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Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance To American Colonialism (American Encounters/Global Interactions)



Synopsis

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

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dr. Silva's book relies on seldom-used Hawaiian-language newspaper sources to document native Hawaiian resistance to foreign power in the islands. Most histories of Hawaii depend on

English-language (and all too often missionary and American) accounts of the people and events in Hawaiian history, which means that they often miss, or ignore, the opposing, and generally native voices. It is as if the Hawaiians simply gave up. But, as "Aloha Betrayed" documents in some detail, this version of history is not true, and is in fact part of an on-going struggle to erase native struggles. At times, the book is one-sided, as if only native Hawaiians resisted imperialism and only foreigners supported it, but this tendency is forgivable because she is reacting to so many books on Hawaiian history that have written native Hawaiians out of Hawaiian history and created a mythical history where missionaries and capitalists take over the islands with great fanfare and little resistance. "Aloha Betrayed" is not the final history of the Hawaiian islands, but it is a well-researched, well-written and much-needed contribution to the field.

This book is a landmark that marks a sea change in the way Hawaiian history is understood. All Hawaiian history books written after this one must include discussion of Dr. Silva's findings. If they don't, they are inadequate, deficient and indeed, biased for omitting this information. This book also marks a change in the language of politics. Knowing that one's own ancestors signed a petition gives great strength to the continuing struggle for sovereignty. This book is essential for anyone living in Hawai'i who wants to begin to understand the depth of the commitment of Hawaiians to restoration of their independence and dignity.

A must read for all of us concerned about the true history of the people of Hawaii. It is eye opening and certainly sad in many ways how this history has unfolded, but the strength of spirit for the people who live to carry on the aloha is made evident in this book.

I have begun reading this book for the second time in less than a month... As a Hawaiian descendant of the hellish methods employed by the United States to illegally occupy my homeland, brainwash my family members, and erase the language, culture, and history of the Neutral Nation State of the Hawaiian Kingdom, I am finally part of the IĀ•hui of Hawaiians gaining knowledge of our true history ... Noenoe Silva reminds me that I came from extremely courageous, hard working, honorable stock who were extremely intelligent, mastered the highest level of literacy in the world in two languages, with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge that produced more than 100 newspapers... and accomplished all of this in less than 100 years...

I purchased this book as part of my research for my Master's thesis on post-colonial literature in the

Pacific. It was (and is) one of the finest reviews of the tumultuous times during America's colonial expansion and its desire to seize Hawai'i for American military and commercial interests. Unlike some of the Hawaiian sovereignty texts (which can be hyperbolic in the extreme), this book was written with a scholar's due diligence and well expressed. The 'edgy' comment is due to the focus being far less 'Americanized' ('we saved Hawaii') and much more directed toward a view from an occupied population where the local culture was being usurped and subaltern behavior diminished, demeaned, or crushed. A fine addition to any library dealing with colonial behavior in the tropics.

Serious book. Explains how Hawaiians used newspapers and petitions to resist missionary intentions, influence, killings, destruction, construction. Explains devastating effects of forcing English language upon Hawaiians.

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