declared: “It is incumbent upon every loyal citizen to speak out in protest against corruption, fraud, intimidation and degradation to which the political machinery of Senator Long has subjected the citizens of Louisiana and especially those of New Orleans”.<sup>2176</sup> She, for instance, encouraged all readers to vote for Francis Williams at the 1934 mayoral election in New Orleans, who was running in an independent ticket.

#### 6.2.4 On the verge of war

The situation was unsustainable and something was about to occur that could be defined as one of the period’s most dangerous moments. Five years after impeachment, at the end of 1934, Long proposed once again, just as in 1929, a five-cent-per-barrel tax on oil refining.<sup>2177</sup> Davis affirmed: “The fact may be taken as a measure of the dictatorship’s growth”.<sup>2178</sup> Five years earlier Long had not been successful, but now he thought he was powerful enough. As a result of the measure, approximately one thousand workers of the oil giant were dismissed. These workers, tired of the senator’s policies, organized themselves in the Square Dealers Association, the president of which was Ernest K. Bourgeois (1905-1971), a twenty-nine year old former LSU student.<sup>2179</sup> They wore blue shirts and used the slogan “direct action”. Their main claim was to end with what they

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<sup>2174</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 207.

<sup>2175</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 127.

<sup>2176</sup> “Statement of Mrs. Ida Weis Friend”, 1, Ida Weis Friend papers, Manuscripts Collection 287, box 4, folder 2, LaRC.

<sup>2177</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 230; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 112.

<sup>2178</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 231.

<sup>2179</sup> Beals, “The Square Dealers”, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 278-287; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 197.

understood was the dictatorship of Louisiana, and threatened to march on Baton Rouge if no measures were taken.<sup>2180</sup> However, according to Kane, the association “never made clear just what it meant by ‘action’”.<sup>2181</sup>

On January 5, 1935, they sent an ultimatum to governor Allen, who was being protected by the Louisiana National Guard, giving him ten days to respond before taking action.<sup>2182</sup> They wrote: “As fellow citizens and Christians we earnestly appeal to you as our governor to help us find some way to prevent unprecedented unemployment and untold human suffering in our state threatened as result of recent tax legislative enactment”.<sup>2183</sup> But,

anticipating refusal of their demand that Governor O.K. Allen assemble the Legislature to repeal Huey Long’s dictatorship, the Square Deal Association of Louisiana announced tonight it would oppose the dictator with a home guard army it was seeking to organize in a military way in every Louisiana parish.<sup>2184</sup>

The Dealers were right and the puppet governor never responded; the state government’s only reaction was to reinforce protection of the capitol building in Baton Rouge by surrounding it with the National Guard.<sup>2185</sup> As some newspapers testified, their organization was growing, becoming more popular throughout the state,<sup>2186</sup> and prepared to act: “The Square Dealers are reported already to have enlisted several thousand men and women in their ranks. The forces of Long and his ally, Allen, number more than 2,000 members of the National Guard and a State constabulary unlimited under dictatorship statutes”.<sup>2187</sup>

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<sup>2180</sup> “Long Seizes Baton Rouge”, *New Orleans States*, January 23, 1935, 5.

<sup>2181</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 113.

<sup>2182</sup> Frank Allen, “26 Machine Gunners Guarding Gov. Allen”, *New Orleans States*, January 7, 1935, 1.

<sup>2183</sup> “Baton Rouge Is Bristling with Guns of ‘Cossacks’”, *New Orleans State*, January 5, 1935, 7.

<sup>2184</sup> “Oppose Huey Long By Organized Unit”, *The Montreal Gazette*, January 17, 1935, 17.

<sup>2185</sup> Frank Allen, “State Capitol Guard Boosted; Flay Long”, *New Orleans States*, January 10, 1935, 1, 5; “Louisiana Capitol Put Under Guard; Protection Also Provided for Executive Mansion as War on Long Spreads”, *The New York Times*, January 16, 1935, 1.

<sup>2186</sup> “Governor Allen Leaves Capital”, *New Orleans State*, January 9, 1935, 5.

<sup>2187</sup> “Oppose Huey Long By Organized Unit”, *The Montreal Gazette*, January 17, 1935, 17; “Anti-Long ‘Army’ Rallies in Capital; First Group, Comprising 350 Men in 4 Companies, Takes Shape at Baton Rouge”, *The New York Times*, January 20, 1935, 1.

The Kingfish finally gave in and agreed to refund four out of the five-cent tax per barrel. For its part, the Standard Oil was pleased.<sup>2188</sup> Long and J.C. Hilton, the oil company's representative, signed an agreement on January 22 in which they concurred "to make arrangements heretofore announced and agreed upon for modification in the tax on the refining of all oil, which, if carried out in good faith by both parties, will mean a reduction in the tax on refining oil to 1¢ per barrel".<sup>2189</sup> In regards to this agreement, journalist Garlin criticized: "Clearly, Huey Long gets along very well with bankers, corporation heads and rich planters"—<sup>2190</sup>, a statement that could have been easily applied to Machado as well. Thus the government achieved an agreement with the company. In the streets, however, events would not play out so peacefully.

Three days after the negotiation, one of the Square Dealers named Sidney Songy was arrested by Long's Bureau of Criminal Identification, and so began a military invasion of Baton Rouge.<sup>2191</sup> As had been announced, "Square Dealers tonight pushed ahead with plans for organizing a huge mobile military group to fight Longism".<sup>2192</sup> Men of the association armed with pistols and rifles occupied the East Baton Rouge Parish courthouse. At first they were one hundred and fifty men, but the number of insurrectionists rose to five hundred. In reply, Allen proclaimed martial law.<sup>2193</sup> The rules and regulations established that no one could be armed, except for members of the police or the Bureau of Criminal Identification. Similarly, a gathering of more than two people was considered a crowd and therefore banned. Finally, as if all that was not

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<sup>2188</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 113.

<sup>2189</sup> Huey Long's Agreement with Standard Oil, January 22, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, box 3, folder 2, LaRC; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 201. After the arrangement, the two parts released a joined circular that stated: "To make arrangements heretofore announced and agreed upon for modification in the tax on refining of oil to 1¢ a barrel, the State authorities have been assured by a majority of the members of the Legislature that they will give their formal consent to such modification at an early date", Circular "To Help Louisiana Resources and Industry!" January 22, 1935, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, 2511, 2512, OS:W, folder 2:1, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2190</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 38.

<sup>2191</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 233.

<sup>2192</sup> "Square Dealers of Louisiana Organize to War On Longism", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 18, 1935, 10.

<sup>2193</sup> "By the virtue of the authority and discretion vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Louisiana, I do hereby declare martial law for the parish of East Baton Rouge and city of Baton Rouge", Declaration by Oscar K. Allen, January 25, 1935, Hermann Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder 14, LaRC; and T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 13, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

enough, no newspaper or publication was allowed to influence readers against the officials of the State of Louisiana.<sup>2194</sup>

When learning about the release of Songy, the Dealers evacuated the courthouse. However, their activity did not end then, because the next day, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Bourgeois encouraged the members of the association to occupy the Baton Rouge airport, in what came to be simply known as “the battle of the airport”, where they came face to face with Huey’s National Guard.<sup>2195</sup> The encounter was unbalanced, for Long’s force consisted of five hundred men “bearing machine guns, gas bombs and modern rifles”,<sup>2196</sup> opposing one hundred Dealers. They used tear gas to disperse the rebels, and after one accidental shot injured a man named George N. Alessi, a police juror of the Tangipahoa parish, the uprising was quelled.<sup>2197</sup> It came to light later on that the kidnapped man who was supposedly a member of the Dealers, Songy, was in fact a spy for the Kingfish. Once these intense events were over, almost all the members of the association lost their jobs at Standard Oil.<sup>2198</sup> There were some arrests and the Dealers’ leader Bourgeois disappeared for a time to avoid being seized by the militia. In the following days, Louisiana regained normality and Long returned to Washington.<sup>2199</sup>

There is a fascinating account given by one witness, yet another anti-*longite* LSU student, a Californian named Wes Gallagher (1911-1997), who would go on to become a reporter and president of The Associated Press in the 1970s. In 1935, Gallagher wrote a letter to journalist David R. McGuire (1910-1960), who was one of the seven students expelled from LSU after the aforementioned university’s paper, the *Reveille*, incident the year prior. In the letter he wrote:

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<sup>2194</sup> General Orders N°. 2 signed by Brigadier General Louis F. Guerre, Headquarters First Military District of Baton Rouge, January 26, 1935, Hermann Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder 14, LaRC.

<sup>2195</sup> Kelly, “Why They Can’t Stop the Kingfish”, 33.

<sup>2196</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 234.

<sup>2197</sup> “Huey Long Troops Force his Foes to Surrender; Martial Law Declared; Civil War Is Averted”, *The New York Times*, January 27, 1935, 1.

<sup>2198</sup> Herman B. Deutsch, “Charges of Assassination Plot Bring Open Court Hearing as well as State Militia with Machine Guns on Steps of the Capitol; Songy Tells of Alleged Death Scheme”, *The New Orleans Item*, September 13, 1939; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 113–114; Harris, *The Kingfish*, 202, 205; Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 91.

<sup>2199</sup> “Militia Rules Baton Rouge; Square Deal Leader Missing”, *Dallas Morning News*, January 28, 1935, 1; Hair, *The Kingfish*, 298-300.

Well as you no doubt have read, things have been popping in the old burg. Even more so than usual. This is the first evening I have been home since a week ago Thursday. Huey has been raising hell and so has the Square Deal for the past week, and I have been going to town for the ins. Got beat once and got beats on the two biggest stories of the week. Got shoved around by the Kingfish's gorillas and advised that if I didn't want to have my looks changed I wouldn't try to interview Bourgeois as he was released from custody. Got him though, a block from the capitol, and still have my looks, such as they are. They beat hell out of your friend Tryce [...] Don't let these AP [Associated Press] reports fool you they and the Times-Pic have done their damdest [*sic*] to put the Square Deal and its leaders on a pedestal. This stuff about ap being unprejudiced [*sic*], nuts. Here is the situation in a nutshell. Kingfish puts on a big show for the saps and they fall for it. The Square Deal would like to do something but hasn't guts enough to do it and all they can do is blow and how they blow, wow. If they spent half their time fighting instead of talking they could upset Hitler let alone Huey. As it was the Kingfish won as usual. I think the main thing he wanted to get before the public was that he was too big a man for a mere 'murder' and that if they got him it would be an 'assassination' [...] Things have been quieted down considerably now since the big shot has left town but he'll be back and we'll be off again.<sup>2200</sup>

Sindler analyzes these events with a concerned tone that confirmed that they were the result of desperation from the part of the anti-*longite* in front of the Kingfish's "tyranny": "The Square Deal protest doubtless was a fiasco, but it was instructive as to the degree of desperation and proneness to violence to which Huey had reduced his opponents".<sup>2201</sup> General Fleming, who was a member of the Louisiana National Guard, defined the failed revolt as "the kind of insurrection you found in the Latin American countries in the old days".<sup>2202</sup> In fact, similar riots that happened in Cuba after 1930 will be analyzed in the following pages.

After the Square Dealers uprising, the Kingfish started to become more suspicious about the idea of being assassinated. He announced that the Standard Oil Company was trying to murder him because of his positioning in the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay.<sup>2203</sup> The senator even gave a speech at the US Senate about the supposed plot that was aimed at ending his involvement in the South American conflict.<sup>2204</sup> The leader of the women's division of the Square Deal Association defined the idea of the plot to

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<sup>2200</sup> Letter from Wes Gallagher to David R. McGuire, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 1, folder 14, LaRC.

<sup>2201</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 95.

<sup>2202</sup> *The New York Times*, January 27, 1935.

<sup>2203</sup> F. Edw. Hebert, "Long Charges a Plot to Murder Him and Others", *New Orleans States*, January 26, 1935, 1-2; "Standard Oil Plot to Kill Huey Long", *The American Progress*, February 1st, 1935, 1, 11; Davis, *Huey Long*, 236.

<sup>2204</sup> "Long Tells Senate of a Murder Plot", *New Orleans States*, January 28, 1935, 1, 15; "Standard Oil Co. Seeks His Death, Says Long", *The Times-Picayune*, January 29, 1935, 9; Davis, *Huey Long*, 236.

assassinate the senator as Long's "fairy tale", and assured that the only thing the association wanted was to end him politically.<sup>2205</sup>

### 6.2.5 Stealing Roosevelt's thunder

Simultaneous to Long's invasion of New Orleans on July 1934, the rivalry between Long and Roosevelt was increasing to the point that the Pelican State stopped receiving as much federal funding as it had used to.<sup>2206</sup> In fact, "at a time when other states were scrambling for Federal funds, Huey took steps to keep them out of Louisiana".<sup>2207</sup> So did the president, who "ordered all agencies to give no aid to Long. The billions that were being spent on emergency unemployment relief largely bypassed Louisiana".<sup>2208</sup> In a federal system, such as the American, Long was showing that his state power could grow aside from the government in Washington. A journalist reflected upon this issue, demonstrating that Kingfish was somehow challenging the entire political system of the country:

There is deeper significance in this exhibition of power [...] It shows that, despite the complaints that Federal power has swallowed up state and local power, there still is a vast sovereignty in a state. Driven by such a relentless and resourceful machine as Long's, it exhibits almost the vitality of an independent nation.<sup>2209</sup>

In the US Senate, the Kingfish continued criticizing the New Deal as follows: "The quicker we wipe out the New Deal [...] the quicker we will begin to progress. The quicker we get rid of its isms and skisms and what not, then we will be moving forward".<sup>2210</sup> When the US president announced the Second New Deal in the middle of 1935 there were rumors that parts of it were inspired in Long's political program

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<sup>2205</sup> "Murder Plot Is Long Fairy Tale", *New Orleans States*, January 28, 1935, 15.

<sup>2206</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 213. Long demanded the Federal government to lower their funds to Louisiana in a speech he delivered at the US Senate, in Bascom N. Timmons, "Roosevelt Attacked By Long In Senate", *New Orleans States*, January 7, 1935, 1.

<sup>2207</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 127.

<sup>2208</sup> Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 341. The Kingfish affirmed at the senate: "Louisiana is a State which is supposed to have been denied gratuities of the Federal Government, and we would rather not have them, dispensed as they are, than to have them", in Huey P. Long, re-printed Congressional Record, 74 Congress, First Session, January 7, 1935, 148, Cecil Morgan papers, Manuscripts Collection 312, box 6, LaRC. James Farley argued that the Roosevelt administration never denied allotting Louisiana its funds, but it was Long who refused federal officials to supervise the state budget, in Farley, *Behind the Ballots*, 252.

<sup>2209</sup> Frost, "Huey Long Cracks the Whip", 11.

<sup>2210</sup> "Long Opens Drive for President in Senate Address", *The Times-Picayune*, April 6, 1935, 3.

because of the strong economic interventionism it proposed and the high taxation of the wealthy through the Revenue Act.<sup>2211</sup> Therefore, *The American Progress* insinuated FDR was stealing Long's thunder, all the while using techniques to distract the Kingfish and seize his program.<sup>2212</sup> In fact, according to political economist Raymond Moley (1886-1975), who started being a supporter of the New Deal, Roosevelt himself had used that same expression, that is, the need to "steal Long's thunder", in a conversation with him and two other friends. According to Moley, FDR's intention was to "woo" some of the Kingfish's support.<sup>2213</sup>

Kane wrote that the Louisiana senator "forced the Roosevelt Administration to the left, to the adoption of more and more liberal measures to meet his threat".<sup>2214</sup> Historian Richard Hofstadter also argued: "Huey Long's popularity showed the dissatisfaction of a large part of the electorate. And no sign of a really decisive turn toward business recovery had yet come. The result was a sharp and sudden turn toward the left, the beginning of the second New Deal".<sup>2215</sup> Similarly, British essayist Roy Jenkins has affirmed that the president proposed a much more radical deal than the first one due to the wave of new populist leaders that emerged at the beginning of the 1930s, and as a way of fighting them.<sup>2216</sup> The Second New Deal was initiated a few months after the spread of the Share Our Wealth program. It included measures that followed the idea "soak the rich" through an important raise of taxes to big corporations and to receive inheritance. It seems reasonable that the "Share Our Wealth's influence on the Second New Deal was more than negligible",<sup>2217</sup> thus it is arguably plausible that there could have been some impact from one policy on the other. FDR biographer Conrad Black writes that Roosevelt had decided to "take the New Deal further to avoid any possibility

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<sup>2211</sup> Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*, 131.

<sup>2212</sup> "Roosevelt Declares for Share Wealth Program—But He Backs Out When Forced to Face Issue", *The American Progress*, July issue, 1935, 1, 8.

<sup>2213</sup> Moley, *After Seven Years*, 305.

<sup>2214</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 116.

<sup>2215</sup> Richard Hofstadter (1948), *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 438.

<sup>2216</sup> Roy Jenkins, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: The American Presidents Series: The 32nd President, 1933-1945* (London: Macmillan, 2004), 87.

<sup>2217</sup> Edwin Amenta, Kathleen Dunleavy, and Mary Bernstein, "Stolen Thunder? Huey Long's 'Share Our Wealth', Political Mediation, and the Second New Deal", *American Sociological Review* 59, n° 5 (October 1994): 686.

of being outflanked by [Huey P.] Long, [Francis E.] Townsend, and [Charles E.] Coughlin”.<sup>2218</sup>

Fearing for his political future and the Kingfish’s increasing popularity, the president carried out a secret poll about hypothetical presidential elections. James A. Farley (1888-1976), chairman of the Democratic National Committee and Postmaster General, was in charge of the experiment. 150,000 letters were sent, on April 30, 1935, to different citizens of the United States from all forty-eight states with the question: “Dear Voter: Who would be your choice if a President of the United States were being elected today: Franklin D. Roosevelt? A Republican Candidate? Huey P. Long? or, Another Candidate?”. The results were certainly surprising, for if hypothetically extrapolated to the whole country, the Kingfish would have obtained four million votes, i.e. he would have been the third political force in the country.<sup>2219</sup> The amusing man from the South was not so funny anymore.

According to Harris, “that Huey Long hoped to lead a new party as a candidate for the Presidency against Roosevelt there can be little doubt”.<sup>2220</sup> In 1935, a journalist also believed so when referring to the 1936 presidential election: “It is necessary to regard Huey Long seriously, however incredible that may seem. It is the American political demagogue who is the real menace to the Roosevelt administration”.<sup>2221</sup> Williams, however, believed Long’s intentions for the future were not exactly those. The Kingfish had everything planned to slowly ascend to the presidency, although he never denied the possibility of running as early as 1936.<sup>2222</sup> First, he would give support to a candidate of a third party to run for the 1936 election in order to diminish Roosevelt’s power and

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<sup>2218</sup> Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 341. Retired doctor Francis Townsend developed a plan according to which he would “cure” the Depression through assuring a \$200 monthly pension for all American citizens over the age of sixty. For more on the Townsend Plan, see Abraham Holtzman, *The Townsend Movement, a Political Study* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1963); Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941* (New York: Times Books, 1984), 241-243. Besides Long, Coughlin, and Townsend, I would add a fourth militant: novelist Upton Sinclair and his End Poverty in California (EPIC) program. See also Leon A. Harris, *Upton Sinclair, American Rebel* (New York: Crowell, 1975); Lauren Coodley, *Upton Sinclair: California Socialist, Celebrity Intellectual* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); 234-237.

<sup>2219</sup> Farley, *Behind the Ballots*, 249-250; Amenta, Dunleavy, and Bernstein, “Stolen Thunder”, 688; Amann, “Les fascismes américains”, 69; McElvaine, *The Great Depression*, 246.

<sup>2220</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 135.

<sup>2221</sup> Springer, “Huey Long: The Amazing Louisiana Senator”, 124.

<sup>2222</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 818.

have a Republican president. Then, he would tolerate four years of a conservative government until in 1940 he would run for the presidency with a consolidated and increased acclaim. He was “willing to let the country suffer for four years so that he could later save it”.<sup>2223</sup> Kane also believed those were the senator’s plans, and wrote the politician had affirmed to some friends: “1940 will be my real year”.<sup>2224</sup> A journalist had also predicted this path before the senator’s assassination.<sup>2225</sup>

#### a) Mr. Long goes to Hollywood<sup>2226</sup>

When asked in 1935 about his future, Long stated that he would run for governor again in 1936; and about the presidency he vaguely said: “That comes later”.<sup>2227</sup> In fact, in an interview, Allen Ellender, one of Long’s multiple attorneys during the impeachment,<sup>2228</sup> explained that, “if necessary, [...] Long would have supported a progressive Republican in 1936”.<sup>2229</sup> It is a difficult and perhaps a futile task to wonder what the Kingfish’s political intentions were. Davis wrote, while the senator was still alive, that he was “an improviser of tactics, Huey further confounds prognosticators by a backwoods evasiveness, a great deal of loose, leg-pulling talk”.<sup>2230</sup> In an interview for the *Time* magazine the Kingfish was asked whether he would run for the presidency or not, to which Long answered: “My modesty prohibits me from answering that question”.<sup>2231</sup> Counterfactual history is not useful nor the object of this dissertation; however, it is worth noting that Long was seen as a possible threat. To historian Snyder, “the evidence suggests that in 1936 Huey Long might have denied FDR the presidency”.<sup>2232</sup> One reporter was, however, skeptic when writing: “Senator Huey Long wants to be President of the United States. The idea is ridiculous, to be sure it just couldn’t happen”.<sup>2233</sup> This statement certainly reminds of Sinclair Lewis’ 1935 *It Can’t Happen Here*, a novel in which it did happen and a dictatorial character named Buzz Windrip achieves power in

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<sup>2223</sup> *Ibid.*, 844.

<sup>2224</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 125.

<sup>2225</sup> Iwrin, “The Empire of the Kingfish. Part Three”, 34.

<sup>2226</sup> This title is taken from the movie *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), directed by Frank Capra.

<sup>2227</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 257; Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 298.

<sup>2228</sup> Becnel, *Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana*, 47.

<sup>2229</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 86, n. 31, interview given in September 13, 1935.

<sup>2230</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 273-274.

<sup>2231</sup> “National Affairs—Political Note: Share-the-Wealth Wave”, *Time*, April 1st, 1935, 17.

<sup>2232</sup> Snyder, “Huey Long and the Presidential Election of 1936”, 143.

<sup>2233</sup> Sisson, “Huey Long, Dictator of the Delta”, 3.

the United States. It most likely would have not occurred, but one must not dismiss his popular support.

In any case, the Kingfish had the confidence and popularity to run. A pamphleteer showed his utter admiration for him:

Huey Long is not afraid of any man or set of men. He is the only man in the United States today with guts enough to really champion the cause of the common people. He cannot be bought, nor bluffed. He knows all our troubles have been brought about, and he knows how to remedy them. He is the man that will lead the common people out of darkness into light [...] That is why Huey Long should be President of the United States.<sup>2234</sup>

The politician was already becoming nationally known; for example, he was the cover of *Time* magazine on two occasions—October 3rd, 1932, and April 1st, 1935, as would Gerardo Machado that time<sup>2235</sup>—, and constantly appeared in national newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets.<sup>2236</sup> A newspaper from Ithaca, NY, worried about Long becoming a national figure: “The people outside the state [of Louisiana] are beginning to learn a little too much about the man with the fat jowls and loud mouth who is running Louisiana like a very bad imitation of Mussolini”.<sup>2237</sup> The following quote is clearly an overstatement, but it is also an indication of the senator’s growing popularity: “[A]t his death he was, with the possible exception of the executive heads of our greatest world powers, better known and more discussed in throughout the world than any other man in public or private life”.<sup>2238</sup>

There was even correspondence between Long and Warner Brothers about making a movie about the Kingfish—entitled, precisely, *The Kingfish*. They refer to a draft of the

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<sup>2234</sup> Hitt, “Why Huey P. Long Should Be President”, 32.

<sup>2235</sup> *Time*, January 19, 1931, vol. XVII, n° 3, and *Time*, May 15, 1933, vol. XXI, n° 20.

<sup>2236</sup> In 1933 *Real America* concluded an article by saying, “Huey Long is more than a Louisiana local problem now”, in Scaramouche, “Huey P. Long. Clown and Knave of the US Senate”, 82. He was the cover of *Real America* on December 1934, vol. 4, n° 4, under the title “Huey P. Long: Mad Tyrant of Louisiana”, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 14, LaRC. Other magazines include *Collier’s Weekly*, *Today*, *Liberty*, *Real America*, among others.

<sup>2237</sup> “What’s Wrong in Louisiana?” *The Cornell Daily Sun*, December 8, 1934, 4.

<sup>2238</sup> John H. Overton, 74th Congress, 2d Session, House Document No. 480, *Memorial Services Held in the House of Representatives of the United States, Together with Remarks Presented in Eulogy of Huey Pierce Long, Late a Senator from Louisiana*, 35, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1936, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 44, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

script of the film, the protagonist of which would be named Joey Strong, although in the end the idea was shelved due to the passing of the politician. Huey Long met with William Rankin from Warner Bros. Studios in New Orleans on July 1933. Upon his return to California, Rankin assured the senator: “We are busily at work rewriting the first script and incorporating in it the many fine touches which you gave us [...] We believe we are getting a great picture together and one that will enable the people of the nation to see the Kingfish as he really is”.<sup>2239</sup> A few days before the death of the senator, James Wright, a banker who lost his fortune due to the Depression but who had recovered and was ready to finance a new endeavor, wrote Earle Christenberry, Long’s assistant, inquiring him about the possibility of making a motion picture. Wright spoke of the great support the Kingfish had in California and that it was a perfect moment to pursue the idea.<sup>2240</sup> A few days after Long’s death, this same person insisted on the project and coldly stated that “the value of a motion picture on that subject will rapidly decrease as time passes and public interest in the character lessens”.<sup>2241</sup> Mrs. Long, however, was not at all interested on the project and wrote to several motion picture companies to “notify you that I vigorously protest against your making such a picture”. She also “advised” them that “I will invoke the aid of the courts wherever possible to protect my rights and the rights of my children and family if your company attempts to make such a picture”.<sup>2242</sup> Nonetheless, Rankin and Christenberry spoke again in 1936 about the possibility of making a movie—that now had the support of Mrs. Long—, and Long’s assistant wrote: “It must be agreed, however, that the picture will not be unfavorable to the late Senator Long, and that Mrs. Long must approve the final script before production is commenced”.<sup>2243</sup> In the end, the project was stopped and in 1947 Rankin wrote Christenberry that “the only trouble with all of our plans to make a picture embracing the life of the late Senator Long was that we were about ten years ahead of

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<sup>2239</sup> Letter from William Rankin to Huey P. Long, July 26, 1933. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 16, LaRC.

<sup>2240</sup> Letter from James L. Wright to Earle J. Christenberry, September 6, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

<sup>2241</sup> Letter from James L. Wright to Earle J. Christenberry, September 18, 1935. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

<sup>2242</sup> Letter from Rose McConnell to Robert Cochren from Universal Pictures Corporation, September 26, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

<sup>2243</sup> Letter from William Rankin and Earle J. Christenberry, August 8, 1936, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

time”.<sup>2244</sup> By then, *All the King’s Men* by Robert Rossen was already in production. There is a full script written by Christenberry and Rankin for the movie *The Kingfish*, but no date is available.<sup>2245</sup>

## b) Share-our-wealth with the IRS

Roosevelt understood the menace and defiance Long represented for his administration and, taking into account the different accusations of corruption the senator had received, the president initiated an investigation on the Kingfish. Director of the Internal Revenue Service Elmer L. Irey (1888-1948) would be leading it. Irey had been also been the head of the Al Capone investigation of 1931.<sup>2246</sup> Actually, Irey narrated how they applied the same techniques that had put the gangster in jail.<sup>2247</sup>

Throughout his political career, Long was accused of corruption on several occasions, as this article from *The New York Times* shows:

Possibly presaging one of the most sensational trials in the history of American politics, it was learned today on unquestionable authority that Senator Huey P. Long of Louisiana may be prosecuted for asserted evasion of tax payments on a substantial income derived from undisclosed sources.<sup>2248</sup>

There were rumors about this investigation, which lasted for the last two years of Long’s life. *Real America* published:

Undenied by the Kingfish, press stories have flashed across the nation that Senator Huey P. Long soon may face prosecution by the United States Internal Revenue Department for income tax evasion. It is an open secret, publicly charged, in Louisiana, that Federal agents may have been investigating the country boy’s dollars for many months.<sup>2249</sup>

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<sup>2244</sup> Letter from William Rankin and Earle J. Christenberry, July 22, 1947, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

<sup>2245</sup> David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

<sup>2246</sup> Together with William J. Slocum, he wrote a book about his investigations, entitled *The Tax-Dodgers* and published in 1948. Full reference available in note XX.

<sup>2247</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>2248</sup> “Huey Long’s Taxes Are Investigated”, *The New York Times*, April 15, 1933.

<sup>2249</sup> Scaramouche, “Senator Huey P. Long. Clown and Knave”, 13.

A few months after this story, *The Chicago Tribune* published a similar one, which read:

It was learned today that the Roosevelt administration has at last moved toward the prosecution of the Louisiana connoisseur of pot likker and corn pone on oft repeated charges that he had received many thousands of dollars in various ‘fees’, both as governor of Louisiana and as United States senator, and that he neglected to report these sums in his income tax schedules. The country boy has laughed it off, so far.<sup>2250</sup>

This time the investigation did move forward. Irey wrote they set up their headquarters in New Orleans, where they examined the Kingfish’s bank statements, checks, and such. A man named Pat O’Rourke was chosen to infiltrate the Long circle by moving to the Roosevelt Hotel. This agent had done the same job for the Al Capone investigation and was working undercover, for his real name was Mike Malone. His job would be particularly focused on the senator’s friend and director of the hotel Seymour Weiss. Long was accused of tax evasion, extorting citizens to fund his political campaigns, blackmailing companies, and firing political opponents that held jobs during his administration.

The search also focused on the business of an oil company that, curiously, had Long’s imprint. In 1934, together with senator James A. Noe (1890-1976)—who would be governor of Louisiana after O.K. Allen suddenly passed away in January 28, 1936—<sup>2251</sup> the senator founded the Win or Lose Oil Company, a “holding corporation that bought and sold lucrative state oil leases”.<sup>2252</sup> Its vice-president was Seymour Weiss, its assistant and treasurer Earle Christenberry, and its stocks were shared amongst members of the Long circle.<sup>2253</sup> The name of the company came, according to Christenberry, from a conversation the assistant had with the Kingfish, in which the senator told him: “Amos and Andy are always talking about their Fresh Air Taxi Company, and you remind me of them. You’re starting out with nothing. You make something; and you may end up

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<sup>2250</sup> John Boettiger, “See Huey Long Prosecution on US Tax Charge”, *Chicago Tribune*, December 22, 1933, 1.

<sup>2251</sup> “National Affairs—Louisiana Heirs”, *Time*, February 3, 14; “Louisiana Loses Leader in Death of Gov. Allen”, *The American Progress*, March 30, 1936, 3. A journalist wrote a bit cruelly that Allen “followed his chieftain in death”, in Craddock Goins, “Aftermath: Louisiana a Year-and-a-Half After Long”, *Real America*, April 1937, 5, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 3, folder 28, LSMHC, New Orleans.

<sup>2252</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 80.

<sup>2253</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 228.

with nothing. You're either going to win or lose [...] That's it. Win or Lose Oil Co.”<sup>2254</sup> To avoid any direct connection with the corporation, Long did not invest any money in it, but he received thirty-one shares of stock.<sup>2255</sup> Only in 1935 the company had earned \$347,937.50.<sup>2256</sup> It truly became “one of the largest independent oil companies”.<sup>2257</sup> It was said that this oil and gas company “never lost”, because they leased lands to big companies—such as Texaco, Gulf and Shell—<sup>2258</sup> that explored the soil in which deposits had already been found.<sup>2259</sup> It was a perfect business.

The issue was that, technically, the land belonged to the state of Louisiana, and “how much the taxpayers benefited from these leases depended on the honesty and integrity of the public officials who signed the leases”.<sup>2260</sup> Therefore, a great number of the irregularities Irey found when investigating the Kingfish were linked to the finances of this company and the fast and suspicious accumulation of capital of the people involved. Win or Lose had enjoyed a certain secretiveness that allowed it to act freely. In 1934, while the Federal Grand Jury in New Orleans investigated tax evasion in several companies and people of Louisiana related to the Kingfish, such as Abe L. Shushan (1894-1966) or the Arkansas-Louisiana Pipeline Company, “quietly, the Win or Lose Oil Company, officered by Long’s friends, was chartered to drill a lease of fifty wells on State property”.<sup>2261</sup> Besides the clear evidence, Williams was still not convinced of Long’s opportunism and affirmed that although the morality of the company was questionable, Huey was most likely not violating any law, only his own idea that politicians should not receive extra money from private business.<sup>2262</sup>

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<sup>2254</sup> Michael L. Gillette transcripts of an interview to Earle J. Christenberry, 1970s, 9, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 34, LaRC.

<sup>2255</sup> Jeansonne, “The Apotheosis of Huey Long”, 288. The rest of the “Long gang” owned the following shares: James Noe, 31; Seymour Weiss, 24; O.K. Allen, 12; and each of Long’s secretaries, 1; the total was 100 shares with no investment, in Irey and Slocum, “The Gentleman from Louisiana”, 99.

<sup>2256</sup> Elmer L. Irey and William J. Slocum, “The End of the Kingfish”, *Coronet*, January 1948, 51, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 4, folder 16, LaRC.

<sup>2257</sup> Michael L. Gillette transcripts of an interview to Earle J. Christenberry, 1970s, 11, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 34, LaRC.

<sup>2258</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>2259</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 160.

<sup>2260</sup> Becnel, *Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana*, 62.

<sup>2261</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, 228.

<sup>2262</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 827. It is worth stating that, in his biography of over 800 pages, Williams only dedicates three pages (825-827) to discuss the Win or Lose Oil Company.

A part from the Win or Lose issues, Irey elaborated a list of inappropriate goods the senator possessed, including six Cadillacs—each one worth \$5,000—,<sup>2263</sup> a large collection of suits valued at \$3,000, and an annual income of thousands of dollars.<sup>2264</sup> The Kingfish was certainly not behaving according to his Share Our Wealth program or as a “common man”. In fact, according to an anti-*longite* newspaper which was “dedicated to the purpose of exposing political frauds and fakers”, Huey had said: “I may be hated when I leave office, but I won’t be broke”.<sup>2265</sup> However, and besides all evidence, after he passed away a friend of Long’s, state senator Daniel Fleming, affirmed: “It is more than likely he died leaving practically no material wealth”.<sup>2266</sup>

In order to execute his policies Long had to raise taxes. By 1935, they were 75% higher than in 1927. The most affected were the richest incomes, the cotton exchange of New Orleans, and newspaper advertising. According to Garlin, however, since Long came to power it had been those less wealthy who saw their taxes rise for the benefit of the powerful. As an example of what he understood was Long’s demagoguery, the author told that,

two weeks before the [Louisiana] Legislature convened in the fall of 1933, Long declared for a 25 per cent income tax on incomes above \$50,000. When the Legislature met, he reduced it to 6 per cent. It is instructive to note that the difference in tax rate between an income of \$2,500 and \$1,000,000 is only 4 per cent.<sup>2267</sup>

The journalist also argued that the Kingfish imposed massive taxes on everyday products, such as tobacco and gasoline, as well as electric light and gas rates thus raising the cost of living.<sup>2268</sup>

Other relevant numbers have to do with the Kingfish’s law-making agenda: between August 1934 and September 1935, Long approved 463 bills in special sessions of the legislature of Louisiana. In the last months of the senator’s life there was an accelerated

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<sup>2263</sup> The senator was not the only one owning this type of expensive car. There is a letter from the Cadillac Motor Car Company of New Orleans contacting Alice Lee Grosjean in regards to the repairs her Cadillac needed, in Letter from H.J. Bapp, manager, to Alice Lee Grosjean, November 21, 1933, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 1, folder 12, LaRC.

<sup>2264</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah of the Masses*, 158.

<sup>2265</sup> “I May Be Hated When I Leave Office, but I Won’t Be Broke”, *The Louisiana Guardian*, June 6, 1931, 4.

<sup>2266</sup> Quoted in Denis Flynn, “Why Huey P. Long Was Killed” (New Orleans: Fraternity Press, 1935), 22.

<sup>2267</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 30.

<sup>2268</sup> Garlin, *The Real Huey P. Long*, 45.

and most prolific dynamic of approving bills that disconcerted the members of the administration, who often were not quite sure what were they voting for. Long had come to control all branches of the government: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial.<sup>2269</sup> He was acting fast.<sup>2270</sup> He seemed overwhelmed by a feeling that would accompany him during his last years: the fear of being assassinated.<sup>2271</sup> This probably influenced him. Journalist Hodding Carter anticipated it in an article in which he stated that the fact “that there has emerged so far no Brutus or Corday to bell the Louisiana wild-cat is no proof that one is not in the making”.<sup>2272</sup>



**Fig. 46:** *National Guardsmen, Real America, December 1934, p. 10, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 3, folder 14, LaRC.*

<sup>2269</sup> Irwin, “The Empire of the Kingfish. Part One”, 25; Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 371.

<sup>2270</sup> Journalist Chick Frampton inquired him about his rush, to which Long answered: “Chick, you sometimes fight fire with fire. The means justify the end [*sic*]. I would do it some other way if there was time or if it wasn't necessary to do it this way”, Interview to Chick Frampton, no date, by T. Harry Williams, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 28, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2271</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 131. The senator's fear was not entirely irrational, for he had received several threats. Once, he received a note signed by “C” that stated, “I expect to shoot you on sight without warning. Body guards will not prevent”, Threat Against the Life of Huey P. Long by “C”, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 2, folder 13, LaRC. Six years earlier, a man had written an open frightening menace to the then governor, which is not certain he read: “What the people of Louisiana really need is a blind jackass that can give bond to kick Huey P. Long's fertilizer brains over a forty acre field. To hang him would be spoiling good help [hemp?],--to shoot him were to lower the dignity of powder and lead. To knife him were driving honest steel into the rotten carcass of a cowardly coyote. Perhaps it were best to nail him by the ears to a black-jack post, strip him stark naked, and have him thoroughly horse-whipped by a blue-gum nigger because of his misdeeds and misuse of office and betrayal of the people's confidence, etc., etc., Huey is a parody on God's masterpiece,--a disgrace to American manhood”, Oscar R. Whilden, “Bulletin N° 101”, April 23, 1929, THW papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 10, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2272</sup> Hodding Carter, “Louisiana Limelighter”, *Review of Reviews* 91, March 1935, 24, Huey P. Long published materials 1932-1936, Mss. 2363, box 1, folder 5, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

### 6.3 Machado as a dictator

Historian Guillermo J. Jorge argues that during his first administration Machado had become the best president Cuba had ever had due to the extraordinary accomplishments he achieved. However, the author argues, it was in his second administration begun after the reelection process that the Cuban politician turned into a plain and simple dictator. This idea is arguable, for it idealizes, to some extent, the feats Machado developed between 1925 and 1929, and undermines the repression and persecution of opponents carried out throughout that period. Jorge diminishes the gravity of the reelection, as if it had not been the president's maneuver but a sacrifice he had had to endure in the face of adverse circumstances.<sup>2273</sup> On the other hand, contemporary of Machado Roig de Leuchsenring had a more critical perspective on the president since the day he took office. Once an enthusiast, Roig now reversed himself, and argued that:

Desde los primeros meses de su gobierno, el presidente Machado se reveló en caudillo dictador que para afianzarse en el poder echaría mano a la fuerza, el soborno, la violación de la Constitución y las leyes y, principalmente, del apoyo decidido a cambio de favores, privilegios y concesiones de todas clases, de los gobernantes de Washington y los capitalistas y negociantes de Wall Street.<sup>2274</sup>

It is without a doubt that the Cuban president had gathered enormous power in his hands. To cite one eloquent example, it became a habit for men wanting some kind of favor from the president to even grant him the intimate company of their own wives.<sup>2275</sup> Already during his investment as Doctor Honoris Causa in 1926, the Cuban politician took the opportunity to justify the need for a strong man leading the country in such difficult times. The president was preparing the ground for his future plans to gather ever more power. In the speech he gave during the ceremony, the president stated:

Es que la guerra [World War I], con sus terribles males y peligros, impuso a millones de hombres la necesidad del Mando, y así restauró los prestigios de la Autoridad. Listos los

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<sup>2273</sup> Guillermo J. Jorge, "Administración del presidente general Gerardo Machado y Morales. Primer periodo, 1925-1929", *Ciclo de Conferencias sobre los Presidentes de Cuba (1868-1933)* (Miami: Ramón Guiteras Intercultural Center, 1985), 45-47.

<sup>2274</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 225.

<sup>2275</sup> Toledano, "Las diversiones amorosas de Machado: La vida galante del dictador cubano", *El Heraldo de Madrid*, November 2, 1933.

Tratados y desvanecida en breve la ilusión de la Paz, vieron los pueblos que sus males cambiaban sin desaparecer y que los peligros que los amenazaron se renovaban sin extinguirse. De ahí que, sintiendo la nostalgia del Jefe, vivan ansiosos de dirección y de gobierno fuerte. Así se explica la conquista del Poder por Mussolini en Italia, por Primo de Rivera en España y en Alemania por el Mariscal Hindenburg [*sic*]. El pueblo no acepta ya que el Parlamento siga siendo la arena donde los políticos se disputan el goce del poder, excitados por la música de la elocuencia. El pueblo reclama de sus representantes que en el Parlamento hagan labor útil, que se ocupen de satisfacer las exigencias del orden práctico y las de aquel otro orden superior de la grandeza nacional. No soporta las Cámaras que, cerrando los ojos a la realidad, prolongan su pugilato con el Ejecutivo, labor estéril que tan de moda estuvo en los años anteriores a la guerra. De todo esto resulta que, acosada por las necesidades del presente, la voluntad nacional le brinda al Jefe del Estado poder sin límites. No le importa al pueblo que su ejercicio se llame Dictadura. Lo que pide es que se emplee en protegerlo eficazmente en la lucha por la existencia: que el Poder persiga y realice la doble finalidad del fomento de los intereses materiales y el resguardo de los intereses morales.<sup>2276</sup>

As Cubanologist Jorge I. Domínguez wrote in a 1986 article, the president called for a “patriotic dictatorship”.<sup>2277</sup> This public address in which the “people” are portrayed as infants who need guidance and firm authority was certainly bringing the president closer to reelection. In a broader but similar manner, extremist and sycophant Lamar Schweyer was convinced that: “Los pueblos, las masas, no pueden regirse por regímenes de igualdad, porque las ciencias biológicas nos han probado, en estos últimos veinte años, que la palabra igualdad no existe en el léxico de la Naturaleza”.<sup>2278</sup> In order to define the Machado’s administration and manner of ruling, another supporter, the Spaniard Pedro González-Blanco, spoke of the “*autoridad rescatada*” (restored authority). The author referred to the Cuban president as a type of man that “hace brotar el orden de las ruinas, la virtud del orden y de la virtud la gloria y la prosperidad de los pueblos”, and

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<sup>2276</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Discurso leído, el 31 de mayo de 1926, por el general Gerardo Machado y Morales, presidente de la República, en contestación al del Dr. Jose A. Del Cueto, decano de la Facultad de Derecho, en el acto de investidura del grado de doctor en derecho público honoris causa que le fue concedido”, *La investidura del presidente de la república*, 125. This speech is partially reproduced in the president’s memoirs: Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 184-185, and is reproduced in its entirety in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 187-206. The text is also quoted in its English translation in Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 67.

<sup>2277</sup> Domínguez, “Seeking Permission to Build a Nation”, 37.

<sup>2278</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Biología de la democracia*, 10. In this book the author argued that in the nineteenth century and after the revolutions that occurred in the recently-born Latin American states, freedom meant anarchy. As a solution, Lamar Schweyer wrote, dictatorships came as a solution to turbulent situations and brought tranquility to the people, in 69-71. Similarly, he stated: “La tiranía es el paliativo crónico al desorden”, 95. Linked to that reflection, the author had the following theory regarding the (in)governability of Latin America: “La mentalidad americana no alcanza a concebir la noción de Estado, sino con el limitado espíritu de la tribu”, in 74-75.

added that the necessary authority he emanated was in truth pure respect for the law.<sup>2279</sup> This was the terminology used in the late 1920s to justify and define Machado. In another of Lamar Schweyer's controversial books, the author similarly stated that in nations where there is no tradition of self-government democracy will necessarily derive into anarchy or dictatorship.<sup>2280</sup>

Aside from the evidence, however, neither Machado nor Long fully accepted the epithet "dictator". This was in marked contrast to, say, Spain's general Miguel Primo de Rivera, who termed himself thus, with the implication that, once his reforms were over, he would retire.<sup>2281</sup> But in the Americas, the ambient was more circumspect. The "asno", for instance, assured in a 1930 speech:

Si algo tiene que sorprenderme, es que al cabo de cinco años de labor, se pretenda lanzar sobre mí y sobre los elementos que me secundan con patriótica devoción, el estigma de una dictadura mancillante y ruinosa [...] No puede llamarse dictadura a mi gobierno [...] No puede ser dictador el ciudadano que en la hora de su mayor omnipotencia, se confunde con el pueblo, pasa entre las filas militares, siente en su corazón el latido vibrante de la fuerza popular.<sup>2282</sup>

While their power grew, the two leaders believed to be, or at least pretended to be, in a democratic system. In front of an audience of students at the Universidad de La Habana, on January 1926, not a year after he took office, Machado remarked that what Cuba needed was not a dictatorship, because, the president argued, "el país que se hace libre a costa de su sangre, lo que necesita es una sabia democracia".<sup>2283</sup> After having served as tutor to some of the Dominican generalísimo's vast progeny, Spanish Basque activist Jesús de Galíndez (1915-1956)<sup>2284</sup> elaborated a doctoral dissertation in the 1950s to

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<sup>2279</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 63.

<sup>2280</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*, 106-107.

<sup>2281</sup> For more on Cuban-Spanish relations under Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, see Mario García Kohly, *Política internacional cubana (relaciones entre Cuba y España)* (Madrid: Poligráficos, ca.1928).

<sup>2282</sup> Machado y Morales, *Al pueblo de Cuba*, 9-10.

<sup>2283</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, "Discurso en la Universidad, 17 de Enero de 1926", reproduced in Berenguer y Sed, *General Gerardo Machado y Morales*, 168.

<sup>2284</sup> Galíndez was born in Madrid, but because his father was Basque he developed strong Basque nationalist feelings. He studied law in Madrid graduating in June 1936. When the Spanish Civil War broke out that year, Galíndez fought on the Republican side. Once the conflict was over, he fled to France where he remained until the Nazi invasion of the country in 1940, the year he moved to the Dominican Republic, where he lived for six years before leaving for the United States, in Russell H. Fitzgibbon, introduction to *The Era of Trujillo, Dominican Dictator*, by Jesús de Galíndez (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1973), xiv. Esteemed author Manuel Vázquez Montalbán would years later write a novel

better explain the functioning of these types of political regimes through the analysis of the dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. Because of the strong criticisms to the Dominican regime in the text, Galíndez was kidnapped in New York and later murdered by the so-called “*Benefactor de la patria*”. The book would not be published until almost twenty years after the tragic episode. In it, its deceased author theorized that:

The contemporary type of dictatorship or tyranny [...] is disguised under a constitutional democratic appearance. [Such regimes] simulated elections, permitting no possible opposition, and occasionally preferring to have somebody else elected as ‘president’, but always keeping the actual power themselves; maintained the appearance of a congress and courts, although these were only tools to execute their dictates; proclaimed individual rights, which did not exist in practice.<sup>2285</sup>

To this later perspective, twenty-years before, in the mid-1930s, Hernández Catá added that not only did the leaders supersede democratic values, but what was worse, they lessened them through mockery: “Machado ha burlado una Constitución y unas elecciones de intención democrática. Vacía la cabeza de toda ideología social, y puesta la ambición en el propósito único de seguir siendo omnímodo dueño del país”.<sup>2286</sup> These definitions could be applied both to the Cuban president as well as the senator from Louisiana.

### 6.3.1 Opposition grows and repression escalates

The period between 1930 and 1933 marked the decline and end of the *machadato*. The president’s popularity began to decrease at the same time as his repressive policies rose and the economic crisis intensified.<sup>2287</sup> Observer and anti-*machadista* journalist Enrique de la Osa recorded the following figures about sugar production throughout the *machadato*: in 1929 sugar exports amounted to \$272,440,000, while in 1933 the number

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on Galíndez and his assassination in New York: Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Galíndez* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1990). Although with a very different ending, this abduction could be compared to Huey Long’s kidnapping of Sam Irby and James Terrell in 1930, for the motives of both Trujillo and the Kingfish were alike.

<sup>2285</sup> Galíndez, *The Era of Trujillo*, 5.

<sup>2286</sup> Hernández Catá, *Un cementerio en las Antillas*, 70.

<sup>2287</sup> Sugar exports from Cuba decreased from 200 million dollars in 1929 to 42 in 1932, thus affecting local economy and increasing poverty in the island, in Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 371-371.

had decreased to less than 80,000,000.<sup>2288</sup> Similarly, historian Julio Le Riverend affirmed that while in the period 1922-1926 Cuba provided 52% of sugar in the United States, in 1929-1934 the number had decreased to 25% due to the American protectionism applied after the economic collapse put into practice through the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act of 1930. This legislative document raised US tariffs on imported goods significantly and left the Cuban Congress with the frustrating impression of having been deceived by their allies.<sup>2289</sup> Marxist economist Óscar Pino-Santos was sure when he argued that the tariff “se promulgó con la intención declarada de proteger a los productores azucareros domésticos” in the United States.<sup>2290</sup>

Machado’s response was adhering Cuba to the international Chadbourne Plan the following year, which was aimed at reducing sugar production—the Caribbean island was able to cut it down to about three million tones. The Plan was named after its instigator, New Yorker lawyer Thomas L. Chadbourne, and signed in Brussels on May 9, 1931. However, that measure was unsuccessful, for countries that signed the agreement, although cutting 6.4 millions of tons of sugar out of the global production, it represented only 44% of the world’s sugar. Moreover, the countries that did not join the plan raised their own production to over four million tones, and thus it became impossible to avoid sugar prices to fall.<sup>2291</sup> Cuban specialist historian Luis E. Aguilar writes that the price of sugar drastically went down from 2.18 cents a pound in 1928 to 0.57 in 1932.<sup>2292</sup> This was a general trend impacting agrarian products in tropical areas: in Brazil, famously, coffee beans were shoveled into locomotives or simply dumped overboard at sea. Consequently, the sugar harvest of 1932-33 would be half of the

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<sup>2288</sup> Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 13.

<sup>2289</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 246; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 133-135. For more on the tariff, see also Douglas A Irwin, *Peddling Protectionism: Smoot-Hawley and the Great Depression* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Robert B. Archibald and David H. Feldman, “Investment during the Great Depression: Uncertainty and the Role of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff”, *Southern Economic Journal* 64, n.º. 4 (1998): 857-879; Barry Eichengreen, “The Political Economy of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff”, *Research in Economic History* 12 (1989): 1-43.

<sup>2290</sup> Pino-Santos, *El asalto a Cuba*, 183. This author asserted that Cuban exports of sugar in the United States decreased from 51.9% to 24.6% after the Hawley-Smoot Tariff was approved, in 183-185.

<sup>2291</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 136; Tabares del Real, *La Revolución del 30*, 86; Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 220-221; Óscar Pino-Santos, *El asalto a Cuba*, 188. The creator of the Plan explained it in his memoirs: Thomas L Chadbourne, *The Autobiography of Thomas L. Chadbourne* (New York: Oceana Publications, 1985).

<sup>2292</sup> Luis E. Aguilar, *Cuba 1933: Prologue to Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 98.

harvest of 1922-23, and the wages for sugar workers were similar to those of 1910.<sup>2293</sup> French writer Alfred Fabre-Luce concluded in 1934 that the Chadbourne plan “*sera désastreuse pour Cuba*”.<sup>2294</sup> The above numbers affected every aspect of Cuban life, for they meant reduced wages and delays in salary payments, severe unemployment, and the closing down of numerous businesses.<sup>2295</sup>

Although Cuban ambassador to the United States Orestes Ferrara affirmed in an interview for the *Diario de la Marina* that the crisis would not last,<sup>2296</sup> this critical situation led to an irremediable path to chaos, revolution, and ultimately the president’s ousting.<sup>2297</sup> The report by the Cuban Affairs Committee analyzed: “Dadas la terrible situación económica de las masas y las pasiones exaltadas cuya fuerza acumulada no había tenido una salida efectiva en virtud de la represión del Machadato, era inevitable que ocurriera una explosión social”.<sup>2298</sup> Throughout these three years, opposition towards the government became much more visible. While there had been opponents to Machado since his arrival to the presidency—for instance, the Communist Party—they had become the norm in Cuban politics, as well as the repression they were forced to endure. Afro-Cubans also joined the anti-*machadista* cause, for “las luchas sostenidas contra la dictadura implantada por este gobierno revelaron la importancia y el significado histórico de las masas populares y llevaron a parte de la población negra a unirse”.<sup>2299</sup> In fact, this collective became relevant to the point that African American writer Langston Hughes (1902-1967), who was then close to the communists, explained their opposition towards the regime when contextualizing one of his short-stories:

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<sup>2293</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 96.

<sup>2294</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Révolution a Cuba*, 18.

<sup>2295</sup> Pappademos, *Black Political Activism*, 176; Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 99.

<sup>2296</sup> Elena de la Torre, “El Doctor Orestes Ferrara habla sobre la crisis que atraviesa Cuba”, *Diario de la Marina*, April 2, 1930, 1. However, the ambassador was aware that there had been a drastic decline of Cuban sugar exports to the United States thus affecting the cordial relationship between the two countries, as he exposed in a speech he gave in Houston, Texas: “Ferrara califica de siniestras las relaciones entre E-Unidos y Cuba”, *Diario de la Marina*, April 16, 1930, 1. This discourse was acknowledged by the US Congress, although no policies were taken to change the situation: “Dan Importancia al Discurso del Doctor O. Ferrara”, *Diario de la Marina*, April 18, 1930, 4.

<sup>2297</sup> A historian writes: “La última etapa del gobierno de Gerardo Machado, que comprende de 1930 a 1933, se caracterizó por la inestabilidad política debida a la lucha con la oposición, así como por la intensificación de la crisis económica, que actuó como factor impulsante del movimiento revolucionario”, in Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 532.

<sup>2298</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 203.

<sup>2299</sup> Montejo Arrechea, *Sociedades negras en Cuba*, 189.

The government of Cuba had grown suddenly terribly afraid of its Negro population, its black shine boys and cane field hands, its colored soldiers and sailors who make up most of the armed forces, its taxi drivers and street vendors. At last, after all the other elements of the island's population had openly revolted against the tyrant in power, the Negroes had begun to rise with the students and others to drive the dictator from Cuba.<sup>2300</sup>

Within the United States context, awareness rose about the atrocities committed by the *machadato*. In some sectors, Cuba was beginning to be seen not as an ally, but with some contempt. For instance, socialist journalist and co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), William English Walling (1877-1936), published a pamphlet in 1930 aimed at an American audience strongly criticizing Machado's "terror".<sup>2301</sup> In the text, Walling stated that "when the constitution becomes deadwood, when no opposition or organization or publication is tolerated, when judges and officials are the servants of the dictator, there can be no personal liberty".<sup>2302</sup> The author accused the American big businesses and even the State Department of already knowing the harsh political conditions on the Caribbean island, but resenting to act upon it because of private interests. Walling ended his pamphlet asking the American people if they wanted to collaborate in supporting this sort of dictatorial regime.<sup>2303</sup>

Within Cuba, consciousness about the ruthlessness of the *machadato* also began to spread. In Congress, there was a nascent refusal of the *cooperativista* experiment. Already in 1930 some politicians from both the Liberal and the Conservative parties were questioning the practice and proposing to reestablish opposition.<sup>2304</sup> However, the main adversaries that posed a threat to the regime were outside Congress. As an American publication observed: "Students, aided by business and professional men, are

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<sup>2300</sup> Langston Hughes, "Little Old Spy" (1934), reproduced in *The Short Stories of Langston Hughes* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 75-76.

<sup>2301</sup> William English Walling, *Terrorism under the Cuban Dictatorship. An Exposure of Facts Suppressed by the Press. Here Is the Story as a Basis for Protest to the Cuban Government and for a Demand for a United States Senate Investigation* (New York: International Committee for Political Prisoners, 1930).

<sup>2302</sup> Walling, *Terrorism under the Cuban Dictatorship*, 9.

<sup>2303</sup> Walling, *Terrorism under the Cuban Dictatorship*, 10-11.

<sup>2304</sup> For instance, a group of conservative politicians proposed to end with "piñas' electorales y que la lucha entre los candidatos sea absolutamente libre", in "Los conservadores de La Habana dan por terminado ya el cooperativismo", *Diario de la Marina*, April 16, 1930, 13. Also: "Roto el Cooperativismo", *Diario de la Marina*, April 29, 1930, 1, 19.

leading the fight to force the President out. They call him a dictator, a despot”.<sup>2305</sup> There were numerous organizations: the abovementioned *Confederación Nacional Obrera de Cuba* (CNOOC) linked to the Communist Party; the nationalists from the *Unión Nacionalista* led by García Menocal and Carlos Mendieta; the also previously introduced *Directorio Estudiantil Universitario* (DEU); the *Club Femenino de Cuba* and other women organizations, and the extremist terrorists groups *ABC*—which will be further studied in the following pages—, and *Organización Celular Radical Revolucionaria* (OCRR).<sup>2306</sup> Though different in form and specific goals, ranging from more traditional to radical, these organizations were similar in their anti-*machadista* essence. In his memoirs, however, Machado referred to his opposition as “*amorfa*” and “*desorganizada*”.<sup>2307</sup>

Labor unions led by CNOOC became actively involved in the protests against the regime as early as March 20, 1930, through a general strike organized by communist Rubén Martínez Villena, in which 200,000 workers participated and rapidly spread to several Cuban cities under the motto: “*¡Abajo Machado!*” (Down with Machado!). Some weeks earlier, the government had suspended the CNOOC and the *Federación Obrera de La Habana* (FOH); thus, Martínez Villena and others deemed necessary to demonstrate.<sup>2308</sup> The specific demands the demonstrators were making were, mainly: freedom for political prisoners, recognition of the right to strike, legalization of the CNOOC and FOH, no political intervention in union matters, freedom of speech, press, and assembly, seven-hour workdays, and free transportation, food and accommodation for the unemployed.<sup>2309</sup> In the end, and only after twenty-four hours, the protest was heavily repressed—Martínez Villena, who had tuberculosis, was forced to go into exile and travelled to the USSR to treat his illness—, and therefore can be analyzed as a precedent for the general strike in August 1933 that would catalyze Machado’s exile.<sup>2310</sup> Years

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<sup>2305</sup> “Cuba’s Volcano Seething”, *The Literary Digest*, December 27, 1930, 5.

<sup>2306</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 370.

<sup>2307</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 36, 39.

<sup>2308</sup> López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 13-14; Benjamin, “The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism”, 71; Cantón Navarro, *Historia de Cuba*, 112-113; Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 11.

<sup>2309</sup> Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 122; López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 15.

<sup>2310</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 532; Le Riverend, *La República*, 268; Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 373; Pappademos, *Black Political Activism*, 176; Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 123.

later, member of the Communist Party Raúl Roa recalled that they were fighting against imperialism taking inspiration from their refusal of the Platt Amendment, economic penetration of the United States in Latin America, Julio Antonio Mella's writings, and even the Mexican Revolution.<sup>2311</sup> In all, it seems sensible to refuse Berggren's thesis when he states: "The labor movement in Cuba during the 1920s and 1930s was not focused against Machado—it had more revolutionary aims beyond his mere removal from office";<sup>2312</sup> for, while the labor movement broadened its demands from straightforward anti-*machadismo* to social revolution, it certainly *was* mainly focused on the dictator.<sup>2313</sup> Marxist author Tabares del Real was proud to state that "la CNOC realizó un brillante trabajo de organización y combate durante el machadato, multiplicando varias veces el número de organizaciones sindicales y su membresía".<sup>2314</sup> It is worth noting, as can and will be perceived, that the bibliography available for this period was mainly written in the 1970s, thus it was deeply influenced by the 1959 Cuban revolution and the Marxist theory. Hence most authors will be overly positive when analyzing the fight these movements carried out against the dictatorship.

As for the *Unión Nacionalista*, more traditional in its political goals, on May 19, 1930, they held a meeting in the town of Artemisa, located in the West of the island. According to historian Lionel Soto, thousands of people from different backgrounds, tired of the abuses of the regime, attended the gathering.<sup>2315</sup> However, since the political party was officially considered illegal, for it had been constituted after the approval of the aforementioned *ley de emergencia electoral*, a group of soldiers interrupted and disrupted the gathering. After they shot at Afro-Cuban lieutenant Juan Gualberto Gómez, who would recover from the wound, tumult began ending in six or eight dead

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<sup>2311</sup> Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. II*, 793.

<sup>2312</sup> Berggren, "Machado: An Historical Interpretation", 68.

<sup>2313</sup> As conservative politician Carlos Manuel de la Cruz stated in a speech he gave in November 25, 1930: "Lo cierto es que el estado de perturbación pública no es de los elementos rojos, ni de los estudiantes, ni de los políticos por cambiar el sistema republicano ni nuestra forma de gobierno, ni por atender a la vida y seguridad del Estado, sino que todo ese estado de cosas lo motiva únicamente la protesta contra la reelección del Presidente de la República, del general Machado, que es el denominador común de todas estas angustias, de toda esta perturbación, de toda esta zozobra en que vive la República, y que Machado persiste en su decisión de actuar como Presidente hasta el año de 1935. Es evidente que ese es el mal", in De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 250.

<sup>2314</sup> Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 112.

<sup>2315</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 250.

and tens of injured. This event led to some to believe that, since politics were no longer feasible in Cuba, there was only one option remaining: armed and violent revolution.<sup>2316</sup>

Feminist activist Hortensia Lamar directed the *Club Femenino de Cuba*, founded in 1917. The organization fought against the “tyranny” of Machado in a similar manner as Hilda Phelps Hammond opposed Huey Long in Louisiana. Hortensia Lamar, who like Hammond came from a wealthy family, had written several pamphlets in the 1920s protesting about several subjects regarding women, including the need for fighting against prostitution and providing job for former prostitutes, or vindicating to implement legislation against alcoholic beverages.<sup>2317</sup> The feminist club also challenged traditional views stipulated by the Church, and proposed to rethink the concept of family, that should include also illegitimate children.<sup>2318</sup> In fact, the main goal of the club was to regenerate Cuba by ending with political corruption—before the “*asno con garras*” came to power, the association would fight against the Zayas administration.<sup>2319</sup> They would discuss these and more issues in the First National Women’s Congress celebrated in Havana on April 1923, aimed at “influencing national reform policy”.<sup>2320</sup>

A few weeks after the “*asno*” became president in 1925, *The Women’s Congress* took place. Machado spoke at the opening ceremony, and he assured the vote for women would be guaranteed during his presidential term, a promise that would not be kept.<sup>2321</sup> Thus one of the main reasons women’s organizations asked for Machado’s resignation was the absence of feminine suffrage in Cuba—it would not be implemented in the Caribbean island until 1934. According to the feminists, the lack of female suffrage made the regime undemocratic and Machado’s claim to the presidency a farce.<sup>2322</sup> In

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<sup>2316</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 100-101; López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 42; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 250-251.

<sup>2317</sup> Some of her writings are: Hortensia Lamar, *Lucha contra la prostitución y la trata de mujeres; protesta del Club Femenino de Cuba. Conferencia leída en los salones de la Cruz Roja Cubana, el 14 de mayo de 1925* (Havana: Imp. de “El Figaro”, 1925); Hortensia Lamar, *Las bebidas alcohólicas factor de decadencia social; causa específica de la especie: enemigo implacable de la infancia. Necesidad de una legislación anti-alcohólica*. (Havana, 1928); Hortensia Lamar, *La mujer y la vida moderna* (Havana: Labor Escolar, 1928).

<sup>2318</sup> Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 67.

<sup>2319</sup> Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 58.

<sup>2320</sup> Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 59.

<sup>2321</sup> Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 70.

<sup>2322</sup> Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 123.

that sense, Latin Americanist K. Lynn Stoner wrote in her 1991 analysis of feminism in Cuba: “Votes for women and the end of the Machadato were inextricably linked in the minds of feminists and the Cuban people, making women’s suffrage a metaphor for constitutional democracy”.<sup>2323</sup> Moreover, since the incarceration of Julio Antonio Mella in 1925 and the persecution Machado practiced, the club became a fervent enemy of the regime. As historian Lionel Soto put it: “El movimiento femenino en Cuba había venido desarrollándose y miles de mujeres politizadas participaban en los eventos opositoristas”.<sup>2324</sup>

But perhaps the event that marked the beginning of the end for the “*asno con garras*” and launched the oppositionist movement was the death of university twenty-year-old law student and member of DEU Rafael Trejo González on September 30, 1930. The incident occurred during a demonstration that was aimed at passing through Enrique José Varona’s house to show their admiration towards their mentor after some declarations he had made in an interview for the leftist Spanish daily *El País*, in which he urged the youth to combat the regime.<sup>2325</sup> Some days before the protest, the president had strengthened the vigilance of railroads, highways, and government buildings with military forces.<sup>2326</sup>

The protest of the 30<sup>th</sup> was organized by the *Directorio*, which continued the fight initiated by members of this organization in 1927.<sup>2327</sup> It began at Universidad de La Habana with the presence of tens of students—protester Justo Carrillo writes in his 1985

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<sup>2323</sup> Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 108.

<sup>2324</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 45.

<sup>2325</sup> Varona’s words were: “Yo quisiera ver a la juventud gallarda, cívica, combatiente, preparada, culta, capaz de enfrentarse con los problemas de hoy y encararse al futuro con la misma gallardía heroica que supieron demostrar aquellas juventudes gloriosas del 68 y del 95. Quisiera verlos, como aquellos pocos jóvenes universitarios protestantes contra la reforma constitucional y la prórroga de poderes y las libertades conculcadas, sacrificándose por el ideal. Un pueblo no se ridime más que cuando tiene conductores con espíritu de sacrificio”, in Enrique José Varona, “Entrevista de Varona con el director del diario *El País*”, August 20, 1930, as quoted in López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 23.

<sup>2326</sup> “President of Cuba Moves to Prevent Rebellion”, *New Orleans States*, September 13, 1930, 1.

<sup>2327</sup> Its members released a manifesto that attacked the president: “Machado es el Verdugo del pueblo cubano [...] Su desgobernio se ha caracterizado por un absoluto desconocimiento de los males más elementales derechos vitales ciudadanos. Machado ha hecho trizas un día y otro el apotegma martiano de que la ley primera y fundamental de la República debe ser el culto a la dignidad plena del hombre”, “Manifiesto de los estudiantes universitarios al pueblo de Cuba”, September 30, 1930, reproduced in Segura Bustamante, *Cuba siglo XX y la generación de 1930*, 64.

memoirs of the events: “Seríamos 80 ó 100”.<sup>2328</sup> Members of the Communist Party also joined the demonstration. The protesters were vindicating the end of the “tyranny” or, as member of the DEU Raúl Roa recalled, “*combatir la Machadocracia*”.<sup>2329</sup> Thus, they shouted: “Down with the boody tyranny! Down with American imperialism!”<sup>2330</sup> When its participants arrived at Eloy Alfaro Park on their way to the presidential palace—the route was changed in the last minute—the police was ordered to take action. In the middle of the fight between the agitators and the police, Rafael Trejo and a policeman named Félix Robaina<sup>2331</sup> began struggling until the officer shot his revolver at the student. Trejo was brought at the Hospital de Emergencias, but died the next day.<sup>2332</sup> At the student’s funeral, a multitude showed up as a symbolic challenge, an open refusal of the continuity of the dictatorship.<sup>2333</sup> As an author put it: “Diríase que aquel asesinato le arrancó la venda de los ojos a la mayoría del pueblo”.<sup>2334</sup> Historian Luis Aguilar similarly writes: “The death of Trejo and the national commotion that followed marked

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<sup>2328</sup> Justo Carrillo, *Cuba 1933, estudiantes, yanquis y soldados* (Miami: Instituto de Estudios Interamericanos, University of Miami, 1985), 18.

<sup>2329</sup> López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 24.

<sup>2330</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 11; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 262-263.

<sup>2331</sup> It is interesting to note that González Peraza wrote the responsible for Trejo’s death had been one Francisco F. Díaz, in González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 30, although he is the only author with that theory.

<sup>2332</sup> Segura Bustamante, *Cuba siglo XX y la generación de 1930*, 11. Rolando Rodríguez gives a thorough yet bombastic account of the events that day, in Rolando Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república: auge y caída de Gerardo Machado. Tomo II* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2013), 164-168; “Un estudiante víctima de los disturbios”, *ABC*, October 3, 1930, 25. Another student that was hurt in the head and sent to the same hospital as Trejo, wrote a detailed account of the events published in: Pablo de La Torriente-Brau, *La última sonrisa de Rafael Trejo* ([S.l.]: Capitolio Nacional, 1959). La Torriente would die fighting during the Spanish Civil War in 1936, a conflict that inspired him to write the novel *Aventuras del soldado desconocido cubano*, published posthumously in 1940.

<sup>2333</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 270; Velázquez, *La tiranía en Cuba*, 22-23; Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la República. Tomo II*, 166; Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 123. Berggren writes, “He would come to symbolize the “tyranny” of Machado’s administrations against idealistic youth”, in Berggren “Machado: An Historical Interpretation”, 86. De la Cruz made a speech at Congress on October 30 lamenting: “Ayer tras el cortejo fúnebre del cadáver del joven Trejo, a cuyo cortejo no pudo asistir toda la ciudad, como era el deseo unánime, tras del entierro de ese valeroso estudiante que en plena vida cayó luchando por la libertad; ayer dejamos, repito, un girón de nuestra bandera y una huella indeleble de nuestros graves errores que como cirrus nebuloso han empañado la vida republicana y señalan en este período una grave acusación; y hoy, aún vivo el horrible espectáculo de la caída de ese joven, la Cámara se reúne a paso de carga y parece que impulsada por fuerza militar va a dictar y a resolver una ley [la de suspensión de las garantías constitucionales] que agrava la profunda crisis cubana”, in De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 157.

<sup>2334</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 177. González Peraza pompously wrote: “Su muerte inmortalizó su nombre; pero sus compañeros de la Universidad no se consolarán jamás de la pérdida de esa vida gloriosa, tan llena de perspectivas risueñas y tan hermanada a los palenques del ideal y el patriotismo” and ends “¡Rafael Trejo, figura epónima de las santas rebeldías, héroe del decoro intelectual, mártir de un apostolado de justicia! [...] Eres inmortal. Vives y vivirás perpetuamente en el corazón de los cubanos”, in González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 30, 32.

a turning point in the struggle against Machado”.<sup>2335</sup> The aforementioned Raúl Roa wrote a declaration from jail on the one-year anniversary of these events solemnly asserting: “Trejo y el 30 de septiembre permanecerán vinculados en el devenir histórico”.<sup>2336</sup> Similarly, Marxist historian Lionel Soto asserted some decades after the event: “Rafael Trejo fue un estudiante típico de su tiempo. Valeroso y consciente de la satrapía criolla. Progresista y dispuesto al combate. Él es un símbolo más acabado de un momento y de una capa social: los estudiantes de 1930”.<sup>2337</sup>

This tragic event infuriated professors and students alike, and together with primary and secondary school teachers and the direction of DEU on October 23 that same year they released a manifesto-program against the Machado administration. Since November that year, DEU had a feminine branch, the *Directorio Estudiantil Femenino*, for women’s implication in the fight against Machado was increasing.<sup>2338</sup> The organization also saw the birth of a new Marxist section named the *Ala Izquierda Estudiantil* (AIE) (Student Left Wing)—, founded by Raúl Roa and Pablo de la Torriente Brau, and strongly against American imperialism.<sup>2339</sup> The vindications in the joined manifesto they released were the following:

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<sup>2335</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 103. Similarly, Roberto Hernández writes, “Trejo’s death gave the student movement its first martyr”, in Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 120.

<sup>2336</sup> Raúl Roa, “Rafael Trejo y el 30 de septiembre”, September 30, 1931, reproduced in Roa, *La revolución del 30 se fue a bolina*, 20. This author would also write a text in the anniversary of Trejo’s death in 1955 elevating once more the braveness of the martyr and recalling the glorious day he met him, in Roa, “Rafael Trejo”, September 30, 1955, reproduced in Roa, *La revolución del 30 se fue a bolina*, 131-150.

<sup>2337</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 263.

<sup>2338</sup> Segura Bustamante, *Cuba siglo XX y la generación de 1930*, 40. This author tells his own experiences as a member of the feminine DEU, including incarceration, in 40-52. Regarding the role of women in the fight against the *machadato*, Lamar Schweyer wrote: “En el proceso revolucionario de Cuba la mujer ha sido un hecho de extraordinaria importancia. Quizá mucho de lo excesivamente cruel que ha sido esta lucha se debe a ellas [...] La mujer constituyó el elemento más impulsivo y de mayor tenacidad en la lucha, aunque es posible que en mucho contribuyera a ello la impunidad que le daban las faldas”, in Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 27.

<sup>2339</sup> Roa, “Rafael Trejo y el 30 de septiembre”, *La revolución del 30 se fue a bolina*, 17; Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. II*, 796-797; Benjamin, “The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism”, 74; López Segura, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 86-87. The *Ala* released its manifesto-program on February 1931, in which it called Machado’s government “fascist”, and using a strong anti-imperialist and Marxist language postulated in favor of the overthrow of the dictator. Full manifesto reproduced in Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 57-63. A Marxist author justified the DEU split in the following words: “El Ala Izquierda Estudiantil nació en 1931, porque desde fecha tan temprana una parte importante del estudiantado, los profesores, etc., supo captar la esencia, limitaciones y derroteros del DEU”, in Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 110. In further pages, this author similarly writes that the AIE was a “vehículo revolucionario que emergió ante las limitaciones reformistas del directorio”, in 124. Historian

[A]) Depuración de responsabilidades por los hechos del día 30 del pasado septiembre y castigo adecuado de los culpables / b) Expulsión del Dr. Octavio Averhoff como catedrático de la Universidad de la Habana, y su renuncia como Secretario de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes / c) Expulsión del Dr. Ricardo Martínez Prieto, actual Rector Interino de la Universidad de la Habana / d) Desmilitarización de todos los Centros Docentes de la República / e) Derecho de federación de las Asociaciones Estudiantiles Universitarias y nacionales / f) Intervención del estudiante en el gobierno de la Universidad / g) Rehabilitación plena de los estudiantes expulsados con motivo del movimiento universitario de 1927 / h) Plena autonomía universitaria en lo académico, administrativo y económico.<sup>2340</sup>

Octavio Averhoff, who was referred to in the second point of the manifesto, was the former rector of the university and the Secretary of Public Instruction and had supported Machado's fight against rebellious students, specifically when banning them to march to protest for Trejo's death. The rector of the university had been described by Spanish ambassador in Cuba, Manuel Góngora Echenique, as "un hombre joven y afable, que una a sus muchos méritos el de poseer una exquisita mundanidad".<sup>2341</sup> Similarly to Averhoff, Ricardo Martínez Prieto, the rector of the University of Havana, was a strong *machadista*. Moreover, university students vindicated justice for those who had been expelled from the university in 1927 after organizing several demonstrations against the reelection of the Cuban president. This movement born and developed in the university can be compared or at least put into a broader context with the situation in Louisiana. Although LSU students had shown great support for Huey Long because of the improvements carried out in the institution, the incident at the *Reveille* daily crossed the line of how much censorship was to be allowed and brought up the discussion of whether freedom of speech was being threatened in the Pelican State.

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Suchlicki affirmed the *Ala* served merely as a tool for the Communist Party, in *University Students*, 28. For more on the AIE, see Ladislao González Carbajal, *El Ala Izquierda Estudiantil y su época* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1974).

<sup>2340</sup> The manifesto also vindicated the need for a "new university", free of militarization, and for a deep social transformation. Moreover, it included a list of specific changes the DEU was urging to implement: "El recuerdo de Rafael Trejo al cual hemos de mantenernos siempre fieles impone de modo imperativo que junto a reformas de orden permanente y general, situemos las peticiones que nacen de los hechos dolorosos del día 30", *Programa-Manifesto Directorio Estudiantil Universitario*, October 23, 1930, reproduced in González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 264-266, Segura Bustamante, *Cuba siglo XX y la generación de 1930*, 70, and in *Manifiestos de Cuba*, ed. Roberto Padrón Larrazábal (Sevilla: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1975), 106-109; and partially reproduced in López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 28, and Carrillo, *Cuba 1933*, 25-26. The text would be published in the *Diario de la Marina*, October 29, 1930, 19. It is also partially available in English in Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 104-106.

<sup>2341</sup> Góngora Echenique, *Lo que he visto en Cuba*, 4-5.

Back in Cuba, Machado was not thrilled with the DEU 1930 manifesto and counteracted by closing down the university that December—which would not reopen until three years later—and all high schools.<sup>2342</sup> Historian Ramón Eduardo Ruíz wrote that the institution was closed “después de que los profesores se quejaron de que no podían enseñar teniendo soldados en las aulas”.<sup>2343</sup> Moreover, the Cuban president detached army units to control “problematic” institutions throughout the island.<sup>2344</sup> Machado justified his decision in his memoirs by arguing that he had no other choice:

Llegó un momento en que fue preciso ocupar la Universidad con soldados. Y esto se hizo en contra de la voluntad del gobierno y sólo por la petición de los profesores que no encontraron forma de resolver el cada vez más peligroso problema. Fue preciso suspender las clases para evitar males mayores. La lucha con el elemento revolucionario era difícil y trabajosa.<sup>2345</sup>

Because of these disturbances, in June 1933 a Cuban university student named José Sergio Velázquez wrote during his exile in Madrid a pamphlet entitled *La tiranía en Cuba* aimed at making Spanish intellectuals and students aware of the tragic situation in his native island. In it, the author lamented the closing of the university in the following words: “Machado, en su incapacidad mental manifiesta, no le ha bastado con teñir de sangre el suelo cubano para mantenerse arbitrariamente en el Poder, sino que también su bestialidad le ha llevado a atentar contra la Cultura, como si quisiera detener el avance del Progreso y de la Civilización”.<sup>2346</sup> In his 64-page pamphlet, Velázquez mainly focused on the increasing repression committed by the Machado administration, particularly in relation to university students. After all educational institutions were closed, over sixty professors were dismissed from their positions and some were incarcerated or sent into exile because of their anti-*machadista* conduct.<sup>2347</sup> Similar to Velázquez’s booklet, the Comité de Jóvenes Revolucionarios Cubanos released in 1933 a pamphlet also aimed at letting Spanish audiences learn about the terror that was the dictatorship in Cuba led by Machado, calling him a “*pelele de los Estados Unidos*”.

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<sup>2342</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 183; Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 532; Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 296; Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 49.

<sup>2343</sup> Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 104.

<sup>2344</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 62.

<sup>2345</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 36.

<sup>2346</sup> Velázquez, *La tiranía en Cuba*, 44.

<sup>2347</sup> Velázquez, *La tiranía en Cuba*, 39-41.

Most importantly, the document was a desperate measure to internationalize the worry towards the Cuban president's regime and the will to overthrow it.<sup>2348</sup>

The numerous demonstrations that took place in Havana in the aftermath of the event aimed against the dictator and Trejo's death, and in favor of political freedom on the island would be marked by violent encounters with the police, always resulting in wounded people and severe damages in private and public properties. At the beginning of November the government banned the celebration of a ceremony dedicated to the student martyr, thus generating more unrest through violent demonstrations.<sup>2349</sup> The death of Trejo had clearly marked a radical change in the popular protest against the dictatorship.<sup>2350</sup> As Raúl Roa assessed decades later: "Sin duda, el 30 de septiembre de 1930, en que cae Rafael Trejo mortalmente herido para levantarse en brazos de todo un pueblo y convertirse en bandera, se inicia realmente la lucha estudiantil sin cuartel contra la tiranía machadista. La insurgencia de 1927 es el ensayo general de esa sublevación, que muy pronto incendiaría la Isla de punta a punta".<sup>2351</sup>

As a consequence of the ongoing agitation, at the end of 1930 the president suspended constitutional liberties in Havana and later throughout the island, banned the formation of new groups, censored the press—on January 9, 1931, all newspapers were banned including the illustrious and conservative *Diario de la Marina*, except for his own version of Long's *American Progress*, *El Heraldo de Cuba*—,<sup>2352</sup> and basically invaded the city with the army.<sup>2353</sup> Protests then spread throughout other provinces, which were also violently quelled.<sup>2354</sup> Conservative politician Carlos Manuel de la Cruz regretted:

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<sup>2348</sup> Comité de Jóvenes Revolucionarios Cubanos, *El terror en Cuba*, 7.

<sup>2349</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 106.

<sup>2350</sup> Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la República. Tomo II*, 168; Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 532.

<sup>2351</sup> Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. II*, 796.

<sup>2352</sup> Velázquez, *La tiranía en Cuba*, 45; Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 124-125; López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 39. Tabares del Real writes how this newspaper would make propaganda of Lamar Schweyer's aforementioned problematic 1927 book, *Biología de la democracia*, in which the author praised the president and his will of leading the country with a firm hand. To promote the book, *Heraldo de Cuba* would publish sentences such as "Perdóname Martí pero Machado te ha superado", in Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 123.

<sup>2353</sup> "Cuba: Suspensión de garantías en todo el país", *ABC*, November 14, 1930, 30.

<sup>2354</sup> Macías Martín, "La diplomacia española ante el 'Machadato'", 300-301.

“Es inútil suspender las garantías constitucionales en estos momentos, porque de hecho están suspendidas hace tiempo”.<sup>2355</sup>

Because of the commotion, De la Cruz publicly asked the president to resign.<sup>2356</sup> Together with fifteen other congressmen, the conservative wrote an open letter to Machado on December 9 that year in which he observed: “La grave crisis política que padece el Gobierno que usted representa, se aumenta y hace imposible por día la vida normal y pacífica de la nación en todos sus aspectos”, and consequently asked of the president:

1. Cesación de todo el Poder Legislativo, el primer lunes de abril de [1931]. / 2. Organización de un Gobierno Provisional, que deberá actuar desde el veinte de mayo de [1931] al veinte de mayo de [1932]. / 3. Celebración de elecciones generales para cubrir los cargos de Presidente de la República y de la totalidad del Congreso el día primero de noviembre de [1931].<sup>2357</sup>

An American publication was following the events with a worrying eye: “Cuba’s unrest boils higher and hotter. Riots, bombings, killings torment the island. Up goes a tremendous demand for the resignation of President Machado. Down comes martial law as the answer, clapped on by Machado as



The Lid's Been Bobbin' for Some Time

Fig. 47: “Cuba’s Volcano Seething”,  
Literary Digest, December 27, 1930, p. 5.

<sup>2355</sup> As reproduced in his book: De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 159. In the aforementioned speech given on November 25, the politician bemoaned: “Esta ley que autoriza a la policía para penetrar en el domicilio de los ciudadanos, sin un mandamiento judicial; y que permite otras absurdas actividades policíacas impedidas por la Constitución, cuando rige; esta ley, que sólo crea una situación de temor en el campo económico, no puede ser eficaz en ninguno de sus aspectos”, in 250. On April 13, 1931, this representative also presented a project in Congress to reform the presidential system in order to turn it parliamentary, and advocated for female suffrage, in Vega Vega, *Cuba, su historia constitucional*, 60.

<sup>2356</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 270.

<sup>2357</sup> As reproduced in his book: De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 261-262, and Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 50.

he ridicules the thought of resigning”.<sup>2358</sup> As could be expected, however, the president disregarded the petition and the House of Representatives issued a statement responding to de la Cruz’s letter arguing the ending date of Machado’s term was stipulated by the Constitution and thus immovable.<sup>2359</sup> The president wrote in his memoirs that “mi retirada del poder en aquellos momentos implicaba el desatar en Cuba la anarquía”.<sup>2360</sup> Most autocrats feel that way in similar circumstances.

Although he remained in power, a form of anarchy would still come. Subsequently, Cuba entered two years of “countless acts” of violence and protests, all rapidly followed by government repression, in a typical provocation-response spiral of violence. Spanish ambassador in Havana wrote an account of this unstable situation in March 1931:

La manifiesta hostilidad de todas las clases sociales al señor presidente, se ha traducido en constantes protestas contra su gobierno, habiéndose visto obligado éste a suspender por tiempo indefinido las garantías constitucionales poniendo en vigor la antigua Ley de Orden Público del tiempo de la colonia. Pese a este estado de fuerza, rara es la noche en que no explotan en la Ciudad [Havana] numerosos petardos colocados en las calles más céntricas.<sup>2361</sup>

Similarly, US ambassador to Cuba in 1933, Sumner Welles, a major figure, reasonably close to FDR, gave an address the following year referring to the situation in the island before the ousting of Machado as chaotic and alarming: “Those who were apprehended [by Machado’s forces] were frequently tortured, often murdered. The prisons were filled with political offenders. In reprisal, Government officials were assassinated. No man’s life was secure, and the spirit of fear reigned in the Republic”.<sup>2362</sup>

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<sup>2358</sup> “Cuba’s Volcano Seething”, *The Literary Digest*, December 27, 1930, 5.

<sup>2359</sup> The full text read: “Los Representantes declaran: Primero: Que la fecha de vencimiento de su mandato está señalada por la Constitución y la ley y no tiene el Congreso por sí solo, poder para modificarla. / Segundo: Que no hay razón de interés público que aconseje la dimisión de los Representantes antes del vencimiento normal de su mandato, y estiman por el contrario, que con ello establecerían un funesto precedente, de gravísimas repercusiones futuras. / Tercero: La Cámara de Representantes brinda a la oposición y al pueblo de Cuba en general, en la esfera de sus funciones, plena garantía para el ejercicio de sus derechos en un régimen de orden y de paz”, in De la Cruz, *Proceso histórico del machadato*, 266.

<sup>2360</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 37.

<sup>2361</sup> Report by Méndez de Vigo, March 3, 1931, as quoted in Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 314.

<sup>2362</sup> Sumner Welles, *Relations Between the United States and Cuba. Address by the Honorable Sumner Welles, Assistant Secretary of State, Before the Young Democratic Clubs of America* (Washington: Government Printing Office, March 29, 1934), 5.

As overall violence was increasing, an attempt on Machado's life soon took place. On February 23, 1931, a bomb exploded in one of the ventilation ducts in a bathroom located on the highest floor of the presidential palace, very close to the president's private rooms. While no one was wounded, the attack was a clear sign of political and social instability. The perpetrators were not caught or discovered; however, one lawyer named Pedro Herrera Sotolongo affirmed the "*asno con garras*" himself had been the instigator of a staged assault in order to increase his popularity and be kept in power.<sup>2363</sup> As significant as these events were, the most noticeable uprising against the administration in these years before the definitive revolution on August 1933 was the insurrection of August 1931.

#### a) The (failed) rebellion from within

Political leaders from both the Liberal and the Conservative parties that did not support the *cooperativista* experiment had been imprisoned or had fled into exile. Amongst the latter, there were Machado's rival in the 1925 election and former conservative president Mario García Menocal, liberal Carlos Mendieta—founder of the anti-*machadista* *Unión Nacionalista*—, and also liberal Roberto Méndez Peñate, who had participated in the 1917 uprising against former president Gómez. Abroad, these men organized a plot purchasing weapons and coordinating with some anti-*machadistas* on the island. They represented an opposition emerged from within the political system; a sort of "institutionalized" resistance very different from the revolutionary opposition that was to come. Marxist historian Lionel Soto plainly referred to their revolt as "*insurrección burgués-latifundista*".<sup>2364</sup> Thus, the *machadato* was beginning to crumble from within. According to Le Riverend, it would be "el punto más alto de participación de los políticos tradicionales en la lucha contra Machado".<sup>2365</sup>

In August 9, 1931, this coalition group believed to be ready to invade the island to oust the regime, and consequently they initiated their short movement by entering through Pinar del Río province, located in Western Cuba, and Oriente, in the East, and began

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<sup>2363</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 195-206.

<sup>2364</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 89.

<sup>2365</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 272.

what would amount to roughly a ten-day rebellion. A student activist at the Directory who was a direct witness, Justo Carrillo, relates that the organization did not rely on the DEU, for they remained in Havana with no weapons available to take part in the action.<sup>2366</sup> The insurgents tried to destroy national resources, including a tank belonging to the Shell Oil Company in a suburb in Havana, but were constantly stopped by the loyalist army.<sup>2367</sup>

The revolutionary expedition was a disaster, for government forces rapidly reacted and stopped the uprising. Naval, air, and ground units loyal to Machado—still the “legitimate government”—were able to move fast through the newly inaugurated Central Highway.<sup>2368</sup> There were also over fifty detentions in New York and Atlantic City of Cuban residents in the United States by federal authorities. Those arrested had planned to go to Cuba to participate in the uprising, and thus were accused of violating the American federal laws on neutrality.<sup>2369</sup> Thirty-seven men were apprehended, and Machado’s forces killed several of the participants. A few days later, Menocal and Mendieta were arrested as prisoners of war in Río Verde, located in Pinar del Río, together with twelve followers—the leaders of the rebellion would be released a few months after.<sup>2370</sup> Lionel Soto argued that this capture was the end of the two military men’s prestige: “El ridículo fin que tuvo la aventura de Río Verde decretó el ocaso de los viejos caudillos y el descrédito personal de Mendieta y Menocal”.<sup>2371</sup> The next day in Santa Clara—Machado’s native province—some insurgents, who were not aware that their leaders had surrendered, killed eight soldiers in what would be conceived as a small victory for the insurrectionalists. The “delegate general” of the rebels, Domingo Capote, was recorded to have stated: “There is striking similarity between the present revolt and the Cuban war for independence against Spain waged in 1898”. He further

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<sup>2366</sup> Carrillo, *Cuba 1933*, 30.

<sup>2367</sup> “Cuban Rebels Prepare to Attack Havana”, *New Orleans States*, August 12, 1931, 1.

<sup>2368</sup> A newspaper published that Cuba had an army of about 17,000 men, in “Cuban Rebels Prepare to Attack Havana”, *New Orleans States*, August 12, 1931, 2.

<sup>2369</sup> “Se confirma la existencia en Nueva York de una conspiración contra el presidente Machado”, *La Voz* (Madrid), August 8, 1931, 1; “Los cubanos residentes en Atlantic City preparaban una expedición armada”, *El Sol* (Madrid), August 9, 1931, 1.

<sup>2370</sup> “Las tropas de Machado han capturado a Menocal y Mendieta”, *ABC*, August 15, 1931, 32; Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 42.

<sup>2371</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 304.

affirmed that the rebellion would not end until its goal of eliminating the tyrannical *machadato* had been achieved.<sup>2372</sup>

However, Machado, who was proud to announce as early as August 10 that the plot had been erased, declared martial law in Havana and Pinar del Río, and, a few hours later, in the rest of the island.<sup>2373</sup> There still remained, nonetheless, several rebel strongholds in Santa Clara, where insurgents kept robbing, burning and pillaging towns, and cutting communication—telegraph and telephone—lines. The president responded by sending 400 soldiers and personally travelled to the area to supervise the actions. In his memoirs, the Cuban politician reminisced: “Tal labor me era fácil en extremo si se piensa que durante los tres años de la Guerra de Independencia yo había actuado día a día en mi provincia como jefe de una brigada que fue una de las más tenazmente combatida por las tropas españolas”.<sup>2374</sup>

After a meeting with some officials, Machado offered amnesty to the rebels in return for abandoning the arms within twenty-four hours.<sup>2375</sup> Rejecting the proposal, about 2,000 prepared to battle against the government troops, which amounted to about 4,000 soldiers.<sup>2376</sup> It is relevant to note that, throughout the rebellion, the army, well fed and paid, remained loyal to the president.<sup>2377</sup> Fernando Ortiz is quoted as having said that the revolutionary forces were “making consistent headway”, and that the revolt would “continue for some time” because their fighters were all voluntary and thus financing was not a problem.<sup>2378</sup> Numerous groups of agitators spread out throughout the island to the point where the president’s enemies were sure that soon enough they would be able

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<sup>2372</sup> “Rebels Battle On as Chief Is Taken”, *New Orleans States*, August 15, 1931, 1-2.

<sup>2373</sup> “Importante movimiento revolucionario en Cuba”, *Crisol* (Madrid), August 10, 1931, 1; “Según el Gobierno, ha fracasado el complot revolucionario más grande de los registrados desde 1917”, *El Heraldo de Madrid*, August 10, 1931, 1; “En Cuba se descubre un importante complot revolucionario y se declara el estado de guerra en La Habana y Pinar del Río”, *La Voz*, August 10, 1931, 1; “A pesar de que el Gobierno de Machado insiste en que es dueño de la situación las explosiones del complot se producen en diferentes puntos del país”, *El Heraldo de Madrid*, August 11, 1931, 1; “Movimiento revolucionario en Cuba: La ley marcial en todo el país”, *ABC*, August 12, 1931, 28.

<sup>2374</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 41.

<sup>2375</sup> “Movimiento revolucionario en Cuba: Desórdenes en diferentes puntos de la isla”, *ABC*, August 12, 1931, 28; “Cuban President Invades Rebel Stronghold; Reported Seeking Peache Agreement”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 14, 1931, 1; “Machado ofrece una amnistía”, *ABC*, August 15, 1931, 32; “Cuban Fighting Continued in Revolt Zone”, *New Orleans States*, August 16, 1931, 1, 8.

<sup>2376</sup> “Cuban Insurgents Reported Massing Troops for Battle”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 18, 1931, 1.

<sup>2377</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover’s Latin-American Policy*, 105-106.

<sup>2378</sup> “Santa Clara Battle Near; Will Decide Rebellion”, *New Orleans States*, August 18, 1931, 1, 10.

to capture him.<sup>2379</sup> The biggest was held on Gibara, in Oriente province, in which a foreign legion made up of Americans, Germans, Japanese, and French participated in support of the rebels. At the same time, three bombs exploded in downtown Havana, with no casualties.<sup>2380</sup> However, before the insurrectionary could reach Holguín, in the South of Gibara, they were captured and executed by Machado's forces.<sup>2381</sup> Thus, ultimately, the revolt was arguably easy to suppress because of the "completion of the Central Highway, rapid motor transport, scouting airplanes, machine guns, and above all, a well-trained and well-equipped army".<sup>2382</sup>

Finally, once more, on August 23 the president was able to officially declare that the uprising had been stamped out and expressed his grief for the deceased during the fighting.<sup>2383</sup> In his memoirs, however, Machado was proud to state that none of the previous rebellions occurred in Cuba in the twentieth century "se liquidó con menos sangre y menos esfuerzo".<sup>2384</sup> In all, the uprising cost the life of about one hundred men, although hundreds more were wounded and imprisoned.<sup>2385</sup> The United States, then under the Hoover administration, had remained silent throughout the conflict, despite legally being able to intervene in accordance to the Platt Amendment. Americanist historian Dexter Perkins criticized this attitude by writing: "It seemed as if the United States were prepared to tolerate any regime so long as it was not hostile to American interests".<sup>2386</sup>

The revolt was a disaster and it opened up opportunities for younger sectors of society who were willing to take charge of the political future of the island. Aguilar defined the whole revolt as a "miserable fiasco",<sup>2387</sup> and Tabares del Real as a "mal organizad[a], cort[a] de miras y objetivos".<sup>2388</sup> Similarly, historian Jules Benjamin argued it had been

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<sup>2379</sup> "Machado Is Cut Off From Havana By Rebel Army", *New Orleans States*, August 19, 1931, 1-2.

<sup>2380</sup> "Rebel Foreign Legion Opens New Battle", *New Orleans States*, August 22, 1931, 1-2.

<sup>2381</sup> Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 129.

<sup>2382</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 193.

<sup>2383</sup> H. E. Knoblaugh, "Machado Says Revolt Is Over", *New Orleans States*, August 23, 1931, 6.

<sup>2384</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 40.

<sup>2385</sup> Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 126. Historian Francisca López Civeira gives an account of the upheaval in López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 50-57.

<sup>2386</sup> Perkins, *The United States and the Caribbean*, 98.

<sup>2387</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 113.

<sup>2388</sup> Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 125.

an “uncoordinated affair”.<sup>2389</sup> Historian Louis A. Pérez argues that the rebellion was ultimately unsuccessful mainly because its participants were old war veterans fighting in a traditional manner—the one they knew;<sup>2390</sup> that is, organizing a classic military uprising in the open country (the *manigua*), promoting all sorts of rumors to undermine the government, and encouraging the US to position itself against the dictator. Member of the Communist Party Raúl Roa recalled decades later that they had a different understanding of the world than previous generations, and that they possessed “una sensibilidad y una pupila propias”.<sup>2391</sup> Justo Carrillo, another witness, expressed straightforwardly: “La Historia abría sus puertas a las nuevas generaciones”,<sup>2392</sup> that would promote direct attack on big cities and the end of Cuban dependency on its northern neighbor.<sup>2393</sup>

Before that came, Manuel Márquez Sterling,<sup>2394</sup> who had renounced his position as Cuban ambassador in Mexico,<sup>2395</sup> joined the so-called *nacionalistas* led by Cosme de la Torriente.<sup>2396</sup> They began conversations with the Machado government, represented by its ambassador in the US, Orestes Ferrara, and former president’s Secretary of State and then senator, Viriato Gutiérrez. These would be referred to as the *Conferencias del Shoreham*, carrying the name of the Washington, D.C., hotel where they began on October 13, 1931.<sup>2397</sup> The goal of all those attending was to find an agreement between the traditional opposition and the *machadato*. Márquez Sterling had warned the Cuban president that if no efficient political measures were taken, such as a constitutional reform in which all forces of the opposition were well represented, a second uprising

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<sup>2389</sup> Benjamin, “The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism”, 79.

<sup>2390</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 58–59. A Marxist author called them “viejos caudillos derechistas”, in Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 100.

<sup>2391</sup> Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. II*, 793.

<sup>2392</sup> Carrillo, *Cuba 1933*, 30.

<sup>2393</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 107.

<sup>2394</sup> Márquez Sterling published a book on January 1933—that is, a few months before Machado’s ousting—on these encounters: Manuel Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham: El cesarismo en Cuba* (Mexico City: Botas, 1933). His attitude towards the publication is of certain despair regarding the hieratical attitude of the government throughout the process of conciliation with the opposition.

<sup>2395</sup> It became effective on January 5, 1931. The reasons for his resignation were, as the ambassador explained, because of the constant attacks Cuba received from the outside and his uncomfortable position in the conflict occurring in the island, in Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 262–266.

<sup>2396</sup> He was a lawyer, statesman, and veteran of the war of independence who had written a compilation of speeches about the relationship between Cuba and the United States in the first decades of the republic: Cosme de la Torriente, *Cuba y los Estados Unidos* (Havana: Imp. de Rambla, Bouza y ca., 1929).

<sup>2397</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 157.

would soon break out.<sup>2398</sup> During the conferences, de la Torriente stipulated that there was only one way to reestablish normalcy in Cuba, and that was the resignation of the president, the reform of the Constitution, and freedom for all political prisoners. The allies of the government would inform Machado of the proposals.<sup>2399</sup> Márquez Sterling insisted in several letters to the president and his representatives for the urgent need for action in the face of increasing violence on the island.<sup>2400</sup> Although “no llegó a interrumpirse, ni por instantes, el ambiente de cortesía”,<sup>2401</sup> as could be expected, the conferences were unsuccessful, for the president did not accept any of the measures suggested or, as Márquez Sterling put it, he did not lower “un ápice sus puntos de vista patrióticos”.<sup>2402</sup> Some months after the encounters at the Shoreham Hotel, the former diplomat and historian criticized the attitude of the *machadato* in a letter to Cosme de la Torriente:

Todo el afán del Gobierno se reduce a obtener la benevolencia de los banqueros [norteamericanos], benevolencia que sólo se utiliza en prolongar el régimen político, mientras la República se va convirtiendo en escombros. ¿Cómo es que ni el Gobierno, ni los amigos del General Machado, comprenden la trascendencia y el alcance de lo que aquí se hace y se dice respecto del porvenir de Cuba?<sup>2403</sup>

The Cuban establishment would, however, soon be affected by the unwise decision of the “donkey with claws” to remain in power.

### 6.3.2 Escalating measures on both sides: the ABC and the *porra*

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<sup>2398</sup> Letter from Manuel Márquez Sterling to Gerardo Machado, September 11, 1931, reproduced in Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 139-141. The general response by the government was quite condescending. Ferrara, for instance, affirmed: “Acabamos de pasar por una revolución y parece necesario un paréntesis de seis meses antes de conceder ningún acercamiento. El Presidente ha vencido. Es indispensable que los derrotados reconozcan y sufran su derrota”, quoted in Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 155.

<sup>2399</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 166-170.

<sup>2400</sup> In one of his writings, the former ambassador urged: “La anarquía va pronunciándose cada día más en Cuba, y si no la contenemos a tiempo, será después más fuerte que la oposición y el Gobierno juntos, y arrasará con todo”, reproduced in Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 174.

<sup>2401</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 159.

<sup>2402</sup> Márquez Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 190. This author quotes a letter he received from senator Gutiérrez in which he expressed: “Yo creo que aunque aparecemos estar en el centro de un círculo vicioso, en realidad nos encontramos frente a dos voluntades que todavía no están en actitud de ceder, lo que de hecho produce una situación de enconos, que se viene prolongando fatalmente”, in 209.

<sup>2403</sup> Letter from Manuel Márquez Sterling to Cosme de la Torriente, April 18, 1932, reproduced in *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 234.

The failed attempt to oust president Machado in August 1931 had shown the president's strength and, to the young opposition, the failed conversations with the president were an indication that new and more radical measures were necessary.<sup>2404</sup> Thus, a new political clandestine formation was born in October 1931—although their political manifesto would not be released until the following year—aimed at direct and definitive action against the regime. They represented a new generation, youth born or grown up after independence and ready to change Cuban society, without any memories of the struggle against Spain. Furthermore, they were completely willing, by way of terrorism, to get rid of what they understood to be an obsolete political system. This group would be organized in cells of seven members. Each member would have another cell under his or her responsibility, and that person only knew the other six members and his own leader. By using this method, secrecy was guaranteed and the organization remained functioning even after there were police arrests.<sup>2405</sup> The most relevant cell was A, the second would be B, and so forth, thus the name of the group simply became ABC.<sup>2406</sup>

Led and co-founded by intellectuals Joaquín Martínez Sáenz, Juan Andrés Lliteras, Jorge Mañach—who was a Harvard University graduate—, and Francisco Ichaso, the ABC's perception of Cuba was elitist; for instance, they proposed restricting voting to literates, although they also defended women's suffrage.<sup>2407</sup> Historian Ramón Eduardo Ruíz wrote that the organization was composed of young professionals that came from wealthy families.<sup>2408</sup> The group represented a relevant change in the social spectrum of the island, for they belonged to the Cuban middle-upper-class now unaccepting of political and economic liberalism.<sup>2409</sup> One of its most known members would be future president of Cuba Fulgencio Batista, although he joined the organization with not so much a revolutionary spirit but a desire to survive the turmoil of the last years of the

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<sup>2404</sup> López Segrera, "Orígenes, desarrollo y frustración de la revolución de 1933", 95.

<sup>2405</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 118.

<sup>2406</sup> Geoff L. Simons, *Cuba: From Conquistador to Castro* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 245.

<sup>2407</sup> *El ABC al pueblo de Cuba. Manifiesto-programa* (Matanzas: Casas y Mercado, 1932), 31, Digital Library of the Caribbean, University of Florida, dloc.com; Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 85; Le Riverend, *La República*, 273–274. The full text of the manifesto is reproduced in González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 215–250 as well as in *Manifiestos de Cuba*, ed. Padrón Larrazábal, 118–152.

<sup>2408</sup> Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 105.

<sup>2409</sup> Benjamin, "The Machadato and Cuban Nationalism", 79.

*machadato*.<sup>2410</sup> Another of its members was student militant Carlos González Palacios, who in 1948 would write a book on the (1933) Cuban revolution regretting that the regime that was established after the ousting of Machado did not fulfill the expectation of the revolutionaries such as him. Ironically, in later years González Peraza became the director of the Instituto de Cultura under the Batista dictatorship.<sup>2411</sup>

The ABC 1932 manifesto was a 36-page text that justified the need for an integral renovation of the political system of the Caribbean island. The main thesis was that the generation of 95, which was referred to as “*agotada*”, had been unable to detach itself from endemic political tendencies, Machado being the culmination of these.<sup>2412</sup> Thus the ABC proposed five main innovations: “Hombres nuevos / Ideas y procedimientos nuevos / Reconquista de la tierra / Libertad política / Justicia social”,<sup>2413</sup> through the economic empowerment of the Cuban people. Also, the ABC argued that the 1901 Constitution had permitted the president to gather excessive power, for the judicial and the legislative powers were subdued to the executive.<sup>2414</sup> The specific “remedies” the newly born organization was proposing were, among others, to eliminate *latifundios*, to nationalize the land, to create a National Bank, to limit the authority of the president, and to enact compulsory military service. The manifesto ended with a loud call, directed at all honest Cuban citizens, to take part in the fight for liberty and against the personal rule of the *machadato* and its reliance on a traditional and corrupted political system.<sup>2415</sup>

The text was not, however, radical per se, for it did not propose to socialize the

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<sup>2410</sup> For a recent biography about Batista, see Frank Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista: From Revolutionary to Strongman* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 40. This work is interesting because its author also chooses to use the concept of “strongman”.

<sup>2411</sup> González Palacios, *Revolución y pseudo-revolución*.

<sup>2412</sup> In the manifesto the president was brutally described: “Machado es uno de los más acabados tipos de déspota hispano-americano. Reúne todas las características biológicas y psicológicas de la especie: listeza y simpatía de pícaro, empaque de histrión, ignorancia osada, temperamento hipersensual, hábitos crapulosos, hipocresía radical, ambición de poder, de dinero y de honores, megalomanía sin límites, ausencia total de escrúpulos morales, vileza de espíritu, instintos sanguinarios, conciencia atrofiada de criminal nato”, in *El ABC al pueblo de Cuba*, 23.

<sup>2413</sup> *El ABC al pueblo de Cuba*, 3; López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 60; Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 127.

<sup>2414</sup> *El ABC al pueblo de Cuba*, 14.

<sup>2415</sup> The last paragraph is a reflection of the desperation of its authors: “Martí auguró que después de la Independencia tendría que hacerse la guerra por la libertad. ¡Esta es la nueva guerra! ¡Marchemos todos juntos a la conquista de una patria libre, próspera y honrosa! ¡Reivindiquemos nuestra economía perdida! ¡Nacionalicemos a Cuba! ¡Desterremos para siempre de la vida pública la estulticia y la corrupción! ¡Saquemos del altar de la Patria a quienes lo han tomado de pedestal para su soberbia, y llevemos a él la ofrenda de sacrificio de las manos nuevas, de las manos limpias! ¡EL ABC ES LA ESPERANZA DE CUBA! ¡JUNTOS TODOS BAJO LA BANDERA DEL ABC!, in *El ABC al pueblo de Cuba*, 36.

economy thus advocating, to some extent, “traditional” liberalism.<sup>2416</sup> Marxist historian Lionel Soto criticized that aspect by arguing that it was not a revolutionary organization: “Se movía [...] en el área de un vago reformismo”.<sup>2417</sup> Perhaps that explains why, as historian Louis A. Pérez states, “the ABC revolutionary society represented the largest opposition faction to emerge in the aftermath of 1931”,<sup>2418</sup> for a broader audience could empathize with its program. Moreover, historian Robert Whitney ventured to argue that the organization became the “first mass movement in twentieth century Cuba”.<sup>2419</sup> Machado, however, stated in his memoirs that the “ABC fue una organización meramente circunstancial”.<sup>2420</sup>

While in the manifesto their authors stated that they were against fascism and communism because these political systems banned political liberties,<sup>2421</sup> some enemies believed there was a suspicious resemblance between the ABC’s text and the document released in 1919 by the Italian fascists, particularly when proposing to substitute the Senate for a “functional chamber” and banning illiterates from voting, a very anti-populist and anti-black measure in Cuba.<sup>2422</sup> For instance, communist Rubén Martínez Villena harshly criticized the organization because, he argued, of the para-fascist symbology of its program.<sup>2423</sup> Enrique Lumen wrote in 1934 that the ABC pretended to be fascist, but could not be so because of the investments foreigners made to the

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<sup>2416</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 152.

<sup>2417</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 125.

<sup>2418</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 63.

<sup>2419</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 84.

<sup>2420</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 46.

<sup>2421</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 85. The manifesto clearly stipulated: “La libertad civil, que Martí defendió como el derecho que tiene todo hombre honrado a pensar y hablar sin hipocresía no sólo es perfectamente compatible con todas las reformas de verdadera justicia social, sino que es indispensable para su realización, y esta esencia firmísima hace que el ABC repugne por igual los dos extremos en que, con pretensiones del falso dilema, se manifiesta una parte del novísimo pensamiento político: el fascismo y el comunismo, sistemas que excluyen formalmente la libertad política”, in *El ABC al pueblo de Cuba*, 33.

<sup>2422</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 121. Historian Lionel Soto criticized this point by stressing: “[The ABC] pedía la ‘Supresión del Voto Analfabeto’, en un país de impresionante proporción de ciudadanos—obreros y campesinos, no estudiantes, profesionales, comerciantes, etc.—que no sabían leer ni escribir”, in Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 330.

<sup>2423</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 377. Similarly, years later a Marxist author would state: “El ABC era en su ideología, en su programa y en su táctica una organización genuinamente fascista”, in Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 100. In further pages, this author directly called the members of the organization “fascistas criollos”, in 126.

organization.<sup>2424</sup> Several decades later, another Marxist author, Francisco López Segrera, affirmed that the ABC was repeating European fascism and adapting it to the Cuban scene.<sup>2425</sup> Member of the Communist Party Raúl Roa also called the ABC “*partido político fascistizante*”,<sup>2426</sup> and Lionel Soto referred to their program as a “*sinuosa y demagógica tendencia política fascistoide*”.<sup>2427</sup> Even Gerardo Machado wrote in his memoirs that the group “*era de carácter secreto, celular, terrorista y políticamente de miras fascistoides*”.<sup>2428</sup>

Debates aside, the ABC did use violence as a means to achieve their goal of eliminating the dictatorship, or, as Lamar Schweyer argued in his book on the downfall of Machado—which he wrote in exile—: “*El ABC decidió sembrar en el país, y especialmente en las esferas del Gobierno, el terror*”.<sup>2429</sup> Although surprisingly not stipulated in their manifesto, bombings and murders were a common technique used by the *abecedarios*, who at the beginning of 1933 had about 2,000 members—although, as historian Robert Whitney points out, the number is difficult to assess due to the organization’s secrecy.<sup>2430</sup> The usual acts of terrorism of the organization included placing bombs in theaters and clubs in Havana, that is, places with large crowds.<sup>2431</sup> Witness and *abecedario* González Palacios wrote that, in fact, terrorism in Cuba already existed on the island before the foundation of ABC, for, Machado, the author argued, had initiated it little after he became president.<sup>2432</sup> To some extent, and considering that the level of violence was negligible compared to that of ABC, this organization could be examined in correlation to the Square Dealers in Louisiana, at least in its motives.

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<sup>2424</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana*, 68. Regarding foreign investments to the anti-machadista cause, a newspaper published during the 1933 revolution: “There have been rumors for several days that foreign capital involved in Cuban interests has been supporting the anti-Machado movement”, in “Machado, Backed By His Party, Rejects US. Plan to End Bloodshed in Cuba”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 11, 1933, 1.

<sup>2425</sup> López Segrera, “Orígenes, desarrollo y frustración de la revolución de 1933”, 97.

<sup>2426</sup> Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. II*, 792.

<sup>2427</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 133.

<sup>2428</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 46.

<sup>2429</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 25-26.

<sup>2430</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 85-86.

<sup>2431</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 150.

<sup>2432</sup> González Palacios, *Revolución y pseudo-revolución*, 30.

Comparisons aside, at first, the ABC joined with the Student Directory, amongst other reasons because they both defended the same ultimate goal and were configured by a strong base of middle-class citizens.<sup>2433</sup> The ABC praised them in its manifesto by stating:

[E]se movimiento estudiantil [...] está siendo bajo el Machadato, una de las páginas más brillantes de la historia cívica de Cuba [...] [L]a actitud combativa del estudiantado, orientada y mantenida por el Directorio del año 30, ha sido de una eficacia extraordinaria para levantar el espíritu público, y su valor, su entusiasmo y su abnegación les ha ganado para siempre la gratitud de Cuba.<sup>2434</sup>

However, in the following months, and particularly after the arrival to Cuba of US ambassador Sumner Welles in April 1933, which will be the topic of the next chapter, their paths would separate because, while the student's organization rejected the intermediary's presence for they understood it as another form of intervention by the northern neighbor, the terrorist organization openly supported it.<sup>2435</sup>

Whereas opposition groups became stronger, Machado also reacted. The critical situation made the Cuban president estimate the best manner in which to combat it was by implementing terror.<sup>2436</sup> In their book on the history of Cuba, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias broadly concluded that: “[Machado] elevó el crimen político a sistema de gobierno, la represión brutal a estado permanente del país y siguió una política de intensa centralización del poder y los medios represivos”.<sup>2437</sup> The president reinstated the old Spanish practice of *ley de fuga*, according to which any prisoner who attempted to escape could be shot by the police.<sup>2438</sup> Moreover, in 1932 the “*asno*” created a special unit called *Liga Patriótica* (Patriotic League), which came to be known as *La Porra* (bludgeon or big stick). A “*porra*” is a group of followers who loudly show their support for their cause or their rejection towards opposing factions.<sup>2439</sup> The goal of this

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<sup>2433</sup> Justo Carrillo admitted it was “una lógica alianza de las fuerzas realmente renovadoras”, in Carrillo, *Cuba 1933*, 32.

<sup>2434</sup> *El ABC al pueblo de Cuba*, 22.

<sup>2435</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 89.

<sup>2436</sup> Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 532.

<sup>2437</sup> Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, *Historia de Cuba*, 580.

<sup>2438</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 194.

<sup>2439</sup> There is a precedent for the use of the term “*porra*” when on December 1870, a fierce play against Amadeus of Savoy entitled *Macarronini I* was open in Teatro Calderón in Madrid. It had been written by political satirist Eduardo Navarro Gonzalvo (1846-1902). In the middle of the play, however, a group of

new gang, which is described by writer Geoff Simons as “an effective death squad”, was to annihilate all dissidents of the dictatorship and violently end all protests and demonstrations.<sup>2440</sup> Now the “*asno con garras*” had the police, the army, and the *porra* at his disposal to repress all enemies. Macías Martín described the latter as a “grupo de choque paramilitar”, which “llevaba a cabo toda clase de tropelías”.<sup>2441</sup> Historian DeConde went even further and defined the *porra* as a “gestapo-like organization”.<sup>2442</sup> A worried reporter, in 1935 Westbrook Pegler compared the Bureau of Criminal Identification of Louisiana, controlled by Huey Long, with the *porra*. Pegler wrote that Long could “hire every underworld gunman and thug, every hoodlum and crossroads loafer of murderous tendencies to harass or kill his enemies”, thus the senator had the “power to bribe impoverished citizens to spy and squel on their neighbors”.<sup>2443</sup>

The new paramilitary group in Cuba acted as a sort of secret parallel force with no regards of the law, for it could not be held accountable for its misdemeanors.<sup>2444</sup> As could be expected, the terrorist group ABC was repulsed by the *porra*, and expressed so clearly in their manifesto:

No le bastaba [...] al Tirano la bochornosa incondicionalidad de un Ejército burocratizado y aguantón. Necesitaba además de elementos que clandestinamente sembrasen el terror y llevasen su fuerza intimidatoria hasta el seno de los más pacíficos hogares. Para ello instituyó la ‘Porra’, bajo títulos pomposos: ‘Liga Patriótica’, ‘Guardia Civil Nacional’, ‘Milicias Nacionales’, etc. La ‘porra’ es otro sostén del gobierno: el de la delincuencia profesional. La ‘porra’ no se ha limitado a atacar a mansalva a los miembros de la Oposición: se ha valido de su fuerza y de su impunidad para perpetrar toda clase de delitos vulgares, contra la propiedad y las personas. La ‘porra’ ha practicado, en gran escala, todas las formas de ‘chantaje’, ha saqueado comercios, ha

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irritated right wingers named “grupo de la porra”, who entered the theater with sticks and knives, and destroyed what they found on their path, and even wounded some members in the audience. After the incident, a former congressman Fermín Gonzalo Morón wrote a pamphlet entitled *El pueblo, el Gobierno y la Partida de la Porra*, in which he condemned the attack, in David Thatcher Gies, *The Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Spain* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 334-335. As recently as 2012, allegedly groups of supporters of Mexican presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador were derogatorily called “*porros*” by members of the opposing Enrique Peña Nieto campaign, in Emir Olivares Alonso, “No somos porros ni acarreados, responden alumnos de la *Ibero* que increparon a Peña”, *La Jornada* (Mexico), May 15, 2012, [jornada.unam.mx/2012/05/15/politica/011n1pol](http://jornada.unam.mx/2012/05/15/politica/011n1pol).

<sup>2440</sup> Simons, *Cuba*, 245; Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 125.

<sup>2441</sup> Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 374. Author González Palacios jokingly wrote, “la ‘porra’ fue el más celebrado huésped del Palacio Presidencial”, in González Palacios, *Revolución y pseudo-revolución*, 28.

<sup>2442</sup> DeConde, *Herbert Hoover’s Latin-American Policy*, 104.

<sup>2443</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough”, *Reading Eagle* (Pennsylvania), February 18, 1935, 4.

<sup>2444</sup> Berggren, “Machado: an Historical Reinterpretation”, 110-111.

allanado moradas, ha apedreado y ametrallado a hombres, a mujeres y niños indefensos, ha colocado bombas [...] [H]a creado el estado de terror necesario para justificar la suspensión indefinida de las garantías constitucionales.<sup>2445</sup>



**Fig. 48:** “Gerardo Machado. Presidente actual de la República de Cuba”, ca. 1930. Cartoon by Conrado Walter Massaguer. Courtesy of Xavier de Castromori.

To the president’s supporters, however, the existence of this force was fully justified, even historically. In that sense, González-Blanco stated: “El Gobierno, ha dicho en alguna ocasión, [que] tuvo que, en aras de intereses supremos del Estado, adoptar algunas resoluciones enérgicas. Los que a eso llaman dictadura, olvidan o desconocen los heroicos sacrificios que por el derecho realizamos los cubanos de todas las épocas”.<sup>2446</sup> Years later, but with a similar tone, Berggren argued Machado’s repression was not as ruthless as his contemporaries and subsequent historiography had established. The author is completely biased by his anti-Castrism when

writing: “[A] key factor in Machado’s demise was his relative lack of ruthlessness. This may seem callous in light of the Porra’s brutality, but clearly Machado did not possess the ‘will to power’ that has become a hallmark of the strong arm political leaders of the twentieth century. Cuba would not have its superman until 1959 when Castro assumed power”.<sup>2447</sup>

<sup>2445</sup> *El ABC al pueblo de Cuba*, 25.

<sup>2446</sup> González-Blanco, *El Presidente Machado*, 59.

<sup>2447</sup> Berggren, “Machado: an Historical Reinterpretation”, 161.

Some of the oppositionist groups argued that Afro-Cubans were responsible for constituting the *porra* and for being the main supporters of Machado.<sup>2448</sup> The situation became such, that Lamar Schweyer wrote that the ABC released a problematic pamphlet:

De continuo se oía a los líderes de la oposición acusar a la raza negra de ser adicta a Machado. En realidad, lo que ocurría era que el negro forma una gran parte de las clases más pobres de Cuba y ajena al problema, no como raza, sino como clase social. Interpretando mal el hecho, que era sólo un síntoma, los opositoristas enfilaron sus baterías de dicitos contra los negros y una tarde, en las calles principales de La Habana, circularon unas hojas impresas del ABC, en las que se decía: ‘Si te sobra comida, dásela a un perro; pero no a un negro’.<sup>2449</sup>

Perhaps not blacks, but women did take part in the unit. A few time after its creation, Machado decided to add a female division to the organization to deal with women opponents.<sup>2450</sup> War veteran and anti-*machadista* González Peraza related how Machado relied on prostitutes—or, as Quesada y Miranda put it, “mujeres de la peor ralea” —,<sup>2451</sup> to work as counterinsurgency for two pesos a day. French writer Alfredo Fabre-Luce described them as “*bataillon de prostituées qui déshabille les opposantes avec des ongles de métal*”.<sup>2452</sup> The group was led by one Josefa “la Camagüeyana”.<sup>2453</sup> On one occasion this new *porra* assaulted prominent women that were protesting in front of the presidential palace and carrying signs against Machado; after the aggression, some of the ladies were left half-naked, or, as Tabares del Real affirms, the demonstration “fue disuelta violenta y vejaminosamente”.<sup>2454</sup> To counter-attack the insult, another protest took place not long after, in which several men dressed as women to draw the attention of the feminine *porra*, and when they approached to carry out their violent job the students took off their disguises and punitively hit the prostitutes, leaving some of them unconscious.<sup>2455</sup>

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<sup>2448</sup> María Poumier, *La cuestión tabú: el pensamiento negro cubano de 1840 a 1959* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Ediciones IDEA, 2007), 338.

<sup>2449</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 50.

<sup>2450</sup> Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 119.

<sup>2451</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 208.

<sup>2452</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Révolution a Cuba*, 23.

<sup>2453</sup> González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 96.

<sup>2454</sup> Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 124.

<sup>2455</sup> González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 96. De Quesada y Miranda described the event in the following terms: “Fue necesario, para que la Porra femenina desapareciera, que veinte fuertes estudiantes, dedicados a los deportes, [...] se disfrazaran de mujeres y respondieran a una nueva

Violence was clearly escalating on the island on both the *machadista* and anti-*machadista* sides. In his book about the fall of the Cuban president, Lamar Schweyer directly referred to the years 1931-1933 as “*años de terrorismo*”, during which every night people could hear bombs.<sup>2456</sup> On September 28, 1932, a successful attempt carried out by the ABC on the life of the president of the Senate Clemente Vázquez Bello took place. A close friend of the president, he was shot in his car driving from the Havana Yacht Club to his home.<sup>2457</sup> This political murder was what the president called in his memoirs: “El más brutal y cruel atentado terrorista del que se tiene noticias”.<sup>2458</sup> The plan of the terrorist organization was to subsequently set off several bombs at Vázquez Bello’s funeral at the Havana cemetery in order to eliminate the political elite of the island, including the “*asno con garras*”, all in one swoop. However, at the last moment, the president of the Senate’s widow decided to change the location of the ceremony and bury his husband in his native Santa Clara.<sup>2459</sup> Moreover, a gardener in the Havana cemetery discovered the explosives, which would have had a damage radius of about 500m., before they were detonated. Lamar Schweyer, in his usual bombastic tone, argued that had ABC achieved its goal, this would have been the “crimen más espantoso que recuerda la historia de Cuba y, posiblemente, la del mundo”.<sup>2460</sup> Similarly, in his memoirs Machado affirmed: “De haber conseguido los abecedarios llevar a vías de hecho su plan completo, el mundo hubiera presenciado el espectáculo más macabro de la historia”.<sup>2461</sup> In a less dramatic tone, Marxist historian Lionel Soto speculated that “de haberse cometido, es realista pensar que se hubieran producido cientos de muertos y heridos y que, gran parte de los funcionarios y políticos de más alto nivel” would have also perished.<sup>2462</sup> The failed attempt at the cemetery would inspire the 1949 movie *We*

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agresión con golpes contundentes, al extremo de tener que ser asistidas algunas de las Porristas en el Hospital de Emergencias”, in Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo I*, 209.

<sup>2456</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 22, 29.

<sup>2457</sup> Vázquez Bello was beloved by the members of the *machadato*: “Importante actuación legislativa que viene desarrollando el Doctor Vázquez Bello, Pdte. del Senado”, *Diario de la Marina*, April 28, 1930, 1.

<sup>2458</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 50.

<sup>2459</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 126, n. 22; Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 167; Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 127-128; Suchlicki, *University Students*, 30; Rolando Rodríguez, *Rebelión en la república: auge y caída de Gerardo Machado. Tomo III* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2013), 6-7.

<sup>2460</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 33. In this same book the author concluded that the ABC was never successful in its attempts to end with the president’s life because “los que planeaban el asunto consideraban tan importante el salvar su vida como el cortar la de Machado”, in 28.

<sup>2461</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 51.

<sup>2462</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 119.

*Were Strangers*, which was at the same time based on a chapter of the novel *Rough Sketch* written by Robert Sylvester the year prior. The film, directed by John Huston, takes place in a convulsive Cuba in which a group of revolutionaries plan to detonate several explosives in the funeral of a government minister by digging a tunnel from the main character's house to the cemetery.<sup>2463</sup>

On July 9, 1932, the Chief of the Secret Police, captain Miguel Calvo, had also been murdered by the terrorist organization.<sup>2464</sup> There were many more attacks. Historian López Civeira lists on a table some of the dead in terrorist attacks between 1932 and the beginning of 1933:

<b>Table 2: Selected list of terrorist actions (1932-1933)</b>	
1932:	
January 19	Bomb at the <i>Secretaría de Instrucción Pública</i>
January 25	Failed attempt on Machado's life
January 26	Explosion at a house ending in three dead (Antonio Betancourt, etc.)
May 21	Execution of the Chief of Rural Guard in Artemisa (Diez Díaz)
July 9	Execution of Chief of the Secret Police (Miguel Calvo)
July 24	Execution of captain Carlos García
September 6	Bomb that resulted in two dead (lieutenant Francisco Echenique and captain Massip)
September 28	Execution of president of the Senate (Clemente Vázquez Bello)
1933:	
March 11	Execution of the creator of the <i>porra</i> (Leopoldo Fernández Ross)
March 15	Execution of captain Pau

Source: López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 81.

<sup>2463</sup> This movie will be further analyzed at the end of chapter seven.

<sup>2464</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 275; Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 86; Tabares del Real, *La revolución del 30*, 127. Activist Raúl Roa narrated from prison how he learned the news. He was at the courtyard at Modelo when suddenly one of his fellow convicts approached: "Es Gabriel. Tiene el rostro alterado. Se acerca a Pablo y le dice algo al oído. Pablo da un volido, me lo transmite a mí junto con el secreto y yo, a mi vez, a Ladislao y a Bartolo. De pronto, todos se han arremolinado en el patio en desordenado vocerío: - '¡Muera Machado!... ¡Abajo el imperialismo!...' Y nos abrazamos como locos. Se explica: ¡han limpiado a Calvo!", in Raúl Roa, "Presidio Modelo", August 1931-January 1933, reproduced in Roa, *La revolución del 30 se fue a bolina*, 62.

Historian Berggren is scandalized by the ABC's methods and criticizes US (lack of) response to them: "Machado's opposition was actively engaged in terrorism, yet the Americans did not support Machado or report the opposition's atrocities with equal candor".<sup>2465</sup> Be that as it may, as a journalist foresaw, "el poder de Machado, el enteramente sometido a Norteamérica, se bambolea—si no hoy será mañana su caída; pero su fin está muy próximo como el milagro no surgiere. Y ya, la época contemporánea, no suele vivir días milagrosos".<sup>2466</sup>

Not only were political circumstances complicated on the Caribbean island, but also environmental. On February 1932 an earthquake affected Santiago de Cuba, destroying over half of the buildings of the city.<sup>2467</sup> But most importantly, on November 9 that same year, in the midst of the severe crisis, a hurricane occurred, named *huracán de Santa Cruz del Sur* or *de Camagüey*, which resulted in over 3,000 dead and prejudices reached to 40 million US dollars.<sup>2468</sup> In March 1933, renowned Cuban meteorologist José Carlos Millás, who also reported about previous hurricanes, particularly the "Hurricane Ten" of 1924 mentioned in chapter three, published a fascinating account of the tragic events that took place during those weeks.<sup>2469</sup> Millás, who referred to the hurricane as the biggest known catastrophe a nation had to suffer, was surprised by its lateness and argued that never in the history of Cuba had such a devastating phenomenon been registered in November.<sup>2470</sup> The town of Santa Cruz was completely destroyed, as a journalist witnessed and narrated:

Cuanto se diga del desastre de Santa Cruz del Sur es pálido ante la realidad. Nunca, aunque nos remontáramos a los tiempos más antiguos, ningún pueblo de Cuba ha sufrido una catástrofe semejante. No es hipóbole afirmar que Santa Cruz del Sur ha desaparecido totalmente del mapa de Cuba [...] Jamás en mi larga carrera periodística

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<sup>2465</sup> Berggren, "Machado: an Historical Reinterpretation", 111.

<sup>2466</sup> Miguel Pérez Ferrero, "El Ocaso de las dictaduras: Fogonazos de Revolución en Cuba", *El Heraldo de Madrid*, August 11, 1931.

<sup>2467</sup> Amongst them, there were several edifices of storage of Bacardí rum, in Gjelten, *Bacardí y la larga lucha por Cuba*, 156.

<sup>2468</sup> Historian Stuart Schwartz has specified that 2,870 people were identified as deceased, but that the total number of dead and missing was probably around 4,000, in Schwartz, *Sea of Storms*, 252.

<sup>2469</sup> José Carlos Millás, *Memoria del huracán de Camagüey de 1932* (Havana: Observatorio nacional de Cuba. Secretaría de Agricultura, Comercio y Trabajo. Seoane y Fernández, impresores, 1933).

<sup>2470</sup> Millás, *Memoria del huracán de Camagüey*, 14. The meteorologist concluded: "[N]unca, desde que existían registros meteorológicos, había azotado a Cuba en el mes de noviembre un huracán en la acepción propia de la palabra, tal como fue el huracán de Camagüey", in Millás, *Memoria del huracán de Camagüey*, 10.

he contemplado un espectáculo semejante. Jamás he visto tanto duelo, tanta desolación, tantos muertos, tanta tristeza.<sup>2471</sup>

Historian Stuart Schwartz concluded: “This was the greatest single natural disaster in Cuba’s history”. This author added that an American railroad company was partially to blame for the losses, because it refused to send a train to help the citizens of Santa Cruz evacuate unless it would receive \$500. Thus the event became to some extent a nationalistic empowering of Cuban strength.<sup>2472</sup>

The situation of social turmoil and environmental crisis in Cuba in 1931-1933 is clearly not comparable to that of Louisiana in 1934-1935, for the level of street and institutionalized violence was far greater on the Caribbean island. While Louisiana was living through the effects of a worldwide economic depression, Cuba was in addition experiencing a fierce revolution. It is not the intention of this author to suggest the resemblance existed in that sense. However, as stated in the introduction of this thesis, the interesting comparison would be to focus on the leaders those societies elected and how their evolution was similar. If Huey Long, arguably a dictator made in America, had not been assassinated, would he have generated such angst and opposition as to initiate a revolution as the Cuban? That is highly unlikely. Nonetheless, Beals pointed out in his comparison between the two politicians that, as opposed to the “guts” the Cuban people had to oust their president, Louisianans remained fond of the Kingfish. Huey, according to the author, was as much a despot as Machado, but had prevented the state to getting rid of him through widespread rebellion.<sup>2473</sup> Similarly, the journalist mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Westbrook Pegler, wrote on February 1935 that both regimes were much alike, but that Long had simply not deemed it necessary to become more ruthless.<sup>2474</sup> Perhaps scholars and the general public have been and are quite hesitant to use the term “dictator” to refer to the senator of Louisiana because unconsciously they perceive the word as foreign or unconceivable to the American “exceptional” scene—what Sinclair Lewis confronted with his 1935 novel *It Can't*

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<sup>2471</sup> Santiago González Palacios, *El Mundo*, November 12, 1932, as quoted in Millás, *Memoria del huracán de Camagüey*, 45.

<sup>2472</sup> Schwartz, *Sea of Storms*, 252-253. The historian has added that each November 9 the event is still commemorated, in 253.

<sup>2473</sup> Beals, *The Crime of Cuba*, 377.

<sup>2474</sup> Pegler, “Fair Enough”, *Reading Eagle*, February 18, 1935, 4.

*Happen Here*—,<sup>2475</sup> as opposed to the supposed paradise for dictators and revolutions that is the Caribbean.

In the last period of their regimes, both Long and Machado arrived at the zenith of their power, which would be often displayed through military or para-military force. This strength did not signify that there would be no opposition; on the contrary, the more ruthless their regimes became, the more several groups of discontent citizens emerged as opposition to the leaders. These organizations came from diverse backgrounds, gender, race, and political inclinations, particularly in the case of Cuba, but they all had a goal in common, that is, the need for change. The popularity the Kingfish and the “Donkey with claws” had enjoyed throughout the previous years was now being strongly challenged, and would ultimately bring the two politicians’ demise.

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<sup>2475</sup> Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here*.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: DEMISE OF TWO STRONGMEN

A las armas de nuevo, cubanos  
nos convoca la patria humillada  
a romper de los nuevos tiranos  
la cadena de sangre manchada.

La manigua nos dio libertades,  
pero solo del yugo español,  
mas la tierra se pierde, cubanos,  
y tenemos un nuevo opresor.

Ya se forman las filas heroicas,  
¡acudid a la cita de honor!  
quien se quede en su casa tranquilo  
es infame, cobarde y traidor.<sup>2476</sup>

ABC's anthem

Only a few years after their popularity peaked, Huey Long and Gerardo Machado witnessed the end of their regimes. The downfall of the Cuban president came in August 12, 1933, during a bloody revolution, while the senator from Louisiana was killed two years later on September 8, 1935, as a consequence of a personal gun assault. Thus the spectacular nature of the Caribbean island's events is hardly comparable to the "cleaner" two pistol shots that ended with the Kingfish's life. However, his departure was surrounded by such mystique, intrigue, and a touch of morbidity, that to this date—eighty-one years later—the subject of who killed Huey Long and why remains of great interest among scholars and the general public. Surprisingly, the opposite occurs with the Cuban case. Because of the formidable impact of the 1953-1959 revolution—which is commonly simply referred to and understood as *the* "Cuban Revolution"—<sup>2477</sup> by

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<sup>2476</sup> González Peraza, *Machado: crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, 312.

<sup>2477</sup> Latin Americanist Richard Fagen began his study on Fidel Castro's rise to power with the question: "What is the Cuban revolution?", without any mention to previous similar political processes such as the 1933 turmoil, in Richard R. Fagen, *The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 1.

comparison, the revolution which had toppled Machado twenty years earlier has been somewhat neglected historiographically and socially.<sup>2478</sup>

This chapter aims at explaining the collapse of the *machadato* and the relative implosion of the Long machine that followed the disappearance of their leaders. The first section is dedicated to relate the sequence of convulsed events that led to Machado's inevitable exile after eight years of being president of Cuba. Because of the magnitude of the revolution, which continued after the demise of the "*asno con garras*", this thesis will focus mainly on the events that occurred until August 1933. Newspapers from New Orleans, mainly the *New Orleans States* and *The Morning Tribune*, that reported alternatively on the island revolution will be used to follow the events. This is the first time that these sources are used to analyze the 1933 Cuban revolution; the goal will be to interpret these events from the perspective of the Louisiana press. The second section of the chapter will deal with the sudden yet somewhat anticipated assassination of Huey Long and the consequences his loss entailed in his native state. Lastly, the political and cultural legacies of both rulers will be briefly analyzed in the third section, including their portrayals in cinema and literature, especially in the 1930s and 1940s. It will be argued that, although their movements declined, the fact that their regimes and personas were so polemical drew the attention of novelist and cinematographers alike.

## 7.1 The (1933) Cuban revolution

There is no evidence that Huey Long ever met with Gerardo Machado. Most likely, the two politicians never did. However, besides the connections that one can make between the two based on their leadership styles and their societies, there was something more. On April 1930 Cuban ambassador in the United States Orestes Ferrara travelled to New Orleans after visiting Texas.<sup>2479</sup> Although no account has been found about that visit to Louisiana, it is plausible that he met with the Kingfish, as was customary according to

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<sup>2478</sup> Historian Irwin Gellman maintained that the "Revolution of 1933 became an integral part of the island's nationalistic heritage, although its importance is often overlooked", in Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 2-3. In the 1930s, however, Machado perceived the attention given to his ousting a bit differently: "Este periodo de mi gobierno tiene un contenido dramático intensísimo y la pasión que se ha puesto para juzgarlo ha sido tanta que la verdad quedó cubierta de un velo oscuro de fantasía y calumnia", in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 47.

<sup>2479</sup> "El Dr. Ferrara a tres estados", *Diario de la Marina*, April 4, 1930, 3.

the rules of diplomacy. But perhaps the most interesting contact was during the 1933 revolution in the Caribbean island. Huey Long learned about the events with great worry. In the *American Progress*, the senator positioned himself against the Cuban president and in favor of the Cuban people because, the senator argued, Machado was but a ruthless dictator and Wall Street's puppet.

As the senator usually did when he dealt with issues concerning national politics, he argued that under the *machadato* Cuba was submitted to the yoke of American economic imperialism, which should be fought now that the dictator was gone. In October 1933, almost two months after Machado's exile, the Kingfish published an editorial in the *American Progress* asserting the need for Cuban people to be freed from dictatorships dominated by American interests. This article is noteworthy because is the only document that has been found of Long referring to the "*asno con garras*":

The Wall Street interests have mastered control over everything there is in Cuba to amount to anything. The people of Cuba, reduced to a slavery 1,000 times worse than that when Spain owned the isle, have no place to turn for the chance to live. The lands and other resources that lie under the eyes of the poor Cubans are just 'so near, but yet so far'. Cubans may be hired as common serfs and peasants to do the work there, but the masters of finance in Wall Street take away from them any chance of becoming home owners or independent citizens. Those millions of people in Cuba stood for this condition as long as they could. Finally they threw off the yoke—but did they? Did they merely erase Wall Street's label 'Machado'? Others who maintain this imperialism of America's money masters are being called to serve after Machado. And now America's army, navy and marines are to occupy Cuba, we hear. They are to be sent there to 'protect American lives and property'. The first thing the money kings try to do when they are fertilizing foreign soil for their own greed is to get a few Americans killed. Then out yell their newspapers, 'Americans Killed in Cuba'. Then a paid off set of shouters will begin to weep salted tears over those 'poor dead patriots who, draped in the Stars and Stripes, died in Cuba, and whose souls bid us to come—blah'. They don't have to go to Cuba to find Americans that have been killed to weep over. There are thousands dying of hunger and nakedness in the United States today, deliberately and ruthlessly bled to death by cold and hunger at the hand of Wall Street's money masters, to where there is one killed on foreign soil. Pestilence and disease for ages is being left in the ill cared bodies of this day [...] Right under the dome of Heaven, where there is so much to eat and wear that we have to burn it up and slaughter the livestock, the wealth is so tied up in such few hands that the fruits of the land cannot be passed around to our people. I say that no such country deserves to live, no such government should endure, that will make cannon fodder of its people. And now, to go to Cuba to keep those properties there in the hands of the nefarious elements who have also brought wreck to America! To send our men to death under the tunes of the Battle Hymn of the Republic to keep the people of another land peons for our own enemies of mankind,—I say no, never! Let Cuba redistribute its wealth among the people,—just like God said they had a right to do,—just like He said they should do. Let Cuba say (even if we can't say it in

America), that, ‘Where there is food in the land our people will eat, where there is raiment, none of ours shall go naked; where there are houses our people shall have a shelter above their heads’. God help us! America cannot save itself, maybe; the death strangling coils of our money masters are stifling us of the blood that needs to circulate and of the air that we need to breathe. If we be in the throes of that death our imperial financiers have imposed, if there is not enough strength left for us to grasp that [...] which the Cubans have managed to clutch with every frenzied atom left to their make-up,—then let us who cannot save ourselves, say to Cuba: ‘Go free!’<sup>2480</sup>

Just as he had done for the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay, the Kingfish was transporting to Cuba his American national discourse against big companies and finance. That is, through the presidency of Gerardo Machado, the senator argued, Wall Street was dominating the poor people of the Cuban island who, as those impoverished during the Great Depression in the United States, deserved to be “free”. In the first speech the senator gave at the US Senate about the Chaco conflict on May 1934, he stated that the main responsible for both turmoils, including the Cuban revolution, was Rockefeller who, through the Standard Oil was attacking Paraguay, and through the Chase National Bank was controlling the Caribbean island.<sup>2481</sup> In another article published in the *American Progress*, Huey Long explicitly wrote: “Machado was the Chase Bank’s puppet president of Cuba”.<sup>2482</sup>

As stated in the previous chapter, however, the “Donkey with claws” hardly conceived his regime as a dictatorship or himself as a dictator. In fact, he was proud of his administration’s accomplishments and championed his multiple achievements. Not only that, but in an interview with Manuel Márquez Sterling a few months before his ousting, a naive Machado was convinced that his government was secure and everlasting:

El paisanaje no la quiere ni [...] secunda [la revolución]. El guajiro [the Cuban rural farmer], que fué siempre hombre de paz, no ve justificada la contienda. Y el negro, a quien tanto he conseguido enaltecer, hará causa común conmigo. La lealtad, la disciplina y el ardor del ejército no me producen la más leve inquietud. Estoy preparado a cualquier evento.<sup>2483</sup>

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<sup>2480</sup> Huey P. Long, “Shall the Force of America Enslave Another People For Wall Street?”, *The American Progress*, October 5, 1933, 1, 6.

<sup>2481</sup> Gillette, “Huey Long and the Chaco War”, 298.

<sup>2482</sup> “Rockefeller Bank Friends Hit Again; Lose \$20,000,000”, *The American Progress*, January 4, 1934, 3.

<sup>2483</sup> Sterling, *Las conferencias del Shoreham*, 123.

The fact is that Machado and his closest advisors were sure that there was no real political problem on the island, only economic, thus exempting the regime of the upheaval that was occurring particularly since 1930. The president himself expressed so in his memoirs: “En Cuba no existió, en realidad, un problema político durante mi gobierno. Existió, sí, un problema económico”.<sup>2484</sup> Machado was convinced that if he left his position, which, he argued, was holding out of respect and love for the island, Cuba would enter chaos and anarchy. In his memoirs he still believed that “irme yo [...] era provocar lo que vino después”.<sup>2485</sup> On the contrary, historian and essayist Roig de Leuchsenring had a very different perspective on the events that occurred and justified the need for a revolution by arguing in 1935:

Dañinas y perjudiciales, sí, son las dictaduras unipersonales y oligárquicas; y no son los pueblos desgraciados los que se lanzan a la revolución para acabar con tales despotismos y tiranías, sino los que permanecen inconscientes y adormecidos soportando impasibles las violaciones de la ley y las arbitrariedades y explotaciones de tiranos y dictadores.<sup>2486</sup>

Moreover, the situation in the spring of 1933 intensified, and daily demonstrations and the consequent repression became normality. For instance, between March and May the police killed thirty-two students at the cost of the lives of thirteen officers. The Comité de Jóvenes Revolucionarios Cubanos released a pamphlet that year condemning the extreme measures taken by the dictator and offering an unpleasant situation on the island: “Los decretos manipulan las leyes. Las garantías democráticas no existen ya para nadie desde hace tiempo. La Universidad de La Habana está cerrada desde hace tres años. Se mata a todos los adversarios que se distinguen [...] Machado juzga útil dejar en las calles bien en evidencia, los cadáveres”.<sup>2487</sup> This booklet included letters from a variety of personalities supporting to overthrow the “tyranny” of the Cuban president, including American journalist Carleton Beals.<sup>2488</sup> Historian Robert Whitney

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<sup>2484</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 33. Lamar Schweyer connected the economic aspect to the political by stating: “El problema cubano tenía dos aspectos. Uno era económico y otro político. En realidad, uno y otro estaban muy estrechamente ligados, y es posible, o casi seguro, que sin la ruina del país no hubiera surgido el otro”, in Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 57-58.

<sup>2485</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 68.

<sup>2486</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 225.

<sup>2487</sup> Comité de Jóvenes Revolucionarios Cubanos, *El terror en Cuba*, 8-9.

<sup>2488</sup> Beals had written: “La intervención de los Estados Unidos en Cuba tiene que cesar. Todos los pseudo-independientes gobiernos cubanos han sufrido directa o indirectamente, sea la presión de los intereses azucareros y bancarios de los Estados Unidos; sea la influencia política de Wáshington [...] Es preciso

relates how political exiles came back to the island from the northern neighbor—only in Miami there were about one thousand refugees—, Mexico, and Spain, among others, to fight against the regime.<sup>2489</sup> The United States could not allow the crisis to deepen and thus took measures to end the matter.

### 7.1.1 *Míster Welles*

Just as had happened with Republican US presidents Coolidge and Hoover, Machado maintained a good relationship with US ambassador in Cuba Harry F. Guggenheim (1890-1971), who held that position from 1929 until he resigned in 1933. Historian Lionel Soto plainly wrote that the ambassador was Machado's "protector y compinche de negocios".<sup>2490</sup> Journalist R. Hart Phillips also added that criticizing Cubans called them "*Guggenado*" and "*Machadoheim*" as a disdainful joke.<sup>2491</sup> Guggenheim was mainly interested in strengthening economic ties between the two countries, and prioritized American bankers and companies' interests on the island. The ambassador would also promote the inclusion of Cuba to the Chadbourne Plan.<sup>2492</sup> Soon after Roosevelt was sworn as president, however, he looked for a substitute for Guggenheim, because his linkage to the Machado regime had discredited him in Washington, DC.<sup>2493</sup> As historian Jorge Ibarra pointed out, after his inauguration as US president, FDR had to awkwardly assume the consequences of the obtuse relationship his predecessors had established with the *machadato* and that had supported the Cuban president's reelection.<sup>2494</sup> Roosevelt had a specific goal to distance himself from Coolidge and

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echar abajo la Enmienda Platt [...] [E]s un instrumento equívoco, que ha permitido en todo tiempo, tanto al Gobierno cubano como al americano, evadir sus respectivas responsabilidades [...] Hoy se encuentra Cuba bajo la férula de un Gobierno de terror [...] ¿Ayudamos, acaso, a libertar a Cuba de la dominación española, con el solo propósito de hacerla caer bajo el yugo de una nueva esclavitud? El presente estado de cosas, en Cuba, no puede y no debe continuar", in Carleton Beals in *El terror en Cuba*, Comité de Jóvenes Revolucionarios Cubanos, 14.

<sup>2489</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 82-83.

<sup>2490</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 366.

<sup>2491</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 7.

<sup>2492</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 281.

<sup>2493</sup> Moreover, historian Lester Langley affirmed that in the last months of 1930 Guggenheim was of little help, for the ambassador "seemed content to perform the role of an impartial observer of the Cuban calamity", in Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States*, 149. Similarly, historian Irwin Gellman wrote that during those months Guggenheim decided not to take any task regarding the convulse situation in Cuba until the new Democratic administration took office, in Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 12.

<sup>2494</sup> Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33*, 9.

Hoover administrations and the so-called “dollar diplomacy” in the Caribbean Basin. Thus, the president appointed a special envoy to Cuba to allegedly assist solving the deep economic crisis the island was experiencing. The American Department of State had inquired Cuban ambassador in the United States, Óscar B. Cintas—who in 1932 would substitute Orestes Ferrara (recently appointed Secretary of State), and hold the position until 1934—, if the Cuban government deemed it useful to send such emissary. Although the *machadato* respectfully declined the offer in order to maintain its sovereignty, the United States government named Benjamin Sumner Welles Ambassador Extraordinary to Cuba on April 24, 1933.<sup>2495</sup>

French writer and journalist Alfred Fabre-Lance described this envoy in 1934 as “*un homme long et grave, avec une figure osseuse, une bouche mince, des yeux enforcés*”, and “*un peu hautain*”.<sup>2496</sup> Welles was a specialist in Latin American affairs, for he had previously served in Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Honduras. Thus he was regarded as one of the most knowledgeable diplomats on Latin America and, more specifically, the Caribbean.<sup>2497</sup> President Roosevelt fully trusted Welles, for their wealthy families had always been close, and the two men remained good friends.<sup>2498</sup> Welles’ son, journalist Benjamin Welles, wrote a thorough biography of his father, published in 1997, in which, unsurprisingly, the author offers a more candid study of the diplomat than that of Cuban analysts.<sup>2499</sup> Since his perspective on the matter is so subjective, Benjamin Welles decided to include some anecdotes of the adventures he, as a seventeen-year old, experienced in Cuba in 1933 while his father was working.<sup>2500</sup> Similarly, journalist R. Hart Phillips gave a fascinating personal account of her experiences in Cuba during the tumultuous days before Machado was ousted, including some notes of her diary.<sup>2501</sup>

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<sup>2495</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 195.

<sup>2496</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Révolution a Cuba*, 34.

<sup>2497</sup> Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 12.

<sup>2498</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 194.

<sup>2499</sup> Benjamin Welles, *Sumner Welles: FDR’s Global Strategist: A Biography* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

<sup>2500</sup> The author, for instance, tells the account of a night when he drove from Havana to a Varadero resort (80 miles away) with some friends and the car broke in the middle of the road. After the incident and choosing to avoid such distractions while he was trying to put an end to a revolution, Sumner Welles decided to send his son and his wife back to New York, in Welles, *Sumner Welles*, 163-164.

<sup>2501</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 3-37.

Sumner Welles' task as ambassador in the Caribbean island would be narrowed, in theory, to the economic aspects, not political, and to establish a new commercial treaty between the two countries.<sup>2502</sup> American Secretary of State Cordell Hull (1871-1955) had instructed Welles to offer friendly mediation on the Caribbean island. In fact, US policy towards Cuba would be interference, but not intervention. Hull, however, spent the summer in London attending the Economic Conference, thus leaving Welles on his own to make decisions regarding the situation in Cuba, confident in his capacity to override Hull with FDR indulgence.<sup>2503</sup> Machado distrusted the American envoy from the start, for he rightly suspected that his intentions went further than his formal presentation, and were aimed at making him resign.<sup>2504</sup> De la Campa González put it plainly in 1938: "Sumner Welles era uno de los mayores enredadores con que contaba la diplomacia americana".<sup>2505</sup> Militant of the Student Directory Raúl Roa similarly stated in 1948 that Welles "trae su propósito definido y la táctica correspondiente: sustituir 'constitucionalmente' a Machado, sin alterar la estructura colonial de la república".<sup>2506</sup> Cuban economic historian Le Riverend argued in the 1960s that Welles' idea of renovating the commercial treaty between the two countries was just an excuse to maintain the Cuban people distracted while he prepared the arena for the political changes the government intended to do.<sup>2507</sup> In fact, most likely, the turmoil occurring in the Caribbean country worried little both the diplomat and the US president, except for the losses American companies such as the Electric Bond and Share, and the Chase National Bank were experiencing due to the instability.<sup>2508</sup> Luis Aguilar points out how several members of Roosevelt's brain trust were officials of the American Molasses Company, which controlled a refining sugar company named Sucrest Corporation that

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<sup>2502</sup> Lamar Schweyer was suspicious of these intentions and wrote: "Lo que se creía abstención del embajador Welles en la cuestión política era solo una maniobra diplomática. Quería simplemente enterarse bien y penetrar el problema antes de comenzar a actuar", in Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 69-70. On the other side of the political spectrum, marxist author Francisca López Civeira also argued: "Resulta clara la intencionalidad de utilizar la posible firma de un nuevo acuerdo comercial como elemento de atracción para la gestión política que se proponían, al tiempo que diseñaba muy bien una vía compatible con la nueva proyección anunciada", in Francisca López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30* (Havana: Editorial Félix Varela, 2000), 91.

<sup>2503</sup> Wood, *La política del buen vecino*, 52-55; Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 11-12.

<sup>2504</sup> Machado y Morales, *Memorias: Ocho años de lucha*, 70.

<sup>2505</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 534.

<sup>2506</sup> Raúl Roa, "12 de agosto", August 8, 1948, reproduced in Roa, *La revolución del 30 se fue a bolina*, 275.

<sup>2507</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 284.

<sup>2508</sup> Alejandre, "Administración del presidente general Gerardo Machado y Morales", 14.

used Cuban sugar.<sup>2509</sup> Author Benjamin Welles did not hide the fact that his father's policy in Cuba was to be “‘proper, behind the scenes’ influence on Machado to resign”.<sup>2510</sup>

Welles, who was described by Enrique Lumen as “un diplomático elegante, con mentalidad de conejo”,<sup>2511</sup> travelled from New York to Cuba on the ship *Petén*, which docked in Havana at the beginning of May 1933, most likely on the 7th.<sup>2512</sup> Machado thoroughly related the first time they met, and how from the very beginning he mistrusted the ambassador's kind but cold attitude. That day, the diplomat carried a letter from Roosevelt, which he gave to the Cuban president. In his missive, FDR assured the “*asno con garras*” that everything Welles said to him could be considered as if it were his own words, thus letting Machado know he fully trusted the mediator. Lamar Schweyer later argued that “míster Welles había de hacer de ella [the letter] su arma más formidable para derribar a Machado”.<sup>2513</sup> The negotiations were not to be successful. The Cuban president argued that his representatives were proposing a fair treaty according to which Cuba would prioritize US products while the United States would reduce its sugar tariffs and set a fixed fee. However, despite Rooseveltian pretensions to become a new kind of presence in the Caribbean, Welles wanted to reestablish the inadmissible hierarchical Cuban-American relationship that existed before 1925.<sup>2514</sup> The American diplomat also proposed that Machado gradually

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<sup>2509</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 129.

<sup>2510</sup> Welles, *Sumner Welles*, 154.

<sup>2511</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana*, 72. Alejandro described the diplomat as “elegante en el vestir y de muy fino tacto en sus maneras”, in Alejandro, “Administración del presidente general Gerardo Machado y Morales”, 14.

<sup>2512</sup> The specific date of Welles' arrival to Cuba is unclear. Machado wrote it was on May 4 in *Ocho años de lucha*, 70. Benjamin Welles assured his father set off for Cuba on the 4th and arrived three days later, in Welles, *Sumner Welles*, 158-159. López Civeira also specifies it was the 7th, in *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 91, as did journalist Enrique de la Osa, in Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 27; Cantón Navarro, *Historia de Cuba*, 116; Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 15; Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 14; Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 192, and Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 373. Hernández writes the ambassador arrived to Cuba on May 8 in “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 193, as well as did Wood in *La política del buen vecino*, 52; Aguilar in *Cuba: 1933*, 132, and Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33*, 15. Berggren wrote it was on the 9th, in “Machado: An Historical Interpretation”, 113. Le Riverend wrote Welles arrived in April, in *La República*, 284.

<sup>2513</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 66.

<sup>2514</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 71-74.

reestablished civil liberties in the country and to reduce his term by one year, to what the president responded with a rotund and convinced “no”.<sup>2515</sup>

Since the mediator and the president could not reach an agreement, Welles took the opportunity to meet with several leaders of the opposition, “*a espaldas del gobierno*”, as a bit petulantly stated in Machado’s memoirs.<sup>2516</sup> In the middle of 1933 the only support the *machadato* had came from the army—although that would soon change.<sup>2517</sup> Welles believed Cosme de la Torriente, member of the *Unión Nacionalista* as well as the terrorist OCRR who had already taken part at the Shoreham Conferences, could be a good beginning to open a dialogue between the opposition and the government in what López Civeira calls a new form of *cooperativismo*.<sup>2518</sup> De la Torriente felt that the ambiguous mediation could be of help and not as aggressive as direct US intervention, which he opposed.<sup>2519</sup> The ambassador would also find support among the terrorist groups ABC and OCRR—which Le Riverend defined as a “*grupo insignificante y oportunista*” —,<sup>2520</sup> as well as anti-*machadistas* women’s organizations—namely the Organization of Oppositionist Women—, all represented by Hortensia Lamar, founder of the progressive *Club Femenino de Cuba*.<sup>2521</sup> This activist would openly support Welles’ mediation and praised it months after the demise of Machado.<sup>2522</sup>

In an open statement president Roosevelt celebrated the open attitude of these political forces, which Whitney defined as “elite opposition”, to negotiate.<sup>2523</sup> Welles read this message on the first meeting he held with several of the rival forces on July 1 at the

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<sup>2515</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 82; Philip Dur and Christopher Gilcrease, “US Diplomacy and the Downfall of a Cuban Dictator: Machado in 1933”, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, n° 2 (May 2002): 258.

<sup>2516</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 76.

<sup>2517</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 64.

<sup>2518</sup> López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 101.

<sup>2519</sup> Dur and Gilcrease, “US Diplomacy and the Downfall of a Cuban Dictator”, 261; Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 17-18, 20.

<sup>2520</sup> Le Riverend, *La República*, 286. Historian Lionel Soto was also ruthless in his analysis of the role of ABC throughout the mediation process. The author asserted that “la degradación del ABC se hacia total”, in Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 392.

<sup>2521</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 68; Masó, *Historia de Cuba*, 548; Dur and Gilcrease, “US Diplomacy and the Downfall of a Cuban Dictator”, 263. Historian Jorge Ibarra has published the official notes of every meeting Welles had with the different sectors of Cuban society throughout the mediation process, in Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33*.

<sup>2522</sup> Hortensia Lamar, “Sumner Welles, liberador romántico”, *Bohemia* 25, n° 42 (December 10, 1933): 8, referenced in Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 115.

<sup>2523</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 83.

American Embassy.<sup>2524</sup> However, several opposition groups rejected the ambassador's mediation, including the Communist Party, the ABC Radical—who would split from the terrorist organization because of the ABC's support of American mediation—,<sup>2525</sup> the *Ala Izquierda Estudiantil*, and the DEU, amongst others.<sup>2526</sup> After being invited to attend the negotiations, the latter group issued a manifesto on July 16 in which they declined Welles' offer, for they:

Entendemos los estudiantes que la mediación propuesta por el Señor Embajador de los Estados Unidos supone tácitamente una intervención y está respaldada por la fuerza coercitiva del gobierno americano, pues sólo en este caso dicha mediación sería virtualmente eficaz para conseguir el fin que se propone. Esta mediación, pues, menoscaba el derecho que tiene el pueblo cubano a determinarse por sí propio y tiende a inculcar en el pueblo, una vez más, que nuestras dificultades internas sólo pueden resolverse con la colaboración del extranjero.<sup>2527</sup>

The students' organization interpreted the mediation by the special envoy as a materialization of the hated Platt Amendment.<sup>2528</sup> Lamar Schwyer identified that there were “centros en los cuales se pensaba que era mejor que Mr. Welles dejara resolver a

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<sup>2524</sup> Aguilar in *Cuba: 1933*, 136; Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 23. The full statement was: “It is very heartening and a source of much satisfaction to me to know that the Cuban people now believe that a peaceful discussion of their country's problems is the most satisfactory means of determining their country's destinies, and that the best way of reconciling their political difficulties is to be found in the peaceable and orderly process of frank but constructive discussions. I wish the Cuban people every success in these discussions, for I am convinced that the restoration of political peace is a necessary and essential preliminary step on the way to Cuban economic recovery. The representatives of all factions may rest assured that the moral support of the American people will be behind these attempts at the peaceable adjustment of Cuban problems through the orderly procedure of constitutional government”, Franklin D. Roosevelt: “Message to Opposing Factions in Cuba”, July 1, 1933. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14678](http://presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14678).

<sup>2525</sup> López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 97. It would be led by Óscar de la Torre, who justified that there had been ideological differences in the ABC since its conception and that the mediation had simply accentuated them. However, the group lacked popularity and it would be dissolved in 1934, in Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 91.

<sup>2526</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 200-201; Macías Martín, “La diplomacia española ante el ‘Machadato’”, 383; Aguilar, *Cuba: 1933*, 133. The DEU released a manifesto cordially declining Welles' invitation to the mediation process: “Estudiando debidamente el problema, teniendo en cuenta los antecedentes históricos en las relaciones entre Cuba y los Estados Unidos, considerando el carácter de la mediación que nos ofrece el señor Embajador y su condición de representante del gobierno americano, hemos acordado declinar cortesmente la invitación del Señor Sumner Welles a tomar parte en las antedichas conferencias”, “Directorio Estudiantil Universitario al pueblo de Cuba”, June/July 1933, reproduced in Segura Bustamante, *Cuba siglo XX y la generación de 1930*, 96-97.

<sup>2527</sup> “Directorio Estudiantil Universitario al Pueblo de Cuba”, July 16, 1933, reproduced in Roberto Padrón Larrazábal, ed., *Manifiestos de Cuba* (Sevilla: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1975), 154, and in Carrillo, *Cuba 1933*, 56.

<sup>2528</sup> Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 89.

los cubanos sus problemas. Esos centros eran los estudiantiles y los comunistas”.<sup>2529</sup> The latter was the group that first rejected US interference through a manifesto published on April 1933, in which they presented Welles as a perpetrator of terror and war, and criticised the positioning of opposition groups such as the terrorist organization.<sup>2530</sup>

Regardless of this document, the opposition, led precisely by the ABC, asked the ambassador after several meetings and a manifesto published on July 4, 1933, to force the Cuban president to resign immediately, but not before a reform of the Constitution in order to designate a vice-president as president-to-be before celebrating an election. From the moment the ABC joined the US mediation process the organization somewhat lost its believability as the representation of a Cuba free from the yokes of the past and dependency on the United States. The opposition also demanded the reestablishment of constitutional guarantees, the liberation of political prisoners, and freedom to organize new political parties. In return they would cease terrorism and political assassination.<sup>2531</sup> In Machado’s eyes, Welles, by accepting these measures, was becoming less of a mediator and taking clear sides in the conflict.<sup>2532</sup> Thus on July 11, the ambassador visited the Cuban leader at the presidential palace presenting him the demands made by the opposition, but the president assured him: “[L]o que usted me pide es imposible”, for, he argued, the opposition was not ready to take the responsibility of governing the country in such violent stir.<sup>2533</sup>

The two men met once more at Machado’s ranch *La Nenita*, named after his daughter, at the end of July. Welles asked the Cuban politician to approve an Amnesty Law for the political “criminals”, to which the “Donkey with claws” agreed, perhaps as a first sign of desperation. Shortly after, on a Saturday night the mediator sent a message to Machado asking him to reestablish constitutional guarantees before the next Monday.

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<sup>2529</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 63.

<sup>2530</sup> López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 100.

<sup>2531</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 205-206.

<sup>2532</sup> Roig de Leuchsenring was under the same impression when writing: “Desde el primer momento se vio claramente que el embajador Welles no desempeñaba el papel de mediador imparcial entre los dos bandos políticos, sino que en realidad fungía de vocero ante el gobierno de los sectores opositoristas, utilizando a éstos y sus demandas como medios e instrumentos para eliminar a Machado del poder”, in Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt*, 240.

<sup>2533</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 81.

As could be expected, the president did not take the petition or the impulse to hurry particularly well, and responded that that decision was for the president to make, not the ambassador. To that situation, the “*asno*” arranged a meeting between the Cuban ambassador in the US, Cintas, and Roosevelt, to expose the concerns Machado had regarding his envoy to be held on July 25. After the meeting, Cintas reported to the Cuban president that FDR was barely aware of the situation on the island aside from what Welles informed him. Cintas added that the ambassador was a friend of Cuba who was acting on his own accord.<sup>2534</sup>

The day after the meeting in Washington, in Cuba, on July 26 Congress approved the Welles-requested Amnesty Law and restored constitutional guarantees in Havana.<sup>2535</sup> Moreover, since the mediator cautiously assured the Cuban president that he was acting simply as a “friend of the Cuban people”, in the speech Machado gave that day at the Senate, he emphasized:

Deseo hablar también de la labor mediacionista del Sr. Sumner Welles. La razón que he tenido para aceptar la mediación es clara, porque ella iba encaminada al restablecimiento de la paz. No puede creerse que la mediación de Mr. Welles merme nuestra soberanía, porque su cooperación es de su espontánea voluntad y no obedece a instrucciones ni mandatos del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos. Si fuera de otro modo, yo hubiera dejado de ser Presidente antes que aceptar una ingerencia extranjera.<sup>2536</sup>

Later that day, the president also affirmed to the House of Representatives: “La mediación no representa a ningún gobierno extranjero, como lo ha declarado repetidas

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<sup>2534</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 206-207. Latin Americanist Fitzgibbon argued that the idea that the envoy was acting in an “unofficial capacity” was a “fiction” the American government maintained for weeks, but that in reality FDR’s administration was plainly aware of the situation and approved all of Welles’ measures, in Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States*, 196.

<sup>2535</sup> The president stipulated that the law entailed: “Artículo I – Se concede amnistía total a los acusados o culpables de delitos o infracciones del Código Electoral o de delitos o faltas contra las personas, y sus conexos, cometidos con motivo u ocasión de la última reorganización de los partidos políticos, de las elecciones de primero de noviembre de mil novecientos treinta y dos y sus complementarias o que hayan sido consecuencia de la contienda electoral o de la pugna de las aspiraciones de los candidatos”. As for the reestablishment of constitutional guarantees, Congress approved: “Esta Presidencia cree oportuno, por no existir ya peligro para la seguridad del Estado ni para la paz pública, restablecer en la provincia de la Habana las garantías constitucionales suspendidas”, in *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba. Edición Extraordinaria N.º 16 - Leyes de Amnistía*, July 26, 1933, Series V, box 14, folder 12, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, UMDC; “Machado firma la ley de Amnistía”, *ABC*, July 27, 1933, 35.

<sup>2536</sup> As reproduced in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 90, and Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 112. Available in English in Aguilar, *Cuba: 1933*, 140.

veces el mediador. Ella es solo la gestión personal de un ‘amigo de los cubanos’”.<sup>2537</sup> Machado desperately wanted to understand the level of support Welles’ decisions had in Washington, that is, if the envoy was following FDR’s orders or acting on his own initiative. Thus the diplomat hurried to add that he indeed was a friend of Cuba but also the representative of the US government looking for a peaceful solution to the island’s commotion.<sup>2538</sup> As can be seen, the role of Welles in this process was confusing to the “*asno*”, or at least that is how he expressed it in his memoirs.<sup>2539</sup>

### 7.1.2 Sultry midsummer’s defeat

While the discussions between Welles and Machado took place in the political sphere, in the streets of Havana a group of workers of the bus company *Ómnibus*, which would go bankrupt merely a few weeks later, began a non-political strike on July 28.<sup>2540</sup> The strikers were demanding an increase of their salaries after a new city tax on buses was passed and the mayor of the city stipulated the obligation that *Ómnibus* drivers could only purchase gasoline at the garages of the American oil giant Sinclair Oil Company.<sup>2541</sup> Welles took the opportunity to ascribe the turmoil to Machado’s administration and, supported by the ABC, asked for his resignation. *Machadistas* sources indicate that Welles even encouraged streetcar workers and bus drivers to take part in the strike, an unlikely proposition.<sup>2542</sup> Within a few days the labor stoppage had spread throughout the island, including Santa Clara, Matanzas, Camagüey, Santiago,

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<sup>2537</sup> Full speech reproduced in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 91, and Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 113.

<sup>2538</sup> The ambassador’s words were: “Esta mañana me conmovió profundamente saber que el Presidente de la República, en un discurso que pronunció ayer en la Cámara de Representantes, me hizo el alto honor de referirse a mi como ‘un amigo de Cuba’. No deseo mayor honor que ese, y puedo asegurar a ustedes que pondré a contribución todos mis esfuerzos para merecer la distinción que el Presidente tuvo la benevolencia de conferirme. Pero en mi carácter oficial aquí, soy igualmente el Embajador de una nación que es la más íntima amiga que la República de Cuba tiene, y soy el representante de un Presidente de los Estados Unidos quien está profundamente interesado en el bienestar de Cuba”. Full speech reproduced in Machado y Morales, *Memorias: Ocho años de lucha*, 91, and Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 116. Also available in English in Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 209.

<sup>2539</sup> Historian Irwin Gellman also defined Welles’ position as “vague”, in Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 21.

<sup>2540</sup> John P. M’Knight, “Mobs Burn and Loot Anew in Cuba”, *New Orleans States*, August 14, 1933, 1; Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 316; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 396.

<sup>2541</sup> Aguilar, *Cuba: 1933*, 144; Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 26.

<sup>2542</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 211-212; Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 120.

and Pinar del Río, as a protest against the government joined by some 24,000 workers to become a general strike.<sup>2543</sup> Lionel Soto thus wrote: “Las huelgas y las demostraciones van cubriendo literalmente todo el territorio nacional”.<sup>2544</sup> Witness and observer R. Hart Phillips reflected on how “small things sometimes grow into big things, even in politics. When the bus drivers walked out on strike no one paid any attention to them, but now it looks as though there will be a general strike”.<sup>2545</sup>

A week later, under the organization of the Communist Party and the CNOOC, and the leadership of Communist Rubén Martínez Villena—who after three years had returned from Moscow—the situation intensified and some businesses such as bakeries, grocery stores, and cafes joined the strike, until all life in Havana and in the rest of the country was paralyzed, except for banks and public offices.<sup>2546</sup> Observer Enrique la Osa described the transformation of a local strike into a general protest in his account of the 1933 revolution:

La situación se agravó al decursar la última semana de julio [...] Los estibadores paralizaron sus faenas dos días después [que los conductores de ómnibus]: se solidarizaron con sus compañeros del transporte [...] Antes de concluir el mes, los tranvías dejaban de circular. Otros sectores fueron integrándose al firme movimiento huelguístico: los tipógrafos, los periodistas, el comercio... [También] [m]uchas bodegas, tiendas y cafés.<sup>2547</sup>

All protesters asked for Machados’ resignation.<sup>2548</sup> Lamar Schweyer described a frightening atmosphere during the days of the strike: “Faltó el hielo. Faltó la carne. No se tuvo pan. Todos los establecimientos estaban cerrados y vigilados por el ABC. No se

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<sup>2543</sup> J.D. Phillips, “Cuba Threatened by General Strike”, *The New York Times*, August 4, 1933, 1; John P. M’Knight, “Martial Law Near in Cuba”, *New Orleans States*, August 4, 1933, 1; “Cuban Strike Revolution to Unseat Machado”, *New Orleans States*, August 5, 1933, 1; “Cuban Strike Is Spreading Widely”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 5, 1933, 11.

<sup>2544</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 406.

<sup>2545</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 27.

<sup>2546</sup> In that sense, Marxist author Francisco López Segrera pointed out that the “PC [Partido Comunista] desempeñó un papel decisivo en la organización de la huelga, impulsado por la actividad incesante de Rubén Martínez Villena”, in López Segrera, “Orígenes, desarrollo y frustración de la revolución de 1933”, 110-111, and López Segrera, *Raíces históricas de la revolución cubana*, 95.

<sup>2547</sup> Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 32.

<sup>2548</sup> “Cuban Strike Extends, Ties All Businesses”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 4, 1933, 4; “Cuban Strike Revolution to Unseat Machado”, *New Orleans States*, August 5, 1933, 1.

oía más que la música de la radio”.<sup>2549</sup> Hart Phillips also portrayed a distressing scene: “The situation is becoming more tense all the time. No ice or milk deliveries this morning. We are furnishing our neighbors on each side with ice from our refrigerator. Streets are deserted; everyone is afraid to go out”.<sup>2550</sup> Because of this situation, in August 5 the ABC sent a statement to the ambassador urging him to accelerate his mediation by requesting the Cuban president to ask the Congress for a license to resign.<sup>2551</sup> That same day Welles met with Machado once more to discuss the gravity of the situation, but the Cuban president let him know that the government would handle the crisis. In his memoirs, he expressed the theory that the ambassador was hoping the situation would worsen in order to justify American military intervention on the island.<sup>2552</sup>

Then a secret meeting was held between the president and Martínez Villena, from the Communist Party.<sup>2553</sup> They arranged an unprecedented pact according to which Martínez Villena guaranteed that the strike would end if Machado rehabilitated the CNOC and legalized the Communist Party. The Cuban leader expressed his desire to end with all convulsions and to distance his regime from the mandate of the United States and its mediator. What linked the Communists to the *machadato* was a common hatred towards the northern neighbor. In that sense, Lamar Schweyer stated that: “El espíritu antiintervencionista y ‘antiimperialista’ que hoy [1934] domina en Cuba no existió hasta que lo despertó la equivocada acción del embajador Sumner Welles”.<sup>2554</sup> However, the strikers—particularly those belonging to the CNOC—were reluctant to end their protest, thus showing the Communist Party was not strong enough to impose its will, although some militants followed their leader’s advice and went back to

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<sup>2549</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 131. Journalist M’Knight stated that the strike was threatening the regular sources of food, in “Martial Law Near in Cuba”, *New Orleans States*, August 4, 1933, 1.

<sup>2550</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 27-28.

<sup>2551</sup> López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 103.

<sup>2552</sup> Machado y Morales, *Memorias: Ocho años de lucha*, 96-100.

<sup>2553</sup> There were rumours that Martínez Villena was behind the general strike, which Hart Phillips denied: “We were told that Martínez Villena, the young Communist leader, is behind it. I doubt that because the striking unions are not communistic. It seems like a snowball. I certainly would like to see the Cubans make a success out of it”, in Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 28-29.

<sup>2554</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 45.

work.<sup>2555</sup> In fact, author and economist Nathaniel Weyl argued that, overall, throughout Machado's ousting the communists "representaron un papel equívoco".<sup>2556</sup>

When the US ambassador learned the news, he realized that his mission might be jeopardized, thus he urged ABC members—the sector of opposition who most supported his presence in Cuba, and whom Lamar Schweyer defined as Welles' "*soldados disciplinados*"—<sup>2557</sup> to encourage the Cuban people to keep on protesting on the streets to make the president resign.<sup>2558</sup> Lamar Schweyer criticized this attitude by concluding: "El presidente Roosevelt y su embajador en Cuba impidieron que la revolución por ellos puesta en marcha continuara su cauce natural y tratando de encauzarla a su antojo provocaron el desbordamiento, impulsando la revolución hacia un incógnito destino".<sup>2559</sup> During these first days of August both Machado and Welles tried by all means to achieve their individual goals, which often clashed with one other. Latin Americanist Bryce Wood concluded that "durante unos cuantos días los dos hombres lucharon desesperadamente para salvar sus posiciones y prestigio".<sup>2560</sup>

Tensions increased and in August 6 the Associated Press correspondent in Havana received the false news that Machado had handed in his resignation to Welles that evening and had left the country. This information, which was disseminated by ABC leaders through a pirate radio station—Benjamin Welles argues the rumour may have been initiated by Machado himself—<sup>2561</sup>, travelled fast, and the day after members of the opposition went out to the streets to celebrate. About 2,000 people gathered around the presidential palace and the capitol building, while Machado remained in his finca *Nenita*. The *machadista* De la Campa González described with amazement the scenario: "Y agitanse y abrense las puertas y lanzase afuera enardecido el populacho, que canta, que baila, que entona canciones siempre prohibidas. Van al motín. Por las calles pasan

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<sup>2555</sup> Quesada y Miranda, *¡En Cuba libre! Tomo II*, 244; Macías Martín, "La diplomacia española ante el 'Machadato'", 384-385; Dur and Gilcrease, "US Diplomacy and the Downfall of a Cuban Dictator", 273.

<sup>2556</sup> Weyl, *Estrella roja sobre Cuba*, 123.

<sup>2557</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 121.

<sup>2558</sup> Hernández, "The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado", 213-215.

<sup>2559</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 12. This author also stated: "Aquella huelga pequeña, convertida después en paro general, hábilmente manejado por el embajador de los Estados Unidos y sus cómplices del ABC, iba a derrumbar todo un orden de cosas y a echar por el suelo toda una estructura social, cuyo sostén principal era el presidente Machado", in 119-120.

<sup>2560</sup> Wood, *La política del buen vecino*, 56.

<sup>2561</sup> Welles, *Sumner Welles*, 165.

raudos automóviles de los que salen disparos en todas direcciones. Gentes locas como si se libertasen de una esclavitud de cadenas”.<sup>2562</sup> In order to end with the disturbances, the president sent the police and the army, a force of summing about 1,000 men, to end the parade in what would come to be known as “la masacre del siete de agosto”, which resulted in twenty-two dead and over one hundred wounded.<sup>2563</sup> Journalist de la Osa defined it as a desperate measure of the “despot” to extinguish popular rebellion.<sup>2564</sup> Historian Jorge Ibarra argued it was a “suceso provocado por una mente hábil e intrigante”, which created “una situación que impulsaba a la tiranía a utilizar la fuerza y generar la masacre que tuvo lugar”.<sup>2565</sup>

Journalist and witness Hart Phillips wrote a detailed account of that day, August 7:

About three this afternoon a crowd began to collect around the Capitolio where Congress was in session. Some very foolish people got the idea that Machado might resign. Why the immense crowd collected in front of the Capitolio is just one of those Cuban mysteries [...] There must have been somewhere near 5,000 [people]. As we stood there a sudden shout went up [...] One moment, thousands of people were sweeping across Central Park, yelling like maniacs [...] There was the crack of a rifle. Then a machine gun opened up. Revolvers barked. The crowd shrieked like the cry of a single animal, and fought to reach shelter from the hail of death.<sup>2566</sup>

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<sup>2562</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 555.

<sup>2563</sup> Hernández stipulated the wounded had been seventy-two in “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 215. *The Morning Tribune* published the injured were more, in “Machado, Deserted By His Party, Calls Out the Army; 20 Killed, 150 Injured”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 8, 1933, 1, the same numbers provided by Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 27. Dur and Gilcrease wrote the dead had been twenty or twenty-one, and the injured 160, in Dur and Gilcrease, “US Diplomacy and the Downfall of a Cuban Dictator”, 271-272. Militant Tabares del Real wrote in his memoirs of the events that twenty people had lost their lives and that 170 had been wounded, in *La Revolución del 30*, 134. Another militant, journalist Enrique de la Osa, gave higher numbers when stating that there had been 30 dead and 100 wounded, in Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 35. Not accidentally, in his memoirs Machado gave a lower number of casualties: he affirmed that seventeen protesters died together with two policemen, and that there were multiple wounded, in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 102. Historian Jorge Ibarra also stated the deceased had been seventeen, in Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33*, 170. Lamar Schwyer affirmed there were eighteen deceased and almost one hundred wounded, in Lamar Schwyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 140, the same numbers López Civeira offers in *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 104. Robert Whitney wrote the dead had been “at least 13 and more than 120 wounded”, in Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, 97.

<sup>2564</sup> Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 34.

<sup>2565</sup> Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33*, 170.

<sup>2566</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 31-32.

The journalist continued later that day: “The hospital is surrounded by a huge crowd trying to find out if their relatives are dead or dying”.<sup>2567</sup>

The *New Orleans States* recognized that an “erroneous rumor [about the Machado’s resignation] caused Monday night’s bloodshed”, and described a horrifying scene in which “in a blaze of rifle, pistol, and submachine gun fire, scores fell, dead and wounded”.<sup>2568</sup> The president justified these actions by stating that the government needed to prevent the agitators from entering the presidential palace. Similarly, Lamar Schweyer, who only wrote about one policemen dead during the strife and not the protesters, defended the armed forces’ actions in the face of the menace the mob posed: “Arrollando cuanto a su paso encontraba, la multitud seguía avanzando entre cantos revolucionarios y voces de ruda amenaza”.<sup>2569</sup> Benjamin Welles offers a harsh description of the scene: “Machado’s gunmen, firing indiscriminately from speeding cars, killed or wounded large numbers, including many gathered around the American embassy for protection”.<sup>2570</sup>

After the incident, or as Raúl Roa called it, the “*masacre brutal*”,<sup>2571</sup> Machado made a public appearance asking the people to remain calm and assuring them that the task of the American mediator was now over, because he was overreaching his role by interfering in affairs that only concerned Cubans.<sup>2572</sup> Enrique Lumen was disgusted by these affirmations and characterized Machado’s attitude as both disconcerting and cynical.<sup>2573</sup> On behalf of the Cuban government, Secretary of the Presidency (equivalent to the US office of Chief of Staff) Ramiro Guerra, who did not cease to receive acclaim in Cuba after Machado’s exile, also released a statement confirming the president had indeed not resigned.<sup>2574</sup> However, the tragic events that occurred that day changed the political situation in Cuba; the opposition was infuriated towards the regime, and thus the general strike was revived. Consequently, on August 7 Machado once more

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<sup>2567</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>2568</sup> “Slaughter of 20 Inflammes Cuba”, *New Orleans States*, August 8, 1933, 2.

<sup>2569</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 137.

<sup>2570</sup> Welles, *Sumner Welles*, 165.

<sup>2571</sup> Roa, “12 de agosto”, *La revolución del 30 se fue a bolina*, 278.

<sup>2572</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 102-103.

<sup>2573</sup> Lumen, *La Revolución cubana*, 78.

<sup>2574</sup> “Slaughter of 20 Inflammes Cuba”, *New Orleans States*, August 8, 1933, 2.

suspended constitutional guarantees in Havana.<sup>2575</sup> Two days later he declared a state of war throughout the country.<sup>2576</sup> Forgetting his relaxed and open attitude towards the US at the 1928 Sixth Panamerican Conference, the president broadcasted that night that those measures were needed to maintain the unity among Cubans, as well as their sovereignty and independence—comments directly aimed at Welles.<sup>2577</sup> The “*asno con garras*” was now desperate to remain in power by any means necessary. The *New Orleans States* reported how, when learning the news about the August 7<sup>th</sup> massacre, Cuban exiles in New York, mostly anti-*machadistas*, began to ask themselves whether he would resign or not.<sup>2578</sup>

The massacre meant that a strike that had been mainly peaceful had turned into a violent uprising.<sup>2579</sup> Marxist Lionel Soto probably exaggerated when writing that these assassinations “en lugar de atemorizar el pueblo, lo enardeció”.<sup>2580</sup> The repression undertaken towards protesters in different demonstrations against the regime increased throughout the island; for instance, a manifestation in Santiago resulted in one dead and two wounded, and in the end the police had to fire one hundred shots to dissolve it.<sup>2581</sup> Similarly, another riot in Manicaragua, Santa Clara, ended with one killed and two injured.<sup>2582</sup> At times, protesters also managed to inflict reprisal violence; for example,

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<sup>2575</sup> The decree stipulated constitutional guarantees would be suspended for thirty days and that: “The interest of the public peace demands the adoption of extraordinary means for the maintaining of order, for which the reconciliation procedure adopted by the government has not been sufficient; nor have the means at the disposal of the civil authorities sufficed to prevent such disturbances”, quoted in “Bomb Answers Machado Order”, *New Orleans States*, August 10, 1933, 4. The Cuban president had called Congress to meet on August 7 to suspend constitutional guarantees, in “More to Join Cuba Strike”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 7, 1933, 1.

<sup>2576</sup> López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 105. It was reported that “the Machado regime felt that the civil authorities lacked sufficient facilities to cope with the increasingly dangerous strike situation and that the troops would be returned to the streets of Havana tonight, taking over patrol of the capital from the police”, in “War Declared in Cuba by President Machado to Stop Island Strikers”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 10, 1933, 1.

<sup>2577</sup> “Machado, Deserted By His Party, Calls Out the Army; 20 Killed, 150 Injured”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 8, 1933, 1; Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, 128.

<sup>2578</sup> “Slaughter of 20 Inflames Cuba”, *New Orleans States*, August 8, 1933, 2.

<sup>2579</sup> Dur and Gilcrease, “US Diplomacy and the Downfall of a Cuban Dictator”, 273.

<sup>2580</sup> Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 328; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 411.

<sup>2581</sup> “Mobs Battling Police; Cubans Face Famine”, *New Orleans States*, August 7, 1933, 2.

<sup>2582</sup> “War Declared in Cuba by President Machado to Stop Island Strikers”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 10, 1933, 1.

one night in Havana four policemen were shot, three of whom died, presumably in retaliation for the bloody events at the presidential palace.<sup>2583</sup>

Moreover, everyday life was becoming more and more difficult, as Hart Phillips told:

We have no bread of any kind. I have been eating crackers for so long I feel like a parrot. Potatoes have gone up from four to fourteen cents per pound; chickens retailing at three for a dollar jumped to eighty cents each; there are no fresh vegetables and little rice and beans. Some of the *bodegas* (corner grocery stores) are still open but they have practically nothing left on their shelves. I can't imagine what the really poverty stricken are doing.<sup>2584</sup>

The situation became critical for the Cuban president when on August 8, Welles, who had been suggesting either resignation or intervention,<sup>2585</sup> with the full support of the US president,<sup>2586</sup> explicitly asked Machado to resign in what the Cuban president called an “ultimatum” the ambassador had arranged with the opposition, mainly the ABC, one day prior.<sup>2587</sup> The six-point document urged:

1. Que el president nombre inmediatamente un secretario de Estado, que será una persona imparcial y que no esté relacionada con la política activa y tenga la confianza de todos los sectores.
2. Que inmediatamente después que el Senado confirme ese nombramiento, el presidente solicite una licencia del Congreso, licencia que continuará hasta que el vicepresidente tome posesión.
3. Que inmediatamente después que tome posesión el vicepresidente, el presidente de la República renunciará a su cargo, permitiendo al vicepresidente que continúe en el cargo de presidente de la República desde esa fecha hasta 20 de mayo de 1935.
4. El secretario de Estado, que habrá de ser designado de esta manera y que bien puede ser la misma persona escogida para la vicepresidencia, inmediatamente se les darán facultades para reorganizar el Gabinete, dando representaciones a todos los grupos importantes de la República, haciendo que el Gabinete sea de un verdadero carácter nacional.
5. Los miembros de la Cámara de Representantes convendrán en reducir los actuales periodos de duración de sus cargos, de tal manera que permita a aquellos miembros de la Cámara cuyos periodos vencen, según la Constitución actual, en 1947, que cesen en sus cargos en 1935 siendo electos sus substitutos en las elecciones nacionales de 1934 y que todos los demás miembros de la Cámara acuerden reducir sus periodos en igual grado.

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<sup>2583</sup> “War Declared in Cuba by President Machado to Stop Island Strikers”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 10, 1933, 1.

<sup>2584</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 33-34.

<sup>2585</sup> Although military intervention was not really contemplated, as FDR is recorded of affirming in “Slaughter of 20 Inflames Cuba”, *New Orleans States*, August 8, 1933, 2.

<sup>2586</sup> “Welles Acts With Roosevelt’s Approval”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 8, 1933, 2.

<sup>2587</sup> “Mobs Battling Police; Cubans Face Famine”, *New Orleans States*, August 7, 1933, 1.

6. Ya que los periodos de una mitad de los miembros del Senado terminan en 1935 no hay necesidad de acordar que los periodos de los demás del Senado se recorten.<sup>2588</sup>

Thus Machado was to ask Congress for a leave of absence and to be replaced by a newly appointed Secretary of State.<sup>2589</sup> Because Machado was not willing to agree to all the terms—although he began to understand that his resignation was inevitable—, in his memoirs he explained he offered the diplomat a counter-proposal with the following conditions:

1. Renuncia del presidente, con licencia por el momento y determinando la fecha en que la licencia comenzará a surtir efecto.
2. Toma de posesión de la presidencia por el secretario de Estado y constitución de un nuevo Gabinete de libre elección del nuevo presidente.
3. Aprobación de una Reforma Constitucional dentro de un plazo no mayor de quince días y convocatoria de una Convención Constituyente.
4. Auxilio financiero de los Estados Unidos par pagar los atrasos a los empleados.
5. Aprobación de un Tratado de Reciprocidad y rebaja del cincuenta por ciento de los aranceles norteamericanos a los productos de Cuba.
6. Modificación del Tratado de Relaciones Permanentes en el sentido de que no se autorizarán más intervenciones que las que permita el Derecho Internacional.
7. Respeto al sufragio universal y a la plena soberanía nacional en la nueva constitución. Precepto claro sobre la igualdad de derechos en la nueva constitución, sin distinción de razas en la soberanía cubana.
8. Respeto al Congreso y a todos los funcionarios de elección popular, con la reducción de periodos ya convenida en la Mediación.
9. Respeto a la organización de las Fuerzas Armadas hasta 1935 y no separación ni castigo a ningún miembro de las mismas, sino de acuerdo con las leyes.<sup>2590</sup>

However noble this reaction might have sounded, in practice the Cuban president was refusing to leave power.<sup>2591</sup> The executive committee of the Liberal Party backed him and officially rejected the mediation of the US ambassador alleging that foreign intervention was not needed because Cuban affairs would and should be handled by Cubans. Thus, a resolution regarding the mediation of Welles was voted within the party resulting in seventeen against and only one in favor.<sup>2592</sup> After a few days of unrest,

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<sup>2588</sup> Reproduced in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 111-112, and Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 148-149. It was published in English in “US Soon to Act in Cuban Crisis”, *New Orleans States*, August 9, 1933, 10.

<sup>2589</sup> J.D. Phillips, “Machado ‘Leave’ Sought by Welles as Cuban Solution”, *The New York Times*, August 9, 1933, 1.

<sup>2590</sup> Reproduced in Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 113, and Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 177-178.

<sup>2591</sup> “Machado Will Not Withdraw”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 9, 1933, 2.

<sup>2592</sup> “El Presidente Machado, apoyado por el Partido Liberal, se niega a dimitir y proclama el estado de guerra”, *ABC*, August 10, 1933, 27; “Noticias contradictorias acerca del Comité ejecutivo del partido

while the general strike continued, Machado and his cabinet, Orestes Ferrara among it, had no other choice but to follow the instructions given by Welles and look for the right and impartial man to be appointed Secretary of State.<sup>2593</sup> Welles was inclined towards Carlos Manuel de Céspedes (1871-1939), son of the national independence hero and Cuban ambassador in Mexico at that time, but the “*asno con garras*” believed the candidate did not have the capacity nor the experience to hold the honorable position; as a newspaper put it: “The man was too weak for the job”.<sup>2594</sup> The president, who still believed Cuban sovereignty could be preserved, proposed general and Secretary of War Alberto Herrera Frachi (1874-1954), for, he argued, a man respected by the troops would be able to maintain control. Herrera would consolidate a cabinet configured by representatives of all political forces in order to continue with the mediation only amongst Cuban politicians avoiding foreign interference.<sup>2595</sup>

At the same time, the US president met with ambassador Cintas once more, on August 9, to let the Cuban president know that Welles was acting on his behalf. Roosevelt sent a telegram the next day destined to Machado affirming that he ought to do what the majority of Cuban people wanted, implying that his resignation should be imminent.<sup>2596</sup> FDR affirmed that Welles should help the Caribbean island avoid chaos in any way he could, although he also stated that the ambassador could not oblige the Cuban president to renounce his position because that would be meddling too much in Cuban affairs.<sup>2597</sup> In 1934 Welles gave a speech assuring that “President Roosevelt does not and did not believe in intervention by the United States in the territory of a foreign republic, even when that right is granted to us by treaty”.<sup>2598</sup> However, Machado was beginning to resent the American ambassador to the point that he declared him *persona non grata* in

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liberal”, *ABC*, August 12, 1933, 19. The president is quoted of having said: “In regards to politics, I stand ready to accept immediately and sincerely any honorable solution which will assure the return of normal conditions in our country on a firm basis which at the same time will safeguard the nation’s sovereignty and independence”, in “Machado, Backed by His Party, Rejects US. Plan to End Bloodshed in Cuba”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 11, 1933, 1.

<sup>2593</sup> “US Soon to Act in Cuban Crisis”, *New Orleans States*, August 9, 1933, 10; Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 72.

<sup>2594</sup> “Machado, Angered By Our Effort to Oust Him, Avers He Will Retain Office”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 9, 1933, 1.

<sup>2595</sup> John P. M’Knight, “Gen. Herrera to Succeed Machado”, *New Orleans States*, August 11, 1933, 1, 15.

<sup>2596</sup> Lamar Schwyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 167; Welles, *Sumner Welles*, 166.

<sup>2597</sup> Wood, *La política del buen vecino*, 57.

<sup>2598</sup> Welles, *Relations Between the United States and Cuba*, 6.

the country.<sup>2599</sup> As usual, the attitude of the United States seemed to follow the Good Neighbor policy; however, this attitude might arguably have been a facade, for their aim was to deeper influence the politics of the Caribbean country. The same day of the meeting, FDR and Cintas released a joined statement in which they ambiguously expressed the need to end poverty and depression on the island.<sup>2600</sup>



**Fig. 49:** “Cuba’s Government at the Eve of Upset”, *New Orleans States*, August 8, 1933, p. 10.

<sup>2599</sup> “Machado, Angered By Our Effort to Oust Him, Avers He Will Retain Office”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 9, 1933, 1.

<sup>2600</sup> The full statement was: “The President and Ambassador Cintas discussed the Cuban situation, especially in its economic aspects. They feel that the problems of starvation and of depression are of such immediate importance that every political problem should be met in the most patriotic spirit in order to improve conditions at the earliest possible moment. The Ambassador is communicating with his Government”, Franklin D. Roosevelt: “Joint Statement with Ambassador Cintas on the Cuban Situation”, August 9, 1933. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14498](http://presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14498). Reproduced in “Bomb Answers Machado Order”, *New Orleans States*, August 10, 1933, 4.

After the state of war was declared in the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup>, the military was in full control.<sup>2601</sup> A witness described the ambience in Havana like the calm before the storm: “The city is a muted drumhead, beaten soundlessly with fear and fear of fear”.<sup>2602</sup> The army, however, would not be as loyal as Machado had predicted.<sup>2603</sup> On August 11 there were mutinies in two military posts in Havana: *Castillo de la Fuerza* and the Máximo Gómez military barracks, disobediences which afterwards spread to *Camp Columbia*.<sup>2604</sup> The military men were asking for Machado’s resignation within twenty-four hours, a petition that left the Cuba president astonished.<sup>2605</sup> This revolt, led by colonel and head of the Air Force Julio Sanguily Echarte (1879-1935) and colonel Horacio Ferrer (1876-1960),<sup>2606</sup> came as a surprise to the loyalist government, and instigated the definite fall of the “*asno*”.<sup>2607</sup> The last bastion of the regime was also abandoning it, mainly because US intervention seemed immediate, making it obvious that Machado could not stay in power for much time.<sup>2608</sup> Lamar Schweyer argued, on the one hand, that it was a maneuver the army made in order to secure its future as anti-*machadista* after Machado’s exile.<sup>2609</sup> On the other hand, in his 1981 book Marxist historian Federico Chang argued that it was the increase of the opposition towards the *machadato* that had raised contradictions within the army.<sup>2610</sup> Witness of the events Ricardo Adam Silva, who was a member of the army, wrote some years later that the reason for the military to rebel against the regime was to avoid American

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<sup>2601</sup> “War Declared in Cuba by President Machado to Stop Island Strikers”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 10, 1933, 1; “Bomb Answers Machado Order”, *New Orleans States*, August 10, 1933, 4.

<sup>2602</sup> Frederick Palmer, “Silent Havana Tries to Shut Out Terror”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 12, 1933, 1.

<sup>2603</sup> A newspaper suspected so when publishing three days earlier: “It was stated in high Army quarters that a spirit of insubordination was spreading in the enlisted ranks in the Havana district. So far, there has been no open mutiny or disorders within the Army but the spread of this attitude was taken to indicate the troops would refuse to attack the strikers, if ordered to do so following the suspension of constitutional guarantees”, in “Machado, Deserted By His Party, Calls Out the Army; 20 Killed, 150 Injured”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 8, 1933, 1.

<sup>2604</sup> Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33*, 187.

<sup>2605</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 36-37.

<sup>2606</sup> Ferrer wrote his memoirs in 1950 where the military man narrated his experiences in the battle field, from 1895 onward, including his fight against Machado, in Horacio Ferrer, *Con el rifle al hombro* (Havana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1950).

<sup>2607</sup> “Detalles del pronunciamiento”, *ABC*, August 13, 1933, 31.

<sup>2608</sup> López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 110; Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 73.

<sup>2609</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 182. The author further justified: “Un Gobierno caído se queda siempre solo, pues los mismos que lo han venido apoyando tratan, en pocas horas, de ganar insignias en el bando contrario para no ser víctima de los vencedores, y eso fue lo que pasó en Cuba con el Ejército”, in 172.

<sup>2610</sup> Chang, *El ejército nacional*, 154.

intervention.<sup>2611</sup> Historian Lionel Soto provided another theory, according to which the army, always loyal to “American imperialism”, decided to position itself with Welles instead of Machado, who had betrayed his fidelity towards the northern neighbor.<sup>2612</sup> While this last hypothesis is less convincing, it may have been both Lamar Schweyer’s and Chang’s reasons that motivated the army to rebel. Political scientists O’Donnell and Schmitter concluded that in militarized countries where the leader is losing power the army resolves that the ruler’s perpetuation in government becomes a risk for them. Moreover, “protracted exposure to the temptations and conflicts of government is causing an erosion of the military’s professional integrity”.<sup>2613</sup>

Historian Roberto Hernández emphasized how, after all, the defeat of Machado was ultimately pushed by the army acting independently from the US mediator. By August 11 military rebels, who demanded Machado to leave power, were in control of all armed forces.<sup>2614</sup> After the situation escaped his control, the president agreed to accelerate the process. Welles at once discussed the succession with military leaders, who did not want a general as provisional president because he would be too reminiscent of Machado himself. The idea was that general Herrera would be appointed for a few hours, after which he would resign in favor of Céspedes, the civilian option.<sup>2615</sup> The military were aware that their reputation had diminished considerably; historian Federico Chang even stated that there was a feeling of guilt among the army because of the horrors they committed throughout the regime.<sup>2616</sup> Whether Welles was the mastermind behind the army’s uprising is doubtful, for there are no connections between him and the leaders of the movement.<sup>2617</sup> However, journalist and triple Pulitzer prize winner Arthur Krock (1886-1974) reported a few days later that the US ambassador was very aware of the intentions of the military.<sup>2618</sup> Conversely,

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<sup>2611</sup> Adam Silva, *La gran mentira*, 42.

<sup>2612</sup> Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 438.

<sup>2613</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule*, 35.

<sup>2614</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 218.

<sup>2615</sup> Hernández, “The Second Administration of President Gerardo Machado”, 221-222; Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 174, 205; López Civeira, *El proceso revolucionario de los años 30*, 110.

<sup>2616</sup> Chang, *El ejército nacional*, 168.

<sup>2617</sup> Wood, *La política del buen vecino*, 61; Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba*, 31.

<sup>2618</sup> Arthur Krock, “Hull Wins Spurs in Test of State Department in the Cuban Crisis”, *The New York Times*, August 17, 1933, 16.

militaryman Ricardo Adams Silva was unsurprisingly defensive of the army and assured: “El doce de agosto fue un hecho militar que se produjo sin consulta ni concierto con embajada alguna, creyendo interpretar los oficiales, de buena fe, un anhelo nacional y resolviendo de pasada un problema propio”.<sup>2619</sup>

On August 12, 1933, the army broadcasted a message from Columbia field announcing:

Gerardo Machado is no longer President of Cuba. We guarantee that he who substitutes [him] will not be an Army man or a politician. The United States Ambassador (Sumner Welles) now is in accord with the opposition. At this moment the Ambassador is conferring with Army leaders [...] Disturbances of any nature must not be feared. Order is absolute. The Army and the people will fraternize.<sup>2620</sup>

In the balconies of the US embassy, where Welles and the leader of anti-*machadista* women organizations Hortensia Lamar were present, it was publicly declared that Machado was resigning to avoid US intervention.<sup>2621</sup> The message would also be broadcasted through the pirate radio station dominated by the ABC.<sup>2622</sup> The president, as stated in the aforementioned ultimatum by Welles, had asked Congress for a leave of absence and stated he planned to leave the island that afternoon. That day Machado read an address to Congress exposing:

Razones que no debo explicar en este momento me llevan a la decisión de presentar la renuncia de mi cargo. Por simple fórmula constitucional pido ahora una licencia, pero deseo hacer constar que queda presentada mi renuncia para su oportunidad. Agradezco en el momento de abandonar el Poder Ejecutivo a todos los miembros de ese Cuerpo colegislador, de todos los partidos, incluyendo al grupo opositor, la cooperación prestada para la obra patriótica que hemos realizado en estos pasados años y que la Historia tranquilamente juzgará.<sup>2623</sup>

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<sup>2619</sup> Adam Silva, *La gran mentira*, 45. This author further criticized the idea that Welles had a certain complicity with the army as a “false” and “clumsy legend”, in 47.

<sup>2620</sup> As reproduced in “Army Forces Machado Out After His Arrest at Camp; Havana in Strange Siege”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 12, 1933, 1. Raúl Roa argued decades later that on each August 12 it was very important to remember that the *machadato* had been the worst government ever to exist in Cuba: “Hay que recordar y difundir, en cada aniversario, aunque un émulo suyo detentara el poder, que nunca tuvo la república gobernante peor que Machado y que ningún otro dejó tan abominable memoria”, in Roa, *Retorno a la alborada. Vol. I*, 260.

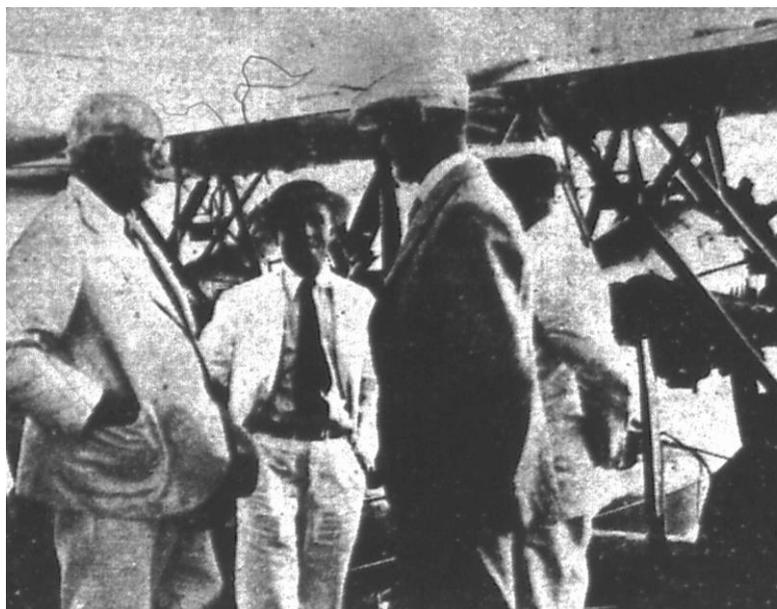
<sup>2621</sup> Dur and Gilcrease, “US Diplomacy and the Downfall of a Cuban Dictator”, 264.

<sup>2622</sup> Lamar Schweyer lamented: “Fue un triste espectáculo ver a un grupo de cubanos y cubanas, desde el balcón de la Embajada yanqui, al amparo de una bandera extraña, dando al público la noticia de la renuncia de Machado”, in Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 195-196.

<sup>2623</sup> Reproduced in Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 201; Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 358, and Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 428.

The new former Cuban president decided it was time to leave his country for his own safety as well as that of his family. All members of his cabinet, except for Herrera, would resign and do the same.<sup>2624</sup> Thus, after obtaining permission from Welles, who authorized a pilot to fly them out of the island, the dictator, or the “tyrant”, as the *New Orleans States* referred to him, left Cuba.<sup>2625</sup> In his memoirs Machado emotionally narrated: “Caía una llovizna fina y había un cielo opaco como un gran manto de tristezas. Al elevarnos vimos por unos segundos La Habana y unas nubes de humo y manchas rojizas de llamas. Eran las casas de los *machadistas* que ardían”.<sup>2626</sup> De la

Campa González wrote, perhaps without exaggerating, that Machado escaped the country alive by a sheer miracle.<sup>2627</sup> Their destination was Nassau.<sup>2628</sup> Once the former president arrived to the Bahamas, he stated in front of several journalists: “I have been for eight years president of Cuba and the good



**Fig. 50:** Machado arriving to Nassau. “Far from the Very Bad Mob”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 15, 1933, p. 1, Louisiana Division-City Archives, cabinet 56, drawer 09, reel 64, New Orleans Public Library.

<sup>2624</sup> Pérez, Jr., *Army Politics in Cuba*, 76; Edwin L. James, “Machado of Cuba Loses a Long and Bitter Fight”, *The New York Times*, August 13, 1933, 1. About general Herrera’s attitude, Lionel Soto wrote “Herrera amaba a Machado, pero más aún, amaba su vida e intereses”, in Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 423.

<sup>2625</sup> “Machado Is Out; Ferrer Favored for Presidency”, *New Orleans States*, August 12, 1933, 1; “Abandonado por el ejército, dimite Machado, huye en un avión y le substituye el Sr. Céspedes”, *ABC*, August 13, 1933, 31; Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo cayó el presidente Machado*, 218; Welles, *Sumner Welles*, 166.

<sup>2626</sup> Machado y Morales, *Ocho años de lucha*, 123; Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 123.

<sup>2627</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 595.

<sup>2628</sup> “Machado Flees Into Exile; Secret Police are Slain as Crowd Ransacks Palace”, *Monroe Morning World* (LA), August 13, 1933, 1; J.D. Phillips, “Machado Flees in Plane; Machado in Flight to a Secret Refuge”, *The New York Times*, August 13, 1933, 1; Fabre-Luce, *Révolution a Cuba*, 50; López Segrera, “Orígenes, desarrollo y frustración de la revolución de 1933”, 116; Soto, *La revolución del 33. Vol. II*, 361; Soto, *La revolución precursora de 1933*, 430.

must be taken with the bad, but I think I have given Cuba a constructive government [...] I gave the people of Cuba many things they needed. I am willing that history shall record whether my administration was like my enemies picture it”.<sup>2629</sup>

The US ambassador managed to wangle the appointment of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes as provisional president, who was inaugurated the day after Machado left and whose administration would only last twenty-two days.<sup>2630</sup> The United States government considered the mediation by Welles a complete success.<sup>2631</sup> FDR himself sent a telegram to the special envoy congratulating him for a job well-done, to which Welles responded: “Sin el constante apoyo que usted me ha dado nunca se hubiera podido conseguir esta situación, que posibilita la reanudación de una reconstrucción pacífica de Cuba”.<sup>2632</sup> The ambassador was proud of his job, as he also expressed in a speech where he narrated with a touch of imagination that all Cuban factions were in favor of his presence and task: “Both President Machado and the leaders of almost all of the important political groups opposed to him accepted my tender of good offices to bring about a solution of the political crisis in Cuba”.<sup>2633</sup> However, not all opinions on the matter were positive. For instance, historian Jorge Ibarra concluded that Welles’ mediation in 1933 was the “episodio de hipocresía con que se inauguró la política del Buen Vecino a escala continental”,<sup>2634</sup> and militaryman Ricardo Adam Silva referred to the envoy as “el siempre equivocado en los problemas cubanos”.<sup>2635</sup>

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<sup>2629</sup> “Machado Bitter Over Downfall”, *New Orleans States*, August 14, 1933, 10; “Machado to Stay in Nassau”, *The New York Times*, August 15, 1933. *The Morning Tribune* gave a thorough account of Machado’s activities once he arrived in the island, including drinking much brandy, and having eggs and ham for breakfast, in “Machado Glups Brandy, Keeps Silence on Plans”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 14, 1933, 2.

<sup>2630</sup> Although it would not be a peaceful ceremony, as an article reported: “20 Killed in Havana in Revenge as Oath Is Given de Céspedes”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 14, 1933, 1.

<sup>2631</sup> Wood, *La política del buen vecino*, 59.

<sup>2632</sup> Osa, *Crónica del año 33*, 51.

<sup>2633</sup> Welles, *Relations Between the United States and Cuba*, 7. The diplomat concluded this speech with a positive hopeful note: “Our policy toward Cuba is clean and honorable. We believe that our own money-changers should no more determine the destinies of the Cuban people than that they should determine the destinies of the American people [...] With mutual cooperation, forbearance, and understanding, we have every reason to hope that we will see in the not distant future a prosperous Cuba governed by Cubans, without intervention or interference from the United States, to the advantage not only of our two countries but of the entire continent as well”, in 16.

<sup>2634</sup> Ibarra Guitart, *La mediación del 33*, 196.

<sup>2635</sup> Adams Silva, *La gran mentira*, 10.

After the “*asno con garras*” left Cuba, in the streets people revolted, celebrated, and destroyed. Some gathered at the presidential palace to witness first hand the historical moment.<sup>2636</sup> Songs were sang, such as the following of African origins: “*Y con el nuevo tratao / Ya se acabó el peseteo / Y vuelve el rascabucheo / Y como se fué Machao / Ni un guatacazo má / Ni un guatacazo má*”.<sup>2637</sup> Other sacked the property of *machadistas* who had been forced to leave the island, as well as Machado’s own country estates.<sup>2638</sup> The members of the terrorist group ABC unfurled their green flag and began the revolution where *machadistas*, particularly *porristas*, were being attacked and assassinated.<sup>2639</sup>



*Fig. 51: “Crowds Acclaim Soldier Who Killed la Porra Chief [Col. Antonio Jimenez] in Havana”, New Orleans States, August 15, 1933, p. 10.*

The Cuba that the dictator escaped was in plain revolt. De la Campa González lamented the joyfulness of those celebrating Machado’s defeat.<sup>2640</sup> He described a terrifying scene, in which “ardían casas, ardían redacciones de periódicos. Sonaban tiros sueltos al

<sup>2636</sup> “Machado Is Out; Ferrer Favored for Presidency”, *New Orleans States*, August 12, 1933, 1; “Regocijo por la caída de Machado”, *ABC* (Sevilla), August 13, 1933, 22.

<sup>2637</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 579, 615.

<sup>2638</sup> John P. M’Knight, “Mobs Burn and Loot Anew in Cuba”, *New Orleans States*, August 14, 1933, 1.

<sup>2639</sup> “Havana Mobs Tear Porristas to Bits as Troops Stand By”, *The Morning Tribune*, August 15, 1933, 1.

<sup>2640</sup> The machadist argued that these mobs were unconscious that they were going back to being a colony of the United States: “[People] dejaban sobre el pavimento las huellas de sangre, de sangre cubana; cumpliendo destino manifiesto; matarse si siempre entre sí los cubanos, no ser para ellos nada la propia vida de su pueblo pero eso sí sagrada siempre la propiedad del extranjero [...] La sangre del nativo cada día valía menos, derramándose en querellas pueriles, distraídos en esto y no viendo que sus verdaderos enemigos en el entre tanto se adueñaban de todo, convirtiéndolo en un pueblo de esclavos”, in Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 614-615.

azar sin saberse quién tiraba. No parecía haber una sola autoridad en la capital”.<sup>2641</sup> The DEU released a manifesto ten days after Machado left into exile stating that after what it called the “tyranny”, Cuba was ready for a revolution led by university students, who would fight against US meddling. Historian Ramón Eduardo Ruíz pointed out that that generation of students was inspired by José Martí’s writings in a revolution that ended three decades of Cuban history linked to the United States.<sup>2642</sup> Thus the DEU addressed at Cuban youth in the following encouraging tone: “¡Jóvenes cubanos!: aprestaos a la acción bajo nuestras banderas. De nosotros depende que podamos vivir con la frente levantada. Somos nosotros los que hemos de labrar nuestro propio mundo. ¡Unámonos para crear!”<sup>2643</sup> Witness of these events González Palacios wrote years later with a less enthusiastic tone wondering whether, in fact, these so-called revolutionaries were really changing Cuban society or were simply a group of opportunists trying to seize power.<sup>2644</sup> In a similar way, Hernández concludes that, in fact, all rejoicing in the streets had been in vain, for “very little was accomplished by the fall of Machado”; the island was left in brutal chaos and bloodshed.

### 7.1.3 Decease in exile

After arriving to Nassau and escaping from his native Cuba, Gerardo Machado travelled to several countries. He lived for a brief period, and in chronological order, in Montreal, whereto he flew from the Bahamas,<sup>2645</sup> then the United States, first in Poughkeepsie, New York, and then in Philadelphia. On July 1934 he arrived to the Dominican Republic, where dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, who would support the fallen ruler, greeted him.<sup>2646</sup> Machado and Trujillo exchanged cordial letters before the former’s arrival to the Dominican Republic. From New York, the former Cuban president wrote:

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<sup>2641</sup> Campa González, *Memorias de un machadista*, 590.

<sup>2642</sup> Ruíz, *Cuba. Génesis de una revolución*, 97.

<sup>2643</sup> “Directorio Estudiantil Universitario al pueblo de Cuba”, August 22, 1933, reproduced in Larrazábal, ed., *Manifiestos de Cuba*, 157-172, and partially in Carrillo, *Cuba 1933*, 60-62.

<sup>2644</sup> González Palacios, *Revolución y pseudo-revolución*, 21.

<sup>2645</sup> “Machado Anxious to Continue Flight; Hopes to Leave the Bahamas for Canada on Steamer Today”, *The New York Times*, August 26, 1933; “Machado Is Barred from Bermuda Visit; Party of Cuban Ex-Cuban President on Way to Canada Is Heavily Guarded”, *The New York Times*, August 29, 1933.

<sup>2646</sup> Crassweller, *Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator*, 98.

Apenas salido de Cuba, en Nassau, tuve la grandísima satisfacción de recibir sus primeros ofrecimientos de verdadero y leal amigo, con un desinterés, una nobleza y una prontitud, que si hablan muy alto en honor a Vd. [...] [M]e halaga la idea de poder realizar mi viaje en una fecha más o menos próxima por algunos de nuestros países de América, Santo Domingo, desde luego, en primer termino [*sic*], a fin de conocerlo personalmente y reiterar, de viva voz, el testimonio de mi simpatía y mi amistad.<sup>2647</sup>

The Dominican president amicably responded: “Ojalá realizara muy pronto su idea de viaje a Santo Domingo, donde usted puede venir en cualquier momento y en la forma que a usted le plazca en la seguridad de ser recibido no solamente con agrado, si no que pondré todo empeño para que aquí se sienta usted rodeado de afectos y de solicitudes de hermano”.<sup>2648</sup> The two men had established a cordial relationship already on September 1930, barely a few weeks after Trujillo took power, when after a category 5 hurricane affected the Dominican Republic, Machado sent a team of medical doctors, nurses, and soldiers to aid the Caribbean country.<sup>2649</sup> Thus by inviting the former Cuban president to his country, Trujillo was to some extent returning the favor of three years prior.

It is interesting to note that not only Machado maintained good relations with the Dominican dictator. Although Huey Long did not meet him, there are two connections between Trujillo and the *longite* faction in Louisiana that persisted long after the Kingfish died. Senator Allen Ellender, one of Long’s closest advisers, visited the Dominican Republic on February 1959 to meet Trujillo and his brother, who was president at that time. When he returned to the United States, Ellender was interviewed on the radio program “Capital Assignment”. The interview would later be published on the newspaper *The Herald* on February 21, under the title “Senator Sees Trujillo as US Friend”.<sup>2650</sup> The Senator expressed his admiration for Trujillo and the task he had been carrying out in his country, where, as he said, there were no more towns or cities without hospitals, good schools, and good streets. Ellender defined Trujillo as a “hard

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<sup>2647</sup> Letter from Gerardo Machado to Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, January 16, 1934, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series I, box 1, folder 11, UMDC.

<sup>2648</sup> Letter from Rafael Leónidas Trujillo to Gerardo Machado, January 23, 1934, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series I, box 3, folder 19, UMDC. These letters are also referred to in Schwartz, *Sea of Storms*, 380, n.43.

<sup>2649</sup> Schwartz, *Sea of Storms*, 247.

<sup>2650</sup> “Senator Sees Trujillo as US Friend”, *The Herald*, February 21, 1956.

worker”, a “human dynamo whose energies are being used [...] in order to lift the economic condition of the Dominican Republic”, turning it into a modern country.<sup>2651</sup>

At that time, another more relevant Louisiana senator also spoke about the Dominican regime. After the disappearance of Jesús de Galíndez, the aforementioned professor who wrote a dissertation about Trujillo in 1956, the US Congress often discussed the complicated political situation in the Dominican Republic. In the middle of 1957, in defense of the Trujillo regime and in order to discharge him of the kidnapping of the Basque author, a Congressman from Louisiana said:

It has been widely and loosely said that the Dominican Republic is a dictatorship. I have learned not to be taken in by the word ‘dictator’. If indeed the Dominican Republic is a dictatorship, we have no proof of the fact that would stand up under a court of law of our nation. The Dominican Republic and its chief of the armed forces [Rafael Leónidas Trujillo] and its president [Héctor Trujillo] have always and unequivocally been on the side of God and Christianity.<sup>2652</sup>

The senator who spoke these words was George Long, brother of the late Kingfish. Thus if Long’s heirs were so fond of the Dominican “*benefactor de la patria*” the connectivity within Greater Caribbean political forms is once more warranted.

Back to the former Cuban president’s exile, on November 1934 Machado flew to Hamburg to be treated, for he began to be ill. He had been suffering from an unspecified malady.<sup>2653</sup> But because there were rumours that he was to be extradited, he escaped Nazi Germany, allegedly only a few minutes before the secret police visited his hotel room, and travelled to Switzerland and France. Finally, Machado settled in Miami Beach, in the United States.

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<sup>2651</sup> Arturo R. Espaillat, *Trujillo: The Last Caesar* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1963), 85-88.

<sup>2652</sup> Espaillat, *Trujillo*, 171.

<sup>2653</sup> In a 1935 letter, his secretary described some of the symptoms the dictator was experiencing, including the loss of hearing in his right ear: “Ayer fuimos al médico. Lo encontró muy bien [...] [E]s asombroso lo que ha mejorado en un mes desde que fue a la clínica y amenazaron con ponerle el plan de alimentación, inyecciones, medicinas, etc. Las piernas ya las tiene bastante fuertes, pues camina una hora sin gran cansancio. El oído derecho parece que no recuperará más la audición, pues según ha explicado el médico, se le ha atrofiado un nervio, que equivale a cortarle los alambres al teléfono. La falta de dirección en el caminar se le va quitando a medida que se acostumbra a oír con un solo oído”, Letter from secretary Fernando Villapol to Baldomero Grau, March 26, 1935, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series I, box 4, folder 5, UMDC.



**Fig. 52:** *Elvira Machado and Gerardo Machado, New York, ca. 1937, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series VIII, box 22, folder 1, University of Miami Digital Collection.*

Throughout these years and barely after a few days after he went into exile, his enemies indicted him of murder and sought to extradite him. Their lawsuits were to no avail. For instance, the *New York American* informed on February 1935 that authorities in Paris were considering arresting the former dictator, but that his whereabouts were a mystery to the Cuban legation and the French police forces.<sup>2654</sup> In the United States, the Cuban politician was investigated and accused by the Republic of Cuba of political crimes, embezzlement, and misappropriation of funds—it was argued that when leaving the island, Machado was in possession of gold.<sup>2655</sup> But he obtained the support of some American personalities, such as one Commissioner O’Neill, who in a public statement assured that the former president was a “truly great man”, and that when Machado left Cuba all his possessions were confiscated.<sup>2656</sup> The “*asno*” also made efforts to publicly clean his image. He wrote a statement in which he assured that the accusations of murder and torture were false rumours:

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<sup>2654</sup> “Paris Considers Arrest of Machado”, *New York American*, February 14, 1935.

<sup>2655</sup> “Proceedings for the Extradition of Gerardo Machado on Demand of the Republic of Cuba Memorandum for Gerardo Machado”, ca.1935, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, SeriesV, box 15, folder 6, UMDC.

<sup>2656</sup> “Statement by Former Commissioner O’Neill”, ca.1935, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series V, box 15, folder 6, UMDC.

[T]he charge of assassination was not supported by the slightest proof or evidence, and that it referred solely to clashes between the police and the revolutionaries. If a President of any Republic were to be held responsible for the acts of the police of the Cities, not a single President would be out of prison. In the United States there has been a great deal talk, even by responsible persons, that while I was President prisoners were being subjected to torture. I deny this.<sup>2657</sup>

Not surprisingly, in the years before his death, Machado never returned to the Caribbean island. On one occasion, he assured that the future of Cuba interested him little. *The American Progress* reported the news plainly: “He doesn’t give a cucaracha what



**Fig. 53:** Former president’s daughter Nena Machado de Grau, and Mrs. Villapol (wife of one of Machado’s acquaintances, Fernando Villapol) at Gerardo Machado’s funeral, Miami, March 30, 1939, *Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series IX, box 23, folder 4, University of Miami Digital Collection.*

happens to Cuba, he’s never going back”.<sup>2658</sup>

After receiving anaesthesia to be operated of a tumor in the liver, the former Cuban president died of a heart attack a few minutes before noon in Miami on March 29, 1939. He was sixty-seven years old.<sup>2659</sup>

After learning the news, Rafael Leónidas Trujillo sent a letter to Orestes Ferrara offering his condolences.<sup>2660</sup>

<sup>2657</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales, “Gerardo Machado’s Declaration to the Press”, December 28, 1937, 1, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series V, box 15, folder 6, UMDC.

<sup>2658</sup> “He Won’t Play Tuba in Cuba”, *The American Progress*, April 1, 1935, 4.

<sup>2659</sup> “Machado, Exiled Cuban Leader, Dies In US”, *The New Orleans Item*, March 29, 1939, 1-2; “Machado Dies While Under Anaesthetic”, *The Evening Independent (FL)*, March 29, 1939, 2.

<sup>2660</sup> The Dominican ruler wrote: “Informado por la prensa de la muerte de mi amigo el General Gerardo Machado y Morales, suceso éste que me ha producido honda pena, y no siéndome posible comunicarme directamente con su distinguida familia, por desconocer su dirección, recorro a la bondadosa mediación de usted, mi querido y distinguido amigo, para que haga llegar hasta todos los deudos del buen amigo ido a destiempo, las expresiones de mi más sentido pésame”, Letter from Rafael Leónidas Trujillo to Orestes Ferrara, April 3, 1939, Gerardo Machado y Morales Papers, Series I, box 3, folder 21, UMDC.

Machado left a legacy of hatred and contempt in the eyes of the Cuban people, a perspective that has not changed in the present and that has been promoted by the current regime.<sup>2661</sup> The state of Florida is one of the few places where the dictator is dearly remembered by some. For instance, in 2005 a book entitled *Nuevo Siglo* in Tampa portrayed an idealized image of the general and president, and referred to him as one of the most outstanding members of the generation of 1895. Its author, Cuban painter José A. Mijares, whose grandmother—or so he claims—called the dictator “Gerardito”, praises Machado’s achievements, including the *carretera central*, and justifies his decisions throughout the last months of his administration, including the persecution and the massacre of August 7. The author concludes that Machado was not a dictator because he was simply enforcing the law, and that communist propaganda had besmirched the name of the president.<sup>2662</sup>

## 7.2 *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*<sup>2663</sup>

Huey Long would also witness the increase of opposition of his regime. In the last months of his life the Kingfish was convinced that there were multiple plots against his life.<sup>2664</sup> One of these allegedly was prepared on July 21, 1935, when a group of the senator’s “enemies” gathered at De Soto Hotel in New Orleans. This meeting has been interpreted in different ways. Its attendees, “public leaders and business men from every section of the state”,<sup>2665</sup> affirmed they discussed a political strategy to fight the Kingfish and find a strong candidate for the 1936 election. Long believed that the meeting was

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<sup>2661</sup> For instance, Machado’s most known successor before Fidel Castro, Fulgencio Batista, launched a Triennial Plan in 1937, in which the military man assured he would improve the social and economic conditions of Cuba that had greatly deteriorated under the *machadato*. Batista listed issues that were affecting the island, including impoverishment, the loss of land by locals and its appropriation by foreigners, which “colocan al nativo en la imposible posición de extranjero en su propia tierra”. Moreover, Batista added that Machado had ignored these problems while president, in Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar, *Plan trienal de Cuba, o, Plan de reconstrucción económico-social (P.R.E.S.)* (Havana: Cultural, 1937), 68.

<sup>2662</sup> José A. Mijares, “Presidente Gerardo Machado y Morales”, *Nuevo Siglo*, February 17, 2005, 16-19.

<sup>2663</sup> This title is borrowed from Gabriel García Márquez, *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (Bogotá: La Oveja Negra, 1981). The novel is set in a Caribbean town and its story was based on a real assassination occurred in 1951.

<sup>2664</sup> His devoted friend Harvey Fields wrote a strange assumption: “The first born plot was to kill Huey at the first chance. It was freely advocated, and championed by several leaders in a spirit of anger and resentment, some of whom wore at one time an emblem of death. A little piece of red rope tied to a certain part of the clothing was the emblem of revenge and death, so as to distinguish each other”, in Fields, *A True History of the Life*, 58.

<sup>2665</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 221.

held to plan his assassination.<sup>2666</sup> Hodding Carter confessed that he attended that meeting, and firmly stated: “It was a caucus of die-hard oppositionists, dolefully trying to decide what to do for the next state campaign. And the ‘plotting’ was limited to such hopefully expressed comments as ‘Good God, I wish somebody would kill the son of a bitch’”.<sup>2667</sup> In his multiple interviews, T. Harry Williams showed the diverse perspectives of contemporaries, but asserted it is not possible to reach to a conclusion.<sup>2668</sup> What can be firmly stated is that at the end of the gathering, five US Congressmen issued a statement in which they declared their loyalty to their federal president and criticized Long’s methods. A fragment of the text reads: “We unhesitatingly declare Senator Long’s assaults upon the patriotic leadership and constructive policies of President Roosevelt to be false and malicious and motivated by political disappointments and baseless delusions of grandeur”.<sup>2669</sup>

More than ever, the Kingfish relied on his bodyguards. On September 2 he unknowingly attended his last public event in Oklahoma City giving a speech in Labor Day about his beloved Share Our Wealth.<sup>2670</sup> A journalist narrated how during his visit the senator was always accompanied by one or two of his bodyguards, and how “he looked like a scared, craven child”. The reporter’s conclusion was that they all knew that “a dictator is never safe”.<sup>2671</sup> Harris wrote about Long’s obsession: “No tyrant from Caligula to Stalin ever went to greater pains to insure his person against tragedy than the Louisiana Kingfish”.<sup>2672</sup> Mason Spencer, an anti-*longite* Louisiana state representative, had predicted what has become one of the most quoted phrases regarding Long’s death:

When this ugly thing is boiled down in its own juices, it disfranchised the white people of Louisiana. I am not gifted with second sight. Nor did I see a spot of blood on the moon last night. But I can see blood on the polished floor of this Capitol. For if you ride

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<sup>2666</sup> “The De Soto Hotel Conference”, *The American Progress*, August issue, 1935, 12.

<sup>2667</sup> Carter, “Huey Long: American Dictator”, 355.

<sup>2668</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 840.

<sup>2669</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 222.

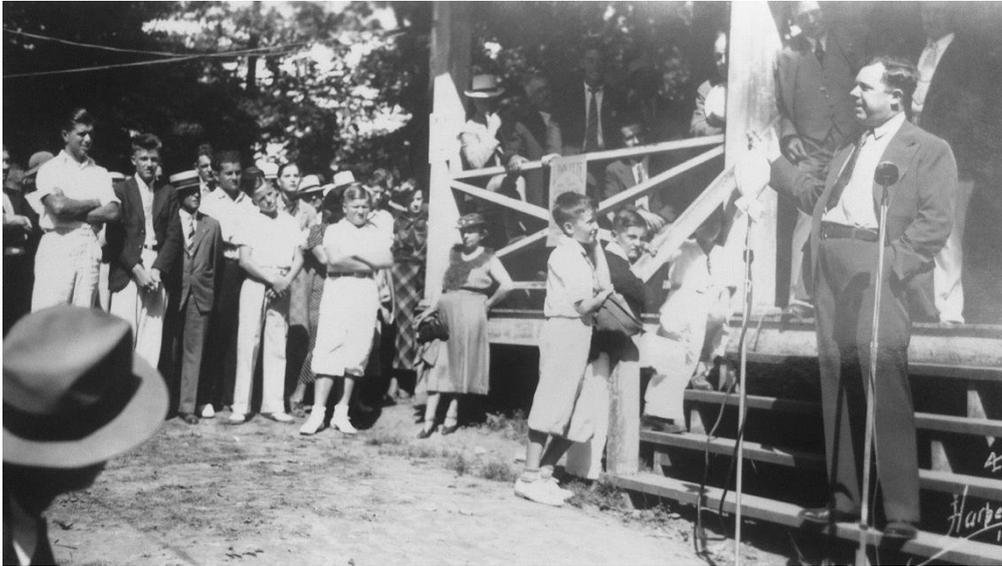
<sup>2670</sup> “6,500 Listeners to Louisiana Kingfish Explain Share-Wealth Plan”, *The Oklahoman*, September 3, 1935, 4; Otis Sullivant, “Share-Wealth Program New Issue, He Says”, *The Oklahoman*, September 3, 1935, 1, 4.

<sup>2671</sup> Bill Kent, “Fear of Assassination Held By Long While Visitor Here”, *The Oklahoman*, September 9, 1935, 2.

<sup>2672</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 255.

this thing through, you will travel with the white horse of death. White men have ever made poor slaves.<sup>2673</sup>

It would not be long until the Kingfish's fears materialized.



**Fig. 54:** Long's last public event in Oklahoma City, Labor Day, he delivered a speech on *Share our wealth*, September 2, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 5, folder 2, LaRC.

### 7.2.1 The dread becomes true

The aforementioned investigation carried out by Elmer Irey, director of the IRS, and his team regarding the senator's finances arrived then at its high point. The lawyer they had chosen to indict Long before the Grand Jury, Dan Moody (1893-1966), former Democrat governor of Texas (between 1927 and 1931) who had fought against the KKK, affirmed they had enough evidence to present their case. They would do so the next time the jury gathered, that was, in October 1935. There was one slight problem that changed the lawyer and the investigators' plans: Moody made that affirmation right the day before the Kingfish's future would be dismantled.<sup>2674</sup>

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<sup>2673</sup> Carter, "Huey Long: American Dictator", 343; Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 95; Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 131; Zinman, "The Meteoric Life", 30.

<sup>2674</sup> Irey and Slocum, "The Gentleman from Louisiana", 100.

On Sunday September 8, 1935, Long summoned a new special session of the legislature of Louisiana—which was by then accustomed to convene on weekends. The senator had prepared forty-two bills he intended to approve that same evening. When the meeting ended around 9:20PM, and he was heading for the exit door of the capitol building in Baton Rouge, a mysterious man approached the politician holding a gun. With no time to react, Long was shot through the abdomen and fell on the floor. According to a newspaper:

A spectator who was in the basement said he saw Long come down the steps alone walking slowly on the ground floor, and then to go out a rear door. The spectator said Long was shot twice on the side near the abdomen and that the bullets apparently went through his stomach. He said blood was streaming from the senator's mouth.<sup>2675</sup>

James P. O'Connor, one of his bodyguards, rapidly took the senator to Our Lady of the Lake Hospital.<sup>2676</sup> Enroute, it was latter reported that Long asked: "I wonder why he shot me?"<sup>2677</sup> It is also recorded that governor Allen lamented: "God, why did anyone want to do that?"<sup>2678</sup> Long was treated by Doctor Arthur Vidrine, because his personal doctor, Urban Maes (1879-1954), had been delayed in a small car accident when he was driving from New Orleans to Baton Rouge to take care of the senator.<sup>2679</sup> In fact, the medical team questioned whether to wait for Long's regular doctor before operating him, but decided he was bleeding too much, and after asking the senator, they proceeded.<sup>2680</sup> When learning about the attack, president Roosevelt declared: "I deeply regret the attempt made upon the life of Senator Long, of Louisiana. The spirit of violence is un-American and has no place in a consideration of public affairs, least of all

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<sup>2675</sup> "Senator Long Critically Wounded, Assailant Killed", *The Shreveport Times*, September 9, 1935, 1.

<sup>2676</sup> "Long Is Shot; Operated On", *The Times-Picayune*, September 9, 1935, 1. A police officer told: "I heard one shot. It was like a muffled blow. In less than three seconds there was a volley of shots. They were very close together [...] In a few moments Senator Long came down the stairs. He was holding his side. Blood was oozing between his fingers from the side of his gray suit. He ran toward the coffee shop door to the left and Jimmy O'Connor [...] ran out of the shop and met him. The senator said 'Jimmy, I've been shot'", Eugene Kemp's declaration to a Ville Platte (LA) newspaper, newspaper clipping, September 11, 1935, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 9, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2677</sup> "End Comes At 6:10 A.M.", *The New York Times*, September 10, 1935, 1; "The Story of the Murder", *The American Progress*, September issue, 1935, 3; Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 404; "Would-Be Dictator", *Sunday News*, September 7, 1941, 11.

<sup>2678</sup> "Long Shot, Assailant Killed in State Capitol", *The Morning Tribune*, September 9, 1935, 1.

<sup>2679</sup> Deutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case*, 101.

<sup>2680</sup> Daniels, *A Southerner Discovers the South*, 236–37.

at a time when calm and dispassionate approach to the difficult problems of the day is so essential”<sup>2681</sup>.

The day after the shooting, *The New York Times* published a declaration of the doctor having high hopes for the recovery of his patient: “Dr. Vidrine said that the bullet entered the right side of the abdomen and emerged at the back, miraculously missing any vital organs. Unless complications developed, the doctor said, Senator Long ‘had a good chance’ to recover”.<sup>2682</sup> The physician released a notice that same day in which he affirmed: “The patient’s condition is satisfactory”,<sup>2683</sup> and, again, that the wounds had not been inflicted on any vital organ.<sup>2684</sup> However, due to a kidney problem that had not been previously detected, after five transfusions and use of oxygen, the Kingfish’s condition worsened, which ultimately led to his passing.<sup>2685</sup> He died in Baton Rouge two days after the shooting, on September 10, 1935, at 4:10AM.<sup>2686</sup> Witnesses that were present during his last moments, such as his intimate friend Seymour Weiss, told that the Kingfish’s last words had been either: “God, don’t let me die. I have so much to do”,<sup>2687</sup> or “I have a few more things to do”,<sup>2688</sup> depending on the sources.<sup>2689</sup> However, a nurse recalled that the senator’s last phrase had not been so poetic but rather a more

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<sup>2681</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Statement on the Murder of Senator Huey P. Long”, September 9, 1935. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed September 9, 2015, [presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14933](http://presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14933); “Roosevelt Sends Sympathy”, *Washington Herald*, September 10, 1935, 1; “FDR Sends Regrets to Long’s Family”, *Daily News*, September 10, 1935, 11; “President Voices Regret, Deplores Spirit of Violence”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 10, 1935, 3; Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 365.

<sup>2682</sup> “Doctor Shoots Huey Long In Louisiana State Capitol; Bodyguards Kill Assailant”, *The New York Times*, September 9, 1935, 1.

<sup>2683</sup> “Crisis for Long in 72 Hours”, *The Times-Picayune*, Extra Issue, September 9, 1935, 1.

<sup>2684</sup> “Wounds May Not Be Fatal; Gunman Slain”, *The Oklahoman*, September 9, 1935, 1.

<sup>2685</sup> “Long Grows Weaker, Second Blood Transfusion Is Given”, *New Orleans States*, September 9, 1935, 1-2; “Huey Long Sinking; Family at Bedside”, *Washington Herald*, September 10, 1935, 1; “Friends Abandon Hope for Long’s Recovery”, *The Morning Tribune*, September 10, 1935, 1.

<sup>2686</sup> “Senator Dies at 4:10AM.”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 10, 1935, 1.

<sup>2687</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 876.

<sup>2688</sup> “The Funeral Oration by Rev. Smith”, *The American Progress*, September issue, 1935, 3; Smith, *Huey P. Long*, 50. This phrase would appear in posters of the 1936 gubernatorial election in the ticket put forward by the Long machine, “Photo Tribute to Huey Long”, 1936, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 4, folder 12, LaRC.

<sup>2689</sup> According to John Overton, “his last uttered thought was a hope, a doubt, a prayer, all in one, for the students of Louisiana State University and the youth of Louisiana. ‘What will now become of my boys?’ was the cry of anguish, the last articulate thought of the dying Senator”, 74th Congress, 2d Session, House Document No. 480, *Memorial Services Held in the House of Representatives of the United States, Together with Remarks Presented in Eulogy of Huey Pierce Long, Late a Senator from Louisiana*, 40, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1936, Huey P. Long papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 44, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

prosaic and Huey-like: "Get back, Oscar [Governor Allen], so I can get a little air".<sup>2690</sup> Be that as it may, O'Connor also witnessed that the day he died it was raining and storming, and when all the lights went out, "everybody was scared. The king was dead".<sup>2691</sup>

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING.

Form V. S. No. 1  
N. B.—WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK.—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be clearly supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. PHYSICIANS should state CAUSE OF DEATH in plain terms, so that it may be properly classified. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important.

OCT 15 1935  
OCT 25 1935

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH**  
Bureau of Vital Statistics  
**CERTIFICATE OF DEATH**

1—PLACE OF DEATH  
Parish E. Baton Rouge  
District No. 3  
Town Baton Rouge  
No. Lady of the Lake St. Saw Ward 8

2—FULL NAME Huey Pierce Long Jr  
(a) Residence. No. 17-5760 New Orleans Ward Orleans Par

3. SEX male 4. COLOR OR RACE white 5. SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED single

6. DATE OF BIRTH (month, day, and year) August 30, 1893  
7. AGE 42 Years 0 Months 11 Days 1 day, hrs. or mins.

8. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, or SAW, YER, BOOKKEEPER, etc. U.S. Senator

9. Industry or business in which work was done, as cotton mill, saw mill, bank, etc.

10. Date deceased last worked at this occupation (month and year)

11. Total time (years, months, and days) served in this occupation

12. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) Winnfield (State or Parish) La.

13. NAME Huey Pierce Long Sr.

14. BIRTHPLACE (State or Parish) Louisiana

15. MAIDEN NAME Caledonia Brown

16. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) La. (State or Parish)

17. INFORMANT Rabenhorst Funeral Home Records (Address) Baton Rouge, La.

18. BURIAL, CREMATION, OR REMOVAL P. No. State Capitol Grounds Sept 12, 1935

19. UNDERTAKER Rabenhorst & Co (Address) Baton Rouge, La.

20. FILED 9/12/35 Robbiquet

21. DATE OF DEATH (month, day, and year) Sept 10, 1935

22. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_

I last saw him \_\_\_\_\_ alive on \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_, death is said to have occurred on the date stated above, at 4.10 A.M.

The principal cause of death and related causes of importance in order of onset were as follows: Pistol wound to abdomen at dinner (dinner table)

23. If death was due to external causes (violence) fill in also the following: Accident, suicide, or homicide? Homicide Date of injury 1935

Where did injury occur? In La. State Capital Bldg (Specify city or town, parish, and State)

Specify whether injury occurred in industry, in home, or in public place In public place (State Capital)

24. Was disease or injury in any way related to occupation of deceased? No

If so, specify \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) T. Williams (Address) 1149 7th St

Fig. 55: Huey Long's Death Certificate, Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane, [www.lecomite.org/doc-month-archive-2013.html](http://www.lecomite.org/doc-month-archive-2013.html).

<sup>2690</sup> T. Harry Williams notes from Linnie B. Persac's Scrapbook 1935-1936, no page, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 9, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2691</sup> Interview to John O'Connor, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 9, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

According to current doctor Michael C. Trotter, “Long was clearly a victim of timid medical care when he needed aggressive and purposeful treatment”.<sup>2692</sup> A pamphlet related the scene pompously: “He died like he had lived, vigorously, in the full strength of his manhood and power and as courageous as any hero who had died upon a field of battle”.<sup>2693</sup> Fearing there might be disturbances in the city, the National Guard was ready to intervene in case it was necessary. The night, however, followed up quietly.<sup>2694</sup>

There are several theories regarding the Kingfish’s death. The most widely accepted account is the “one man, one gun, one bullet” theory, named after a phrase Long had coined on July that year to refer to those allegedly plotting against his life,<sup>2695</sup> and that would appear posthumously in his newspaper.<sup>2696</sup> It was believed that the assassin was a twenty-nine year-old physician named Carl A. Weiss (1906-1935) who never met the senator personally.<sup>2697</sup> He was married and had recently become a father. During the incident, he dropped dead after Long’s bodyguards shot him numerous times. Most authors and primary sources state sixty-one times,<sup>2698</sup> Harris affirms seventy shots were fired,<sup>2699</sup> Ivy Hair wrote “more than thirty”,<sup>2700</sup> and a newspaper published forty,<sup>2701</sup> while another published fifteen bullets.<sup>2702</sup> Regardless, an author complained about the brutality of Weiss’ assassination at the hands of Long’s bodyguards, and wrote: “These

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<sup>2692</sup> Michael C. Trotter, “Huey P. Long’s Last Operation: When Medicine and Politics Don’t Mix”, *The Ochsner Journal* 12, no.1 (2012): 14.

<sup>2693</sup> Flynn, “Why Huey P. Long Was Killed”, 3.

<sup>2694</sup> A witness told the story of how his father returned home that day screaming: “Thank God, Huey Long is dead”, and how “he could not have been happier”, “he just drunk a bottle of the world’s best champagne”, Brunson, *Dr. Weiss, Gone and Forgotten*, 13, Hermann Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder 6, LaRC.

<sup>2695</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride: 1940*, 132–33.

<sup>2696</sup> “One Man! One Gun!! And One Bullet!!!”, *The American Progress*, February issue, 1936, 6.

<sup>2697</sup> Most works about this topic until the late 1960s defended that idea. See Deutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case*; Joseph M. Mardesich, *Who Shot Huey Long?* (Trenton: Hermitage Press, 1964); Williams, *Huey Long*.

<sup>2698</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 96; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 135; “61 Bullet Holes in Weiss’ Body, Inquest Is Told”, *The Washington Post*, September 10, 1935, 4; “The Shooting of Huey Long. A Painting for LIFE by John McCrady”, *Life*, June 26, 1939, 49, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 3, folder 30, LSMHC; Ronald L. Feinman, *Assassinations, Threats, and the American Presidency: From Andrew Jackson to Barack Obama* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 68; Zinman, “The Meteoric Life”, 32; Hamilton Basso, “The Huey Long Legend”, *Life*, December 9, 1946, 108, David McGuire 271, series III, box 3, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>2699</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 266.

<sup>2700</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 324. Similarly, Mexican newspaper *El Universal* wrote Weiss received “no menos de treinta balazos”, in “Los funerales del Senador Huey Long”, *El Universal*, September 13, 1935, 2.

<sup>2701</sup> “Huey Long Shot by Assassin in Louisiana Statehouse”, *Dallas Morning News*, September 9, 1935, 1.

<sup>2702</sup> “Long Shot, Assailant Killed in State Capitol”, *The Morning Tribune*, September 9, 1935, 1.

men committed a brutal murder and should have been brought before the bar of justice”.<sup>2703</sup> Weiss’ family did not understand what motives his relative could have had to commit such a crime; in fact, he had spent that same day having a picnic with his family and his recently born baby-boy.<sup>2704</sup> An author wrote right after the shooting that “he seemed in good spirits and was in no way acting as if he had murder on his mind”.<sup>2705</sup> One author called Weiss an “improbable killer” due to the doctor’s lack of strong motives and mental illness.<sup>2706</sup>

A possible motive for the crime was Weiss’ father-in-law judge Benjamin Pavy (1874-1943), who Long had tried to manipulate and even fire during the legislature by gerrymandering his district, St. Landry parish. Russell Long, the senator’s son, told in a later interview how:

Carl Weiss was very much upset at the prospect of his father-in-law losing his job as a result of the so-called gerrymandering [...] Everything that I have been able to learn from Seymour Weiss and others about the bill to shift St. Landry Parish away from the district which included Evangeline, and into the district of Lafayette and Vermilion, indicated that my father was reluctant to go along with the bill. He had no real interest in changing the district to beat Judge Pavy. The problem for him was that Judge Cleveland Fruge and Mr. Fruge’s friends had been stalwart Long supporters and they felt that by creating a separate judicial district for Evangeline Parish, Cleveland Fruge would be assured election. Therefore, the purpose of the bill was not so much to defeat Judge Pavy as to elect Judge Fruge in a district where in Judge Pavy would not be eligible to run.<sup>2707</sup>

Moreover, Huey Long had supposedly accused Pavy’s family of having African American blood.<sup>2708</sup> Furthermore, an uncle and his sister-in-law had been fired from the high school they worked at for opposing the senator. *The American Progress* argued

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<sup>2703</sup> Brunson, *Dr. Weiss, Gone and Forgotten*, 4, Hermann Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder 6, LaRC.

<sup>2704</sup> “Mother of Dr. Weiss Tells of Her Son’s Activities Sunday”, *Shreveport Journal*, September 9, 1935, 1.

<sup>2705</sup> Pavy, *Accident and Deception*, 28.

<sup>2706</sup> James W. Clarke, *American Assassins: The Darker Side of Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 239.

<sup>2707</sup> Interview to Russell B. Long, March 27, 1963, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 9, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2708</sup> Zinman, “The Meteoric Life”, 29. Huey’s son, Russell, rejected this idea stating there existed no proof of that accusation, Letter from Russell B. Long to T. Harry Williams, March 27, 1963, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 18, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU). Historian William Ivy Hair, however, wrote: “The Kingfish’s ultimate way of identifying white enemies with blacks was to say, or at least insinuate, that they had African blood”, in Hair, *The Kingfish*, 303.

that “this killer was not insane. Dr. Carl A. Weiss was wholly sane, the son-in-law of a bitter political foe of Senator Long, and his cowardly crime was inspired by the lowest kind of political moves”.<sup>2709</sup> Williams believed Weiss committed the assassination individually with the intention of becoming the martyr of a tyrannicide.<sup>2710</sup> In a similar understanding, Hermann Deutsch wrote:

[Weiss] was an earnest lad, and lived for humanity, but he was sorely distressed about the suppressive form of government he felt existed in Louisiana. He never talked much about it, and he certainly never confided to his family or anyone else any plan to kill Long. Our only explanation for his action is that this suppressive type of rule preyed on his mind until it unhinged, and he suddenly felt himself a martyr, giving his life to the people of Louisiana. He must have felt that way, else how could he have left the wife and baby that he loved above everything?<sup>2711</sup>

Kane wrote Weiss had spent some time doing postgraduate work in Vienna while Engelbert Dollfuss (1892-1934),<sup>2712</sup> leader of Austrofascism, commanded the “destruction of the worker’s co-operative apartments”, and thus “he remembered those days, and thought bitterly of the days that were now upon Louisiana”.<sup>2713</sup> Similarly, a surgeon who was colleague of Weiss described a scene in an operating room at a Baton Rouge hospital that occurred a few days before the incident that sheds some light to the doctor’s positioning regarding the political situation of Louisiana:

A number of us were sitting around one afternoon about 10 days ago in the amphitheater of a local hospital. Weiss was sitting on an operating table, one leg drawn up under him, taking little part on the conversation. The conversation came around to politics, several of the doctors present began panning Senator Long, criticizing him for the methods employed in his operation of the State government. The talk became heated. Suddenly I looked across at Dr. Weiss. He said nothing, but great tears were coursing down his cheeks. He got up from the table and walked out of the room, without saying a word [...] I firmly believe that, in secret, Dr. Weiss was eating his heart out because he thought Long’s control of Louisiana was oppression of the people, and he thought upon the subject so much that his mind snapped. At the time of the shooting, I am convinced, Dr. Weiss was completely insane.<sup>2714</sup>

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<sup>2709</sup> “The Story of the Murder”, *The American Progress*, September issue, 1935, 3.

<sup>2710</sup> Williams, *Huey Long*, 876; Frances Frank Marcus, “Researchers Exhume Doctor’s Grave To Resolve Part of Huey Long Legend”, *The New York Times*, October 21, 1991.

<sup>2711</sup> Deutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case*, 128.

<sup>2712</sup> Dollfuss had also been assassinated, by Nazi agents, in 1934. See also account of politician Johannes Messener, *Dollfuss* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1935).

<sup>2713</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 134.

<sup>2714</sup> “Surgeon Tells Why Weiss Shot Long”, *The Washington Post*, September 10, 1935. A fragment of this story is also reproduced in Zinman, “The Meteoric Life”, 29.

Other people that knew Weiss affirmed it was impossible that such a brilliant and quiet person was able to commit an assassination. A close friend of Weiss was convinced that he had gone to the capitol only to talk to the senator about the accusation of having African American blood, and that he was not a “good shot”.<sup>2715</sup>

Another theory regarding the mysterious homicide is that the bodyguards were, in fact, responsible.<sup>2716</sup> A detail that may be evidence for this hypothesis is that when brought to the hospital, Long had a cut on his lower lip, perhaps because the assailant had struck him; therefore, he could not have shot him at the same time.<sup>2717</sup> Another unsolved clue is that Weiss was carrying a .22 caliber pistol, while the wounds found in Long’s body were made by a .45 caliber slug.<sup>2718</sup> Thus Weiss’ father affirmed: “Long was probably killed by [his] own guards”.<sup>2719</sup> There are several studies that focus on this interpretation of the events. In the 1960s David Zinman was the first author to question whether Weiss was the murderer, and situated himself on the side of the doctor.<sup>2720</sup> Two decades later,

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<sup>2715</sup> Interview to James Petrie, March 23, 1960, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 9, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2716</sup> A former supporter of Long wrote to Williams: “The people who supported Huey P. Long were made up of two classes, or bunches. One class were the God-fearing bunch, conscientious, religious, and fanatic. That other bunch were the lawless element, the Al Capone type, who would stop at nothing, and I mean ‘nothing’ [...] Dr. Weiss was put on the spot to take the blame for killing Huey Long. I firmly feel that he had no more to do with Huey’s death than you or I did. He was phoned to go to the Capitol. He went, not even having met the Senator, and the excuses Huey’s pretended friends put out for Weiss’ killing Huey were so ridiculous that a child’s mind should have seen try it as all lies. I do not know, or rather did not know Dr. Weiss, had never heard of him, but to say that a highly educated man, a man who had never before shown any steaks of insanity as that would get fanatic over a political father-in-law matter [...], or the ridiculous idea that a sane man would go murderous over the idea as some suggest in regard to the negro blood of his child and wife, without any proof that Huey had said such thing, was simply carrying the lies too far. No, that Al Capone element of Huey’s administration were everywhere around Huey at his death”, Letter from William C. Boone to T. Harry Williams, November 17, 1964, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 14, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2717</sup> A newspaper published that “No we don’t know the answer yet, but we are getting closer” to discover who had punched the senator, in “Who hit Huey Long?”, *Washington News*, newspaper clipping, no date, Huey P. Long published materials 1932-1936, Mss. 2363, box 1, folder 7. O’Connor, however, argued that Long must have hurt himself while he was running down the steps: “when he was making a turn--you know that as you come down the stairs in the turn there is something that projects and he must have hit his mouth there”, Interview to James P. O’Connor, no date, by T. Harry Williams, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 9, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2718</sup> Irely and Slocum, “The Gentleman from Louisiana”, 100.

<sup>2719</sup> “State Stirred by Dr. Weiss’ Charge”, *New Orleans States*, January 10, 1936, 20. In fact, Weiss’ father affirmed he possessed an affidavit from one of the nurses who attended Long at the hospital stating that the senator had said “That is where he hit me”, without indicating who he meant by “he”, in C. P. Liter, *Morning Advocate*, newspaper clipping, September 9, 1945, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 18, folder 9, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2720</sup> David Zinman, *The Day Huey Long Was Shot, September 8, 1935* (New York: Ivan Obolensky, 1963).

Ed Reed wrote a book to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the shooting in which he also questioned the accepted theory. His thesis was that, when protecting Long from the punching of the doctor, a bullet from one of the bodyguard would have accidentally hit the senator.<sup>2721</sup> Later on, William Ivy Hair wrote that the Kingfish had been shot by two bullets that hit pierced through the abdomen and in the back, respectively. According to the author, Weiss shot one and a bodyguard the other.<sup>2722</sup> A few years later, Dr. Donald Pavy, the cousin of the presumed assassin's wife, wrote a book vindicating the innocence of Weiss. He proposed that, when encountering Long at the capitol, the doctor was not carrying a gun and that it was the accumulated tension felt by the bodyguards that might have led them to aggressively shoot without questioning him first. Pavy also states there might have been a later cover-up of the incident blaming Weiss of the assassination.<sup>2723</sup> According to the author, the investigation that followed after the Kingfish's death was not serious and that "witnesses were obviously biased and made self-serving statements without any cross-examination. No physical evidence was presented to support a finding of guilt".<sup>2724</sup> A fascinating documentary entitled *61 Bullets: an Unsolved Mystery* (2014) has recently been released and deals with the innocence of Weiss through interviews of historians such as Alecia P. Long from LSU, and the surviving family members, including his son Carl, Jr., and sister-in-law Ida Boudreaux, who, throughout the decades have defended the innocence of the late doctor.<sup>2725</sup> If it indeed had been in fact the bodyguards that ended Long's life, the situation could be compared to the demise of Machado, whose downfall was prompted by the military: both leaders would have been ironically deceived by the armed men that were supposed to protect them.

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<sup>2721</sup> Reed, *Requiem for a Kingfish*.

<sup>2722</sup> Hair, *The Kingfish*, 324.

<sup>2723</sup> Pavy, *Accident and Deception*, 42-43.

<sup>2724</sup> Pavy, *Accident and Deception*, 46. There are, in fact, no medical reports on the subject, a fact that could be interpreted as suspicious. Dr. Frank Loria published a study in which he vindicated that "the writer has failed to find any report of this case in the medical literature. It is firmly believed that nothing of the case's surgical history has been published, except the incomplete and unreliable newspaper medical accounts of this tragedy", in Frank L. Loria, "Historical Aspects of Penetrating Wounds of the Abdomen", re-print from *International Abstracts of Surgery*, vol. 87 (December 1948): 521-549, 26, Frank Leo Loria papers, Manuscripts Collection 395, box 1, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>2725</sup> Huey Long, *61 Bullets*, Documentary, directed by Louisiana Kreutz and David Modigliani (2014; United States), Film; John Wirt, "Documentary Revisits Death of Huey P. Long", *The Advocate*, January 20, 2015, accessed July 13, 2015, [theadvocate.com/entertainment/10933068-31/documentary-revisits-death-of-huey](http://theadvocate.com/entertainment/10933068-31/documentary-revisits-death-of-huey).

If it was Weiss who pulled the trigger, another crucial and obvious question arises, that is, did he act alone or was he following orders? Did he attend the De Soto Hotel meeting?<sup>2726</sup> Gerald L.K. Smith even affirmed that the murder had been a plot orchestrated by president Roosevelt himself, who felt menaced by the rise of the Kingfish.<sup>2727</sup> Related to that risky assumption, in 1939 two allegedly well-informed columnists, Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, made an interesting point in their column when questioning how could it be possible that a newspaper man from Washington already knew Weiss' full name and profession only five minutes after the shooting, when people in Baton Rouge were still wondering and this information was not officially revealed until after eighteen minutes.<sup>2728</sup> Did Washington have some advanced information? In commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the gunfire, another of Long's supporters, John Fournet, stated in an interview that someone in Washington was responsible for the murder, if not Roosevelt, "some of his friends".<sup>2729</sup>

In any case, the event remains unresolved. In fact, an autopsy of the senator was never carried out. At the beginning of the 1990s the investigation reopened but Long's family rejected the request to exhume Huey's grave. On the other hand, Weiss' son, Carl Weiss Jr., has tried all his life to demonstrate the innocence of his father and even approved an autopsy in 1991, which unfortunately did not bring new information to the case.<sup>2730</sup> Besides the fascination surrounding the death of the Kingfish, the most interesting thing to note is that "the victim perished at the hands of the very Frankenstein monster he created—public violence".<sup>2731</sup>

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<sup>2726</sup> A bizarre and non reliable article defended this theory, describing step by step the decisions taken in the De Soto meeting and how a "Doctor Wise" had attended and expressed his willingness to kill Long, in William Griffies, "Who Really Killed Huey Long, by Governor O.K. From Louisiana As Told to William Griffies", *Famous Detective Cases*, February 1936, 23-24, Huey P. Long collection RG 300, box 3, folder 25, LSMHC.

<sup>2727</sup> Smith, *Huey P. Long*, 42-43.

<sup>2728</sup> Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, "The Washington Merry Go Round", May 13, 1939. This idea would later appear in the *Life* magazine article of that same year, "The Shooting of Huey Long", 49, and "Would-Be Dictator", *Sunday News*, September 7, 1941, 12.

<sup>2729</sup> Joe Darby, "An Assassination Plot? Fournet Says Yes", *The Times-Picayune*, September 7, 1975, 3.

<sup>2730</sup> Frances Frank Marcus, "Researchers Exhume Doctor's Grave To Resolve Part of Huey Long Legend", *The New York Times*, October 21, 1991, accessed July 14, 2015, [nytimes.com/1991/10/21/us/researchers-exhume-doctor-s-grave-to-resolve-part-of-huey-long-legend.html](http://nytimes.com/1991/10/21/us/researchers-exhume-doctor-s-grave-to-resolve-part-of-huey-long-legend.html); Zinman, "The Meteoric Life", 33.

<sup>2731</sup> Goins, "Aftermath", 3.



**Fig. 56:** *Aerial View of Huey Long's Funeral, September 12, 1935, Leon Trice Louisiana political photographs, Manuscripts Collection 950, LaRC. The New York Times narrated the scene: "The great plaza around the sunken garden, in the middle of which was the open grave with an awning over it, was a black and white mass of humanity", in "Thousands Mourn at Long's Burial", The New York Times, September 13, 1935.*

Dr. Carl Weiss was buried before Long died, on September 9, 1935, in a Catholic service.<sup>2732</sup> It is interesting to note that several enemies of Huey attended the ceremony, such as members of the Square Deal Association, former governor John Parker, and representative J.Y. Sanders, among others.<sup>2733</sup> An author described it as the "largest [funeral] of any assassin in American history".<sup>2734</sup> In a very different service, around 175,000 people from the state of Louisiana and the entire country attended the funeral of Huey Long on September 12 in Baton Rouge,<sup>2735</sup> where

"the mood in the capital was a mixture of shock, sadness, and resignation".<sup>2736</sup>

<sup>2732</sup> "Final Rites for Dr. Carl Weiss this Afternoon", *The States Times*, September 10, 1935, 1; "Long Foes Attend Weiss Funeral", *Washington Herald*, September 10, 1935, 1; "Thousands Attend Funeral of Dr. Carl Austin Weiss, Slayer of Senator Huey Long, Monday", *The Times-Picayune*, September 10, 1935, 1.

<sup>2733</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 406.

<sup>2734</sup> Clarke, *American Assassins*, 238.

<sup>2735</sup> "Thousands of Followers Pass Longs Casket In Capitol", *The Morning Tribune*, September 12, 1935,

1.

<sup>2736</sup> LeVert, *Huey Long*, 116.



**Fig. 57:** Huey Long in a casket, September 12, 1935, Leon Trice Louisiana political photographs, Manuscripts Collection 950, LaRC.

Most of the people who attended the ceremony came from the rural areas of the state, where he was most loved.<sup>2737</sup> They were “every one of whom Huey Long had promised to make a king”.<sup>2738</sup> That day schools suspended classes, most public buildings closed, and flags were at half-staff.<sup>2739</sup> Every parish of the state sent flowers.<sup>2740</sup> The senator was buried under a garden located in front of the capitol building in Baton Rouge.<sup>2741</sup> Gerald L.K. Smith pronounced a eulogy in which he devotedly spoke of Long as a martyr, a hero, and a saint: “This place marks not the resting place of Huey Long. It marks only the burial place for his body. His spirit shall never rest as long as hungry bodies cry for food, as long as human frames stand naked, as long as homeless wretches haunt this land of plenty”.<sup>2742</sup> As it has been already mentioned, Smith published a

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<sup>2737</sup> Robert Mann, *Legacy to Power: Senator Russell Long of Louisiana* (New York: Paragon House, 1992), xiv.

<sup>2738</sup> “National Affairs—Louisiana: Mourners, Heirs, Foes”, *Time*, September 23, 1935, 14.

<sup>2739</sup> “Throng See Long’s Burial on Lawn of Louisiana State Capitol”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 13, 1935, 3; “Webster Schools to Close Thursday in Respect to Long”, *Shreveport Journal*, September 11, 1935; “Post Office Flag at Half Mast for Senator Huey Long”, *Shreveport Journal*, September 11, 1935.

<sup>2740</sup> Sam S. Farrington, “Crush of Humanity at Baton Rouge for Huey Long Funeral”, *New Orleans States*, September 12, 1935, 1.

<sup>2741</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 407.

<sup>2742</sup> Printed Funeral Oration by Gerald L.K. Smith, 1935, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 2, folder 12, LaRC; “National Affairs—Louisiana: Mourners, Heirs, Foes”, *Time*, September 23, 1935, 15; Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 136; Smith, “Huey P. Long”, 47. The next year another eulogy would be given by several members of the US Senate and printed by United States Government Printing Office. A variety of people wrote to Rose McConnell requesting copies of the text. For instance, an attorney from Thibodaux (LA), explained: “While recently in Mississippi I was presented with the memorial exercises of the late Percy Quinn, and my host said he

pamphlet about Long in the 1970s in which he included this text.<sup>2743</sup> At the end of the ceremony, the LSU band played the song of the Kingfish, “Every Man a King”.<sup>2744</sup> As an admirer put it, “not curiosity, but sadness and the sorrow of a great multitude followed Huey Long to his tomb. He needs no monument so long as over all this State his good works remain to shine before men”.<sup>2745</sup> Despite that statement, there would be monuments in honor of the Kingfish, probably as a reminder to those who might nevertheless forget.

*The American Progress* poetically published: “He was laid to rest on a still, quiet, sunny day in September. Even the clouds in the heavens seemed to stop in memory of the great work he had done”.<sup>2746</sup> Father Charles Coughlin told a reporter the murder was “the most regrettable thing in modern history”.<sup>2747</sup> Long’s opponent, general Hugh Johnson, declared his respects in a press release in which he affirmed: “No moral is to be drawn from the manner of the death of Huey Long [...] Huey, I enjoyed fighting you. I’m sorry you’re gone. As a soldier, I salute you”.<sup>2748</sup> Even president Roosevelt declared: “It’s a dastardly thing and I condemn it in the most spirited language of which

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would give anything to have one of your late husband's. I told him it would give me great pleasure to write for him, and at the same time, if possible, to obtain several for myself, if you can spare same [sic]”, Letter from Mr. Lawrence H. Pugh to Rose McConnell, August 4, 1936. A Congressman of the 3rd District in Michigan asked: “I have just received one copy of the Memorial Addresses delivered in Congress honoring the late Senator Huey Pierce Long. If it not asking too much, may I have an additional half a dozen copies of the collection of Memorial Addresses?”, Letter from Congressman to Rose McConnell, November 27, 1936. Another Congressman, this time from the 2d Congressional District in Oregon wrote: “One of my friends and constituents is very much interested to have the memorial on your husband, Senator Long. I would also prize one very highly, and shall be grateful to you if you can have two copies sent to me when they are available. If you have sufficient supply and can send me three additional copies I shall take pleasure in placing them in important libraries in Oregon where your husband had many friends and admirers”, Letter from Walter M. Pierce to Rose McConnell, February 22, 1936?. HPL papers 1915-1936, Mss. 2005, box 43, folder 1436, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2743</sup> Smith, “Huey P. Long”, 47-51.

<sup>2744</sup> Margaret Dixon, “‘Ev’ry Man a King’ to Be Dirge by Author”, *New Orleans States*, September 11, 1935, 1; “A ‘Dictator’ Is Buried: 100,000 At Rites for Huey Long”, *Washington Herald*, September 13, 1935, 6; Herman B. Deutsch, “Long Calls Last Special Session to Legislature Judge Pavy Out of Office; The Judge’s Son-in-Law Quietly Writes the End to the Saga of the Kingfish and Falls Ridden on the Capitol Floor”, *The New Orleans Item*, September 19, 1939.

<sup>2745</sup> Hugh M. Wilkinson, “Address Delivered at the Memorial Exercises Before the Supreme Court of Louisiana”, October 7, 1935, 13, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 22, LaRC.

<sup>2746</sup> “The Murder of Huey Long Leaves Grief-Stricken People to Mourn Death”, *The American Progress*, September issue, 1935, 1.

<sup>2747</sup> “Coughlin Deplores Passing of Sen. Long”, *New Orleans States*, September 10, 1935, 1; Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 366.

<sup>2748</sup> Hugh Johnson, “Huey, I salute you!”, *The American Progress*, September issue, 1935, 7.

I am capable”.<sup>2749</sup> Another opponent, journalist Harnett Kane, described the service in an emotional tone, rejecting assassination as a solution to end a dictatorship, but added: “Long’s death came as a not illogical sequel to the life he had chosen to lead”.<sup>2750</sup> The political path was now easier for Roosevelt whose “hold on the American presidency was now unshakeable”.<sup>2751</sup> FDR would indeed go on to win the presidential election in 1936 by a landslide of 523 electoral votes against 8 gained by his Republican opponent, the relatively unknown governor of Kansas, Alf Landon (1887-1987).<sup>2752</sup>

With the sudden death of the senator, political enemies, supporters, and journalists analyzed the politician, his persona, and policies. Activist Hilda Phelps Hammond invited women to keep fighting longism, and only a few minutes after the funeral she stated:

Reconstruction days face Louisiana. Long is dead but Longism lives. Absolute tyranny still reigns. The cruel, shackling laws still stand upon the statute books and corruptionists are still in control [...] The battle of the women’s committee of Louisiana had always been based on principles, not personalities. That fight goes on.<sup>2753</sup>

In a very different tone, *The American Progress* depicted, of course, an image of a martyr and heroic Long, and described him as “the man who will be known in the histories of tomorrow as ‘the President who was assassinated before he was elected’”, and added that the people “had suffered an irreparable loss”.<sup>2754</sup> The *Dallas Morning News* published an article the day he passed away that reported death was imminent for the “blatant, ruthless dictator of Louisiana”.<sup>2755</sup> *The Times-Picayune* was also severe when publishing that the senator “attained the highest degree of state control ever recorded under America’s democratic form of government”.<sup>2756</sup> Similarly, the *New*

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<sup>2749</sup> Quoted in Flynn, “Why Huey Long Was Killed”, 26.

<sup>2750</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 136.

<sup>2751</sup> Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 366.

<sup>2752</sup> Dave Leip, “1936 Presidential General Election Data - National”, *US Election Atlas*, [uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/data.php?year=1936&datatype=national&def=1&f=0&off=0&elect=0](http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/data.php?year=1936&datatype=national&def=1&f=0&off=0&elect=0)

<sup>2753</sup> “Mrs. Hammond Presses Women’s Fight on Longism”, *Washington Herald*, September 13, 1935, 6.

<sup>2754</sup> “The Murder of Huey Long Leaves Grief-Stricken People to Mourn Death”, *The American Progress*, September issue, 1935, 1.

<sup>2755</sup> “Senator Long’s Death Is Regarded Matter of Hours; Closest Friends Abandon Last Hope for His Recovery”, *Dallas Morning News*, September 10, 1935, 1B.

<sup>2756</sup> “Huey Long’s Ascent to Rule Over State Marked by Turmoil”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 10, 1935, 1B.

*Orleans States* wrote that his burial marked the end of seven years of drama.<sup>2757</sup> *The Washington Post* published: “The peculiar constitution of Louisiana and its antiquated Napoleonic code of law were responsible for Long’s dictatorship. He probably could not have accomplished the same thing in another state”.<sup>2758</sup> In a cynical tone, on September 11 *The New York Times* published an article entitled “Long Death Eases Roosevelt’s Road”.<sup>2759</sup> A few weeks later, journalist Walter Davenport wrote similarly: “To a lot of [people] [...] the murder of Huey Long must have been like lifting the mortgage on the old homestead. Ask President Roosevelt”.<sup>2760</sup>

But the newspapers in the United States were not the only ones that covered the assassination and analyzed the lights and shadows of the controversial politician of Louisiana. In Great Britain, *The Illustrated London News* dedicated a full page to explain how the “dictator” of Louisiana, who had been “one of the most eccentric figures in American political history”, was like the “great Tammany ‘bosses’ of New York”, and he “extended lavish patronage to all his supporters and bestowed varied material benefits to the masses”.<sup>2761</sup>

In the Spanish-speaking world the event also mirrored the press. In Spain, *La Vanguardia* referred to Long as the “*dictador de la Luisiana*”, and explained that he had managed to control the whole state by persecuting opposition and carrying out acts of violence. Assuming that the senator would recover, *La Vanguardia* published that the supposedly failed assault would make the Kingfish more popular and would prepare his terrain for the following year’s presidential election.<sup>2762</sup> The day after, the newspaper published that his death “*aparta ahora un serio obstáculo para la elección del presidente*

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<sup>2757</sup> Meigs O. Frost, “Long’s Burial Ends 7-Year Drama in State”, *New Orleans States*, September 13, 1935, 1

<sup>2758</sup> “Louisiana’s Future at Stake in Scramble for Long’s Power”, *The Washington Post*, September 10, 1935, 4. A few months earlier, a journalist interviewed a barber about what his thoughts on Huey Long were, and he said: “Our state has always lived under the Code Napoleon. Now, today, we, in Loo-ee-see-anna, live under a living Napoleon himself”, in Goins, “The Drunken Tyranny of Huey P. Long”, 64.

<sup>2759</sup> Arthur Krock, “Long Death Eases Roosevelt’s Road”, *The New York Times*, September 11, 1935, 1, 17.

<sup>2760</sup> Davenport, “The Robes of the Kingfish”, *Collier’s Weekly*, November 23, 1935, 33.

<sup>2761</sup> “An Eccentric Figure in US. Politics Assassinated: Huey Long”, *The Illustrated London News*, September 14, 1935, 417.

<sup>2762</sup> “Atentado contra el senador norteamericano Huey Long”, *La Vanguardia*, September 10, 1935, 29.

[Roosevelt] en 1936”.<sup>2763</sup> This publication included a note affirming that people in Asuncion, Paraguay, received the news with great sadness, after the senator had become their spokesperson in the US Senate during the Chaco War.<sup>2764</sup> Another Spanish newspaper, the *ABC*, dedicated only a short column in which they wrote: “El senador Huey Long, el dictador de Luisiana (EEUU), ha fallecido como consecuencia de las heridas que sufrió al ser agredido recientemente por un médico, al que mataron a su vez [sic], los hombres que daban escolta al primero”.<sup>2765</sup>

In Mexico, the representative of the workers’ and peasants’ organization of Northern Mexican states, Robert Gómez, saw connections between the Kingfish and fascist movements, and thus affirmed on September 9 that workers:

[E]xpressed satisfaction over the apparent elimination of Huey Long, Fascist dictator of Louisiana, from the political scene in that State. Long had all the characteristics of our state dictators who operated by force. I hope now the workers of Louisiana will have removed the threat of implantation of a Fascist dictatorship of the Hitler and Mussolini type. Fortunately Long has disappeared from the United States political scene.<sup>2766</sup>

The Mexican newspaper *Excélsior* also referred to Long as a “*dictador*”, and recalled the De Soto Hotel meeting and the accusations the politician had made in the Senate about an attempt to assassinate him.<sup>2767</sup> The publication also advocated that “la mayoría de su tiempo lo pasaba dando mayor fuerza a su ‘dictadura’ en Louisiana y tratando de extender su influencia hacia el Sur”.<sup>2768</sup> The newspaper announced his passing in the front page:

La bala de un asesino eliminó hoy a Huey Pierce Long del escenario político en que el senador había desempeñado un papel dramático y pintoresco por medio de la organización de la más asombrosa dictadura personal que registra la historia de los Estados Unidos.<sup>2769</sup>

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<sup>2763</sup> “Ha fallecido el dictador de Luisiana, Huey Long”, *La Vanguardia*, September 11, 1935, 24.

<sup>2764</sup> “Sentimiento en el Paraguay”, *La Vanguardia*, September 11, 1935, 24.

<sup>2765</sup> “Hechos y rostros del día”, *ABC*, September 11, 1936, 9.

<sup>2766</sup> “Mexican Workers Hail ‘Elimination’ of Long”, *The Washington Post*, September 10, 1935, 4.

<sup>2767</sup> “El senador H.P. Long iba a ser asesinado”, *Excélsior*, September 9, 1935, 1, 7.

<sup>2768</sup> “Se debate entre la vida y la muerte el senador Huey Long”, *Excélsior*, September 10, 1935, 2-3.

<sup>2769</sup> “Murió el Senador por la Louisiana Huey Pierce Long”, *Excélsior*, September 11, 1935, 1.

Another Mexican newspaper that witnessed these events was *El Universal*. The publication followed the shooting<sup>2770</sup> and the subsequent medical condition of the senator<sup>2771</sup> with a rather serene tone, although it also occasionally referred to the politician as a dictator and an absolutist. On the issue about his death, *El Universal* stated that without the “*jefe*” there was no one to lead an “ultrarradical” third party in the United States, and so his passing was not only a loss for his friends in Louisiana but for all those radical Americans in hope for a change.<sup>2772</sup>

There had been political assassinations throughout the history of the United States and thus Long’s death was not the first violent expression against radical policies.<sup>2773</sup> Forrest Davis wrote: “Assassination as an instrument of political policy is almost as American as lynching”,<sup>2774</sup> and historian Ronald L. Feinman asserts: “Political assassination has been one of the major themes of American history”,<sup>2775</sup> for up to 2015 a total of eleven presidents and three presidential aspirants have been exposed to murderers in the United States,<sup>2776</sup> six of whom were successful in their attempt. It seems, though, as if works on this peculiar American tradition have not gone further in analyzing the reasons that have led this country to be marked by such events. Besides providing a list of victims and describing different examples of political assassinations or attempts of assassination, scholars do not offer a broader deeper explanation.<sup>2777</sup> In any case, this trait surely challenges the conception of American exceptionalism.

Hungarian Jewish emigré, social scientist, and historian Oscar Jászi argued Long’s assassination was a tyrannicide, and that the Kingfish resembled more an ancient type of

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<sup>2770</sup> “El Senador Long herido de un tiro”, *El Universal*, September 9, 1935, 1, 5.

<sup>2771</sup> “El Senador Long está moribundo”, *El Universal*, September 10, 1935, 2.

<sup>2772</sup> “El Senador Long falleció ayer”, *El Universal*, September 11, 1935, 2.

<sup>2773</sup> A study analyzes different political assassinations throughout the globe after the end of World War I, including those of Martin Luther King, Huey Long, and Rafael Leónidas Trujillo: Murray Clark Havens, Carl Leiden, and Karl Michael Schmitt, *The Politics of Assassination* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

<sup>2774</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, postscript.

<sup>2775</sup> Feinman, *Assassinations, Threats, and the American Presidency*, 2.

<sup>2776</sup> These include: Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Huey P. Long, Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, George C. Wallace, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, and Ronald Reagan, in *Ibid*.

<sup>2777</sup> See, for instance: James W. Clarke, *American Assassins: The Darker Side of Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Willard M. Oliver and Nancy E. Marion, *Killing the President: Assassinations, Attempts, and Rumored Attempts on U.S. Commanders-in-Chief* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010).

tyrant, “with all its ruthlessness, vitality, ambition, greedy appetite, and low jocularity”.<sup>2778</sup> *The New York Sun* published an interesting article that reflected upon the murderer in the following terms:

The perplexing aspect of this situation is that, when a usurpation of power is carried to extremes, it begets violence. In that sense, the episode will no doubt be looked upon in Louisiana as awakening the people to a greater need for reliance on lawful methods in preserving their constitutional rights.<sup>2779</sup>

The same journalist concluded that the people of Louisiana could have resorted to alternative methods to violence to deal with the political situation of their state, and that such destructive measures “have been all too frequently utilized in the Latin-American republics when rulers have become tyrannical”.<sup>2780</sup> The writer of a booklet believed that “a man must die or be killed at the peak of his fame, or infamy, in order to go down in history as a martyr”.<sup>2781</sup> And that is exactly what happened to Long as opposed to Machado. One could wonder whether he would have been so attractive to historians and other scholars had he never been shot, or if his popularity would have simply faded with the years ending with the outbreak of World War II. Political scientists Havens, Leiden, and Schmitt believe that the impact of his assassination was moderate in terms of national politics, because he was barely supported at the Senate and his chances of winning a presidential election were low. On the opposite side, in his native state his death had tremendous repercussion. Louisiana had become a supposed anomaly in the United States, “a state dictatorship in a federal democracy”.<sup>2782</sup> The personal rule of the Kingfish was now over.

### 7.3 Legacies

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<sup>2778</sup> Oscar Jászi, “The Use and Abuse of Tyrannicide”, in *Against the Tyrant: The Tradition and Theory of Tyrannicide*, by Oscar Jászi and John D. Lewis (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), 175.

<sup>2779</sup> David Lawrence, “Today in Washington”, *The New York Sun*, September 10, 1935, 14.

<sup>2780</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2781</sup> Brunson, *Dr. Weiss, Gone and Forgotten*, 13, Hermann Bacher Deutsch papers, Manuscripts Collection 130, box 20, folder 6, LaRC.

<sup>2782</sup> Havens, Leiden, and Schmitt, *The Politics of Assassination*, 83.

### 7.3.1 The legacy of the Kingfish<sup>2783</sup>

In an article published a few hours after Long's passing, renowned journalist Arthur Krock lucidly affirmed: "There will be no successor in Louisiana, for in his own State as in Washington the Senator had no lieutenants—only vassals".<sup>2784</sup> This was the same journalist that had reported Sumner Welles' knowledge of the army's mutiny against Machado before the Cuban president did.<sup>2785</sup> Beals anticipated a similar future to the Long movement when writing: "Whether it [the Share Our Wealth movement] will even continue to expand without Long's vibrant personality is doubtful".<sup>2786</sup> So did journalist George Morris when he wrote: "Such personalities do not often command the spotlight as they walk across the stage of public affairs. Chaos usually follows their departing footsteps",<sup>2787</sup> a statement that could also be applied to Machado. Even politicians from the time, such as Democrat Ellison D. Smith (1864-1944) from South Carolina, reckoned that the Share Our Wealth movement was about to end.<sup>2788</sup> Harris described Long as a shepherd that guided his sheep in the following manner:

To millions of creatures, Huey Long was a new hope in a forlorn and despairing world. There is no tie as strong as the bond of common suffering, and no faith as enduring as reliance built upon it. So, while many of the sheep in his fold followed his voice and many others followed his standard, all were united in unqualified trust of and an absolute dependence upon their shepherd.<sup>2789</sup>

When the leader died, there was no one to replace him. Huey Long had created a potent and well-structured machine that could, in fact, function without him. Kane even affirmed: "The end of the dictator did not mean the end of the dictatorship".<sup>2790</sup> However, it was an organization based on his persona and therefore in his absence its popularity, impact or duration trembled. In the postscript of his biography of Long,

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<sup>2783</sup> There are several works on this issue, such as: Hamilton Basso, "Huey's Louisiana Heritage", *The New Republic*, August 30, 1939; Courtney Vaughn, "The Legacy of Huey Long", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 20, n° 1 (Winter 1979): 93-101; Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*; Stan Opatowsky, *The Longs of Louisiana* (New York: Dutton, 1960).

<sup>2784</sup> Krock, "Long Death Eases Roosevelt's Road", 17.

<sup>2785</sup> Arthur Krock, "Hull Wins Spurs in Test of State Department in the Cuban Crisis", *The New York Times*, August 17, 1933, 16.

<sup>2786</sup> Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*, 414.

<sup>2787</sup> George Morris, "The Reason for Huey", *The Commercial Appeal*, September 11, 1935, 3.

<sup>2788</sup> "Asked If Machine Died With Long", *New Orleans States*, September 10, 1935, 3.

<sup>2789</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 153.

<sup>2790</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 144.

Davis added: “Huey ruled alone, he brooked no palace rivals, and it takes no special gift of prophecy to perceive that the Long organization will divide and realign with Long’s splenetic enemies before the stone on his tomb is weathered”.<sup>2791</sup> Similarly, reporter Walter Davenport added that the only people the senator had surrounding him were yes-men who, “now that there was nobody to say yes to, began to scramble like dock boys for what remained of a myth”.<sup>2792</sup> His aspirations, nonetheless, did not accompany the senator six feet under.

Long’s circle consisted of a variety of men coming from different regions and backgrounds of Louisiana. After his death, they justified that “Share-Our-Wealth is NOT dead. It was never more alive than it is today”.<sup>2793</sup> During the Kingfish’s life, Long had multiple disputes with several of his henchmen that caused irreparable rifts. After the tumultuous assassination, his remaining trustees were: from New Orleans, millionaire Robert S. Maestri, treasurer Seymour Weiss, Abe L. Shushan, judge Richard W. Leche, and senator Jules Fisher; from the French South there were speaker of the House of Representatives Allen Ellender—he held that position from 1932 until 1936—, <sup>2794</sup> former speaker of the House John Fournet, and Wade Martin, who had recently been appointed chief of the Public Service Commission; from the North, governor O.K. Allen, and senator James A. Noe;<sup>2795</sup> and somewhere in between there were reverend Gerald L.K. Smith—who was, in fact, originally from Wisconsin—, Long’s assistant Earle Christenberry, and Long’s own brother Earl.<sup>2796</sup> They were a miscellaneous and peculiar group that was not always united. Kane states that “Huey had sometimes been forced to use stern methods to keep them from each other’s throats”,<sup>2797</sup> an indication of a turbulent future in the organization.

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<sup>2791</sup> Davis, *Huey Long*, postscript.

<sup>2792</sup> Davenport, “The Robes of the Kingfish”, 13.

<sup>2793</sup> “Share-Our-Wealth Marches On”, *The American Progress*, November issue, 1935, 4.

<sup>2794</sup> Samuel Lang, “Long Announces Ellender Choice for Speakership”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 15, 1932, 2.

<sup>2795</sup> It should be noted that, in the mid-1950s, some still showed support for the late senator: “Huey Long was, in my estimation, one of the outstanding men of America, and it makes me sick sometimes when I see some of the things that have been written about him knowing him as I did and knowing his desire to do good for the people who really needed help. He wanted to make Louisiana an outstanding place. People seem to have forgotten that”, Letter from James A. Noe to T. Harry Williams, August 13, 1957, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 12, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2796</sup> Kane, *Huey Long’s Louisiana Hayride*, 148–49.

<sup>2797</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

After 1935, Louisiana had a series of governors related to the *longite* faction. Before dying, the Kingfish had stipulated that the new governor should be the unknown judge Richard Leche, and so it was.<sup>2798</sup> Allen Ellender was pointed out candidate for senator to replace Long in Washington. They both won using the idea: “This is the only Huey P. Long ticket”,<sup>2799</sup> or “Vote the Share Our Wealth Ticket”.<sup>2800</sup> Their nominations were already announced a few days after Long’s assassination, under the conception that they would “keep Huey’s light always burning”.<sup>2801</sup> Another less sophisticated way they employed to spread their campaign was to argue that not voting the Long ticket was voting in favor of murder.<sup>2802</sup>

In the 1936 gubernatorial election in Louisiana, held on January 21, judge Leche won with 67% of the votes, although “he was realistic enough to admit that people had voted for a dead senator rather than a living governor”.<sup>2803</sup> This was the major victory within the Long machine since its existence.<sup>2804</sup> During the speeches and propaganda used throughout campaign, Leche and his supporters had constantly evoked the Kingfish’s memory. *The American Progress*, which would be running until March 1940 though as a monthly periodical,<sup>2805</sup> pointed out that Leche “carries on the tradition of Long and Allen for the common people of Louisiana”,<sup>2806</sup> and, again, “he will keep Huey’s light always burning!”<sup>2807</sup> The newspaper kept publishing cartoons by Trist Wood that were a constant reminder of the martyrdom of Long. On one occasion, the artist draw Huey’s ghost leading his loyal followers to “Louisiana’s future”;<sup>2808</sup> on another, the Kingfish appeared also as a ghost in-between Leche, who was running for governor, and Maestri, who was running for mayor of New Orleans, telling them: “I look to you to carry out

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<sup>2798</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>2799</sup> “Carry On the Work of Huey P. Long”, *The American Progress*, September issue, 1935, 8. Reporter Goins cleverly added that the idea of continuing Long’s work made no sense because not even the Kingfish, an improviser, knew what his next move would be, in Goins, “Aftermath”, 5.

<sup>2800</sup> “Vote the Share Our Wealth Ticket”, *The American Progress*, November issue, 1935, 8.

<sup>2801</sup> “Followers of Senator Name Allen Leader Then Select The Real Huey Long Ticket”, *The American Progress*, September issue, 1935, 1-2.

<sup>2802</sup> “Register and Then Go to the Polls in January to Vote Against Assassination”, *The American Progress*, October issue, 1935, 1.

<sup>2803</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 182.

<sup>2804</sup> Even the usually anti-*longite* parish of East Baton Rouge voted 51% for the Leche ticket, in Howard, “The Long Era, 1928-1956”, 263.

<sup>2805</sup> “The Press: Progress”, *Time*, April 8, 1940.

<sup>2806</sup> “Richard Leche for Governor”, *The American Progress*, January issue, 1936, 4.

<sup>2807</sup> “He Will Keep Huey’s Light Always Burning!”, *The American Progress*, February issue, 1936, 2.

<sup>2808</sup> “Do You Vote For Murder?”, *The American Progress*, February issue, 1936, 8.

my plans now that I am gone”.<sup>2809</sup> In his speeches, Gerald L.K. Smith invoked Long from the sky so that he would become present while he spoke, which he did through a speaker hanging from a tree that would reproduce his recorded voice.

Earl Long, who then became lieutenant governor, had also been campaigning under his brother’s shadow. *The American Progress* described him as a “brilliant young lawyer who has pledged himself to the principles of his immortal brother”.<sup>2810</sup> In a satirical yet rightful manner, Hodding Carter wrote: “The [gubernatorial] campaign was macabre. The heirs of Long did almost everything in his memory, except display his body on the platform”.<sup>2811</sup> Because of these techniques, there was probably little Leche’s opponent, Cleveland Dear (1888-1950), could do to beat him. Dear had been a US representative since 1933 and would be until 1937, and had been part of the opposition to the Long machine during the Kingfish’s reign. However, he had support from several citizens who wished they could now get rid of longism in the state and anonymously made a published statement criticising that “Judge Leche and his ticket approve of a pyramid of taxing laws, waste and extravagance as part of the ‘great accomplishments’ of the Long-Allen administration and will ‘carry on’ in the same way!”<sup>2812</sup> To voters, however, it was not convincing enough.

The Kingfish would be immortalized in art. A few months after his passing, a bronze statue would be erected at the Statuary Hall of the nation’s capitol in Washington—commonly known as the “Hall of Fame”.<sup>2813</sup> Perhaps as a nod to the beholder, Long’s statue stands next to William Jennings Bryan’s. The statue was inaugurated on April 25, 1941, in a ceremony attended by friends and relatives of the late politician, as well as eighteen US senators. It is worth noting that the governor of Louisiana of that time, anti-

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<sup>2809</sup> “They Will Carry On the Work”, *The American Progress*, March 30, 1936, 1.

<sup>2810</sup> “Earl K. Long for Lt.-Gov.”, *The American Progress*, January issue, 1936, 2.

<sup>2811</sup> Carter, “Huey Long: American Dictator”, 357-358.

<sup>2812</sup> “A Statement and an Appeal”, 3, Ida Weis Friend papers, Manuscripts Collection 287, box 4, folder 2, LaRC.

<sup>2813</sup> “Statue of Huey P. Long to Stand for all Time in Nation’s Capitol”, *The American Progress*, June 20, 1936, 4. The architect David Lynn sent a letter to Mrs. Long to inform her about the erection of the statue, Letter from David Lynn to Rose Long, December 13, 1940, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 19, LaRC.

longite Sam H. Jones, did not attend.<sup>2814</sup> Long’s assistant, Earle Christenberry, gave a eulogy in which he affirmed the late senator was “the greatest humanitarian in the history of Louisiana”, and asserted that “it is not only wars which produce heroes”.<sup>2815</sup> This was a perhaps inappropriate remark in the midst of World War II, although it was



*Fig. 58: Huey Long statue in front of the state capitol building in Baton Rouge where he is buried. Picture by Ignasi Lloret.*

also true that the US had not yet entered the conflict. In the ceremony, former state senator Ernest S. Clements (1898-1987) made a bombastic Huey-like address in which he said:

Some years ago, the Great Jehovah, the Master of us all, looking down from his throne on high saw the great State of Louisiana in peril and in grave danger; He saw little children crying because they lacked money with which to buy books and go to school; He saw poor people distressed because they had not a dollar with which to buy a poll tax [...] He saw farmers and laboring men troubeled [...] and so, in the infinite wisdom of the Supreme Architect, he cast about to find one who could liberate the great State of Louisiana and bring happiness, prosperity, and contentment to all of our people. And in doing so, I wish to assure you He did not go into the mansions of the rich [...] bur rather He went into the hills of old Winn Parish in north Louisiana...<sup>2816</sup>

Back in Louisiana, in the spring of 1937 the new governor Leche decided to build a memorial atop Long’s resting place in front of the state capitol building in Baton Rouge, and encouraged artists to send proposals for a sculpture of the Kingfish, which would be placed at the center. The work by New York

<sup>2814</sup> Thomas L. Stokes, “Huey Long Joins Great, Near Great, Etc., and Senators Breathe Easy”, *The Washington Daily News*, April 26, 1941, 2; “Long’s Statue Was Unveiled in Washington”, *The Sunday Item-Tribune*, April 27, 1941.

<sup>2815</sup> Earle J. Christenberry, “Eulogy at the Unveiling of the Statue of Huey P. Long”, April 25, 1941, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 21, LaRC.

<sup>2816</sup> “Address Made By the Honorable Ernest S. Clements at the Proceedings Held for the Unveiling of the Statue of Huey P. Long, Statuary Hall, United States Capitol”, April 25, 1941, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 2, folder 27, LaRC.

sculptor Charles Keck was selected, and in March 21, 1940, a thirty-five foot memorial with a bronze statue was erected. The monument was supposed to be paid for by Long's friends, but in the end the Louisiana legislature spent \$50,000 on the project. At the base of the monument a text extracted from a speech Long made at the United States Senate on March 8, 1935, reads:

I know the hearts of the people because I have not colored my own. I know when I am right in my own conscience. I have one language. Its simplicity gains pardon for my lack of letters. Fear will not change it. Persecution will not change it. It cannot be changed while people suffer.<sup>2817</sup>

Governor Leche also inaugurated a new seven million dollar bridge crossing the Mississippi river in Baton Rouge, resembling in design the Huey P. Long bridge of New Orleans.<sup>2818</sup> The new construction would bear the name "Huey P. Long – O.K. Allen Bridge", in honor of the two late governors of Louisiana.

Leche's administration was, on top of everything, polemical. Like his famous predecessor, he was linked to corruption—in three years as governor he declared he earned 45,000 dollars per year, but his real monthly salary was of \$7,500, which meant in reality he earned \$90,000 a year—, and thus resigned in 1939 to avoid being impeached.<sup>2819</sup> At the end, in 1940 Leche was sentenced to ten years of prison, which finally became five. He was the first governor of Louisiana to be incarcerated. Leche justified his misbehavior by simply saying: "When I took the oath as governor I didn't take any vows of poverty".<sup>2820</sup> Other *longite* members, such as Seymour Weiss, the former president of LSU James M. Smith, and Abe L. Shushan were investigated for similar issues: evading taxes, corruption, embezzlement, and thievery.<sup>2821</sup> They also

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<sup>2817</sup> Hilda S. Krousel, *Landmarks and Monuments of Baton Rouge* (Charleston: The History Press, 2012), 41. The proposal of the inscription was sent in a Letter from Charles Keck to Earle J. Christenberry, September 29, 1939, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 1, folder 19, LaRC.

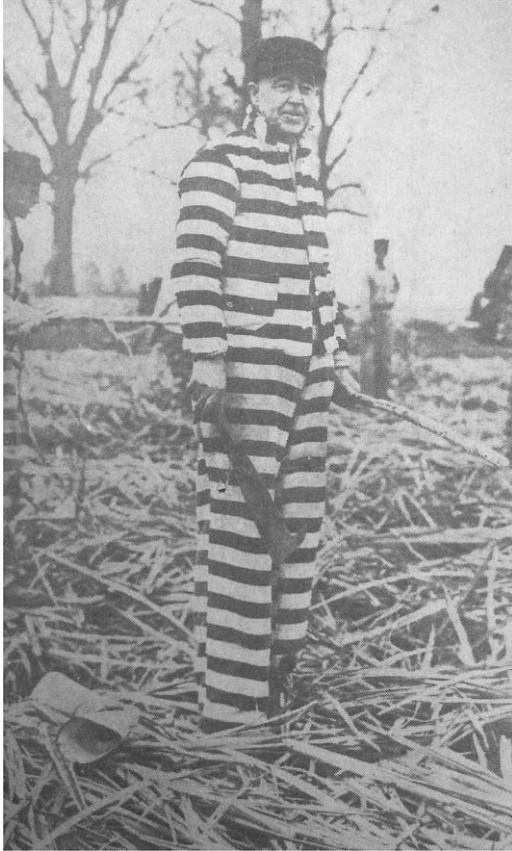
<sup>2818</sup> "Seven Million Span Assured for Capital", *The American Progress*, September issue, 1936, 1, 3.

<sup>2819</sup> The total amount he made in this three years of governor was \$1,000,000, in Irey and Slocum, "The Gentleman from Louisiana", 106, 117.

<sup>2820</sup> Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 236.

<sup>2821</sup> Irey and Slocum wrote about James Smith: "He was charged with everything except murder and reckless driving", in Irey and Slocum, "The Gentleman from Louisiana", 107.

ended up in prison.<sup>2822</sup> James A. Noe, who had been governor for a few months in 1936 after O.K. Allen's sudden passing, was also investigated in relation to the Win or Lose Oil Company.<sup>2823</sup> According to confidential documentation, his earnings per year as



**Fig. 59:** “Dr. [James M.] Smith Cuts Cane on Angola Farm”, no publication available, 1939, Newspaper Clippings, David McGuire 271, series III, box 2, folder 23, LaRC. An author wrote about this image: “Perhaps the most famous remembrance of the LSU president is the picture of him standing in a field. The field is at Angola and Smith is dressed in horizontal black and white prison stripes”, in Laborde, “The Strange Tale of Huey Long”, 79.

president of the corporation were \$92,396, the same as its vice-president, Seymour Weiss. Ironically, the president of the institution Long had publicly fought all his life, the Standard Oil, earned only \$32,272 per year.<sup>2824</sup>

Irey and Slocum published an article in which they concluded: “The bullet that killed Huey Long did not save us from a dictator. It saved Huey from going to jail. Huey had broken the law and was about to be indicted for it when he was killed”.<sup>2825</sup> Taking this statement into account, perhaps scholars should stop wondering whether Long would have won the presidency either in 1936 or 1940, because he would have most likely been in jail.

Representative from North Dakota Usher Bordick affirmed on June 16, 1936, that “the dismissal of the income tax cases

<sup>2822</sup> “Arrested to Date”, *New Orleans States*, July 10, 1939; “Five Guilty in Fraud”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 15, 1939, 1; W. V. Holloway, “The Crash of the Long Machine and Its Aftermath”, *The Journal of Politics* 3 (August 1941): 349–350.

<sup>2823</sup> Long’s family, especially his son Russell, denied the politicians responsibility with the company. He expressed so in a Letter from Russell B. Long to T. Harry Williams, September 15, 1966, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 19, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2824</sup> Becnel, *Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana*, 100.

<sup>2825</sup> Irey and Slocum, “The End of the Kingfish”, 58, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 4, folder 16, LaRC. See also Elmer Lincoln Irey and William J. Slocum, “The Gentleman from Louisiana” in *The Tax Dodgers: The Inside Story of the T-Men’s War with America’s Political and Underworld Hoodlums* (New York: Greenberg, 1948), 88-117.

constituted a ‘second Louisiana Purchase’”, a term that had been previously coined by journalist Westbrook Pegler.<sup>2826</sup> The case would also be known as “the Louisiana Hayride”, due to Harnett Kane’s 1941 book under that title. Thomas O. Harris affirmed: “The aggregate amount involved in the Louisiana cases was over four times the sum involved in the [Al] Capone prosecution”.<sup>2827</sup> And Elmer Irey, one of the minds behind the prosecution of these Long men, and William Slocum concluded that the trial had been “one of the blackest libels ever made against the American system of democracy”.<sup>2828</sup> Some decades later, historian Din G. Gilbert defined the period as “one of the most scandal-ridden eras in modern politics”.<sup>2829</sup> Logically, these events affected the reputation of Long’s circle negatively, but they did not destroy it. Above all, the figure of Huey Long remained respected, for “to this day [1938] followers of the Louisiana Kingfish boasted that much of the wealth which he accumulated, in known and unknown ways, went back into the Cause”.<sup>2830</sup> This idea remained in the minds of several Louisianans that perceived Long as a savior.<sup>2831</sup>

#### a) Long’s political dynasty

Harley B. Bozeman, Long’s childhood friend, wrote in an article that the Longs were “the family that has produced more prominent and outstanding state and national political figures than any other single Southern family”.<sup>2832</sup> When Richard Leche retired from politics in 1939, Earl Long became governor for a few months, although he did not win the following year’s election—the aforementioned anti-*longite* reformer Sam H.

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<sup>2826</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 236-237; Kane, *Huey Long's Louisiana Hayride*, 183; John T. Flynn, *The Roosevelt Myth* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1948), 72; “The Shooting of Huey Long”, 49.

<sup>2827</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 228.

<sup>2828</sup> Irey and Slocum, “The Gentleman from Louisiana”, 117.

<sup>2829</sup> Din, *The Canary Islanders*, 145.

<sup>2830</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 244.

<sup>2831</sup> Ken Burns’ documentary, *Huey Long*, showed several interviews carried out after Long’s death in which people from rural Louisiana still supported the late senator (PBS, September 28, 1985). A former member of a Share Our Wealth club expressed in a letter: “In my opinion Huey Long was the greatest figure in American history. The sad fact was that he was born twenty years too soon the things he advocated in one form or another are coming to pass today”, Letter from Edgar Norton, member of the Share Our Wealth movement from Springfield, Ohio, to T. Harry Williams, September 26, 1956, T. Harry Williams papers 1927-1977, Mss. 2489, 2510, box 8, folder 11, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2832</sup> Harley B. Bozeman, “Winn Parish As I Have Known It -- Dr. George Shannon Long”, *Winn Parish Enterprise*, March 27, 1958.

Jones did.<sup>2833</sup> In fact, that election was the first in twelve years that did not give victory to the Long machine, which was a clear consequence of the scandals that affected the heirs of the Kingfish by the late 1930s.<sup>2834</sup> However, the youngest brother of the Kingfish would be governor again on two occasions: from 1948 to 1952,<sup>2835</sup> and from 1956 to 1960,<sup>2836</sup> the year of his death.<sup>2837</sup> Huey's son, Russell, campaigned for his uncle the first time he won a gubernatorial election in 1948. He basically claimed his father's innocence in front of his opponents, who still defined him as a thief, more than focusing on what the candidate's own program could offer.<sup>2838</sup> In a similar manner and following his brother's political discourse, Earl became a controversial and populist governor who everybody referred to as "Ol' Earl". At the end of his life, he briefly had to be hospitalized in a psychiatric unit in Galvestone, Texas, after he had a nervous breakdown.<sup>2839</sup> He adapted and adopted the program and persona Huey had created. *Time* magazine satirized Earl by publishing an issue where the governor appeared on the front cover: "As governor of Louisiana, swaggering, shifted-eyed Earl Kemp Long has hardly been able to split, scratch or take off his shoes without rousing a disconcerting ghost".<sup>2840</sup>

Besides Earl, a number of other Longs got involved in politics, especially in Louisiana. Huey's wife, Rose, briefly took his place as a senator in Washington after his passing,

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<sup>2833</sup> Holloway, "The Crash of the Long Machine and Its Aftermath", 356. In his inauguration speech on May 20, 1940, Jones said: "I occupy a unique position in Louisiana political life. I am a liberal who has consistently opposed the out-going regime because of its tendency towards dictatorship; because of unconstitutional and undemocratic methods used, and because of the many flagrant vices evident in the system used by it", quoted in Howard, "The Long Era, 1928-1956", 265.

<sup>2834</sup> "Long Machine Crippled in Louisiana Primaries after Twelve-Year Rule", *Life*, vol. 8, n° 5, January 29, 1940, 13.

<sup>2835</sup> Long won with 65% of the votes, thanks, in part, to the support of his nephew Russell, in Howard, "The Long Era, 1928-1956", 272-273.

<sup>2836</sup> On this election he received less votes, but still a majority: 51% of the electorate, in *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>2837</sup> See also Morgan D. Peoples, "Earl Kemp Long: The Man from Pea Patch Farm", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 17, no. 4 (Fall 1976): 365-392.

<sup>2838</sup> Circular from Russell B. Long, "Why I Am for Earl K. Long", 1948, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 4, folder 19, LaRC.

<sup>2839</sup> "A Portrait of Earl Long at Peak of Crack-Up: A Governor Goes from Harangue to Hospital", *Life*, vol. 46, n° 24, June 15, 1959, 32-36; Robert Wool, "The Louisiana Story: Clowns Complacency Corruption", *Look*, December 8, 1959, 42.

<sup>2840</sup> "National Affairs—Louisiana: Winnfield Frog", *Time*, August 30, 1948, 16.

where she sat next to Hattie Caraway, from Arkansas.<sup>2841</sup> She took the oath of office on February 11, 1936, and, according to the *Progress*:

Not one dissenting voice was raised, for all Louisiana was aware of the sacrifices which Mrs. Long had made in yielding the time of her husband to the people of the state, in order that he might carry on his fight for improving the conditions of the poor. Mrs. Long had fought shoulder to shoulder with her husband.<sup>2842</sup>

*Time* magazine published that Mrs. Long's rhetoric style was more "pleasant" than her late husband's "loud histrionics".<sup>2843</sup>

Another of the Kingfish's brothers, George, served in Congress for two terms. Huey's son, Russell, also became US senator between 1948 and 1986, and defended his father throughout his life.<sup>2844</sup> In one of his last speeches at the Senate, he affirmed the late senator had lived ahead of his time and concluded: "Those who knew Huey Long will always remember what he did for them. Neither they, nor I, will ever forget the price he paid for trying to make this world a better place".<sup>2845</sup> Throughout his political career Russell tried to use his father's discourse, but, as a newspaper from Alabama put it, the politician was full of contradictions because "Russell Long is a populist with a million-dollar trust fund and oil royalties".<sup>2846</sup> *The Times-Picayune* described the politician as follows: "Long turned his father's 'Every Man a King' into 'Every Man an Entrepreneur', and was often more capitalist than populist. He was a staunch supporter

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<sup>2841</sup> Hilda Phelps Hammond criticized the fact that the wife of a recently deceased senator was automatically appointed to her husband's seat: "All that has to happen is for a senator or a congressman to pass out of the picture and presto! his widow is ready for the place. It does not matter whether she has ever made a speech in her life or whether she knows about anything but tea and truffles [...] It's amazing, but it's true", in Hammond, *Let Freedom Ring*, 297.

<sup>2842</sup> "Mrs. Huey Long Takes Senate Seat", *The American Progress*, March 30, 1936, 1.

<sup>2843</sup> "National Affairs—Wounded Widow", *Time*, March 1936, 20.

<sup>2844</sup> White, *Kingfish*, 272. See also Russell's 1992 biography: Mann, *Legacy to Power*, in which the author portrays a realistic and complex image of the Kingfish's son and his political achievements. For a more recent biography, see Michael S. Martin, *Russell Long: A Life in Politics* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014).

<sup>2845</sup> Russell B. Long, "The Career of Huey P. Long, Jr.", re-printed Congressional Record, 99 Congress, First Session, September 10, 1985, David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series III, box 3, folder 3, LaRC.

<sup>2846</sup> Donald M. Rothberg, "Men Who Hold Purse Strings", *Mobile Press Register*, June 12, 1977, 46.

of the oil industry and a faithful friend of big business”.<sup>2847</sup> He was sometimes referred to as “Princefish”.<sup>2848</sup>

Some authors believe Huey Long started a political dynasty in the United States, akin to that of the Adams did or the Kennedys. The “dynasty arose as a protest against what previously had passed as representative democracy in Louisiana”.<sup>2849</sup> The Longs of Louisiana were: Huey, Earl, George, Rose, Blanche, Russell, Gillis, and Speedy. In only two generations the dynasty produced two governors, a lieutenant governor, three United States senators (elected five times), and three congressmen (also elected five times).<sup>2850</sup> The last of them, Speedy, is recalled to have said: “I was brought up to think that Huey Long was God Almighty, Earl was Jesus Christ and George was St. Peter”.<sup>2851</sup> The Longs held family meetings until the late 1990s in memory of those great political leaders of earlier decades.<sup>2852</sup> Author Charles Dufour wrote that Huey “came out of North Louisiana like a maverick, a hurricane on the loose, a gusher out of control, a comet in the political sky”.<sup>2853</sup> The ghost of Long, as the one drawn several times in the cartoons of *The American Progress*, was a symbol of his political legacy and continuity inherited by his close followers. In a republican regime such as the American, these political dynasties are the closest incarnation of a monarchical system. *The Times-Picayune* published, years after Long’s death, that “the saga of Huey Long is one of the most remarkable political tales in American history”.<sup>2854</sup> Political scientist Stephen Hess argued that political dynasties in the United States were not static but changeable, and that the Longs were a perfect example of that, since they had started as

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<sup>2847</sup> “Long: Private Life Won’t End Public Interests”, *The Times-Picayune*, January 11, 1987, 5.

<sup>2848</sup> Peter J. Bernstein, “‘Princefish’ Rules With Tax Laws”, *The Times-Picayune*, August 7, 1979, 17.

<sup>2849</sup> Thomas Martin, *Dynasty: The Longs of Louisiana* (New York: Putnam, 1960), 12.

<sup>2850</sup> Stephen Hess, *America’s Political Dynasties From Adams to Kennedy* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 442.

<sup>2851</sup> Opatowsky, *The Longs of Louisiana*, 235.

<sup>2852</sup> Rick Bragg, “Reunion Hails Legacy Of Huey and Earl Long; Relatives Remember Louisiana Legends”, *The New York Times*, August 10, 1998, accessed October 15, 2015, [nytimes.com/1998/08/10/us/reunion-hails-legacy-of-huey-and-earl-long-relatives-remember-louisiana-legends.html](https://www.nytimes.com/1998/08/10/us/reunion-hails-legacy-of-huey-and-earl-long-relatives-remember-louisiana-legends.html). Bozeman, however, affirmed in the 1960s that “the political dynasty that Huey established in 1928, now is threatened from family dissensions, and may reach a disastrous climax in the squable [*sic*]”, Letter from Harley B. Bozeman to T. Harry Williams, April 16, 1963, Harley B. Bozeman papers, Mss. 2431, Correspondence 1840-1941, 1952-1969, Range T:36, box 1, folder 2, LLMVC, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library (LSU).

<sup>2853</sup> Dufour, “The Days of the Kingfish”, 258.

<sup>2854</sup> Charles L. Dufour, “Huey Long’s Star Rises”, *The Times-Picayune*, September 27, 1967, 26.

farmers.<sup>2855</sup> The author wrote: “The dynasty was created because of Huey. His name became a passport to public office in Louisiana”.<sup>2856</sup> In a similar manner, Havens, Leiden, and Schmitt compare the Kingfish’s legacy to that of Anastasio Somoza (1896-1956) of Nicaragua, who had also been assassinated.<sup>2857</sup> They wrote:

The Long family can be compared to the Somozas in Nicaragua. Despite the collapse of the dictatorship, the Longs remained powerful and for some of the same reasons. Both families had broad popular support, had instituted modern development programs, and faced a divided, outmoded opposition.<sup>2858</sup>

On the other hand, these same authors argue that, in the case of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, the family power faded after the well-coordinated coup organized by men in key positions ended his regime. These authors believe that this was due to the fact that the Dominican dictator had antagonized the aristocracy, had no reliable or competent successors, and that the need for political change was spreading throughout the country.<sup>2859</sup> Therefore, in the Dominican Republic, the Trujillo political dynasty did not exist and the regime ended with its “great benefactor”. Trujillo’s case is comparable to that of Machado, whose exile marked the end of his era and thus, although also coming from a family of farmers like Huey, a “Machado dynasty” never materialized in Cuba.

Besides the Long family, it is worth focusing on the person who continued with the Share Our Wealth movement. Gerald L.K. Smith, who was probably the most devoted advocate of the Kingfish and his cause—perhaps even more than Long himself—, became interested in national politics. The reverend criticized the political attitudes of his colleagues after Long’s death. According to him, they had renounced to their principles in order to obtain material gain. He wrote: “Those who had been victorious after the death of Huey Long and who had sold his blood to his political enemies carried

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<sup>2855</sup> Hess, *America’s Political Dynasties*, 3.

<sup>2856</sup> Hess, *America’s Political Dynasties*, 442.

<sup>2857</sup> His slayer was young poet Rigoberto López Pérez (1929-1956), who, similarly to Carl Weiss, was killed in the act by Somoza’s personal guard after being shot fifty-four times. As an anecdote, Somoza died one September at 4:05AM.; only five minutes before Long—although several years later, in 1956. See also Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal, *Estirpe sangrienta: los Somoza* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Triángulo, 1959); Knut Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza, 1936-1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Agustín Torres Lazo, *La saga de los Somoza: historia de un magnicidio* (Managua: A. Torres Lazo, 2002).

<sup>2858</sup> Havens, Leiden, and Schmitt, *The Politics of Assassination*, 83.

<sup>2859</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-145.

on and controlled the political machine in Louisiana under the leadership of Seymour Weiss and others”.<sup>2860</sup> At the same time, Long’s colleagues, particularly Christenberry and even Mrs. Long, probably rightfully attacked him and therefore Smith soon left the organization.<sup>2861</sup> In the presidential election of 1936 the reverend joined a coalition entitled Union Justice, the members of which included father Coughlin and Francis E. Townsend, and its main candidate was William F. Lemke (1878-1950), from North Dakota.<sup>2862</sup> It was a third party of the United States, which only obtained 1.8% of the vote—a total of 892,378.<sup>2863</sup>

In the end, on a national level, the Long machine and all the “messiahs”, such as Coughlin and Townsend, appeared throughout the Great Depression never achieved their final goal. Journalist Hermann Deutsch wrote in 1939 that after all the scandals “the Kingdom of the Kingfish is today a crumbled and crumbling relic of past history”.<sup>2864</sup> Amann concluded:

*Ce que nous croyons avoir démontre, c’est que les rangs des mécontents, minoritaires mais considérables tout de même, se trouvèrent à gauche, parmi cette cohue populiste que Huey Long et le P. Coughlin d’avant 1936 on mobilisée de façon incomplète et passagère.*<sup>2865</sup>

In that sense, and re-taking Frederick Jackson Turner’s concept, Huey Long was a product of sectionalism in the South, thus he never or could have become nationally relevant or more relevant than Roosevelt: “No sectional interest is strong enough, alone

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<sup>2860</sup> Smith, *Huey P. Long*, 56.

<sup>2861</sup> At a radio address, Christenberry responded to an accusation Smith made insinuating that the secretary had burned all the files of the Share Our Wealth society by saying: “That statement by Gerald Smith I brand as a deliberate falsehood; or to be more emphatic, Gerald Smith told you a deliberate lie and he won’t dare make that statement to my face”, Earle J. Christenberry, November 2, 1936, Radio Address. Huey’s wife, Rose, made a similar statement: “I feel obliged to advise the public that Dr. Smith has no connection with the Share Our Wealth Society, directly or otherwise; that he had nothing whatever to do with the original organization of the movement”, Rose McConnell, July 28, 1936. David R. McGuire memorial collection, Manuscripts Collection 271, series IV, box 2, folder 16, LaRC.

<sup>2862</sup> Amann, “Les fascismes américains”, 71.

<sup>2863</sup> Smith, *Huey P. Long*, 56.; Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*. After the election, a journalist concluded: “The two major parties have too big a hold on the American people to be disturbed from the outside and that the one effective way to capture the party machinery is ‘to bore from within’”, in David Lawrence, “Groups Seen Concentrating On Acts Within Major Parties”, *The Day* (Conn.), November 10, 1936, 4.

<sup>2864</sup> Herman B. Deutsch, “Long’s Death Provides State with Mysterious Stories and Creates a Mass Hysteria which Sweeps Leche into Office in a Landslide; Then the Kingdom Starts to Fall—From Within”, *The New Orleans Item*, September 20, 1939.

<sup>2865</sup> Amann, “Les fascismes américains”, 74.

and unaided, to control the federal government”.<sup>2866</sup> However, as Jeansonne has affirmed, “of all the messiahs of the depression era he was the most successful politician, hence he posed the greatest threat to the New Deal”.<sup>2867</sup>

It would be unfair to discard the impact of Long’s movement and dynasty or to limit it to the Depression years. Sindler argues that Huey marked the political tradition of Louisiana in the following decades after his passing: “The persistence of the factional loyalties and the issues created by the Kingfish thus accounted in large part for the content and form of post-Huey politics in Louisiana”.<sup>2868</sup> In a broader analysis, Jeansonne wrote: “Long’s proposals remained in the American utopian tradition”,<sup>2869</sup> and Vernon Parrington believed that “these formulas [Long and other leaders of his time] represented the contemporary American Dream”.<sup>2870</sup> In fact, Harris finished his 1938 book with a warning to all readers that the Long regime did not necessarily have to be an isle in American history, but could leave an imprint in its society:

Huey Long is dead. But his career constitutes a blueprint from which a temple of dictatorship may yet be built in the free and independent United States of America. To the American people we would say: ‘Beware of the Greeks bearing gifts’. They come with well-filled hands—but very, very often with treacherous lips and lying hearts.<sup>2871</sup>

### 7.3.2 Long and Machado in popular culture: legacies in literature and cinema

Both Long and Machado inspired writers of fiction in different genres and media. For this reason their portrayal in literature and cinema has had a key role in configuring their respective “personas”, particularly after their demise. That is to say, when thinking about the Kingfish, most Americans will most likely remember Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men* (1946). Similarly, when reflecting upon the Cuban president and his downfall, many would conjure up the depiction by director John Huston in the movie *We Were Strangers* (1949). Thus a discussion of the portrayal of the two strongmen in

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<sup>2866</sup> Jackson Turner, *The Significance of Sections*, 50.

<sup>2867</sup> Jeansonne, *Messiah*, 123.

<sup>2868</sup> Sindler, *Huey Long’s Louisiana*, 114–15.

<sup>2869</sup> Jeansonne, *Gerald L.K. Smith*, 36.

<sup>2870</sup> Parrington, Jr., *American Dreams*, 195.

<sup>2871</sup> Harris, *The Kingfish*, 284.

popular culture is warranted, as it reveals many comparable aspects of the legacies of the two leaders.

It is relevant to note that, while the depictions of the Kingfish tend to be satires of the real character, Machado is portrayed as a ruthless tyrant with no sense of humor. In that sense, this difference in the interpretation of the two has had an impact in the creation of different memories or mental imaginaries about them. Thus, the memories among Cubans and Americans of their respective politicians vary significantly: while Long is basically recalled as a buffoon, Machado becomes a coldblooded dictator.

Because these artistic representations are based on real events, they cannot simply be categorized as “fiction”, but rather “historiographic meta-fiction”. The novels should more accurately be defined as political novels or *roman à clef*, defined by researcher Jue Chen as a “kind of fiction in which actual people are presented under fictitious names in [such] a systematic way [that] a comprehensive key is necessary to understand the hidden references of a given text”.<sup>2872</sup> That is not a phenomenon restricted to the two politicians studied in this study. Much has been written in literature, for instance, on the Dominican dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo. Two very well known examples are Mario Vargas Llosa’s celebrated *La fiesta del chivo*,<sup>2873</sup> about the assassination of the “*benefactor de la patria*”, or Edwidge Danticat’s *The Farming of Bones* (1998),<sup>2874</sup> on the Haitian massacre of 1937. However, a comparative study of the portrayals of Long and Machado is currently missing in scholarship.

The first of political novels that used Long as a reference for the main character was published when the Kingfish was still alive. It was *Cinnamon Seed* (1934), written by Hamilton Basso, a novelist and journalist from Louisiana who experienced first hand Long’s administration. The protagonist of the story is Harry Brand, who everybody refers to as “King-Frog”. He was born in the parish of Gwinn—close enough to Winn—, and his archenemy was named Janders—very similar to Long’s real opponent, former

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<sup>2872</sup> Jue Chen, “Poetics of Historical Referentiality: Roman À Clef and Beyond” (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1997), 5-6.

<sup>2873</sup> Mario Vargas Llosa, *La Fiesta del Chivo* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2005).

<sup>2874</sup> Edwidge Danticat, *The Farming of Bones* (New York: Soho Press, 1998).

governor J.Y. Sanders. Brand is a satirical interpretation of Huey, in the sense that he is more of a buffoon than his real-life counterpart. Among many other buffooneries, Basso recreates the aforementioned “green silk pajamas” incident Long protagonized.

The following year, Nobel Prize winner Sinclair Lewis published his famous *It Can't Happen Here* (1935). Although not greatly appreciated, the novel is a reflection of the anxieties of the 1930s United States in the era of fascism. The book was clearly a political warning to all Americans. In the text, a racist tyrant named Berzelius Windrip is president of the country and has established a militarized regime very similar to that of Hitler's Germany. In the novel, another worrying character arises when Paul Peter Prang, a radio evangelist, gathers much power through his sermons—a clear reference to Catholic priest Charles Coughlin. *It Can't Happen Here* challenged the ideas of American exceptionalism by asserting that, in fact, a dictatorship *could* occur in the United States. As scholar Keith Perry argues, “Americans already knew it could happen there”.<sup>2875</sup> As for the depiction of the Kingfish, the novel perpetuated the comparison between his regime and fascism, and his persona with the *Führer*. This parallelism, which is very much questionable, has accompanied Long throughout the decades up until the present.

But it was not until the 1940s that literature inspired on Long would truly flourish, perhaps as a consequence of an arguable needed “distance” with the events and the martyrdom of the Kingfish. Once more, novelist Hamilton Basso wrote a book entitled *Sun in Capricorn* (1942), in which the main character, Gilgo Slade, is much more ruthless than his earlier counterpart, Harry Brand.<sup>2876</sup> The author might have been influenced by the historical context in the midst of World War II: dictators were not something to laugh at anymore.

A year later, the renowned vanguardist novelist John Dos Passos would add a new title to this corpus: *Number One* (1943). Its protagonist is an egotist cigar-smoker very similar to Long in his ways named Chuck Crawford. Perry remarked how “Crawford's

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<sup>2875</sup> Keith Ronald Perry, *The Kingfish in Fiction: Huey P. Long and the Modern American Novel* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 55.

<sup>2876</sup> Hamilton Basso, *Sun in Capricorn* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942).

résumé, appearance, and personality all resemble Long's".<sup>2877</sup> In the book, people refer to this politician as "number one". He wears flashy clothing, he fights against bankers, and his slogan suspiciously is "Every man a millionaire". In one of the speeches Crawford gives, Dos Passos drew inspiration from William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold":

[T]he riches that could belong to the plain people in this country... it's the plain people that produce all the riches there is... if they'd only jess git [*sic*] together an' freeze out of our government the bankers an' usurers an' predatory interests that never did a lick of real work in their lives... that crucify mankind, in the words of the Great Commoner, on a cross of gold... an' the first step in loosenin' the stranglehold these interests has got on the produce of this country is to drive their willin' tools an' henchmen out of office.<sup>2878</sup>

Throughout the novel, Crawford becomes acquainted with a racist priest that promulgates white supremacy and the usefulness of coups d'état, Chester Bigelow. He becomes the head of the "Every man a millionaire" movement. Because of his ideologies, perhaps Dos Passos was inspired by Coughlin when creating this character. However, Gerald L.K. Smith would become the head of the Share Our Wealth movement, was a fervent racist, and a close friend of Long, thus it is more probable than the novelist based his character on Smith.

Finally, Hank Martin is the mad politician of the novel *A Lion Is in the Streets* (1945), written by Adria Locke Langley, which was made into a film directed by Raoul Wash in 1953. The novel has two main themes: demagoguery and poverty. What is innovative about this book is that its main character is not the politician but his wife, a schoolteacher named Verity Wade. She is suspicious of her husband, for she believes that he is no true speaker for the poor but a simple demagogue and manipulator. Locke Langley herself had worked in politics in favor of the repeal of the Prohibition, during which she coined the phrase: "Cocoanut congressmen—dry on the ouside, but wet on the inside".<sup>2879</sup> Although the author rejected the idea that her Hank Martin was based on Long, most historians include this novel on the list of Kingfish-inspired literature.

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<sup>2877</sup> Perry, *The Kingfish in Fiction*, 137.

<sup>2878</sup> John Dos Passos, *Number One* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943), 53.

<sup>2879</sup> Eleanor Coakley, "1929 Crash Proved Challenge To Writer Of Popular Novel", *Toledo Blade* (Ohio), June 12, 1945, 18.

Moreover, the text served to empower women, as Keith Perry concluded: “The ‘fighting spirit of women’ thus proves a weapon against more than just poverty and demagoguery”.<sup>2880</sup> The 1953 movie adaptation of the novel, however, focuses on the politician and relegates the wife to the background.

But the most claimed novel on Long is the already mentioned *All the King's Men* by Penn Warren, winner of the 1947 Pulitzer Prize. The story is about the political evolution of a character named Willie Stark, a populist from an unspecified southern state who, after escaping impeachment, is assassinated in front of the capitol building of his native state. Like Adria Locke Langley, Penn Warren assured that his character was not completely based on the Kingfish, but on the thoughts the politician from Louisiana inspired him. As professor of literature Ladell Payne concluded, “Warren’s statements are comparable to a claim that Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar is neither a biography of nor an apologia for the historical Caesar but rather the result of a line of thinking suggested by Caesar’s career and times”.<sup>2881</sup>

The narrator is a journalist named Jack Burden who acts as a sort of personal assistant to the politician. This character is interesting because he acts as the witness of all that is good and all that is bad of the flamboyant protagonist. One occasion in the novel, Burden reflects upon the goodness or the badness of Stark, concluding: “So I lay back and thought of [...] the Boss [Willie Stark] and what he said the truth was. The good was. The right was. And lying there, lulled in the Cadillac, I wondered if he believed what he said. He said that you have to make the good out of the bad because that is all you have got to make it out of. Well, he made some good out of the bad”.<sup>2882</sup> This reflection could easily be applied to the case of Long.

Three years after the book was published, a film was released under the same title, directed by Robert Rossen (1949). The movie was a success, perhaps because, as a *New York Times* critic wrote, it “visions the vulgar spellbinders and political hypocrites for

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<sup>2880</sup> Perry, *The Kingfish in Fiction*, 156.

<sup>2881</sup> Ladell Payne, “Willie Stark and Huey Long: Atmosphere, Myth or Suggestion?”, *American Quarterly* 20, n° 3 (1968): 595.

<sup>2882</sup> Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1974), 314.

what they are and it looks on extreme provincialism with a candid and pessimistic eye”.<sup>2883</sup> Moreover, it won three Academy Awards including best film. It is interesting to note how, in Argentina, the movie adaptation directed by Rossen was banned, for the government understood it as a fierce criticism to the regime of populist Juan Domingo Perón (1895-1974).<sup>2884</sup> The 2006 movie adaptation of the book, directed by Steven Zaillian, was poorly received: “Nothing in the picture works. It is both overwrought and tedious, its complicated narrative bogging down in lyrical voiceover, long flashbacks and endless expository conversations between people speaking radically incompatible accents”.<sup>2885</sup>

As for portrayals of Machado, just as it happens in historiography, in fiction the politician has generated less interest than Long. However, there are a few relevant books that were inspired by his regime. In that sense, and contrary to what historian Enrique Krauze argued about Latin America being a place in which history meant “history of great man”, these books put less emphasis on the politician per se and more on the dictatorship or the political establishment, as opposed to the novels on Long, which were mainly centered on the man.

The first of these books on Cuba is *Un cementerio en las Antillas* (1933), written by Spaniard Alfonso Hernández Catá. The text is a critical essay on Machado’s regime, in which the author concluded: “Cuba era el botín de la familia de Machado y de los amigos de Machado”.<sup>2886</sup> Hernández Catá’s writings had become more political since the end of the 1920s due to the radicalization of the *machadato*. Not only would Hernández Catá write explicitly of the regime, but through his earlier biography of Cuban hero José Martí, *Mitología de Martí* (1929), the author would indirectly criticize the current political situation on the island.<sup>2887</sup> To the author, Martí incarnated all those

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<sup>2883</sup> Bosley Crowther, “All The King’s Men (1949). Movie Review”, *The New York Times*, November 9, 1949.

<sup>2884</sup> “El peronismo y la farándula”, *El Universal* (Venezuela), March 31, 2013, [eluniversal.com/opinion/130331/el-peronismo-y-la-farandula-imp](http://eluniversal.com/opinion/130331/el-peronismo-y-la-farandula-imp)

<sup>2885</sup> A. O. Scott, “Southern Fried Demagogue and His Lurid Downfall”, *The New York Times*, September 22, 2006.

<sup>2886</sup> Hernández Catá, *Un cementerio en las Antillas*, 37.

<sup>2887</sup> Alfonso Hernández Catá (1929), *Mitología de Martí* (Club del Libro A. L. A., Amigos del Libro Americano, 1939).

values and virtues that Machado did not possess, and perhaps that justified the need for this biography in times where the dictatorship was at its height.<sup>2888</sup>

Cuban writer and musicologist Alejo Carpentier wrote a few decades later a short novel entitled *El Acoso* (1956), in which the author used the structure of a symphony to reflect upon a society that is in decadence.<sup>2889</sup> The story, fragmentally structured and not organized chronologically, is about the loss of innocence of the protagonist—who, not accidentally, has no name—, a young student of architecture. He is being chased as a suspect of murder, for first he joined the Communist Party, but then committed terrorist acts in an era of political corruption inspired in the *machadato*. The story begins *in media res*, when after being arrested and having snitched to the police the names of his accomplices, the protagonist hides in a concert hall in Havana, where the third symphony of Beethoven is being played, the so-called Heroic Symphony. At the end of the book, the *acusado* is murdered on that same spot at the hands of those whom he had betrayed.<sup>2890</sup>

Most recently, Cuban writer Abilio Estévez, who currently lives in Barcelona, has published a novel entitled *Archipiélagos*, set in August 1933. The narrator of the story is an old man named José Isabel Masó who gives a retrospective account of the events he experienced as a teenager during the last days of the *machadato*. Masó points out the irony of the situation on the island: “Lo más idiota es que estamos al borde de una guerra civil. Si el vesánico no se larga, Cuba se convertirá en un matadero. Y si el

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<sup>2888</sup> The portrayal of Martí that Hernández Catá offered in this book is completely hagiographical. The author himself admitted, when justifying the title, that it was not his intention to gather the events of the life of Martí, but to talk about the myth that surrounds him, for “Su iluminación, su abnegación, su desasimiento de las miserables codicias terrenas, su fulguradora actuación, su multiplicidad de aptitudes regidas todas por una especie de arrebatado ordenado, su sacrificio y su misterioso y potente retoñar en las complejas palpitaciones de la vida de Cuba libre, lo circuyen con un halo extraño, por lo común, al hombre. Un efluvio mesiánico, una superanormalidad de semidiós lo diferencian de los demás talentos y de los demás caudillos”, in Hernández Catá, *Mitología de Martí*, 14.

<sup>2889</sup> For more on Carpentier’s novel and its connections to music, see Jacqueline Chantraine de Van Praag, “El Acoso de Alejo Carpentier: Estructura y expresividad,” *Actas Del Tercer Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas*, 1970, 225-231; Helmy F. Giacomán, “La relación músico-literaria entre la Tercera Sinfonía, Heroica, de Beethoven y la novela El Acoso de Alejo Carpentier”, *Cuadernos Americanos*, n.º. 3 (June 1968): 113-129.

<sup>2890</sup> Frances Wyers Weber, “El Acoso: Alejo Carpentier’s War on Time”, *PMLA - Modern Language Association* 78, n.º 4 (1963): 441.

vesiánico se larga, será el mismo matadero”.<sup>2891</sup> The narrator comes from a poor background, and reflects upon how under Machado “el infierno de la vida se había convertido en la vida del infierno”.<sup>2892</sup> Once it is learned that the president will resign, Masó expresses frustration when concluding that after the dictator left there would be an even worst leader, and desolately adds that “así han sido siempre las cosas en Cuba. Muchos finales y ningún comienzo”.<sup>2893</sup>

As can be seen, what has attracted writers and viewers in regards to the *machadato* is not so much the persona of the Cuban president but the 1933 revolution, or the turbulent environment the last years of his regime. In that sense, and based on an incident narrated in the novel *Rough Sketch* (1948) by Robert Sylvester,<sup>2894</sup> John Huston directed the movie *We Were Strangers* (1949). Inspired in the assassination of the president of the Cuban Senate, Vázquez Bello, the film shows the failed attempt of a group of underground insurrectionist that plan to end the regime of the dictator of Cuba by detonating bombs at a cemetery in the middle of the funeral an official of the government.<sup>2895</sup> In the novel *Rough Sketch* Vázquez Bello is named Gerardo Crusellas and is supposed to be the Cuban president’s successor.<sup>2896</sup> As an anecdote and a questionable hypothesis, an author points out that the alleged murderer of president John F. Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald, watched the film three times only a few days before the assassination, thus, he argues, the movie acted as a sort of motivator to commit the crime.<sup>2897</sup>

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<sup>2891</sup> Abilio Estévez, *Archipiélagos* (Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2015), 138.

<sup>2892</sup> Estévez, *Archipiélagos*, 154.

<sup>2893</sup> Estévez, *Archipiélagos*, 351.

<sup>2894</sup> The novelist, for instance, narrated the repressive regime the president had established in Cuba through the constavigilancy of the terrible *porra*: “The President himself had ordered that all organizations and gangs intent on disrupting Cuban economy and government [...] be crushed. The President was deeply disturbed”, in Robert Sylvester, *Rough Sketch* (New York: Dial Press, 1948), 139.

<sup>2895</sup> Bosley Crowther, “‘We Were Strangers’, Starring Jennifer Jones and Garfield, Is New Feature at Astor”, *The New York Times*, April 28, 1949.

<sup>2896</sup> The character is dead after receiving twelve bullets, in Sylvester, *Rough Sketch*, 183. The attempt has to be cancelled because “Gerardo Crusellas would be buried in Santa Clara. Santa Clara had a beautiful cemetery, too. Just as beautiful as Havana’s. But, tragically, it was some one hundred and fifty miles from the Havana cemetery and the Crusellas plot and the big, deadly waiting bomb with its two hundred and fifty pounds of dynamite and its so thoughtfully planned, so carefully executed mission of death and freedom. The silent bomb had been robbed of its proper place in history. So had its sponsors. And Gerardo Crusellas had, indeed, died in vain”, in 191-192.

<sup>2897</sup> John Loken, *Oswald’s Trigger Films: The Manchurian Candidate, We Were Strangers, Suddenly?* (Ann Arbor: Falcon Books, 2000).

These different portrayals of both Long and Machado helped shape the manner in which they would be represented in historiography and how the general public would conceive these leaders long after their deaths. Although in different levels, the senator from Louisiana and the president from Cuba came to embody dictatorship and authoritarianism that post-World War II Western society tended to avoid in their own territory. Thus, these leaders became emblems of what government should not do nor embrace: corruption, graft, and tyranny.



## CONCLUSION

There can be no question that, in the 1930s, the dominant leadership style worldwide was the figure of the strongman. The leader personalized and personified power, but allegedly made it accessible to the “common man”. Out of the hands of longtime élites, power was made to seem “personal” also in the sense that the leader was “one of us”, a “man in the street”. As Gerardo Machado in Cuba said, he was making politics “on foot”, for those of “the great unwashed” who could not ride even of a half dead little donkey. More flashy, Huey Long promised that he could make “Every man a King”, with himself as Kingfish.

Historians have tended to interpret this proliferation of strong leaders, often with a background in the military, as a Latin American trait, and thus they have analyzed each of these politicians by separate or in connection to one another. By contrasting Gerardo Machado to Huey Long from Louisiana, this dissertation has offered a new approach to study of a particular leadership style that emerged in a specific time and place that transcends traditional boundaries between the United States and Latin America.

The reason for choosing and developing this uncommon comparison is that both Long and Machado looked for and applied similar solutions to social problems their respective regions were experiencing. Moreover, the similarity and connection between Louisiana and Cuba warrants an analysis of the two societies together beyond the colonial period. The two territories were characterized by strong economic dependency in agriculture—mainly monoculture of sugar and cotton. Both thrived in Catholic cultures under the norms of Roman Law, with a complicated climatology with constant hurricanes and floods. In addition, both societies, Cuba and Louisiana, have a similar colonial history, which had left a considerable amount of disenfranchised population—white farmers and, especially, African Americans and *afro-cubanos*. All these factors, political, institutional, cultural, and ecological, are noteworthy when analyzing the reasons for explaining the rise of Long and Machado to power through democratic election. What is more, throughout the dissertation I have argued that particularly during the interwar years unprecedented economic turmoil facilitated the establishment of the

two extraordinary regimes in the Greater Caribbean led by strongmen who championed the regeneration of their societies through modernization by installing administrations that gradually evolved towards personalistic and authoritarian rule. This dissertation has sought to explore the rise and fall of Long and Machado, and analyze how similar their leadership styles were and, most importantly, why.

The comparison between Long and Machado within the Greater Caribbean unit of analysis provides a double-case study of authoritarianism in the interwar period and challenges ideas about American exceptionalism. Similarly, it questions—perhaps more implicitly—the suppositions common throughout Latin American that European experiences are alien.<sup>2898</sup> In the twentieth century and until the present, contemporary observers and later historians have examined both politicians separately. Only a very few have suggested a linkage, most importantly, American journalists Carleton Beals and Westbrook Pegler, from markedly opposed perspectives. However, until this dissertation, no scholar has pursued a deeper analysis on the subject. By offering an innovative comparative perspective on the two politicians, this dissertation has outlined new insights on the main issues affecting Louisiana and Cuba during this critical period. The comparison is the core of the thesis. Rather than highlighting any specific political ideology, the preceding chapters underscore the commonality between these leaders' styles of rule over strikingly similar societies in the midst of social, economic, and political crisis. Thus, Long and Machado developed what political scientist Rossiter called “crisis governments”, that is, exceptional measures even beyond “the rule of law”, without stepping outside the institutional forms of representative government.<sup>2899</sup>

Both rulers shared a number of strategies that illustrate the particular challenges posed to governance and the rise of strong leadership in Greater Caribbean politics. First, both the Kingfish and Machado resulted from and responded to particular social contexts with much in common. Embracing a regenerative discourse, these strongmen appealed to a great part of society that had been previously neglected in politics, or had even

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<sup>2898</sup> In that sense, reporter and author George Pendle problematically asserted that “Latin Americans have grown up, so to say, in opposition to Europe. They feel that Europe is finished, whereas Latin America is only just beginning. They are impatient of European caution, and of the European respect for the law”, in Pendle, *A History of Latin America*, 224.

<sup>2899</sup> Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*.

remained disenfranchised. Through popular mottos, such as “Every man a king” or “On foot” (“*a pie*”), which implied the protagonism of the “common man” in their programs, these politicians sought to include marginalized sectors into the political spectrum of Louisiana and Cuba. Consequently, they became magnets for white farmers, poor workers, and, by extension, the black population, who had been forgotten the most by previous politicians. Women were also appealed to, although under Machado’s administration female suffrage still was not permitted and would not be approved until 1934, after the revolution that overthrew his rule. However, as shown in this thesis, the political empowerment of the black population carried out by both strongmen should be regarded with certain skepticism. Huey Long included African Americans on his political program and even eliminated the poll tax that had barred them from voting. This notwithstanding, the senator from Louisiana did not appoint any black to a trusted position nor did he strive in any way to derogate “Jim Crow” laws or, as senator, to pass federal legislation against lynchings. Similarly, although Cuban society was more inclusive of its Afro-Cuban population and Machado did appoint some blacks in his cabinet, supported the *Club Atenas* in Havana—an elitist circle for *afro-cubanos*—, and even banned the formation of a Cuban cell of the KKK, a somewhat hidden segregation in his society existed throughout his regime. Moreover, however much the “*asno*” embraced the apparently egalitarian concept of a raceless *Cubanidad*, his views of Cuban citizenship arguably were sustained by an implicit white dominant discourse.

Crucially, what Long and Machado proposed was *regeneration*, a makeover, not a complete reconstruction of society. Therefore, it would be misleading to categorize either Long or Machado as “revolutionary”, as many did at the time; clearly, “regenerationist” or “reformist” would be more appropriate descriptions. According to political scientist Paul Taggart, “populism (and particularly populist electoral success) comes at times of particular economic crisis and [...] fails to deliver on its message of fundamental structural change because it is essentially reformist rather than revolutionary”.<sup>2900</sup>

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<sup>2900</sup> Paul A. Taggart, *Populism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 60.

The regenerative message that Long and Machado embraced was both metaphorical and literal. In the first instance, their appeal theoretically meant the end of corruption, nepotism, and other dubious political practices very common in Louisiana and Cuba before the two strongmen came to power. Therefore, *regeneration* was aimed at forming new “clean” governments, free from previous questionable methods. More literally, *regeneration* was regrowth, which meant the physical modernization of urban and rural spaces through the construction of new infrastructure.

For instance, in Cuba the new Central Highway rearranged overland connectivity and affected the way the entire island functioned. Moreover, the highway linked the country together in a single united national sentiment where “everyone was Cuban”, thus “de-provincializing” the interior, and empowering the main cities. Machado also focused on the embellishment of Havana, which was to be transformed into a modern city with ample avenues, beautiful parks, and a handsome new capitol building. The Cuban president wanted to transform the capital city into the Paris or the Nice of America—depending on the source—, thus implying that the president’s main goal was to convert Havana into a “modern” city. Meanwhile in Louisiana, dozens of bridges and roads improved the integration of the state and made mobility far easier, especially for farmers. And, in Baton Rouge, a new skyscraper pierced the skyline of the South: the state capitol building, together with a new mansion for the governor, became symbols of the new regime or leadership style, and thus of the “new Louisiana” Long was building.

These grand constructions would logically come at a great economic cost, and consequently they met opposition from various sectors of Cuban and Louisiana society that argued the times were not ripe for such extravagant expenditures. More importantly, both politicians revamped the education system by building new schools and promoting adult literacy. Huey Long provided free textbooks for schoolchildren, a policy that proved very popular and drastically reshaped the landscape of education in the state. This policy would also be developed throughout the *machadato*, during which hundreds of new schools were built in order to “*nacionalizar*” the Cuban people. Thus one of the main features of Machado’s political program was the effort to foment strong nationalism, as opposed to provincialism, American imperialism, or, as Lamar

Schweyer expressed in one of his works, an excessive immigration—in part from Spain—that resulted in a weakening of the patriotic feeling in the island.<sup>2901</sup> In all, the island saw an increase of literacy, although the results were less successful than what Machado assured in his speeches.

Another direct consequence of the regenerative leadership style that has been suggested in this thesis and that has been less explored in historiography is their origin in environmental phenomena. That is to say that due to natural disasters that occurred in the 1920s there was a very real need for regenerating society both in Louisiana and Cuba. From hurricanes to floods, adverse weather conditions deeply altered the living standards throughout the Greater Caribbean region they affected, leaving a trail of destruction and death. Thus the building of infrastructure during the *machadato* and the Long era was not only related to the thirst for power and visual recognition of both leaders. These policies also represented an endeavor to reconstruct out of necessity.

In the United States, 1927 was the year of the so-called Great Flood when, after weeks of heavy rainfall, the Mississippi river flooded ten states of the country, Louisiana being one of the hardest hit. This environmental tragedy had an impact on migration within the country, as thousands of people joined the Great Migration from the South to other less problematic areas in the United States, thus changing the demography of the nation. This thesis argues that the fact that Huey Long was voted governor of the Pelican State only a few months after the flood was not a coincidence.

Similarly, in Cuba, hurricane *Diez* (Ten) left a terrible legacy of destruction and death throughout the western area of the island in October 1924. It came to be one of the worst hurricanes ever to hit Cuba. Unsurprisingly, this phenomenon occurred only three weeks before Gerardo Machado was voted president. Moreover, in looking into the political effects of environmental phenomena, on November 1932 the *huracán de Santa Cruz* or *de Camagüey* struck Cuban shores, which destroyed great part of the central and eastern island and resulted in about 3,000 casualties becoming the deadliest hurricane in Cuban history. While, as has been described in the past pages, there had

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<sup>2901</sup> Lamar Schweyer, *La crisis del patriotismo*.

been political turmoil on the island for quite some time, this catastrophe most likely had a negative impact on the *machadato* and on the general crisis occurring in Cuba.

By rebuilding in the wake of these catastrophes, their goal was to “modernize” society and escape from longstanding traditional forms of social control. In addition, another one of both Long and Machado’s aims in developing their respective regions was to break away from the control imposed by the US federal government. While in the Cuban case the Platt Amendment inevitably linked the island’s destiny to American whims, in the Pelican State Long’s enmity towards Franklin Roosevelt was directed at giving Louisiana, and thus the Long machine, more independence from Federal dictates. In both cases, there was a hate/love relationship with Washington, D.C. If the Caribbean island and Louisiana were to be regarded as “modern” and “advanced”, then the powerful U.S. government would have to have less legitimacy to meddle with their local affairs. However, it must be noted that due to the constant presence of the United States in Cuba, a perceptible “Americanization” of the island’s society and culture took place, particularly in regards to consumerism and the pressure of tourism.<sup>2902</sup> This occurred at the same time as a process of “de-Hispanization” of Cuba.<sup>2903</sup> To some extent, and quite paradoxically, the “modernization” of Cuba was linked to the appropriation of U.S. practices. As a consequence, and as has been analyzed, particularly in chapter four, the relationship between Washington and both strongmen was a complicated one. Although Long and Machado belonged respectively to the U.S. (and Louisiana) Democrat and the Cuban Liberal party, paradoxically they both maintained a cordial friendship with Republican presidents Coolidge and Hoover, while Franklin Roosevelt had more reservations about the two politicians, and they about him.

There are some authors, perhaps influenced by ideas of a backward and rural American “South”, that have perceived Long as anti-modern. It is time to revise the “Old South” vision of author and journalist W.J. Cash for a “New South” perspective.<sup>2904</sup> According to the late historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., bosses and agitators such as Long, Coughlin, and Townsend, “seemed to represent Old America in resentful revolt against

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<sup>2902</sup> Cockcroft, *América Latina y Estados Unidos*, 347.

<sup>2903</sup> Núñez Vega, “La Danza de los Millones”, 65.

<sup>2904</sup> Cash, *The Mind of the South*.

both contemporary politics and contemporary economics”.<sup>2905</sup> Historian Alan Brinkley also believed these movements were against modernity, as the author expressed in the 1980s:

It was not just the power of particular men and institutions that was at issue; it was the power of historical forces so complex that no one could easily describe them. It was, ultimately, modernization itself [...] that Long and Coughlin were indirectly challenging.<sup>2906</sup>

And Taggart had stated that, in general, certain leadership styles similar to those of Long and Machado, which he typifies as “populism”, were a “reaction to modernity or to a particular feature of the modern world”.<sup>2907</sup> In a broader but similar sense, Italian anti-Fascist politician Carlo Sforza argued in his 1930s study about dictators emerged after World War I as “*une réaction heureuse contre l’anonymat inintelligent des bureaucraties modernes*”.<sup>2908</sup> However, the opposite may be true.<sup>2909</sup>

After having analyzed the case of the Kingfish and Machado, one can disagree with count Sforza’s idea because their programs featured new solutions to the problems their societies were facing in the 1920s and 30s, rather than policies directed at preserving autarchic communities. Neither Long nor the Cuban president were against modernization. On the contrary, in their discourses they were in favor of better road systems, the improvement of infrastructure, alphabetization, and the regeneration of the political system. In that sense, we can question the general conclusion given by professor of Foreign Policy Barry Rubin, who argued that there was a factor of strong conservatism in Latin American leaders that made them be opposed to liberalism,

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<sup>2905</sup> Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Upheaval*, 69.

<sup>2906</sup> Alan Brinkley, “Comparative Biography as Political History: Huey Long and Father Coughlin”, *The History Teacher* 18, n° 1 (1984): 12.

<sup>2907</sup> Taggart, *Populism*, 13.

<sup>2908</sup> Sforza, *Dictateurs et dictatures*, 251.

<sup>2909</sup> Historian Ucelay-Da Cal has argued that Catalan populism was successful in gathering a variety of sectors in one political movement, including the industrial bourgeoisie and workers’ unions. See Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, *La Catalunya populista: imatge, cultura i política en l’etapa republicana (1931-1939)* (Barcelona: La Magrana, 1982). Conservative journalist and author Michael Lind has recently affirmed in an interview that populism entails “popular sovereignty” that includes farmers but also city workers, in Michael Lind, “Trump y el ‘Brexit’ son una reacción contra los globalistas”, *La Vanguardia*, August 24, 2016, [lavanguardia.com/internacional/20160824/404159918644/michael-lind-entrevista-trump-brexit-globalistas.html](http://lavanguardia.com/internacional/20160824/404159918644/michael-lind-entrevista-trump-brexit-globalistas.html).

intellectuals, and social reform, among others.<sup>2910</sup> It was the way modernization was being managed by the big magnates that bothered the Louisiana politician on the US Senate, and foreign intervention that Machado ultimately decried. Long's idea was not to go back to the rural world as Jefferson's agrarian republic or Mao's agrarian socialism, nor was the countryside the center of his utopian Share Our Wealth program. In that sense, historian Charles Postel has argued that the American populists at the end of the nineteenth century were harbingers of modernization, representing "a distinctly modernizing impulse" in order to end "rural ignorance" and "the force of habit".<sup>2911</sup> In this sense, both Huey Long and Gerardo Machado incorporated US populist legacies from a quarter century before into their respective discourses.

The progressive idea of wealth redistribution would be vital to carry out these improvements. As indicated in this thesis, this concept was not completely revolutionary, for it was an issue that had its roots in the nineteenth century. Through the construction of the *Carretera Central*, Machado hoped to establish the beginnings of a wealth redistribution system in Cuba. But it was Long that pursued this idea to its ultimate consequences as, due to the Kingfish's charisma and popularity, the senator made the redistribution a key element in 1930s American politics. Hodding Carter wrote, "my own conviction is that Huey Long was no true revolutionary. Power for power's sake was his mastering god".<sup>2912</sup> As opposed to that quote, T. Harry Williams defended the idea that Long was not a dictator, but just another American boss, "typical in many ways of the type, atypical in that he came to grasp for too much power".<sup>2913</sup> It seems when analyzing this politician one should stand somewhere between these two perceptions: he indeed was intentionally accumulating too much power and wealth, although there may have been something more to his goals than just straightforward dominance. At the same time, as argued throughout the dissertation, he was an unusual politician, but within the American tradition. There were several "bosses" in the 1930s United States and Long's Share Our Wealth was in the middle of a "neopopulist

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<sup>2910</sup> Rubin, *Modern Dictators*, 113.

<sup>2911</sup> Postel, *The Populist Vision*, 9.

<sup>2912</sup> Carter, "Huey Long: American Dictator", 363.

<sup>2913</sup> T. Harry Williams, introduction to *Every Man a King*, by Huey Long, XXIII.

insurgency” of his time.<sup>2914</sup> A journalist wrote at the time, “The Huey Long type of politician is unfortunately not an uncommon figure in American politics. Long is conspicuous merely because he is a better showman than most of them, and because he happens to be, in a curious way, a brilliant man”.<sup>2915</sup>

The dissertation reveals another main characteristic that united these two strongmen: the cult of personality, which was the basis of their leadership styles. As historian Hugh Hamill argued in his 1966 study of dictatorship in Spanish America, “It might well be that an intense exploration into the specific nature of political autocracy will lead to a much wider knowledge of the society which produces the personalist leader”.<sup>2916</sup> In that sense, the historian specified that the fact that Long emerged during the Depression years was indicative of the connections between autocracy and particular social and economic conditions.<sup>2917</sup> Long and Machado became *the* faces of their respective administrations, which was the reason why their regimes would falter without them. This cult was achieved through the idea that the US senator and the Cuban president came from rural backgrounds and were undereducated, which allowed them to portray themselves as “common men” in order to appeal to the masses. Furthermore, the idea of strong leadership was visually adopted in Cuba and Louisiana by naming streets, bridges, buildings, and towns “Huey Long” or “Gerardo Machado”. Latin Americanist historian Curtis Wilgus wrote in 1937 that some rulers—such as these two, I add—gained power in moments of economic depression, but that “the soaring ambition and intense selfishness of the leaders often drove them to exaggerate the crisis in order to justify their appearance as men of the hour or their retention of the reins of government”,<sup>2918</sup> thus increasing their cult of personality. This derived into the notion that they were sort of messiahs saving the nation from political, economic, and even moral disaster.

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<sup>2914</sup> Amenta, Dunleavy, and Bernstein, “Stolen Thunder?”, 681. In that sense, British author and journalist George Pendle emphasized how Latin American nineteenth-century military leaders or *caudillos* did not disappear in the new century, but readapted themselves to the changing conditions in society, in Pendle, *A History of Latin America*, 161.

<sup>2915</sup> Springer, “Huey Long: The Amazing Louisiana Senator”, 124.

<sup>2916</sup> Hamill, *Dictatorship in Spanish America*, 6.

<sup>2917</sup> Hamill, *Dictatorship in Spanish America*, 7.

<sup>2918</sup> Wilgus, *South American Dictators*, 18.

It is difficult to assess whether Long and Machado had planned to progressively transform their administrations into authoritarian regimes or if it was a somewhat improvised development that occurred after achieving such popularity. While both elements may have played a part in their evolution as politicians, the incorporation of authoritarianism was an escalating process that mostly characterized the second half of these leaders' regimes. The *machadato* was clearly more ruthless, for it resorted to political assassination and persecution. However, the preceding chapters have shown how Long's regime was not simply "colorful" as some have portrayed it, as it featured kidnappings, bribes, and threatened citizens. Moreover, the dissertation highlights how both regimes increased the relevance and presence of their military or law-enforcement forces in order to assure their permanence in power, a method that would eventually backfire and prompt their demise.

Nonetheless, the main question remains: Why did political phenomena such as Huey Long and Gerardo Machado come to pass? They both lived in a moment of severe economic crisis and greatly benefited from that situation, obtaining popularity by saying to their audiences what they wanted to hear. As political scientist Clinton Rossiter defined these type of governments, they established "constitutional dictatorships", which employed emergency policies close to dictatorial measures in times of economic depression in order to save the state and return to "normality".<sup>2919</sup> What Rossiter called "crisis governments" tended to maintain the political system in the sense that they did not eliminate any of its institutions nor derogate its constitution; however, and Greater Caribbean strongmen are examples of this, they learned how to manipulate Congress in order to carry out their policies and to eliminate the division between the three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—that drove them away from democracy.<sup>2920</sup> In the case of Long and Machado, there was a clear abuse of these exceptional measures. As Rossiter concluded, "once a constitutional dictatorship is initiated, it is inevitable that the men charged with its success will seek more extraordinary powers or demand more procedural readjustments than are necessary of even expedient".<sup>2921</sup>

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<sup>2919</sup> Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*, 5-7.

<sup>2920</sup> Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*, 288.

<sup>2921</sup> Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship*, 297.

Equally important is the notion that Long and Machado were not isolated phenomena in their respective countries. For instance, journalist R. Hart Phillips, corresponsal for *The New York Times* in Cuba, argued that Gerardo Machado was the result of a setting that had been shaped ever since the signature of the Platt Amendment:

All Cuban writers and many American journalists have depicted Gerardo Machado as a monster in human disguise, a cruel tyrant who reveled in torture and bloodshed. That viewpoint is erroneous. Machado was the cleverest politicians ever produced by the island, greedy, revengeful and unscrupulous, but he was the result of a system of government rather than the creator of a dictatorship.<sup>2922</sup>

The reporter gave a more comprehensive approach of the Cuban president by understanding him not as accidental anomaly but a result of a political system that helped create him, as it also occurred in Louisiana.

A chief conclusion of this dissertation is that both men supposedly challenged big corporations that were controlling Louisiana and Cuba. Long fiercely attacked multimillionaires, Wall Street, and, especially, his archenemy the Standard Oil Company, for, according to him, the oil giant encapsulated all that had gone wrong with US society. In the last years of his power, the Kingfish transported this discourse outside American borders, for instance, when facing the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay, or during the 1933 revolution in Cuba. Thus, in a sense, the senator was internationalizing the fight against big corporations that allegedly undermined the downtrodden for their own interests. However noble his discourse may have appeared to broad audiences of poor farmers, Long himself accumulated a handsome fortune and was involved in the Win or Lose Oil Company, a Louisiana corporation that would later be related to corruption and fraud during the so-called “Second Louisiana Purchase”. For his part, starting with the 1924 presidential campaign, Machado assured he would get rid of the Platt Amendment in order to liberate Cuba. By “freedom” the candidate meant that he would get rid of the control of American companies and their interests. Thus, the “*asno*” also appeared as a defender of Cuban sovereignty, but at the same time was facilitating US economic permanence in the island, which economically benefitted him also. For instance, the Chase National Bank loaned substantial sums of money to

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<sup>2922</sup> Phillips, *Cuba, Island of Paradox*, 4.

the Cuban government, while Machado's son-in-law was manager of the Cuban branch of the company; also, the president put the *Compañía Cubana de Construcciones* in charge of several public works carried out under the *machadato*, while him and his Secretary of Public Works, Carlos Miguel de Céspedes, were its main stockholders. Consequently, while the ideas Long and Machado defended in their political speeches and programs seemed progressive and allegedly empowered the little man, in reality their actions spoke very different.

The two strongmen divided society in two: those in favor and those against them, the latter of whom were often persecuted. Without mistakenly assuming a teleological explanation for the two politicians, an analysis into the deeper past of Louisiana and Cuba is warranted, as it better defines the problems and social issues they faced. In the case of Long, the 1929-1941 Great Depression was not the only explanation for his success, nor was the populist movement of the late nineteenth century, which had also been influenced by the 1873-1896 economic crisis. Novelist Hamilton Basso, who was born in New Orleans, arrived to a conclusion that is fundamental. In 1935 he wrote that Long:

was a product, not of depression, but of the [American] Civil War. His career rests, not so much on the crash of 1929 as upon Grant's hammering in Virginia and Sherman's march through Georgia. He is the result—I think the inevitable result—of a political and economic tendency that has been developing in the South for over seventy years.<sup>2923</sup>

As for the Cuban president, he was clearly the heir of the wars of independence from Spain of the nineteenth century, also dating back, at least, to the 1860s. Machado was a somewhat old fashioned politician from a past generation, as the Cuban terrorist organization ABC argued, but he was concerned with the troubles of his present. Thus he was striving to modernize Cuban society with a firm rather than a rebellious hand.

As has been seen, the discussion of Long as a politician has mostly been focused on whether he belonged to the political tradition of the United States, or whether he was a foreign European-inspired threat—that is, was he a Fascist or a Communist? This thesis shows that his European connections, while arguably legitimate, are less relevant when

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<sup>2923</sup> Basso, "Huey Long and His Background", 665.

analyzing Long than those that emerge when comparing him to his Caribbean counterpart. Unsurprisingly, in his time, Machado was also constantly equated to Mussolini. However, neither were following in the footsteps of those European regimes, later on named “totalitarian”; for instance, as stated above, they were reformist rather than revolutionary, while totalitarianism pushed forward the idea of a completely renewed society.<sup>2924</sup> Long and Machado were developing their own distinct leadership style. The persistence of the false equation is more telling of the rising fears of their contemporaries, and not an accurate description of their policies.

As seen in chapter seven, their enemies perpetrated the demise of both leaders, and their legacy on a national level was scarce. The Kingfish began a political dynasty, which would have some impact, although mainly circumscribed to Louisiana. As for the “*asno con garras*”, there was no political legacy whatsoever, for his departure from Cuba meant the end of his career as well as those in his trusted circle. The memory of the politician remains controversial in Cuba to this date; in the minds of most, he was a fierce dictator that persecuted communists and other opposing forces. Raymond L. Buell and the other members of the US Committee of Cuban Affairs concluded in their 1935 report on the island:

Machado, después de haber reducido a Cuba a un país presa del terror, tuvo el final de otros muchos dictadores. Algunas de sus ideas en favor del desarrollo económico de Cuba pudieran haber sido beneficiosas si las hubiese puesto en planta por medios democráticos, honrados y constitucionales, que no siguió y a los que substituyó, durante su gobierno, por los métodos del más brutal despotismo y auspiciando las peores formas de la corrupción y del crimen.<sup>2925</sup>

There are few authors that interpret the Cuban president in positive terms. Historian Fritz Berggren, who could be understood as Machado’s T. Harry Williams, is one of very few. This author problematically concludes that: “Machado’s inglorious place in Cuban history is not because he was an evil man or tyrant—but because he lost the battle of violence and revolution waged by his opponents”.<sup>2926</sup> In the long term, the

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<sup>2924</sup> Simon Tormey, *Making Sense of Tyranny: Interpretations of Totalitarianism* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>2925</sup> Buell et al., *Problemas de la nueva Cuba*, 14.

<sup>2926</sup> Berggren, “Machado: An Historical Reinterpretation”, 160.

demise of both politicians meant the end of their regimes and their policies, and the beginning of their multiple (mis)interpretations and oversimplifications.

After analyzing Long in comparison to Machado, we could go one step further and conclude that the Kingfish was to some extent a sort of American *caudillo*, in the sense that he resembled the leadership style of this type of politicians, who, according to historian Fernández-Armesto, take force through military power or, as historian Hallgarten pointed out, were “*chefs militaires qui s’élevaient à la dictature*”.<sup>2927</sup> Although a generic term—certainly not more specific than “dictator”—, the word *caudillo* has served to localize the phenomenon in the region of Latin America.<sup>2928</sup> Dozens of studies on *caudillismo* have reflected upon this issue, such as Bolivian Arcides Argüedas, who distinguished between “*caudillos bárbaros*” and “*caudillos letrados*”.<sup>2929</sup> Or politician and journalist Arthur Conte, who divided between conservative *caudillos*, who were under the mandate of the aristocracy, and populist *caudillos*, who were demagogues that arrived to power after seducing the masses.<sup>2930</sup> In most cases, the figure of the *caudillo* is understood to be a sort of savior of societies in Latin America. In that sense, historian Carlos Malamud has written: “Prácticamente todas las esperanzas de los pueblos latinoamericanos por alcanzar la justicia social acaban depositándose en las figuras de los caudillos redentores”.<sup>2931</sup> Historian Hugh Hamill argued in the introduction to his study that the *caudillos* had been, particularly until the 1940s, a key historical phenomenon in Spanish America.<sup>2932</sup> Moreover, the historian added, the Latin American strongmen had a “unique quality” in respect to other authoritarian rulers world-wide.<sup>2933</sup> Mexican historian Enrique Krauze has explored *caudillos* and the development of modern Mexican regimes and offered a broader definition of *caudillos* to include lawyers, writers, bureaucrats, while delving into how some of them became “*redentores*”, men of the hour set to deliver their

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<sup>2927</sup> Hallgarten, *Histoire des dictatures*, 164.

<sup>2928</sup> Hamill, *Dictatorship in Spanish America*, 8.

<sup>2929</sup> Argüedas, *Los caudillos bárbaros*; Argüedas, *Los caudillos letrados*.

<sup>2930</sup> Arthur Conte, *Les dictateurs du XXe siècle* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1984), 284. Hallgarten similarly differentiated between “dictateurs de type bourgeois” and those who “défendaient la société créole des grands propriétaires et le féodalisme anti-révolutionnaire”, in Hallgarten, *Histoire des dictatures*, 164.

<sup>2931</sup> Carlos Malamud, *Populismos latinoamericanos: los tópicos de ayer, de hoy y de siempre* (Oviedo: Ediciones Nobel, 2010), 101.

<sup>2932</sup> Hamill, *Dictatorship in Spanish America*, 5.

<sup>2933</sup> Hamill, *Dictatorship in Spanish America*, 7.

countries from strife.<sup>2934</sup> Influential Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy, who lived through the 1920s and 30s, even argued that, at times, the Spanish American dictator instigated the appearance of crises in order to justify his existence and result as the savior of a nation who could hold on power as much as needed. Of course, this status warranted him epithets such as “liberator”, “defender of the homeland”, and “founder of peace”.<sup>2935</sup>

Fernández-Armesto, however, has transcended traditional borders and referred to Americans Aaron Burr, Mormon founder Joseph Smith and, of course, Long, as American *caudillos*.<sup>2936</sup> Also, as stated in chapter four, when examining the relationship between the United States and Latin America, historian Norman A. Bailey referred to the US as a *caudillo* or a *patrón* because of its paternalistic yet powerful attitude towards the southern continent.<sup>2937</sup> By taking the concept of *caudillo*, commonly narrowed to the Latin American scene, and applying it to United States politics we can better understand the fluidity between the two supposedly separated places: the US and Latin America, and question the hermetic boundary between the imaginary “North” and “South”. Moreover, we can escape from problematic generalistic assumptions that situate Latin America as a separate backward entity in comparison to the United States, such as the following quote by professor of foreign policy Barry Rubin: “Despite more than 150 years of independence, Latin American countries have been generally unsuccessful at maintaining democracy or avoiding military rule for very long”.<sup>2938</sup> Writing at the end of the 1930s, conservative British historian Alfred Cobban argued a similar idea when affirming that the first place in the world where dictatorship and *pronunciamientos* became a normal form of government was Spanish America.<sup>2939</sup> This

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<sup>2934</sup> Krauze, *Siglo de caudillos*; Enrique Krauze, *Redentores: ideas y poder en América Latina* (Barcelona: Debate, 2011).

<sup>2935</sup> Rippy, “Dictatorships in Latin America”, 183.

<sup>2936</sup> Fernández-Armesto, *Our America*, 344. In an opposite and problematic direction, political studies professor Omar G. Encarnación has defended the idea that Republican candidate for the US presidency Donald Trump represents what he calls a “Latin-Americanization” of politics in the United States, implying that his political style is foreign to his native country and thus embracing the notion of American exceptionalism, in Omar G. Encarnación, “American Caudillo: Trump and the Latin-Americanization of US Politics”, *Foreign Affairs*, May 12, 2016, [foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-05-12/american-caudillo](http://foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-05-12/american-caudillo).

<sup>2937</sup> Bailey, “The United States as a Caudillo”, 314.

<sup>2938</sup> Rubin, *Modern Dictators*, 110.

<sup>2939</sup> Cobban, *Dictatorship*, 144, 147.

dissertation has challenged these problematic assumptions, often guided by the ideas of the Black Legend, by questioning the hermetic boundaries between the United States and Latin America and offering a less clear division between the two spaces. After all, as Fernández-Armesto pointed out, “the United States cannot be understood in terms of a single, WASP heritage”.<sup>2940</sup>

Historian Hugh Hamill attributed some “common denominators” to the Spanish American *caudillos*, which are: “shared backgrounds of historical antiquity and experience, psychic orientation of peoples, philosophies of government, social stratification, economic dislocation, geographic conditions, and external pressures”.<sup>2941</sup> I argue that both Long and Machado certainly fit this description.

The main issue postulated throughout this thesis is that Huey Long and Gerardo Machado were not exceptions within their native countries; on the contrary, they were the result of social, economic, and political processes developed before their regimes were established. In fact, they belonged to a common region within a similar *habitus* of a common *situs*,<sup>2942</sup> the Greater Caribbean, to the point that, the fact that when they came to power their territories were different countries did not drastically elicit different leadership styles.

Thus this thesis has challenged the traditional notion of American exceptionalism. The fact that the United States was founded as a separate entity from Europe spurred the idea that the country was different and unique. This notion derived to the present-day myth of the US as a haven for freedom and equality, and, consequently, democracy. Conversely, conceptions about Latin America have been rationalized in opposite and reactionary terms. Latin Americanist J. Fred Rippy stressed that supposedly the US followed a different path from that of its southern neighbor, thus configuring a separate entity: “About the year 1800 a new light appeared upon the horizon of this static,

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<sup>2940</sup> Fernández-Armesto, *Our America*, 345.

<sup>2941</sup> Hamill, *Dictatorship in Spanish America*, 9.

<sup>2942</sup> To retake Charlotte Lütken's, Norbert Elias', and Pierre Bourdieu's terminology, developed in Lütken, *El Estado y la sociedad en Norte América*; Elias, *The Germans*; Bourdieu, *La distinción*.

servile, and repressed [Spanish American] society, a light that came from England, France, and the United States”.<sup>2943</sup>

One of the factors that have helped create the illusion of American exceptionalism is abundance. Sociologist Monica Prasad reflected upon this issue and its political consequences.<sup>2944</sup> In relation to the idea of American exceptionalism, author Michael Lind wrote a study where, taking George Washington’s 1785 expression of “land of promise”, he has argued that even though economic crises have often occurred in the country, the United States has been and continues to be able to always transform depression into growth.<sup>2945</sup> Some years prior, Israeli Americanist historian Arnon Gutfeld argued that Franklin Roosevelt was the paradigm of the Americanist discourse when affirming: “Roosevelt’s New Deal may be described simply as jump-starting the American economy in order to connect the American people once again to the abundance of America”.<sup>2946</sup> However, the idea of the country of plenty that Huey Long also embraced and based for his Share Our Wealth program, was not exclusively a US rhetorical technique. Gerardo Machado, for instance, used the same concept to justify in his speeches the need for more autonomy from the United States. And, as the “*asno*”, many other leaders throughout the globe may have justified and vindicated their country’s greatness through the concept of abundance.

Comparing Long and Machado clearly shows the limitations of forcing upon the former another thematic example of the exceptionalism of the US, i.e. the matter of fascism, often cited by historians and political scientists. Some authors have interpreted the fact that an American version of fascism did not develop as an indication of the success of its democratic institutions. In that sense, British author Godfrey Hodgson has written: “In the 1930s and 1940s the United States [...] escaped the political disaster of fascism [...] The fact that fascism never seriously threatened the American political system [...] reflects the strength of the democratic tradition and the political skill of President

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<sup>2943</sup> Rippy, “Dictatorships in Latin America”, 180.

<sup>2944</sup> Prasad, *The Land of Too Much*.

<sup>2945</sup> Michael Lind, *Land of Promise: An Economic History of the United States* (New York: Broadside Books, 2012).

<sup>2946</sup> Arnon Gutfeld, *American Exceptionalism: The Effects of Plenty on the American Experience* (Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2002), 44.

Roosevelt”.<sup>2947</sup> However, two issues make this assumption less accurate. First of all, as has been discussed in chapter two, there *were* fascist movements in the United States, such as the German American Bund and William Dudley Pelley’s anti-Semitic Silver Legion, or organizations that promoted very similar ideas of strong racism against African Americans as well as immigrants, such as the KKK. Therefore, the American political scene was as exposed to these polemical ideologies as was any other country in the world. Secondly, although Huey Long was clearly not a fascist, for his program did not include any of the fundamental traits of fascism, the senator did implement authoritarianism in the United States during one of its most beloved president’s administration: FDR’s.<sup>2948</sup> Consequently, as novelist Sinclair Lewis pointed out, it indeed could have happened there, perhaps in a less European-inspired manner but authoritarian nonetheless. In a more dramatic manner, essayist and diplomat Carlo Sforza, writing at the end of the 1920s after having experienced the political debacle after World War I, concluded: “[O]n pourrait craindre que l’avenir ne soit pas à la démocratie: c’est si l’on estime que le monde occidental risque de tomber à nouveau, après quinze siècles, dans la catastrophe de barbarie qui s’abattit sur l’Europe à la chute de l’Empire romain”.<sup>2949</sup> Also influenced by the times, in the mid-thirties president of the US Foreign Policy Association Raymond Buell warned the readers of a study on new governments in Europe that “it is by no means certain that [the US, France, and England] will not adopt some form of dictatorship”.<sup>2950</sup> Although driven by fear of totalitarianism, these assumptions were already questioning the idea of American exceptionalism.

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<sup>2947</sup> Hodgson, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism*, 158. See also Brian E. Fogarty, *Fascism: Why Not Here?* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books Inc, 2009).

<sup>2948</sup> Following the path of his father, who began the task in a 1948 poll, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., carried out an analysis on the popularity of US presidents, concluding that overall throughout the decades the three presidents that were regarded as the greatest by popular opinion were George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt. In the 1996 poll Schlesinger carried out, the results in order of popularity were: Lincoln, Washington, FDR, in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton”, *Political Science Quarterly* 112, n° 2 (1997): 179-90. A more recent poll carried out by the Federalist Society and The Wall Street Journal among 150 professors of history, law, economics, and political science similarly concluded that FDR was the third most beloved president, after Washington and Lincoln, in “Presidential Leadership: The Rankings”, *Wall Street Journal Online*, September 12, 2005, [web.archive.org/web/20060207050558if\\_/http://ad.doubleclick.net/adi/opinionjournal.wsj.com/unicast\\_oj;sz=1x1;ord=731288](http://ad.doubleclick.net/adi/opinionjournal.wsj.com/unicast_oj;sz=1x1;ord=731288).

<sup>2949</sup> Sforza, *Dictateurs et dictatures*, 263.

<sup>2950</sup> Raymond L. Buell, Preface, in *New Governments in Europe*, Vera Micheles Dean et al., v.

Moreover, the dissertation challenges the notion, championed by proponents of American exceptionalism, not only that the United States is a haven of democracy, but that Latin America and its governments represent the opposite. For example, when writing about dictatorships in Latin America, historian Hallgarten concluded that the development of capitalism did not come from within these countries but from the outside, nor did it create a national bourgeoisie:

*L'Amérique latine tomba sous le pouvoir d'aventuriers, de spéculateurs, de banquiers, d'exportateurs et de commerçants étrangers, et devint la proie de l'impérialisme étranger. Ainsi les conséquences sociales du développement économique moderne, qui se manifestèrent dans d'autres pays, n'apparurent pas en Amérique latine; le capitalisme augmenta le pouvoir de caudillos isolés, mais ne provoqua pas l'apparition de la démocratie bourgeoise.*<sup>2951</sup>

In a very similar biased approach, British author and journalist George Pendler argued that “Parliamentary democracy is not necessarily the best form of government at all times and in all places; indeed, one of the principal causes of misunderstanding between the United States and Spanish America in recent years has been the North American assumption and insistence that it is”.<sup>2952</sup> It is vital to deconstruct old Latin American exceptionalism historical paradigms, of which Pendle’s history of Latin America is a paramount example. Although they have long been questioned, the peril of misconception remains if one insists on fixating on artificially created cultural boundaries. This dissertation has sought to rethink these conceptions of “otherness” that Latin America stereotypically represents. We could go one step forward and challenge the whole cosmovision according to which “Western civilization” differs from others, such as the “Eastern”, because of its “progress”. By doing so, we could question assumptions like the following: “*L'Orient est le champ du despotisme, mais les mouvements de masses et les révolutions sont plutôt le privilège du monde occidental avec son commerce et ses cités développées*”.<sup>2953</sup>

The comparative interpretation of strongmen in the Greater Caribbean unit of analysis employed in this thesis could be explored in future research. The ideas proposed here

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<sup>2951</sup> Hallgarten, *Histoire des dictatures*, 171-172.

<sup>2952</sup> Pendle, *A History of Latin America*, 126.

<sup>2953</sup> Hallgarten, *Histoire des dictatures*, 10.

can further be tested with a new corpus of sources taken from archives in Cuba. The first project that comes to mind is to expand newspaper articles and other official and personal documents in relation to the *machadato* by, for instance, visiting the Archivo Nacional de la República de Cuba. One major theme to explore could be the race issue in interwar Caribbean politics, and the forms of political and cultural response of black population to those policies. Another project could deepen into women's organizations in reaction to the *machadato* and the Long regime; for instance, a comparative study between Hilda Phelps Hammond from the Louisiana Women's Committee and Hortensia Lamar from the Club Femenino de Cuba could shed new light into studies that have previously been mainly focused on white males.

The questions posed here could be extended throughout the entire Greater Caribbean area. In the 1920s and 30s, all over the Greater Caribbean, numerous personalist leaders arose in a context of severe economic depression and strong resentment against the United States' intervention in their home affairs. In succession to U.S. Marines, there were powerful chieftains who simply incarnated statehood, like Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, "*El Jefe*", in the Dominican Republic, who controlled the country from 1930 until his assassination in 1961. But already before the 1920s, the development of a certain leadership style took place. It began in Venezuela, after 1908, with Juan Vicente Gómez, "*El compadre*", a coarse and brutal *llanero* or cowboy, who ruled with an iron hand until his death in 1935. Regardless of ideological labels of left and right, the figure of the *Caudillo* summed up the complexities of the Mexican Revolution, were Plutarco Elías Calles took power followed by Lázaro Cárdenas—after two years of Calles' puppet president Emilio Portes Gil administration. Similarly, Jorge Ubico Castañeda in Guatemala from 1931 to 1944, the crazy killer Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in El Salvador from 1931 to 1944, as well as Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, from the mid-1930s until his murder in 1956, whereupon his sons took over the family business, And, of course, Gerardo Machado in Cuba, and later Fulgencio Batista. Unlike Huey Long in the U.S., these were all generals or colonels, or strongmen risen from the ranks of the army or police. There were some "professional men", but like Arnulfo Arias in Panama, a medical doctor and writer who occupied the presidency from October 1940 to October 1941, they tended to last less time. Nevertheless, as this dissertation has tried to show,

comparisons can be made, beyond the standard trope of “man on horseback”, dating back to the Nineteenth Century.<sup>2954</sup> In fact, the methods explored in this dissertation can be applied to analyze other transregional but “peripheral” political styles of rule throughout the globe. A similar method perhaps could yield new insights into interwar historical developments such as Balkan and Eastern European politics in the 1930s, and the subtle connection with Communist post-World War II dictatorships, or the harsh and corrupt authoritarian hold of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek on the Guomindang in China, until swept away on the Asiatic mainland in 1949 by the Communists of Mao Zhedong.<sup>2955</sup>

The implications of the methodological approach employed in this thesis can go beyond the study of interwar political leadership styles. The inquiry of interconnectedness between “North” and “South” America can contribute to a variety of topics involving cultural exchanges, migratory flows, diseases, and political movements, among others, within this Greater Caribbean unit. Although, as has been previously stated, this is not a completely new idea, as authors and historians have been reflecting upon the Caribbean for decades, studies on twentieth century history lack the analysis of connections beyond the classical hierarchical US imperialistic approach. Works on twentieth-century Greater Caribbean can open a door to less national-centered analyses and push academics to go beyond the biased concept of American exceptionalism.

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<sup>2954</sup> Samuel Edward Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962).

<sup>2955</sup> In the line of: Keith Sainsbury, *The Turning Point: Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, and Chiang-Kai-Shek, 1943: The Moscow, Cairo, and Teheran Conferences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the China He Lost* (London: Free Press, 2003).



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