

Gun Kills Siam's Young King; Palace Death Held Accident

***Ananda Mahidol, 20, Ruled Ancient Country
Since 1935—Was Set to Fly to U. S.
—Brother, 18, Named Successor***

By The Associated Press.

BANGKOK, Siam, Monday, June 10—Ananda Mahidol, 20-year-old King of Siam, was found dead of a bullet wound yesterday in the royal palace, and twelve hours later the Siamese Legislature named his brother, Prince Phumiphon Aduldet, 18, as the new king.

The Siamese police director general told an emergency session of the Legislature last night that the king's death was accidental and that the bullet went through the center of his forehead.

Ananda, whose death occurred almost on the eve of a projected trip to the United States, had been indisposed for the last two days. He arose at 6 A. M. yesterday and took some medicine. Nothing was known of his actions from then until his body was found by a servant in the bedroom of the Barompinan Palace about 9 A. M.

The historic night session of the Legislature unanimously selected Phumiphon Aduldet as the new king, rising together to signalize his election with a "Cha Yo, Cha Yo, Cha Yo"—the Siamese hurrah.

Phumiphon Aduldet was born in Boston while his father, the late Prince Mahidol of Songkhla, was studying at Harvard University. He was a constant companion of his elder brother and attended school with him in Switzerland.

The Legislature also appointed a three-man Council of Regency to guide the new king in matters of state. Pride Panymyong, who was reappointed Premier three days ago, told the Legislature he would recommend a Premier to the regency, but legislative sources said there was little doubt that Mr. Panymyong would receive the post.

The entire nation was stunned by the news of Ananda Mahidol's death. The young king had gained great popularity since his return from Switzerland last Dec. 5.

[In Berne, Switzerland, Paul Rey, director of the school where the King studied, said the monarch's retinue had been worried before Ananda's departure from Switzerland over the possibility of assassination. Asked

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about reports that the King was depressed because he was unable to marry a fellow student, M. Rey said Ananda had "gone with" one or two girls but had not had a serious romance.]

Ananda, a fancier of firearms, always kept a weapon near him and often practiced firing in the palace grounds. Several weeks ago a thief stole his favorite Luger automatic and the King was disturbed.

The King's young mother, Queen Phraratanani Sri Sangwan, was prostrate with grief.

Around the palace great crowds gathered in silent sorrow as the news spread.

Most of Bangkok was unaware of the death of the quiet, studious ruler until the Government broadcast the news at 7 P. M. Immediately a wail went up from a crowd gathered in the square before the publicity building, near the royal palace.

Ananda, who ascended the throne eleven years ago, had planned to fly this week to the United States and remain there about a week before flying to Switzerland, where he planned to resume his studies. His mother and a royal suite of twenty had been expected to accompany him.

Drove Jeep Around Palace

Diffident, bespectacled and boyish, Ananda was often described as a reluctant monarch who found his greatest pleasure in playing his saxophone and driving his American jeep about the palace grounds.

A month ago King Ananda signed a new Constitution. It provided for a Senate and a House of Representatives, both elected by the people. On June 1 he opened the first wholly elected Siamese Parliament.

At that time, in accordance with

a Constitutional requirement, Premier Panymyong and members of the Cabinet resigned, continuing to serve, however, while the Parliament considered the selection of a new Premier.

Ananda was proclaimed King March 2, 1935, under a regency, on the abdication of his uncle, King Prajadhipok, but he spent little time in his own land. Born in Germany on Sept. 20, 1925, he was taken to Siam at the age of 2. He studied there and went to Switzerland in 1933. He was educated in Lausanne, and most of his last twelve years were spent in Switzerland, except for a brief visit home in 1938. Prajadhipok died in 1941.

During Ananda's minority a Council of Regency ruled Siam. It was made up of Prince Aditya, a nephew of Prajadhipok; Chao Phya Bijayendra Yodhin, a former army general, and Chao Phya Yommaraj, former Minister of the Interior, who died in 1938.

Bloodless Coup in 1932

The ancient absolute monarchy of Siam, which lasted from 1350 to 1932, was overthrown in a bloodless revolution three years before Ananda ascended the throne, but the Siamese revered him.

Ananda's recently expressed desire to return to Switzerland was opposed by the elder members of the royal family and powerful politicians. They wished to bring in tutors for him, arguing that his presence in the country heightened morale.

Last Friday, however, the Government announced that the King and his royal party would leave the following Thursday in an Air Transport Command C-54 plane. United States diplomatic attachés in Bangkok were to have accompanied him.

Ananda's personal life in Siam was passed largely within the palace walls. None of the informal social expeditions that popularized monarchs in the Western world were permitted to him. His mother was said to have exerted a strong influence on the young ruler of 18,000,000 subjects.

Since his return to Siam from Switzerland last December the King obediently followed the dictates of pomp and ceremony, and

it seemed to have heightened his popularity. The King attended many functions and always conducted himself strictly as a monarch.

Siam's bloodless revolution on June 24, 1932, was led by army officers and Government officials. Three days later Prajadhipok signed a temporary Constitution, which was replaced the following December by a permanent one.

Under that system the King appointed a State Council of Ministers composed of a President and fourteen to twenty-four other Ministers. It provided for a one-house assembly of people's representatives.

The change from the absolute to constitutional monarchy was attributed generally to the infiltration of Western ideas because of the custom of sending Princes and sons of prominent families to Europe and the United States for their education.

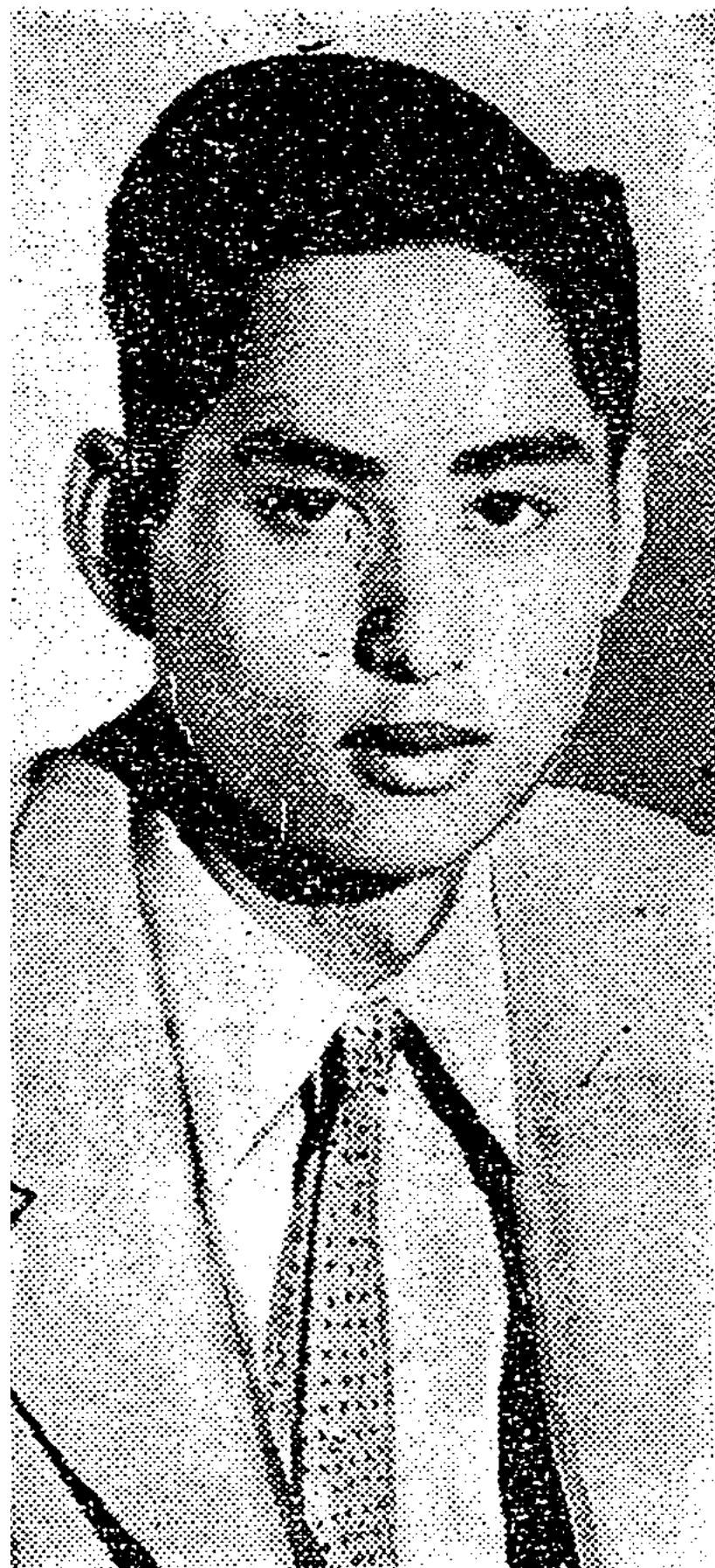
Modern trends were evident in Bangkok even before the war. Hollywood movies, airliners linking the country with Europe, heavy motor-car traffic, well-constructed buildings and flourishing commercial life in the cities were signs of the times for the Siamese.

The King died at a time that may be critical in his country's history. The country has applied for membership in the United Nations, and recently charged the French had invaded Siam from Indo-China in areas ceded by the Vichy Government to Siam during the war. The Siamese hoped to present this case to the United Nations Security Council.

Siam was invaded by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941, while the King was in Switzerland. A puppet Government declared war on Britain and the United States in January, 1942, but the Americans considered the declaration to have been made under duress and did not recognize a state of war with Siam.

Last January Britain and the United States announced formal recognition of the new Siamese Government.

The ancient name of Siam was restored officially in September, 1945. From 1939 until 1945 the name of Thailand had been used.



King Ananda Mahidol

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