



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 9154

Habana, April 11, 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: Cuban Civil Aeronautics Commission

file



The Honorable,
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

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AV. T. P. DE/L. C. F. R. L. W. T.

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's confidential airmail despatch number 9905 of March 20, 1945, entitled "Preliminary Organization Plans for Cuban Civil Aeronautics Commission", in which was listed the positions created by the Ministry of Communications in the preliminary organization.

Information now at hand lists the following as the persons who are being offered the positions on an honorary basis pending the passage of legislation and the appropriation of a budget:

Director General	Captain Oscar B. Santa María Lainé
Assistant Director	Capt. Mario Torres Menier
Aeronautics Engineer	Agustín J. Cerdido
Mechanical Engineer	Hari Cruz Bustillo
Civil Engineer	Rafael Sorondo Campaneria
Airport Inspectors	Capt. Manuel J. Bannatyne, and Capt. Agustín Parlá
Medical Chief	Dr. Alberto Gandía
Operations Chief	Capt. José Alvarez del Regato
Operations Assistants	Agustín Gutierrez Gonzalez
	Capt. Orlando Alvarez Builla
Maintenance Chief	Manuel Diaz
Maintenance Assistants	Leopoldo Villena and Federico Reineria
Liaison Officer with Military Aviation Radio	Capt. Carlos Pascual Pinard Mario de la Fé and Urbano Muñiz
Meteorology	Ernesto Tabío
Despatch Chief	Dr. Mario Haedo Triana

Legal

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Legal Advisors

Dr. Luis Machado Ortega
Dr. Rogelio Sandrino, and
Dr. Jorge de Cubas del Marmol

The Embassy's information on these individuals is not complete, and the only biographical sketches available are as given below:

Oscar B. Santa María Lainé

Claims to have been a pilot in the RAF during the last world war. Since 1920 engaged in commission business for various United States concerns in Cuba. Cuban citizen, educated in the United States. Speaks English. Represents DuPont Company paints in Cuba. Engaged in Cuban politics in the past. Expressed himself as anti-communist, anti-Batista. Advocates organization for equal power against unionized labor. Was offered position as head of Cuban Army Air Corps but did not consider the offer because of the fact that Batista, through his political power, ran the country and "unless one is in the inner circle he can accomplish nothing." Is known to have deplored the fact that Cuba has made no contributions in the present war and the fact that politics in Cuba is merely an avenue of obtaining a fortune through graft.

Manuel J. Bannatyne

Born in Matanzas on April 1, 1904. Educated at Belen College, English College in Marianao; Villanova College at Villanova, Pennsylvania; U. S. Army Air Corps Technical School at Chanute Field, Rantone, Illinois. Cuban Air School at Habana during 1929. Graduated as airplane pilot and commissioned Second Lieutenant in the Cuban Army Air Corps. Served in the Cuban Army four years. Services terminated in the 1933 revolution. In 1934 entered the services of Pan American at Habana. In July 1936 he was transferred to Cienfuegos as Manager of Pan American in that city. Organized a flight club and trained two civilians and one Cuban Navy Officer as pilots. Prominent member of Rotary Club, Director of Cienfuegos Yacht Club, Director of Tourist Commission, and Advisor of Municipal Commission of Public Services. In 1940 he was transferred to Camaguey to take charge of the new field and in 1941 was again transferred to Rancho Boyeros field as Manager. Speaks English fluently. Strong pro-American sympathies.

Agustín Parlá

Cuban aviator, about 50 years old, gained considerable publicity as the result of a flight from Key West, Florida to Mariel, Cuba, on May 19, 1913.

As a

As a result of this pioneer effort in aviation (on the strength of which he has since earned his living) Parlá gained entree to Cuban military and political circles, belonging to the Cuban Aviation Military Reserve, a position of political patronage. During the Civil War in Spain, he was unofficially attached to General Franco's army, and upon his return to Cuba he was rendered as "homenaje" by the local Spanish Falange. He is supposed to have reiterated his totalitarian ideas and his plan to work in Cuba for the cause of the Spanish Falange.

In September, 1943, Key West, Florida, municipal authorities invited Parlá to Key West for the purpose of presenting a medal to mark the 30th anniversary of his flight from Florida to Cuba. Parlá was denied a visa to visit the United States on October 12, 1943. Anti-American sympathies.

Carlos Pascual Pinard

Born at Perico, Matanzas Province, on January 13, 1913. Military record: Entered the army in 1934 as private. In 1937 made a lieutenant; in 1938 First Lieutenant Pilot; in 1942 Captain Pilot (Air Corps). Military schools attended: 1939-1940 telegraphy course, radio telegraphy and radio telephone; 1941 Technical Schools at Lowery Field, Denver, Colorado; 1942-1943 different aviation schools in United States. Grade 92.5 per cent.

Decorations:

- 1937 - National Red Cross Medal
- 1940 - Order of Honor and Merit, Cuban National Red Cross
- 1940 - Medal of National Corporation of Public Assistance
- 1944 - Distinguished Service Medal

Comment from a reliable source: "A sly, clever, ambitious officer, with an eye on the chief's job. Doubtful as to pro-United States attitude; is 'Latin-minded' type."

Ernesto Tabío

Is Chief Meteorologist for the Compañía Cubana de Aviación - since April 1, 1940. Born in Santa Clara on September 29, 1911. Formerly connected with the Cuban Navy. Education - high school equivalent.

Luis

Luis Machado Ortega

Cuban citizen, born in Cuba on September 25, 1899. Attorney. A leading Cuban lawyer who is ambitious, experienced in international conferences, extremely active and disposed to "sound off" at every opportunity. He was Grau's representative to the Cuban delegation at the Bretton Woods Conference. Attended the conference in Mexico in February and March, 1945. While pro-American in his utterances, may be considered at heart to be primarily pro-"Luis Machado."

Dr. Jorge de Cubas del Marmol

Junior partner of the firm Lazo y Cubas, prominent local attorneys and legal representatives for both Pan American Airways and Compañia Cubana de Aviación, the wholly owned subsidiary of Pan American. Dr. Cubas was recently made President of Compañia Cubana de Aviación on the resignation of Manuel Quevedo. In the capacity of legal advisor for Pan American and Compañia Cubana, Dr. Cubas has gained a great insight into the local aviation situation and while his leaning naturally would be toward the interest of the companies his firm represents and that of which he is president, there is no doubt that his aero-legal experience will be very valuable to the Civil Aeronautics Commission.

On the return of Captain Santa María from the United States, background information regarding the other persons mentioned will be obtained and forwarded to the Department.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:


George C. Howard
Commercial Attaché

GCH/jw/bs
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Original and Hectograph to Department