

POST-WAR ATTITUDES REGARDING RACE RELATIONS IN HAWAII

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Qualified observers differ in their judgments as to the effects of the war upon race relations in Hawaii. "The Islands will never be the same again," is the doleful refrain of one school of responsible reporters, who see numerous evidences of a significant breakdown in the pre-war interracial solidarity of Hawaii. The wholesale introduction of mainland servicemen and defense workers, most of them unsympathetic with Hawaii's tradition of race relations, is cited as the basis of an inevitable deterioration in the human and social values of Island society. Attention is called to the instances of overt conflict between "local boys" and mainland service personnel and to the more vocal expressions of feeling between the various racial groups within the Territory. Other observers, equally responsible and intelligent, are impressed by the absence of racial feeling during and since the war. "Where else but in Hawaii could you find people of such varied racial ancestries living together so intimately and with so little difficulty?" they say.

The truth probably lies somewhere between these two sharply contrasted viewpoints and cannot be so simply and categorically stated. The average resident, when he stops to consider the total situation, is likely to be impressed by the conflicting character of the evidence. The situation has improved in certain respects and deteriorated in other respects. Certainly, Island residents are not wholly agreed in their judgments of the Island scene.

In an attempt to discover some of the basic trends in the attitudes of Islanders toward this problem, the War Research Laboratory has periodically experimented in the use of anonymous questionnaires with fairly large samplings of the student body of the University. One test occurred in June, 1946, with a group of 350 underclassmen, fairly representative of the entire university population. Previous experiments along similar lines had been conducted in April, 1943, 1944, and in October 1945, the results of which were partially reported and in Volume VIII of *Social Process in Hawaii*. These studies have been conducted on the assumption that the student responses, although not representative of the entire population of the Territory, would reflect the significant feelings, particularly among the middle and upper classes of the Islands. The lower classes generally, but especially of the Hawaiian, Filipino, and Puerto-Rican groups, were in-

adequately represented in the student samples. A significant number of returned veterans were included in the 1946 sampling.

I. *Distribution by Sex and Ancestry of Student Sample.*

| Ancestry | Men | | Women | Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------|--------------|-------|-------|
| | Veterans | Non Veterans | | |
| Hawaiians and Part Hawaiians | 7 | 1 | 13 | 21 |
| Caucasians | 17 | 10 | 21 | 48 |
| Chinese | 4 | 4 | 30 | 38 |
| Japanese | 52 | 30 | 146 | 228 |
| Koreans | 1 | 2 | 8 | 11 |
| Filipinos | --- | --- | 5 | 5 |
| | 81 | 47 | 223 | 351 |

The following report summarizes only a few of the findings gleaned from the 1946 questionnaires and relates chiefly to the interracial attitudes expressed by the students. The responses to the specific questions listed below throw light upon the prevailing feelings of the different ethnic groups toward themselves and toward each other:

1. Do you believe that race relations in Hawaii are generally:improving?getting worse?
What are your reasons for believing as you do?
2. Do you think the members of your particular racial group are discriminated against? Yes..... No.....
No opinion..... Cite evidence for your answer:
3. Which ethnic group do you believe has benefitted most economically from the war?.....
What makes you think so?

General Impressions of Hawaii's Race Relations

The first two questions listed were designed to uncover some of the more general feelings which exist in the community, and the students were encouraged to give the reasons and some of the evidence for their judgments. The great majority (72.4 per cent) felt that race relations generally were improving, offering as evidence the increasing numbers of interracial marriages, the fraternizing between mainland servicemen and local girls during the war, the decline in wartime hysteria, the passing of the first generation immigrants with their strong prejudices, and the greater readiness to disregard race in the matter of employment. The more favorable attitudes toward interracial marriage during the war were mentioned frequently, particularly by the women, as indicating improvement of race relations. Comments such as the following are typical:

I believe that race relations are improving: (a) More interracial marriages. (b) Employment of all nationalities in several concerns where employees were formerly only of certain nationalities. J-F.¹

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Ca—Caucasian | M—Male |
| Ch—Chinese | F—Female |
| J—Japanese | (C)—Civilian |
| K—Korean | (V)—Veteran |
| PH—Part Hawaiian | |

Thus a veteran of Chinese ancestry would be designated by: Ch-M(V).

Members of races other than Caucasian are being more and more widely accepted in business and social positions than formerly; also the growing importance of our geographical position forces Caucasians to concede that other races are able. Ca-F.

The war helped things along and people don't look down upon you for talking or being friendly with one outside your group. Ca-M(V).

I have done a lot of traveling and have never seen so many mixtures of different races living happily together as here. Ca-M(V).

It is improving because I have a lot of Japanese friends and it is much easier to go over to visit them than formerly. Ch-M(V).

Table II. *Attitudes of 351 College Students Regarding Race Relations in Hawaii, 1946.*

| Ancestry of Informants | Total | ATTITUDES EXPRESSED | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------|------|-----------------------|----|--------|
| | | Trends in Race Relations | | | Racial Discrimination | | |
| | | Improv- ing | Deferi- orating | Same | Yes | No | Unsure |
| Japanese | 228 | 171 | 46 | 11 | 142 | 11 | 75 |
| Haole | 46 | 31 | 11 | 4 | 16 | 19 | 11 |
| Chinese | 38 | 26 | 9 | 3 | 22 | 7 | 9 |
| Hawaiian & Pt Hawaiian.. | 21 | 12 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 13 |
| All Others | 18 | 14 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 10 |
| TOTAL: | 351 | 254 | 77 | 20 | 189 | 44 | 118 |

The students of Japanese ancestry were particularly impressed by the change for the better in their relations to other groups, as a consequence of developments during the war. Very frequently there was evident a tendency to define Hawaii's racial problems exclusively in terms of their own experience and to judge the total situation by what had happened to their own group. This, of course, is a perfectly natural reaction and one observed among the other groups as well.

I feel that with the disappearing of the first generation immigrants, the tendency for prejudice declines. The second and following generations have so much in common (education, clothes) that relations are improving. J-F.

The recent war has tended to break down family ties which kept the girls confined at home and as a consequence better cooperation is possible. J-F.

Thanks to the 100th and the 442nd. J-M(C).

The A JA veterans were generally confident that race relations in Hawaii were better than when they left for the

¹The following symbols will be used to designate the racial ancestry, sex, and status of the informants:

service, and that their own actions had somewhat contributed to this change.

The main problem was the Japanese-Americans. Since they have proved themselves, they are more readily accepted. J-M (V).

I have noticed the marked improvements since my return, especially in the relations between the Japanese and the others as compared to the situation before the war. J-M (V).

The change in the attitudes of the morning newspaper which "till then was anti-Japanese for no apparent reason" was mentioned by one woman student of Japanese ancestry.

A significant minority (27.6 per cent) of the students answering the questionnaire were either convinced that race relations were getting worse (21.9 per cent) or were in doubt about the situation (5.7 per cent). The Hawaiians of both sexes and the Caucasian men were somewhat more pessimistic than the rest with regard to the trends in Island race relations. In general the students who felt that things were getting worse had their conceptions a little more precisely defined than their more optimistic fellows. The influx of Mainlanders, with their deviant attitudes toward Island people, was mentioned most frequently as indicating a decline of interracial amity in Hawaii.

They were improving until the almighty white man in uniform moved in. There are more race riots than I can remember from before. Ca-F.

Large influx of Negro and haole groups with preconceived notions on race prejudice, that tendency of these groups to look down upon natives, and failing to learn and appreciate life in the islands. Ca-M (V).

The increasing number of haoles who come from the mainland hold the old attitude of *white supremacy*, especially those that come from the South. J-M (V).

Increased economic competition, growing out of these shifts in population, was reflected in mounting racial tensions. The non-Haole groups especially, expressed concern because mainlanders were "getting the better jobs" and were "introducing foreign conceptions of race relations." Some of the Haoles, on the other hand, were becoming equally concerned because the Orientals, in particular were rising too rapidly in the economic scale and were thus disturbing the old order.

They are getting to buy land in haole districts and do not know how to adapt themselves. They bring their old ways. Ca-F.

I don't feel that the races in Hawaii should mix or get out of line. It was so much better when each group lived in his own section. Ca-F.

A combination of several factors has made the Haole group stand out in the minds of a considerable number of residents as a special source of difficulty. There has doubtless been an actual increase of race consciousness in certain areas; and this, together with the sharper prejudices im-

ported by Haoles from the Mainland and the growing competition across racial lines at the higher economic levels, has brought added elements of tension in the relations of the Haoles to the other groups. Attitudes of hostility toward the Haoles, which previously had appeared only sporadically in the well known cases of "Haole-hating," appear actually to have become somewhat more intense than before, especially among the Part Hawaiian groups.

I've heard and witnessed and even feel myself a growing resentment for the Haoles, who seem to be taking all that the Hawaiian has ever owned. PH-F.

Now that the war is over, the native is against the serviceman. PH-F.

The mainland Haoles brought with them the race prejudice feelings and the island Haoles, rather than being looked down upon or trying to spread good-will, blindly follow the mainland Haoles. Ch-F.

The loss in prestige of the Haoles in the eyes of the non-Haoles was mentioned several times as a disorganizing factor, and this impression is substantiated by other evidence.

I don't know whether I'm becoming more conscious of the people around me, but I have lost much of any respect and admiration for many of the so-called "big shot" Haoles and Hawaiians. Many of them "take advantage" of "us" common people. This also has been noted by many of my friends. J-F.

I do not esteem the haole group too much now because of the many servicemen coming here. J-F.

There are occasional expressions of resentment toward the servicemen who "leave the Island girls carrying the bag" after promising to marry them. On the other hand, some of the Haole veterans are appalled at the frequency of marriage here between "far different races, e.g., Negro and whites and Filipinos and whites." Several Oriental girls mentioned the presence of Negroes as a disturbing factor "because of the immoral acts they perform." College students are obviously not immune to the current myths and rumors.

Sense of Racial Discrimination

Despite the generally optimistic tone of the comments by students on trends in race relations in Hawaii, it is apparent that they well aware of problems which still exist in the community. Slightly more than half of the students (53.8 per cent) returned a positive answer to the question, "Do you think the members of your particular racial group are discriminated against?"; and only one in every eight categorically denied the existence of prejudice against their group. The Chinese and the Japanese were the two groups which felt the discrimination most keenly, with 62.3 per cent of the Japanese and 57.9 per cent of the Chinese answering question two in the affirmative. In the Japanese group, it was the women who reported unfair treatment most frequently, whereas in all the other ethnic groups it was the

men. Obviously, however, a simple answer of "yes" or "no" did not indicate the depth of feeling and frequently the comments reveal marked differences in the attitudes among those who recognized the existence of race prejudice.

The large number of those who registered "no opinion" on this question (33.6 per cent) strongly suggests that the feelings of prejudice were frequently not too sharply defined. Comments such as the following were made by students in all the different ethnic groups:

There are instances of petty discriminations in any society (storekeepers saving special items for their friends, etc.). However, I believe there is no cause for excitement over my situation or that of my race. Ca-M(C).

It is natural that there should be minor discriminations involving each race. I don't believe in taking trivial discriminations seriously. Ch-F.

It is hard to give a clean cut answer because on the whole there has been little discrimination, but there has been some. K-F.

I can't give a definite answer. The situation in Hawaii has improved greatly . . . but prejudice against the Japanese is not wholly absent. J-M(V).

Even the small proportion of those who answered the question in the negative (12.5 per cent) frequently qualified their statements by recognizing that minor distinctions might occur.

It was to be expected that the groups with the highest economic and social position in the community would be least aware of racial prejudice. Actually, the Part Hawaiian students, of the various groups represented in the sample, were least conscious of suffering discrimination (23.8 per cent) although the rate among the Haoles was only slightly higher (34.8 per cent). Comments such as the following were made by the Hawaiians:

I am Part Hawaiian and after all Hawaii is my home. If there is discrimination against my particular racial group, I have never felt it. PH-F.

I haven't felt it in Hawaii, by the people who live here anyway. PH-M(V).

Because I think discrimination is up to the individual and you won't be bothered if you conduct yourself properly. H-M(V).

The more sophisticated Haoles were ready to recognize that they were in a favored position "to do the discriminating" and that, in general, they were less the victims of discrimination than its source.

In my brief term of employment between discharge and entering school, I found I was given privileges in the firm which I didn't deserve and which were embarrassing because these privileges were denied the AJA's who worked with me. (A clerical-administrative job.) Ca-M(V).

We are discriminated against as we discriminate against other groups. It is natural—we seem to have a feeling of superiority and this is held against us naturally. Ca-M(V).

Many people of all races hate our family who are strong politically and economically in these islands. However, we are discriminating, too. Ca-M(C).

A number of the Haoles recognized also that the advantages they enjoyed were less secure than formerly.

At least in Hawaii the Haoles are the upper class socially, but losing fast economically. Ca-M(V).

On the other hand, some Haoles were apparently unaware of the bases for the counter-prejudice encountered or they chose to disregard it.

All racial groups are obviously discriminated against. Bus drivers pass me up; non-Haole shopkeepers are rude to me; local youths look for a chance to beat me up; kamaaina Haoles regard me as an interloper and would probably refuse to give me a manual labor job if I should want one. Ca-M(V).

The non-Haole groups were most conscious of discrimination in the field of employment where the preferred positions were made available to the favored race regardless of skill, training, or experience and wage differentials were commonly thought to exist.

If a Chinese and a White man are both applying for the same job at one of the larger "Haole" firms in town, 9 times out of 10 and sometimes with no questioning as to his ability, intellect, etc., the White man is employed. Ch-F.

Coming from a plantation, this has been true to some degree. Plantations tend to limit the "advancement" of any laborer, field worker, or office clerk. J-F.

My uncle, who was employed at HSPA as chemist, was the virtual "brains," knowing everything. He was told, when applying for the job, that he was starting on \$150, but when the employer saw that he was Japanese, he was worth only \$125. J-F.

The Haoles were also frequently accused of obstructing the legitimate claims and hopes of Orientals for advancement.

To a certain degree in jobs. Certain jobs are open only to Haoles and Orientals, whether they are qualified or not, cannot get those jobs. J-F.

A certain man, although capable and "next in line," couldn't become the manager of a warehouse department in a plantation because he was a Japanese. J-F.

The Haoles who have shown that they are incompetent and who have not worked as long are always given raises and promotions. Ch-F.

The injustice of expecting an experienced Oriental to teach a *malihini* Haole so that he can take over a preferred job was mentioned repeatedly by students from plantation areas.

Wartime discrimination was cited in the case of both the Chinese and the Japanese groups, although the instances mentioned frequently involved irritations of long duration.

Why were Japanese boys trusted on the front-lines of combat and are not trusted to work in jobs, such as Pearl Harbor, is beyond me. The same goes for parents of sons in the U. S. Army who were interned. J-M(V).

All the big companies in town show reluctance in hiring Japanese. Even during the war, Japanese were not permitted to work in Pearl Harbor; also, I see no reason why they require Japanese to show proof of their citizenship at the immigration station. J-F.

We are criticized for our religions, our language, anything "Japanese." Yet other ethnic groups carry on their traditions without any hot air blasts. J-F.

Several students of Japanese or Chinese ancestry mentioned the residential restrictions in certain districts such as Kahala

and the resentment evident in other areas when Orientals invaded them during the war. Answers to one of the other questions indicate that the Chinese community is fairly well aware of the resentment directed toward them during the war because of their sudden rise on the economic ladder.

Since the war the Chinese have gotten the superiority complex. They began to think that they were too "good" and the "Haoles" began to look down upon them. Ch-F.

One or more representatives of each of the racial groups wrote of differential treatment in stores, clubs, or other public institutions, supposedly on the basis of race.

When at a counter with a White person, if the salesman is also White, the White person I am with invariably is waited upon before I am. Ch-F.

Clubs barring membership to Orientals; Haoles' attitude on street or in shops. Ch-F.

The Part-Hawaiian is looked down upon by certain Haoles—in school, sororities, fraternities, etc. PH-F.

When old women of my racial group enter a bus, haole civilians and servicemen seldom give them seats, whereas when young Haole girls enter the same bus, the men readily give the girls seats. J-F.

I could fill a whole page of these evidences, but here's a particularly good one: I had gotten priority to travel by plane through "big shot" Haole superiors. I was required to fill in a questionnaire, and when I filled in "American" to the question: "What nationality?" I was ordered to change it to "Japanese" although the airways agent himself was no more than a Portuguese. Priority travel is easy for those who are non-Japanese. J-M(C).

Well, one finds it still while being waited on in a drug store or a department store where a damn Haole is a clerk; one usually waits around the place for service. Ch-M(V).

Economic Rivalry

Still another aspect of the problem of inter-group feeling in Hawaii grows out of the fact that the recent war and the peace have brought greater economic advantages to some groups than to others. It is not the purpose of this paper to examine precisely what these differences have been. It is quite obvious, however, that the conceptions that people have of each other are governed to a considerable degree by their relative success or failure in the economic struggle.

The group which outstrips all others in the race for economic position is likely to be regarded with mixed feelings of envy and respect by those less fortunate. In a world where prestige is so largely measured in economic terms each group tends to be rated according to its assumed ability to acquire property and the rise or fall of a given group on the economic scale is likely to be quickly reflected in the stereotyped conceptions toward them. This does not mean, however, that the upward movement of a group necessarily increases the good will or respect it enjoys in the eyes of the other groups. In fact, the sudden rise in the relative economic position of a given ethnic group is almost certain to

evoke strong resentment not only among those whose preferred positions have been invaded but also by those who have been left behind in the struggle for higher status.

The question "which ethnic group do you believe has benefitted most economically from the war?" was designed to test the foregoing theory and brought results roughly parallel to those in an earlier study with a more representative sample of the population.² In both studies there was a tendency to mention some group other than the informant's as having profited most from the war. In both studies the Chinese were most frequently specified as the group which had advanced economically the most as a consequence of the war. Over half (61.0 per cent) of all the students who gave a positive answer to the question mentioned the Chinese and even the Chinese students referred more commonly to their own group than to any other.

Table III. *Ethnic Groups Specified by Student Informants as Having Benefitted Most Economically from the War.*

| Ancestry of Informants | Ethnic Groups Mentioned as Profiting Most | | | | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|---|------|-----|-----|----|------|-------|---------|-------|
| | H. & P. H. ³ | P. | Ca. | Ch. | J. | F. | Other | No Ans. | |
| Japanese | 2 | 4 | 25 | 122 | 9 | 13 | 5 | 48 | 228 |
| Haole | | | 3 | 18 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 47 |
| Chinese | | | 2 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 38 |
| Hawaiian & Part-Haw. | | | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 21 |
| All others | | | 6 | 5 | 1 | | 1 | 5 | 18 |
| TOTAL | 2 | 4 | 39 | 163 | 26 | 18 | 15 | 85 | 352 |

It should be noted that nearly one fourth of all the students had no answer to this question and it is probable that relatively few of the informants were as deeply moved about this issue as those interviewed in 1944. At that time the responses were characterized by a considerable amount of bitterness at not being included in the "big money." References were made to the "money-mad Pakes" to "Filipinos lining their pockets with easy defense money," and to the Haoles who "being on top, get the cream first." By 1946 the peak of the defense boom had passed and with it some of the rancor and envy toward those who were assumed to have derived more money from the war.

Statements regarding the Chinese were usually phrased in fairly objective and restrained language. It was commonly asserted, for example, that the Chinese were already established in defense industries and in business enterprises which could profit most from the war time boom. Even Chinese students freely admitted, sometimes with a measure of pride,

²*What People in Hawaii are Saying*, University of Hawaii, March 1, 1944.

³The same abbreviations of names of ethnic groups are used here as in footnote¹.

that their ethnic group had been so situated as to derive maximum benefit from the war.

Most businessmen in this group, or rather the ratio of businessmen to other workers is greatest in this group. C-F.

Some have become office managers or partner in a Haole corporation or with other nationalities. They have been accepted by other ethnic groups readily. C-F.

—Entered freely into business enterprises. Were not discriminated against as the Japanese were because Japan was an enemy. The Chinese seemed more enterprising and manage to get the necessary capital. C-F.

Signs of definite irritation and resentment toward the Chinese for their alleged war time gains were somewhat more prominent among the Haoles and the Japanese than any other groups. The Haole veterans especially charged the Chinese with being "Oriental Jews," "draft dodgers," and "racketeers."

I think they had more people in defense or war jobs and less in actual fighting than any other group. Among Orientals, they are the group most closely united and in business they adopt the policies of the Jew even more so than the Jew. Ca-(V).

They all stayed home and made a lot of money while the rest went to war. There are very few Chinese who volunteered. This is proven by the large amount of Chinese being drafted now. Ca-(V).

Few in the service, many in well-paid defense jobs, many involved in black market and other rackets, ostentatious display of jewelry, purchases of high-priced real estate. Ca-(V).

They are oriental Jew. Ca-(V).

The Japanese repeated many of the same stereotypes regarding the Chinese but the charges were commonly made with less intensity of feeling.

They were allowed to work in Pearl Harbor and also were deferred from draft. When the war ended they began to be drafted. Chinese merchants had all the breaks during the war. Opened amusement concessions and made more money than any other group I can think of. J-(V).

It does not matter for present purposes that many of the statements regarding the Chinese were inaccurate and biased. Even among those who admitted that they had inadequate grounds for judgment, there was a readiness to attribute "this questionable distinction" to the Chinese.

The nearest competitors to the Chinese as the reputed beneficiaries of the war were the Haoles although they were mentioned only 39 times or about one fourth as frequently as the Chinese. The traditional advantages enjoyed by the Haoles were mentioned as enabling them to profit all the more during the war time on the theory that "to him that hath shall be given."

They own or control the biggest business and this war has increased their wealth even more. Being Haoles, they could get the best jobs. J-F.

Because of their favored status—they were in a position to command the better jobs. J-(V).

During the war, the people with capital tend to accumulate more capital. J-(V).

The other groups were mentioned less frequently, the Japanese 26 times or by one out of every ten of the students who had definite opinions in the matter, the Filipinos 18 times, the Portuguese 4 times and scattered groups such as the Jews and Negroes, a total of 15 times. The comments reflect the varied experiences and attitudes derived from many different and changing situations. The sudden rise in economic position of certain Filipinos, a group which was commonly identified with unskilled plantation labor, impressed some observers most profoundly. The dramatic appearance of a Korean furniture dealer in a residential area previously held exclusively by Haoles may suggest a mass movement to another observer. The irresponsible talk about the Jews in a particular circle of friends may cause the group to be mentioned even though most of the group have had no direct contact with the Jews.

The Filipinos, from the plantation to taxi-driving is a big jump. C-(V).

The wages that the Filipinos earned enables them to move out of areas of transition and settle in more respectable residential areas. C-F.

The Filipinos never made much before the war. As laborers in PH, they make twice as much as white collar workers. The Haoles do pretty well, tho. H-F.

I come in contact with them and they are always carrying great amounts of money. Their manner of dress has changed previous to the war. They wear expensive clothes, boast about the houses and cars they've bought. J-M(C).

They have gone up on the economic ladder because of the war. Prior, they were just considered as unskilled laborers. J-F.

Despite the varied and sometimes conflicting evidence revealed in this study, it is quite apparent that Islanders are generally hopeful about the basic trends in race relations without being completely satisfied with conditions as they exist. It is highly probable that many of the instances of discrimination attributed to race were actually the consequence of other factors entirely and that in some cases the discrimination itself was largely imaginary. The fact, however, that a significant number of persons of all ethnic groups believed themselves to be the victims of discrimination means that the problem cannot be disregarded. On the other hand, the comments generally gave the impression of a situation which was definitely improving and in which there had been no serious crystalization of caste attitudes. Certainly the citizenry of Hawaii, as reflected in this sample, while recognizing that racial distinctions play an important part in the life of the people, are also assured that personal merit and integrity count much more. Neither despair nor self pity are prominent elements in what the young people of Hawaii have to say about race relations.