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Her Majesty's Disloyal Opposition: An Examination
of the English-Language Version of Robert Wilcox's
the *Liberal*, 1892–1893

IN 1993, 100 years after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, the City and County of Honolulu unveiled a bronze statue of the Hawaiian nationalist Robert W. Wilcox (1855–1903) at the corner of Fort Street Mall and King Street in downtown Honolulu in a small park that had been named after Wilcox in 1989. Part of the statue's inscription reads, "He was regarded by many of his countrymen as a national hero due to his commitment to defend the independence of the Hawaiian monarchy." Indeed, in 1889 Wilcox had led a rebellion to restore the prerogatives of the monarchy two years after the Bayonet Constitution of 1887 had left King Kalākaua a mere figurehead. In 1895, two years after the overthrow of the kingdom, Robert Wilcox was again instrumental in leading a failed royalist counterrevolution to put the deposed Queen Lili'uokalani back on the throne.

Despite these efforts, the views of Robert Wilcox and his associates were not by any means consistently favorable towards the Hawai-

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ian monarchy. This article analyzes the English-language editions of the bilingual political newspaper the *Liberal*, which was published by Robert Wilcox from September 1892 to April 1893.¹ For the seven months that the *Liberal* was in existence Wilcox owned the paper and served as overall manager. In addition, he took on the responsibility of editing the Hawaiian-language version. On the other hand, the English-language portion had four different editors during the journal's short life. The first was D.L. Huntsman. Huntsman was an American lawyer born in Missouri who had lived for several years in the kingdom prior to becoming an editor of Wilcox's paper. He directed the English-language edition from the inception of the *Liberal* on September 7, 1892 until October 22. Huntsman was pressured to resign by Wilcox because of his incendiary editorials, and following Huntsman's dismissal Wilcox himself edited the English-language section of the paper. Wilcox performed the dual role of Hawaiian and English-language editor from October 26 to January 14, 1893, three days before the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy.

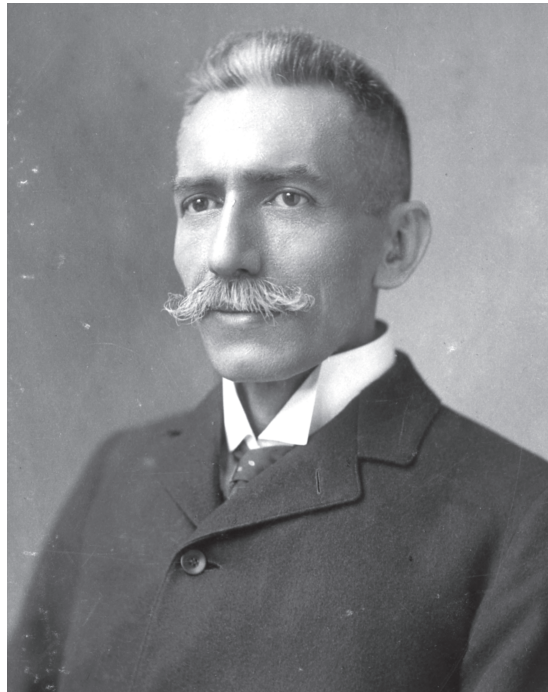
When the paper resumed publication on January 25, 1893 following an 11-day interruption due to the events of the Hawaiian revolution, a new English-language editor, Clarence Ashford, had assumed the helm. Aside from Wilcox himself, Ashford, a former Attorney General of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, was the most prominent individual associated with the *Liberal*. Although Ashford served as editor at a crucial time in Hawaiian history, his tenure at the *Liberal* lasted for only three issues. He was replaced by D.L. Huntsman, the dismissed first director of the English-language version of Wilcox's paper, on February 4. Huntsman remained as editor until his death on March 20 as a result of a romantic dispute. Huntsman was replaced by the last editor of the English-language section of the paper, Harry von Werthern, who led the *Liberal* from March 25 until the journal ceased publication on April 15. Von Werthern was a member of the "Drei Hundert," an unofficial anti-monarchist paramilitary organization composed of men of German ancestry.

This paper asserts that during the crucial months prior to and immediately following the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom in January 1893 Robert Wilcox's position, as viewed through the *Liberal*, towards Queen Lili'uokalani and the institution of monarchy as a whole was almost always hostile.

ROBERT WILCOX AND THE HAWAIIAN MONARCHY

Robert Wilcox's position towards the Hawaiian monarchy was inconsistent. In his early political career Wilcox clearly favored the traditional system of government in the kingdom. For example, following Wilcox's entry into the Hawaiian legislature in May 1880, he became a strong supporter of King Kalākaua. Indeed, the king sent Wilcox along with two other part-Hawaiian men to Italy in August 1880 to receive military training at the expense of the Hawaiian government.²

Wilcox remained in Italy until 1887 when he was recalled after a coup by a small number of white politicians and their supporters that resulted in Kalākaua losing most of his political power. These opponents of the king formed a political organization called the Reform Party and forced Kalākaua to sign the so-called Bayonet Constitution that formally stripped the king of much of his authority. As a result,



Robert W. Wilcox, circa 1900. Hawaiian Historical Society.

Wilcox lost his confidence in the king's ability to protect the interests of the monarchy and the native Hawaiian people.

Following his return to Honolulu, Wilcox came to favor Kalākaua's abdication in favor of his sister and heir Lili'uokalani. The abdication never became a reality. However, on July 30, 1889, Wilcox finally took action to overturn the Bayonet Constitution and restore power to the monarchy. The attempted uprising was thoroughly put down by supporters of the Reform government.

Despite the failure of the revolt, Wilcox became a hero among the native Hawaiian people for his efforts to remove the Reform Party from power. In 1890, a new pro-monarchist political party was formed to counter the policies of the Reform Party. It was styled the National Reform Party, and Robert Wilcox was among its leaders. The same year Wilcox was elected to the House of Representatives and again endorsed Kalākaua and the notion of a powerful monarchy. However, the king was never restored to his former powers.

In January 1891, Kalākaua died and was succeeded by his sister Lili'uokalani. Although she wanted to do away with the restrictions of the Bayonet Constitution and return political leadership to the monarchy, she swore to uphold the Constitution of 1887 at her accession. Wilcox was angered by what appeared to be the new monarch's lack of resolve. He was also irritated when the new queen did not choose him to be in her government or on her personal staff. By the summer of 1891, Wilcox was ready to break away from the National Reform Party by creating his own political movement, the National Liberal Party. The new party decided to contest the legislative elections scheduled for early February 1892.³

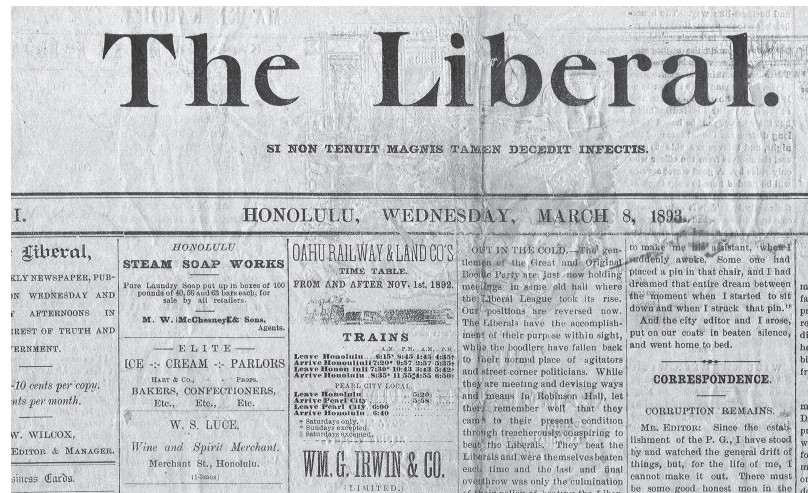
THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY AND THE DEBUT OF THE *LIBERAL*

By the time the National Liberal Party was formally established in November 1891, Wilcox had already indicated his support for the establishment of a Hawaiian republic that would return political power to the Native Hawaiians. The former die-hard monarchist had now seemingly turned into a solid republican. However, the official platform of the National Liberal Party did not explicitly call for the abrogation of the monarchy. Rather, the new party focused on restoring political power to the indigenous people. Indeed, shortly after the

inauguration of his new political movement, Wilcox played down his differences with Lili'uokalani.

Following the elections of February 1892, in which the National Liberal Party performed well but came nowhere near to achieving a parliamentary majority, Wilcox reverted to his criticism of the monarchy and Lili'uokalani herself. Only a republic would protect the interests of the native Hawaiian people Wilcox asserted. By the spring of 1892, Wilcox's anti-monarchical rhetoric had become so vitriolic that many became convinced that he was plotting the overthrow of the Queen. On May 20, 1892, Wilcox and several associates were arrested and charged with plotting to set up a republic. A little more than a month later, the indictment against Wilcox was withdrawn, and he was released.

Shortly after Wilcox's arrest, the legislature opened. The National Liberal Party had split over the issue of the monarchy. Wilcox and his supporters formed a republican group, and a more moderate element pledged to back Lili'uokalani. Released from prison, Wilcox was able to play a role in the 1892 legislative session, and on July 13, Wilcox initiated action to bring down the Queen's cabinet. By the end of August, Lili'uokalani's ministers had resigned.⁴



The Liberal newspaper masthead from Wednesday, March 8, 1893. Hawaiian Historical Society.

It was into this tempestuous political atmosphere that Robert Wilcox's bilingual paper the *Liberal* made its first appearance on September 7, 1892.⁵

THE *LIBERAL* AND THE MONARCHY, OCTOBER 1892–JANUARY 1893

The *Liberal* attacked Queen Lili'uokalani and the institution of the Hawaiian monarchy on a regular basis.⁶ These criticisms were of both a general and specific nature. For example, monarchy as a system of government was ridiculed as antiquated. One of the more scathing attacks on the principle of hereditary rule appeared in the October 1, 1892 edition of the paper soon after the journal made its debut. A letter to the editor signed by Frederick Forest occupies much of the front page and is typical of the tenor of the *Liberal*. The letter strongly condemned the institution of monarchy and argued that Hawai'i would become a much more advanced and prosperous society without the burdens of supporting royalty. In fact, Forest declared that the "victory of Republicanism over Monarchy will be hailed as a glorious sign of the progress of universal liberty and enlightened civilization."

Under a Hawaiian republic, the writer continued, government would become more rational and streamlined. Needless ceremonial obligations would vanish. "The Court column in the daily papers will disappear. No more Court directories. No more 'Her Majesty,' followed by a lot of rot and rubbish about the heir." On a practical level, the Royal Guard would be disbanded, which Forest argued would save the government \$50,000.

Not only was the institution of monarchy criticized in Forest's letter, but individual members of the royal family were mocked. For instance, Archibald Cleghorn, the Scottish-born Governor of O'ahu and the father of the heir to the throne, Princess Ka'iulani, was ridiculed. In a Hawaiian republic, Forest imagined, "We shall miss the royal gloom of the erstwhile Governor, covered with tin stars denoting decorations of Kalakaua, Kapiolani, Kakaako, and Pearl City." The author also alluded to the fact that Cleghorn was the father of several out-of-wedlock children in addition to the Princess. "Farewell, sire of royal succession, also sire of others in whom the marital rite was omitted."⁷ Finally, Forest scorned Prince Kawānanakoa and Prince Kūhiō, nephews of Kalākaua who had been raised to royal rank and placed in

the succession by their uncle. The letter concluded that the monarchy had made Hawai'i an international embarrassment.

Strong criticism of the monarchy in the October 1 edition of the *Liberal* was not limited simply to Forest's letter to the editor. In a section entitled "Politics," an unnamed writer accused Lili'uokalani of being dominated by corrupt sycophants, in particular the Royal Marshall, Charles B. Wilson. The author then maintained that "the monarchy is known to be an evil thing. From the earliest times efforts have been made to mitigate and limit it."⁸ The following week on October 22 the English editor of the *Liberal*, D. L. Huntsman, harshly attacked the heir to the throne. Several days earlier on October 16 Princess Ka'iulani had celebrated her seventeenth birthday. The monarchist papers of Honolulu praised the heir to the throne, who was known by her supporters as the "Hope of Hawai'i". Huntsman, on the other hand, condemned the royalist journals and argued that if "the 'Hope of Hawaii' rests in the hands of a half-white girl and lick-spittle hirelings like these, we may expect to see the country sink into the sea."⁹

Besides accusing the monarchy of being frivolous and corrupt, the *Liberal* condemned Lili'uokalani for being a despot. On October 12, for example, Huntsman, described the Queen as a "monarch struggling to be absolute."¹⁰ The alleged accumulation of wealth and power by the Queen and her supporters, Wilcox's paper maintained, would lead to the loss of Hawai'i's independence. The charge of despotism was raised again on November 2 in an editorial entitled "The Throne and the Legislature." The November 2 editorial accused the Queen of interfering with the will of the Hawaiian parliament, which the author maintained was the sole arbiter of political power in a constitutional monarchy. The article went on to conclude that royal meddling in the affairs of government was in direct opposition to the will of the people of Hawai'i. The consequences of continued intrusion, it was suggested, might result in the end of the monarchy.

The concern about the Queen's relationship with the Hawaiian legislature in the editorials of the *Liberal* in early November 1892 was directly related to Lili'uokalani's appointment of a new cabinet. On October 17, the legislature had overwhelmingly issued a vote of no confidence in the Queen's ministers prompting the removal of the cabinet. Defying the suggestions of the parliament, Lili'uokalani appointed a new cabinet of her own choosing on November 1. This

move was met with immediate disapproval from the legislature which voted only two hours after the cabinet was seated to remove them from office. Robert Wilcox supported the vote of no confidence.¹¹

The following day Wilcox's paper demanded that Lili'uokalani take the advice of the legislature when she selected her new advisors. Three days later on November 8, the Queen named a new cabinet headed by George Wilcox, a plantation owner who was not related to Robert Wilcox. This new group of ministers was supported by the parliament. The *Liberal* endorsed the new body of advisors in its November 9 editorial stating that the appointments were a victory for the principle of legislative control over the cabinet.

Following the appointment of George Wilcox as premier in early November, the *Liberal's* criticism of the monarchy abated. Nevertheless, an article which appeared in the December 3 issue of the *Liberal* demonstrates that Robert Wilcox's view of the monarchy at the end of 1892 was at best ambivalent. On the front page of the December 3 edition was a summary of a story that had appeared previously in the *San Francisco Examiner*. The California paper had surveyed members of the Hawaiian House of Representatives to discover where the lower house stood on the issue of potential annexation of Hawai'i to the United States. The parliamentarians were overwhelming against the loss of Hawaiian independence. Robert Wilcox's position on annexation, however, was ambiguous. "If we cannot make any progress as an independent nation we should take some steps to secure commercial and political protection from some foreign country," Wilcox asserted. Similarly, Wilcox took an indifferent stance on the future of the Hawaiian monarchy: "Our country must advance, progress. If we cannot do so under a constitutional monarchy we should try some other system of Government."¹²

By the close of 1892, Lili'uokalani had turned against the George Wilcox cabinet, suspecting that it was aware of and possibly involved in an alleged plot to overthrow the monarchy and bring about the annexation of the islands to the United States. The *Liberal*, however, reaffirmed its support for the George Wilcox ministry in an editorial on Christmas Eve. The December 24 article mentioned nothing about the Queen's dislike for the cabinet or any scheme to depose the monarchy. Rather, the paper asserted that the removal of the Wilcox ministry would create unnecessary chaos for the Hawaiian nation.

The *Liberal* also praised the cabinet for pursuing a policy of good and honest government.¹³

One week later, on New Years' Eve, the *Liberal* gave its support to the Queen. At the end of a short editorial entitled "Another Year," which outlined the paper's hopes for 1893, Robert Wilcox wrote, "May Her Majesty long live to reign over a country independent, and happy, whose flag proudly flies over a free and independent people."¹⁴ This shifting and ambiguous tone of the *Liberal*, which was apparent during November and December 1892, continued until January 14, 1893. In the first three issues of the new year the Wilcox ministry was repeatedly praised. Nevertheless, on January 12 the Wilcox cabinet came under attack from the Queen's supporters in the legislature and was unable to survive another vote of no confidence. Lili'uokalani got her wish, and the entire cabinet resigned. In a complete about face Robert Wilcox had supported the Queen and voted for the removal of the ministry despite lauding the cabinet just days earlier. On the following day, January 13, Lili'uokalani appointed a new cabinet headed by Samuel Parker. All of the new ministers were supporters of the Queen. At noon on January 14, Lili'uokalani prorogued the legislature.¹⁵

That same day the *Liberal* endorsed the fall of the Wilcox ministry and stressed the Queen's right to select a new group of advisors. The article maintained that it was the duty of all Hawaiians to support the Queen and the new government. Thus, only three days before the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy Robert Wilcox appeared to have moved into the royalist camp. In fact, on January 16, the day before the Hawaiian kingdom ended, Wilcox expressed his loyalty and support for the Queen in a public speech. Nevertheless, within a few short days, Wilcox's anti-monarchism would be again clearly apparent in the pages of the *Liberal*.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE HAWAIIAN MONARCHY

The January 14, 1893 edition of the *Liberal* was the last to appear before the overthrow of Lili'uokalani on January 17. The paper would not resume publication until January 25. However, before examining the reaction of Wilcox's paper to the toppling of the kingdom, it is useful to sketch out briefly the events immediately surrounding the abrogation of the Hawaiian monarchy. At midday on Janu-

ary 14, Lili'uokalani prorogued the parliament. That afternoon the Queen intended to abolish the Constitution of 1887 that had been forced on her brother Kalākaua some six years earlier. In its stead Lili'uokalani planned to issue a new charter for the Hawaiian kingdom that would strengthen the prerogatives of the sovereign. The Queen had informed her ministers on the morning of January 14 of her objectives and expected the Parker cabinet to sign the proposed constitution. However, according to the terms of the 1887 charter, to which Lili'uokalani had reluctantly sworn allegiance at her accession, the monarch did not have the authority unilaterally to issue a new constitution. The Queen's ministers were reluctant to endorse her plans.

Moreover, by the time Lili'uokalani had recessed the legislature, several anti-royalist leaders had learned of the Queen's intentions. Among these was Lorrin Thurston, a leader of the Reform Party and a key figure in forcing the Bayonet Constitution on Kalākaua in 1887. In early 1892, Thurston and a small group of approximately a dozen other opponents of the Queen, all of American or European descent, had formed a secret society called the Annexation Club. The purpose of this organization was to promote the transfer of Hawai'i to the United States in the event that Lili'uokalani attempted to replace the Constitution of 1887 and restore direct royal rule. Thurston had anticipated the Queen's actions. On January 14, Thurston and his associates urged the cabinet to refuse to sign the new constitution.

Furthermore, by the afternoon of January 14, the foreign diplomatic community was aware of Lili'uokalani's desire to promulgate a new charter. The consular representatives advised the Queen not to act. Lili'uokalani relented and announced that she would postpone the proclamation of a new constitution. However, the Annexation Club was prepared to take action, and the opponents of the Queen formed a Committee of Safety. Their goal was now the overthrow of the monarchy and the installation of a provisional government. The conspirators made contact with the American minister to Hawai'i, John L. Stevens, who was sympathetic to their cause and was prepared to recognize a provisional government if the plotters were able to depose the Queen. By the following day, January 15, the cabinet was aware of the plot to depose Lili'uokalani. Nevertheless, no action was taken to arrest those planning the coup.

On January 16, Thurston and his supporters held a mass public

meeting to condemn the Queen and her actions. A counter demonstration was held by royalists. Included among the speakers was Robert Wilcox who "addressed the meeting to extol the virtues of the queen and support the monarchy."¹⁶ Late in the afternoon of January 16, Minister Stevens ordered the landing of some 160 troops from the *USS Boston*, an American naval vessel docked at Honolulu harbor. These men were ostensibly landed to maintain public order and protect the lives and safety of American citizens in the event of civil unrest.¹⁷

On the afternoon of January 17, the members of the Committee of Safety went to the unguarded Government Building, the seat of the kingdom's administration, and proclaimed the abrogation of the monarchy and the establishment of a provisional government until annexation to the United States could be arranged. Almost immediately Stevens recognized the provisional government. By the evening of January 17, Queen Lili'uokalani had surrendered her authority under protest. However, she capitulated, not to the provisional government, but to the United States.

THE *LIBERAL'S* VIEW OF THE OVERTHROW OF THE MONARCHY

The *Liberal* resumed publication on January 25, 1893, eight days following the overthrow. Although Wilcox had praised Lili'uokalani and the monarchy only one day before the overthrow, by January 25 the *Liberal* had once again become staunchly anti-royalist. In addition, with the reappearance of Wilcox's paper came a new English-language editor, Clarence Ashford, an anti-royalist former attorney general in the Reform cabinet.

The first article on the editorial page of the January 25, 1893 edition was entitled "The Monarchy." It began by paraphrasing a line from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, "We come to bury Caesar, not to praise him." Thus, it was clear that the *Liberal* had no sympathy for the demise of the monarchy. Indeed, Ashford's literary allusion was followed by a reference to a death that was closer to home. He pointed to a murder investigation in Hilo in which a body had to be exhumed and examined approximately a week after death. When the doctor who performed the autopsy was asked to describe the condition of the corpse, he replied, "well, it appeared to be, ah, to be -dead." According to Ashford, such was the condition of the monarchy one

week after its overthrow: "After viewing the remains of the late Hawaiian Monarchy, . . . THE LIBERAL is constrained to affirm that the monarchy appears to be dead."

Clarence Ashford attributed the downfall of the Hawaiian kingdom to the actions of Lili'uokalani. Indeed, the English editor of the *Liberal* declared, "the demise of the Monarchy may be attributed to SUICIDE." By this, Ashford meant that the Queen had brought about her own fall from power by attempting to replace the Constitution of 1887 with her own charter. This, according to the former attorney general, was a clear violation of the law.

Ashford strongly supported the Provisional Government and argued that it had significant public support. "The Monarchy has been abolished, . . . and a temporary government, springing from the spontaneous action of a considerable section of the community . . . now exercises control of the public affairs." The *Liberal* went on to urge the populace to comply with the directives of the Provisional Government. Indeed, Wilcox's fellow editor specifically praised the leaders of the revolution, including the president of the Provisional Government, Sanford Dole, and the minister of finance, P. C. Jones. Dole was described as a man of "unimpeachable integrity" who had the backing of the nation, and Jones was hailed as an individual who would honestly preside over the country's finances. Two other ministers of the provisional cabinet were also lauded by Ashford. James King, minister of the interior, was extolled as a trustworthy official, and the Attorney-General, W. O. Smith, was applauded for his thorough knowledge of Hawaiian history and culture.

The English-language editor of the *Liberal* even compared Robert Wilcox to the leaders of the overthrow of the monarchy. In fact, he argued that Wilcox had already attempted to do what the revolutionaries argued they had accomplished in January 1893, stop Lili'uokalani from imposing a royal dictatorship on the Hawaiian nation. Ashford was making reference to Wilcox's arrest in the spring of 1892 for attempting to depose the monarchy and establish in its place a republic. In fact, Ashford maintained that Wilcox's goal some eight months prior to the overthrow was to "resist a projected attempt of the then Queen and her supporters to impose upon the country an illiberal and despotic constitution."

In its January 28 edition the *Liberal* continued its criticism of the monarchy and included a mocking personal attack on Lili'uokalani.

Indeed, Ashford alleged that the former Queen, a devout Christian, was surrounded by pagans:

We learn from this morning's P.C.A [*Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, at the time a major anti-royalist paper] that the late Queen has been attending a luau at which dead pigs and live kahunas [traditional priests] were prominently present. We would advise her late Majesty to reverse these conditions, at the next feast she shall grace with her presence, and allow the pigs to live, while roasting the kahunas.¹⁸

Wilcox's associate went on to accuse officials of the Hawaiian kingdom's military of being cowards and blowhards. Ashford pointed out that in the aftermath of the overthrow of the monarchy some of the strongest critics of the Provisional Government were former members of the royal guard. The editor then highlighted the fact that the Queen's military had not fired a single shot in defense of the monarchy. Ashford concluded that it would have been more heroic if the royal guard had used physical force to counter the revolutionaries rather than verbal assaults to mock the Provisional Government.

Besides Lili'uokalani, the *Liberal* also attacked other members of the deposed royal family. For example, Ashford strongly criticized Archibald Cleghorn, the father of Princess Ka'iulani. Cleghorn had served as Inspector-General of Customs and Governor of O'ahu under the monarchy, and on February 1, Wilcox's paper reported that Cleghorn had agreed to take an oath of allegiance to the Provisional Government under protest in order to maintain his official positions. Ashford suggested that Cleghorn's actions were hypocritical as "the taking of such an oath is not one of the occasions to which a 'protest' is applicable." Further ridiculing Cleghorn and the trappings of monarchy, the *Liberal* claimed that as governor Ka'iulani's father had done nothing more than "stand around in gold lace and look ridiculous at Palace fetes."¹⁹

THE *LIBERAL* AND THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY

When Lili'uokalani relinquished her authority on January 17, 1893, she surrendered, not to the Provisional Government, but to the United States. The Queen hoped that the American administration would help to restore her to the throne once it realized that its diplomatic representative had collaborated with the revolutionaries in

the overthrow of a friendly government. Many royalists were optimistic that the United States would be sympathetic to the cause of the deposed monarchy. In an article entitled "A Delusion," which appeared on January 28, Clarence Ashford maintained that "people who hold such opinions must be demented."²⁰ The English-language editor of Wilcox's paper explained that the American government had no sympathy for the institution of monarchy and would make no efforts, political or military, to restore Lili'uokalani to the throne.

Within days of the overthrow of the monarchy, the Provisional Government sent a delegation to Washington to negotiate a treaty of union with the United States. Similarly, a group of royalists was dispatched to the American capital by Lili'uokalani at the beginning of February. Wilcox's paper viewed this move as absurd. Ashford argued that monarchy was an obsolete form of government and that it was "too late in the 19th century to rationally hope for the restoration of monarchical forms which have been overthrown by the people."²¹ The former attorney general then anticipated the criticism that would be made by opponents of the Provisional Government: that the Hawaiian revolution was not in fact a popular uprising but rather a coup led by a small handful of malcontents of foreign origin. In response to this argument Ashford countered that if the proposition were indeed true, then the Hawaiian monarchy had clearly demonstrated its ineptitude by being unable to defeat the revolutionaries. Such a weak institution was not deserving of restoration the *Liberal* concluded. Maintaining that monarchy was nothing more than an impediment to the march of progress, the paper advised royalists to cease their opposition to annexation.

THE *LIBERAL* AND THE NEW HAWAI'I

In the first edition of the *Liberal* following the overthrow of the monarchy, Clarence Ashford maintained that the native Hawaiian people would benefit from the end of the Hawaiian kingdom. However, Ashford argued that there was only one viable alternative to the monarchical form of government and that was statehood for Hawai'i. "With a State government, the equal rights of the people would be forever guaranteed, and the INDEPENDENCE of Hawaii would be elevated from a phrase to a fact."²² Ashford's statements echo the declared

objectives of Robert Wilcox, who asserted that his utmost goal was the political liberty of the Hawaiian people.

The *Liberal*, nevertheless, recognized that the leadership of the Hawaiian revolution did not include any native Hawaiians and that in the new Provisional Government, which was directed by an Executive Council and an Advisory Council, there were no people of indigenous descent. Ashford believed that this took away from the integrity and legitimacy of the new regime. Without the involvement of Native Hawaiians, Ashford contended, "no government can hope to endure long in Hawaii."²³ In addition, the former attorney general reasoned that the absence of Native Hawaiians in the Provisional Government was an indication that either there were no native people who were qualified to be in the new administration or that the government was purposely discriminating against them. Ashford condemned any policy of prejudice and asserted that the United States would not look favorably on a request for annexation from a regime without any Native Hawaiians in positions of prominence. Thus, the *Liberal* considered that it was the "manifest duty of the government to seek out and appoint . . . men of Hawaiian blood, whose brains, interests and loyalty to the new idea bespoke than [sic] as deserving of such honor and confidence." This suggestion was reiterated on February 1 when the former attorney general urged the Provisional Government to appoint Native Hawaiians to future vacancies on the Advisory Council.

Wilcox's paper clearly outlined its political program for the future in an article entitled "Statehood" on January 28. Annexation to the United States was the first goal. "THE LIBERAL is an advocate of annexation, first, last, and all the time." Furthermore, Ashford was unambiguous in his desire for statehood as an immediate consequence of annexation. No other form of association with the United States, including territorial status, was acceptable. Statehood was necessary in order to guarantee freedom and liberty for the people of Hawai'i.

Specifically, the *Liberal* delineated several key benefits to statehood. Firstly, and perhaps counter-intuitively, becoming an American state would establish and ensure Hawaiian independence. Ashford claimed that under the monarchy Hawai'i had not been a truly independent nation. "While nominally sovereign, the government has seldom or never been free from the illicit supervision, control or influence of other Powers, or of individuals."²⁴ In other words, the *Liberal* asserted

that during the Hawaiian kingdom before any major decision of the monarch or parliament could be implemented it had to meet with the approval of either overseas financial backers or foreign governments and military officials. American states, on the other hand, the former attorney general stressed, were sovereign entities with genuinely representative governments.

Ashford went on to explain the American system of government highlighting constitutional guarantees. He pointed out that although the federal administration had control over certain responsibilities, such as the military and national borders, American states were largely self-governing. For instance, each state had its own legislature and determined its own local laws. Similarly, states chose their own officials to represent them in Congress. Hence, the *Liberal* concluded that as an American state Hawai'i would have more freedom than as a kingdom.

On the other hand, Ashford staunchly condemned the creation of an American territory in Hawai'i. He did this by giving a history of territorial government in the development of the United States. The editor explained that beginning with the presidency of Andrew Jackson, positions in territorial administrations were distributed as political patronage and that appointed territorial officials viewed their posts as a means to advance their financial situations.

Although Wilcox's paper strongly supported statehood for Hawai'i in order to guarantee freedom for its residents, the *Liberal* was willing to accept the possibility that statehood would be not immediate. To prepare for that scenario, Ashford developed a strategy to prevent the worst abuses that might result from the creation of a territory. He insisted that territorial status for Hawai'i would be of only a limited duration, perhaps five years. Moreover, during that period government officials in Hawai'i would be required to be residents of the islands who had lived in the former Hawaiian kingdom for at least several years. These conditions would have to be confirmed in a treaty of annexation between Hawai'i and the United States. Ashford was not willing to leave the question of statehood to the whims of the American Congress at some undetermined future point following annexation.

The stance of the *Liberal* with regards to Hawai'i's status following annexation was in opposition to the desires of the Provisional Government. Although the leaders of the January coup supported union with the United States, they did not wish Hawai'i to become an American state. Rather, the new regime favored some form of territorial sta-

tus for the islands. This would allow the former kingdom to benefit from American control without having to observe certain aspects of American law. For example, in order to protect their economic advantages, the revolutionaries, who represented the interests of Hawai'i's plantation owners, did not want the introduction of American labor laws, which would disrupt the contract labor system of the kingdom that strongly favored employers. In addition, the officials of the Provisional Government who went to Washington sought to prevent the establishment of a political structure in which there would be popular elections.

NEW EDITOR, SIMILAR POSITIONS

The February 1, 1893 edition of the *Liberal* was the last to be edited by Clarence Ashford. He was replaced by D. L. Huntsman, who had been the first English-language editor of the paper until he was let go by Wilcox in October 1892 for his inflammatory articles. Huntsman resumed the editorship with the February 4 issue of the journal. In that day's editorial columns Huntsman criticized the Hawaiian monarchy. Indeed, Huntsman celebrated the downfall of hereditary rule by declaring that "an elaborate system of effete humbug has been swept away."

Like Ashford, Huntsman blamed the monarchy for its own demise. The new editor accused royalists of being cowards, claiming that they had done nothing to defend the Queen during the January revolution. Huntsman also argued that the kingdom had been artificially maintained by the support of the United States. However, "when the support of the American government was withdrawn, the rotten institution went to pieces of its on [sic] accord."²⁵

Again like his predecessor, Huntsman believed that annexation would benefit all of the people of Hawai'i. In fact, in the February 4 issue of the journal, Huntsman reprinted an editorial that he had written for Wilcox's paper in September 1892. The article was entitled "Annexation" and provided a lengthy analysis of the benefits of union with the United States. Huntsman reasoned that Hawai'i, as a small independent kingdom, was a pawn of the world's most powerful nations and was inherently unstable. Under the protection of the United States, however, Hawai'i would become freer than under the monarchy. Huntsman also envisaged under American rule the end

of the contract labor system in Hawai'i, which the editor argued bordered on slavery.

In addition, Huntsman, like Ashford, analyzed the various possible forms of government that might be established in Hawai'i following union with the United States. For the most part, Huntsman's conclusions mirrored those of his predecessor. For instance, Huntsman insisted that statehood was the only guarantee of liberty and political independence for the people of Hawai'i. In addition, he pointed out that with statehood the native Hawaiian people would gain control of the reins of government in the islands.

Huntsman urged Native Hawaiians to demand autonomy under American rule. If this were achieved, he concluded, those of Hawaiian blood would have much more political influence as residents of a territory of the United States than they did as citizens of the kingdom of Hawai'i. Thus, both Huntsman and Ashford desired a new Hawai'i whose political structures would become democratic under American control.

Yet, Huntsman acknowledged that the indigenous population was overwhelmingly royalist. In fact, he argued that Robert Wilcox and his associate John Bush, another part-Hawaiian leader of the Liberal Party, were "the only natives who have worked for good government and had the courage to stand up against the aggression of the throne."²⁶ Huntsman also referred again to Wilcox's anti-royalist credentials by pointing out that he had been arrested in the summer of 1892 for plotting to overthrow the kingdom.

Fearful that the Provisional Government would not call for Hawai'i to become a state upon annexation, Huntsman proposed a novel idea, the incorporation of Hawai'i into the state of California. This would allow the islands to benefit from the advantages of statehood without becoming a separate state. Specifically, Huntsman proposed that Hawai'i could become four new counties of California. As such, the people of the islands would be able to vote in local, state, and national elections and participate fully in the democratic process. Huntsman concluded, "Let us be Californians if we are consulted in the matter."²⁷

In an editorial on February 18, Huntsman maintained that joining California was not only the best method to ensure that the people of Hawai'i would share completely in the benefits of American citizen-

ship, but was also an arrangement that would be looked on positively by California. Indeed, the *Liberal* proudly declared, "Hawaii is the jeweled key of the Golden Gate."²⁸ Huntsman also pointed to a resolution adopted on February 3 by the California legislature that declared in favor of annexation to the United States.

Although Huntsman's views of the leaders of the Provisional Government were similar to those of Ashford and thus largely favorable, Huntsman, again like Ashford, was willing to criticize the new regime. For example, on February 15, Huntsman denounced the lack of elective offices in the Provisional Government as undemocratic and dictatorial. One month later on March 15, concluding that the Provisional Government had not rooted out monarchists in its service, Wilcox's journal suggested that the hiring guidelines for government appointees should include the phrase, "No Royalist need apply."²⁹

By early March 1893, it appeared unlikely that the United States would immediately annex Hawai'i. This was made clear by the actions of the American president, Grover Cleveland, who decided to abandon a proposed treaty of annexation on March 9. This heightened fears at the *Liberal*, and on March 11 Huntsman announced that "the re-establishment of the monarchy has already swung within the range of possibilities." Contributing to this apprehension was the perception that royalists, such as the father of Princess Ka'iulani, Archibald Cleghorn, who had been retained by the Provisional Government as Inspector of Customs, were taking over the new regime. Princess Ka'iulani herself raised alarms at the *Liberal*. Ka'iulani was rumored to be the next sovereign if the kingdom were re-instated, and the Princess had arrived in Washington at the beginning of March to plead her case for the restoration of the Hawaiian monarchy.

The anti-royalism of Wilcox's paper intensified. On the front page of the March 11 edition there appeared a re-print from an unidentified American publication entitled "A Foolish Princess." The editorial began by stating that Ka'iulani had announced to the American people that she was entitled by birth to one day rule the Hawaiian kingdom. This claim, the article maintained, was evidence that the princess was out of touch with modernity and was a "product of the seventeenth century. Crowns were then held by divine right."³⁰ The author explained that the principle of divine-right monarchy had been replaced by the notion of popular sovereignty. Under popu-

lar sovereignty, the writer asserted, the princess had been declared heir to the throne in order to benefit the Hawaiian people. When Lili'uokalani proved unable to govern in the best interests of her nation, the editorial concluded, she lost her throne and the privilege to pass it on to her niece. Consequently, Ka'iulani had no right to the Hawaiian crown.

On March 15, another article criticizing Princess Ka'iulani appeared on the front page of the *Liberal*. Signed "American Citizen" the attack analyzed the Princess' public statement to the American people urging them to reject annexation. The very notion of a public pronouncement to the citizens of the United States was condemned by the author as an act of arrogance. "American Citizen" also denounced Ka'iulani as an individual who had accomplished nothing, yet "has been living so far on the charity of the Hawaiian taxpayers."³¹

The *Liberal's* fear that the kingdom would be restored following the failure of annexation in March 1893 was closely linked with the paper's growing opposition to the Provisional Government. Indeed, on March 15, Huntsman declared that while the institution of monarchy in Hawai'i had been seemingly destroyed by the January revolution, "it has been coddled into animation by the Provisional Government."³² Huntsman highlighted the new administration's continuing contact with royalists, its oligarchic nature, and its refusal to establish democratic institutions. Moreover, Huntsman claimed that the representatives of the Provisional Government who had traveled to Washington to negotiate the terms of annexation had requested that the United States provide a large pension to the deposed Queen. The *Liberal* reasoned that such a request diminished the chances for annexation as it gave the appearance that the former monarch had not been legitimately deposed.

While the English edition of Wilcox's newspaper vilified the Hawaiian monarchy and extolled the virtues of annexation in the weeks following the overthrow, the actions of Wilcox himself mirrored many of the views expressed in the *Liberal*. For instance, during the first week of February 1893, Wilcox requested a position in the Provisional Government. His application was denied. Several weeks later, on March 21, a group calling itself the Annexation Club was established to support union with the United States.³³ Wilcox joined the organization and was named a vice president of the league.³⁴ Indeed, advertisements for the Annexation Club appeared in the pages of the *Liberal*.³⁵

In a letter to the editor published on the front page of the *Liberal* on April 8. The article, written by an individual who signed his name "Equality," explained Robert Wilcox's political positions on the issues of the Hawaiian monarchy and annexation. The author declared that Wilcox's "ambition is to see the Hawaiians citizens of the Greatest of Republics." With annexation would come true independence for the native Hawaiian people, the writer continued, suggesting that the monarchy had oppressed the Hawaiians and had been manipulated by foreigners. "Equality" further maintained that Robert Wilcox more than anyone else understood the true opinions of the indigenous population. Wilcox could see, for instance, that the native people had "been deceived enough by their pretended 'haole' [western] friends."³⁶ True freedom, it was argued, would only come following a union with the United States.

THE FINAL EDITOR AND THE FINAL WEEKS

Harry von Werthern was the last editor of the English-language version of the *Liberal*. An anti-royalist, he assumed the position following the murder of D. L. Huntsman on March 20, and the first issue of the paper with von Werthern as editor appeared on March 25.³⁷ Von Werthern held his position until Wilcox's paper ceased publication on April 15. With von Werthern as editor the *Liberal* continued to assume the same core positions that it had held under its previous directors. These included support for annexation by the United States, hostility to the Hawaiian monarchy, and anger at the Provisional Government for what the journal perceived as a lackluster effort to prevent a restoration of the deposed Queen.

These perspectives were clearly apparent in the March 25 issue of the *Liberal*, the first edited by von Werthern. For example, an article in that day's edition was entitled "Annex Hawaii at once." Moreover, in the editorial portion of that day's paper was an article challenging Princess Ka'iulani's claim to the Hawaiian throne. Von Werthern also wrote a commentary condemning the Provisional Government for allegedly providing Lili'uokalani with large regular payments.

Although that day's edition gave no indication of its impending demise, the last issue of the *Liberal* appeared on April 15, 1893. The view of the Hawaiian monarchy advanced in that Saturday's paper was consistent with the opinions put forth by the journal's English-lan-

guage editors for most of its existence, hostility towards Lili'uokalani and contempt for a monarchical institution. As his predecessors did, von Werthern heartily advanced the cause of annexation, which the *Liberal* had staunchly supported since the January revolution. As a result, the last installment of the *Liberal* gave no indication of Wilcox's looming break with the cause of union with the United States, which would culminate in his leading role in the royalist counterrevolution of January 1895.

On April 17, 1893, two days after the final edition of the *Liberal* appeared, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* provided some clue as to the state of the paper. The daily stated that von Werthern had "retired from the editorial chair of The Liberal. Of late the Hawaiian and English portions of the journal have clashed somewhat. The retiring editor is not in favor of a republic, as Wilcox seems to be."³⁸ On April 23, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* circulated a rumor that Wilcox was about to proclaim a Hawaiian republic and pointed out that the *Liberal* had not appeared for several days.³⁹

CONCLUSIONS

As the commentaries in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* suggest, the English-language edition of Wilcox's paper might not always have been in complete agreement with its Hawaiian-language counterpart. As a result, further research is needed to compare the Hawaiian-language version of Wilcox's journal with the English-language edition. Although the English and Hawaiian-language versions were published together, it is clear that they had different audiences. However, given that Wilcox was the owner and overall manager of the paper, who appointed and removed his co-editors and even served as English-language editor himself for a good part of the *Liberal's* existence, it is assumed that Wilcox concurred with the basic content of his own journal. In addition, the views expressed on the subject of the Hawaiian monarchy in the English-language version of the paper are in agreement with Wilcox's own actions during this period. Therefore, while by April 1893 von Werthern preferred annexation over a republic and Wilcox seemed to favor the latter, both positions were consistent with strong opposition to the monarchy.

Indeed, during the crucial months before and after the overthrow

of the Hawaiian kingdom, the positions of the *Liberal* clearly indicate that Wilcox was often, but not always, hostile to the Hawaiian monarchy and to the rule of Lili'uokalani. This contrasts with Wilcox's pro-monarchy positions in 1889 and 1895. The reasons for these shifts have not been analyzed here, but further research on Wilcox's career as a journalist will likely shed more light on his motives.

NOTES

- ¹ The *Liberal* appeared twice weekly, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Microfilm copies of the paper are located at the Hawaiian Historical Society, Hawai'i State Library, and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Unfortunately, the first seven issues of the *Liberal* are unavailable at any of those locations and have probably not survived. In addition, numbers 9, 31, and 49 are also missing. A brief biography of Robert Wilcox, with special attention given to his involvement with the press, is presented in Helen G. Chapin, *Shaping History, The Role of Newspapers in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1996) 84–92.
- ² Ernest Andrade Jr., *Unconquerable Rebel, Robert W. Wilcox and Hawaiian Politics, 1880–1903* (Niwtot: UP of Colorado, 1996) 14–24, 52.
- ³ Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel* 71–79, 86–90.
- ⁴ Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel* 89–91, 94–99.
- ⁵ Esther K. Mo'okini in *The Hawaiian Newspapers* (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing, 1974) and Helen G. Chapin in *Guide to Newspapers of Hawai'i 1834–2000* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Historical Society, 2000) list the inaugural issue of the *Liberal* as September 9, 1892. However, in the September 8, 1892 edition of the Honolulu-based *Daily Bulletin*, the first issue of the *Liberal* is referred to as having appeared the previous day. Kuykendall in *Hawaiian Kingdom* (Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1967) volume III, page 555, and Andrade also refer to the debut date of the *Liberal* as September 7, 1892.
- ⁶ Although the *Liberal* first appeared on September 7, 1892, I have been unable to find any surviving examples of the paper prior to the eighth issue published on October 1, 1892. The microfilm copies of the *Liberal*, which are available in Hawai'i at the Hawaiian Historical Society, the Hawai'i State Library, and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, do not contain the first seven editions of the paper. The Library of Congress possesses a copy of the March 29, 1893 edition and reports that the only institution outside of Hawai'i with the *Liberal* is Harvard University, whose microfilm version is also missing the first seven editions.
- ⁷ *Liberal*, Oct. 1, 1892, 1.
- ⁸ *Liberal*, Oct. 1, 1892, 2.
- ⁹ *Liberal*, Oct. 22, 1892, 3.
- ¹⁰ *Liberal*, Oct. 12, 1892, 2.
- ¹¹ Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*, 108–09; Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. III, 555–59.

- ¹² *Liberal*, Dec. 3, 1892, 1.
- ¹³ *Liberal*, Dec. 24, 1892, 2; Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. III, 576.
- ¹⁴ *Liberal*, Dec. 31, 1892, 2.
- ¹⁵ Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. III, 580-81; Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*, 114.
- ¹⁶ Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol., III, 593; Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*, 124-25.
- ¹⁷ Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol., III, 592-95.
- ¹⁸ *Liberal*, Jan. 28, 1893, 2.
- ¹⁹ *Liberal*, Feb. 1, 1893, 1.
- ²⁰ *Liberal*, Jan. 28, 1893, 3.
- ²¹ *Liberal*, Feb. 1, 1893, 1.
- ²² *Liberal*, Jan. 25, 1893, 2.
- ²³ *Liberal*, Feb. 1, 1893, 1.
- ²⁴ *Liberal*, Jan. 28, 1893, 2.
- ²⁵ *Liberal*, Feb. 4, 1893, 2.
- ²⁶ *Liberal*, Feb. 8, 1893, 1.
- ²⁷ *Liberal*, Feb. 11, 1893, 2.
- ²⁸ *Liberal*, Feb. 18, 1893, 2.
- ²⁹ *Liberal*, Mar. 15, 1893, 1.
- ³⁰ *Liberal*, Mar. 11, 1893, 1.
- ³¹ *Liberal*, Mar. 15, 1893, 1.
- ³² *Liberal*, Mar. 15, 1893, 2.
- ³³ This Annexation Club was a different organization from the Annexation Club that existed before the overthrow of the monarchy.
- ³⁴ Wilcox remained a member of the Annexation Club for the duration of the period during which the *Liberal* was published. He resigned in May 1893 (Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*, 126)
- ³⁵ See, for instance, *Liberal*, Mar. 29, 1893, 2 and *Liberal*, Apr. 1, 1893, 2. On April 8, von Werthern noted in the *Liberal* that several prominent individuals of Native Hawaiian background, such as Wilcox, had joined the Annexation Club. The editor reasoned that this was a clear indication that support for annexation was growing among the indigenous people (*Liberal*, Apr. 8, 1893, 2).
- ³⁶ *Liberal*, Apr. 8, 1893, 1.
- ³⁷ D.L. Huntsman was shot twice on March 18 by his landlord August Herring who suspected that Huntsman was having an affair with his wife. Huntsman died in the hospital from his wounds on March 20. For the details of the Huntsman murder see *DB*, Mar. 20, 1893, 3.
- ³⁸ *PCA*, Apr. 17, 1893, 3.
- ³⁹ *PCA*, Apr. 22, 1893, 3. The claim that Wilcox was in favor of a republic was repeated in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* on April 26 (*PCA*, Apr. 26, 1893, 3). It is also discussed in the *Hawaiian Star* on April 18, 1893 (*Hawaiian Star*, Apr. 18, 1893, 2).