

Violence and U.S. Politics

Washington

The attempted assassination yesterday of Alabama Governor George C. Wallace, coming almost four years after Robert F. Kennedy was killed during the 1968 presidential primary campaign, was another reminder of the hazards faced by American politicians and public figures.

In addition to Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., who was slain a month before Senator Kennedy, assassin's bullets have struck down four American Presidents, including John F. Kennedy, in 1963; William McKinley, in 1901; James A. Garfield, in 1881, and Abraham Lincoln, in 1865.

Three Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman escaped assassination attempts. Teddy Roosevelt, the Bull Moose Party's candidate in 1912, was shot but not fatally wounded, and Mr. Truman's life was endangered in 1950 when four gunmen tried to storm Blair House, the official presidential residence while the White House was being renovated during Mr. Truman's term of office.

FDR was also lucky when confronted by assassins in Miami in 1933, but not so his companion, Chicago Mayor Anton J. Cermak, who was killed by shots intended for the President-elect.

Another assassination victim during the Roosevelt era was Senator Huey P. Long, the Louisiana populist whose political career most resembles that of Wallace.

Long was killed in the rotunda of the State Capitol in 1935 at a time when he was being mentioned as a presidential candidate. The one-time Louisiana farmboy was considered a virtual dictator in the State, having consolidated his strength earlier as Governor.

The 1960s saw the greatest incidents of political assassinations in the Nation's history and prompted sociologists and presidential commissions to explore the underlying causes of violence in the country.

In addition to the Kennedys and King, the list of assassination victims included civil rights activist Medgar Evers, in 1963; Black Muslim leader Malcolm X, in 1965; George Lincoln Rockwell, American Nazi Party leader, in 1967.

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