

5

The Queen of Hawai'i Raises Her

Solemn Note of Protest

No darker cloud can hang over a people than the prospect of being blotted out from the list of nations. No grief can equal that of a sovereign forcibly deprived of her throne.

—Lili'uokalani

Queen Lili'uokalani, known as Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku (the ali'i who rules the islands), was the central figure in the struggle against annexation, but her role has not been analyzed much in histories.¹ Her strategies and tactics included a series of formal written protests and other ways of contesting how she and her people were represented in the news stories of the time, which were directed at the American public and politicians. Equally important were the ways she sought to keep her nation alive by maintaining and strengthening close relationships with her lāhui. All of these forms of resistance were nonviolent, primarily because Queen Lili'uokalani and her people were outnumbered, in the queen's words, by the "superior force of the United States of America."² As Leilani Basham put it, instead of engaging in a battle they could not possibly win, "imi na'e lākou i mau ala hou a'e e hele aku ai no ka ho'ihou i

ke Ali'i kona wahi kūpono e noho, 'o ia nō ka noho kalaunu," (they searched for other paths to follow to return Ke Ali'i to her rightful place, that is, on the throne).³ The desire to avoid bloodshed may also be understood as the response of a people still suffering from epidemics and a low number of births. Not yet sixty years old, Lili'uokalani herself was the only survivor of all her siblings, among whom there was only one surviving child, Ke Kamāli'iwahine Ka'iulani. Maka'āinana as well as ali'i were dying too young, and to lose even a few people to violence would have been foolish.

Although a single chapter is insufficient to tell the story of the queen's struggle, it is worthwhile nevertheless to present some highlights here. As elsewhere I draw on Hawaiian-language sources (including Hawaiian-language newspapers and letters from Emma 'A'ima Nāwahī to the queen), and I also draw on the formal diplomatic protests and on a "contrapuntal" reading, à la Edward Said, of mainstream historical accounts.⁴

The battles over representation took place on two related grounds: the first was in the newspapers of 1893 to 1898 and the second in the historiography based on those news stories. Historians have relied on English-language newspaper accounts of the coup and the struggle over annexation, as well as on the memoirs written by Sanford Dole and Lorrin Thurston, who actually perpetrated the coup. The nineteenth-century newspapers, as I have shown throughout this work, were overtly political or religious. The two communities, the English-language community and the Hawaiian-language community, were in a struggle or even at war with each other. The English-language papers minimized the resistance to annexation, actively campaigned against the queen, and, at their worst, ridiculed her. To say that the newspapers as well as Dole and Thurston's memoirs are biased would be an understatement. Historical accounts based on these works have resulted in gaps, erasures, and far less than a full understanding of the actions of the Kānaka Maoli, and particularly of Queen Lili'uokalani.

Two popular histories, *Hawaii Pono* by Lawrence Fuchs and *Shoal of Time* by Gavan Daws, as well as the less popular but major history of the annexation by William Adam Russ, all rely on these sources.⁵ Fuchs characterizes the 1893 coup as a popular "revolution," which was "dignified through the support of one of the great names in Hawaiian history, Sanford Ballard Dole" who "represented the best of the haole missionary tra-

dition in Hawaii." He unashamedly goes on to report that "Dole wanted a constitution that would protect haole rights and privileges." He mentions Queen Lili'uokalani in a one-paragraph summary of the events of January 14 to 17, 1893, and thereafter he does not mention her at all until another single-paragraph description of the 1895 war, which included her imprisonment and (coerced) abdication. The paragraph ends with the statement: "Without the Queen's leadership, her supporters were broken,"²⁶ but later in this chapter, I show how the people were never really without the queen's leadership. Finally, Fuchs mentions nothing at all about the resistance of the queen or anyone else to annexation.

Daws treats Lili'uokalani at somewhat greater length than Fuchs, but he draws a portrait of an autocratic, ineffective monarch. He writes, for example, that "she had a strong streak of unfeminine toughness, almost coarseness, that surprised those who ran up against it in conversation." He also repeats a comment made to Lorrin Thurston (taken from Thurston's *Memoirs*) by a newcomer to the islands that "Liliuokalani was a dangerous woman." On her desire for a constitution, Daws concludes, "Liliuokalani simply wanted her cabinet ministers to obey her; if they refused she might proclaim a new constitution that suited her better."²⁷ He notes some of the resistance activities, especially the 1895 war, and even reports that the queen traveled to Washington, D.C., but he does not say what she actually did there and he always characterizes her actions as ineffective. All in all, there is almost nothing in the account that informs the reader about the queen or about her relationship to her people.

Russ uses the same sources as Fuchs and Daws, supplemented with eyewitness accounts written by members of the American military and the diplomatic despatches written by John L. Stevens and Albert Willis, to create an even more detailed representation of the queen as childlike, incompetent, desirous of tyrannical power, and violently vengeful. This is in spite of his own statement that in 1936, "Julius W. Pratt gave convincing proof that her evil reputation arose from deliberate reviling by Annexationists, especially by Minister John L. Stevens and the Reverend Mr. Sereno E. Bishop," and his recognition that "it profited those republicans who later deposed the Queen to paint her in as unfriendly terms as possible." But because for Russ the oligarchy was legitimate (although clearly not based in the consent of the native people) and annexation was a worthy pursuit, he begins by asserting that "Liliuoka-

lani was not a good Queen. That is certain,"²⁸ and elsewhere says that the queen and her people's protests constituted "the native 'menace.'"²⁹ He accepts without question Willis's report that the queen, if restored, would have had Dole and the others beheaded. (Queen Lili'uokalani strenuously objected on numerous occasions that she had said no such thing.) He also concludes that the coup of 1893 was justified because "there can be no doubt that Royal Government under Kalakaua and Liliuokalani was inefficient, corrupt, and undependable."³⁰ For Russ, the native people of Hawai'i, including the queen, serve as background for a story about American expansion and American politics. As for Daws and Fuchs, for Russ "the key to what happened in the Hawaiian Islands was not in Honolulu but at Washington."³¹

It is possible, and crucial, to contest these representations by reexamining the events from a standpoint in which the queen and her lāhui are central, rather than marginalized, in the history of their own nation. This is what I aim to do in what follows.

THE FORMAL PROTESTS

After receiving many petitions of support from her people, Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku Lili'uokalani consulted with trusted advisers and with Hui Kā-lai'āina, and then attempted to promulgate a constitution that removed the race and language requirements for the franchise, restored her executive powers, restored the guarantee of inviolability of the sovereign's property, and either eliminated or lessened the property requirements for voters. The resulting draft constitution was nearly identical to the constitution of 1864.¹² After she attempted to promulgate the new constitution, the oligarchy conspired with U.S. Minister John Stevens to land U.S. troops on Hawaiian soil and proclaim themselves the provisional government of Hawai'i the following day.

Lili'uokalani immediately sent several letters of protest, the longest of which was addressed to Sanford B. Dole and others "composing the Provisional Government":

I, Liliuokalani, by the grace of God and under the constitution of the Hawaiian kingdom, Queen, do hereby solemnly protest against any and all acts done against myself and the constitutional government of the

Hawaiian kingdom by certain persons claiming to have established a Provisional Government of and for this kingdom.

That I yield to the superior force of the United States of America, whose Minister Plenipotentiary, His Excellency John L. Stevens, has caused United States troops to be landed at Honolulu, and declared that he would support the said Provisional Government.

Now to avoid any collision of armed forces, and perhaps the loss of life, I do, under this protest and impelled by the said forces yield my authority until such time as the Government of the United States shall, upon the facts being presented to it, undo the action of its representative, and reinstate me in the authority which I claim as the constitutional sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands.¹³

Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku reaffirmed in this protest that she was the rightful head of state by virtue of the constitution. She continued in future protests to assert that she was abiding by the constitution and laws of the kingdom, while the oligarchy was not. Ironically, it was the Bayonet Constitution that she references, a document that she and her supporters considered illegal and illegitimate and that they had intended to replace with a new constitution. However, rather than claim that the constitution was illegal, she claimed only that it needed to be amended and that she had the mana to do so, provided her cabinet supported her. If her cabinet did not support her, *which in itself was a requirement of the Bayonet Constitution*, she felt that she could not legitimately proceed. The day following the coup, her cabinet ministers issued a pronouncement giving "assurances that any changes in the fundamental law of the land would be sought by methods provided in the constitution itself and signed by [her]self and [her] ministers."¹⁴

There appear to be two reasons why Lili'uokalani and her people felt bound by the Bayonet Constitution. First, King Kalākaua had bowed to threats of violence and promised to work within it. Jonathan Osorio points out that Kalākaua apparently felt that he and his people were helpless against the oligarchy, and that "he had no stomach for war."¹⁵ The second reason is that within hours of learning of her brother's death, Lili'uokalani herself had been rushed into taking an oath to uphold the constitution. As a person of honor, she was bound by her word, despite her belief that the oligarchy had taken advantage of her state of shock and grief. It is also significant that she had sought her husband's

advice and he had advised her to take the oath. She was thus triply bound: by the rule of law, the rules of civility, and the solemnity with which the spoken word is regarded in Kanaka culture. The spoken (and, by extension, written, word) has power: the people of old said, "I ka 'ōlelo ke ola, i ka 'ōlelo nō ka make" (life is in the word [or language], death is also in the word). Larry Kimura explains that in Kanaka thought, "language contains the power of life and death. . . . The basis of the Hawaiian concept is the belief that saying the word gives power to cause the action. For example, to say 'I wish you good health,' will actually help a person to recover, while an expressed wish for death could actually cause it. . . . The power of the word is increased by the seriousness and preciousness of the form in which it is offered, such as in a chant or formal speech."¹⁶ Thus, within these confines Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku continued to act, searching for ways to restore pono for her people.

One of the ways was to appeal for help from the president of the United States. The situation of the coup was similar in some ways to the Paulet incident of 1843. In that case, faced with a threat of attack from a British warship, Kamehameha III temporarily surrendered sovereignty to the captain of the ship, and then sent an emissary to appeal to the Crown. The sovereignty of the kingdom was then restored within a matter of months, without any violence.¹⁷ Similarly, Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku wrote a letter of protest to President Benjamin Harrison in which she said that some of her subjects had "renounced their loyalty" and "revolted against the constitutional government of my Kingdom." She reported that the provisional government was being proclaimed "in direct conflict with the organic law of this Kingdom" and that the U.S. minister had "aided and abetted their unlawful movements."¹⁸ Once again, we can see that the queen's strategy was to position herself as working within the law and constitution of the kingdom, while observing that the provisional government was acting illegally. She also wrote a letter to president-elect Grover Cleveland, and she was able to send her representatives, the attorney Paul Neumann and her nephew Ke Kamāli'i Kawanānakoā, to meet with him.

Persuaded by the queen's protests, Cleveland withdrew the treaty of annexation that the provisional government had proposed and sent James Blount to investigate. The queen submitted a long statement to Blount, recounting the events of the overthrow and what had led up to

it. Her main points were that it had been "a project of many years on the part of the missionary element that their children might some day be rulers over these islands"; that the U.S. minister had interfered in the internal affairs of the kingdom; that her attempt to promulgate the constitution "was in answer to the prayers and petitions of my people" and would have been constitutional if her cabinet had signed on; and, finally, that U.S. troops had been landed to support the conspirators.¹⁹ Here the queen began to appeal to principles of international law: there was a treaty of perpetual amity between Hawai'i and the United States, and Hawai'i had been an accepted member of the family of nations since 1843.²⁰ It was a violation of the principles of international law for the United States to invade a recognized sovereign nation with whom it held treaties, especially for the purpose of installing an oligarchical government.

With Blount as representative of President Cleveland, the queen was dealing with a friendly administration. She trusted that Cleveland would conduct a fair investigation and then withdraw U.S. support for the provisional government. In December 1893, after reviewing Blount's report, Cleveland made a long statement condemning the actions of Minister Stevens and calling on the provisional government to step down and restore the throne to the Queen.²¹

CLEVELAND'S ABSOLUTE DENIAL

After Cleveland called for the restoration of the queen, she entered into negotiations with the new U.S. Minister, Albert Willis, which she thought would lead to her restoration. Sanford Dole responded to Cleveland with the statement that "we do not recognize the right of the President of the United States to interfere in our domestic affairs," with no discernible acknowledgment of the ironies of such a statement.²² Annexation to the United States had always been the goal of the provisional government and always would be, but because it was obvious that Cleveland would not allow it to happen, Dole perhaps disingenuously issued his statement. Immediately thereafter, Dole and his oligarchy instituted the deceptively named Republic of Hawai'i. The queen sent a letter of protest to the U.S. government through Minister Willis on June 20, 1894. As in her previous protests, she emphasized that she was

the "constitutional sovereign of the Hawaiian Kingdom," and that she "most solemnly protest[ed] against . . . any and all . . . acts done against myself, my people, and the Constitutional government of the Hawaiian Kingdom." She also reiterated that she and her government "would never have yielded" but for "the United States forces" and that "the great wrong done to this feeble but independent state by an abuse of the authority of the United States should be undone by restoring the legitimate government." Her main and "earnest request" was that "the government represented by [Willis] [would] not extend its recognition to any pretended government of the Hawaiian Islands."²³ Unfortunately, despite Cleveland's condemnation of the coup as an act of war, and despite Secretary of State Gresham's distaste for Lorrin Thurston and others in the provisional government, and finally, despite the negotiations undertaken in good faith by Lili'uokalani, Albert Willis immediately recognized the oligarchic Republic of Hawai'i as the de facto government of the islands.

Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku's responses to this betrayal included sending a commission to Washington to present a protest to the president. Cleveland did not meet with the commissioners but offered a written response in which he refused to accept responsibility to rectify what the U.S. minister (Stevens) had done, and what his present minister was doing. He wrote, "Fully appreciating the constitutional [*sic*] limitations of my Executive power . . . I undertook the task [of attempting to rectify the situation]. . . . Having failed in my plans, I committed the entire subject to the Congress of the United States . . . The Executive branch of the government was thereby discharged [*sic*] from further duty and responsibility in the matter . . . The Congress has . . . signified that nothing need be done touching American interference with the overthrow of the Government of the Queen." The president went on to say that a government had been established which was "clearly entitled to our recognition without regard to any of the incidents which accompanied or preceded its inauguration." The final result was Cleveland's statement of his "absolute denial of the least present or future aid or encouragement on my part to an effort to restore any government heretofore existing in the Hawaiian Islands."²⁴

Ke Ali'i was not given a copy of this letter and therefore did not understand the immovable nature of the opposition the commission had encountered in Washington. Cleveland's "absolute denial" of any

further effort to help was not communicated clearly to her, as she wrote quite angrily in her book: "What was the result of this commission? That is impossible for me to say. They went and they returned. They brought me no papers giving an official account of their proceedings or actions while on the mission."²⁵ The queen considered Cleveland a trustworthy friend and believed in his good intentions; perhaps the commissioners decided not to give the letter to the queen because they wanted to protect her from disappointment in her friend and perhaps because they feared for her health. She reported in her book that in the autumn and winter of 1894, she had been given electricity treatments because she "was suffering very severely from nervous prostration."²⁶ It is also possible that they withheld the letter from her because they did not want her to lose hope. If she lost hope, where would the lāhui be? It could also be that they knew that an armed uprising was being planned that they could not tell her about, and they did not want her to attempt some new tactic with Cleveland at the same time.

PROTESTING THE TREATY OF ANNEXATION

Lili'uokalani also submitted formal protests of the treaty of annexation, which the republic negotiated with President McKinley in spring 1897. She wrote the document in English. It was a strongly worded protest calling once again on international law: "I declare such treaty to be an act of wrong towards the native and part-native people of Hawaii, an invasion of the rights of the ruling chiefs, in violation of international rights both towards my people and towards friendly nations with whom they have made treaties, the perpetuation of the fraud whereby the constitutional government was overthrown, and finally an act of gross injustice to me."²⁷

She reminded McKinley that his predecessor, Cleveland, had determined that her government had been "unlawfully coerced" and that she had been "the constitutional ruler" of her people. She also reminded him that her "people, about forty-thousand in number, have in no way been consulted by those . . . who claim the right to destroy the independence of Hawaii." Finally, she reminded McKinley of the treaties made between the United States and the legitimate sovereigns of the kingdom, which the annexation treaty ignored, making it "thereby in viola-

tion of international law." Finally, she called on the Senate to reject the treaty for these reasons.²⁸

We can see in Queen Lili'uokalani's writings that she always positioned herself as working within the law and continually protested the unlawful actions of both the oligarchy (the provisional government and the republic) and the United States. Her insistence on doing this is related to the charges continually made against her and her people that they were uncivilized, backward savages who behaved like children and therefore could not understand the law or government. The oligarchy, and later the historians, would claim that their coup meant the triumph of "good government" in Hawai'i nei. Thus the queen and her people continually had to demonstrate that they did indeed understand and live according to the rule of law.

REPRESENTATION

Following the U.S. military intervention and the oligarchy's coup, "a number of the American people [were] deceived by the most astounding and unblushing falsehoods disseminated through the States by the papers," according to the executive committee of the Hui Hawai'i Aloha 'Āina.²⁹ The discourse of the savage pagan was deployed against the queen and her people once again, as it had been throughout the nineteenth century. Michael Dougherty quotes Sereno Bishop, a missionary son who wrote for the United Press, defaming her as the "debauched Queen of a heathenish monarchy where . . . the *kahuna* sorcerers and idolators, all of the white corruptionists, and those who wish to make Honolulu a center for the manufacture and distribution of opium lie together with the lewd and drunken majority of the native race."³⁰ Writing from Boston in 1897 the queen's secretary, Joseph Heleluhe, enclosed clippings from a newspaper there that quoted the republic's representative on "ko ke Alii ino, oia hoi, ka hupo, pegana, hookamakama, a me ka hoomanakaii" (the Queen's evils, i.e., that she was stupid, pagan, a prostitute, and an idol worshipper).³¹

Lydia Kualapai also quotes Bishop claiming that "disgusting orgies . . . polluted [the] palace" and that Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani "had no 'real hereditary royalty' but were instead the illegitimate children of a mulatto shoemaker." Bishop claimed that because of that, "white Ha-



"We Draw the Line at This." Cartoon by Victor Gillam, December 1893. (Courtesy of the Bishop Museum) Caricature of Cetshwayo, Zulu king, from *Judy*, 1879.



"Lili to Grover." Cartoon by Victor Gillam, February 1894. (Courtesy of the Bishop Museum) Caricature of Emilio Aguinaldo of the Philippines, by Victor Gillam, *Harper's Weekly*, 1899.





Queen Lili'uokalani; frontispiece to her autobiography, *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*, 1897. (Courtesy of Hawai'i State Archives)

waii loathes them, and native Hawaii has no respect for them."³² Such a charge was a ridiculous one, rooted in American racism against Africans, and used to justify the continued subjugation of the African Americans in the post-Civil War period, then borrowed here to justify taking over the government from Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani.

American cartoonists borrowed stock images of Africans and African Americans that worked intertextually with Bishop's and others'

statements. As Stuart Hall has pointed out, the "stereotyping of blacks in popular representation was so common that cartoonists, illustrators and caricaturists could summon up a whole gallery of 'black types' with a few, simple, essentialized strokes of the pen. Black people were reduced to the signifiers of their physical difference — thick lips, fuzzy hair, broad face and nose, and so on."³³ These signifiers can be seen in caricatures of Lili'uokalani that appeared on covers of *Judge* magazine. One such cover ridicules the queen and President Cleveland's decision to support the Kanaka Maoli government through the use of images borrowed from earlier caricatures of the Zulu king Cetshwayo, who battled the British in 1879. According to Jan Pieterse, in the media at that time a discourse developed about saving Africa from the practice of human sacrifice, and that "abolishing human sacrifice was the pretext for the British invasion."³⁴ In the magazine images Lili'uokalani is meant to be seen as a similar type of savage. She is barefoot, a sign meant to show that she is not civilized. She sits in a chair, holding two documents labeled "Gross Immorality" and "Scandalous Government." These undoubtedly refer to the opium and lottery bills passed by the Legislature in 1892, which she signed before the coup. In her chair she is being held aloft by a circle of bayonets wielded by white sailors and soldiers. In the background on one side are palm trees and on the other what appears to be a depiction of Kanaka men in loincloths, who may be protesting or perhaps worshipping her (one of them has both arms raised). By borrowing the ready-made "black" stereotype the cartoonist was able to signify the queen's racial difference immediately, a shorthand way to convey that she was essentially, naturally, unfit to rule.

Another cartoon draws on the black stereotype of the "pickaninny," notably in the drawing of frizzy hair and the use of the exaggerated contrast in color between the dark skin and white eyes and teeth. The pickaninny is an infantilizing as well as racializing stereotype, and in this case it is also sexualized because the queen appears to be made up to look like a prostitute, an image that works intertextually with the written statements about orgies, etc. The cartoon bases some of its ridicule on the detail of the dress made of feathers: featherwork is an important signifier of ali'i nui status in Hawai'i, and not too many years previously Lili'uokalani and Queen Kapi'olani had gained some fame in London for the fine featherwork sewn as decoration on Kapi'olani's gown. The figure in the cartoon is wearing a feather skirt (but not a fine one), as well as

a crown and prominent earrings and bracelets, which the queen usually wore. The background of the image is meant to represent a Hawaiian beach, which is gruesomely strewn with the evidence of the queen's (and by extension, the entire people's) savagery: a bloody axe and a chopping block inscribed "for Dole" on the left, and a cannibal pot on the right, accompanied by a skull and bloody crossbones. The cartoon implies that despite her finery — the feathers, high-heeled shoes, and jewelry — the queen cannot escape her nature, which is defined by her skin color and features. She is in essence a pickaninny, a foolish, childish woman from a savage and cannibal "race." An almost identical cartoon image during the Philippine-American war depicted the resistance leader Emilio Aguinaldo of the Philippines as a girl pickaninny, thereby reducing Aguinaldo to the same set of stereotyped characteristics.

The queen attempted to contest these representations in several different ways. First, in 1893, not long after the coup, she agreed to write an article for the San Francisco *Examiner*. The article was translated into Hawaiian and published in *Ka Leo o ka Lahui* shortly after it appeared in the *Examiner*. In it, Lili'uokalani again asserted that she was the legitimate sovereign and that the constitution she attempted to replace was fatally flawed. She also appealed to the readers' humanity, presenting herself as the champion of her people who were being oppressed by wealthy planters. She wrote, "I am a Hawaiian. I love and sympathize with my native poor." She used her considerable knowledge of politics and the haole principles of democratic government to make her case, turning the tables on the oligarchy by deploying the very discourse that they attempted to use against her. She wrote, for example, "the circumstances of the case do not call for a change of Government. Annexation is repugnant to the feelings of every native Hawaiian . . . Annexation is not necessary for the ends of peace or of civilization, or of commerce, or of security."³⁵

While in Washington the queen published *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*, which was meant to counter the racist representations, as well as the arguments that the Republic's delegates were making for annexation at the time. Lydia Kualapai, in her work "Cast in Print," makes a strong argument that the queen's discursive strategies in *Hawaii's Story* successfully countered both the negative representations and the arguments for annexation.³⁶ Included in the book as a frontispiece is a formal portrait of Lili'uokalani, another visual representation meant to

counter the intertextual discourses of savagery. In the photo the queen wears a tiara, a white gown sewn with featherwork, and a sash with the royal order attached: she appears as a member of the upper class and royalty. Claiming this upper-class status is meant to strengthen her claim that she is the proper head of state of Hawai'i as well as counter the claims that she is incapable. The ostentatiously expensive gown and jewelry signify her real wealth. Simultaneously, her brown skin confounds the notion that upper-class, royal status belongs only to white people.³⁷ The portrait disrupts the meaning making of the aristocracy, which depends on the existence of a dark other who is the opposite — the savage for the civilized. The existence of real wealth also disrupts the racist stereotypes: this dark queen had been received by Queen Victoria and by many in the U.S. capital despite the color of her skin; she was able to present herself as an anomaly to the American racist imagination.

The queen also made appearances in society in Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C. to counter these misrepresentations. She used her body, her physical ability to carry herself as an aristocrat and thus ultracivilized, as a countertext. Her secretary, Heleluhe, wrote that although some people had initially been deceived by Gilman, the republic's representative who had been claiming the queen was a pagan and a prostitute, "i ka ike pono ana iho nei o ko onei poe a me na poe hoolaha nupepa, ke olelo nei lakou he kanaka hoopunipuni loa o Gilimana" (now that the people and the reporters here have actually seen her, they are saying Gilman is a liar). Heleluhe reports that several hundred people visited the queen in the first three days of her stay in Boston.³⁸ The queen then spent private time with family and friends, but after making a doll for a charity doll show she again received positive attention in a Boston newspaper. Her friend was quoted in the paper saying, "I have never found a more devout and perfect Christian under all circumstances than Liliuokalani."³⁹

In Washington, wrote the Queen, "it was my custom to give a reception about every fortnight; to receive callers at eight to nine any evening . . . Both houses of Congress were well represented at my receptions, if not always by the gentlemen themselves, by their wives or daughters." These receptions were exceedingly well-attended; the queen notes that "there were seldom less than two hundred callers, and [the] largest reception numbered nearly five hundred persons." Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku also received visits from, she adds, "many delegations of patri-

otic or literary societies” and from “all denominations of the Christian church.”⁴⁰ She accepted invitations to the homes of dignitaries, and to the theatre and opera. Reports in the *New York Times* commented on her dignity and tasteful dress.⁴¹ She thus attempted to demonstrate to hundreds of the most influential citizens of the United States that she was indeed a lady and a head of state, not the bloodthirsty and ignorant pagan she was represented to be.

In addition to these discursive and other actions directed at the American public the queen spent considerable thought and energy in maintaining the hopes and spirits of her own people. Let us turn now to an examination of some of the ways that she attempted to keep the lāhui together in the face of sustained efforts by the oligarchy and United States to dismantle it.

KONA LĀHUI ALOHA

In January 1895, after the frustrated po'e aloha 'āina unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the provisional government in an armed counter-coup, Queen Lili'uokalani was arrested and imprisoned in 'Iolani Hale, the palace that the oligarchy had taken over and renamed the Executive Building. The provisional government convened a military tribunal, and, according to the queen's account, forced her to abdicate with the threat that she and her most loyal supporters would be executed if she did not. Shortly after signing the abdication, she was subjected to trial by the military tribunal. Osorio has written that “this trial was not simply about establishing the Queen's guilt. It was also a demonstration of the power and the right of the new government to arrest and convict the previous head-of-state.”⁴² Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku strongly denied that the republic or the tribunal had any such power or right. She prepared a long statement in her own defense that was read in court; and although the tribunal was conducted in English she submitted her written statement in Hawaiian, which had to be translated for the officers. In translation, her statement reads in part: “I must deny your right to try me in the manner and by the Court which you have called together for this purpose. In your actions you violate your own Constitution and laws . . . All who uphold you in this unlawful proceeding may scorn and despise my words, but the offense of breaking and setting aside for a

specific purpose the laws of your own nation and disregarding all justice and fairness may be to them and to you the source of an unhappy and much to be regretted legacy.”⁴³ The queen was sentenced to five years of hard labor, but her actual punishment was eight months imprisonment in one room of 'Iolani Palace; five months house arrest at her home, Washington Place; and eight months confinement to O'ahu.⁴⁴

During the months Lili'uokalani was held at 'Iolani Palace she was not allowed to communicate with her people. At the start of the conflict, the republic had declared martial law and then arrested all those it believed to have worked for its downfall, including all newspaper editors who supported the queen. The prorepublic paper *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* sarcastically reported that “the native and English papers troubled with a leaning towards the resumption of royalty are enjoying a long-needed term of rest. The editors are passing their vacations in the Oahu prison.”⁴⁵ The *Advertiser* also opined that “the right to a free and untrammled expression of opinion on the conduct of national affairs is causing any quantity of trouble in more than one nation in the world.”⁴⁶ What this meant for the po'e aloha 'āina was that the only news they were getting about the queen and the situation of the people who were imprisoned was from the progovernment newspapers, that is, from their enemies. The prorepublic *Nupepa Kuokoa* was the only source of news in Hawaiian.

Up until this time, Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku had been working closely together with Hui Aloha 'Āina, Hui Kālai'āina, and others. News about her activities was reported on a weekly basis, and her opinions were made known to the people through the papers. But now the newspapers were reporting that she willingly gave up everything, even her claims to her own land. *Nupepa Kuokoa* claimed that the queen had independently signed a statement drafted by her own advisers. They reported: “Ua kakau inoa iho o Liliuokalani Dominis moiwahine hope o ko Hawaii Paeaina malalo o kekahi palapala ano nui loa iloko o ka moololo o ko Hawaii nei noho ana, e hookuu ana, haalele loa a hoopau loa i kana mau koi a pau, kona mau hooilina a mau hope i ka nohoalii o Hawaii no ka manawa mau loa” (Liliuokalani Dominis, formerly queen of the Hawaiian islands, signed on a document very important to the history of the life of Hawai'i, releasing, abandoning completely, and completely quitting all her claims, and [those of] her heirs and other claimants to the throne of Hawai'i forever).⁴⁷

The stories in the *Kuokoa* and the *Advertiser* were intended to lead the people to think that Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku had abandoned them and their struggle. Then, in March, F. J. Testa, editor of *Ka Makaainana*, and the other newspapermen were released from jail, and allowed to resume publication of the opposition papers. The second week of publication *Ka Makaainana* ran an anonymous mele in the top left corner of the front page. It was titled "Mai Wakinekona a Iolani Hale" (From Washington Place to 'Iolani Palace). This title, along with the first line, "Ia'u e nanea ana ma Wakinekona" (While I was relaxing at Washington Place), identified the composer as Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku. This was the first in a four-week series of mele written by her that appeared in the same position on the front page. Thus it was only through lyric composition that Ke Ali'i was able to communicate with her people and to bear witness to what she suffered at the hands of the provisional government, expressing her thoughts and feelings in the language of her ancestors, family, and community. Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman has laid the groundwork for understanding nineteenth-century Hawaiian politics through analysis of mele, noting that study of song and poetic forms are particularly important "in situations of colonization, where histories from generations past [have been] produced largely or even solely from records of the colonizers." Stillman has found that "the political turmoil of the late 1880s and 1890s contributed to a dramatic increase in the use of poetic texts for political and explicitly nationalist commentary," and that these texts created "nationalist poetic discourse [that] took place in arguably the most public of forums—Hawaiian language newspapers."⁴⁸ Lili'uokalani, like her siblings, was a haku mele (composer), and we can better understand her songwriting if we view it in its political context as well as in the context of the traditional culture.

Haku mele had and have important roles to play in the life of the community. In the ancient world, says Kamakau: "'O ka haku mele kekahi hana akamai a na'auao o ka po'e kahiko, a ua kaulana loa ia po'e ma ia hana" (Mele composition was an activity of the people of old requiring education and skill, and composers became very famous for their work).⁴⁹ This was in part because haku mele were responsible for remembering and composing mele ko'ihonua, the cosmogonical chants that linked ali'i to the birth of the land itself and to the gods, and so legitimated their rule. Haku mele had the mana to select among different lineages to create and maintain the illustrious names of their ali'i

nui. Mele ko'ihonua such as the *Kumulipo* were thus the most political of all mele forms. Kamakau explains that the composition of mele ko'ihonua was kapu, meaning both sacred and restricted; only those who were most knowledgeable in all of the three fields of genealogy, oratory, and land distribution—that is, politics (*kālai'āina*)—composed mele ko'ihonua. The kapu were the same as those that governed genealogies.⁵⁰ In addition, mele contained the memory of the people, so the haku mele had to be trustworthy as well as talented. Kamakau, Poepoe, members of Hale Nauā, and other Kanaka authors relied on mele for evidence for their accounts and analyses of the wā kahiko (ancient times). Kamakau celebrates "ka waiwai i loa'a ma loko o nā mele a ka po'e kahiko i haku ai" (the riches found inside the mele that the people of old composed). And he states that "he nui nā lōina a me nā kaona i loko" (much lore and kaona are contained within [mele]), because "ua hana 'ia ko ka lani, ko ka lewa, ko ka moana, ko ka honua, ko ka lā, ka mahina, nā hōkū a me nā mea a pau" (that of the heavens, the sky, the sea, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and everything were made [into mele]).⁵¹

Haku mele composed many other kinds of mele, including name songs, or mele inoa; mele ma'i that celebrated sexuality and fertility; songs that honored deities; songs that extolled certain places, and so on. Name songs often served political functions, as they were usually composed for mō'i and other ali'i, and often for parents and children, as well. Kamakau says that they were sung with happiness, but the kaona in them could contain riddles and metaphors about an ali'i's weakness or character failures, such as stinginess or withholding. The public would enjoy the mele in its celebratory aspect, which was the main idea, but they would not understand the kaona of the mele; only certain other ali'i might appreciate the criticisms hidden in the kaona.⁵²

When Lili'uokalani lived and composed, mele had changed in both form and function. Haku mele remained central to the life of both ali'i and maka'āinana, but in ways different from the ones Kamakau describes for the old world. Genealogies were still of the greatest importance and cosmologies were recited and recorded, but only at the risk of direct opposition by the increasingly wealthy missionary camp. Many cosmogonical chants were lost, and the composition of new ones ceased to be part of the nineteenth-century haku mele's profession. The interwoven nature of politics, religion, and mele continued in name songs for ali'i, and also in mele lāhui that were used as national anthems in the

European style. Lili'uokalani was an important composer both of mele lāhui and of mele inoa.

Since the advent of the print media starting in 1834, mele also became a genre of resistance to cultural imperialism. Even in the first missionary newspaper, the student page (written by the Kanaka students of the missionaries) contained a traditional kanikau. Recall that it was a mele (ironically a parochial school hīmeni [hymn] of particularly Kanaka style) that began the struggle over whether or not Kanaka could continue to publish their own paper. It was mele that Kānepu'u felt should be written and published in their entirety for posterity because the knowledge of the kūpuna was being eroded by the demands of the missionaries. Mele were crucial to Kalākaua's formulation of himself and the legitimation of his reign — he had the *Kumulipo* written down and published (which Queen Lili'uokalani later translated while imprisoned), and he also had *Na Mele Aimoku* published as a book. Further, in the era of print, mele composition became a popular literary form. Ordinary people as well as the highly trained ali'i were literate in great numbers, and many composed various kinds of mele (although not the types previously guarded by kapu).⁵³ Mele was a primary genre through which women were able to express their political views in the nineteenth century. Many ordinary people, including women, published kanikau to honor deceased family members or ali'i.⁵⁴

Mele communicate in ways prose cannot. Mele functioned then (and now) both as carriers of messages of opposition and as signs of Kanaka identity, in that they indicate mastery of cultural knowledge and poetic language, which few foreigners, even orientalist like Nathaniel Emerson or Thomas Thurman, possessed.⁵⁵ As Kame'eleihewa has explained about prose in Hawaiian, which is intensified in mele, "there is the tale at face value . . . An additional level is introduced by innumerable allusions to ancient events, myths, gods, and chiefs that have become metaphors in their own right. This includes the use of place names and the symbolism attached to the names of winds, rains, plants, and rocks, evoking a certain emotional quality on all levels. . . . This device not only creates a certain mood but adds to the beauty of the work, as what is seen on the surface can be interpreted simultaneously on other levels."⁵⁶ I would suggest that the understanding by both poets and audiences that mele should contain these several levels of meaning made the genre particularly well suited to communicating thoughts and feelings un-

detected but yet in plain sight of hostile forces. The shared understanding also bound the lāhui together.

In 1861 mele had been used to oppose the increase in cultural oppression. Later, during her brother's reign, when Kalākua battled the missionary sons, Lili'uokalani composed at least one song, "He 'Ai na ka Lani," that talks back to his detractors and defends her family's right to the throne. The first verse is:

Ke 'ai nei 'o ka lani,
Hāmau 'oukou lākou nei a'e
Mai noho a pane a'e,
Ua kapu 'ē ka 'aha i ke ali'i.
(The royal one is dining now,
You should all be silent,
Make not a sound,
The assembly is *kapu* in the presence of the chiefly one.)⁵⁷

The word 'ai has been translated here as "dine" in keeping with the surface meaning of the rest of the song, which refers to eating various types of foods.⁵⁸ However, because 'ai also means "rule" (as in ali'i 'ai moku), the first two lines can also be understood as "The king is ruling now/You should all be silent." The single-meaning translation of 'ai as dine effectively depoliticizes the song. The remainder of the song refers to food being brought to the king from the uplands, the kula (plains), the freshwater streams, and the sea, indicating in the usual language of Hawaiian poetry that he rules over the entire country.

Lili'uokalani also composed a mele inoa for her niece and heir apparent that similarly defends the family's genealogy:

Lamalama i luna ka 'ōnohi lā,
Kāhiko uakoko 'ula lā,
Ka hō'ailona kapu o ke kama lā,
He ēwe mai nā kūpuna.
(The display of a rainbow illuminates above,
An adornment with the blood red rain,
This is the sacred sign of the princess,
The lineage passed down from the ancestors).⁵⁹

The two kinds of rainbows, 'ōnohi and uakoko (the "blood red rain"), are hō'ailona (cosmic signs) that validate ali'i nui status, which are

common in mo'olelo kahiko as well as in mo'olelo contemporary to that time. Kalākaua's funeral was attended by many such hō'ailona that were recorded in the newspapers. In that case, John Bush asserted that the presence of the hō'ailona proved Kalākaua's genealogy against his racist detractors.⁶⁰

Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku shared this language and understanding with her lāhui and, as I have stressed, many foreigners, although functionally fluent in Hawaiian, could not understand such poetic references and did not share these beliefs. Her mele worked differently from the other genres of resistance. The formal protests; articles in newspapers; publication of books; and presence in Washington were directed at U.S. politicians and the American public, but her mele were primarily for her people. Kanaka were the only ones who could understand the language and the form, and a handful or more of them understood the kaona. Communicating through mele was a way of keeping the lāhui together when they were the most isolated from each other.

Moreover, the idea that the spoken (and written) word has mana continues to this day among Kanaka, and the well-composed mele was and is a particularly potent mode of communication. Elizabeth Tatar quotes one nineteenth-century Kanaka expert as saying "he pule ke mele" (mele are prayers).⁶¹ Mary Kawena Pukui explains that "the kaona of a chant was believed to be potent . . . but it was ineffective unless chanted before a gathering of people."⁶² When mele were published in the newspapers, they reached a large number of people, and as such were meant and perceived to have such mana.

During the period 1893 to 1898 there was an outpouring of song in the nation. According to J. J. Leilani Basham, there were approximately 250 mele lāhui published in the Hawaiian papers in this five-year period.⁶³ Love for the land and loyalty to the queen were the major subjects of these songs.

Basham explains that "he mana ko nā mele [lāhui], no ka mea, hō'ike mōākāka aku nā haku mele i ko lākou mana'o kūpa'a no ka pono o ka 'āina" (mele [lāhui] have mana because composers clearly show their commitment to what is pono for the land). She adds further that "he waiwai a ko'iko'i ia mea he mele lāhui i ka ho'omaopopo pono 'ana i ka mo'olelo Hawai'i" (mele lāhui are valuable and extremely important for understanding Hawaiian history).⁶⁴ The category mele lāhui originally referred to national anthems composed in the mid-nineteenth

century, when Hawai'i was constructing itself as a nation-state in the Euro-American tradition. Lili'uokalani composed "He Mele Lāhui Hawai'i," which was used as the national anthem from 1866 to 1874; it was followed by "Hawai'i Pono'i," which was composed by her brother Kalākaua.

But in 1895 the meaning of mele lāhui had changed because although the nation or lāhui was alive in the people there was no government attached to it, so mele lāhui could no longer be "national anthems." In some ways the meaning of the term intensified because instead of simply celebrating an existing nation, the songs were a powerful expression of the people's commitment and desire for the nation to be restored. The term mele lāhui now came to signify all the songs in honor of the mō'iwahine and the po'e aloha 'āina who were trying to restore her government.⁶⁵ This included songs that protested the oligarchy, U.S. intervention, and the proposed annexation of Hawai'i and supported the restoration of the native government. Or, as Basham says, mele lāhui became "nā mele a pau i haku 'ia no ka ho'ohanohano 'ana a me ke kākō'o 'ana i ka Mō'i, ka 'āina, ke aupuni, a me ka lāhui o Hawai'i" (all mele composed to honor or support the Mō'i, the 'āina, the government, or the people of Hawai'i).⁶⁶

Four mele were apparently smuggled out of the queen's prison room to the newspaper *Ka Makanihana*, where they were published in weekly installments. Her main message in these mele was that her heart was still with her people and her nation, and that contrary to the representation being made by the proupublic papers she had not abandoned the po'e aloha 'āina or the struggle for their nation. In the first mele are the lines:

Eia ko hewa la e Kalani
No kou aloha i ka lāhui
(This is your offense, Kalani
It is because of your love for your people.)

And in the second part are these lines:

Anoano ke aloha ka hiki'na mai
No kuu lāhui i ke ehuehu
(Sacred is the aloha that comes
For my people in the spray [of bullets])⁶⁷

The first of these verses recounts the “hauna o ke Aupuni” (blows of the Government); Lili‘uokalani’s experience of being carried to the palace in “ke kaa pio Hope Ilamuku” (the deputy sheriff’s carriage); and of her view from the window of her prison room of Lae‘ahi (Diamond Head), where the po‘e aloha ‘āina “i imi ai i ka pono o ka lanakila” (had sought the pono of victory). She also prays to the heavenly powers to release her distressed people.

In the next installation, in the second week, the song is titled “Lokahi ka Manao me ka Lahui” ([My] mind is one with the people), which again stresses the queen’s desire to tell the lāhui that her heart and mind are with them. In this song, the queen angrily criticizes her former appointee, William A. Whiting, along with William Kinney, who told prisoners they would hang if they did not tell all to the republic’s police. Whiting was the head of the military tribunal that convicted her, a matter than Jon Van Dyke says “must have been particularly painful, because Queen Lili‘uokalani had picked Whiting to serve as her Attorney General in her first cabinet in February 1891.”⁶⁸ Kinney had been the law partner of Lorrin Thurston and was one of the original organizers of the bayonet coup.⁶⁹ In January 1893 he had been one of the provisional government representatives that traveled to Washington to propose the treaty of annexation.⁷⁰ He now served as prosecutor at the tribunal. Here is most of the song:

Ka aku ke aho ia Waitina
 Ka peresidena nui o ka Aha-Koa,
 Nana e kaana mai i ka pono,
 No kuu lahui i alohaia,
 Hana e launa ole o Wi[l]i Kini,
 Haole lelepi o Waialae,
 Kana hana o ka pelo i ke kanaka,
 E hai pau mai i ola oe,
 Mai puni aku oe i kana mali,
 E i aku e ke ola ia Kalani,
 I molia kona ola no ka lahui,
 I ola nou e ke aloha aina.
 (The line was thrown to Whiting,
 President of the Military Tribunal,
 It is he who will mete out “justice.”

To my beloved people,
 Inexplicably strange are the actions of Willy Kinney,
 The hot-tempered haole of Wai‘alae,
 His act was to lie to the people,
 “Tell all so that you will live,”
 Do not be deceived by his cajolery,
 Say that there is life through Her Majesty,
 Who sacrifices her life for the lāhui,
 So that you patriot(s) may live.)⁷¹

These lines refer to the queen’s attempt to prepare herself for the death sentence to which she had been alerted.⁷²

The third week’s installation — a mele inoa for the queen’s nephew, Kalaniana‘ole (Prince Kūhiō), imprisoned in a republic jail — was published under the title “Umia ke Aloha i Paa Iloko” (The love held inside).

Hiki mai e ka lono i o‘u nei,
 Aia o‘u pokii la i Kawa,

 Umia ke aloha i paa iloko,
 No ke one oiwi ou e Hawaii,
 Eha ai ka ili ou kupuna,
 O Keawe, O Kalani-I-a-Mamao,
 (The news has come to me,
 My younger brother [nephew] is at Kawa jail,

 The love held inside is choked back,
 For your native sands, Hawai‘i
 For which the skins of your ancestors were injured,
 Keawe and Kalaniimamao).⁷³

Here the queen reminds her nephew and her people of the genealogy that gave her and Kalaniana‘ole membership in the royal family and that links his struggle and sacrifice to the struggles of their warrior ancestors, Keawe and Kalani‘iamamao. Later in the song, she says he is decorated with “aloha ‘āina,” a lei of honor to be cherished, and that together they all know the same hardship of imprisonment. These songs, smuggled out to be printed in the newspaper, let Kūhiō and the public know that Ke Ali‘i approved of his joining the maka‘āinana aloha

‘āina attempt to regain the government. She must have hoped that the newspaper would be smuggled in to him, or at least that he would hear of the song and know her feelings.

The following week, Lili‘uokalani published another mele inoa for Kūhiō, continuing the series. This mele concentrated on the people who were caring for her and expressed gratitude that none of her people had received a sentence of death. Here is an excerpt:

Ke aloha hoohakukoi waimaka,
 Mai na puka alohi ka ikena iho,
 Ka maalo ana ‘e ku‘u maka,
 I ka poe i aloha i ka aina,
 I ukali ia ma na aoao,
 E ka poe menchune aiwaiwa,
 Ua ko ae nei ku‘u makemake
 Ua hookuu ia ku‘u lahui.
 (A troubled aloha that brings tears,
 From the bright windows the sight,
 Passing before my eyes,
 Is of the people who love the land,
 Attended at their sides,
 By the supernatural menchune,
 My desire has been fulfilled,
 My people have been released.)⁷⁴

But not only did the queen express solidarity with her people by smuggling mele out to *Ka Makaainana*, the people responded by expressing their solidarity with her. They also sent mele out from their jail cells to be printed in *Ka Makaainana*. The mele acted like conversations between people who were physically unable to talk to each other because they were imprisoned in different locations and separated on different islands. This situation is apparent in the endings of the songs; the queen echoes the ending of “Mele Aloha Aina” or “Kaulana Na Pua,” when she states “Haina ia mai ana ka puana / Na pua i aloha i ka aina” (The story is told / Of the flowers who love the land) or “Haina ia mai ana ka puana / No ka poe i aloha i ka aina” (The story is told / For the people who love the land).⁷⁵ The pieces in the queen’s series all end with “Hoo-kahi puana ko‘u puuwai / No ka poe i aloha i ka aina” (My heart has one refrain / For the people who love the land) or some variation thereof,

which is very similar. Other haku mele responded, as in the next song composed by two po‘e aloha ‘āina, Kapu and Kaulia, in prison; their refrain is “Hainaia mai ana ka puana / Makou o na poe aloha aina” (The story is told / We are the po‘e aloha ‘āina).⁷⁶

Another example is the queen’s description of her location imprisoned within “Na paia hanohano o Iolani Hale,” (The grand walls of Iolani Palace).⁷⁷ Kapu and Kaulia echo her words, locating themselves inside “Na paia laumania o Kawa,” (The smooth walls of Kawa [jail]);⁷⁸ and then Heleluhe (her secretary) and Koa in turn locate themselves imprisoned in “Na paia pohaku o ka Halekoa” (The rock walls of the Barracks).⁷⁹

Po‘e aloha ‘āina communicated in mele their continuing love and loyalty to the queen. On May 6, a mele titled “Liliu Lei a ka Lahui” (Lili‘u, “lei” of the people) by W. Olepau appeared in the same space the queen’s had in previous weeks. Here lei is a metaphor for a cherished one, someone who might put their arms around one’s neck. The mele compares the queen to a precious feather lei, urges her to put on the royal feather cloak, and prays that the Crown flag will fly again. On May 20, an anonymous mele titled “Kupaa ka Manao me Liliu” ([My] mind is steadfastly with Lili‘u) appeared in response to her “Lokahi ka Manao me ka Lahui.” This mele calls her the queen who is draped in aloha.

These mele served as a way for Ke Ali‘i ‘Ai Moku to communicate to her people that she shared their anger, sorrows, and desire to regain their nationhood, and for them to communicate to her that they were still loyal, no matter what the haole newspaper said. For her and her lāhui, the mele also functioned as pule, praying for the life of the nation, published as if chanted before the large gathering of newspaper readers. The queen’s message in the various mele was consistent: she was with them, she had not abandoned them, and she was fighting the provisional government in every way she could, including through spiritual appeals. The people were po‘e aloha ‘āina, and so was she.⁸⁰ At the end of the year the four songs, (under the pseudonym Ha‘imoeipo), were included in F. J. Testa’s collection *Buke Mele Lahui*, and two years later the queen included them in her own (unpublished) songbook “He Buke Mele Hawaii.”

“I KISS YOUR SOFT HANDS”:
LETTERS TO KE ALI‘I ‘AI MOKU

The bonds between the lāhui and Lili‘uokalani are also reflected in a series of letters to the queen written by Mrs. Emma ‘A‘ima Nāwahī between December 1896 and August 1898. Lili‘uokalani wrote back to Mrs. Nāwahī regularly—sometimes once a week, sometimes more or less. All of the letters are in Hawaiian. Although I have not been able to locate the queen’s letters to Mrs. Nāwahī, Mrs. Nāwahī, in her newspaper, *Ke Aloha A‘ina*, excerpted the letters she received from the queen, so we do have some fragments.⁸¹ We also have letters and excerpts from Ke Ali‘i’s secretary, Joseph Heleluhe, published in *Ka Makaaninana*. These letters are further demonstration that without reading the archive in Hawaiian it is not possible to gain a full understanding or analysis of the politics of the era. Although some of the letters have been translated, many have not, and the context for them is missing unless one also reads the newspapers.⁸² And as we have seen many times now, translations by themselves of works in Hawaiian tend to leave out the multiple meanings and Hawaiian cultural connotations present in the originals.

In this case, the letters help to answer some questions about the role of the women of Hui Aloha ‘Āina. Through the letters a picture emerges of mature and politically engaged women trusted by the queen to guide the younger men who were the presidents of the hui. The letters also reveal that Ke Ali‘i ‘Ai Moku directed the 1897 antiannexation petition drive through the exchange of letters with Mrs. Nāwahī, David Kalauokalani, and James Kaulia. It was she who suggested the petition drive, directed that the three hui work together, and suggested the content of the heading of the petition.

THE QUEEN SAILS TO AMERICA

As soon as the queen’s full civil rights had been restored, and with no warning except to her retainers and to the republic government from whom she needed passports, she boarded a ship for the United States. ‘A‘ima Nāwahī and David Kalauokalani learned of Ke Ali‘i ‘Ai Moku’s departure and were able to go to her home to say goodbye; F. J. Testa of

Ka Makaaninana happened to be at the harbor for another reason and was startled to see the queen and her retainers, Joe Heleluhe and Mrs. Nahaolelua, boarding the ship. Mrs. Nāwahī described in a letter how the lāhui felt when she left: “Ua hoopuiwa loa ia ko ke kaona nei poe a nui ka pioo ame ka nune ia la a po” (The people of this town were very surprised and there was a lot of upset and questions all that day). She goes on to describe hō‘ailona traditionally associated with ali‘i that had appeared as Ke Ali‘i ‘Ai Moku was leaving: “Auwe! Aloha nohoi na hiohiona eehia oia la au e Kalani i haalele iho ai i ka aina nei, e nee ana nohoi ka ua liliili, e pipio ana hoi ke anuenuue, ku ka onohi, ka punohu ua koko i ka moana. Ae, e hoike mai ana na Lani a me ka po, he hoailona kapu ia no Kalani Aimoku o Hawaii no Liliu no Loloku no Waliania i ke kiionohi” (Auē! So awe-inspiring were the phenomena on the day that you left, Your Majesty, a fine rain moved in, a rainbow arched in the sky, and the blood-red rainbow appeared on the sea. Yes, the Heavens and the pō [the spirits of ancient past, and those who have passed on] were showing sacred signs for Kalani Aimoku of Hawai‘i, for Lili‘u, for Loloku, for Waliania i ke ki‘i‘ōnohi). The signs continued through the night: Mrs. Nāwahī lamented that “oiai ka ua me ka makani e nu mai ana iluna ae nei o ka laalaa o Muolaulani . . . Auwe! aohe hiki pono ia‘u ke moe, e hiolo mau ana ko‘u mau waimaka, e pule ana, a e nonoi mau ana i ke aloha o ka makua mana loa e malama a e kiai hoi i kana kauwa wahine, ka makuahine o keia lahui kanaka nawaliwali” (Since the rain and wind were roaring above the plants of Mu‘olaulani [Lili‘u’s home in Kapālama] . . . Auē! I could not sleep well, my tears were falling, I was praying, asking continuously for the mercy of the almighty father to care for and watch over his servant, the mother of this powerless people).⁸³

Mrs. Nāwahī was understandably anguished and worried over the queen’s departure. In January 1891, Kalākaua had sailed to San Francisco and later passed away there. And just three months before the queen left, Joseph Nāwahī had made the same journey and also died in San Francisco. The po‘e aloha ‘āina had just suffered the failed counter coup and the mass arrests and imprisonment in places like “the pest hole known as Oahu prison,”⁸⁴ which caused death and illness like the tuberculosis that killed Nāwahī. These experiences had also apparently tamed the spirits of some of the strongest advocates for Hawaiian autonomy. John Bush and Kahikina Kelekona, for example, were never again as outspoken as they

had been prior to being imprisoned. Just the week before, the Hui Aloha 'Āina and Hui Kālai'āina had convened to elect their new presidents, Kaulia and Kalauokalani, who had not yet had a chance to exercise their leadership. It was a shock, then, to lose the guiding presence of the queen at this time. But, as the queen herself explained, "I felt greatly inclined to go abroad, it made no difference where"; and as the ship pulled out of the harbor, "for the first time in years I drew a long breath of freedom. For what was there worthy of that sacred name under the circumstances in which I had lived on shore?"⁸⁵ She had suffered not only the isolation of imprisonment but the indignity of imprisonment in her own palace. She had been terrorized with the threat of execution and by displays of American military power, as when the soldiers of the USS *Philadelphia* were "marched in front of my windows with their guns pointing at the building."⁸⁶ She also suffered from the betrayal of some whom she had thought were friends, such as the marshal Charles B. Wilson and the policeman Robert Waipā Parker, now both in the employ of her jailers. Being under constant surveillance had caused a great strain and strengthened her desire to sail away. Besides the relief from surveillance, Kualapai has argued that the queen had carefully planned the journey in conjunction with a handful of advisers as a tactic to fight annexation.⁸⁷ The planning had to have been kept secret, or the republic would have withheld their passports.

The day the queen left, Kuaihelani Campbell, president of the women's Hui Aloha 'Āina, telephoned 'A'ima Nāwahī and asked to meet with her the following morning. They shared stories of their sorrow at the queen's departure and of their restless night, and then got down to work. 'A'ima suggested to Kuaihelani that they draft a document protesting annexation to be presented to President McKinley along with a similar document from the men's hui, and she assured Kuaihelani that as president of the hui she had the kuleana to sign the document on behalf of the entire group.⁸⁸ Again, this was all done secretly so that the republic would not sabotage their plan. In 'A'ima's letters to the queen, it is clear that she and the queen had discussed the idea prior to her departure, and that the queen had trusted 'A'ima to present it to Kuaihelani. 'A'ima and Kuaihelani became close friends from that day on, and, although Kuaihelani was the hui president, 'A'ima was the one who corresponded most often with Ke Ali'i and she shared her letters with Kuaihelani.⁸⁹



Emma 'A'ima Nāwahī in her *Ke Aloha Aina* newspaper office. (originally published in John G. M. Sheldon, *Ka Buke Moololo o Hon. Joseph K. Nawahi*, Honolulu: Bulletin Pub. Co., 1908; Courtesy of Tom Coffman)

In her letters, 'A'ima describes how she watched over Kaulia and Kalauokalani, even temporarily taking away from them the project of drafting their protest document because some "traitorous friends" of Kaulia's had gotten him drunk in an attempt to find out what the queen was planning.⁹⁰ In other letters, 'A'ima said she mediated between Kaulia and Kalauokalani and even assisted in straightening out internal problems within Hui Kālai'āina.⁹¹ In December, 1896, 'A'ima told the queen that she had to restrain the young men from conducting a petition drive before the proper time.⁹²

'A'ima also stressed to the queen the importance of letters from her or her staff to the newspaper. In her letter of December 25, 1896, which began, "E honi aku au i na lima palupalu i aloha nui ia" (I kiss your soft hands which are dearly loved), she wrote, "E oluolu Kelii, e mea iho ia Joe, a i ole ia Mrs. Nahaolelua paha, i kahi o lau e kakau mai no kahi Nupepa Ke Aloha Aina. O ka ka Lahui ia e noke mai nei i ke kakau ia'u. He makemake loa lakou e lohe mau no ka huakai a Kelii ame ka ike mau i ko Kelii ola kino oia i ka aina mamao" (Please, Ke Ali'i, mention to

Joe or Mrs. Nahaolelua for one of them to write for *Ke Aloha Aina* newspaper. The Lāhui persist in writing to me. They want to hear regularly about Her Majesty's trip and her health while she is in that distant country).⁹³

In February, 'A'ima reiterated the people's desire to hear from and about the queen: "Ua kohu pula kau maka kahi Nupepa i nei wa, kohu ipo aloha na ka lahui, oia i, o ko lakou aniani kilohi a hoonui ike ihola ia e ike ai i ke aka o Kalani e maaloalo ala i ke Kapitela hanohano o Wasinetona" (The newspaper is now the obsession of the people, it is like a darling sweetheart, since it is their mirror and magnifying glass through which they may see the reflection of Your Majesty moving around in the glorious Capital of Washington).⁹⁴ For 'A'ima the newspapers, especially her own, were crucial in keeping up the spirits of the people. She wrote: "Ke hooikaika like nei maua me J. K. K. e hoolana mau i ka manao o ka lahui mamuli o ko maua wae ana ae i na mea ano nui i kupono no ka lehulehu mailoko ae o na Nupepa a me na leta nohoi a maua, a ma ia ano, ua like me he ume makeneki ala e hoopipili paa ia ana ka manao o ka lahui, a lilo na hana hapai kumuhana o na ano a pau e manao ia nei i mea ole" (I am working with J. K. K. [Kaulia] giving hope to the people by our selecting the important matters pertaining to the people from [other] newspapers and our letters. And this is like a magnet's pull firmly bonding the feelings of the people. And this makes all the different projects being planned seem easy).⁹⁵

Both Testa's *Ka Makaainana* and *Ke Aloha Aina* ran news and commentary about the queen in every issue, assuring the public that her health was good and that she was in the United States to carry on the fight. Both papers selected and translated stories from newspapers in San Francisco, as 'A'ima said. Joe Heleluhe seemingly preferred to send his letters to Testa, which appeared regularly in *Ka Makaainana* and infrequently in *Ke Aloha Aina*, and 'A'ima apparently continued to excerpt her own personal letters for her paper.⁹⁶

'A'ima wrote to the queen in March reporting that the republic also depended on the papers for news about her, but she added that her own newspaper was in danger of being shut down by them. The queen had offered to contribute toward a new printing press (apparently in order to free them from renting from the establishment press), but 'A'ima refused by saying that the queen's living expenses were great in the foreign land and that instead she would "quietly bear it."⁹⁷ Then, the very next day, 'A'ima wrote another letter reporting that a member of

the oligarchy was trying to buy out her paper in order to stop it because of its advice to the people to continue their resistance as was done in the time of Joseph Nāwahī. 'A'ima laughed that they thought they could outwit her because she was a woman: "Keu nohoi ka hilahila ole la o ka manao ana o ka hana ihola keia e loa ai ka lakou. No ka ike mai paha he wahine au a e puni wale hoi i ka lakou. Auwe! hilahila o — le — . Akaaka loa au i ko'u lohe ana ihola" (They are so shameless to plan to do this to get theirs. Because they know I am a woman they think I will be easily deceived by them. Auē! Shameless! I laughed long when I heard that).⁹⁸ The threats were serious, however, and later when the petition drive was going strong the republic shut down *Ke Aloha Aina* temporarily on the grounds that the paper was in debt \$168 to Thrum's printing house. Fortunately, 'A'ima was able to raise the funds to pay Thrum and the paper resumed publication immediately.⁹⁹

NĀ PALAPALA HO'OPĪ'I KŪ'Ē HO'OHUI 'ĀINA
(PETITIONS PROTESTING ANNEXATION)

It was through these and other letters that the queen, 'A'ima Nāwahī, Kuaihelani Campbell, James Kaulia, and David Kalauokalani jointly planned the petition drive and other actions to protest the annexation treaty in 1897. When the queen heard about the treaty in June, she immediately wrote to the leaders of the hui: it became more urgent that McKinley receive the protests of the lāhui. The "fans," as Mrs. Nāwahī called them in code, actually letters of protest to McKinley, "woven" months earlier, had not been delivered to the president, because neither Joe Heleluhe nor Lili'uokalani had been granted an appointment. Now the queen wrote a cover letter sending the documents to McKinley. The "fans" informed McKinley that the people of Hawai'i trusted the U.S. government, and that their trust was partially based on the recognition of the independence of the kingdom supported by the United States in 1843. Their main message was "aole loa he kumu e keakea ia ai ka manaopaa luli ole o ka lahui Hawaii, no ka manao kuio, e hoihoi hou ia mai ke Aupuni Moi o Hawaii, a me ka Noho Moi o ka Moiwahine" (that no cause whatever can arise that will alter or change the mind of the Hawaiian people, and their desire to see the Monarchy restored, and the Throne occupied by [the] Queen).¹⁰⁰

The queen understood that, however strongly worded, these letters

were not sufficient to stop the treaty because Thurston, Kinney, and others were in Washington telling the press that the majority of Hawaiians desired annexation to the United States.¹⁰¹ American politicians apparently cultivated a willful amnesia about the recent events in Hawai'i, which Cleveland had termed illegal and an act of war on the part of the United States. Thus a much bigger protest had to be mounted. The queen notified the hui presidents that it was time to carefully plan the petition protesting annexation. The project that the young men had been anticipating since December now saw its proper time.

Ke Ali'i and the three hui were successful in planning over long distance, but it was not without difficulty. Their letters often used code because the republic officials were opening all mail to and from Ke Ali'i. Sometimes one person would receive instructions in a letter from Ke Ali'i before the others, which caused confusion and jealousy. In addition, they could not agree on the heading for the petitions. In early August 1897, Kalauokalani apparently received a letter from Heleluhe on behalf of the queen advising him to have everyone sign one petition protesting annexation, including the members of Hui Aloha 'Aina. Shortly thereafter, rumors began that Hui Kālai'āina members, and perhaps Kalauokalani himself, were telling people that they should leave Hui Aloha 'Aina and join Hui Kālai'āina. This naturally made 'A'ima and the other members of Hui Aloha 'Aina angry. However, the leaders met together soon thereafter to form a joint committee to coordinate their efforts.¹⁰²

Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku saw the necessity of mounting a massive coordinated action, so she was not pleased to hear of the strife among the three hui. 'A'ima published a letter dated "Ebbitt House, September 1, 1897," addressed to Kaulia. Although no signature was printed, it is clear that the letter is from Heleluhe on behalf of Ke Ali'i. It reads in part:

Kai no paha e hana ana la hoi oukou elike me ka maua i hai aku ai ia olua, oia hoi, e kuka like la olua, a e kahea ia la hoi ka Papa hooko a me ka Aha Kuwaena o na Hui a elua a iwaena oia halawai ana e noonoo ai oukou i ke poo o ka ka lahui kua no ka hoohui aina, a malalo la hoi oia poo e kakau inoa mai ai na makaaina [sic] aloha aina a pau loa, eia ka e lilo ana keia hana i mea e kuae ai

(We thought that you folks were doing as we told you two [Kaulia and Kalauokalani], that is, for you two to confer together, and then call the

executive board and coalition committee of the two hui together and in that meeting to consider the heading for the lāhui's protest of annexation, and below that heading, all of the aloha 'āina maka'āinana are to sign their names, however, this is now becoming something to fight over.)¹⁰³

This letter directed Kaulia to "hoopau i na manaio kuae mawaena o oukou" (stop the conflicts among all of you) and ended with an order to them to separate the signatures of the women on pages marked "Hui Aloha Aina o na Wahine," which they did.

Around the same time 'A'ima wrote to the queen saying how important the queen's voice was to the people, and about her worry that Kalauokalani might be rushing his own petition. She wrote about the process this way: "O ko Kelii leo he mea nui ia. Ua hoao maua e kaomi a hiki i ka wa kupono o ka hana . . . a i loa ai ka hoonaauao e i ka lahui, a i loa like hoi he lokahi, alaila hapai no ka hana a hele like i mua" (Ke Ali'i's voice is the most important thing. We two ['A'ima and Kuaihelani] tried to hold back until the right time for the action . . . in order that the people get educated beforehand, and in order to get unity, and then take up the work and go forward together).¹⁰⁴ In addition to Ke Ali'i's direction and approval, we see here again the importance of the mature women's leadership and their care in handling the petition drive slowly and properly so that it would succeed. 'A'ima represents the young men, especially Kalauokalani, as impetuously rushing ahead. But eventually he responded to the women's direction and all three hui finally managed to coordinate their efforts. The three hui seem to have done little without the queen's knowledge and approval during this time. These coordinated actions between the three hui in Hawai'i and the queen and Heleluhe in Washington resulted, as we know, in the defeat of the treaty of annexation.

BONES OF MY BONES: CONCLUSION

In spite of the written protests, the defeated treaty, and the queen's contestation of the racist representations of herself and her lāhui, in May 1898 Lili'uokalani heard that the U.S. Congress had decided to take Hawai'i. In her diary that day she wrote "Auwe! Kuu aloha i kuu Aina

hanau ame kuu lahui aloha. Ka iwi o kuu iwi ke koko o kuu koko. Aloha! Aloha! Aloha!" (Auē! My love for my birthland and my beloved people. Bones of my bones, blood of my blood. Aloha! Aloha! Aloha!).¹⁰⁵ At home in Hawai'i, the po'e aloha 'āina had already been experiencing the ill effects of the United States's war to take the Philippines. *Ke Aloha Aina* reported that the streets were full of U.S. soldiers, and the paper protested that the government of Hawai'i had spent \$10,000 to host the soldiers who were not fighting on behalf of Hawai'i's people.¹⁰⁶ In the midst of the U.S. drive for empire, there was little left for Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku to do except to go home to her people. She arrived home on August 2 just past midnight, greeted by a crowd, including her niece Ke Kamāli'iwahine Ka'iulani, her nephew Ke Kamāli'ikāne Kawanānakoā, and the presidents of the hui. She spoke, in tears, to the crowd, saying that the news about annexation was very painful to all of them but that she felt the circle around her there at the wharf in the middle of the night meant they were saying "eia no makou a pau mahope Ou e ke alii, no ke kupaa i ke aloha i ka aina" (we are all still behind You, Ke Ali'i, steadfast in love for the land).¹⁰⁷

The crowd then followed her to Washington Place, where the columns, doors, and chairs of the house had been draped in forest greenery by a reception committee. James Kaulia read an official welcome from the lāhui, and Rev. E. S. Timoteo said a prayer. In the morning, the Bana Lāhui serenaded Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku while she ate breakfast. For the readers who couldn't be there, 'A'ima's newspaper reported:

Ua kipa aku makou e ike i ke Alii ka Moiwahine Liliuokalani a ua ike kumaka aku hoi Iaia, me he mea la, aia no Oia iluna o Kona nohoalii kahi i noho ai, a o Kana mau kamailio ana, me he mea la, e rula ana no Oia i ka pono o Kona lahuikanaka Ana i aloha ai. He oia mau no Kona kulana kapukapu alii, a aole loa e hiki ke hoololi ia ae ia mea mai Iaia ae, a hiki i na la hope o Kona ola ana.

(We went to see the Ali'i, Mō'iwahine Lili'uokalani, and we did see her in person, and it was as if She were still on her throne, and her conversation was as if She were [still] ruling for the pono of Her people whom She loves. Her stature as a sacred ali'i continues, and this can never be changed or taken from Her, until the last days of her life.)¹⁰⁸

Indeed, the po'e aloha 'āina continued to regard her as their ali'i for the rest of her life. She lived to the age of seventy-nine, passing away on

November 11, 1917. Her funeral was the last grand, solemn ceremony of the ali'i nui culture. Since then, descendants of the po'e aloha 'āina have remembered her with deep respect and admiration. Although she suffered the loss of her nation, she did not have to suffer the shame she feared because, in her words, she was the ruler "from whose hands national independence was forcibly wrested."¹⁰⁹ Instead, her own generation and the generations after have respected her for her decisions to work within the law, because her doing so now means that her lāhui are able to press their claims under international law.¹¹⁰ Although, as Siba Grovogui so concisely states, "the aim of international law has been to justify or facilitate Western hegemony,"¹¹¹ Hawai'i's unique position as the first non-European member of the family of nations may allow it to regain its status as an independent nation, and, further, to join the movement to reform international law so that other indigenous peoples are treated fairly. The queen's careful actions have, at the very least, kept these possibilities open at the international level.

In addition, Lili'uokalani is still highly regarded as a composer; over thirty of her songs have been recorded by many different contemporary artists. Through these recordings and the *Queen's Songbook* people are able to hear and read her mele. Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku also left a substantial legacy in writing, including her book *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* and her translation of the *Kumulipo*, both still in print.

It is important to emphasize that all Lili'uokalani's official protests were translated into Hawaiian, as was *Hawaii's Story* and many of the magazine and newspaper articles written about her, which included excerpts of her letters in the newspapers. The newspapers played an important role in sustaining the lāhui as one across the archipelago, while people were separated when imprisoned and while the queen was far away. More important, perhaps, is that the newspapers provided a site for the practice of freedom in a time of repressive policy by a colonial government. These newspapers now perform a similar function: when they are used to restore Kanaka Maoli in history and deepen an understanding of these events, the connection to the ancestors and the queen is restored. Today, the knowledge that is reemerging similarly helps to keep the lāhui together.

Lili'uokalani's dedication and commitment to the welfare of her nation were extraordinary, and her commitment to peaceful resistance was celebrated both in its time and, perhaps even more so, now. A mele

composed for her in 1893 by Mrs. Kawohikapulani contains the line, "Kaulana o Liliu i ka maluhia / Ma na welelau o ka honua" (Liliu is famous for peace / To the ends of the earth).¹¹² The queen's insistence on peace but also on active resistance forms part of her important political legacy; her country's government was taken not because she was weak but because she acted boldly.

Queen Lili'uokalani served as the ali'i nui within a constitutional monarchy that was a blend of Hawaiian, English, and American political traditions. She was the only woman of color at the time who was a head of state recognized and respected around the world. At the same time, she was an ali'i hānau o ka 'āina, born with the mana and kuleana to lead the nation. An equally important part of her legacy is that she was committed to democratic ideals and processes, even though she is portrayed by haole historians as a tyrannical monarch. In fact, in 1897, when a reporter told her that perhaps her niece Ka'iulani would take the throne, Ke Ali'i responded, "na ka lahui ke Alii, a no ka lahui na Alii" (it is up to the lāhui who the Ali'i is, and the Ali'i are of or belong to the lāhui).¹¹³ This means that the people decide who their leader is to be. The queen's commitment to open and inclusive processes, and to working with her people and encouraging them to work in coalition despite their differences, serve as inspiration to her lāhui today, who are carrying on the struggle for their land.

The act of deposing Queen Lili'uokalani was the culmination of seventy years of U.S. missionary presence in Hawai'i. Step by step, the religion, the land, the language, and finally the government were overtaken by the drive for imperial domination. We Kanaka Maoli have now suffered more than one hundred years of nearly total U.S. hegemony: of being made into a minority without voting power in our own land; of being excluded and marginalized in important institutions, such as higher education; of being drafted to fight the U.S. wars in foreign lands; of fighting for scraps of entitlements to housing, education, and health care funding; of watching our language nearly become extinct; of watching the poorest be evicted from their tents on the sand; and of experiencing the psychic confusion of being raised ignorant of the mo'olelo, 'ōlelo, and culture of our own grandparents. But as the po'e aloha 'āina said on August 13, 1898 — he oia mau nō kākou: we endure.

We are inspired today by Ke Ali'i 'Ai Moku's strength, intelligence, dignity, and commitment to what was pono for her land and her people.

She skillfully moved in both haole and Kanaka worlds. So it is now up to us to weigh how much and which aspects of haole culture have been (and are) harmful to us and which are useful, and which aspects of the culture of our ancestors we wish to revive and perpetuate. We too are cloaked in haole culture and language but remain 'Ōiwi as the descendants of the people who have lived in the islands from time immemorial. Now *we* must decide how to govern ourselves and how we want to live together as a lāhui.