

The Hawaiian Renaissance by George S. Kanaha . May 1979

Just as the artist must have a proper perspective in order to paint, so must we have **some kind of perspective in order to understand the Hawaiian Renaissance**. Historically, if we look at Hawaiian culture over the long term, it has been in steady decline since 1778. But there have been periods of cultural resurgence during this time. The best example is the movement spearheaded by **King Kalakaua** both to revive and preserve traditional ways. He brought back the hula, at least to the urban areas, which had been banned and then nearly laid to eternal rest by Victorian morality. He stirred renewed interest in the legends and myths of old Hawaii. He inspired and popularized Hawaiian music, although in this respect he was more of a synthesizer than a purist. (After all, his mentor was **Henry Berger**.) Indeed, Kalakaua comes close to being a "renaissance man" -- cultured, learned, accomplished, versatile, cosmopolitan, and progressive.

The Kalakaua renaissance was short lived, for after he died, it was just four years before the Hawaiian Kingdom came to an end. The collapse of national sovereignty had an almost fatal effect on Hawaiian cultural integrity. I cannot say how much was lost as a result, for this is a subject that needs a great deal more research and reflection, but it must have been enormous.

It is not until the 1920s that we see a resurgence of Hawaiian activity but of a socio-cultural and political nature. This was the movement led by **Prince Jonah Kuhio** aimed at rehabilitating Hawaiians through a **homesteading** scheme, and returning them to the land. As a complement to this program, he also established the **Hawaiian Civic Club** designed to promote the educational and cultural welfare of native Hawaiians. The results of Kuhio's efforts were, at best, uneven and represent something less than a renaissance.

There have been other individuals who have attempted to stir up interest in preserving and maintaining Hawaiian traditions and arts. In the 1930s, **George Mossman**, the charismatic founder of **Lalani Village**, tried almost single handedly to regenerate public interest in Hawaiiana, particularly the language, chant and hula. His Village, consisting of traditional Hawaiian grass huts and even a heiau, all of which he built himself, was probably the first "Hawaiian cultural center." He offered classes in language, chant, hula, crafts and some of the ancient rituals.

Since he was a close friend of my father, I came to know him quite well as a boy. I remember him as a great white kahuna (he didn't look Hawaiian at all) who had a booming voice which seemed to grow louder whenever he spoke Hawaiian.

But he was a tragic figure as neither the public, Hawaiians included, nor Waikiki was ready for what he hoped would be a great cultural awakening. His was a voice in the wilderness that could not be heard above the din of oaths of allegiance to America. For the 1930s and '40s was a period of red-white-and-blue Americanization. Everyone tried to be good Americans which meant that you best submerge any feelings of being non- or un-American. The word "ethnicity" was unheard of. Being different, i.e., being Hawaiian or Japanese or Chinese and so on was not the in-thing to do.

So Brother Mossman was ahead of his time by three decades. Another individual initiative emerged in the 1950s when **Malia Solomon** developed her famous **Ulu Mau Village**, somewhat in the spirit and style of Lalani Village. Her interest and skills were in

crafts such as tapa-making and weaving, and consequently she emphasized aspects of the culture that others had not. But Ulu Mau Village, which was first located in the midst of Ala Moana Park, and then later removed to Heeiea-kea, eventually faded away, not for lack of inspired leadership and commitment on the part of Malia, but for lack of a responsive public.

The time was not ripe. Hawaii was preoccupied with the political, social and economic changes that followed the Second World War. The main groups that were involved were the Big Five, the AJA's and the labor unions. The Hawaiians as a community were only on the periphery of the power struggle. Consequently, matters such as Hawaiian cultural identity and preservation took a backseat to other priorities.

However, in the mean time, the mainland was in the throes of the black civil rights movement. With its demands for equality and self-determination, the movement inspired other minorities to press their grievances. The fight for civil rights ushered in the "**Age of Ethnicity**" whose main credo was that there was nothing wrong in maintaining one's ethnic identity and, certainly, nothing un-American about it. It challenged the old "melting pot" notion of everybody becoming one homogenized lump.

The movement also engendered a spirit of defiance and rebelliousness that was reflected in the great counter-culture of the '50s, rock 'n roll. Elvis, the Beatles, long hair, new clothes styles, drugs--in a way these were but expressions of independence against the established order. A new generation had arrived to create its own world.

Vietnam was an important part of this period, nourishing the nation-wide mood of questioning of authority and old myths through protests, demonstrations, draft-card burning, desertions and escapes to Sweden and Canada by young men who believed the war was wrong.

So this spirit of protest and all the values and activities it engendered, had an impact on American ethnic groups such as the Chicanos and Puerto Ricans--and the Hawaiians. It's impossible to measure it, but its effects were observable or at least felt in the 1960s when Hawaiians, as individuals and groups, showed an increasing concern for their political rights and grievances and their cultural identity. The seminal statement of this period was, perhaps, John Dominis Holt's "On Being Hawaiian" an emotional but powerful reaffirmation of the Hawaiian and his place in society. It was published in 1964. A rather significant event--looking back now because it wasn't considered so then--was probably the establishment of the State Council on Hawaiian Heritage because it was the first time the State of Hawaii officially recognized the value of perpetuating the culture in this manner. This was done in 1969. There were other Hawaiian cultural happenings such as the growth in the popularity of Hawaiian canoe paddling, the emerging comeback of the male hula, the formation of Hui Kukekua and Hui Na Opio and similar cultural groups, all by the late 1960s. And finally, the first political demonstrations that began with Kalama Valley in early 1970 when protesters sought to prevent Bishop Estate from ousting a pig farmer.

It was not until the early 1970s that the Hawaiian Renaissance really flowered and attained the influence it has today. So you can see that the events of this decade are the logical culmination of events and causes that happened before, including the efforts of many individuals and groups, such as King Kalakaua, Prince Jonah Kuhio, George

Mossman, Malia Solomon and many others. History, after all, is a continuum with its own karma. but what makes the '70s different from any of these past events and efforts is the sheer size, intensity and numbers of people involved in the Renaissance.

The Renaissance can best be understood in terms of before and after, comparing the level of activity on or prior to 1970 and now. Take **Hawaiian music as an example**. In January, 1971, I wrote in the *Honolulu Advertiser* that "Hawaiian music was in its death throes." there was only a handful of steel guitar players, all of whom were aging; young people were turned on to rock 'n roll and could care less for Hawaiian music; only one radio station in Honolulu bothered to play it regularly; slack key guitar music was almost unheard of; there was only one hotel featuring a Hawaiian show; and outside Hawaii Hawaiian music, once so popular throughout the world, was all but dead.

Today, the resurgence of Hawaiian music is one of the strongest evidences for the Renaissance. Young people are now turned on to Hawaiian music as they had once been turned on to rock earlier. **The Cazimero Brothers, Gabby Pahinui, Olomana**, and the **Sons of Hawaii** are as familiar to them as The Village People and Peter Frampton. There appears to be more young--and old--people learning to play Hawaiian music, more teaching and more performing it, than at any time in the past 20-30 years. **The Halau Mele Hawaii**, sponsored by **The Hawaiian Music Foundation** in cooperation with St. Louis High School, has "graduated" more than 1,000 students in the past 4 years. There are more students taking slack key guitar than you can shake a stick at. and there are more youngsters leaning to play the steel guitar--an instrument invented by a Hawaiian student from Kamehameha, **Joseph Kekuku**-- than ever before.

Radio stations are devoting more time, though not by much to Hawaiian records. And Hawaiian records are selling more. Who ever thought that a Hawaiian album (the Cazimero's) would sell over 50,000? Indeed, a few years ago you could count on your fingers the number of Hawaiian albums that were produced in a year. Now there are dozens. There are also dozens of composers writing hundreds of songs today. Not long ago I asked **Eddie Kamae** what he thought of the competition. He said, "Young Hawaiian musicians are coming out of the woodwork in droves." Today, at least some musicians can make a decent living at playing Hawaiian music. This is an important contribution of the Renaissance, for ultimately in order for an art to survive it must have a viable local market, that is, people must be willing to support it, to put their money where their mouth is.

For the first time in modern Hawaiian history, we have an organization set up to perpetuate Hawaiian music, **the Hawaiian Music Foundation**. Set up in Feb. 1971, it is the first of what I call the Renaissance organizations. In 1972, it held the first slack key guitar concert, and in 1973, the first falsetto and steel guitar concerts. It publishes *Ha'ilono Mele*, a monthly dealing with Hawaiian music which is the only regular publication devoted to a single aspect of Hawaiian culture. And in October of this year, the University Press of Hawaii will bring out the Foundation's encyclopedic work entitled ***Hawaiian Music and Musicians, An Illustrated History***.

Significantly, the impetus for the resurgence in Hawaiian music has come almost entirely, if not entirely, from the local community. It has not come from the outside nor from the tourism industry. You can tell by the songs: the lyrics are in Hawaiian, the themes are

Hawaiian, the composers, for the most part, are Hawaiian. The most popular Hawaiian groups almost disdain the tastes of the visitors. And what can be more Hawaiian than the chant which has been a vital part of the current revival in Hawaiian music?

One of the more exciting aspect of the Renaissance is the **revival of the hula kahiko and male hula**. Nobody can help but be impressed with the dancers and performances today of the ancient hula, but it was not too long ago that **Mary Kawena Pukui** predicted that by now there would be no more hula. It was in 1946 that she stated, as quoted in the *Honolulu Advertiser*, that the "real hula was dying out, and that there were only about a dozen Hawaiians who could dance the hula as it should be danced according to the old Hawaiian custom. She predicted that within 320 years the tradition will have vanished into the realm of memory."

Well, I think in this instance she would gladly recant, because she has played a part in keeping g the tradition alive. So have many others from **Ilalaole** to **Akoni** and **Ha'aeo**, from **Lokalia Montgomery** and **Iolani** to **Kaui Zuttemeister** and **Edith Kanakaole**. But, most important to the Renaissance is the cadre of young kumu hula who have taught hundreds and who will yet teach hundreds more in the years to come. While I don't have any comparative figures, I am prepared to wager that there are more young people learning and dancing the ancient hula in the '70s than during any other decade of this century. The evidence may be gleaned form the number of participants in the Merry Monarch Festival, the King Kamehameha Celebration hula competitions, and other contests. In fact, there are more hula competitions today than at any other time in recent memory. If you ned more evidence, look at the figures of the attendance at the annual dance conferences of the State Council on Hawaiian Heritage. In ten years they have increased nearly a thousand-fold.

Of course, what really turns on many people is the return of the male dancer to his rightful place. I remember as a kid in the not too remote past no local boy would be caught dead doing the hula for fear of being called a sissy. Nowadays you may risk a punch in the mouth for calling a male cancer, who may just be on the footfall team, a sissy. Perhaps, the most forceful evidence off how far we've come is the picture of **Russ Francis, Arnold Morgado**, and other football players who did the hula during the half time show at last year's Hula Bowl.

Male dancers also have become the favorites of local audiences, both men and women, although the squeals of glee I hear when the men come on stage wearing a modern style malo come mostly from the wahines. **John Lake** tells me that invariably it's the male dancers who get the biggest applause.

It is important to note that today's interest is greater for the ancient than the modern or hapa-haole hula. The more traditional the dance, the keener, the interest. It's as if people want to get as close as they possibly can to the first hula that Kaka did. And because of this, I think the Hawaiians have finally retaken the hula from the tourists. Since the 1920s the hula was sort of aggrandized by the tourism promoters in Hawaii to advertise the charm of the Islands. Almost every ad, for example, showed a smiling hula lassie. In fact, in the 1930s "teaching hula" to tourists became " big business." So reported the *Star-Bulletin* in July, 1937. It said that there were "as many as eight large hula studios and numerous teacher., " and that a good part of the business was coming from the tourists,

"99.44 percent of whom wanted to learn the hula." The haolefication of the hula, like hapa-haole music, was very much an accommodation to the tourists.

The tourists are really irrelevant to today's hula revival. It is all native, made in Hawaii by, for and of Hawaiians.

While dance and music enjoy the highest visibility, there has been great interest shown in other arts and crafts of Hawaii-nei. Take, for example, **featherwork**, which the ancient Hawaiian craftsmen did more skillfully and beautifully than any other Polynesians. 40 years ago it was virtually extinct except for a few practitioners such as **Johanna Cluney**. But in recent years several thousand people have taken up the lost art. **Mrs. Mary Louise Kekuewa** and her daughter **Paulette** have taught more than 2,000 students since they organized their first classes eight years ago. Imagine, in one year they'll purchase as much as \$10,000 worth of feather for their classes alone. [And that ain't chicken fee--or feathers either.] Mrs. Kekuewa, who just last year published the first book on how to make feather leis, states that in her 24 years of featherwork she has never seen so many people involved in learning the art.

Another example in the art field is the dramatic emergence of another Renaissance organization, **Hale Nauä III**, made up of **Hawaiian artists**. Set up in 1976, they have already made an impression on the community through their exhibits culminating in their recent Bishop Museum show. Since it was the first time in the 90-year old museum's history that a contemporary exhibit was allowed in its halls, it means something. I don't know exactly what, from the museum's point of view at least, but I think it has given credence to the Society's claims that they are Hawaiian artists who produce Hawaiian art imbued with a Hawaiian feeling. Although one can certainly argue this point--after all, the world view of the ancient Hawaiian artists was much different from contemporary Hawaiian artists, no matter what we may say--what's important is their belief that their art is an expression of their Hawaiian identity.

Another manifestation of the Renaissance is in **sports**, which was such a huge part of the life of ancient Hawaiians. We all know what has happened to the sport of Hawaii's kings--**surfing**. It was nearly dead by the turn of the century but by the 1960s surfing had not only become the number one water sport in Hawaii, but had also become an international craze. Incidentally, next to Hawaiian music, surfing is the only other aspect of Hawaiian culture that has been so widely accepted around the world.

More than surfing, **canoe racing** is a product closer to the Renaissance. With more than 50 clubs and 10,000 members, canoe racing is flourishing today. **Hui Wa'a** fast overtaking the HCRA as the number one canoe organization with 21 clubs on 3 islands was only organized in 1974. In the words of its founder **Joseph Stu Kalama, Sr.**, its major purpose is "to maintain and perpetuate canoe racing (as a part) of Hawaiian culture."

An additional boost to the sports revival came a couple of years ago when island high schools organized the first canoe racing league.

All this stand in stark contrast to that bleak time not too many decades ago, when the only koa racing canoe gathered dust in the Bishop Museum.

Of course, one canoe stands alone, the **Hokule'a**. Its successful voyage to Tahiti and back is one of the most singular achievements to happen during the Hawaiian Renaissance because it symbolized one of the greatest accomplishments of the Polynesians. It was an extraordinary feat by any definition. I don't want to be too hard of Pierre Bowman, but this is hardly "scant evidence" of a renaissance taking place.

One of the most fundamental givens of a culture is its **language**, and no culture can long survive, let alone achieve a renaissance, without its language being spoken and understood. I can remember when people said and when I said it, too, the Hawaiian language is dying. We know its' been dying for a long time. When Kaunamano established his Hawaiian language newspaper in 1861--the first native Hawaiian to do so--he was afraid it was dying too. And only last year, Leslie Kuloloio of Wailuku, Maui told a congressional hearing that the Hawaiian language is an "endangered species," when less than 1 percent of the state's estimated 30,000 Hawaiian children are able to speak it.

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I asked the librarians in the Hawaiian Room at the main branch of the State Library and in the Hawaiian Collection at Hamilton Library, University of Hawaii and the State Archivist whether they have noticed any increase by the public in the use of material relating to Hawaiiana. "No question," they said. the increase in recent years is anywhere from two to four times. One librarian wearily complained about the "hoards of instant historians descending on us looking for God knows what." according to the State Archivist, what people mostly look for in the Archives is genealogical information relating to land matters.

Not only librarians, but **kupuna** are being sought out to tell what they know about events, people, songs, things--anything about the past. I'm not so sure how all the tutus feel about all this attention, but it is good to know that some are willing to share their secrets.

This **surging interest in research and study** has led to demands on the part of students and teachers for the University of Hawaii to recognize Hawaiian studies as a legitimate academic program. As a result, two years ago, the University set up a Hawaiian studies Program and last year appointed its first permanent director, **Abraham Pi'ianaia**, though only on a half-time basis. Another half-time position has been added and some funds for curriculum development and publications. However, the University president has still to act on whether to approve a bachelor's degree in Hawaiian studies as well as a separate degree in Hawaiian language. I understand it's only a question of time. The university moves slowly, but we have good reason to wonder why it has taken the University of Hawaii so long to recognize Hawaiian studies as a serious subject worthy of academic standing.

And we might also ask the same question as to why the University has just gotten around to designating a professor of Hawaiian History in the history department. But never mind, better late than never. Fortunately, its first appointee is a Hawaiian, **Professor Nawahine King Joerger**. Out of her classes and the Hawaiian studies program should come a new occupational or professional group of Hawaiian specialists who will help to shape the Renaissance of the future.

What have we to show for all this study and research? A helluva lot. An enormous output ranging from songs and chants, to dances and art works, crafts and writings of all kinds-- poems, plays, novels, articles, books, monographs, dissertations, and assorted publications. Let me prove this with some figures. Dave Kittelson, curator of the Hawaiian collection at the University of Hawaii, reports that 129 titles, i.e., books, reprints, pamphlets, leaflets, monographs, dealing with Hawaiiana subjects in Hawaii and the U.S. were published during the years 1960 to '69. But during the 1970s so far 371 titles have already been published. That more than a 200 percent increase. It is also interesting that outside Hawaii during the 1960s 11 master's or doctoral theses were produced dealing with Hawaiiana subjects, whereas in the 1970s so far 28 have been produced. That's more than a hundred percent increase. While I do not have any figures for the University of Hawaii, I would guess that there would be comparable increases.

Who is responsible for these writings? To be honest, I think mostly non-ethnic Hawaiians. But there is a growing number of ethnic Hawaiian writers and scholars who have already produced more in this decade than in the past two or more decades. Maybe the Renaissance has not yet produced the great Hawaiian historian, poet, dramatist, or novelist, but I think it is only a matter of time.

The **intellectual ferment** we see developing among Hawaiians today will certainly bring about a class of respected native intellectuals. A Ph.D. is no guarantee of a person becoming or being an intellectual, but it is worthwhile to note that more Hawaiians are earning doctoral degrees now than ever before. Prior to the '70s a Hawaiian with a doctorate was a rare species, but it's no longer very true.

You know, it was only four years ago when a popular guidebook on Hawaii, published by a well-known international firm in the field stated and I quote: "So far there have been no Hawaiian intellectuals. There may never be." Why? The reason it gives is because Hawaiians are "allergic to thought."

If it's any comfort to you, that guidebook today no longer contains that statement.

It was also about four or five years ago when Zulu used to tell funny jokes about the dumb Hawaiians who went to school only to eat lunch and so on. From now on I think you're going to hear less and less, and eventually none of those kind of jokes.

In our reflecting on our past, I think we should remind ourselves of the **important place that the intellectuals occupied** in the Hawaiian elite. They were, after all, the kahunas, the scholar-priests, or at least some of them were. Since there was no written language everything had to be recorded in the memory banks of these intellectual giants. The old Hawaiians, therefore, must have had enormous respect for the human mind and for those who were gifted in its use. How good it is to see us rediscovering this traditional value.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Having made the case for the Hawaiian Renaissance, let me now try to draw some meaning for you and the people of Hawaii. First, as human beings and, of course, as Hawaiians, we should all be elated that **a once rich culture threatened with extinction has been able to survive and now appears to be thriving in spite of the odds against it.**

Other cultures in other areas of the world and at different periods in man's history have not been as fortunate. Indeed, the history of man is littered with the carcasses of dead cultures. Thus, from the point of view of the human race, the Hawaiian Renaissance should offer hope to other dying or threatened peoples and cultures that they, too, can survive, if not thrive, in the modern world.

As a matter of fact, **what is happening among Hawaiians in Hawaii today is also happening in other states, island groups, and countries all over the world.** Cultural revivals are taking place among the Cajuns in Louisiana, the Indians of the north and southwest and other parts of the United States; the Maoris in New Zealand, the Rarotongans in the Cook Islands, and the Chamorros in Guam; the Welsh in Wales; the Bataks in Sumatra; the Filipinos in the Philippines. Wherever there are peoples who feel strongly enough about their identities and legacies, there will usually be strong efforts to preserve and strengthen them. **So we're not alone in Hawaii.**

Prof. Jon Useem, a sociologist and others who have studied the life cycle of cultures, call the stage we are experiencing a "revival of neo-traditionalism." It means reviving traditional values and practices of a culture, but incorporating new elements. Since each generation brings perforce something new into the world--new perspectives, new forms, new concepts, new words--traditions must accordingly change, no matter how imperceptible it might appear on the surface. In an uncertain world, change is the only thing we can be certain about.

Understand, therefore, that **the Renaissance does not mean a literal rebirth of classical Hawaiian traditions, dances, chants and so forth.** To believe otherwise is to make a fetish out of tradition. We've lost too much already. Who knows, for example, what a truly traditional, pre-1778 chant sounds like? And even if we did, could any one recreate it exactly? Who would want to anyway? Creative artists are not mindless copycats. They strive to express their own selves and their own time. Consequently, today's chants are not the same as those of 1778. They are different, but yet they still retain some identifiable characteristics that we can call Hawaiian. What precisely are those characteristics, those standards by which we judge what is artistically and culturally honest, are sometimes questionable. Sometimes they lead to arguments. And, God knows, we have a lot of arguments among Hawaiians. Maybe that, too, is evidence of dynamic culture. I don't know.

At any rate, while we try to insist on certain standards of cultural integrity and authenticity, we must realize the historical reality of inevitable change. Thus, in our efforts to rediscover our roots, to reaffirm our heritage, to revive our past, we cannot always be too clear about precisely what we are rediscovering, reaffirming, or reviving. **It may well be that much, if not most, of what we are reviving is new traditions that look like old traditions.**

One of the most intriguing questions about the Renaissance has to do with the spillover effect into economic and political activities of Hawaiians. There is an assumption that ethnic consciousness does have an effect on the economic behavior of minorities. For example, the Community Development Corporation Program which is funded by the U.S. Office of Economic Development assumes that the new cultural awakening of the blacks, Chicanos, Indians and others had led to greater racial consciousness and that this is a modern counterpart to the Protestant ethic which motivated capitalism and the nationalism of earlier generations. Consequently, the program has deliberately designed its activities so as to exploit that feeling for economic development among minorities in America.

It is difficult to trace causal relationships, but certainly one by product of the Renaissance was the organization in 1974 of the **Hawaiian Businessmen's Association**, still another Renaissance organization, the first of its kind in Hawaiian history. WE know that the conventional stereotype of the Hawaiians has been that they are not business-oriented. We're too undisciplined, lazy or generous. Incidentally, the word "manuahi" (or free) which is not found in the Hawaiian dictionary, is supposed to be the name of a 19th century Hawaiian businessman who presumably gained a reputation for giving his profits away.

In any case, that stereotype is being challenged today by the HBA and its members, many of whom are relatively young and successful. They represent a new generation of Hawaiians who are entering business in increasing numbers. Many have college degrees and have advanced into management positions in both small and large companies. And several are owners of their own firms or chief executives of corporations. Much of this is documented in the Association's monthly publication.

I think it is the influence of the Renaissance when HBA members try to **make business culturally relevant**. For example, in selecting candidates for their annual award of the outstanding Hawaiian businessman of the year, they look for someone who not only has a good balance sheet but who also exhibits the spirit of Aloha. We may be seeing the emergence of a "Hawaiian" businessman model, someone who can be successful in business yet still be generous, warm, considerate and caring. It's hard to find better evidence than the HBA's selection of **Joe Kealoha**, a 39-year old millionaire and Kamehameha graduate, as the outstanding Hawaiian businessman of the year.

Has the **Renaissance influenced the political thinking and behavior of Hawaiians**? No question. Kaho'olawe couldn't have happened in the 1950s or even the 1960s. The Renaissance was the incubator for a lot of the sympathetic feelings that the issue received from among Hawaiians, especially young Hawaiians, and non-Hawaiians alike. The protest songs written by young composers for Kaho'olawe were part and parcel of the resurgence of Hawaiian music. The rhetoric of aloha aina symbolized the whole movement of going back to the source, listening to our kupuna, finding our roots.

Nor could the so-called "Hawaiian package" of amendments have been adopted by the delegates of the Constitutional Convention and then accepted by the voters of Hawaii had the Renaissance not created the right climate. This is not to detract in any way from the efforts of individuals and groups who were directly involved in their formulation and adoption. But they could not have succeeded without knowing--or at least--perceiving

that there was a reservoir of Hawaiian support. True, not all Hawaiians supported all of the amendments, but the vast majority apparently did and for those who might have wavered but voted affirmatively, their Hawaiian consciousness, shaped and strengthened by the Renaissance, made the difference, as it did in my case.

When I asked John Waihe'e, a delegate and leader of the Constitutional Convention, whether **the Renaissance was a factor in the passage of the Hawaiian package**, he said, "It was more than a factor; it was the glue that kept the package together." He continued, "You cannot understand how it all happened without understanding the Renaissance." Out of the hundreds of proposals in all the committees, the Hawaiian proposals were the only proposals that passed unanimously out of committee. And when they were voted upon in the full assembly, the vote was almost unanimous.

The Con Con produced some significant things for Hawaiians: the Office of Hawaii Affairs, the various provisions relating to Hawaiian Home Lands, Hawaiian traditional rights, education and lands. (Incidentally one proposal calling for an elected Hawaiian King and Queen succumbed in committee.) This is certainly the most significant political legislation for Hawaiians since 1920. And, depending on how the package is implemented over the next few years, it could have enormous political implications.

Let me give you one possible scenario. In 1980 there will be an election on the board of trustees of OHA. That election will take place at the same time and place as the State general election. Since it will be so convenient to cast an extra ballot, Hawaiians will vote. The trustees they elect will very likely be regarded as representative leaders of the Hawaiian people. Thus, **there will be for the first time in this century a way to identify a Hawaiian leadership**. When you combine this with the popular acceptance of the Renaissance by non-Hawaiians along with the increasing population of Hawaiian voters, you can understand the political power that Hawaiians might one day enjoy.

Undoubtedly, Hawaiians will become more politically involved. An indication of this was the large number of Hawaiian candidates who ran in last year's general elections. Out of a total of 320 candidates, more than 10 percent or 40 were Hawaiians. While only a small number won their races, this will likely change in the future.

Not only will **there be more Hawaiians in politics, there will be more political issues involving Hawaiian matters**. Already in this decade three of the State's top political issues have been Hawaiian issues: 1) Kaho'olawe, 2) reparations and 3) the Hawaiian Con Con package. All have been directly affected by the Renaissance, and I foresee the Renaissance playing the same role in future Hawaiian political issues.

What else does the Renaissance mean? When I first wrote about it two years ago I described it as a young movement whose leadership and activist-supporters tended to be younger than older people. Since I wanted to include myself, I was probably guilty of a little vanity thinking I was younger than my years. So I have changed my mind and now I want to make it perfectly clear that the movement involves both young and old Hawaiians. Seriously, though, the evidence is all there. For instance, the leadership of such Renaissance organizations as the Hawaiian Businessmen's Association, Hawaiian Music Foundation, Hui Wa'a, Polynesian Voyaging Society, Aha Hui Olelo Hawaii and Hale Naua, have had and continue to have grey-haired youngsters.

There is no doubt about the leadership they have taken in perpetuating and reviving the hula music, featherwork and other Hawaiian beliefs and practices, Nor should there be any question about their heart-felt support of the Renaissance. If any one of them seem unsure, it is probably because they can't believe what's happening. As one tutu put it to me, "I never believed that something like this could happen." On the other hand, there are some who feel relieved that it has finally happened. As another tutu put it to me, "I've been waiting for this and I'm mighty glad it has happened."

But while the Renaissance belongs to both old and young, it is a young people's movement. I believe, therefore, that it will very likely last awhile. It is not a fad, a momentary flirtation with one's exotic past. Some observers suspect that because it is now popular to be Hawaiian, that the Renaissance is a temporary phenomenon. But when my boy, who has to stay out in the sun two or three hours just to get a tan insists that he is Hawaiian and not haole, **I have great hope in the permanency of the Hawaiian Renaissance.**

Let me say, however, that not all Hawaiians, young or old, are actively involved or even interested in the Renaissance. There are those who are oblivious to what's going on, others who don't care, and still others who think it's un-American, or worse, to be preoccupied with your ethnic roots, or to interfere in the Navy's maneuvers, or to accuse the united States government of committing an injustice, or to ask for reparations.

Being a mixed population and representing different social and economic backgrounds, today's part-Hawaiian community is at best fragmented. Indeed, strictly speaking, there is no cohesive, unified integrated Hawaiian community. **There are only communities of Hawaiians.** To believe otherwise is to have our heads in the sand.

And this is another important meaning of the Renaissance, for if anything will bring these disparate communities of Hawaiians together, it will be the overarching cultural loyalties generated and reinforced by the Renaissance.

Finally, there is a **paradox about the Renaissance** we need to understand. It is that **the Renaissance does not only belong to Hawaiians. It belongs to non-ethnic Hawaiians, too.** Could you exclude, for example a Donald Mitchell, a Jack Waterhouse, a Peter Moon, a Keola Cabacungan, a Rev. Harada, or a Dorothy Hazama just because by some genetic accident they don't happen to be Hawaiian? Would you exclude a Pat Bacon, the hanai daughter of Kawena Pukui, who is fluent in Hawaiian, who is a master teacher of the hula and a chanter, just because she is pure Japanese?

The plain fact is that **historically non-Hawaiians have always played a large role in preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian culture and ideals.** The Rev. Lorenzo Lyons, "Makua Laiana," the composer of Hawaii Aloha; Henry Berger, who preserved and changed Hawaiian music; Alexander Hume Ford, who helped revive surfing and canoe paddling at the turn of the century; Prof. Kuykendall, whose history of Hawai'i remains the classic reference work; Dr. Peter Buck and Kenneth Emory and...The list goes on and on.

Today there are probably as many non-ethnic Hawaiians as there are Hawaiians actively engaged in the Renaissance: haoles, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, etc. people who have no Hawaiian ancestry but who for one reason or another have come to identify

themselves culturally, psychologically and spiritually with Hawaiianness. In the process, of course, some have become more Hawaiian than the Hawaiians, to the chagrin of the natives.

These **Hawaiians-at-heart have key positions in many Hawaiian causes**, and often it has been their support in money, time and counsel that has spelled the difference between success and failure.

Unfortunately, but true, some Hawaiians choose to ignore this fact. They are so self-conscious about their new-found Hawaiianness that they become suspicious of very haole or Oriental who may want to help. Some insist on excluding non-Hawaiians from any Hawaiian-related activity, purely on the basis of race--a case of reverse racism.

What the Renaissance confirms to me is that a lot of people in Hawai'i care deeply about what is happening to those values and customs that make Hawai'i Hawaiian, unique and special. **Anybody who claims or want Hawai'i to be home, in some degree or another, wants and, even needs to share in its Hawaiianness.**

The beautiful thing about the Renaissance is that it offers Hawaiians the greatest opportunity we have had since Kamehameha I to **unify** the people of these islands not by the power of the sword but by the influence of our ideals, or values and our aloha.

(original emphasis)

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