



Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism

Noenoe K. Silva

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In 1897, as a white oligarchy made plans to allow the United States to annex Hawai'i, native Hawaiians organized a massive petition drive to protest. Ninety-five percent of the native population signed the petition, causing the annexation treaty to fail in the U.S. Senate. This event was unknown to many contemporary Hawaiians until Noenoe K. Silva rediscovered the petition in the process of researching this book. With few exceptions, histories of Hawai'i have been based exclusively on English-language sources. They have not taken into account the thousands of pages of newspapers, books, and letters written in the mother tongue of native Hawaiians. By rigorously analyzing many of these documents, Silva fills a crucial gap in the historical record. In so doing, she refutes the long-held idea that native Hawaiians passively accepted the erosion of their culture and loss of their nation, showing that they actively resisted political, economic, linguistic, and cultural domination. Drawing on Hawaiian-language texts, primarily newspapers produced in the nineteenth century and early twentieth, Silva demonstrates that print media was central to social communication, political organizing, and the perpetuation of Hawaiian language and culture. A powerful critique of colonial historiography, *Aloha Betrayed* provides a much-needed history of native Hawaiian resistance to American imperialism.

Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism Details

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From Reader Review Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism for online ebook

AskHistorians says

A pathbreaking work that relies on Hawaiian-language sources to reveal the forgotten history of Native Hawaiian resistance to colonialism.

Stephanie says

Outstanding account of the resistance to becoming part of the USA - native resistance that was never exposed. Interesting and infuriating read

Katherine says

An add-on to pro-English/American history of Hawaii perspective about colonialism. No surprise - some natives were for alignment with the US, others were not. Lots of criticism about the author's research being too narrow, and some criticism about ignoring the importance of the Asians in Hawaii's history - but overall, good information.

Roxanne says

When I went to Hawaii in the 1970's we took a bus up to the Polynesian Cultural Center. We had to go by police escort because there was a massive protest by the native islanders to get their island back. I think we should let them get it back for this is their personal culture.

Danielle Mootz says

Anazing amount of information I learned.

Ed Callahan says

I found Silva's work a helpful corrective to Hawaiian historiography which only considers the English language sources. Silva should follow this work up with an anthology of Hawaiian writings, perhaps a parallel English-Hawaiian text, or the sources translated into English in order to open these remote sources to a wider readership.

Karen says

Book Sum: Hawaii is a prime example of how historian source bias (using only English language/the colonizers' language sources) can lead to a faulty picture of that society. Hawaiian language sources were ignored until very recently and this has led to the idea that native Hawaiians never fought annexation/colonization by the US when intact they mounted a very vigorous resistance movement.

Cheri says

I read this book for a history class, and I must say it was extremely eye-opening. There is so much history I have never heard about at all, and this book gave me a beautifully crafted native-sourced history of the colonization and takeover of the Hawaiian islands by the Europeans and then the Americans.

Artnoose McMoose says

Historians and scholars have written much about the colonization and annexation of Hawaii. In this book, however, Silva considers the role of native resistance throughout the process by reading and including Hawaiian language poems and publications.

This book is not just about history, but about the historiography of colonization.

Things I learned:

1. The Hawaiian people suffered a huge population loss due to disease directly following first contact with Europeans. Although I knew this was the case, I hadn't considered just how massive the loss of life was and how it began the process of dissolving the native social structures.
2. Bisexuality was common among native Hawaiians before contact with missionaries.
3. The missionaries (and their children) did more than just dismantle the Hawaiian ways of life by enforcing the replacement of Hawaiian spirituality and language; they intentionally became plantation owners and politicians specifically to make a bunch of money and subjugate the native Hawaiians. Silva shows several examples of missionaries who came to Hawaii under the pretense of spreading Christianity only to realize they could make more money taking land and setting up sugar plantations.

Alessandra says

Noenoe K. Silva, a professor of political science and Hawaiian language at the University of Hawaii, successfully unearths the veiled history of Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) resistance to colonialism. Within Aloha Betrayed, critical interpretation of native Hawaiian newspapers, petitions, mele (chants), and poetry accurately deconstruct the myth that the Kanaka Maoli "passively accepted the erosion of their culture and the loss of their nation." These sources, long overlooked or grossly misinterpreted, narrate a story of resistance while also contesting native Hawaiian misrepresentation by both colonists and colonial historians of Hawaii. Silva cites severe "gaps" and "erasures" in the current historiography of colonial Hawaii, which "justifies the continued occupation of Hawaii by the United States today." Thus, in neglecting native Hawaiian sources, and misinterpreting the Hawaiian language, a one-sided sense of colonial Hawaii

emerges.

Silva traces Kanaka Maoli resistance from Captain James Cook's landing in 1778 to Hawaii's official annexation to the United States in 1898. From mass death to the destabilizing forces of capitalism, Silva characterizes the pervasive nature of colonialism, and its effects on the indigenous population. In particular, this discursive struggle is highlighted in the print media, specifically within newspapers. Silva presents disregarded texts from the independent Hawaiian newspaper, the *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika*, in order accentuate a key medium in Kanaka Maoli cultural preservation and colonial resistance. According to Silva, this colonial struggle was often "fought with paper and ink", as indigenous Hawaiians sought to inform their peers and preserve their traditions through the printing press. Silva continues to detail the preservationist and resistance efforts of King Kalakaua, Queen Lili'uokalani, and key political organizations during the late nineteenth century. In preserving the genealogy of the kingdom and the heritage of the hula and mele, these key actors fostered a collective identity among native Hawaiians as independent from their colonizers. Additionally, as leaders from the ruling class, their authority directly challenged colonialism, racism, and the misrepresentation of their culture. Yet through these specific agents of resistance Silva neglects reference to the broader indigenous population. Apart from the petition signed by a substantial portion of the Kanaka Maoli, the opinions and opposition efforts of the lower indigenous classes are left in question. Furthermore, in Silva's endeavor to inject Kanaka voice within the narrative, the structural cohesion of *Aloha Betrayed* falls short. Long discourses in native Hawaiian, frequently interposed within the larger chronicle, are both indecipherable and impractical to the average reader who is illiterate in the language. Thus, in an attempt to reinforce the Kanaka voice and promote continued analysis of sources, *Aloha Betrayed* often makes for a disjointed read. Yet despite these criticisms, Silva successfully chronicles a history long distorted and ignored. Through thoughtful analysis of native Hawaiian sources, a nuanced understanding of Kanaka Maoli history as one of resistance emerges, while also providing substantial groundwork for future analysis and reinterpretation of colonial Hawaiian history.

Michael Anderson says

This is an excellent retelling of the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom, annexation to the US, and the efforts of the Hawaiian people to retain their autonomy, from Hawaiian rather than English language sources. US missionaries in the 1820s became businessmen and land owners in the last half of the century, and they wanted annexation to the US to relieve tariffs on their products. They eventually took over the government through both legal and less-than-legal military means. Hawaiians fought back mostly within the law, through petitions and pleas to Washington DC. This might have worked had the Spanish American war not convinced the US that taking the fight to the Philippines was warranted and Hawaii was needed as a coaling station. Well written, I would have preferred that the presented timeline include details of resistance in the years after annexation, all the way up to present day.

Scot says

Another must-read for those interested in Hawai'i. Much of the colonial history of the islands is built around the notion that the "bloodless revolution" was an indication of the passive consent of the Hawaiian people to the takeover of Hawai'i by white business interests. This book uses Hawaiian language resources to demonstrate that Hawaiian did in fact resist, and powerfully. Puts a whole new spin on an often-told story that has served to justify the evil of colonization to Hawaii children for generations.

Mike says

Hawaii, the land taken from her people. Historical, detailed, dehumanizing. A must read if you are of Hawaii or a student of Pacific Studies. Flows, but reads like a blend of historical novel and a text book.

Zoe says

Although occasional disorganization sometimes detracts from the overall readability of the book, Silva presents an important and under-represented perspective on the subject of Hawaii's colonization by the U.S. Exactly the kind of source I've been looking for in my term paper on Western Colonialism in Hawaii. Not a leisure read, but a great read nonetheless.

Ran says

Noenoe K. Silva refuted the myth of Hawaiian native passivity in this work, citing that political, cultural, economic, linguistic resistance efforts were made by Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) against annexation to the United States in the 1890s. Silva called on Edward Said's "Against the Grain," Foucault's ideas about power and resistance, and G. C. Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in trying to tie evidence to the idea that Kanaka Maoli resisted annexation. According to Silva, "Hawaii is not postcolonial but a (neo?) colonial state..." and "...historiography justifies continued occupation of Hawaii by the United States." (9) Them's some fighting words there. Bring it on!

I was particularly interested in the Hawaiian petitions presented to Senator George Frisbie Hoar by the Kanaka Maoli delegation including: James Kaulia of Hui Aloha 'Aina; David Kalauokalani of Hui Kalai'aina; John Richardson, an attorney from Maui; and secretary William Auld. Silva made available interpretations of traditionally Hawaiian-language materials, including the delegation's journal, and rediscovered these petitions at the National Archives & Records Administration (NARA) in Washington, DC. The petition had 21,000 signatures! If that isn't documented resistance, what is? What a gold mine for historians!

It is unfortunate to note that while Senator Hoar did turn the petitions over to Congress as a memorial, nothing came of the process in which Native Hawaiians engaged in a very democratic and politically organized endeavor to express their opinion. Congress threw the petitions out in March 1898 after Hawaiian-born American lawyer Lorrin A. Thurston destroyed its credibility in a memo. As if he had nothing to gain by the United States's acquisition of the Hawaiian islands.
