

SELECTIONS FROM "THE CAUCASIAN MINORITY"

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These selections are from Professor Hormann's important article in the 1950 issue of *Social Process in Hawaii* (volume 14). They provide a useful perspective from thirty years ago on the theme of ethnicity in Hawaii, which continues to be a controversial topic. Interest is reflected in student papers (including some which have won the Hormann Prize Award in Sociology, established in honor of Professor Hormann), a number of new scholarly books, and daily newspaper articles. Indeed, in a letter-to-the-editor of the *Honolulu Advertiser*, July 21, 1978, Professor Hormann concludes with the remark, "The story of Hawaii's mixing is not yet finished, but according to the statistics, mixing is clearly ascendant over ethnic separation."

The Editors

The present article deals with the group which is usually considered dominant in Hawaii, the Haoles. From the point of view of numbers however, they are not dominant, but a minority like every other group in Hawaii. Because of their economic, political, and social dominance they sometimes have to face a form of opposition from all the other groups combined, and acquire in this situation, besides intensified numerical subordination, also the sociological role and psychological traits of a minority group. Furthermore, the Haole population can itself be broken into several separate minority groups. The members of each, like persons from the non-Haole ethnic groups, must find their natural place in the still evolving social structure of Hawaii.

To look at the Haoles in this unusual perspective gives us an opportunity to understand their behavior somewhat more realistically. That at least is the burden of this article. It is indeed just because Haoles tend to be generally regarded as a dominant group that they may here quite appropriately be considered a "neglected" minority group.

Before proceeding with our discussion, we may note how the usual emphasis on the dominance of the

Haoles leads to futile controversy and stands in the way of our understanding of the Island interracial scene. When a group is "dominant," the assumption is that it is "responsible" or "to blame" for a situation. For instance, the person who comes from the Mainland with no preparation for the local system of race relations and with previous experiences with persons of other races of an entirely different sort, is frequently bewildered and shocked by what he finds here, and consequently begins to criticize the racially "careless" attitude of local Haoles. Or, on the other hand, the newcomer may have expectations about Hawaii's racial harmony. When he runs into instances of discrimination, he tends to find the local Haoles "at fault." There result many long, but vain arguments about whether the situation in Hawaii is "improving" or "deteriorating" and whether the prejudice which is found here is to be attributed to the kamaaina Haole or to the recent Haole or perchance to the Oriental.

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It is the writer's feeling that in attempting to interpret the behavior of peoples in the local situation an exaggerated amount of attention has been turned to the societies and cultures from which the peoples came, and far too little to the genesis of behavior patterns out of the developing local situation. One of Romanzo Adams' stories comes to mind. A Southern white man recently arrived in Honolulu was heard to remark, "Well, you may call them Kanakas, but where I come from we call 'em niggers." However, within a year this same man had married a woman of Hawaiian ancestry.

Turning now to the Haoles, we will develop two important facets in their situation in Hawaii, both of which involve them in behavior characteristic, not of dominant, but of minority groups. These two important considerations are, first, relative isolation of numerical minority status, and second, status ambivalence, that is, the problems of fitting into Hawaii's complex social structure marked by ethnic diversity and a two-class somewhat caste-like society in process of changing to the three-class system characteristic of the Mainland.

Haole Diversity

As was suggested above, the Haoles' minority position is intensified by their not being, in origin, a single group. The lack of fundamental unity among

Haoles is something of which all local people are aware, and is perhaps best symbolized by the fact pointed out in earlier issues of *Social Process* that the Portuguese, while since 1940 having achieved official statistical recognition as Caucasians, are still not certain of their position as "Haoles" (see, Hormann, 1948, p. 30).

In further elaboration of this point of Haole diversity, the reader may be reminded of the many components which have gone into the local Haole population. American, French and English missionaries; sailors and beachcombers from all European nations; clerks and merchants, lawyers and physicians from England, Germany, and the United States; Caucasian sugar plantation workers from Portugal, Norway, Italy, Russia, Poland, and the United States; American troops and defense workers: these all have contributed to the local Haole population. Thus diversity is obvious.

The detailed facts about the Caucasian sugar plantation workers are not widely known and warrant a brief summary. Some years ago the writer made a study of the Germans in Hawaii and found that in the period from 1881 to 1897 almost 1,500 Germans, including men, women, and children, were recruited for the labor force of Hawaii's plantations.

The Germans had been preceded by the Portuguese, the first contingent of whom arrived in 1878, and who continued to come down into the second decade of this century. The 1930 Census, which was the last to take separate notice of them, found 27,588 Portuguese. They are by far the most important group of Caucasian immigrants of the peasant and laboring class. Most of the Portuguese came from the Madeira, and Azores Islands, some from Portugal proper, some from the Portuguese settlement in Massachusetts in about 1907, and also about that time about five hundred were brought back from California, where they had migrated from Hawaii. Before the arrival of the first German workers a total of 615 Norwegians had been introduced in 1881, most of them probably going to Maui plantations. Some of the ships bringing Germans in the 1880s and 1890s also brought in some Galicians from what was then the Polish part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

After annexation in 1898 and the organization of the Territory of Hawaii in 1900, American law put a stop to the importation of contract labor. In

1907, the Gentlemen's Agreement made impossible the further importation of Japanese males. Thus, Hawaii's sugar industry was threatened with serious labor shortages. Once again, white labor was considered.

Ewa Plantation experimented with American farmers, introducing fifteen families from the Western states. Houses were erected especially for them. They were each given a garden patch and a "common" for their combined use as pasture. They were assigned lots in the cane fields to be cared for by them. The arrangement was apparently mutually unsatisfactory. After about a year none of the families remained. According to Governor Carter "the white man can not and will not stand the work of tropical cane fields" (Governor of Hawaii, 1904, p. 10).

Some Italians were also introduced. Whether any came directly from Italy and whether there were several importations the writer has been unable to determine. There was certainly mention as well as actual investigation of Italy as a possible source in the late 1870s (Hormann, 1948). The 1900 Census found fifty-eight foreign born Italians, three-fourths of whom were males. A few Italians were brought in from the sugar plantations of Louisiana, probably soon after annexation (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1902, p. 22). In 1907 some effort was made to bring in Italian immigrants from New York, but nothing materialized (Board of Immigration of Hawaii, 1909).

Whether Hindus should be mentioned here depends on the definition of Caucasian. In view of the fact, however, that no trace of this group remains, it is surprising to note that Hawaii's Board of Immigration notes the importation of over four hundred in the period from 1905 to 1911, almost exclusively males.

The Russians too have left little trace, and yet in the period from 1909 to 1912 the Board of Immigration reports that a total of 2,056 Russians, many in family groups, were imported from Manchuria. They do not seem to have remained long in plantation work, but not all left immediately, for many took various skilled and unskilled non-plantation jobs in and around Honolulu.

These Russians had been preceded by a group of 110, all belonging to the Molokan sect, who were brought in from Los Angeles in 1906 and placed on lands of the Kealia plantation. Disagreements quickly developed and they left, having been declared locally a failure (Thrum's Annual, 1907).

Seventeen Poles were introduced in 1913. They all went to Wailuku, where they had relatives.

The only other major Caucasian group to be mentioned is the Spanish (see Brooke, 1948). Just under eight thousand came in from 1907 through 1913. They soon, like the others, left in large numbers for the Mainland, so that by 1938, the Bureau of Vital Statistics estimated that the Spanish population, including Hawaiian-born, numbered only 1,248 (Schnack, n.d.).

It must not be assumed that for all these groups the migration away from Hawaii was complete. Germans, Norwegians, Russians, Spanish, Italians remained and have become merged, both with the wider Caucasian group and the wider population as a whole.

Isolation

If we consider the total number of persons classified in this wider Caucasian group, we find them achieving their highest proportion in the total Island population on July 1, 1948, when they constituted by estimate 33.4 per cent of the civilian population of the Islands. According to the most recent estimate of the Bureau of Health Statistics, their proportion on January 1, 1950 was down to 29.6 per cent.

At earlier dates the proportion of Caucasians was even smaller. In the 1910, 1920, and 1930 Censuses the Caucasians came consistently to just under or just over 20 per cent. In 1940 their percentage was 24.5. These percentages, however, included military population stationed in Hawaii, as the figures after 1940 do not.

The percentage of Caucasian school children has been very small. In 1945, when the last returns by race of the school population are available, the percentage of Caucasian children in the total public and private school population was only 5 per cent. Interestingly enough, the percentage of Caucasian children has shrunk over the years. In 1928, for instance, the Caucasian children came to 17 per cent of the total school population. This shrinking is due to the growth of a large second and third generation in the non-Caucasian immigrant groups.

In a very real sense, therefore, it is correct to speak of the Haoles as always having constituted a numerical minority in the Islands.

This numerical deficiency of the socially, economically, and politically dominant group, when combined with other factors, such as the non-contiguity of the Island territory to the U.S. Mainland and the expense and complications of travel to home territory and the climatic, cultural, linguistic, and racial uniqueness of the Islands, makes for the isolation to which earlier reference was made.

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Psychologically, the sensitive Haole who comes to Hawaii expecting to mingle with people of different races but who is soon told by the resident Haoles with whom he is first thrown into contact that he must confine his more intimate social life to Haoles, is also put in a difficult situation conducive of malaise.

The writer has been told that Army and Navy authorities have a persistent problem involving some wives of officers and enlisted men who "hate" Hawaii and have to be transferred back to the Mainland because of their unhappiness.

The superficial diagnosis for these maladjusted persons frequently is that they could not stand the climate. In this connection it is significant that a geographer, A. Grenfell Price, in a comprehensive study of the acclimatization of whites in the tropics came to the conclusion that isolation rather than climate was involved. He noted that on all cultural frontiers, regardless of climate, where whites have resided and been outweighed numerically by a native population, maladjustment is common. On the other hand, when whites have colonized tropical areas and supplanted the native population, this sort of maladjustment tended to be absent (Price, 1939).

For persons to whom Hawaii is their native home, it may be difficult to understand that people from the Mainland can have such a sense of isolation. It is necessary for us to put ourselves imaginatively into the place of people who are separated by over two thousand miles of water from the continent on which their loved ones live. On the Mainland they can travel easily and cheaply by coach or bus or in their own car over distances of many hundreds of miles. In illness and in death, for marriages and other happy occasions, close relatives can get in touch with each other. If the persons come from smaller communities, they are used to moral support, the friendly interest of neighbors.

In Honolulu, conditions are radically different. The sense of distance, in spite of the speed of air travel, overpowers every family of moderate income whose closest ties are with the Mainland. In the urban setting neighborly relations are established only with difficulty. The local Haole population has sometimes been characterized as stand-offish except to people who come with "good introductions." If the Mainland Haole chances to move into a neighborhood having several non-Haole families, diffidence and anxiety on both sides may prevent the establishment of more intimate relations. If in addition, the children in the neighborhood speak the local dialect, and the neighbors in various ways exhibit "strange" customs, the Mainland Haole family may have all their fears confirmed of being isolated in a strange land.

Thus, while with the increasing urbanization and Americanization of Hawaii's peoples and with the reduction in travel time, this sense of isolation and malaise is being reduced, it nevertheless, even today, is a factor which helps us to understand the behavior of immigrant Haoles.

The Changing Class Structure

We may now proceed to our second point, namely the problem faced by the newly-arrived Haole when he seeks to fit into the evolving local class structure. This class structure has been described up to recently as a two-class system. ... What happens to Haole groups and individuals who enter this society, where, for long, the top class was largely Haole and the bottom class largely non-Haole?

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Haoles coming directly from the Mainland have left a predominantly middle-class society to enter a society in various stages of transition from two to three classes. Where have they fit in?

Three possibilities are open to them if they are middle-class people, as probably most of them are. They enter the upper class; they join the lower class; or they stay in their middle class in a society in which the middle class is only in process of formation.

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The middle-class Haole from the Mainland who enters upperclass society in Hawaii feels somewhat out of place. He tends to take on some of the characteristics of upwardly mobile people, of the keepers-up-with-the-Joneses: aggressiveness, snobishness, self-advertising, conspicuous consumption. This sort of behavior of course also characterizes local Haoles working their way up from a lower to a higher class position (and incidentally also local non-Haoles moving upward in the social scale). Among such people strong prejudices, often in the form of race prejudices, make their appearance.

It is important to see these prejudices as products of the dynamics of the local situation rather than as importations from the Mainland.

Very few Mainland Haoles who have come into the Territory in the last thirty years have been lower-class Haoles, and few middle-class Haoles have moved downward.

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This rise of a middle class composed of both Mainland Haole and local non-Haole elements raises intriguing questions about the direction which race relations will take in the future. It is the writer's feeling, based on recent observations, that within this middle class, race conflict will steadily decline. The feeling of identification with a middle class whose dominance will become increasingly apparent will prove stronger than ethnic identity. On the part of the local population, a sense of differentiation from the lower class was manifested in 1948 and 1949 when legislation was passed calling for the gradual return to a single standard school system. Interestingly enough, great concern was shown by some local non-Haole parents whose children were attending the English standard schools, that their association with the children of the pre-standard schools would injure them. There was the suggestion of a fear of contamination by lower-class children, even though these might belong to the same ethnic group. On the part of the Mainland derived middle-class neighborhoods one now frequently sees groups of children playing who are ethnically varied. Adults recently from the Mainland are able quickly to establish friendships with local people. In P.T.A. and similar community organizations effective committee work involves cooperation between persons from several races.

The maturation of the middle class in Honolulu and its increasing influence over the whole society means that the colonial or frontier or plantation era in Hawaii is about to pass into history. Hawaii's admission to the union as a forty-ninth or fiftieth state will be the symbol that Hawaii's social structure has attained the characteristics of American society. It will augur the disappearance of minorities, Oriental, Hawaiian, and Haole.

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Postscript 1979

In the more than twenty-five years since I wrote "The Caucasian Minority" several significant changes have occurred. Hawaii has attained statehood. Air transportation has become almost the sole mode of

moving people in and out of Hawaii. Statistically the Caucasians have increased their numerical proportion, becoming the largest minority, close to 40 percent when persons of mixed ancestry are allowed racial self-identification, as was true of the 1970 U.S. Census, closer to one-third if the former ways of counting--only pure Caucasians--are used. Politically the local non-Caucasian minorities have gained tremendously in importance. Ethnic identity movements and the Federal government's concern with numerically fuller representation of all minorities in all parts of the public sector, are forces to be reckoned with. These and other influences continue to keep many Caucasians somewhat apart from the so-called "local" population and in that sense what I called isolation is still to be reckoned with.

The class situation has evolved into what in many ways is a mass rather than a class society. New housing in rural areas and the fact that our ethnic groups--not counting recent immigrants from the Philippines, Korea, Hong Kong, and Vietnam--are an added generation removed from immigrant status have moved us away from the two-class society I spoke of.

In the main, I believe my article still helps us to understand aspects of Caucasian behavior which might otherwise be hard to explain.

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