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## The Competition for Trans-Pacific Air Routes to Hawai‘i, 1945–1959

OVER THE YEARS, varied and significant changes have affected the Hawaiian Islands: violent volcanoes, the Polynesians’ arrivals, the missionary era, the plantation economy, arrival of Asian immigrants, the revolutions of 1893 and 1954, the rise of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union in the 1940s and statehood in 1959. Another significant change, the advent of commercial aviation and large airplanes, that began in the 1940s, profoundly impacted all facets of 20th century Island life and led commercial airlines to compete vigorously to secure trans-Pacific routes from the mainland to Hawai‘i.

Aviation came to O‘ahu seven years after the Wright brothers’ first short flights at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. J. C. Mars, on December 31, 1910, piloted a primitive aircraft for about five minutes over the Moanalua polo grounds before a fascinated crowd of onlookers. On July 13, 1913, Lt. Harold Geiger, the army’s first aviator to be billeted in Hawai‘i, arrived with a small support detachment, but this group was soon withdrawn “because of the extreme danger of making flights owing to the erratic and violent wind currents. . . .” The weather bureau director felt that “flying with air machines over the Island of Oahu is extremely hazardous.”<sup>1</sup>

On February 13, 1917, Capt. John F. Curry, Sixth Aero Squadron

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commander, arrived in Honolulu, and a month later his unit began permanent air operations flying seaplanes from Fort Kamehameha. In 1918, the Army moved to Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. It named the airdrome Luke Field in honor of Lt. Frank Luke, an American ace killed earlier that year in France. During 1917 and 1918, army pilots flew over O'ahu and crossed the channel to Moloka'i. There were no regular landing fields and few navigational aids, making inter-island air travel hazardous. After World War I, the army built airfields at Pūolo Point near Port Allen, Kaua'i, and at 'Upolu Point and South Point, Hawai'i. O'ahu airfields included Luke Field, Wheeler Field, and after 1930 Bellows Field at Waimānalo.<sup>2</sup>

Lt. Comdr. Robert D. Kirkpatrick led the first contingent of naval aviators to a temporary base at Pearl Harbor on December 28, 1919. Under his command were forty-nine officers and men who operated four seaplanes. They soon shared Ford Island with the army. Ford Island was one of the seven nationwide Navy air stations then in operation. By 1932, the navy had 32 aircraft at Ford Island.<sup>3</sup>

During the 1920s, friction developed between the navy and army commands regarding operations on Ford Island. In 1928, the army, seeking another airfield, selected 2,212 acres adjoining Pearl Harbor and Fort Kamehameha. By 1935, the army completed one of its major airfields: Hickam Field, named for Lt. Col. Horace M. Hickam, killed in a 1934 airplane accident at Fort Crockett, Texas.<sup>4</sup>

Daring army and navy aviators dominated flying in the Islands during the 1920s. Given the type of fragile aircraft in use, island air currents required a fearless personality to fly. Brig. Gen. William Mitchell, assistant chief of the air force, arrived in late October 1923 to undertake a survey of potential airfields in the Territory.<sup>5</sup>

In 1924, navy seaplanes started carrying mail between Honolulu and Hilo while the Army called for a territorial airway system with fields on Hawai'i, Kaua'i, Lana'i, Maui and Moloka'i to supplement the two on O'ahu. The army hoped to develop a cadre of civilian pilots who would engage in commercial aviation and undertake the airmail service. The purpose, said army spokesmen, was to provide "a nucleus from which pilots could be drawn in an emergency." The army's hopes led the territorial legislature to call for inter-island air service.<sup>6</sup>

The Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company organized the Inter-

Island Airways in January 1929, the first commercial air operations in the Islands. Before starting operations, the fledgling company sought a United States airmail contract, but post office officials said that no contract could be awarded until the company had its airplanes flying. It was not until 1934, after almost five years of service and a debt of \$58,000, that a mail contract arrived, just in time to ward off economic disaster for Inter-Island Airways.<sup>7</sup>

On November 11, 1929, commercial inter-island air service began as two Sikorsky amphibian planes, the *Hawaii* and the *Maui*, left John Rodgers Field, O'ahu's first civilian airfield named for Comdr. John Rodgers, at 9:30 a.m. for Hilo with a stop-over at Māalaea, Maui. After a ceremony in Hilo, the two planes returned to Honolulu, arriving at 5:00 p.m. The next day a flight was made to Kaua'i. By 1932, Inter-Island had daily passenger service to Moloka'i, Lana'i, Maui, and Hawai'i and thrice-weekly service to Kaua'i. The airline reduced travel time by boat between Honolulu and Hilo from one and one-half days of a rough sea voyage to 100 minutes of comparatively smooth flying.<sup>8</sup>

Hawai'i's distance from the United States mainland offered a challenge to aviation. The military made several efforts to fly from the West Coast to O'ahu. In August 1925, a squadron of three navy PN-9s tried to bridge the waters. One seaplane failed to take off while another ditched off the California coast. The third, captained by Comdr. John Rodgers with a crew of four, ran out of fuel northeast of Maui. After rigging a makeshift sail for the downed craft and drifting, the crew was rescued by a submarine.<sup>9</sup>

Two army aviators, Lts. Lester J. Maitland and Albert F. Hegenberger, were the first to cross the Pacific, arriving on O'ahu on June 28, 1927, in the *Bird of Paradise*, an army tri-motor Fokker. Soon after this flight, Ernest Smith and Emory Bronte, two civilian pilots, left Oakland on July 14, 1927. Encountering strong high head winds, they ran out of fuel and crashed in an algaroba grove east of Kamalō on Moloka'i's south shore.<sup>10</sup>

#### TRANS-PACIFIC COMMERCIAL AVIATION

By the mid-1930s, Hawaii stood at the threshold of trans-Pacific commercial flights, with airplanes about to change the Islands' economy and way of life. At the same time that Inter-Island Airways prepared

for its first inter-island flight, Walter Dillingham helped found the Pacific Zeppelin Transport Company. Other major investors were the W. A. Harriman Company and Lehman Brothers of New York. Comdr. Jerome C. Hunsaker, vice president of the Goodyear Zeppelin Company, planned to operate two helium-filled dirigibles between California and Hawai'i, a 36-hour flight. The plan faltered when the federal government failed at that time to subsidize overseas transport service. Two years later, the advent of Pan American World Airway's (Pan Am) *China Clipper* made dirigibles outmoded for passenger service.<sup>11</sup>

A spectacular transportation change began when Pan Am inaugurated its trans-Pacific air mail and passenger service in 1936. Pan Am had already pioneered long trans-oceanic air routes. On the afternoon of November 22, 1935, the *China Clipper*, a Glen Martin Company flying boat, with a flight crew of seven, left its Alameda base and lifted off San Francisco Bay bound for Pearl Harbor and its mooring site at Pearl City. Its payload consisted of 1,879 pounds of mail and 14 passengers. The seaplane arrived at Pearl City after a flight time of 21 and one-third hours, two hours behind the scheduled time of 18 to 20 hours.

The *China Clipper* had reduced the travel time between the West Coast and Hawai'i from five days by steamer to one day by air. With only first class seats, the one-way first-class fare from Alameda to Honolulu was \$360. The clipper could carry 75 passengers, but never more than 30 passengers were accommodated because the first priority was mail. Pan Am operated its trans-Pacific route largely because it had received a federal government mail subsidy, but the flying boats with low payloads and high operational costs kept the airline in red ink.<sup>12</sup> During World War II, land-based airplanes replaced the flying boats.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the airplane revolutionized naval warfare in the Pacific, making battleships obsolete. The impact of aviation during World War II paved the way for an explosion in commercial aviation that made tourism a major support of Hawai'i's economy. By war's end, Pan-Am's land-based aircraft carried bigger payloads, and its airplanes now landed at John Rodgers Field.

In the months after World War II, the Matson Navigation Com-

pany's *Lurline* shuttled 722 first-class passengers every six days across the Pacific Ocean, but the luxury steamship's days were numbered. Because the airplane had proved during the war to be reliable in carrying passengers and freight, Island and mainland entrepreneurs saw a golden opportunity in obtaining the right to fly passengers to Hawai'i.

Even as the war was ending, the United States Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) held hearings to determine which airline would join Pan Am in flying passengers from the West Coast to Hawai'i. On March 17, 1945, George Lycurgus, owner of the Volcano House on Kilauea Crater's rim on the Big Island, expressed his concerns to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes about the proposed trans-Pacific route. He assumed that the "next contenders in line" were Hawaiian Airlines (HAL) and the Matson Navigation Company. He felt that the record of the Inter-Island Navigation Company, the parent owner of HAL, showed it to have "followed the worst evils of monopolies." As for Matson, he claimed that it too had "always played the freeze-out method." While he could not prove it, Lycurgus believed that interlocking directorates had led to the lack of transportation competition in Hawai'i. Thus he objected to both of the companies securing the air route.<sup>13</sup>

HAL President Stanley Kennedy, Delegate to Congress Joseph Farrington, and the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce lobbied hard on behalf of the two carriers to join Pan Am in connecting the territory with the mainland. All three expressed the caveat that any company chosen had to have a demonstrated interest in the Islands' welfare. Thus, they opted for either HAL or Matson, if not both.<sup>14</sup>

Both HAL and the Matson Navigation Company filed applications to join Pan Am in regular schedules to Hawai'i. Northwest Airlines, Western Air Lines, United Airlines, the Ryan School of Aeronautics, and The Ryan Aeronautical Company also applied. HAL, Western, and United applied for routes from Los Angeles and San Francisco; Ryan applied only for the Los Angeles route. Matson requested both California routes as well as those from Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington, while Northwestern Air Lines filed for the two northwestern cities.

On May 17, 1945, the CAB recommended granting the San Francisco route to the United Air Lines, believing that United with its

already established mainland routes would provide the most convenient air service to a “far larger segment of the public than any other applicant.” The final decision, however, rested with President Harry Truman. CAB staff studies showed that 70 percent of registrants in Hawai‘i’s hotels came from cities served by United; Western had but 30 percent. Pan Am objected to any other carrier. The board reasoned that while United would have a competitive edge, United’s mainland competitors such as TWA and Western would tend to favor Pan Am when routing passengers to Hawai‘i.

The Ryan companies and HAL were eliminated because they seemed to lack prior experience to mount such a major undertaking. The board saw no need for any service from the Pacific Northwest, thus denying Northwest’s and Matson’s applications. The board divided on making Los Angeles a terminal or co-terminal and denied service because of the lack of an affirmative vote.

The CAB had paid considerable attention to Matson’s application. Matson argued that entering into air service was a progressive step for the steamship company, and it argued that a denial would hurt its operations, “including its ability to provide ships for the national defense.” The board found Matson’s argument not convincing that its freight service would suffer. The board believed that many people would still travel to Hawai‘i by ship and dismissed Matson’s claim that allotting the air service to the steamship company was necessary to keep its ships ready for any national defense. Finally, the board thought that Matson’s dominant position in seagoing traffic and ownership of Honolulu’s two major hotels, the Royal Hawaiian and the Moana, could give it an unfair advantage over Pan Am.<sup>15</sup>

The CAB first sent its proposed decision (granting the San Francisco-Honolulu route to United) to the Department of Interior for its review. Interior Secretary Julius A. Krug urged the board to consider the minority’s opinion that HAL be awarded the Los Angeles-Honolulu route because that airline seemed best to meet the board’s test “that the location of Hawai‘i, its complete dependence on transportation for its economic existence, the regional character of its traffic, and the large and inevitable increase of air traffic, lend force to the argument that it should have access to service by a carrier whose primary objective is to serve traffic to and from Hawai‘i, and whose

polices are dictated solely by the needs of that traffic." Krug also objected to the CAB's denial of a route from the Pacific Northwest.<sup>16</sup>

In the aftermath of the aeronautics board decision, the political pot began boiling. Congressman Richard Welch of San Francisco telegraphed President Harry Truman on May 29, 1946, urging that the Matson Navigation Company, that had provided passenger service to the Islands for the past 64 years, be granted a certificate to operate seaplanes between California and Hawai'i. Welch stated that the navy had strongly recommended that an operator who would utilize waterborne aircraft be permitted to fly the Pacific route. Welch claimed that the navy could thus use these airplanes as an "auxiliary aviation service in conjunction with steamship service over the same routes."<sup>17</sup>

In its several applications to the CAB, Matson stated that it was the only applicant that did not request a federal subsidy to carry the United States mail. It would charge for the weight of the mail but believed that it could make the air route a success using its own money.<sup>18</sup>

With Matson and Northwest Airlines still seeking a certificate to fly from the Pacific Northwest to Hawai'i, Senators Guy Cordon and Wayne Morris of Oregon met with Edwin A. Locke Jr., special assistant to President Truman, to argue for an air route from Portland and Seattle to Hawai'i. Locke also met with F. A. Bailey, president of Matson Navigation Company. Bailey claimed that the northwest route was fully warranted regardless of who became certified. He again stated that Matson was willing to use seaplanes or any aircraft that the government might specify and there was much to be said for an efficient and economical operation by "one company of both steamships and airlines."<sup>19</sup>

On June 29, 1946, President Truman accepted the CAB's finding that United Airlines be granted the right to begin air service from San Francisco to Honolulu and join Pan Am in transporting passengers between the mainland and the Islands. The president asked the board to reconsider the granting of an air route between Los Angeles and Honolulu, but he made no reference to a route from the Pacific Northwest.

Matson representatives contacted the Department of Interior

regarding the department's statement that an island airline was the one to be preferred to provide the air service. Acting Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman, in response to Matson's inquiry, informed the CAB chairman that the department never endorsed the concept that a local or Island carrier be given the trans-Pacific route. The department's position was that the carrier be one that would develop the needed air traffic. Earlier, Secretary Julius Krug had indicated that the Interior Department favored approving a northwest route but the department did not endorse a particular carrier.<sup>20</sup>

By September 1946, pressure had built to the point that the CAB reopened the Hawaiian Airline case. Edwin Locke Jr.'s prepared hand-written notes about the growing controversy showed that the CAB was unanimous in awarding the San Francisco route to United Airlines. Two board members wanted to make Los Angeles a co-terminal for United, while two other members favored HAL to offer direct service from Los Angeles to Honolulu. Locke observed that the United States Post Office was also inclined to HAL but did not insist on it. Locke indicated that HAL, owned by Inter-Island Navigation Company (71%) and TWA (20%) had high rates for freight and passengers. Others held the remaining shares (9%). One CAB member, feeling that granting the route to HAL would require higher subsidies than United would require, favored United.

As for the Pacific Northwest, Locke found that the board had been unanimous in its opposition, the post office indicated that service was not presently required, while the navy recommended that the route was essentially for national defense but deferred to the opinion of the CAB. Locke noted, too, the strong desires of the Oregon senators for a northwest route.<sup>21</sup>

Matson, hoping in 1946 of gaining either the northwest or the Los Angeles route, purchased six D-C 4's and operated non-scheduled service until United began regular service in May 1947. The CAB rejected Matson's bid for a trans-Pacific route and held off granting other routes to any carrier.<sup>22</sup>

Matson continued to press its case in February 1947. Matson, Northwest Airlines, and Pan Am remained interested participants. The charter service, Trans-Ocean Airlines, indicated it might become an applicant as did Pacific Overseas Airlines that had a CAB certifi-



cate to fly cargo over the Pacific route. Trans-Ocean Airlines became an applicant while Pacific Overseas did not.<sup>23</sup>

On March 18, 1948, after lengthy hearings, the CAB authorized Northwest Airlines to carry passengers, property, and mail between the co-terminals of Seattle/Tacoma and Portland for a period of five years. This certification was temporary, and at the end of five years, the board would determine if there was a need to continue this service. At the same time, it denied the applications of Matson, Pan Am, and Trans-Ocean Air Lines. President Truman, on April 22, 1948, turned aside the CAB recommendation, thus blocking Northwest Airlines' application. He believed that there was not justification "to warrant the expenditure of government funds which would be required." The CAB then reversed its earlier decision, thus denying the northwest route.<sup>24</sup>

After considering a strong appeal from Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, Truman on July 29, 1948, reversed his stop order and told the CAB that he approved the Northwest Airline application. In September, he also approved Pan Am's application to fly from Portland and Seattle to the Orient and the South Pacific. This airline was, however, prevented from "any local shuttle service . . . between the Mainland and Hawaii."<sup>25</sup>

By 1949, only Pan Am provided air service between Los Angeles and Honolulu. The CAB again held hearings in 1949 and 1950 on the "Reopened Hawaiian Case, Docket No. 851," as both United Airlines and Pacific Overseas Airlines applied for the Los Angeles route. One of United's arguments for increased service was the fact that in 1948 it expected that Pan Am and it would carry 72,815 passengers and expected to reach 108,900 passengers in a few years. After considering the pros and cons of the two applicants, the CAB recommended that United Airlines' existing certificate be amended to allow it to operate from San Francisco and Los Angeles. The Los Angeles route was awarded on a temporary basis to expire in October 1953, the same time as the northwest route was to be reexamined. Thus, in 1953, all routes would be examined to see if a need for such services still existed.<sup>26</sup>

The CAB air route decisions precipitated Hawai'i's tourist boom as the arrival of tourists increased annually. Developers built luxury

hotels on every island. Following these decisions, the CAB approved routes from mainland cities far removed from the West Coast. The losers in this trans-Pacific air traffic were HAL and the Matson Navigation Company.

#### INTER-ISLAND AVIATION

Since 1929, HAL held a monopoly on inter-island air traffic. Inter-Island Airways changed its name to Hawaiian Airlines in 1940. The airline had had no passenger injury in those 16 years. In 1946, it carried 252,206 paying passengers. HAL was the first scheduled airline to carry air freight under a published tariff schedule.<sup>27</sup>

By 1947, the CAB had two applicants seeking the right to operate inter-island air service. Trans-Pacific Airlines, Ltd. (TPA; later known as Aloha Airlines) sought a permit to carry passengers, property, and mail. Trans-Air Hawaii, Ltd., sought permission to fly scheduled transportation of property and mail.<sup>28</sup> Trans-Air Hawaii, a non-scheduled airline, had become the largest air cargo carrier in the Islands. It was owned and operated by Air Force veterans. Islander Ruddy Tongg led a group of Asian American businessmen to form TPA. Hung Wo Ching, Aloha Airlines president, indicated in 1959 that TPA had been formed because of treatment meted out to Asians during World War II. Many Asians seeking passage on HAL had been refused passage. Stanley Kennedy Jr., retired president of HAL, countered that the airline had not been prejudiced against Asians during the war. It was military government employees who forced HAL to exclude Asians. Kennedy opined that some was racial prejudice and the military view that it was a risk to have Asians flying between Islands during the wartime years. As late as 1946, HAL had no Asian employees at its ticket counters; there were no Asian stewardesses or pilots.<sup>29</sup> Whatever the cause, the result was the formation of a competing airline.

In October 1947, the CAB denied TPA a temporary operating permit, but the airline persisted in seeking scheduled island routes.<sup>30</sup> Further investigation by CAB examiners led to the view that a second airline was necessary to provide healthy competition to HAL. HAL, launching a campaign in opposition to TPA's application, enlisted

support from the Navy and from former Ohio Governor James M. Cox, the 1920 Democratic candidate for president. Cox, father-in-law of Stanley Kennedy Jr., sent President Truman a "Personal & Confidential" letter on October 14, 1948, just prior to the 1948 presidential election, in which he detailed reasons to support HAL's position. He suggested that there was not enough traffic to support two airlines. He contrasted the Kennedy family, long time Island residents, with Ruddy Tongg, "a man of very questionable character" and a "wartime speculator" who had made considerable money.

Cox acknowledged that HAL had had a traffic monopoly with its past ties to Inter-Island Navigation Company. However, a much more serious problem was that 92 percent of TPA stockholders were Japanese and Chinese. Cox found this fact disquieting and worrisome, given Hawaii's place in national defense. His letter attached a list of TPA stockholders. His own inquiries with Naval authorities into this matter of TPA ownership, he wrote, found that they were disturbed that Chinese and Japanese would dominate this sector of air transportation. Cox noted, too, that Federal Judge J. Frank McLaughlin ruled that TPA had been operating illegally by flying a regular schedule. McLaughlin enjoined the airline from continuing this practice.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, on October 22, 1948, Joseph O'Connell, CAB chairman, alerted the White House that his board decided unanimously to grant a permit to TPA. In light of the Cox letter, Truman wanted clear opinions from all interested executive departments. After receiving favorable comments, the President approved the application on February 17, 1949.<sup>32</sup>

By 1950, TPA found itself in financial difficulty that made it unable to offer a full flight schedule to the neighbor islands. Consequently it applied for a \$150,000 loan from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. At the same time, the company sought assistance from the Department of Interior to help obtain a mail subsidy. The request was made in light of a recent HAL request that it receive payment on a mileage basis of sixty-one cents a mile. It had previously received payment by the pound for mail carried. In seeking support from the Department of Interior, TPA called attention to the recent dock strike that had hurt island business, noting that a strike of aviation personnel, an earthquake, and/or financial instability would be a disaster if

such an event interrupted the service of a single airline. Thus, having two airlines made interruption of service much less likely.<sup>33</sup>

In January 1949, Cox, in what he said was his last word on the "Hawaiian imbroglio," claimed that "persons closely associated with that Chinese fellow [Ruddy Tongg] have sent post-election checks to the Democratic Committee."<sup>34</sup> However, the Cox faction did not stop its lobbying on behalf of HAL. W. McNeil Lowry, chief, Washington Bureau of the James M. Cox Newspapers, sent a memorandum in August 1950 to Rhode Island Senator J. Howard McGrath, Democratic National Committee chairman, in advance of another CAB hearing on certifying TPA to operate in Hawai'i. During the 1948 presidential campaign, Cox had helped President Truman during his tour of Ohio, and Truman had told Cox that he was in his debt. However, the president had not replied to Cox's two letters asking for support of HAL. Lowry added that Cox felt that two recent \$5,000 contributions to the Democratic Party demonstrated TPA stockholders appeared to be of greater importance than presidential support by Cox and his chain of newspapers. Lowry concluded that Governor Cox was satisfied to let the facts speak for themselves once the "obvious political spurs were removed." Thus it was important, said Lowry, to hold up the August 16 CAB hearing on TPA's extended license request.<sup>35</sup>

Senator McGrath spoke to Truman about Cox's concerns, and the president then replied to Cox on August 23, 1950. He stated that his Bureau of the Budget had investigated the matter. He had then concluded that the opinion of the CAB was persuasive and he had reluctantly approved the original license for TPA in 1949. Now he understood that HAL was seeking an increase in mail pay while TPA sought an airmail subsidy. McGrath's information made it necessary to reexamine the current application. Truman said that the CAB would not be influenced by political considerations but even so he would ask that "special precautions be taken to avoid even the appearance of evil."<sup>36</sup>

It was common knowledge in Hawai'i's aviation industry, said G. A. Selig, a Civil Aeronautics Administration aircraft control specialist, that HAL would strongly resist any provision or requirement that would hurt the airline. It was expected that HAL would threaten political pressure to get its way. On the other hand, HAL seemed

resigned to competition from TPA and was prepared to accept the second airline. Selig added that competition was bound to help air travel for islanders.<sup>37</sup>

A. William Barlow, Hawai'i regional attorney for the Civil Aeronautics Administration, on October 31, 1950, wrote to Merwick Ross, a staff officer for the Assistant Secretary of Commerce, about the growing HAL-TPA controversy. CAB investigators reported that charges were being alleged that contributions by TPA officials were "illegally made," which could make certification of TPA a political payoff. A CAB investigator discovered that Ford Studebaker, a HAL vice-president, had recently contributed \$2,500 to the Democratic National Committee. This was unusual, for Studebaker was "not in a position to make such a large contribution and the source of this money can easily be viewed with suspicion" given the pending applications of the two companies. The CAB investigator noted that directors and officers of HAL were traditional Republicans, and Studebaker had never made a contribution to the Democratic Party that compared to his recent \$2,500 contribution. On the other hand, TPL's officials had for a number of years contributed to the Democratic Party. The investigator found the \$5,000 contribution of Sai Chow Doo was one that he could well afford, unlike Studebaker's contribution.<sup>38</sup> Cox later reiterated his views in a December 13, 1950, letter to Senator Howard McGrath.<sup>39</sup>

Charges that ownership of TPA by persons of Asian descent constituted a potential national security risk were advanced during the era of McCarthyism. Harry S. Truman Presidential Library files relating to TPA contain reports regarding 13 highly educated persons of Asian descent. Eleven were born in Hawai'i, one was born in China, and one was born in Japan. Four Caucasians were also investigated. David A. Benz, manager of Tongg Publishing Company and assistant to President Tongg of TPA, underwent particular scrutiny. Benz had become active in Democratic politics. At the time of Hawaii's Democratic Party split in 1950, he was identified by the opposition as a possible member of the party's "left wing." When the right wing walked out of the party's convention, Benz was a delegate, but he was absent from Hawai'i and did not participate in the convention's controversy. Interviews with Col. Kendall J. Fielder of army military intelligence, and Foreman Thompson, a special traffic representative for

TPA, both showed that there was no reason to believe Benz to be disloyal to the United States. Territorial Governor Stainback, when interviewed, stated that he did not know Benz but indicated that Benz was “not one of those on his list which presumably includes all subversives within the Hawaiian Islands.” Both Stainback and Fielder favored competition in island air transportation.<sup>40</sup>

The decision of granting TPA the right to carry mail kept being delayed. David Benz’ February 6, 1951, letter to White House staff member Philleo Nash expressed TPA’s frustration. He related that HAL had been consistent in its criticism of the multiracial composition of the TPA board of directors even before TPA gained its temporary Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in February 1949. After certification, HAL then made allegations through the navy department that TPA board members of Chinese and Japanese ancestry were not loyal to the United States. This, Benz believed, had caused a delay in certification, and the three to four months’ delay caused serious financial loss to TPA. In June 1951, HAL renewed the allegations, leading a new investigation of the board. Benz acknowledged that he too was investigated because of his connection with the Democratic Party. All charges proved to be unfounded.

Benz felt that the HAL charges were a further effort to delay TPA’s mail contract application. He charged that HAL knew it could not convince the CAB or the White House to turn down the mail contract application and thus sought delaying tactics, knowing that TPA’s financial situation was shaky and could not survive without the mail contract.

Benz concluded with the thought that some persons were upset that Americans who were not Caucasians saw fit to organize TPA. It also seemed a major sin that one of the executives was active in the Democratic Party, while HAL executives had long been leading supporters of the Republican Party.<sup>41</sup>

In March, the CAB rendered a majority decision awarding TPA the right to carry mail on its Hawaiian air routes and recommended that the president accept the decision. Truman did so.<sup>42</sup> In 1954, TPA received a permanent certificate but by then it had lost \$1,000,000. The board of directors named Hung Ho Ching as president in 1958. Ching sought an unsuccessful merger with HAL. He then led TPA

into a reorganization and secured a large mainland loan. Out of these efforts came Aloha Airlines.<sup>43</sup>

By the time of statehood in 1959, commercial aviation had become part of everyday life for Island residents. For years, from the days of the missionaries, the only way for visitors to reach Hawai'i was by sailing ship and by steamship. The number and size of these ships, as well as the Islands' few hotels, severely limited the number of tourists who could come to the Islands. But today, every few hours, planeloads of mainland and Asian tourists descend on Hawai'i to enjoy its culture, its climate, its landscapes and seascapes. Island residents find it easier and more comfortable to commute between islands. Commercial aviation is among the most significant changes to affect the Hawaiian Islands.

#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Thornton Hardy [Aviation in Hawaii, 1922]; [Lt. Banfill], "Aviation in Hawaii," Walter F. Dillingham Papers, File 364, BPBM, Honolulu; Lucius Pinkham, confidential letter to Franklin Lane, Nov. 23, 1914, Lucius Pinkham Papers, U.S. Depts.: Interior, Aug.-Dec. 1914, AH; Wm. J. Horvat, *Above the Pacific* (Fallbrook, Calif., 1966) 21-25, 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Hardy [Aviation in Hawaii]; [Banfill], "Aviation in Hawaii"; HAA, 1919, 45-46; Horvat 21-25, 29-30, 33-34.

<sup>3</sup> Terr. of Hawaii (hereafter cited as T.H.), *Governor's Report, 1929*, 554-555; 1930, 51; Wallace Farrington, letters to Sec. of Interior, Oct. 5 and 15, 1926, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Office of Territories, Classified Files, Record Group 126 (hereafter cited as RG 126), File 9-4-20, Military Reservations (4), Nat. Archives; Dwight Davis, letter to Calvin Coolidge, June 30, 1927, C. Coolidge Presidential Papers, File 400L, Library of Congress; [Banfill], "Aviation in Hawaii"; U.S. Navy, Sec. of Navy, *Annual Report, 1921*, pp. 42-43, 46 and "Report of the Bureau of Aeronautics, *Annual Report, 1922*, 376, 402; *Annual Report, 1923*, 89; Frank A. von Heiland, "Army and Navy Aviation in Hawaii, *Pan Pacific*, I (1937) 21-24.

<sup>4</sup> Capt. A. W. Johnson, "Memorandum for the Secretary of Navy," Oct. 27, 1923, Edwin Denby Papers, Box 1, U of Michigan Bentley Historical Library; Wm. B. Murphy, "Pearl Harbor Before 'Pearl Harbor'," *Our Navy* (Jan. 1967); U.S. Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks, "Federal Owned Real Estate under the Control of the Navy Department" (1937) 144.

<sup>5</sup> Vaughn MacCaughey, letter to W. Dillingham, Nov. 10, 1921; H. M. Bowen,

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