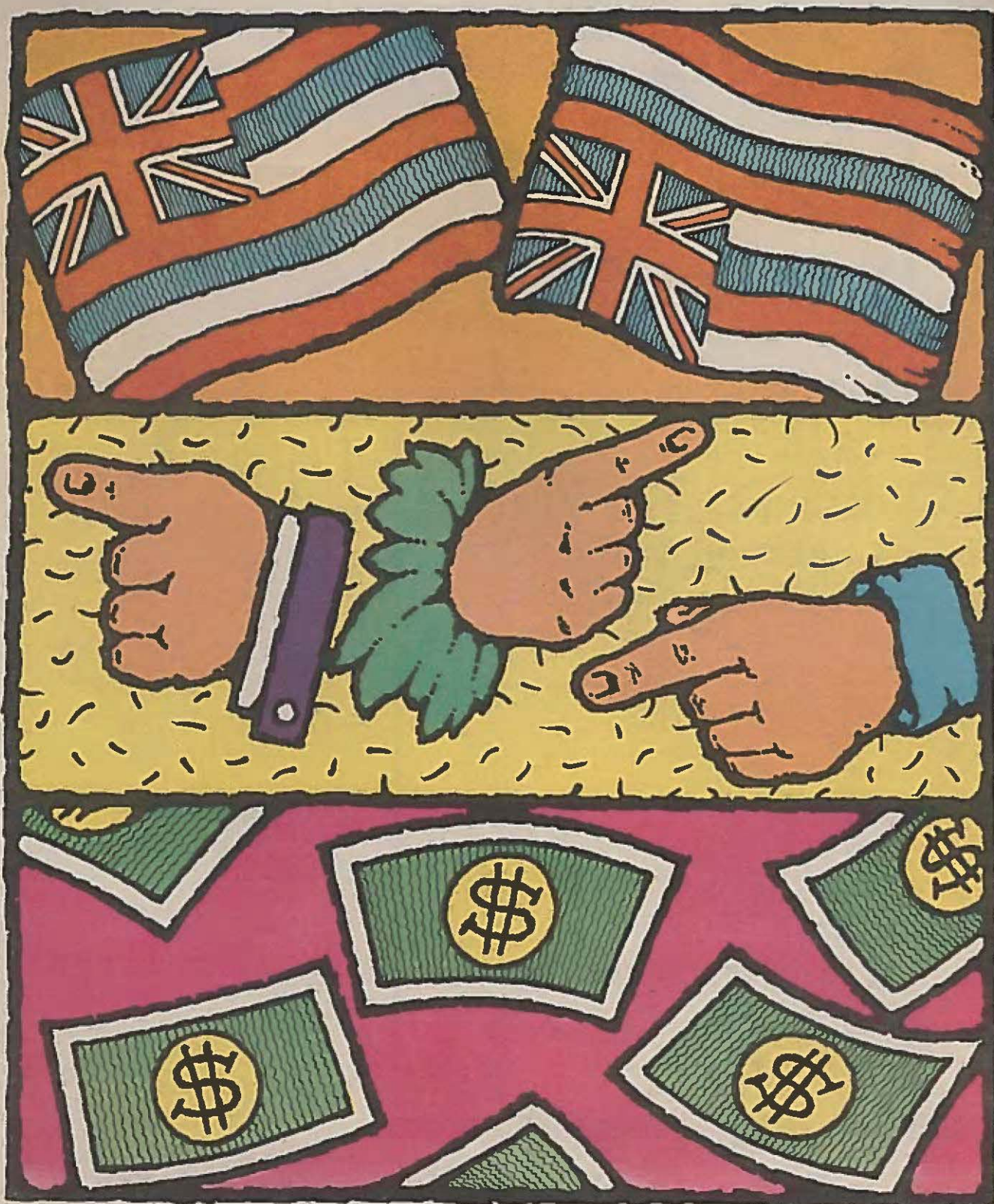


# Weekly

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FREE



## Other Voices

Two writers ask some tough and different questions about the future of the sovereignty movement.



# The Politics of Sovereignty

Who's who and what they're after

**In the fall of next year, all Hawaiians age 16 and over will be asked to vote in a plebiscite on whether Hawaiians should proceed to consider sovereignty. If the vote is yes, Hawaiians will convene in gatherings that could culminate in a proposed constitution as early as 1998. If the vote is no, it will be the end of Hawaiian sovereignty as a feasible concept for at least a generation. The outcome will be determined by the politics of sovereignty.**

## Volcanic eruptions

Gov. Waihee and the state Legislature in 1993 created the Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission. Comprised of 19 Hawaiians selected by Gov. Waihee from a group nominated by Hawaiian organizations, the commission's purpose was to advise the Legislature on sovereignty.

A year later the commission reported its findings, and in turn the 1994 Legislature passed House Bill 3630. This metamorphosed the commission into the Hawaiian Sovereignty Elections Council, charged with preparing for and conducting a plebiscite on sovereignty in 1995.

The Legislature appropriated \$900,000 for the effort with the provision that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, OHA, match that sum. OHA, established by constitutional amendment in 1978 to benefit Hawaiians, is a quasi-state agency run by an elected board of Hawaiian trustees.

At this decisive point for Hawaiian sovereignty, perhaps the seminal moment, OHA developed a firm sense of fiduciary obligation. Citing its "fiscal responsibility to see that trust dollars are spent appropriately," the trustees of OHA decided to parcel out only \$547,114 in matching funds.

One OHA trustee, Samuel L. Kealoha Jr., voted against any funding at all for the Elections Council, describing its members as "swines in the trough."

Hawaiian activist and Elections Council member Davianna McGregor responded that

Mr. Kealoha "is mean, insulting and ugly to any group outside of his organization."

Open political warfare had broken out among the various factions in the politics of sovereignty. Not counting the Hawaiian Sovereignty Elections Council, there are six major factions at work in the politics of sovereignty.

## Ka Lahui

Ka Lahui, "the nation," of which this writer is an honorary citizen, is a pro-sovereignty group headed by its governor or *kia'aina*, Mililani Trask. With 20,000 citizens and a written constitution, Ka Lahui advocates and claims for itself nation-within-a-nation sovereignty.

Mililani Trask, who combines a powerful intellect with warmth and charisma, is one of Hawaii's great natural resources. However, she and Ka Lahui have worked themselves into a corner. Ka Lahui refused to be represented on the Sovereignty Advisory Commission, citing it as an oxymoronic example of state interference with self-determination. If Hawaiians vote yes on the plebiscite, Ka Lahui will be an outsider. If Hawaiians vote no, Ka Lahui may have helped to defeat its own cause.

Mililani is attempting now to move Ka Lahui more into the mainstream. Through its candidate endorsement committee, Ka Lahui is supporting Ben Cayetano for governor. This has caused great consternation, and one Ka Lahui citizen reacted by writing, "Cayetano is part of the old political game. ... Mililani Trask obviously cut some back-room deals." Mililani responds that Ka Lahui has to be involved to exercise any leverage.

## Ka Pakaukau

Ka Pakaukau, "the [meeting] table," is an alliance headed by Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell, a medical doctor. His diagnosis is clear: "The United States stole our nation. A thief has to return the stolen goods. It's as simple as that." Blaisdell himself became a convert to sovereignty while working on Hawaiian health issues in 1983. Only 10 years later he was instrumental in presenting the Peoples' International Tribunal, a mock trial of the United States for its alleged genocidal, ethnical and other crimes against Hawaiians.

Dr. Blaisdell, like a few other sovereignty activists, seems to embrace the therapeutic history that all whites are bad and all others are good. This kind of perspective had led another outspoken sovereignty leader to be chastized by the *New York Review of Books* for "indiscriminate use" of racism. (Following a TV encounter, yet another writer told me, "You [have] what I consider to be racist attitudes toward Hawaiians since you obviously don't want to learn about the history of violence of your people, that is, haole, against Hawaiians.")

Blaisdell, who wants a separate Hawaiian nation, is outspoken in his opposition to the Sovereignty Elections Council. He wants it to fail. "We hope," he has said, "there are sufficient people in the Sovereignty Committee that will keep it so unstable that there won't be a final settlement."

## The Office of Hawaiian Affairs

The "Standing Committee Report" from the 1978 constitutional convention tells us that OHA is intended to provide "self-determination ... and the unification of all native Hawaiian people." OHA has been unable to fulfill this objective and, as Mililani Trask points out, seems more intent on obtaining "financial benefits for the maintenance of its own bureaucracy."

Even as OHA was refusing to fully fund the Sovereignty Elections Council, OHA, according to one of its trustees, was continuing to spend \$500,000 a year on its own public-relations campaign. The spin effort was designed by Hill & Knowlton Hawaii, a PR firm, to "gain support for OHA as a leader in issues relating to Hawaiian people." (The parent company of the PR firm has done campaigns for Papa Doc of Haiti, the Church of Scientology and Robert Vesco and last year was featured in a *Business*

*Ethics* magazine article, "Lying for a Living.")

As well as a PR agency, OHA retains husband-and-wife attorneys Jon Van Dyke and Sherry Broder. Van Dyke, a UH constitutional law professor, helped develop OHA's self-seeking "Blueprint for Native Hawaiian Self-Determination." Another tool used by some of the trustees of OHA is what Tom Wolfe in 1970 described as "Mau-Mauing," the use of racial and ethnic game playing. Even Hawaiians who criticize OHA are accused by trustees of doing things "the haole way." All this has the ring of irrefutable political correctness and is reminiscent of Kevin Costner's long-winded speeches in *Dances with Wolves*.

The state's reliance on OHA to help fund the Sovereignty Advisory Elections Council is a victory for OHA. If OHA does the funding, then OHA can hope to be in charge as called for by Van Dyke's blueprint and as touted by its PR.

## Dennis Kanahahele's Sovereign Nation State of Hawaii

Only seven months ago Dennis "Bumpy" Kanahahele, leader of the Ohana Council, declared independence for the Ohana Council's Sovereign Nation State of Hawaii. Efforts by Blaisdell and others to stop Kanahahele failed. Wrote Blaisdell just 10 days before, "Our immediate concern is that Bumpy's proclamation ... may cause more dissension [sic] in our movement." Blaisdell also presciently feared that the Establishment media would provide disproportionate coverage of Kanahahele in order to discredit the sovereignty movement.

Kanahahele went ahead but almost immediately discredited his own concept with a master plan based on gambling. The new Hawaiian currency was to be based on "a formula that equates the exchange rate to the profits that are made from gaming on a day to day basis." Mililani Trask described all this maneuvering as the "selling out of sovereignty."

## The Bishop Estate

The Bishop Estate unites most Hawaiians in opposition to what it has called in ads "A History of Stealing Hawaiian Lands" but not in favor of sovereignty. Described by the *Economist* of London as "Hawaii's most bizarre political institution," the estate distances itself from sovereignty because sovereignty would threaten its own status as one of the power elite of Hawaii.

## The Hawaiian silent majority

The Hawaiian silent majority is the most important faction of all. This is a majoritarian faction comprised of 200,000-plus Hawaiians who will vote in the plebiscite but who are undecided. One observer of the silent majority comments, "Many of them think of sovereignty as synonymous with secession. ... All they see is the radicals." More reasonably, Hawaiian Sovereignty Elections Council member Bruss Kepeler, in a thoughtful speech to the Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce, pointed out that the silent majority is likely to vote against sovereignty unless perceptions are altered and acceptable economic models developed.

## Hawaii's annus mirabilis

Trying to bring these factions to consensus is the Hawaiian Sovereignty Elections Council. The Elections Council advocates neither any particular form of sovereignty nor even sovereignty itself, only that the Hawaiians learn about sovereignty and decide whether to proceed.

The Elections Council, even though given only seven lines in the Waihee administration's slick 50-page tribute to its own accomplishments, may someday be looked upon as the governor's greatest contribution. It is this group that has quietly and impressively moved the Hawaiians toward a plebiscite in 1995.

During the coming year it is the politics and factions of Hawaiian sovereignty that will

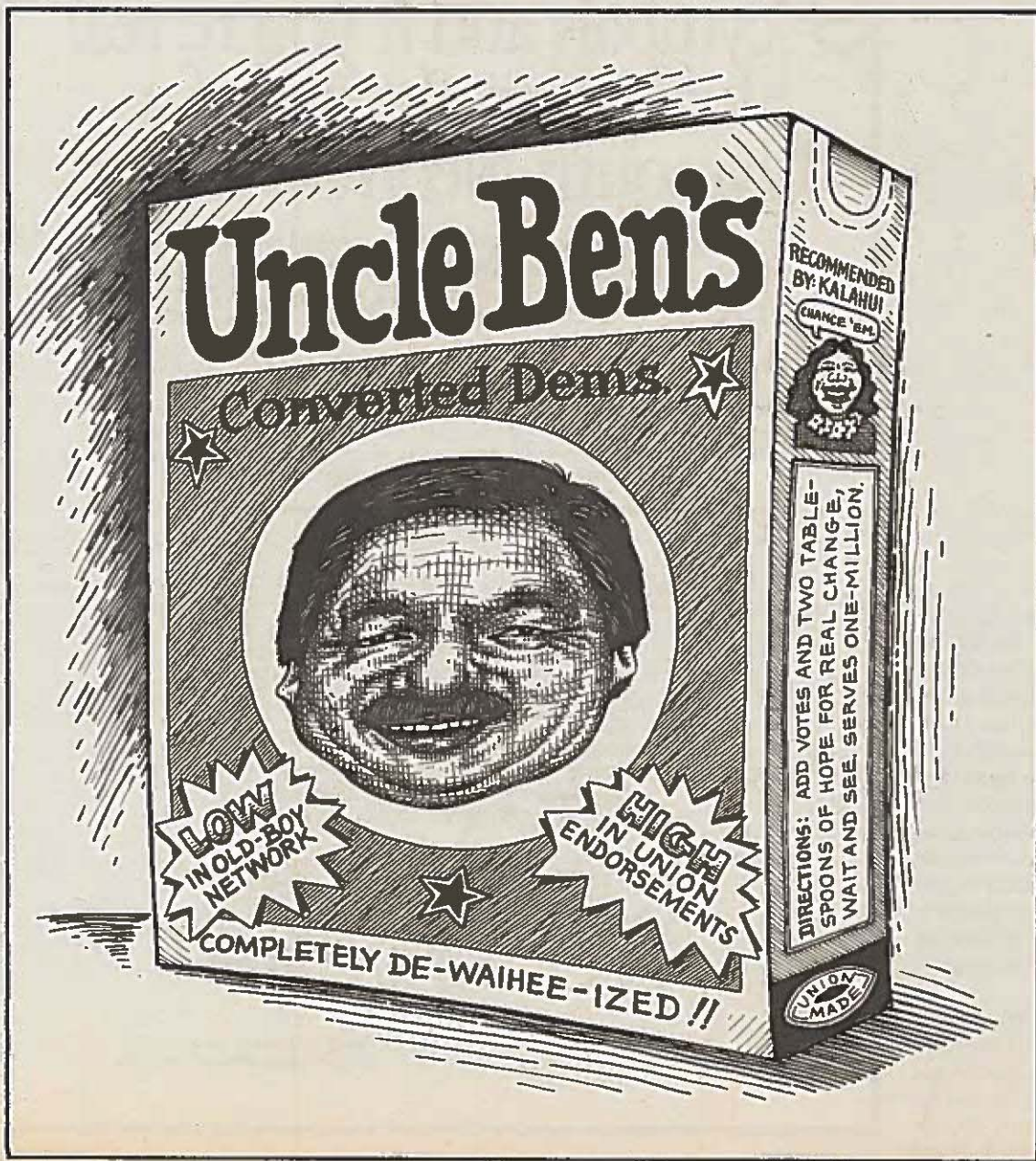
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The Hawaiian flag is lowered for the last time, Aug. 12, 1898.



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# Rees

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determine its fate. The divisiveness and uncertainty are not ominous but encouraging. The debates are no different than those that divided the American constitutional factions. The coming year will be remarkable, an *annus mirabilis* characterized by great intellects and great people engaged with great ideas. What could be better than that? ■

# Beamer

From Page 5

Created as a repository for revenues from the 1.5 million acres of ceded lands, OHA keeps a \$160 million account at the Bank of Hawaii. This is what sovereignty is really about. The agency's unauthorized schemes on claim lands have already prompted one lawsuit. Neither the public nor the media has the confidence to question this agency's gamesmanship. The sovereignty sideshows will only help OHA consolidate its holdings, the \$160 million and the Department of Hawaiian Homelands' 187,000 acres of land, 75 percent of it still undeveloped.

The hidden agenda and sleight of hand of the real players can be detected by watching who gets appointed to the favorable and powerful positions while the clowns perform for the media. The haole media play up the distractive side and ignore the real players. I am afraid that while the Oriental and haole reporters focus on the guerilla theater of the activists, they leave the machinations of the real power brokers unexplored and unexplained. The haole-owned media employ no informed Hawaiian reporters. Who else could grasp the intrigue behind the sovereignty movement? It is like asking Asians and whites to describe the intense emotional scars resulting from the abuses because one is black.

The media's theme that the Bumpys, Blaisdells and Trasks will shape our sovereign state is deviously oblique. Each time Bumpy plays his media act by telling the tourists to go home or occupying land illegally with the blessings of the state, genuine sovereignty precepts are undermined. And these theatrics alienate most Hawaiian, haole and Asian voters and prime them to vote down any plan. The way the media focuses on these irresponsible antics actually helps our own people to continue stealing from one another.

Keith Ahue, our state land director, actually opened the gates for the unlawful settlement charade when he gave Bumpy 69 acres of state-ceded lands. He himself prepared the land for his clan with off-site improvements. Our own Hoaliku Drake, the Homelands director, stood by quietly and idly as Bumpy illegally occupied Makapuu. And our own Native Hawaiian Legal Corp. offered not one objection to the blatant legal improprieties of the occupation. Do we really think it is only illegal when haoles flout the law?

## Nothing new under the sun

Hawaiians co-opting the power structures to steal from one another is an old pattern. Early Republican regimes used to take their land booty from DHHL and ceded lands by col-

laborating with Kuhio, our second Hawaiian delegate to Congress. Since 1954 other Hawaiian conspirators and their Democratic supporters proved to be greater looters than their haole-Hawaiian predecessors.

Another favorite repository for graft is the federal cash cows. These pet Hawaiian projects also seem to be exempted from media scrutiny. To qualify for more federal dollars, the state changed the designation for "part-Hawaiian" blood designation in 1970. It started to include all with some Hawaiian blood, without stipulation of a minimum percentage. Consequently, the part-Hawaiians swelled by 47 percent. Pinky Thompson, Bishop Estate trustee, and his hui have since chartered four self-empowered federally funded foundations. Alu Like, the first charter, has received more than \$300 million for economic and social uplift programs. Another \$100 million was sent through the conduit to the Kamehameha Early Education Program. Another \$100 million is forthcoming to Papa Ola Lokahi for Hawaiian health. Culture and Arts received funding for a \$2 million nonfloating canoe, \$5 million in building funds for a private maritime center and funding support for the Polynesian voyaging society.

Nearly a billion dollars has been received over the 20-year period by these self-perpetuating, Beltway organizations which have no voting memberships, issue no annual reports, submit no expenditure profiles, distribute no progress reports and resist access to review their 990 tax filings. One former Alu Like executive told me that so much money was received, they were hard pressed to create programs to spend the flooding dollars, so "You owe me" Hawaiian job bureaucracies were established. Yet these dollars rarely reach the needy because the greedy have already sucked the honeycomb dry.

The Waimanalo Ohana may have a deal with the land board and some high-powered backers, and Bumpy will probably expand statewide to add to his 69 acres, but the big boys are using him for larger gains. Ka Lahui Hawaii has received at least \$150,000 from federal funds. Yet, they worry: The land and money assets and potential of billions in reparations are threatened by the unrelenting vocal scrutiny of Mililani Trask. Ka Lahui advocates a nation within a nation with voting rights only for those with 50 percent Hawaiian blood. Occasionally it sports a demonstration, but their turnout is rarely proportionate to its 20,000 membership. Hayden Burgess, à la Poka Laenui, has received more than \$300,000 in grants but still seems unable to attract a significant constituency for his international citizenship.

Beyond the Bumpys and the Ka Lahuis, used as window dressing, the old boys connive to snare our assets and the potential reparations. To decipher the future of the sovereignty movement, we must look to the hidden agenda of these real power brokers. Over the next several years, we should study the memberships of the appointed commissions, trace the recipients of federal funding, ask the tough questions of OHA, DHHL, DLNR and the private foundations. The Sovereignty Elections Commission itself bears watching. It should not be given a free hand to impose its preferences on the Hawaiian electorate via its usual and quite undemocratic closed proceedings. ■