

The role of isle royalty

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Weren't democratic

By Thurston Twigg-Smith

Maybe we need a "truth czar" in the continuing discussion of sovereignty. There often seems to be a disregard for facts but I guess that's normal in opinion pieces — the writers are trying to make a point, or in the case of the many UH students we heard from this summer, score a credit or two in their momentary immersion in Hawaiian studies.



Twigg-Smith

Opinions themselves are properly subjective. It is the statements made in support of them that are troublesome — and that should be factual.

A case in point is the piece August 23 by Rowena Akana. She says the Hawaiians were, at the time of the overthrow, "told we could no longer speak our language, dance, sing, or follow the teachings of our kupuna."

Where in the world did this come from? Not true!

She continues that "virtually five Caucasian leaders were responsible for trying to blow out the candle of the Hawaiian culture." That's a new one, too. The Committee of 13 has shrunk to 5? Or does she mean an early version of the Big 5?

She suggests Hawaiians need to go back "as far as the overthrow and longer still" to find the answer to "why sovereignty?" She states that sovereignty will occur when "the native Hawaiian people" ... "create a government that provides for democratic representation."

Better not go too far back, then, because the Hawaiian kingdom and its monarchs did not offer much in the way of democratic representation! In fact, go back far enough and you'll find Kamehameha I taking over the Islands without asking anyone's permission or representation at all.

Those who led the overthrow did so to achieve democratic representation as opposed to determination by the will of some monarch. And the first and immediate beneficiaries were the Hawaiians among the people of Hawaii. With their preponderance of the new vote, they elected Hawaiian leader Robert Wilcox and later Prince Kuhio to Congress.

Hawaiian culture, by the way, is a noble and separate cause and it is not correct to say that anyone connected with the overthrow sought to blow out that candle. The revolutionists merely wanted the government to make proper use of the talents of its people and the worth of its lands for the benefit of all of the residents of Hawaii, not just the monarchy and its friends.

They didn't even want to be the successor leaders themselves, and in fact, no member of the overthrow group took a position in the new government nor gained financially from the change in government. Nor stole any land.

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Sustained culture

By Kaha'i Topolinski

Everyone around us — from the exiled ali to commoner, prince, princess, our cousins in foreign lands, former royalists, the educated and uneducated Hawaiian — all of us — has lost, to some degree, his or her place and reason for being.

The reason: The demise of our hereditary institutions.

Hawaiian sovereignty, though heavily debated in the political arena, is also a story about refugees.

It is about human beings unanchored; blinded by a fractured past and immobilized by uncertainty fueled by traitors who hastened the destruction of our hereditary monarchy.

Above all, it is the tale of a family in crisis — chiefs and commoners alike — confronted with mounting problems which ancient laws and traditions could not effectively comprehend.

Indeed, the Hawaiian family was decimated in the Hawaiian revolution and was then told by pseudo-political prophets to accept as authentic, today's mangled, unstable and recriminatory version of its entire existence.

The answer to the ever-elusive riddle of Hawaiian sovereignty does not only lie in the multitude of fractured political Hawaiian castes, but in the essence and heart of the Hawaiian royal family, where pride, pretense and appearance were overruled by compassion, patience and unpublished good works.

Members of the Royal Family are the legal heirs, as we are, of a great political tragedy which happened only 100 years ago, and which must be made right.

Contrary to popular belief, the Hawaiian monarchy was a viable political structure. Freedom and individual human rights, which we cherish so much today, were the cornerstone of its creation long before modern governments took up the cause.

And because of this, Hawaiian rulers became targets of ridicule, harassment and international intrigue with ever-encroaching political philosophies foreign to Hawaiian thinking.

In their effort to sway Hawaiians from their own traditions and innate political structure, none was more vociferous than the Hawaiian malcontent along with his American counterpart who waved the banner of a new brand of political ideology, such as jingoism, American superiority, and Manifest Destiny.

Thus, the flower of Hawaiian government under the monarchy was never given a fair and unbiased chance to blossom in its fullness.

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