A collection of FB postings between Poka Laenui and others:

A number of correspondences have gone on in a variety of facebook sites which I feel you may have missed, so I have brought it together in one place. You may notice some repetition. I apologize. Here are writings on three topics in the following recent posts:

First on the issue of On Occupation, Colonization and Indigenous nation

Second on the Hawaiian Economy and the U.S. Military in Hawaii

Third on Representative Alexandria Ocasia-Cortez and her challenge to Donald Trump, the integrity of Cubans. And racism

Hope you like.

Aug. 12, 2020

On Occupation, Colonization and Indigenous nation

A friend sent me a private message saying: I noticed that you use the terms occupation and colonization in some of your post’. I always thought that since we gained our status as an independent nation state back on November 28, 1843, that we no longer could be colonized. And also because we were included into the family of nations, that we were no longer considered indigenous. Is that correct?

This being a fundamental question, I thought it deserved a broader response.

The multi-lateral treaty between Hawaii, England and France in 1843 did not place Hawaii in an untouchable category for either colonization or occupation. The former Soviet Union had taken over and colonized many states which were previously recognized as independent states. So did Germany in its aggression across Europe and occupied many states, including for example France and created the Vichy government. The U.S. continually aggresses against independent nations, notwithstanding their status as a recognized state.

To my way of thinking occupation is on one end of the range of deprivation of self-determination. On the other is colonization. Occupation is an international legal term and it deals with a military occupation during a period of military confrontation. Occupation in international law does not have the occupied claiming sovereignty over their occupied land. The period is limited to achieve a declared purpose. For example, the American occupation of Iraq from 2003 to 2011. There are many more examples but I will keep this short.

Colonization, also an international legal term deals with the takeover of so much of life of a people that the influence is far more extensive than just merely occupation of a territory. That term as used more recently, started (1945) with the concept of non-self-governing territories, whereby a territory was not self-governing because of an “administrative” power over it. As that concept continued to develop in the United Nations listing of those non-self-governing territories, (under Article 73 of the charter) Hawaii was specified as one of those territories and the U.S. was identified as the administering power, sometimes called the colonial authority. Therefore, from 1946 when Hawaii was listed with the UN until 1959 when the US cheated in their sacred trust obligation and did not give the people who were non-self-governing the opportunity to make a choice as to their future arrangement with the U.S., Hawaii had been clearly a colony, i.e., under colonization. I also assert that since 1959, that colonization did not stop but has continued.

Some people have argued that Hawaii should not have been on that list in the first place because it was not a colony.

I don’t agree. Hawaii met the definition of a non-self-governing territory. That was the driving definition. We were not self-governing in all of the powers of self-government, such as control over our people and defining our people, control over our lands and defining our territories, control over our own international relations, and control over our own internal government, especially when the Governor was appointed by the U.S. President and all judicial judges were appointed by the U.S. President. And we still had to pay a tithe (taxes) to the Federal government or go to jail. The reality was we were not self-governing as a statement of fact and not as a matter of ideal. The task was to move us from that factual condition to the ideal of being a free people. Decolonization was the pathway.

Some people have said, “But we were illegally taken over!” What do you think occupation and colonization is all about?

Here's another way to look at occupation vs. colonization with regards to the US and Hawaii.

If merely occupation, then our only complaint is the military force which occupies Hawaii. Get the military out of Hawaii and the problem is resolved. I find that totally unacceptable. There’s some other talk that the military should turn over the arms of government to a self-declared temporary regent who will takeover the reigns of Hawaii’s government. Even more unacceptable.

With merely a departure of the U.S. military, what happens to the State of Hawaii? Does it perish into thin air? What happens with the U.S. control over all of our trade, our communications, its influence over our education system, its interference with our foreign relations and tourism, of its continued taxation of our people, of its continued possession of our stolen lands, of the U.S. Supreme Court being supreme over Hawaii, etc. …. And who will decide that for us?

Colonization is far deeper than mere occupation.

Colonization goes to the core of our society and so the remedy is not merely de-occupation. That’s a naïve approach.

De-colonization begins with the people’s minds which needs to be freed from the fears of freedom and realize that we have the full capacity to lead our own path into our future. It takes a process where we have public education, discussion and debates about how we proceed into our future – what will our trade policies be, our economic policies be, our social and environmental policies be, our tolerance for all peoples and all religions will be, and so many more concerns as we re-establish our nation.

That decision belongs to the people over whom the U.S. has lorded and have taken away our rights to freedom. That decision belongs to all of us, not to a self-proclaimed king, queen, regent, or what-ever title a person, group, tribe, social club, or family has claimed.

That is why I make a clear distinction between the two concepts and follow the belief that we are in a state of colonization and the remedy is decolonization.

Now let’s move to your second question, “because we were included into the family of nations, that we were no longer considered indigenous. Is that correct?”

 Not to my understanding.

Hawaii had been an indigenous nation which formed itself into an indigenous state from as early as Kamehameha I as he obtained the symbols of statehood by the adoption of a flag, conducting international affairs with other countries, showed that he had a government form which maintained control over a defined people and over a defined territory. The U.S. recognized Hawaii for its independence even before the Treaty with Britain, France and Hawaii in 1843. Hawaii did not lose its character as an indigenous nation by the occurrence of one treaty. It has always retained its indigenous character as an indigenous nation.

That nation is a multi-racial nation. That nation is a multi-religious and non-religious nation. That nation is many things, but it is still an indigenous nation because it started from our indigenous history, has been driven by the indigenous people who have been in the leadership and their transition has been under the control of those indigenous leaders.

The breach of that leadership came about when the foreign influence expedited by the U.S. military forces landed in peaceful Honolulu, 1893. That nation continues to exist although its self-determination has been temporarily interfered with by the United States. But its indigenous character has not been lost (notwithstanding the heavy-handed influence by the U.S.) In fact, today, we see it growing, expanding, and maturing as we entrench ourselves in our Hawaiian values and language, and as we demand our liberation.

Those are my thoughts. Mahalo for asking. Aloha `aina.

Poka Laenui,

Hawaii National Transitional Authority.

Dina Gilio-Whitaker

So

Poka Laenui

are you saying that in the case of Hawaii it is both occupied and colonized?

Poka Laenui

Author

We were "occupied' at the initial landing in January 1893 with the U.S.S. Boston carrying its troops along with its howitzer cannons and carbines, etc. But after Minister Blount arrived in Hawaii and the U.S. military was pulled back, the state of occupation ceased.

 The aggression was already committed and a state of interruption to Hawaii's self-determination had been created. This allowed the subsequent grab by the "Missionary Party boys" who then formed themselves into the Provisional Government and then into the Republic of Hawaii. The Republic of Hawaii opened the door for the US to step into Hawaii and begin its colonization, taking over not only the landing of troops but over all of the lands and waters of Hawaii, all of the Hawaiian citizens, all the courts, all education, all media, all trade, all immigration, even the language that we were able to transact official life.

That is the point, this is not mere occupation but full on colonization! Now we need to apply all of the rules and remedies for the state of colonization.

Check out the UN resolution on the definition of Aggression which also deals with the consequences of aggression and simply lay that resolution over the facts here in Hawaii. It makes it clear that the present claim of U.S. possession is a violation of international law.

 Mahalo for asking this question. Sorry if I had not been clear previously. There will probably be much more clarity to be made but difficult in this type of communication over facebook.

 Ho mitake asay, To all my relations.

Aloha a hui hou.

Ken Burch



Poka Laenui

It is understandable that many in Hawaiʻi view it as "occupied" because that is their everyday experience. Most probably do not know international law and definitions, so just use the term in a more general way. Another communication problem created by the difference between common language and legal language. Thank you for clarifying.~

Concerning the term "indigenous", some say it is inappropriate in describing kānaka maoli, saying that "aboriginal" is more correct". Could you elaborate on how these two terms differ? Mahalo.

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Poka Laenui

Author

I have had to deal with the problem of common language and legal language for a long time. As a kid from Wai`anae, I always knew nationality to mean race and that the mainland was over in America. But as I studied more the history of Hawaii, the issues of law, and eventually became licensed as an attorney, the clarity of the language became super-important, especially as we address the liberation of our people. I could not contend with just the common use of terms, using it in my speech knowing full well that these were not the right terms.

I than became involved in the international advocacy for decolonization and for indigenous peoples' rights, representing the World Council of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, later changed to Peoples. I represented several other organizations and peoples and was eventually designated as the indigenous expert to the International Labor Organization to work specifically on the Convention regarding the rights of indigenous peoples. All of this required that I be clear with my language.

That's why I use colonization and decolonization as it applies to Hawaii. In certain aspects of the U.S. aggression into Hawaii, we can get away with the term occupation, but not in the long period in which the U.S. has been here and taken over every facet of Hawaii.

Now let me address the use of the term indigenous and why I prefer that use. My experience, as I laid out above, was at the UN and the ILO in which the term of art was "indigenous." The organization I represented, which was the largest and most active organization in the world at that time was known as the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. We have had several discussions as to what the appropriate use of the term was to refer to the people we were calling 'indigenous peoples.'

Some of the suggestions were "aboriginal people" and others said that that term was clearly descriptive of the native peoples (Aborigines) of Australia. Another term would be 1st peoples, or 1st nations which is usually used domestically in the U.S. and in Canada. Some people from Central/South America felt that "indigenous" was an insult because it sounded like indigent, i.e., too poor to even bury their own dead! I guess, many people have many preferences.

For the native Hawaiians, some would prefer "kanaka maoli" while others would say that term identified a maoli or civil, upright, honorable person, it was a term of dignity and not of ancestry or race.

For me, I've learned to enjoy the variety of words, understand that there are preferences, and none is right or wrong for all times and all peoples, but when we need to use a common term, the term that seems to have won the argument is indigenous.

Mahalo for your inquiry, giving me an opportunity to clarify my terms. Aloha `aina.

On U.S. Military and the need for "protection".

In a prior response to my post regarding the development of a rainbow economy for Hawaii, someone posted that “We need the military because if we are attacked and we have no military Hawaii will lose. China and Russia are still taking over small countries and illegally occupying them. Hawaii is a foothold in the Pacific. That's why at one point there was a race for hold over the islands.”

Let us deal with this fear of a military attack from China and Russia. First, history does not support that position. China has historically stayed within the general Asian territory and has not been an expansionist country militarily. China has not been a colonial expansionist country. Its expansion has been through cultural influence and more recently, economic influence including trade and foreign aid.

It has not taken over Viet Nam, Cambodia, Nepal, Bangladesh, North Korea, Japan and many other places where it has not had a historical foothold. Hong Kong has always been a part of China. Formosa or Taiwan has always been a part of China. Even Tibet has been historically under the suzerainty of the Emperor of China. Inner Mongolia became attached to China because of the invasion by Mongolians into China. Outer Mongolia remains a separate country. The fear of Chinese military invasion into Hawaii is not well founded given the Chinese history. The best prediction of one’s future action is one’s past action.

Let’s take a look at Russia. As we do so, we cannot ignore the former Soviet Union and how Russia generated the expansion under the USSR. But we have also seen the failure of that system of governance through the breakup of the union and the aspiration of the people for their independence. Since the breakup, how has Russia aggressed against other countries. Let us be clear, other than Vladimir Putin’s boisterous antics, Russia is today not a giant among nations. Yes, it is struggling to regain its influence but it is economically weak, it is culturally weak, it is politically of little influence, it cannot even hold on to little Cuba which has now gone its own way. It is strong because of its nuclear weapons, a remnant of its colonial expansionist days of the Soviet Union. To argue that Russia today is a viable enemy who may attack Hawaii is not realistic but merely alarmist. It is a projection of U.S. designs on Hawaii as an independent nation.

Who else are the great imperialist nations of concern today? France still holds on to its stolen colonies but is slowly losing control and is changing course after losing a foothold in Northern Africa (Algeria) and Asia (Viet Nam) and now through political outcry of the people, over the Pacific such as the New Hebrides (now independent Vanuatu) New Caledonia (Kanaky) and French Polynesia (Society Islands including Tahiti).

Great Britain has, since the end of the 2nd World War, been going in the opposite direction, giving up its overseas colonies of India (including Pakistan and Bangladesh), Burma, Fiji, Australia and New Zealand, and so many other places that the old saying that the sun never sets on Great Britain is now true only in history. Today it maintains a loose federation of “Commonwealth” nations, but is still seeing its national seams bursting in Scotland and Ireland,

Portugal, Spain and Italy are no longer major colonial nations, having moved in the opposite direction for over a century. Germany is certainly not a threat militarily to Hawai.

Who is a military threat should Hawaii get rid of U.S. military? United States of America with its history of constant wars since its formation and especially following the 2nd World War.

Let us not fall for the trick of psychological projection, attributing to others what the U.S. would most likely be the party to try a military attack. Remember, history is the best predictor of future action.

But the fact that the U.S. committed aggression against Hawaii over a century ago is no reason to simply give up and allow the U.S. to continue its occupation and colonization of Hawai. We find ourselves in the flow of a historical movement called decolonization, in which many countries, including Hawaii, are going through a process of decolonization. Since the formation of the United Nations in 1945, almost a hundred and fifty countries have gained its independence, most having joined the United Nations.

The United States was also under a sacred trust obligation to bring about decolonization to Hawaii, cheated in 1959, and has tried to lock us into its grasp. (see separate paper A Call for Review of the Historical Facts Surrounding UNGA Resolution 1469 (xiv) of 1959 Which Recognized Attainment of Self-Government for Hawaii, found at www.hawaiianperspectives.org/documents under the United Nations)

But that’s not the end of the story. The call for Hawaiian Sovereignty, if anything, is growing by leaps and bounds today.

This brings us now to the matter of national security and a more basic question how shall Hawaii defend itself from foreign aggression?

A modern national security system is far more than military defense. Hawaii can develop a strong security system not only a singular pillar of military might, but on four important pillars, each supporting the other. These pillars are 1) Defensive Defense, 2) Outward usefulness, 3) Inner Strength, and 4) Non-alliance among warring parties.

I will post a second piece which will expand on this alternative national security system which should replace the American Offensive Defense model which has not guaranteed any sense of peace and stability in the world.

Poka Laenui, Hawaii National Transitional Authority

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Joe Nicholas

You forgot the most important FACT. We are & still the BEST fighting force in the WORLD.



Poka Laenui

Author

So what? You lost the war in Vietnam, you lost the war in Korea, you lost the war in the Gulf area, you're losing the trade war with BRICS, you're devastated by a virus so small you can't see with the naked eye!

What does a tough military following the aggressive offensive posture which claims to be the BEST fighting force mean for the lives of the people of the world?

You breed fear, distrust and dishonesty wherever you go. You don't stick to your international commitments such as agreements over climate protection or about control over nuclear weapons, your word cannot be counted on! What does being the BEST fighting force mean at all?

Your fighting force has a black budget which reports to no one, trades in illegal activities, while the citizenry are starving, and conditions are often worse than 3r world countries.

 In the meantime, you poison our aquifer on O`ahu, pollute our base at Pearl Harbor, Lualualei, Schofield, etc. You have not been invited but simply barged your way into Hawaii in 1893 and refuse to make amends for it.

Big deal, tough guy! So, you have the BEST fighting force in the world. It counts for nothing in terms of food on the table and security in our homes and lives.

Joe Nicholas

...you still alive & free. Go to Russisia or China you so bitter with U.S. sad you feel that way Aloha Aina. 

Poka Laenui

Author

Why should I leave my homeland? I think it is the uninvited intruder who should be leaving.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez:

AOC Challenges Trump on College Grades: “Loser Has to Fund the Post Office”

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Poka Laenui

Shows her quick wit. She's brilliant. I'd bet on her winning that contest!

Llewelyn Kauwe

Her vision is having you live a Cuban Life! Are you willing to subject your family to that?

Poka Laenui

First, what's wrong with a Cuban life? Longer life expectancy than in the U.S., its education system probably better than the U.S., produces doctors for the world, its own "peace corp" and an offer to assist the U.S. in holding its free elections! A proud people, still able to speak its own language and many speak better English than Americans who speak Cuban or Spanish. Internationally,

Cuba has been at the forefront of liberation of peoples across the world while the U.S. has been trying to overthrow free, independent and democratically elected governments. Cuba has been in the forefront at the UN General Assembly and in the Special Committee on Decolonization to advocate in favor of those countries who were supposed to be decolonized but have been manipulated by the United States.

So tell me, What's wrong with Cuban life?

Second, your comment is racist and you say this to disregard the essence of what she is saying and just comment on her ethnic background and try to draw disdain based on her ethnicity.

This is a diversion to her statement because you have no other valid way of contesting her remarks, or her platforms.

You owe her an apology and should confront your racism against Cubans, an honorable, proud and intelligent people.

Topher Dean

The only thing wrong with Cuba is U.S. brutal foreign policy.