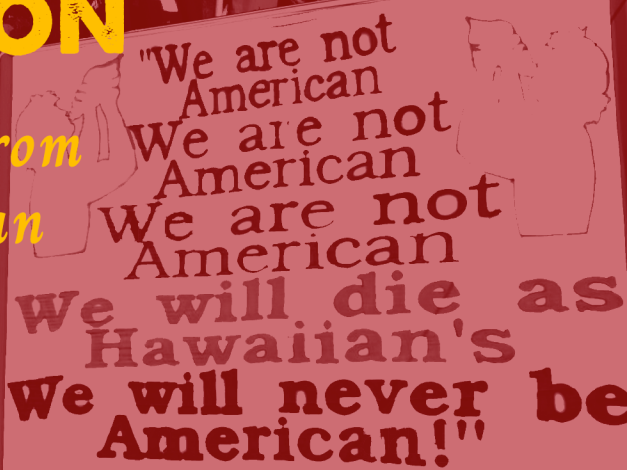


ON THE HAWAIIAN NATIONAL QUESTION

*Documents from
the Hawaiian
Union of
Socialists
1978-81*



"We are not
American
We are not
American
We are not
American
We will die as
Hawaiian's
We will never be
American!"

The banner features a map of the Hawaiian Islands on the right side. The background of the entire image is a photograph of a protest with people holding flags that say 'HAWAII' and 'I N D E P E N D E N T'.



S. Wallis

Hawaii Nation? Some Thoughts, Part I

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The question has been raised: Can Hawaii be considered a nation, and what attitude should revolutionaries take toward the Ohana and other nationalist organizations in Hawaii?

In the first place, Hawaii nationalism springs primarily from the existence of capitalist social relations through the development of U.S. colonialism, and the oppression of nationalities and working people locally by the ruling class. Capitalism divides exploited classes of people along racial (and sexual) lines today as it did during the early plantation days in Hawaii. Capitalism perverts cultural traditions and makes a mockery of Hawaiian history, packaging it like “canned aloha” for tourists and profits. Capitalism alienates land from the users, makes it a “commodity” on the market, and destroys the heritage of Hawaii as it alters the landscape and attacks the cultural roots of the people. The feelings of nationalism felt by many Hawaiians and others of Hawaii’s peoples are natural reactions to this oppression.

Yet, knowing this, what is the role of nationalism in Hawaii?

Right to Self-Determination

Revolutionary Marxism has held that nationalism (in the sense of setting apart the interests of your “own” nation against those of another) in the era of imperialism is no longer unqualifiedly progressive, but that each oppressed nation, nonetheless, has the right to self-determination— up to and including the right to politically secede from an oppressor nation. Given this, socialists support nationalist movements in their struggles against imperialist domination, and at the same time, argue that nationalism itself stands in the way of overall political development of the working class internationally. Generally speaking, the task of complete national self-determination can only be solved on the basis of economically united peoples, purged of bourgeois rule. However, the relationship between the national aspirations of an oppressed people and the working class movement has not been easily resolved.

In particular, cases such as Hawaii where the nationalities are intimately intermingled, not separated into clear geographical concentrations, present difficult problems. We cannot depend on old “masters” for the solution. We must taste the prickly pear in order to know it . . . we must struggle with the reality of Hawaii nationalism.

Perhaps a useful way to assist in examining the national question in Hawaii would be to set forth some of the possible positions revolutionaries could take on the question of Hawaiian nationalism. In doing so, it is essential that this be carried out within the context of building a revolutionary program which aims to unite workers of all nationalities and sexes in Hawaii. We must also remember that the key question for non-Hawaiian socialists is to attack our own ruling class even if we disagree with the ideology of Hawaii nationalism.

Possible Positions on Hawaiian Nationalism

1. Diversion. The national struggle is a diversion from the class struggle and is essentially petty-bourgeois. Hawaii is integrated into the U.S. The Hawaii “nation” no longer exists (or perhaps

never existed) and is unlikely to exist in the future. Hawaiians are now simply an oppressed minority like Samoans. Blacks, etc.

The role of socialists must be to oppose the national movement and contrast to it a revolutionary perspective for all of Hawaii's working class people.

2. Reparations. The U.S. illegally deprived Hawaiians of their nationhood (1893) and thus Hawaiians should receive monetary compensation. This could be in the form of cash payments or in an extension of various welfare and community services or organizations.

3. Land. The chief aspect of U.S. imperialism in Hawaii was the illegal seizure of lands, therefore Federal land should be returned to the Hawaiian people, either on an individual basis or to a revived Hawaiian Homes Commission, or into parks and sanctuaries.

4. Self-determination. The Hawaiian people (as an ethnic group) are a nation and thus have the right to self-determination. Hawaii is no longer a separate national political entity "oppressed" by the U.S. but Hawaiians still have, and feel, a national oppression from the history and workings of imperialist expansion in the Pacific. The exact implications of this position can only be seen in the unfolding of the struggle, but it implies a loss of control by the U.S. over a portion of "its subjects," as a positive goal.

Short-term demands could involve Hawaiian language and cultural issues, affirmative action, etc. Ultimately the demand might be extended to cover actual separation of a part of Hawaii from the United States under the control of a Hawaiian government, or some forms of local autonomy.

5. Secession. Hawaii should secede from the U.S. as the best means of ending two centuries of colonial oppression against Hawaii and its immigrant people. Hawaii is essentially a "third world" country and will have to break politically from the U.S.

before its economy can be built up and standard of living improved.

These probably cover the major ground of the various possible positions, but where should we begin in investigating them? First, “a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions” must be made.

The U.S. economy, while partially recovered from the recession of 1974-75, is unlikely to regain the high growth patterns found after World War II. This implies a depressive effect for Hawaii’s economy, which is increasingly tied to the U.S. business cycle by the fragile tourism industry. As a result, corporations and politicians will be trying to co-opt any resistance and force the workers to bear the cost of capitalist crisis . . . lower wages, higher taxes, fewer public services, greater environmental destruction, U.S. nationality tie jingoism. The “Business is Life” campaign by the Hawaii Business Council is an indication of the propaganda that can be expected in the future, as well as the employers’ use of Con Con against the public: workers’ right to strike and continued attacks on unemployment and welfare benefits.

Second, the distortion of Hawaii’s economy through the colonial and neo-colonial development of sugar, pineapple, defense, and tourism means that Hawaii’s working class is particularly atomized and isolated. The unions have lost much of their strength with the decline of plantation agriculture and the inability to organize effectively in the tourist industry. The traditional ties of labor to the Democrats are disarming the labor movement politically.

Third, the political backwardness of the working class movement in the U.S. and the isolation of Hawaii from other Pacific areas suggests that Hawaii socialists cannot wait for the growth of an international revolutionary movement to have an impact in Hawaii. Eventually Hawaii’s socialists must link up with those on the mainland (and probably in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific area). But in the meantime we must rapidly and consistently develop a revolutionary program with immediate

impact in Hawaii. The problems of slower economic growth in Hawaii are going to present some real dangers to the workers movement here.

Finally, as a result of these problems and the specific manner in which tourism and the U.S. military presence attack Hawaiian culture, we can expect the Hawaiian struggle to remain in the forefront until a more generalized working class response and political movement begins. This is not a call for socialists to put all their eggs in the Ohana basket, but to realize that many of the best militants in Hawaii will be involved in these struggles, as they have been in the past. Besides supporting the Hawaiian struggle for its own sake, socialists should also recognize that routes to the working class appear in many places, and the national struggle may be a key one in Hawaii. Also key to unity with these struggles is the understanding that their victories weaken our common foes —the military and the corporations it protects.

S. Wallis

Positions on the Hawaii National Question, Part II

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(This article is a continuation of last month's opening piece on the important issue of the Hawaii national question: Is Hawaii a nation, and how should socialists relate the struggle against national oppression to working class struggle for socialist revolution? The author, in this concluding article, assesses the various positions on the question and sums up the tasks ahead. Your responses are welcome, and needed.—ed.)

A Diversion? This position involves one of the most difficult contradictions. On the one hand, it recognizes the objective reality that nationalism (as opposed to demanding the right to self-determination) in Hawaii is primarily petty bourgeois and that the real solution to the oppression of Hawaiians can only finally be brought about through socialist revolution. It also recognizes the fact of the effective integration of Hawaii into the U.S. On the other hand, by denying the specific oppression of Hawaiians which has developed historically, this position amounts to confirming the ruling class notion of a pluralistic and homogenous state, a "melting pot" society with no substantial national or ethnic grievances or injustices.

What is the nature of the "Hawaiian nation?" It is relatively clear that from 1893 to the 1930s, Hawaii was essentially a colonial

possession of the U.S. Political independence was already becoming tenuous by the time of the Great Mahele in 1848. From the beginnings of the sugar industry, Hawaiian society became more and more dominated by capitalist formations tied to U.S. monopoly capitalism in an almost classic Marxist determination. However, it is relatively clear as well that up to the preparations for World War II, socialists would have supported attempts for national self-determination for Hawaii.

With the rise of World War II, both U.S. and local bourgeois interests found commercial and political reasons for Hawaii to be integrated into the U.S., and this occurred fairly rapidly. By 1940 the population was already 26% haole (foreign, usually meaning Caucasian), second only to the Japanese workers. Hawaii as a nation had dissolved.

However, just as the Native Americans (Indians) have been demanding a measure of self-determination on the Mainland, the intermingling of peoples in Hawaii has not overcome the cultural and socio-economic oppression of Hawaiians in their own land. When one considers that Hawaii has been a state for only 18 years, and effectively under integration by the U.S. only for 40 or 50 years, and when one recognizes the pockets of Hawaiian culture which exist uneasily with capitalism in rural areas, then the special interests of Hawaiians are better seen.

The crux of the national question may come down to these questions: how deeply do the Hawaiians feel their oppression, how oppressed are they materially, and would the vast majority of Hawaiians actively support a progressive national movement? Socialists arguing that the national movement is a diversion must have strong answers to these questions.

Reparations? The basis of the reparations argument is really that of recognizing U.S. control of Hawaii today, denying the existence of national status for Hawaiians, opting instead for special status within the confines of the U.S. It would seem that this position is the least tenable for socialists since it seeks to create special advantages based on heritage, rather than citing current

oppression. Apparently, this position represents liberal or paternalistic interests trying to get a bigger piece of the pie for themselves. Socialists have few interests in compensating former big landowners for losses which another part of the capitalist class has appropriated.

Land? This position seems to be an improvement over the financial reparations position since it imposes no special levy against other sectors of Hawaii and U.S. people through additional taxation. It is, however, a very unclear position at present... which land is to be repossessed, who is going to get it, etc.? In many cases, the land position amounts to setting up various Hawaiians in the same special status of reparations winners, with no acknowledgment of ongoing oppression. The question of turning the land over to parks, sanctuaries and other public areas is admirable, but hardly a key component of the national struggle.

Self-determination? The ultimate conclusion of this position, separation of the Hawaiian islands into Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian political formations, seems to some so extraordinary that the position cannot be feasible. However, there are many problems which cannot be solved under capitalism (such as full employment) and yet remain important and effective demands. The position recognizes the specific oppression of Hawaiians in the context of the territory's integration into the U.S. It helps replace U.S. national chauvinism with anti-imperialism, and can also be the basis for generating a higher socialist consciousness in Hawaii.

Many of the demands in the process of self-determination and rejection of the legitimacy of the existing government situation concerning Hawaiians will be difficult to work out. Others will pose sharp problems for the State and the U.S., such as attempts to put land areas such as Kaboolawe under Hawaiian control. If the position moved toward its ultimate conclusion, one would expect that a widespread social movement would have already erupted in Hawaii.

Secession? Although socialists support the right to self-determination, they also realize the actual implementation of that demand may not be in the interests of the working-class movement in the oppressed nation. In fact, the secession question is most closely related to the chauvinist and backward immigration limitations proposed by Ariyoshi, which must be thoroughly rejected. The idea of secession fosters the illusion of “self-sufficiency” and “progressive” elements of the local bourgeoisie. In this climate, secession should not be supported by revolutionaries, although it might be in a radically changed social and political situation in the future.

Summing Up. We would justify the right of self-determination for Hawaiians on the basis of historic and current oppression. Main of the questions included in this process pose difficult questions for the monopoly capitalists and can be used to attack their rule. At the same time we must realize that the major present dangers for Hawaii socialists are Hawaii localism (implied by the secession argument) and insensitivity to the Hawaiian struggle. Socialists must analyze this question more completely, integrate the existence of the national movement into an overall revolutionary program striking at bourgeois rule, and attempt to link up with revolutionaries internationally. In fact, without this theory, program and practice, the chances for degeneration of the national struggle, such that it becomes a hurdle for socialists, become greater month by month.

Ivan Hoe

Thoughts on the Hawaii National Question

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A national question arises when the people of a given territory are systematically oppressed as a people beyond that which can be explained by the “normal” exploitation that goes on under capitalism. In the U.S., national questions have arisen concerning black, Chicano, Indian and Puerto Rican peoples. In Spain there exists a Basque national question; in Iran, a Kurdish national question; in Ethiopia, an Eritrean national question, and in Canada, a Quebec national question.

In essence, the Hawaii national question is this: “Is Hawaii a permanent part of the United States like Ohio or Pennsylvania, in spite of its having been forcibly annexed, its geographical location, and its history of Polynesian and oriental peoples? It will not do simply to say “yes” or “no” based on our own subjective wishes or thinking. We must have a real study of the question. The answer, once researched will give us clarity in defining our political tasks.

For years now, the socialist movement in Hawaii has been characterized by jumping into support for this or that community eviction struggle or strike with no overall guiding line as to where it all leads, except vaguely eventually to socialism. But as Chairman Mao has so succinctly put it, “When a task, no matter

which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy.” (“On Contradiction”).

Whenever the need to deepen our theoretical work is raised, someone will inevitably call out, “Yes, but we don’t want theory divorced from practice.” In the general sense this is true, but in the context where practice divorced from theory is the rule, this amounts to a coverup of the predominant economism and spontaneity.

What is necessary at this point is to make an all-sided investigation of the political economy of Hawaii, past and present, and to examine the attitudes regarding Hawaii’s status as the 50th state which exists among the various classes and nationalities of Hawaii. Certainly among Hawaiians that status is being questioned; others are somewhat open about it, but are non-committal. Being integrated into the USA has brought a measure of prosperity to some, it cannot be doubted. On the other hand, others are alienated from the U.S. and everything it stands for. At present, Hawaii is very dependent on the U.S. mainland, but does it have to be that way? Attacks on tourists and military personnel are a symptom of the resentment and frustration of the dispossessed. With the military occupying 25% of Oahu’s land as well as Pearl Harbor, and with resort developments, condominiums and golf courses sprouting up like weeds, many people are saying “Nuff already!”

But since capitalism pushes relentlessly into every nook and cranny regardless of the desires of existing residents, the problem will get continually worse until forced to do otherwise. This pressure then generates an interest on the part of oppressed people to resist. This process is the dialectics of historical relations between the oppressor and the oppressed.

As is well known, Hawaii has a significance for military strategy beyond the “mere” economic investment in the form of industry and tourism here. Hawaii is the command center for the military capacity of U.S. imperialism in the Pacific and Asia. As such, it

will go to extreme lengths to avoid giving it up. On the other hand, the very presence of such military concentration makes Oahu an inevitable target in a nuclear war as long as that concentration exists. This is the key point. This is why the Hawaii National Question has international significance. If Hawaii's people, under the leadership of the working class, unify against the further intrusion of U.S. imperialism and force it to retreat, and in the process defeat the local collaborators, then Hawaii will be in a far better position to survive a world war. Such actions would also make a significant contribution toward reducing the danger of a U.S.-provoked world war by destabilizing a key base area.

So far in the discussion of the issue, two distinct positions have emerged. The RCP, continuing the traditions of the CPUSA, regards Hawaii as an inseparable part of the USA, according to their *Programme*. The Workers Viewpoint Organization declares that Hawaii is a colony and urges independence as long as imperialism has not been overthrown on the U.S. mainland. However, many questions remain to be answered, and any solution must involve the organized strength of the working class and its allies. So far, this is not an issue that has gripped the masses. But it is likely to do so before long.

The national question is not fundamentally a question of race, but of class. Formal political independence for a nation without soon attaining economic independence leads to a continued all-around dependency on the oppressor nation for jobs, industrial goods, and even for food itself. A radical break has to be made with the economic order that binds the oppressed nation to the oppressor. This requires a socialist revolution and a smashing of the control of the existing capitalist class and its structures that perpetuate that control. Economic independence does not mean, of course, cessation of trade relations with other countries, but cessation of unequal trade.

Such a transformation cannot come about without the working class at its head, together with a Marxist-Leninist party to guide it. Even then, the danger of revisionism lurks in the shadows, as we have seen in the USSR and China. But the struggle is doomed to

failure without M-L leadership. For such leadership to arise, the working class must come to understand the political economy of Hawaii, both its internal workings right here, and how it connects with the mainland. But this knowledge does not come spontaneously through day-to-day shop struggles or even in major strikes. As Lenin pointed out 75 years ago, this knowledge must be brought to the working class by that portion of the intelligentsia which takes the class stand of the workers and seeks to merge with them in forming a class-conscious proletarian revolution. In turn, this group, which has the training to do this work, must do it, not tail after each spontaneous movement that arises from the oppression of capitalism. Failure to engage in this work and to unite with the deepest sentiments of the people for liberation, can lead to race war by default, as people explode with anger at the nearest vulnerable target, such as isolated GI's or tourists now, and perhaps attack larger groups of people later.

Regardless of the solution to the Hawaii National Question, whether as part of the U.S. working class struggle or as a striving for independence, the enemy is U.S. imperialism, which is responsible for both the exploitation of the working class and the oppression of non-white nationalities, here, on the mainland, and around the world. To make the details of this exploitation and oppression concretely visible as a system is the task of revolutionary intellectuals. Failure to do this educational work amounts to betrayal, even more than of so-called "labor leaders" who settle for contracts favorable to management by selling out workers' demands.

(When the dominant worldwide mode of production is capitalist, it is unlikely that unequal trade relations can be ended by a revolution. Even with trade among self-proclaimed "socialist" nations, the nature of the trade is still commodity production for exchange, as Kim II Sung has written. While a revolution may help to decrease the inequality of trade relations, the disadvantages of a non-industrial country that must trade with technologically advanced countries will remain for a long time.

Concerning the question of a conscious vanguard party, several successful revolutionary movements have claimed that they were not led by a Marxist-Leninist party (although the leadership was influenced by M-L ideas). These countries include Cuba, Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau. M-L parties were officially formed after victory (In the case of Cuba, the old Communist Party was taken over by the new revolutionary leadership. –Ed.)

John Reinecke

The National Question in Hawaii

Hawaiian Nationalism: A Non-Question

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Editor's Introduction: A group of individuals have joined efforts to try to stimulate some new thinking and research on the question of a Hawaii or Hawaiian nation and its relationship to the working class movement. Articles are being sought, for publication in *Modern Times* or in a special Hawaii National Question Journal. They should be written from an anti-capitalist perspective, no longer than 12 pages (double-spaced) in length, with terms and categories defined and a style which is non-rhetorical. Some of the questions posed are: What is the significance of this question? Is Hawaii a colony? Should secession be a key demand? What are the just demands of the native Hawaiians? What is the meaning of the sovereignty some Hawaiian groups are claiming? How does the national question relate to the overall revolutionary movement in Hawaii and the world, and vice versa?

CONTRIBUTIONS of money are also welcome and can be made to the People's Fund, P.O. Box 11208, Honolulu 96828.

* * *

It is my position that time and energy devoted to “the Hawaiian national question” is mostly time and energy wasted, which could be devoted to much more important issues.

In this limited space, I shall disregard all definitions of nationality, since, no matter how many or how few criteria of nationality fit a population, the crucial question is whether or not it looks upon itself as a nation and behaves accordingly. We should also bear in mind that nationhood does not necessarily entail demand for political sovereignty: the Scots are a good example of this.

I will point out, however, that the term “Hawaiian nationalism” confuses two related but different things: a sense of nationhood including Island residents of all ancestries and a sense of nationhood among those residents who have some aboriginal ancestry. I shall refer to these as Island nationalism and Native nationalism respectively.

Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians as classified by the census amount to about one-fifth of our population. It follows that without backing from Island nationalism, Native nationalism is not likely to get very far. Yet obviously outside a small minority of Native (part-) Hawaiians, a sense of Island nationalism is almost nonexistent.

What might give rise and support to a sense of Island nationality? First, a feeling that Hawaiian Island traditions, culture, and social ties are distinctly different from and perhaps in opposition to those of the mainland U.S.A. Second, a sense of being politically deprived—relegated to an inferior grade of citizenship. Third, a sense of having been and still being economically exploited. Some left-wingers appear to rely chiefly upon the last as a plausible basis for advocating a Hawaiian Island separatism or even sovereignty.

But what are the facts? Progressively during this century and especially since the Second World War, Hawaii has become more closely tied to the mainland, culturally and demographically. With the coming of air travel, there is great two-way traffic between Hawaii and the mainland. We are acutely aware of the recent

influx of mainlanders, but this is largely matched by emigration to the mainland, for both temporary and permanent residence. Consequently there are increasingly strong ties of kinship—often across racial lines—and friendship between Islanders and mainlanders. Our cultural life, in the broadest sense of the term, is getting more indistinguishable from that of the mainland. English is now our usual home language. Add to all this, eighty years of indoctrination in American values, and primary loyalty not to Hawaii but to the United States. For the Japanese in particular, American nationality is something which they have bought with their blood as well as with their sweat.

Because of racial prejudice here as well as on the mainland, Hawaii was relegated to Territorial status long after a white population would have been allowed statehood.

(Territorial status was a great advance over the unabashed racial oligarchy of the Republic, with its disfranchisement of Orientals.) Older citizens like myself remember vividly the threatened loss of even this limited self-government during the Massie case (1932) and the nearly complete loss of self-government under Army rule (1941-44). Statehood has unquestionably brought a greater sense of political security; it has brought also a sense of increased participation, and even influence in national political life.

ECONOMIC COLONY?

Hawaii certainly has substantial remnants of economic colonialism. Most Islanders probably are worried over our great dependence upon so economically fragile an industry as tourism, with its low wages and outside ownership. It does not follow, however, that many Islanders see themselves as economically oppressed colonials. In the past 45 years, real income, the standard of living, and personal expectations have increased markedly. Participation in the cultural amenities has greatly expanded. From a per capita income above those of only two states, Hawaii has reached the middle ranks nationally. The “career open to talent,” regardless of race, has greatly expanded. From being practically

without unions in 1935, Hawaii has become one of the most heavily unionized states.

In short, Hawaii has visibly progressed, not retrogressed, as part of the United States, and few of its residents see anything for them in Island nationalism.

Native Nationalism, on the other hand, has a real foundation in history, including organization in a nation-state, nominally sovereign and headed by a Native puppet monarch. For many Native Hawaiians there is an emotional motive for nationalism in resentment of the failure of many of their number to “make the grade” in Island society as other ethnic groups which started out with fewer surface advantages have done. However, definition of Native nationalism is complicated by (1) uncertainty as to who are Native Hawaiians, (2) uncertainty as to what sort of role Natives are seeking relative to other ethnic groups, and (3) lack of generally acceptable leadership in defining the Hawaiian role.

WHO ARE HAWAIIANS?

For some purposes only individuals who can plausibly claim 50% or more Native ancestry are Hawaiians. For statistical purposes, anyone with claimed Native ancestry however slight is a part-Hawaiian, no matter though he identifies culturally and socially with some other group or simply as a “local”. My own rough guess is that no more than 15% of the population think of themselves as “Hawaiians”—a rather small minority.

This dilution of Hawaiianness and minority status is important in considering Native relations with the rest of the Island population. Put bluntly: To what extent are other Islanders willing to accord Natives special political standing? To what extent are they willing to accept the assumption that by reason of their Nativeness, Hawaiians are specially qualified to speak for all Islanders on issues of general concern, such as the bombing of Kahoolawe and the threat to our ecology from badly controlled hotel building?

I have heard Hawaiians call for sovereignty, but I have not yet heard anyone define what he means by that term. Generally it is accepted to mean political independence. Do Native nationalists who speak of sovereignty mean that Hawaiians should govern the other 80% of the population as well as themselves under the Hawaiian flag? Or that part of the Islands should be set aside for Hawaiians, who now live intermixed with the general population, as a locally self-governing group, somewhat on the lines of an American Indian reservation? Or simply that needy Hawaiians should receive special assistance in adjusting successfully to predominant American patterns? It should be self-evident that anything approaching real Native political sovereignty is romantic nonsense, unacceptable to the bulk of the population and probably to the great majority of Native Hawaiians.

In any event, no effective political capital can be made of Native nationalism until Hawaiians themselves have reached some consensus on what they want—until they begin to put their act together.

Robert H. Stauffer

Class and Ethnicity: Applying Wallerstein's Core-Periphery Concept

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Class analysis and Ethnic Studies have had an evolving history—both locally and around the world. This is due in part to inherent conflicts between the two subjects. We have occasionally seen reactionary forces opposing class consciousness while striving to develop ethnic consciousness. Why is this so?..and especially so for our case in Hawaii?

Several forces in Hawaii have sought to remove or divert interest from class analysis. Modern “liberal” writers such as Lawrence Fuchs (Hawaii Pono) and Gavan Daws (Shoal of Time) have introduced such concepts as ethnic identity, social mobility, assimilation and integration. These then tend to infer that class analysis is only dubiously relevant to any analysis of Hawaii. Instead, our attention is diverted to studying ethnic groups.

Such liberal intellectuals were of course opposed to the old guard oligarchy in Hawaii on various philosophical points, yet the oligarchy (for its own obvious vested interests), like the liberals, had always attempted to stifle class consciousness. One method utilized by the oligarchs was active contributions to differences and antagonisms

among the various ethnic groups of the non-oligarchy strata. A third group—other, older scholars—tended also to reject a class analysis in favor of emphasizing the continuing “reality” of ethnic loyalties.

And then there were the leaders of the ethnic groups themselves. At one time or another, ethnic leaders have held key positions, especially in the political arena, in Hawaii; yet traditionally many of these individuals rejected class analysis and appealed to—and attempted to heighten—ethnic bonds and prejudices. As Immanuel Wallerstein comments (chapter 12, *The Capitalist World Economy*): “That such a denial (of class) serves particular ideological functions for men in power seems so banal as to be scarcely worth noting.”

In summary, all these diverse forces—old guard scholars, modern liberal intellectuals, oligarchs and ethnic leaders—rejected class analysis, largely because certain classes were “missing” at one point of Hawaiian history or another, or that ethnic links were far more “important” than class membership, or that while “classes” might have existed in ancient Rome or 19th century Western Europe, that they have not existed in any “real” sense in the history of Hawaii.

It is obvious that class consciousness is not the only form of consciousness. If we view the world around us, we see that ethnic consciousness is a far more frequent phenomenon than class consciousness, with the same general types of groups noted above contributing to keep class consciousness down.

To understand this better, Immanuel Wallerstein has suggested at least two distinct parts of the world economic system. First, the core states and secondly the peripheral countries which are exploited by the core.

HAWAII AS PERIPHERY. . .

Hawaii has an interesting position of being a largely peripheral part of the world economy, and yet also a political part of the United States—the chief capitalist core nation.

Hawaii for much of its history has been a clearly peripheral economic entity, first under the political sphere of Great Britain and then the U.S. In the early period (up until a century ago), class consciousness was not yet a relevant political tool. The local land owners (na ali'i, na konohiki, and later the white oligarchy) clearly felt their prosperity lay in the stability of a continued smooth flow of trade. Any type of struggle to upset this stability (either on the basis of "class" or "ethnicity") represented an interruption and a threat. The local ethnic (Hawaiian) white-collar intellectuals, government workers, and private office workers were too small a group at this point to make a real impact on changing the system.

But over time this group grew in size and contributed to social struggle. The attempted native armed revolts of 1889 and 1895 were led by this social stratum, as was the case with much of the political agitation of the 20th century (first by Hawaiians, and later by Japanese and other ethnic groups). But most of these revolts were primarily seen in non-class terms, in ethnic terms, with the agitators essentially wanting to replace the existing power structure with their own people.

The broader working class – often subsistence farmers or agricultural laborers – tended only occasionally to be class conscious, as relevant action was difficult for them to carry out: a class-conscious proletariat can emerge only when it represents an easily-organized large sector of the total population. Such an emergence occurred finally with the plantation laborers towards the middle of the 20th century, but this process has been muted by the further "development" of the world economy, which has reshaped Hawaii's economy into several directions (tourism, civilian government, the military, and the plantations being the four largest sectors, respectively, in the current Hawaii economy), thus inhibiting class organization.

Furthermore, the attempted integration of Hawaii into the politico-economic life of the U.S.—especially following "Statehood" in 1959—has brought about the further partial muting of class conflict by the absorption of certain skilled workers and professionals into privileged parts of the economy, and from the relegation of "sub-proletarian" jobs (menial service jobs, intermittent labor, criminal element, all

often connected with tourism), to distinctive ethnic groups. Hence, as the old oligarchy played one ethnic group off against another, we have today parts of the proletariat played off one against the other on the basis of radical differences between privileged (and often “top level” union) workers* salaries, benefit plans, and job security, versus the unprivileged (and often “bottom level” union, or non-union) workers’ salaries, and general lack of job security and benefit plans.

What emerges from this brief sketch is the fact that the true conflicts of society (economic class struggle) are often masked behind apparent conflicts (often ethnic divisiveness). In the modern era, these “illusionary” conflicts based on ethnic consciousness are much more common than class struggle. And—unless we are very careful—any attempt at “ethnic studies” can unwittingly become a tool to foster more ethnic consciousness and thus further obscure the concepts of class.

For, to paraphrase Wallerstein, the heart of our argument here is based on the assumption that if a person really wishes to learn lessons from history, it is important first of all to locate the “primary contradiction” of a given political situation at a given time. And, in general, in core countries the primary contradiction is the struggle between economic classes for the control of the nation’s political structure. This struggle, when it is sharp, becomes a true class struggle and uses “class conscious” terminology, tactics and analysis.

But in the peripheral parts of the world, the primary contradiction is broader, being between the core powers and their local allies against the majority of the local population. Hence, any periphery “anti-imperialist” struggle against exploitation from the core becomes a type of true class struggle, on a broader scale.

Hawaii has portions of both these perspectives: a classic struggle In national terms between the two economic classes, and at the same time an international struggle with other peripheries and former peripheries against core domination and exploitation.

For the existence of economic classes is not lessened by various groups resisting the study of class analysis, or promoting exclusive ethnic consciousness, or by the rarity of true class struggle. If the main actors in the world were to foresake their dedication and interest in other things and were to instead preoccupy themselves with the class conflict, the present capitalist world system would not long survive in its present form. Within this perspective, the current strength locally, nationally, and internationally of ethno-national consciousness is in fact one of the most cohesive factors holding together the existing capitalist world-system.

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