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Hawaii 1778-1854

*Some Aspects of Maka'ainana Response to Rapid Cultural Change**

CAROLINE RALSTON

HISTORIANS OF HAWAII SINCE CONTACT WITH THE WEST HAVE OFTEN PRESENTED Hawaiian society as a homogeneous, monocultural entity¹ and have focused their analyses on the interrelations between the ruling Kamehameha elite and influential foreign immigrants.² Further they have tended to interpret the creation of a nation state, conversion to Christianity, the individualization of land tenure and related changes as rational, often beneficial, progress in the paths of Western civilization.³ I do not wish to dispute the pattern of changes presented in previous accounts or much of its inevitability, but by concentrating on the *maka'ainana* (the ordinary Hawaiian men and women) I want to suggest that Hawaiian experiences and responses to the massive changes that occurred during the first 70 years of contact were not homogeneous, and to reveal the costs and lack of benefit endured by the majority of Hawaiians.⁴

The previous neglect of *maka'ainana* can be attributed to world-wide historiographical trends, to evidential problems, and because it has been too easy to see the *maka'ainana* submitting willingly or passively, depending on interpretation, to chiefly dictates. There was no outspoken protest or resistance against the series of events which appear to have been highly detrimental to the well-being of the ordinary Hawaiian people. Despite the difficulties, however, it is possible, from the archaeological and mythological evidence available for ancient Hawaiian society and from the more voluminous and predominantly Eurocentric sources for the post-contact period, not only to construct an outline of the *maka'ainana's* lives and experiences, but also to find fragmentary evidence to suggest that acquiescence on the Hawaiians' part was not automatic or un-

* This article had its genesis as a contribution to *Popular Protest and Popular Ideology: The George Rudi Festschrift*, edited by Frederick Krantz, which awaits publication. I gratefully acknowledge Prof. Krantz's kind permission for prior publication of this substantially altered version.

¹ Niel Gunson confronted this question of the description of Polynesian cultures in 'Polynesian studies: a decade of Tahitian History', *Journal of Pacific History*, XVII, *Pacific History Bibliography and Comment* 1982, 67-8. He was concerned that specialist descriptions of the Society Islands have fallaciously assumed a homogeneity of culture between the islands. In this article I will differentiate between chief and commoner rather than between the different island cultures within the Hawaiian archipelago, although I recognize that certain differences did exist.

² These histories include: Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom* (Honolulu 1938-67), 3 vols; Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time. A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (New York 1968); Harold W. Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii: The Pioneers 1789-1843* (Stanford 1942); Theodore Morgan, *Hawaii. A Century of Economic Change 1778-1876* (Cambridge, Mass. 1948); Jean Hobbs, *Hawaii. A Pageant of the Soil* (Stanford 1935).

³ See in particular Edward Joesting, *Hawaii, An Uncommon History* (New York 1972); Hobbs, op. cit.; Jon J. Chinen, *The Great Mahele. Hawaii's Land Division of 1848* (Honolulu 1958).

⁴ It should be pointed out that Marshall Sahlins in several articles and in *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities. Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Island Kingdom* (Ann Arbor 1981) has analysed certain experiences of the *maka'ainana*.

thinking. Between 1778 and 1854 life patterns for the *maka'ainana* changed from those of affluent subsistence farmers who were self-sufficient in terms of nearly all the essentials of life, albeit in a politically rather unstable world, to those of a class of unskilled and predominantly landless peasants who were dependent on their labour to supply the food and increasing number of goods of foreign origin necessary to sustain life. While analysing this process I will investigate two related questions: the ways in which the *maka'ainana* responded to these significant changes, and whether or not there were factors in their living conditions and outlook which inhibited large scale protest and resistance.

IN ancient Hawaii the *maka'ainana*—the cultivators, fishermen, and craftsmen and women—constituted the basic labour force for the whole population.⁵ Their lives and productivity were organized and controlled within the boundaries of *ahupua'a*—the territorial and political units which formed the basis of community life, work, taxation and ceremonial activity. All the inhabited islands of the Hawaiian archipelago were divided into *ahupua'a*—segments which ideally stretched from the uplands through the plains to the inshore lagoon, reefs and the sea, offering inhabitants both a complete range of resources necessary for subsistence and the means to produce surpluses of foodstuffs and goods for chiefly consumption. *Maka'ainana* primary affiliations were determined by territorial considerations as inhabitants of the same *ahupua'a*, rather than notions of loyalty to a senior lineage within a closely related kinship group. In marked contrast to the status- and rank-conscious chiefly elite, the *maka'ainana* were not permitted to keep their genealogies.⁶ This prohibition plus the fact that within the *ahupua'a* endogamy was the predominant marriage pattern⁷ led to numerous marital and blood ties between the people but little sense of lineage or acknowledged leadership based on kin. Because notions of kinship were not exclusive, well-defined, tightly knit local groups with recognized leaders did not emerge.

Political and economic control over these territorial groups was exercised in these circumstances not by a local lineage chief as in most Polynesian societies, but by an externally imposed chief, *konohiki*, who had no kin ties with the peo-

⁵ The major sources on which this description is based are: David Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities*, Nathaniel B. Emerson, trans. (Honolulu 1951); John Papa Ii, *Fragments of Hawaiian History*, Mary Kawena Pukui, trans. (Honolulu 1959); Samuel M. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* (Honolulu 1961), *Ka Po'e Kahiko. The People of Old*, Mary Kawena Pukui, trans. (Honolulu 1964), *The Works of the People of Old Na Hana a ka Po'e Kahiko*, Mary Kawena Pukui, trans. (Honolulu 1976); Martha W. Beckwith (ed.), *Kepeleino's Traditions of Hawaii* (Honolulu 1932); *Ka Mooolelo Hawaii*, trans. Reuben Tinker in *Hawaiian Spectator*, II (1839), 58-77, 211-31, 334-40, 438-47 and in *The Polynesian*, 28 July, 1, 8, 15, 22 Aug. 1840; John F. Pogue, *Mooolelo of Ancient Hawaii*, Charles W. Kenn, trans. (Honolulu 1978); Abraham Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race . . .* (Rutland, Vt. 1969), 3 vols in 1; *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-lore* (Honolulu 1916-20), 3 vols; Martha Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* (Honolulu 1970).

⁶ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*. . . , 242; Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race . . .*, II, 28-9, 63-4.

⁷ Timothy Earle, *Economic and Social Organization of a Complex Chiefdom: The Halelea District, Kauai, Hawaii* (Ann Arbor 1978), 145.

ple under his control. The *konohiki*, whose appointment and livelihood were dependent on chiefs above him, was responsible within the *ahupua'a* for organizing the labour required to cultivate lands assigned to the chiefs, collecting the designated tax during the *maka'hiki* ceremonies, and providing labour and resources for military activities and to maintain the courts of itinerant chiefs. The *maka'ainana* provided these services and goods in return for the right to cultivate their own pieces of land to which they were deeply attached on a long-term basis, but over which they had no absolute right. A *konohiki* could deny usage rights if the land were not properly cultivated or the required labour or taxes not forthcoming. The *maka'ainana*, however, were not bound to a particular *konohiki* or *ahupua'a* and could move away, or threaten to, if conditions became oppressive. *Maka'ainana* rarely resorted to such drastic action, but theoretically it was possible.

Ultimately all the land belonged to a ruling chief, *moi* or *alii nui*, of a major district or at times a whole island. On the accession of each new *alii nui* a wholesale redistribution of land occurred amongst his immediate chiefly supporters, who further apportioned rights to their subordinates, who in turn became the new *konohiki*. This redistribution of rights in land occurred after the death or military defeat of each *alii nui*. For chiefly followers of an *alii nui*, office and its rewards were never likely to be permanent. At the lowest level, however, while new *konohiki* were imposed from above to supervise communal labour and collect taxes, the people's usage rights were rarely disrupted. Thus, although it was possible for the *maka'ainana* to move or be removed from their land, in practice they were usually the more permanent fixtures in the Hawaiian polity. The chiefs, who depended on patronage, lived with the *alii nui* or became *konohiki* in communities where frequently they had no kin. In marked contrast to other Polynesian societies the Hawaiian chiefly élite formed an integrated social and political group that was no longer closely linked with local populations as kinsmen and women.⁸ '[C]hiefs and commoners did not share a common genealogy.'⁹ The *ahupua'a* was the 'functional equivalent of the localised lineage' common elsewhere in Polynesia, but its leadership was provided not by a local lineage chief but by a superimposed representative of a distinct, extra-*ahupua'a* élite.¹⁰ Amongst the *maka'ainana* leadership status, skills and experience were rare.

Already before 1778 significant distinctions between chiefs and peoples in terms of standards of living, and access to resources had evolved and were formally institutionalized by the maintenance of a pronounced social distance between the two major groups, imposed through elaborate *kapu* regulations and

⁸ Marshall Sahlins, *Social Stratification in Polynesia* (Seattle 1958), 163-4, 180.

⁹ Irving Goldman, *Ancient Polynesian Society* (Chicago 1970), 236, 241.

¹⁰ Earle, *op. cit.*, 169.

observances which emphasized the divine origins and sanctity of the highest ranking ruling chiefs and underlined the deference, obedience and loyalty required from the *maka'ainana*. The importance of genealogies, memorized and safeguarded by experts, and the rigid endogamous marriage rules also enhanced the chiefly élite's coherence and distinct identity. Despite the divisions extant in ancient Hawaiian society, a rigid class structure with recognized competing or conflicting interests had not developed. There is evidence that in pre-contact times the *maka'ainana* recognized and protected themselves from certain chiefly demands,¹¹ but class consciousness in the modern sense was absent,¹² partly because the complex gradation of status and power amongst the lower levels of the extensive chiefly group did not produce clear-cut boundaries between themselves and the *maka'ainana*. In Hawaii the middle-rank social grouping found in other stratified Polynesian societies—the *ra'atira* and *matapule* in Tahiti and Tonga respectively—had been eliminated leaving *alii* and *maka'ainana* in principle as two distinct realms. But in fact the *alii* group was expansive, its lower echelons being scarcely distinguished from the *maka'ainana*.¹³ The fundamental principle of reciprocity between chiefs and people which remained basically unquestioned by the *maka'ainana* also helped to bind Hawaiian society together.

In return for the people's substantial investment of labour and goods the ruling élite gave them land usage rights, provided the supervisory skills for large communal activities, offered security and justice and, of paramount importance, had the religious connexions and knowledge to ensure the well-being of society. The bond of mutual dependence between *maka'ainana* and *alii* was a personal one, sensitive to pressures put upon it from either side. The chiefs tempered their demands because they still needed their people's support in all political/military struggles. Further, despite the fact that the *konohiki* were imposed from above, a spirit of mutual goodwill grew between them and the people, who accepted chiefly rule as god-given and inevitable. On the other hand, most *konohiki* must have recognized that their term of power was likely to be limited and that their futures lay with the community and their ability to live with them. From the legends there is some evidence of *maka'ainana* rebellion against local or higher chiefs, but most of it pertains to only one district on Hawaii Island, and none of it suggests that the people questioned the rule of chiefs *per se*, only the rule of certain chiefs.¹⁴ No fundamental breach had appeared in the all-encompassing inherent ideology of rule by the chiefs, who

¹¹ Kamakau, *The Works* . . . , 71, 46-7.

¹² E. J. Hobsbawm, 'Class Consciousness in History', in István Mészáros (ed.), *Aspects of History and Class Consciousness* (London 1971), 5-6, 11; Malo, *op. cit.*, 60; Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko* . . . , 3-9.

¹³ Goldman, *op. cit.*, 212-3.

¹⁴ Malo, *op. cit.*, 195; Robert John Hommon, 'The Formation of Primitive States in Precontact Hawaii', PhD thesis, University of Arizona (Tucson 1976), 160-3.

were believed to be descended from the gods and through whom all life and welfare flowed.

The subsistence, non-industrialized nature of pre-contact Hawaiian life acted as a further brake on chiefly demands. While *tapa* cloth, feather work and wooden artefacts were accumulated, no basic Hawaiian crop could be stored for long periods. Large quantities of foodstuffs could be collected at any one time but rapid redistribution was also necessary. This limited the chiefs' ability to hoard wealth. Contact with the West broke this subsistence nexus and offered certain chiefs opportunities for political and economic aggrandizement, often at the people's expense.

The stratification and divisions between groups apparent in pre-contact Hawaiian society were intensified in the decades after contact, which effected major changes in the lives and circumstances of the *maka'ainana*. From the moment of contact and throughout most of the period under consideration it is clear that many newly introduced Western goods siphoned upwards to the highest chiefs. Not only goods with special prestige value but also ironware, from simple adzes to firearms, were accumulated; at times monopolized by the chiefs, who had previously enjoyed the right to requisition any goods they coveted from their followers.¹⁵ On Oahu in December 1786 the high chief quickly found means of acquiring many of the newly introduced goods.

[H]e caused the bay to be tabooed, and convened a general assembly of the inhabitants . . . directing them at the same time, to bring whatever trade they had got, that it might be deposited in his new-erected edifice. This being effected, he found means . . . to appropriate one-half of these stores to his own use. We now no longer wondered at the old priest venting his reproaches so very liberally, as it was pretty evident Teereteere [the high chief] had exerted his authority contrary to the rules of justice and equity.¹⁶

Throughout the decade 1786-95, while civil warfare was intense, guns and ammunition were in greatest demand from foreigners seeking provisions from Hawaii.¹⁷ When a vessel came to anchor, the people flocked out to trade; but once the high chief was told, trading usually diminished until he had been received on board. After that the bulk of the trade (especially in hogs) was collected from the people and channelled through agents who ensured that the guns and ironware demanded in exchange went directly to the chief.¹⁸ On

¹⁵ Nathaniel Portlock, *A Voyage round the World . . . 1785 . . . 1788* (London 1789), 310-11; *Ii*, op. cit., 88; Lucia Ruggles Holman, *Journal of . . .* (Honolulu 1931); 18-28; Charles H. Hammett, *Journal of . . .*, 18 Aug. 1823, Bryant and Sturgis Papers, Harvard University, Baker Library; Laura Fish Judd, *Honolulu. Sketches of the Life Social, Political and Religious in the Hawaiian Islands from 1828 to 1861* (Honolulu 1928), 108.

¹⁶ George Dixon, *A Voyage round the World . . . 1785-1788* (London 1789), 105-6.

¹⁷ John Meares, *Voyages made in the Years 1788 and 1789 from China to the North West Coast of America* (London 1790), 354-6; George Mortimer, *Observations and Remarks made during a Voyage . . .* (London 1791), 53; George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean . . .* (London 1801), I 403, III, 185-6.

¹⁸ Portlock, op. cit., 154-99, 303; Dixon, op. cit., 96-139, 252-61.

many of these occasions there is no evidence that the people gained anything in recompense.¹⁹ Thus, from contact onwards a growing quantity of food supplies was drained out of the system without any commensurate return to the producers, while the chiefs gained the wherewithal to enhance their rapidly expanding political and economic interests.

With the cessation of warfare in 1795 and planned invasion in 1804 chiefly demand for foreign goods altered, but the basic pattern of exchange between chiefs and foreigners, based on unrecompensed *maka'ainana* labour or produce, remained. The development of the sandalwood trade, 1810-30, provided Kamehameha I and later Kamehameha II, and certain high-ranking chiefs, with an opportunity for unprecedented goods accumulation. In exchange for sandalwood, which was cut and carried from the mountains by the people, these chiefs received European vessels, crystal, silver and frame-houses, Chinese porcelain and brocades, none of which was available to their followers who had no right to trade in sandalwood and who were not always fed when cutting and handling it on the chiefs' behalf. In pre-contact times labourers working for the chiefs were never expected to provide their own food, and on many projects, such as building fish ponds or irrigation channels, the resultant benefit to the community as a whole was clear. In the sandalwood trade recompense and long-term community benefits were slight.²⁰ While the hewers suffered harsh working conditions, and food shortages due to the periodic neglect of gardens did occur, there is no evidence that the trade was directly responsible for causing famine or that it fundamentally changed the people's living conditions. The most influential long-term effect of the sandalwood trade occurred amongst the chiefly participants, who had become accustomed to a standard of living which was increasingly difficult to maintain once the sandalwood resources dried up in the late 1820s.

In desperate attempts to create new avenues of wealth the chiefs attempted to monopolize any product that had a marketable potential. From first contact the chiefs had revealed engrossing tendencies over the sale of food supplies, and with the decline in sandalwood resources these monopolistic instincts intensified. A missionary in the early 1830s exposed the chiefs' predicament and their solutions:

The chiefs are continually in debt to the merchants, hence when an article is found

¹⁹ In 1791, after six years of intensive trading between Hawaiians and foreigners along the southwest coast of Hawaii Island, not a single item of iron was seen in the canoes that came out to trade. Etienne Marchand, *A Voyage round the World performed during the years 1790, 1791, and 1792*, Charles C. P. Fleurieu, trans. (London 1969), II, 11-12.

²⁰ Kuykendall, op. cit., I, 85-92; Bradley, op. cit., 53-120; Richard A. Pierce, *Russia's Hawaiian Adventure, 1815-1817* (Berkeley 1965); Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs . . .*, 204, 276; William Ellis, *Journal of . . .* (Rutland, Vt 1979), 214-5, 261, 265, 283; Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet, *Journal of Voyages and Travel . . .* (Boston 1832), II, 43.

capable of being turned to their account, the sale of it is usually prohibited; or such a tax is laid, to be paid in said article, as amounts to a prohibition or nearly so.²¹

In 1820 the Hawaiian governor of Oahu discovered there was a short-term demand for oakum from old rope and he 'immediately prohibited the sale of it [rope] that he might engross this small trade himself.'²² Similarly in the early 1830s on Kauai when goats' skins sold for 6¼ to 12 cents each, all goats were claimed as the property of the chiefs.²³ In this way demands on the people's labour and property increased, often quite arbitrarily.²⁴ Traditional customs of offering a gift on the completion of a chiefly building or on the birth of a chief became occasions for very specific demands, often in coin. Kamehameha II expected to raise \$5,000 from chiefs and people from his new house completed in 1823.²⁵ Silver dollars were collected on the birth of a daughter to the district chief of Waialua in the early 1830s.²⁶ Fifty per cent or more of any money gained from provisions sales to whalers was collected from the people by government inspectors at the Honolulu and Lahaina markets from the 1820s onwards.²⁷

Throughout the period, because of the upward movement of goods and the people's limited access to the market, their opportunities to acquire even the basic items of European trade were restricted. Evidence of the scarcity of such goods is apparent as late as the 1820s and 1830s when people demanded simple iron implements and cloth whenever an opportunity to trade materialized.²⁸ The recognized advantages of iron over stone, cloth over *tapa*, did not benefit the Hawaiian people individually during the early decades of contact as much as might have been expected.²⁹ As late as the 1820s most Hawaiians outside the port areas still dressed predominantly in *tapa*, which was also used in bed coverings and demanded for taxes.³⁰ Throughout the period most agricultural

²¹ Peter Gulick to Anderson, Waimea, Hawaii, 22 Aug. 1833, ABCFM: 19.1, Vol. V: 173, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions archive, Harvard University, Houghton Library (hereinafter ABCFM).

²² James Hunnewell Journal, 6 June 1820, MS, Harvard University, Baker Library.

²³ Gulick to Anderson, Waimea, Hawaii, 22 Aug. 1833, ABCFM: 19.1, V: 173.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Sandwich Island Mission Journal, 26 Apr. 1823, ABCFM: 19.1, I: 1-111.

²⁶ Elizabeth P. P. Pratt, *History of Keoua* (Honolulu 1920), 50-51.

²⁷ Sandwich Island Mission Journal, 25 Mar. 1822, ABCFM: 19.1, I: 1-111; Gilbert F. Mathison, *Narrative of a Visit to . . . the Sandwich Islands during the Years 1821 and 1822 . . .* (London 1825), 452; C. S. Stewart, *Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands, during the Years 1823, 1824 and 1825* (Honolulu 1970), 151; Ellis, *op. cit.*, 299.

²⁸ J. C. Jones to Marshall and Wildes, Oahu, 23 Dec. 1821, Marshall MSS, Harvard University, Houghton Library; Sandwich Island Mission Journal, 16 Jan. 1822, ABCFM: 19.1, I: 1-111; Sereno E. Bishop, *Reminiscences of Old Hawaii* (Honolulu 1916), 27-9; Abner Wilcox to Anderson, Hilo, 4 Oct. 1839, ABCFM: 19.1, XI: 177; C. Forbes to Anderson, Kealakekua Bay, Hawaii, 22 July 1841, ABCFM 19.1, X: 119.

²⁹ Most data on islanders' acquisition of foreign goods are impressionistic only, but to compare Hawaii with Tahiti in the 1820s it is claimed for the latter that iron goods and cloth were widely distributed throughout the population. H. E. Maude, 'The Tahitian Pork Trade: 1800-1830', *Of Islands and Men* (Melbourne 1968), 215-6; Newbury, *op. cit.*, 26, 81-3.

³⁰ Use of *tapa* may at times have been preferred, but reports of the Hawaiians' love of extravagant clothing, when obtainable, suggest that many Hawaiians wanted Western cloth. James Macrae, *With Lord*

production relied exclusively on traditional Hawaiian implements. Access to tools and skills such as carpentering and blacksmithing was denied to many people as late as the 1840s.³¹ During the early decades of contact, several visitors remarked on the people's willingness to accept alcohol and tobacco in exchange for foodstuffs or labour—a request at least partly conditioned by the fact that these were readily consumable items that could be kept out of the clutches of the chiefs.³² Given the volume of trade at Hawaii between the 1780s and 1850s, the *maka'ainana's* acquisitions or benefits from it were not substantial.

This lack of participation in foreign trade cannot be explained in terms of the people's lack of interest in, or desire for, manufactured goods. Iron was recognized and demanded from Cook's first landing,³³ and throughout the period, whenever chiefly monopolies were lifted or surveillance lessened, the people traded eagerly. In 1827, when the chiefs made a concerted effort to pay off their sandalwood debts, all adult males were ordered to deliver to the government half a picul (one picul = 133 ½ lbs) of sandalwood, and as a concession they were allowed to trade a further half picul of wood on their own account, a privilege never granted before.³⁴ The resultant activity was unusual: 'indeed this indulgence has produced a complete change in the feelings and habits of this people, each one is anxious to get all the wood he can and thinks of nothing but accumulating property'.³⁵ During the 1840s the missionaries lamented that the little money that came into the people's hands was spent on lavish clothing and horses rather than on what they considered more useful household goods.³⁶ The temporary market for provisions opened up by the Californian gold rushes in the late 1840s stimulated great exertions amongst the Hawaiians who cultivated large fields to supply the trade.³⁷ So many vessels

Byron at the Sandwich Islands in 1825 (Honolulu 1922), 6; Bishop, op. cit., 14, 44; Levi Chamberlain to Evarts, Honolulu, 19 Nov. 1830, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 161; J. N. Reynolds, *Voyage of the United States Frigate Potomac . . . in the Years 1831 . . . 1834* (New York 1835), 400, 403, 414; Armstrong Letter Journal, 26 July 1837, Wailuku, Maui, ABCFM: 19.1, X: 100.

³¹ The Hawaiian digging stick was very effective for Hawaiian horticultural techniques and iron substitutes were probably not often sought. Bishop, op. cit., 27-9; Forbes to Anderson, Kealakekua Bay, Hawaii, 22 July 1841, ABCFM: 19.1, X: 119; Elias Bond to Secretary, Kohala, Hawaii, 8 Apr. 1844, ABCFM: 19.1, XIV: 259.

³² Isaac Iselin, *Journal of a Trading Voyage around the World, 1805-1808* (New York n.d.), 77; Samuel Hill, *Journal and Log of Two Voyages . . .*, MSS, New York Public Library, mf Canberra, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, PMB 512, 91; Otto von Kotzebue, *A Voyage of Discovery . . . Under taken in the Years 1815-1818* (London 1821), I, 331, 336; V. M. Golovnin, *Around the World on the Kamchatka 1817-1819*, Ella Wiswell, trans. (Honolulu 1979), 210; James Hunnewell Journal, 7 Sept. 1820, Harvard University, Baker Library.

³³ J. C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery* (Cambridge 1967), III, pt 1, 264.

³⁴ Kuykendall, op. cit., I, 92.

³⁵ J. C. Jones to Captain D. Wildes, Oahu, 30 Sept. 1827, J. C. Jones Letters 1826-1838, Honolulu, Hawaiian Historical Society.

³⁶ Armstrong to Anderson, Honolulu, 12 Oct. 1842, ABCFM: 19.1, X: 90; Armstrong to Green, Honolulu, 11 Nov. 1845, ABCFM: 19.1, XII: 23; Conde, Report of the Hana Station, July 1848, ABCFM: 19.1, XV: 258; Bishop to Anderson, Ewa, Oahu, 26 Oct. 1849, ABCFM: 19.1, XIV: 249.

³⁷ J. F. Pogue to Anderson, Kealakekua Bay, Hawaii, 14 July 1849, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 239; A. Thurston to Anderson, Kailua, Hawaii, 27 May 1850, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 315; G. B. Rowell, Waimea, Kauai Station Report, 1851, Honolulu, Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library (hereinafter HMCS).

seeking provisions arrived at different anchorages throughout the islands that chiefly monopolization of the trade was impossible. Even in remote Kohala, Hawaii Island, where access to incoming vessels was difficult, the resident missionary wrote 'Never since our knowledge of Hawaiian affairs had so great an amount of labor been expended on the soil . . . [T]he people were getting wild with prosperity'.³⁸ Clearly the *maka'ainana's* aspirations had risen, but opportunities to satisfy them were rarely adequate.

While the political changes in 1795 had little impact on the people's economic position, the end of active warfare did have profound repercussions on *maka'ainana-alii* relations. Once Kamehameha I had won political supremacy and warfare was no longer a vital issue for the rival factions, the major constraint on chiefly expropriation from the people was removed. After 1804 the people were not conscripted for chiefly armies, neither was their produce liable for requisition for military purposes.³⁹ Life and livelihood were more secure from the vicissitudes of war, but to offset these gains the chiefs were no longer so concerned to foster the loyalty of the people. After this period trading opportunities prompted them to use their followers' labour and produce to finance buying sprees with little concern for the people's well-being. Further, after 1795, Kamehameha I reorganized the patterns of land holding amongst most of the high chiefs. In the past chiefs had been given rights to large areas of contiguous lands, but under Kamehameha I smaller areas of land in different districts were parcelled out, diminishing any one chief's chances of raising a rebellion. Kamehameha I introduced another safeguard against rebellion by insisting that the more influential chiefs live at his court. An important effect of these changes was to increase the alienation between chiefs and people, the former having less contact with, and responsibility for, the latter than in pre-contact times.⁴⁰ By 1800 two crucial events for the welfare of the *maka'ainana* had occurred: the restraints on accumulation, typical of a Pacific subsistence economy, had been broken and the political bond between chiefs and people, already tenuous in pre-contact times, was further weakened by the cessation of warfare and Kamehameha's reorganization of chiefly land holding patterns and rights of residence.

The overthrow of the *kapu* system in 1819 formalized and extended the process of state formation which had been occurring since 1795.⁴¹ The magnificent religious ceremonies which required large quantities of food and artefacts from

³⁸ Bond, Kohala, Hawaii, Station Report 1851, ABCFM: 19.1, XIII: 140.

³⁹ Kuykendall, op. cit., I, 49-51.

⁴⁰ Stephenie S. Levin, 'The Overthrow of the *Kapu* System in Hawaii', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (hereinafter *JPS*), LXXVII (1968), 420.

⁴¹ M. C. Webb, 'The Abolition of the Taboo System in Hawaii', *JPS*, LXXIV (1965), 21-39, particularly 27; William Davenport, 'The "Hawaiian Cultural Revolution": some political and economic considerations', *American Anthropologist*, LXXI (1969), 1-20; Richard H. Harfst, 'Cause or Condition: Explanations of the Hawaiian Cultural Revolution', *JPS*, LXXXI (1972), 437-71.

the people were abolished. The high chiefs' political and economic power was consolidated at the priests' expense, and the previous flow of goods and labour into major religious concerns was now available for use in other chiefly activities, especially foreign trade.⁴² The abolition of *kapu* allowed men and women to eat together and the women to eat foods earlier forbidden to them. Also the diverse demands on the ordinary people were rationalized and centralized if not reduced. On the religious level, however, the people's commitment to their ancestral deities and local gods, the mainspring of religious life, were less seriously affected.⁴³

Available evidence suggests that this dramatic reorganization was initiated and executed by a clique of high chiefs on Hawaii Island, and that it provoked only two instances of resistance, both on that island. One was led by the high chief and priest, Kekuaokalani; the other, which occurred in the Hamakua district, was apparently an uprising of commoners without chiefly leadership.⁴⁴ Both groups were defeated in battle, and apart from the statements that the Hamakua uprising was led and composed of commoners, there is little evidence about the people's reactions to the abolition of the *kapu* or their motivations for joining Kekuaokalani or the Hamakua group. No overt resistance to the overthrow surfaced on any other island and for the people it can be argued that this religious upheaval was less intrusive and traumatic than the later enforced conversion to Christianity, which occurred after 1824.

The final major political changes of the period occurred in the 1840s. New law codes were promulgated, a quasi-democratic form of government was introduced, and fundamental changes in land holding rights were brought into effect between 1845 and 1854.⁴⁵ The processes and rationale cannot be detailed here, but the more influential effects on the people should be outlined. With the introduction of new legislation in the 1840s the people gained *de jure* a number of new rights and avenues of protection, especially from arbitrary taxation. But these changes took time to filter down and be understood, and even if this occurred, the people had little power to insist on their new rights.⁴⁶ Similarly the people's attempts to claim the lands they cultivated and on which they lived were frustrated, sometimes denied, by avaricious chiefs or foreigners.⁴⁷ A

⁴² Davenport, *op. cit.*, 17-18; Webb, *op. cit.*, 30-1; Ellis, *op. cit.*, 80-1.

⁴³ Davenport, *op. cit.*, 18; Ellis, *op. cit.*, 34, 44, 198, 250.

⁴⁴ Kuykendall, *op. cit.*, I, 65-9; Davenport, *op. cit.*, 16; Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs . . .*, 225-8; Fornander, *Fornander Collection . . .*, V, 478-82; Webb, *op. cit.*, 34; W. D. Alexander, 'Overthrow of the Ancient Tabu System in the Hawaiian Islands', *Hawaiian Historical Society Annual Report for 1916*, 42.

⁴⁵ Kuykendall, *op. cit.*, I, chs 10-15; Chinen, *The Great Mahele*.

⁴⁶ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs . . .*, 370; Bradley, *op. cit.*, 321; *Answers to Questions* (Honolulu 1848), 13, 37-41; L. Lyons to Anderson, Waimea, Hawaii, 26 Mar. 1847, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 182.

⁴⁷ J. S. Emerson to Anderson, Waialua, Oahu, 26 Oct. 1847, ABCFM: 19.1, XV: 333; Gulick to Anderson, Waialua, Oahu, 11 Oct. 1850, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 18; Bond to G. M. Robertson, Kohala, Hawaii, 17 Feb. 1851, and J. Fuller to J. H. Smith, Kailua, Hawaii, 11 October 1852, Land Commission Records 1846-56, Honolulu, Archives of Hawaii (hereinafter AH).

number of missionaries and philanthropists had welcomed the land division and offer of freehold tenure to the ordinary Hawaiians, in the belief that it would free the people from the continual and excessive demands of the *konohiki* and would encourage them to become hard-working independent farmers enjoying the fruits of their own labour.⁴⁸ In practice many people received no land at all. Some who gained freehold tenure to cultivated plots lost former communal rights to grazing land or collecting areas, which rendered independent subsistence farming impossible. Some, for this or other reasons, were unable to prevent the subsequent sale of their newly acquired land.⁴⁹ By 1854 the *maka'ainana* owned only one per cent of the land of Hawaii.⁵⁰ Most significantly the land division eliminated the *konohiki*, who had overseen the collection of taxation and agricultural production for the chiefs, and released many of the *maka'ainana* both from those chiefly demands and from the land itself. They were 'free' to become wage labour in the expanding plantation industry.

Other processes were also at work removing commoners from land, one of the very few sources of independent existence open to them. By the mid-1840s government taxes had to be paid in cash not kind, which forced people in areas remote from foreign commercial activities into the port towns to earn the necessary tax money.⁵¹ By the mid-1850s, with a growing proportion of men and women cut off from the land, the process of class formation was developing rapidly – the transition from affluent subsistence to landless, unskilled labour had for many already occurred. The divergence of chiefly and commoner interests had grown over the decade 1840-50, and for some ordinary Hawaiians there was a sense of alienation between themselves and the small governing élite who were strongly influenced and often co-opted by foreign commercial interests.

At no stage between 1779 and 1854 did the people join together in any numbers to break the trading monopolies of the chiefs, to uphold the old religious practices or to refuse to provide the labour and taxes demanded from them, but individually or in small groups some did flout chiefly authority. People anxious to acquire foreign goods were always prepared to sell provisions,

⁴⁸ S. M. Dwight to J. H. Smith, Kalua'aho, Molokai, 22 Jan. 1852, 16 Aug. 1852, Land Commission Records 1846-56, AH; Bond to Secretary, Kohala, Hawaii, 2 Apr. 1852, ABCFM: 19.1, XIV: 272; Richard Armstrong, *The Polynesian*, 16 Feb. 1850; William L. Lee, *The Polynesian*, 17 Aug. 1850.

⁴⁹ Chinen, *op. cit.*, 30-1; Marion Kelly, 'Changes in Land Tenure in Hawaii 1778-1850', MA thesis, University of Hawaii (Honolulu 1956), 138-42; Emerson, Waialua Station Report, 1848, HMCS; Bishop to Armstrong, Ewa, Oahu, 30 Apr. 1850, Public Instruction Land File, AH.

⁵⁰ Chinen, *op. cit.*, 31; Neil M. Levy, 'Native Hawaiian Land Rights', *California Law Review*, LXIII: 4 (July 1975), 856.

⁵¹ Robert C. Schmitt, *The Missionary Censuses of Hawaii* (Honolulu 1973), 44; Thurston to Green, Kailua, Hawaii, 1 May 1844, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 306; J. Paris to Secretary, Waiohinu, Hawaii, 20 Apr. 1847, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 200.

despite chiefly attempts to impose monopolies.⁵² If they were caught, the total purchase price might be confiscated, but this did not prevent illicit trading. In Honolulu in 1830 the chiefs prohibited the people's access to the resident foreign traders, but as one merchant pointed out, the order 'is evaded whenever we are not too closely watch'd'.⁵³

The sale of sexual services was another means by which ordinary women and their menfolk were able to gain access to desired foreign goods. From Cook onwards women willingly offered themselves, or were offered, to foreign visitors.⁵⁴ At the beginning the economic motive was not uppermost in every woman's mind:

we found all the Women of these Islands but little influenced by interested motives in their intercourse with us, as they would almost use violence to force you into their Embrace regardless whether we gave them any thing or not, . . .⁵⁵

But as familiarity with the intruders and their goods grew and the chiefs' monopolistic tendencies were firmly established, the sale of sexual services provided an avenue to goods that was difficult to prohibit or police. As early as 1804 a foreigner claimed that there was a causal connexion between increased chiefly exploitation and prostitution.⁵⁶ In 1835 a missionary explained the frequent lapses into prostitution amongst the females of his flock in similar terms: 'their poverty is one reason why they often yielded'.⁵⁷ At least two chiefs tried to cash in on the women's earnings, by supplying vessels in Honolulu harbour with women and claiming a cut,⁵⁸ but usually the business was conducted privately by the women or their male kinsmen.

Once the missionaries gained an ascendancy with certain chiefs strong governmental pressure was imposed to stop this trade.⁵⁹ But even after the nominal conversion of the entire archipelago in the late 1820s any political upheaval was accompanied by a missionary outcry against increased prostitution and adultery.⁶⁰ During the provisional government of 1843, when laws prohibiting prostitution were temporarily lifted, women from the outer districts

⁵² Vancouver, op. cit., III, 185-6; Alexander Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River 1810-1813*, R. G. Thwaites, ed. (Cleveland 1904), 59-62; Pierce, op. cit., 172; J. Ely to Evarts, Kaawaloa, Hawaii, 11 Oct. 1824, ABCFM: 19.1, II: 112; Stewart, op. cit., 151.

⁵³ James Hunnewell to J. P. Sturgis, Oahu, 10 Feb. 1830, James Hunnewell Papers, Harvard University, Baker Library.

⁵⁴ The moral condemnation inherent in the word 'prostitution' is not appropriate in traditional Hawaiian culture, which vaunted sexuality and placed no value on virginity or chastity except for certain persons and then for political/dynastic reasons rather than moral ones.

⁵⁵ David Samwell, Journal, in J. C. Beaglehole (ed.), op. cit., III, pt 2, 1085.

⁵⁶ Urey Lisiansky, *Voyage round the World in the years 1803 . . . 1806* (Amsterdam 1968 facs.), 128; Daniel D. Tumarlin, 'A Russian View of Hawaii in 1804', *Pacific Studies*, II: 2 (1979), 129.

⁵⁷ Unsigned Waimea, Hawaii, Station Report 1835, HMCS.

⁵⁸ Iselin, op. cit., 79-80; Gavan Daws, 'The High Chief Boki', *JPS*, LXXV (1966), 66.

⁵⁹ Kuykendall, op. cit., I, 122-3; Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-one Years in the Sandwich Islands* (New York 1847), 284-9, 313-9.

⁶⁰ E.g., during the Kauai rebellion in 1824, after the death of Kalanimoku in 1827 and during the troubled year of 1833 when Kamehameha III rescinded many of the missionary 'blue' laws.

and islands flocked into Honolulu and Lahaina.⁶¹ In 1847 two foreign physicians in Honolulu claimed that four-fifths of the money received in Honolulu and Lahaina by the people came from the wages of prostitution.⁶² While the claim may be exaggerated, the people's arbitrarily limited access to the market economy made a certain dependence on prostitution inevitable.

During the sandalwood trade and later, individual instances of labour sabotage occurred. On Oahu and Molokai sandalwood cutters deliberately destroyed young sandalwood trees in attempts to protect their children from the trade.⁶³ In 1837 some people were called out for a day to cut timber for the chief in the mountains. Once there it was discovered that the people had brought only three ropes with them to haul the logs and those broke the moment they were attached.⁶⁴ By then the chief's labour day was over.

Demands on the people did not end with the sandalwood trade and some became increasingly adept at evasion. 'There is no one branch better understood by the people of that region [Waimea] than running away from, and otherwise evading the orders of their chiefs.'⁶⁵ Where evasion was impossible, other means of quiet protest were sometimes employed. The district of Waialua, Oahu, belonged ultimately to the Premier Kinau, who frequently sent a government vessel to the area for provisions. After a period of particularly heavy demands, which had to be met over and above their ordinary taxation, the people protested, not verbally or by withdrawing labour, but by putting leaves, a whole taro and even dung in some of the bundles of *poi* (cooked taro paste) demanded by the voracious chiefess. Punishment was swift and heavy. When no one admitted guilt all but invalids and the young were sent to work for the government at a distant place for six weeks.⁶⁶

Several missionaries lamented the apathy and laziness of the people, but at least some recognized that on many projects the people were conscripted and that even when working for themselves they had no guarantee that they would enjoy the fruits of their labour.⁶⁷ A particularly fine hog or field of taro could be commandeered by a *konohiki*, just as it was ready for consumption. While laziness and apathy were culturally loaded judgements, it seems highly likely that at least sometimes non-activity was a form of passive protection for the

⁶¹ Bond to Secretary, Kohala, Hawaii, 8 Apr. 1844, ABCFM: 19.1, XIV: 259; Thurston to Green, Kailua, Hawaii, 1 May 1844, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 306.

⁶² *Answers to Questions*, 32; Armstrong to Anderson, Honolulu, 24 May 1847, ABCFM: 19.1, XIV: 84.

⁶³ Bob Krauss, *Historic Waianae: A Place of Kings* (Honolulu 1973), 18; George P. Cooke, *Moololo o Molokai. A Ranch Story of Molokai* (Honolulu 1949), 61.

⁶⁴ Marshall Sahlins, Lecture III delivered in Honolulu, University of Hawaii, Feb./Mar. 1973.

⁶⁵ Unsigned, Waimea, Hawaii, Station Report, 1835, HMCS.

⁶⁶ Emerson to Chamberlain, Waialua, Oahu, 19 Oct. 1835, 10 Nov. 1835, J. S. Emerson Letters, HMCS.

⁶⁷ Ely to Evarts, Kaawaloa, Hawaii, 11 Oct. 1824, ABCFM: 19.1, II: 112; Mary A. Richards (comp.), *The Hawaiian Chiefs' Children's School. A Record compiled from the Diary and Letters of Amos Star Cooke and Juliette Montague Cooke* (Rutland, Vt 1970), 17; Paris to Anderson, Orange Hill, Hawaii, 16 July 1853, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 219.

people. When the return for labour seemed fairly secure, the people were prepared to expend enormous amounts of energy.⁶⁸

Resistance to imposed Christian restrictions appeared in many muted forms. Not only adultery and prostitution increased at times of political upheaval, but also *hula* dancing, tattooing, and what the missionaries called heathenish practices. In 1827 on the death of the high chief Kalanimoku, the sabbath was desecrated in Honolulu and the *hula*, cards and rum reappeared.⁶⁹ On more remote mission stations reports came in throughout the 1840s of incidents of *'awa* drinking, tattooing and traditional religious practices, which frequently occurred when the local chief was absent.⁷⁰ In 1833 Kamehameha III publicly defied the missionary-inspired laws prohibiting drinking, gambling and prostitution, and throughout the islands, with the exception of Kauai, the people deserted the mission schools and eagerly resorted to former pastimes.⁷¹ These outbreaks inevitably had political implications, but the widespread support they evoked from the people and the spontaneous reversion to traditional activities in the absence of chiefly surveillance reveals the tenuousness of Christianity's hold on many for whom ancient practices still offered great efficacy and enjoyment.

The non-observance of chiefly monopolies, the sale of sexual services, acts of labour sabotage and the reappearance of traditional customs which occurred throughout the period 1778-1854, were small but unambiguous instances of the *maka'ainana* taking the initiative and refusing to allow the chiefs to dictate absolutely their beliefs, living patterns and participation in the new economic activities. In the 1840s, faced with fundamental changes in power structures and land holding rights, the *maka'ainana* responses became more public and outspoken. The most concerted and well organized popular opposition was a series of petitions which originated in Lahaina. The Lahaina one was signed by 1,600 of the 'common people of your kingdom' and was sent to Kamehameha III and his council in June 1845; 1,344 signed a similar petition sent from Molokai in July 1845. Other petitions followed from Maui, and one from Kailua, Hawaii Island.⁷² By 1845 a legislature had been introduced to Hawaii and a number of foreigners, after becoming naturalized Hawaiian citizens, had been appointed to the government in the most influential ministerial

⁶⁸ See notes 35, 37.

⁶⁹ F. W. Beechey, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific . . . in the Years 1825 . . . 1828* (London 1831), II, 103; Bradley, *op. cit.*, 164-5.

⁷⁰ Conde to Green, Hana, Maui, 12 Feb. 1845, ABCFM: 19.1, XII: 73; G. B. Rowell, Waimea, Kauai, Station Report, 1848, HMCS; Lyons to Anderson, Waimea, Hawaii, 6 Mar. 1848, ABCFM: 19.1, XVI: 183; *Answers to Questions*, 59-60.

⁷¹ Kuykendall, *op. cit.*, I, 134-6; Levi Chamberlain Journal, 1833, HMCS; Chamberlain to Anderson, Honolulu, 26 Mar. 1833, ABCFM: 19.1, VI: 163-64; Gulick to Secretary, Koloa, Kauai, 25 Apr. 1836, ABCFM: 19.1, V: 181.

⁷² *The Friend*, 8 Aug. 1845, 118-9; Petition from Molokai, July 1845, Petitions, AH; Kuykendall, *op. cit.*, I, 257-60.

positions.⁷³ The petitioners questioned the independence of a nation that relied so heavily on foreigners whom they wished replaced by Hawaiian chiefs, and they objected to the naturalized foreigners' right to buy land freehold in Hawaii. A letter signed by 18 Hawaiian-born Lahaina residents published at the same time in a Hawaiian language newspaper contained a perceptive analysis of the matters most concerning the petitioners.⁷⁴ Hawaii was becoming a nation of foreigners, any one of whom could take an oath of allegiance on stepping ashore, marry a Hawaiian woman and buy land. In contrast most Hawaiians had no cash income at all and even the educated Hawaiians, employed by the government, were paid in kind not money. Thus no ordinary Hawaiian could compete with foreigners when land was sold.

Foreigners come on shore with cash, ready to purchase land; but we have not the means to purchase lands; the native is disabled like one who has long been afflicted with a disease upon his back. We have lived under the chiefs, thinking to do whatever they desired, but not according as we thought; hence we are not prepared to compete with foreigners . . .

In years which have past, we desired to pasture cattle, that we might have some property, but the most of us were forbidden to pasture cattle; therefore we have no cattle, nor anything with which to purchase cattle. And now the chiefs are admitting foreigners into the country to possess the good lands of Hawaii, and to deprive us of the same, with the exception perhaps of our small cultivated patches.

Foreigners will say to us perhaps, purchase according to your ability to purchase and husband well.

Very well; but why are we poor at this time? Because we have been subject to the ancient laws, till within these few years. Is it proper at this crisis that we should be turned in with wealthy foreigners to purchase ourselves lands? That is equivalent to the land with the life of the kingdom passing into the possession of foreigners.⁷⁵

Some Hawaiians clearly understood the implications of the political transformations and the likely outcome for themselves. Kamehameha III's foreign advisers were anxious to establish that this agitation was the result of disaffected foreigners, but no evidence of foreign interference or inspiration could be produced.⁷⁶ Later explanation of the movement revealed a widespread fear amongst the *maka'ainana* that the foreign officers would only build up their own positions and that of the king, while their concern for the ordinary Hawaiians would be minimal. Some had prayed for months that the Lord would give them 'black' rulers.⁷⁷ A reply to the petitioners pointing out the need for well-educated foreign experts whose allegiance to the king should be predominant

⁷³ Kuykendall, *op. cit.*, I, ch. 14.

⁷⁴ *The Friend*, 8 Aug. 1845, 119.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Kuykendall, *op. cit.*, I, 259; Judd, *op. cit.*, 114.

⁷⁷ Baldwin to Green, Lahaina, Maui, 8 Nov. 1845, ABCFM: 19.1, XII: 33.

was published in July 1845 and later that year Kamehameha III and a part-Hawaiian government official toured Maui, the centre of the opposition, to explain the government's policies.⁷⁸ The protest died out without having effected any visible change in those policies.

Such were the nature and extent of the Hawaiians' response to their enforced lack of involvement in the changes that were transforming Hawaii. Resistance ranged from individual acts of assertion or passive obstruction to widely supported, perceptively argued petitions. None of them was violent or threatened violence, with the exception of the two groups who resisted the abolition of the *kapu* in 1819. Careful scrutiny of the evidence suggests, however, that changes in the lives of the people had been substantial and that even in places least affected by Western contact standards of living had deteriorated. Basic changes in relations between the people and the chiefs, and between the people and their access to and use of subsistence resources were crucial factors in this decline: the people's labour and cultivated foodstuffs were no longer expended only within a closed system to maintain a chiefly bureaucracy, but were also used to maintain the chiefs' expanding trading interests with foreigners. Certain high chiefs enjoyed unprecedented opportunities to accumulate goods, while the people's aspirations were frequently frustrated and curtailed. Further, by the 1850s increasing amounts of prime land were being engrossed by foreigners and some Hawaiians were left without access to land. Progressively the interests of chiefs and people had diverged until, by the 1850s, it would appear to a modern-day Western analyst that in many senses two classes with opposed interests had emerged.

Despite this, active opposition was minimal. To discover and analyse the factors inhibiting resistance raises a number of cultural and semantic problems: specifically, how did the *maka'ainana* view these changes, and did they regard the high chiefs' actions as unacceptably exploitative? In the Hawaiian context, how is 'exploitation' to be defined and identified? Once the traditional subsistence nexus was broken, the chiefs used their followers' labour and provisions to pursue new commercial activities. But did the people question the chiefs' long-established rights to act in this way or to fill storehouses and caves with newly acquired goods that were not used for community needs? In pre-contact times the well-filled storehouses of the chiefs had kept their people loyal and secure,⁷⁹ post-contact the chiefs' goods still proclaimed their status and prestige and reflected glory on their followers.⁸⁰ Despite the new demands made on the people they may still have seen the chiefs as reciprocating and

⁷⁸ *The Friend*, 8 Aug. 1845, 118-9.

⁷⁹ Malo, *op. cit.*, 195.

⁸⁰ In Feb. 1824 the missionaries were told that the people had only come to church to see the new clothes of their chiefs. *Missionary Herald*, 1825, 280.

fulfilling their expected roles satisfactorily. Any attempt to hypothesize about the *maka'ainana's* responses to the dramatic changes which had occurred between the 1780s and the 1850s in Hawaii must be sensitive to the cultural patterns and predispositions which lay at the heart of chiefly/commoner relations.

In the Hawaiian context it is not possible to talk about a strong inherent ideology of protest.⁸¹ Certainly the *maka'ainana* had clear notions about their right to the means of subsistence and of reciprocity between themselves and the chiefs, crudely calculated as their labour, food supplies and artefacts in return for the organisation of major agricultural projects, celebrations and feasts, and physical and spiritual protection.⁸² But in normal times the Hawaiians did not press hard upon the resources available to them, and if particular chiefs proved oppressive, demanding goods to which they had no recognized customary right, the people had the option of withdrawal to another district. In these circumstances no strong traditions of organized protest grew up amongst the people. On the few recorded occasions of popular uprisings an unacceptable chief was automatically replaced by another chief — often the man who had fomented and led the rebellion.⁸³

Over the people's modest conceptions of their rights towered a massive body of official ideology venerating the chiefs, investing them with god-like qualities and demanding for them absolute obedience and loyalty.⁸⁴ The mythology and practice of chiefly power impinged more heavily on Hawaiian lives than elsewhere in Polynesia. The unique development and separation of the chiefly élite from the people, the loosening of kinship ties between the two groups, and, post-contact, the political and economic ambitions of the chiefs augmented and intensified chiefly power. Early explorers noted the extreme deference and obedience insisted upon by the chiefs and compared chiefly rule in Hawaii unfavourably with other Polynesian societies.⁸⁵ The awe and respect inculcated over generations were not to be effaced by four or five decades of chiefly refusal to respect customary ideas of reciprocity. In no other Polynesian societies were the ordinary people forced to confront their chiefs and recognize that they were not protecting the people's own interests. In Samoa chiefs and people around Apia attempted to force the foreign merchants to lower their prices.⁸⁶ Similarly, in New Zealand, chiefs and people, faced with intense

⁸¹ George Rudé, *Ideology and Popular Protest* (London 1980), 28.

⁸² Malo, op. cit., 135-9, 190-6; Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs . . .*, 226; E.S.C. Handy and Mary Pukui, *The Polynesian Family System in Ka'u Hawaii* (Wellington 1958), 198-204.

⁸³ Hommon, 'The formation of primitive states . . .', 160-3.

⁸⁴ Malo, op. cit., 54, 190-2; Beckwith, op. cit., 293-313; Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko*, 4-10; Handy and Pukui, op. cit., 199-200.

⁸⁵ Beaglehole, op. cit., III, Pt 1, 218, 507, 518, 524-5; J. F. G. de La Pérouse, *A Voyage round the World, performed in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788 . . .* (London 1799), I, 345; Meares, op. cit., 344-5; Portlock, op. cit., 155, 310, 312; George Mortimer, op. cit., 53.

⁸⁶ Caroline Ralston, *Grass Huts and Warehouses. Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century* (Canberra 1977), 100; R. P. Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900* (Melbourne 1970), 239-40.

foreign pressures, fought together to retain their land, or together fought with the foreigners against traditional Maori enemies.⁸⁷ In Hawaii the *maka'ainana* had to contend with massive foreign intervention in many vital spheres of their lives, without the leadership of the chiefs, in fact often in defiance of them. However, given their immersion in chiefly ideologies it is not surprising that they found it extraordinarily difficult to demand justice. Their petitions were couched in the most deferential and self-effacing terms.⁸⁸ These habits of thought and action persisted despite the upheaval and insecurity many experienced.

On-going population loss was another significant factor militating against active resistance. Actual numbers, either of the absolute decline over the period or the rate of decline during particular decades cannot be established, but at a conservative estimate the total decrease was at least 40%.⁸⁹ High death rates from diseases whose nature and virulence were unknown before contact presumably undermined the *maka'ainana's* self-confidence and weakened local coherence; and this in communities which lacked a strong sense of kinship and leadership even before contact. The movement of young people, both men and women, into the port towns of Honolulu and Lahaina, which was much greater than indigenous population movements into Papeete, Apia or Kororareka in comparable periods,⁹⁰ further weakened social cohesion and lessened the possibility that organized resistance in defence of community standards of living would emerge.

Finally, while contact with the West offered the possibility of access to new ideologies, the only one widely promulgated to the *maka'ainana* was a form of Christianity which, while it preached equality of all people in Christ, was totally dependent on the chiefly élite for its very existence in the islands and its acceptance as the official religion. Amongst the missionaries themselves there were uneasy divisions on this subject. Several railed publicly against the greed and tyranny of the chiefs, most of whom were church members. '[I]t is to a number of your missionaries a matter of deep regret that rulers, so manifestly covetous, & oppressive, as are most of the high chiefs, should be connected with the church.'⁹¹ Very rarely a particularly exploitative chief was disciplined by the missionaries, as happened to the high chief Kuakini, governor of Hawaii Island, who was suspended from the church in 1840 for his prominent love of

⁸⁷ Keith Sinclair, *The Origins of the Maori Wars* (Auckland 1957), passim; Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice* (Canberra 1974), passim.

⁸⁸ See petitions in Land Commission—Incoming Correspondence, Claims and Petitions, AH.

⁸⁹ Schmitt, op. cit., passim; Robert C. Schmitt, *Demographic Statistics of Hawaii: 1778-1965* (Honolulu 1968), 10-45; Robert C. Schmitt, 'New Estimates of Pre-censal Population of Hawaii', *JPS*, LXXX (1971), 237-43; Norma McArthur, Review of Schmitt, *The Missionary Censuses in Oceania*, XLV (1974-75), 169; and pers. comm. 12 June 1980.

⁹⁰ Ralston, op. cit., 101-3, 162-4.

⁹¹ Gulick to Anderson, Waimea, Hawaii, 22 Aug. 1833, ABCFM: 19.1, V: 173.

money and his 'oppression of the people seeking his own interests in opposition to theirs or rather out of theirs'.⁹² But the majority of missionaries between 1820 and 1854 muted their criticisms, enjoying the security and influence which a close association between the church and the ruling chiefly élite made possible. As a general mission letter to headquarters written in 1838 pointed out:

To wink at the evasion or resistance of Government orders because they seem to impose heavy burdens, provided they do not require a manifest violation of God's commands, we are aware would tend to sedition and confusion, and a total defeat of our object and the proper object of government.⁹³

Typical of Christian authorities in many other parts of the world the mission in Hawaii offered the people an ideology that gave them little or no assistance to resist the political power of the chiefs or the burgeoning interests of the foreigners.

Despite present historiography not all *maka'ainana* were just passive bystanders quietly accepting the massive changes that swept Hawaii in the decades after contact with the West. While for most of them the conscious recognition that the chiefs were pursuing interests in direct opposition to their own well-being was difficult, there were still groups of Hawaiians who ignored chiefly trading embargoes, temporarily sabotaged sandalwood-cutting expeditions, returned to traditional pastimes when opportunity arose, and wrote and organized petitions. Yet they influenced the course of events not at all. The relentless pressure of foreign invasion by merchant companies, consuls and naval authorities, mission and large scale planters, all of whom, except certain foreign government officials, enjoyed some form of chiefly co-operation, could not be resisted. By 1854 the ordinary Hawaiians owned only one per cent of the land and their numbers were greatly reduced, while the sugar industry stood ready for enormous expansion.⁹⁴ Even before this expansion, however, the possibility of effective opposition by the Hawaiians was minimal. Neither traditional nor introduced ideologies prompted or promoted resistance, while the lack of effective *ahupua'a* organization and leadership combined with on-going population decline compounded the difficulties. To concentrate on the experiences and responses of the ordinary Hawaiian people for the period 1778-1854 does not result in a major rewriting of Hawaiian history, but it negates any interpretation which suggests that post-contact history was progressive or beneficial for all Hawaiians. The *maka'ainana* were historically the inevitable victims of Western contact;⁹⁵ even if they had attempted massive ac-

⁹² Thurston to Anderson, Kailua, Hawaii, 24 Apr. 1840, ABCFM: 19.1, IX: 45.

⁹³ Report of the Delegate Meeting to Anderson, Lahaina, Maui, 20 June 1838, ABCFM: 19.1, VIII: 10; see also Chamberlain to Anderson, Honolulu, 7 Feb. 1839, ABCFM: 19.1, IX: 119.

⁹⁴ Kuykendall, *op. cit.*, II, especially chs 5-6; Schmitt, *Demographic Statistics*, 46-78.

⁹⁵ Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, 12.

tive resistance they were doomed to failure. But an attempt to establish what happened in the lives of the *maka'ainana* in the crucial decades after contact with the West reveals that their experience of change was in many cases very different from that of the high chiefs and also exposes the pervasive forces, both indigenous and introduced, at work in Hawaii to limit and mute popular opposition.



HISTORY DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW
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