

Modern History of Hawaii
Kailua High School
Social Studies Requirement
Mr. Wilson / Mr. Nelson

Prompt: Using the primary documents from your reading on pages 7-9, write a four paragraph essay that supports or opposes foreigners in Hawaii's government from 1837 to 1845.

Opinion 1. David Malo, Hawaiian historian, wrote a letter in 1837 to Kina'u, premier during the reign of Kamehameha III.

...Kina'u (Ka'ahumanu II, Queen Regent, Dowager Queen) was asked by Malo "to hold frequent meetings with all the chiefs . . . to seek for that which will be of the greatest benefit to this country: you must not think that...you can leave things as they are. . . . The ships of the white men have come, and smart people have arrived from the great countries which you have never seen before. . . . [T]hey will eat us up, such has always been the case with large countries, the small ones have been gobbled up. . . . God has made known to us...things that will lead us to prepare ourselves. . . . Therefore get your servant ready who will help you when you need him.
(Hawaii State Archives)

Opinion 2. These statements are from petitions from the people of Lahaina to Kamehameha III in 1845.

We do not wish that foreigners be allowed to take the oath of allegiance and become Hawaiians.

. . . [I]f this kingdom is to be ours, what is the good of filling the land with foreigners? . . . This, in our opinion [is] to give up this kingdom to them, and to give it up quickly, too.

We do not wish you to sell another piece of land in your kingdom to foreigners.

Foreigners come here with their property in dollars;...but we have no property, a people unprepared are we. . . . We have lived under the rulers, expecting to do according to their wish, and not after our own notions; and for this cause we are not ready to be set adrift to strive with the foreigners. . . . If a good thing, let the coming of foreigners into this country be delayed for ten more years perhaps, and let there be given to us lands with the understanding that they are to be cultivated and have cattle raised upon them. [And then] it will be good perhaps to encourage foreigners to enter the country. (Kuykendall, vol.1, 1938)

Opinion 3. From a letter to Kamehameha III from S. M. Kamakau, a Hawaiian historian, in 1845.

There may be men living right among us who will devastate the land like the hordes of caterpillars [in] the fields; [when] the time comes. . . they will be on the side of their own land where their ancestors were born. . . .the king has chosen foreign ministers. . . . This is wrong. The Hawaiian people will be debased and the foreign exalted. . . . With so many foreign agents the dollar will be lost to the government through the cleverness of foreigners and their cunning, and instead of good coming to the Hawaii people strangers will get the benefit from the wealth of the government.

...therefore we believe that we ought all to stand together against the foreigners holding office in Hawaii. Let chiefs be placed in the vacancies and do not let all of the government positions go to foreigners. . . . The laws of those governments [Great Britain, France, and the United States of America] will not do for our government. Those are good laws for them, our laws are for us and are good laws for us, which we have made for ourselves. . . . We shall see that the strangers will complain of the natives of Hawai'i as stupid, ignorant, and good-for-nothing, and say all such evil things of us, and this will embitter the race and degrade it and cause the chiefs to go after the stranger and cast off their own race.

Opinion 4. From a letter to S. M. Kamakau from Kamehameha

I desire all the good things of the past to remain such as the good old law of Kamehameha that "the old women and the old men shall sleep in safety by the wayside," and to unite with them what is good under these new conditions in which we live. That is why I have appointed foreign officials, not out of contempt for the ancient wisdom of the land, but because my native helpers do not understand the laws of the great countries who are working with us. That is why I have dismissed them. I see that I must have new officials to help with the new system under which I am working for the good of the country and of the old men and women of the country. I earnestly desire to give places to the commoners and to the chiefs as they are able to do the work connected with the office. The people who have learned the new ways I have retained. . . . And as soon as the young chiefs are sufficiently trained I hope to give them the places. But they are not now able to become speakers in foreign tongues. I have therefore refused the letters of appeal to dismiss the foreign advisors, for those who speak only the Hawaiian tongue. (Kamakau 1961)