

The Military Administration of Western Samoa, 1914-1919

NEW ZEALAND'S occupation of German Samoa in August 1914 had little to do with her nineteenth-century imperialist aspirations in the South Pacific. It was 'a great and urgent Imperial Service', suggested by the British government forty-eight hours after the outbreak of war with Germany.¹ It was swiftly executed by a force of 1,413 rank and file under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Logan, hastily drawn from territorial units with 'a good sprinkling of ardent spirits who had never before handled a service rifle'.² The expedition sailed from Wellington for an unknown destination on a wave of enthusiastic patriotism, not atavistic imperialism. It was an expression of the self-same loyalty and devotion which during the Boer War had softened New Zealand's disappointment over the British withdrawal from Samoa and the partition between the United States and Germany. Subsequently New Zealand had turned her back on the Pacific to cherish 'the silken bonds of empire' for economic as well as strategic reasons. Moreover initial experiences of colonial administration in the Cook Islands had somewhat shaken her confidence in her manifest ability to rule Polynesians. 'We simply did as we were told to do', said the Minister of Defence, Colonel James Allen, the day after the occupation; 'the future of the islands rests with the Imperial authorities'.³

The success of the operation was assured, for the Germans had decided that resistance was useless. Samoa was unfortified; the whereabouts of the German fleet was uncertain, and Britain was known to have nine men-of-war attached to the Australian station. Above all Dr Erich Schultz, the Governor, believed that Samoan loyalty could not be expected. Strategic parts from the wireless station were removed, but any further warlike measures were deemed

The despatches to and from the Governor relating to Samoa (hereafter G) and the files of the Department of Island Territories (hereafter IT) used in this article are in the National Archives, Wellington, New Zealand. I wish to thank Mr. J. D. Pascoe and Miss J. S. Hornabrook for giving me access to them.

¹ Colonial Secretary to Governor, 6 August 1914, IT 39/2.

² S. J. Smith, 'The Seizure and Occupation of Samoa', in H. T. B. Drew, *The War Effort of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1923, p. 23.

³ R. R. Watson, *History of Samoa*, Wellington, 1918, p. 142.

unnecessary, indeed harmful, for they might have triggered off another native disturbance.⁴

The truth was that fourteen years of German colonial rule had only temporarily subdued native and European elements of discord. In old Samoa the effective unit of government was the village and, above the village level, Samoan politics were concerned with the balance of ceremonial power through the bestowal of the highest titles. In this, as in other political concerns, the idea of duality, not unity, pervaded. There were two great political divisions, generally consisting of the districts of A'ana with Atua and of Savai'i with Tuamasaga and Manono.⁵ The former supported the great family Tupua, the latter Malietoa. In the 'ruling villages' of the political districts were leading orator groups, Tumua and Pule, who controlled the politico-ceremonial system. Tumua were the leading orator groups of Leulumoega and Lufilufi, the 'ruling villages' of A'ana and Atua. Pule were orator groups in six centres of certain political districts of Savai'i. At Afega and Malie in Tuamasaga there were also bodies of orators who generally sympathised with Pule. To these orator groups belonged the right to bestow the four great titles, Tuia'ana, Tuiatua, Gatoaitete and Tamasoali'i. A high chief, holding all these titles was the *tafa'ifa* (ceremonial head).⁶ Throughout Samoan history there had been only a few *tafa'ifa*. The normal state of affairs was rivalry between the Tupua and Malietoa families to secure the *tafa'ifa* through war, intrigue, marriage, great *fonos* (councils) and fine-mat exchange. Neither party had ever established its ascendancy permanently; it had only become the *malo* (dominant part for the time being).

With the coming of the Europeans in the nineteenth century various attempts were made to transform this politico-ceremonial system into a viable Samoan government at Mulinu'u. The *tafa'ifa* or candidates for the position were treated as kings and a constitutional body, Ta'imua and Faipule, was established, the upper house consisting of five high chiefs, and the lower of twenty-eight title-holders nominated by the districts. No one power succeeded in establishing its supremacy over this Samoan government. Rather British, New Zealand, American and German nationals all competed for trade and influence; the British and the Americans generally supporting Malietoa and Pule, the Germans Tupua and Tumua. This interplay of Samoan and international rivalry defeated all attempts to develop

⁴ G 1856/16 and G 2867/15. The former contains extracts from Dr Schultz's private diary, 10 August 1914, and a report of a meeting of executive officials, 5 August 1914, the latter a translation of Dr Schultz's instructions, 23 August 1914.

⁵ F. M. Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, London, 1934, p. 49. Cf. S. S. Allen, Notes on Samoa, IT 1/57. He groups A'ana and Atua with Va'a-o-Fonoti and Savai'i and Tuamasaga with Aiga-i-le-Tai.

⁶ A. Kramer, *The Samoan Islands*, translation, Apia, 1942, Vol. I, pt. I, 30.

a strong, stable central government capable of dealing with Europeans and eventually necessitated political partition.⁷

In Western Samoa the German Governor, Dr Wilhelm Solf, temporarily adopted the expedient of ruling through the existing institutions, with the Kaiser as *der Tupu Sili von Samoa* (chief king of Samoa) and Mata'afa Iosefa as Ali'i Sili (paramount chief) to replace the *tafa'ifa* or so-called kingship. But his long-term objective was a more direct system of native administration that would do away with the old divisive influences and confine Samoan self-government to the villages.⁸ His opportunity came with the resurgence of Tumua and Pule intrigues in 1904-05 and with Lauaki's rebellion, the *Mau a Pule* (the opinion of Savai'i), in 1908-09. Essentially this was an attempt by Pule and Sa Malietoa supporters from Savai'i and Manono with the 'English party' headed by local English and part-English residents to restore the old influence of Tumua and Pule and to get Malietoa Tanumafili recognised as King. It was quelled by the arrival of the fleet and the exile of Lauaki and seventy-two others to Saipan. The Ta'imua and Faipule were replaced by the Fono of Faipule, a council of twenty-seven title-holders nominated by the Governor which was not only to represent the districts in the government but the government in the districts. Dr Solf likened the changes to 'a knife which cuts away the rotten part of the breadfruit and leaves on the healthy part'. The death of the Ali'i Sili, Mata'afa Iosefa, in 1912 enabled his successor, Dr Schultz, to complete the operation. The Ali'i Sili was replaced by the new office of Fautua or high adviser, and the leading title-holders of the two great families, Malietoa Tanumafili and Tupua Tamasese Leolofi, were appointed to it. If the Germans had continued to rule Samoa these reforms might very well have served their purpose of modernising the Samoan government and holding the old and new elements of discord in check. But in August 1914 Schultz well knew that resistance to the New Zealand landing could result in a resurgence of Samoan and European rivalries and warfare. Surrender seemed the lesser of two evils.

As it was, the Samoans remained non-committal. Their attitude is well-illustrated by an incident said to have taken place when the New Zealanders landed. While Faumuina was weeping on the shoulders of Schultz, his wife was preparing a beautiful bouquet of flowers to present to Logan.⁹ Similarly the Fautua, Tamasese, was to extend much hospitality to the troops, although he was believed to be a

⁷ R. L. Stevenson, *A Footnote to History*, New York, 1892; Sylvia Masterman, *The Origins of International Rivalry in Samoa 1845-1884*, London, 1934. A new view of these political struggles is given by J. W. Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa*, London, 1967, ch. iii. He emphasises the efforts of the Samoans themselves to create a government that would leave them in control of their country.

⁸ On German rule see Keesing, pp. 75 ff. and Davidson, pp. 76 ff.

⁹ H. Witheford, 'Samoa, the War and Trusteeship', unpublished narrative, War History Branch, Internal Affairs Department, Wellington, p. 20, citing Turnbull to Berendsen, 2 March 1939.

German sympathiser.¹⁰ 'Samoa does not take sides in this', said the spokesman of the Fono of Faipule; 'we stand by and allow the Great Powers to work out the will of God.'¹¹

The task of conducting the British military administration in Western Samoa was left largely to Logan, an Otago sheepfarmer who had served for many years on local bodies and in 1898 raised a squadron of mounted rifles. As military administrator he was responsible in the first instance to the New Zealand government and ultimately to the imperial government, and he communicated with both through the Governor of New Zealand. General Sir Alexander Godley had instructed him to take such measures as he might consider necessary to hold the Islands and control the inhabitants, but beyond this Logan was left largely to his own devices. Godley had taken it for granted that the New Zealand government would give him supplementary orders,¹² but the government neglected to do so. They had despatched the expeditionary force in haste and in the exigencies of war. They were, moreover, inexperienced and only in the position of *locum tenens*.

Logan attempted to carry on the administration as far as possible on existing lines with existing officials and police,¹³ in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1907 and the laws and usages of war. Without these he later admitted his task would have been an impossible one.¹⁴ But, as the New Zealand government questioned the advisability of retaining Germans in official positions and most of the German officials objected to becoming servants of the occupying force, he was forced at three days' notice to take over the whole civil service. Vacancies were filled from the expeditionary force together with a few local British subjects. A Savai'i resident and Irishman, Richard Williams, who had been *stationsleiten* (district administrator) there since 1900, and had come to Apia on the outbreak of war to hand in his resignation to the German Governor, was appointed deputy administrator and sent back at once.¹⁵ A. Loibl, a treasurer and customs officer under the Western Pacific High Commissioner and on leave in Samoa, was seconded to the post of financial secretary. Charles Roberts, 'a gentleman of standing', who had practised as a barrister and solicitor for some years in Apia, became Judge of the district court.¹⁶ Anticipating that the British Colonial Office would administer the territory after the war, Logan obtained a supply of Colonial Office regulations which he issued to heads of depart-

¹⁰ Logan to Liverpool, 27 October 1915, G 2937/15, encl. Hanssen to D.H. P.C.

¹¹ Quoted in J. Martin, 'Representative Institutions in Western Samoa during the Mandate 1919-1946', M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1959, p. 35.

¹² Godley to Allen, 26 August 1914, IT 39/2.

¹³ Logan to Liverpool, 5 September 1914, G 1280/14.

¹⁴ Logan to Liverpool, 13 December 1915, G 50/16.

¹⁵ Logan to Liverpool, 2 September 1914, G 1279/14; cf. N. A. Rowe, *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods*, London, 1930, pp. 2-3.

¹⁶ Logan to Liverpool, 10 September 1914, G 1474/14.

ments with instructions to conform to them as nearly as possible.¹⁷ Little perceptible inconvenience resulted from these changes, except for the education department, which had to wait for the troops to evacuate school buildings, and for the arrival of a New Zealand superintendent, E. W. Beaglehole, who could speak German and teach English, before it could resume its normal activities.¹⁸ The German crown colony system had in effect been replaced by the British crown colony system — the Governor's advisory council of officials and citizens being the only serious casualty. But as most of the official positions were filled by New Zealanders there was a gradual transition to New Zealand ways.

When the military garrison was relieved in April 1915, after all the German warships in the Pacific had been accounted for, those employed in civil departments were given the option of volunteering for active service or being discharged from the army and accepting appointments for the duration. Volunteers, however, were to remain in their jobs until suitable successors had been arranged and instructed. With two exceptions the civil staff agreed to stay, but only after Logan had put it strongly to them that they would be doing more for the empire this way than freezing in a trench in France.¹⁹ Later Logan regretted they had not been kept in the Force and given military commissions compatible with their civil positions, as the Australians were in Rabaul, for this would also have protected their rights to military promotion and pensions. As the war dragged on, they became restive, particularly when it was maliciously rumoured that they were shirking their duty. The New Zealand government agreed to let them go on active service if Logan could obtain replacements, but he found this very difficult to do.

Existing forms of native administration were largely retained, although there were significant changes in methods and objectives. Ignorant as he was of Samoan customs, Logan continued the German governor's practice of visiting the native office at Mulinu'u each week to deal personally with Samoan grievances and of going on annual *malaga* (journeys) through the villages and districts. He learnt that it was wise to uphold the authority of the *ali'i* and *faipule* (chiefs and orators), to give no pledges unless they could be fulfilled, and to settle Samoan matters without undue delay. He discovered the wisdom of Dr Solf's dictum that the Samoans could be guided not forced. For the rest he relied on his Samoan secretary and chief interpreter at Mulinu'u, Afamasaga Maua, who spoke good English and was said to be an English sympathiser.²⁰ Military administration

¹⁷ Logan to Liverpool, 8 August 1919, G 1975/19.

¹⁸ Logan to Liverpool, 10 September 1914, G 1474/14; 25 November 1914, G 2214/14; 14 December 1914, G 2378/14.

¹⁹ Logan to Liverpool, 23 January 1915, G 280/15; 19 February 1915, G 530/15.

²⁰ Logan to Liverpool, 27 October 1915, G 2937/15 (Encl. Hanssen to D.H.P.C.); Logan to Liverpool, 30 August 1917, G 2426/17; 8 August 1919, G 1975/19; 10 July 1918, G 2021/18.

reduced government interference in village life to a minimum, simply attending carefully to any dispute or complaint referred to it. *Laissez-faire* replaced paternalism. Endeavours to transform traditional Samoan institutions into a modern system of colonial government, and to carry out progressive measures in the villages and districts came to a standstill, giving the Samoans time to become accustomed to the innovations made by the Germans.

The effectiveness of these methods in preventing a recurrence of native disturbances was successfully tested when the Fautua, Tupua Tamasese Leolofi, died on 13 October 1915. Logan wisely did not interfere with the customary procedures of distributing fine-mats and electing a successor as the Germans had done when Tamasese's father had died. He left it to Afamasaga to announce at an opportune moment that he needed time to consider the matter of a new Fautua, so that the people, after about a fortnight's discussion, quietly dispersed to their villages. Six months later, at the half-yearly meeting of the *Faipule*, Logan deemed it politic to appoint Tuimaleali'ifano Si'u, before the Tupua family had hurried on with the election of a new Tupua Tamasese in the hopes that he would be made a Fautua, and before Malietoa Tanumafili had been given the opportunity to hold office by himself for too long.²¹

Logan's intention was that the welfare of the Samoans should be the first consideration of the military administration. To begin with this was little more than a question of internal peace and security; witness one of his first requests to the New Zealand government, namely the repatriation of Lauaki and his fellow exiles.²² Gradually, however, he learnt to respect Samoan society and to favour a policy of development by the Samoans themselves on their own lands. There is no evidence that he was consciously imitating the British principle of paramountcy of native interests. Rather he seems to have adopted this approach because of local circumstances and more particularly because he was confronted by the urgent questions of the future of German planting and trading interests and of Chinese indentured labour.

The Germans had encouraged the development of tropical agriculture by large-scale companies or private planters with adequate finance. There were approximately 275,000 acres of plantation land in Upolu, of which about 56,000 acres belonged to the Deutsche Handels-und-Plantagen-Gesellschaft (D.H.P.G.). Of these, 9,000 acres were cultivated in three large copra plantations and produced about half of the copra exported annually. There were some forty to sixty German planters and twenty British and others. The Germans held about 16,000 acres and cultivated a few hundred of these in coconuts, rubber and cocoa; the British and others held about 16,500 acres of which about 1,500 acres were planted in rubber and cocoa.

²¹ Logan to Liverpool, 15 November 1915, G 3185/15; 13 April 1916, G 1249/16. War Diary, Military Secretary, 13 October 1915, 21 and 31 March 1916.

²² Logan to Liverpool, 14 December 1914, G 2366/14.

In Savai'i, where there were 450,000 acres, the lack of water was a great drawback. The D.H.P.G. owned about 20,000 acres — a few hundred of which were in coconuts or mixed cultivation, while the British claimed 12,500 acres.²³

To work these estates the Germans had from 1903 to 1914 introduced Chinese indentured labour as the Samoans had shown no inclination to forsake their customary way of life to work as wage-labourers. A planters' association had been licensed to import them on three-year terms with provision for two-year renewals and compulsory repatriation. In August 1914 there were 2,184 Chinese in Samoa and their terms of indenture were due to expire as follows: 787 on 28 December 1914, 469 on 1 August 1915 and 928 on 22 June 1916.²⁴ The D.H.P.G. also employed indentured Solomon Islanders of whom there were 567 in November 1915.²⁵

Logan's immediate concern was public security. When war broke out the planters reduced the rice rations of their Chinese coolies by half and this led to 'a somewhat ugly rising of about 120 Chinese on a plantation near Apia'. Logan sent troops to quell it, let German planters retain arms for self-protection, and ordered the restoration of full rations. In his opinion the Chinese were 'a menace to the European population unless very carefully handled'.²⁶

The repatriation of the Chinese labourers whose contracts expired could not be carried out immediately because of the shortage of shipping. But this created no serious difficulties for the planters still needed imported labour and the majority of them were willing to re-indenture. Logan proposed to renew their contracts for short periods and the Chinese vice-consul, the New Zealand government, and British government concurred.²⁷ The question of how to replace them raised more fundamental questions relating to the maintenance of an adequate labour force and the whole future of the European plantations in Samoa. Until these were settled Logan proposed to carry on the existing system.

The Samoans' attitude to the Chinese question, Logan soon discovered, was unequivocal. The great majority of them held the Chinese indentured labourers 'in the utmost detestation' and resented their presence in Samoa. The leaders, in particular, objected to Chinese cohabitation with Samoan women and repeatedly requested that they should all be returned to China. Logan personally shared

²³ N. H. MacDonald, Chief Surveyor of Crown Lands and Works, to R. W. Dalton, H.M. Trade Comr. Apia, 11 May 1918, and Logan to Liverpool, 20 January 1919, G 308/19. Cf. Minister of Defence for Attorney-General, 27 June 1916, encl. Liverpool to Logan, 21 July 1916, G 2249/16.

²⁴ Logan to Liverpool, 27 October 1914, G 1968/14.

²⁵ Logan to Liverpool, 12 November 1915, G 2999/15; 26 January 1916, G 389/16.

²⁶ Logan to Liverpool, 2 September 1914, G 1279/14.

²⁷ Logan to Liverpool, 25 November 1914, G 2214/14; 8 June 1915, G 1632/15; 9 May 1916, G 1511/16; 8 July 1916, G 2084/16.

their feelings and believed that it was his duty to help the Samoans 'keep their race pure'.²⁸

His enquiries about replacements for Chinese labourers whose time had expired led to the discovery that the British government would not allow the recruitment of Chinese indentured labour in British colonies, and that the Australian government had decided not to introduce any more Asian immigrant labour into New Guinea.²⁹ Free Chinese labour and indentured Indian labour seemed equally objectionable and nothing came of his attempts to obtain Solomon Islanders or Niueans. Gradually he was forced to conclude that the time had come to stop the indenture system and to encourage the Samoans to work for wages.

Planters, on the other hand, insisted that they could not run their estates without imported labour and were reluctant to carry out their obligations to repatriate the Chinese. Indeed Logan had to exert considerable pressure on the planters' association to arrange the necessary transport and the administration had to assist them to meet the costs of repatriation.³⁰ Logan formed the impression that far from being short of labour they had over-imported to develop bush land before August 1914. He doubted whether the capital was available to import more labour and he felt that the development of bush land could be well left to the Samoans. After August 1915 as shipping became available the Chinese were repatriated without replacements and there was a gradual decline in number until by October 1918 only 876 remained.³¹ Meanwhile the Samoans had shown little inclination to take their place. Future labour policy depended on the solution of the more basic question of the future of plantation agriculture.

The Germans had been in two minds about the future of European plantation agriculture and Chinese indentured labour.³² They had also feared that war and a British naval blockade would produce disruptive and ruinous effects on the Samoan economy, but this was not so. A British royal proclamation of 5 August 1914, based on the Hague Convention, limited the export trade to British and neutral firms and prevented trade with or payments to Germany. However, to maintain Samoa's external trade, sanction was obtained from the imperial government for the German firms to trade with the British. The result was the diversion of Samoan trade from Hamburg to San Francisco and, to a lesser extent, Sydney.

The D.H.P.G. was able to carry on its business, which included financing a very large number of the planters as well as exporting

²⁸ *ibid.* See also Logan to Liverpool, 12 April 1917, G 1121/17; 14 July 1917, G 2126/17; 15 December 1917, G 3459/17.

²⁹ Logan to Liverpool, G 3246/15; Pearce to Ferguson, 16 January 1916, G 389/16.

³⁰ Logan to Liverpool, 15 November 1915, G 3185/15.

³¹ Logan to Liverpool, 2 October 1918, G 2884/18.

³² Logan to Liverpool, 10 July 1918, G 2021/18; 30 January 1919, G 308/19, quoting the pessimistic views of the German Colonial Economical Committee 1912, but tempering them with Captain Annandale's view that the Germans were bringing Samoa to a high state of prosperity.

annually half the copra produced.³³ Indeed it became more flourishing than formerly.³⁴ The German firms also profited considerably from the replacement of German with British currency.³⁵ 'For eighteen months after we took Samoa we have been generously helping the Germans to continue making their profits', complained a New Zealand weekly.³⁶

Gradually, evidence that the D.H.P.G. and other German firms were continuing to trade with Hamburg through San Francisco and Sydney accumulated. They were therefore placed in the hands of a New Zealand receiver for liquidation. Stores were closed, trading ceased and ligherage of cargoes, carried out for the D.H.P.G. by indentured Solomon Islanders, was taken over by the administration. Plantations were worked only in so far as it was necessary to prevent deterioration and the ravages of the rhinoceros beetle.³⁷ Land, buildings and plantations could not be sold, only leased to British subjects with the approval of the administration.

Liquidation led to growing insolvency among planters who had been financed by the German firms — a serious problem for the administration because if the plantations were not worked the cocoa canker would spread, there would be a lack of work for Chinese indentured labourers, and the planters would not be able to meet the costs of their repatriation. Thus arrangements were eventually made for bankrupt as well as liquidated estates to be placed under receivership. This meant that they were generally kept in working order but not further developed. British and neutral planters were in a similar position. This the planters attributed to the shortage of labour and to the policy of repatriation and short-term re-indentures. The administration, on the other hand, considered their problems arose largely from a lack of capital, accentuated by the reduction of terms of contract for indentured labourers from three years to six months. They were unable to meet the greatly increased costs of indentured labour and unwilling to incur obligations to pay for the repatriation of labourers on short-term contracts. Furthermore they were not prepared to experiment with Samoan labour as the administration was doing.³⁸

In spite of the war, liquidation, bankruptcies, lack of capital, labour problems and serious shipping shortages, Samoan trade and prosperity suffered little. The value of exports and imports increased from 1914 to 1917, though exports dropped in 1918 because of a decline in the

³³ Logan to Liverpool, 4 December 1914, G 2366/14.

³⁴ Logan to Liverpool, 3 April 1915, G 933/15; 28 April 1915, G 1263/15; G 1299/15; 8 June 1915, G 1632/15; 26 July 1916, G 313/16.

³⁵ Logan to Liverpool, 14 June 1914, G 1556/14; 14 May 1915, G 1345/15; Liverpool to Logan, 27 May 1915, G 784/15.

³⁶ *Freelance*, 14 April 1916.

³⁷ Allen to Matheson, G 1296/16; Logan to Liverpool, 9 May 1916, G 1511/16; War Diary, Military Secretary, 16 March and 21 April 1916.

³⁸ Logan to Liverpool, 14 January 1917, G 2126/17; 11 January 1918, G 282/18.

production of rubber and cocoa, due to low world prices, shortage of labour and the cocoa canker.³⁹

Final decisions on the future of European plantations and Chinese indentured labour had to await the Allies' disposal of estates held by the receiver. Logan urged that Savai'i at least should be retained absolutely for the Samoans and that no European settlement should be allowed. He had been particularly impressed by the activity of the people there in making roads, bathing pools and drinking places under the patient guidance of his deputy, Williams.⁴⁰ As to Upolu, the Samoans seemed less progressive — though he observed self-help activities in Falealili and Si'umu similar to those in Savai'i. While he believed that official policy should encourage the people to develop their own lands and to participate in the western economy, it seemed certain that for some years to come prosperity would also depend on the European plantations and that these would require outside labour. Only leases of land to Europeans should be allowed and coconut-growing and cattle-raising encouraged, rather than cocoa and rubber, as these required less labour.⁴¹

Attempts to divert the copra trade to the United Kingdom when the D.H.P.G. was liquidated were largely unsuccessful, one difficulty being lack of shipping. Similarly a proposal by the New Zealand government and some Auckland businessmen to capture the D.H.P.G.'s trade was stillborn. New Zealand firms were not prepared to make the considerable efforts needed to compete with the Americans and Australians, and the Union Steamship Company, which ran a monthly service between Auckland and Apia, could offer no more shipping space. By the end of the war most of Samoa's exports were going to San Francisco in American bottoms, though Australia and New Zealand were providing a substantial share of Samoan imports. Australia had about £100,000 capital invested in the territory, New Zealand only about £10,000, mostly in a hotel.⁴² Neither the United Kingdom nor New Zealand nor Australia could claim that German Samoa had become part of an informal empire of trade and investment. It was the United States who held the economic stakes.

The delays and uncertainty in deciding Samoa's future were unsettling locally. Beneath the surface of Samoan neutrality and hospitality the old political divisions remained. Strong friendly feelings towards the Germans persisted,⁴³ 'better the devil you know, than the devil you do not know' being an important element in them. There

³⁹ Logan to Liverpool, 30 January 1919, G 308/19. For value of exports and imports with different countries see G 1392/12, 1898/17 and 1898/18.

⁴⁰ Logan to Liverpool, 23 October 1916, G 3396/16; 23 November 1916, G 3744/16; 7 November 1918, G 3187/18.

⁴¹ Logan to Liverpool, 23 November 1916, G 3744/16.

⁴² Patterson to Liverpool, 16 February 1916, G 619/16; Liverpool to Logan, 21 July 1916, G 2249/16; Nicholson to Min. of Def., 12 June 1916, G 2084/16; Min. of Def. to Matheson, 3 August 1916, G 2419/16.

⁴³ Logan to Liverpool, 27 October 1915, G 2937/15, encl. English translation of letters from Hanssen to D.H.P.G.; 18 April 1918, G 1140/18, encl. Gurr to MacDonald, 10 April 1918.

was also an American 'party' led by an American citizen and local trader, H. J. Moors. His strong, persistent criticism of the military administration was a sore trial to the New Zealand government, and his vindictiveness towards Logan personally was fully reciprocated. Local European residents generally were annoyed by the irksome restrictions and petty tyrannies of military government: the requisitioning of men, horses and plantation labour during the occupation, the imposition of restrictions on trading with the enemy, and the censorship of mail. German nationals suffered from more drastic measures such as curfews, the liquidation of their businesses, and in some cases internment in New Zealand. Protests from the United States consul on behalf of neutrals and belligerents produced blunt replies from Logan, who, with some justification, felt that the consul was not being strictly impartial. The attitude of the Samoans to the military administration, on the other hand, was masked by the traditional courtesies of formal address and official interpretation. After a year or so they openly expressed their hopes that Britain would retain control of Samoa and it became customary for the Faipule at their half-yearly meetings to refer to 'the joys of British rule'.

Meanwhile some thought was being given behind-the-scenes to the whole question of the future of the former German colonies. 'It would be very gratifying if you could secure from the Imperial Government an assurance that German Samoa would be held by Britain after the war if the Allies win', Colonel Allen wrote to the Governor on 24 July 1916.⁴⁴ In Britain a General Staff memorandum of 31 August 1916 pointed out that the government of New Zealand was likely to attach a high sentimental value to 'the first conquest of a young people'. The Colonial Office was of the opinion that after the war, not only Samoa, but all the former German territory south of the equator must become British, in order to satisfy Australia and New Zealand who had always resented the intrusion of Germany into what they regarded as a British sphere. Furthermore it found little room for doubt that British conquests in the Pacific were not in any way suitable for bargaining purposes, either with Germany or its allies. But as the Japanese government were being pressed at this time to accede to the Admiralty's appeal for additional naval assistance, it was the suggestion of the Committee of Imperial Defence subcommittee on territorial changes that prevailed. With the sanction of the Australian and New Zealand governments, the British government in February 1917 assured the Japanese government that on the occasion of any peace conference, they would support Japan's claim in regard to the disposal of Germany's rights in Shantung and her possessions in the islands north of the Equator, it being understood, that in the eventual peace settlement, the Japanese government would treat Great Britain's claims to the German islands south of the Equator in the same spirit. In the event of this agreement being accepted by the British govern-

⁴⁴ Encl. Liverpool to Colonial Secretary, 3 August 1916.

ment it was understood by the subcommittee that Australia would retain the administration of German New Guinea and New Zealand that of Samoa; but that the exact distribution amongst the British administrations in the Pacific of these German possessions which were in British occupation might be left to the Colonial Office.

Commenting on the agreement at the first meeting of the subcommittee of the imperial cabinet on territorial desiderata in the terms of peace, 17 April 1917, the New Zealand Prime Minister, W. F. Massey, pointed out that the Japanese navy had been of great service to the Dominions throughout the war, especially in the early months, and that generally speaking Japan had 'played the game'. What he now wanted was a definite public statement on the matter of the German colonies to allay anxiety in the Dominions. The German islands south of the Equator were of considerable economic importance and there were strong feelings in Australia and New Zealand that they should be retained in British possession because of the danger of the establishment of German naval and aviation bases and wireless stations in the future.⁴⁵

New doubts about the future of Samoa, as indeed of all the former German possessions, were raised by the entry of the United States into the war and the growing support for the principles of self-determination and international control of colonies in liberal, labour and humanitarian circles. These came to a head with the publication on 10 January 1918 of the second draft of President Wilson's fourteen points for submission to the Paris Peace Conference. The fifth of these advocated: 'A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.' The same day the Governor-General of New Zealand, on behalf of the Colonial Secretary and 'on account of Russia stressing the right of a population of a country to determine its own future and of the probability of a proposal to apply this in the case of the German colonies', asked Logan for a statement, suitable for publication if necessary, containing evidence that the Samoans appreciated and desired to remain under British rule.⁴⁶

Logan promptly replied that he was confident that a very large

⁴⁵ For documents referred to in this paragraph see Papers accumulated during W. F. Massey's visit to Britain, PM 14/1, National Archives. On the Anglo-Japanese understanding see also W. R. Louis, 'Australian and the German Colonies in the Pacific, 1914-1919', in *Journal of Modern History*, XXXVIII, 4, 413.

⁴⁶ IT 67/12/1 and MO 18/15. According to W. R. Louis, the Colonial Secretary's request was to make sure that the indigenous inhabitants would 'self determine' in favour of the British. It was sent the day before Lloyd George's 'British War Aims' speech, 4 January 1918, stating that the peace conference 'must have primary regard to the wishes and interests of the native inhabitants' in disposing of the German colonies. See his 'The South West African Origins of the "Sacred Trust". 1914-1919', in *African Affairs*, LXVI, 262.

majority of Samoans, probably 80% or 90%, did favour remaining British because it was a British society, the London Missionary Society, that first introduced them to Christianity. Furthermore they constantly regretted that Britain had not taken them over when it became impossible for them to exist any longer except under the control of a European power. They were delighted at the amount of self-government they were allowed under British rule and appreciated the justice and despatch with which their grievances were settled, whereas under German rule they had been driven from pillar to post. Nevertheless, it had to be remembered, Logan added, that the Samoans resembled children and if a referendum were taken and if something had arisen a week previously which had given offence they might quite easily vote contrary to their inclinations. As regards the local Europeans (excluding the 530 Germans) it could be safely estimated that 800 out of 900 would favour British rule. American citizens, as a matter of course, would use their endeavours to bring all the Islands under the flag of the United States, for Tutuila cost £20,000 a year and if they secured the other Islands it would be self-supporting, but the Swedish and other nationalities would be 'very greatly British'.⁴⁷

To obtain further evidence of Samoan opinion, Logan consulted the Fautua, Tuimaleali'ifano and Malietoa, who undertook to discuss the matter with the 'Samoa Toiena [sic] Club', a commercial and political club composed of leading chiefs from every district which was meeting the following day. Not understanding customary procedures of decision-making, Logan was 'greatly surprised' by 'the definiteness' of their answer that it was the unanimous wish of Samoa to remain under British rule. Still he believed that they were in earnest 'unless something unprecedented happened just before the matter was put to them'.⁴⁸

Only ten months later a disastrous influenza epidemic proved the remarkable prescience of his words. It was directly attributable to the failure to quarantine the *Talune* on her arrival at Apia from Auckland, where there had been a serious outbreak. The ship had been given a clean bill of health in Auckland and Suva, and neither the New Zealand authorities, nor those on board the ship had informed the Apia authorities of the outbreak until after the passengers

⁴⁷ Logan to Liverpool, 11 January 1918, G 283/18. See also Liverpool to Logan, 18 November 1918, G 3189/18, explaining his deletion of Logan's references to Samoans as children in his despatch to Col. Sec., 11 February 1915, MO 18/15.

⁴⁸ Logan to Liverpool, 31 January 1918, G 486/18. The reasons given by the high chiefs were firstly, that the L.M.S. brought the Gospel; secondly, because shortly after the occupation the administration placed the badge of Samoa on the fly of the blue ensign showing the Samoans as people were recognised; thirdly, the Faipule were consulted twice a year regarding changes in regulations; and fourthly, they had been treated by British officials with love and could now win cases in the courts. Cf. the views of Rev. W. C. Willoughby of L.M.S. on Samoan appreciation of subtle differences in British and German methods of administration, G 2222/18.

had landed. For three weeks or more the epidemic raged through the territory. In Apia the peace celebrations were cancelled; government buildings, stores and offices were closed and the streets were deserted. In the Samoan villages the people, sick, helpless and frightened, lay down in their *fale* and closed up the shutters. To the military garrison, aided by officials and local residents, fell the immense task of caring for the sick, feeding the people, burying the dead in Apia and sending out mounted patrols to assist in the villages.

By the time the H.M.S. *Encounter* brought an Australian medical relief expedition, 7,542 of a total of 38,178 people had died, about 19.6% of the total population, 8.5% being men, 7% women and 4% children. The estimated death rate was 20% for the Samoans, 33% for half-castes and 2% for whites. It was particularly heavy among the older age groups, containing most of the influential *matai* (Samoan family heads and holders of the family title) and leading title-holders. Lack of medical services as well as ignorance and panic contributed to the heavy death toll in the villages as they had done in the nineteenth century when the Samoans had had no immunity to common European diseases. The survivors were debilitated, gloomy and querulous, and their attitude to the administration was one of passive resistance and bitter resentment. Not unreasonably, they felt that the administration could have prevented the epidemic, as the Americans did in Pago Pago, and that Logan could have obtained immediate medical aid from there.⁴⁹

In these circumstances, it was hardly surprising that on 28 January, eight days after his arrival to relieve Logan, Colonel R. W. Tate was presented with a petition requesting that Western Samoa should be handed over to the United States of America and that Samoa might again be under one government. If this were not granted, Western Samoa should be administered directly under the Colonial Office and on no account by the government of New Zealand.

Although the petition was prompted by resentment over the epidemic it was partly the outcome of anti-administration activities of the American 'party'. By 1918 there was a growing feeling amongst the chiefs in favour of annexation to the United States because of the success of the government's scheme for marketing native-produced copra in American Samoa.⁵⁰ Indeed Logan believed that it was being worked up by H. J. Moors with the moral support of the United States consul in Apia.⁵¹ But the chief instigator of the petition was Afamasaga Toleafoa Lagolago, secretary of the Toeaina club, and

⁴⁹ Logan to Liverpool, 27 December 1918, G 30/19; see also Report of Samoan Epidemic Commission in *Samoa Times*, 13 September 1919. At the height of the epidemic the Governor of American Samoa had indeed asked the American consul if they could be of any assistance and the consul had shown the telegram to Logan. But Logan had misunderstood the offer and cut off all wireless communications with his neighbours who were quarantining mail from Western Samoa. Not only was he under great stress at the time but his relations with the American consul were very strained.

⁵⁰ E. W. Gurr to N. Gurr, 23 November 1918, IT 62/12/1.

⁵¹ Minute by Logan, IT 62/12/1.

brother of the late Afamasaga Maua, Logan's native secretary and chief interpreter who had died in the epidemic.

The 'chiefs' club' was said to have been formed in the first place as a social club when cricket was having a great run. As the rage for cricket died down, the chiefs, seeing the advantage of co-operation, approached Logan and asked to be allowed to form a limited liability company (which they were prohibited from doing by German law) to acquire ships and the necessary equipment to engage in general trade. Its shareholders were to be representatives selected by the various villages, its capital was to be 600 shares of £25 each to be fully subscribed by 31 January 1919, and its sole managing director was to be L. Toleafoa. An able and ambitious chief, who spoke English well and had worked as foreman of the yard in Pago Pago, Toleafoa was a pillar of the local racing club, an adept poker player, on the European liquor list and had 'a very fair grasp' of the principles of co-operation; but it was probably due to his brother's influence that Logan agreed to allow the formation of the trading company.

Contrary to the condition that they were not to commence business before the whole of the capital had been subscribed, the club went ahead and spent the subscriptions and funds it had raised on a motor boat, the lease of a property, wages and other expenses. Although its books were well kept, its shareholders received no return for their money other than free or cheap passages, and wanted explanations and satisfaction. The petition, Tate believed, was an attempt by Toleafoa to distract their attention and to obtain the influence his late brother had had in Samoan affairs.⁵²

Obviously the petition did not represent the unanimous opinion of the Samoans, for Savai'i knew nothing about it and one district in Upolu was in disagreement. Malietoa disapproved of the matter from the beginning and, at a meeting with Tate, both he and Tuimaleali'ifano said that the Samoans had been misguided by some of their own people and suggested that the petition should be withdrawn.⁵³ Unexplored depths to this agitation related to past Samoan and European rivalries and Tate had good reason to fear a resurgence of two Samoan 'parties'. Moreover, as a consequence of the epidemic, a great many titles were vacant, and the election of new title-holders was a constant source of quarrels and anxiety in the Samoan polity.

For the time being, trouble was nipped in the bud by Tate's careful, cautious handling of the petition and of Toleafoa, whom he later described as 'a scamp but the strongest native here . . . who should be made use of if possible'.⁵⁴ The request that Samoa be handed over to the United States was deleted at the meeting on 28 January and

⁵² Tate to Liverpool, 8 March 1919, G 751/19. See also Logan to Allen, 21 June 1919 and Arcus to Controller and Auditor-General, 25 August 1919, IT 82/8.

⁵³ Tate to Liverpool, 8 March 1919, G 751/19. See also *Samoa Times*, 5 April 1919.

⁵⁴ Tate to Min. Ext. Aff., 14 February 1922, IT 82/8.

the petition itself was withdrawn at a conference between the administration and Samoan leaders on 15 February. Malietoa officially conveyed the thanks of his people to Logan and his officials for their kindness and protection during the epidemic, and both Fautua expressed the hope that Tate would remain as administrator, 'his fairness and paternal endeavours to redress the disabilities of their people having caused them to regard him with very great confidence and esteem'.⁵⁵

Tate and Williams were nonetheless extremely anxious about the dangers of renewed agitation during the peace celebrations from 5 to 7 August, at which they were to announce that German rule had ended and that New Zealand was to be the part of the British Empire which was to govern Western Samoa. But a large committee of chiefs was charged with the responsibility of seeing that no persons carried arms and nothing untoward occurred.⁵⁶ On 3 September Tate held a meeting of shareholders of the proposed trading company and told them that they had infringed the conditions drawn up by Logan. He gave them the option of either finding the balance of the £15,000 share capital by 3 December and forming their company under proper conditions, which he knew they could not do, or of going into liquidation. This they eventually did and their assets were held in trust by the Native Office until arrangements were made to pay a dividend to shareholders in 1939.⁵⁷

When the Fono of Faipule, consisting of six old members and twenty-four new members appointed by the administration to replace those who had died in the epidemic, met on 10 September 1919, its proceedings were 'perfectly harmonious' and 'eminently successful'.⁵⁸ Business was brisk, the value of copra exports was increasing, the Samoans were industrious, and it began to look as if after all the British military occupation would end 'with peace, contentment and goodwill'.⁵⁹ But a strong, forceful personality like Afamasaga Toleafoa Lago Lago was not so easily discredited in a society unaccustomed to company law and practice; indeed he continued his intrigues against the New Zealand administration after the transition to civil government and became one of Nelson's leading lieutenants in the Mau. And the shareholders of the Toeaina Club, convinced that they would get more for their copra and pay less for their goods if they could form their own trading company, made one more bid to capture the copra trade before the firm of O. F. Nelson & Son Ltd. became

⁵⁵ Malietoa to Tate and Malietoa to Liverpool, 8 February 1919, encl. Tate to Liverpool, G 751/19; petition addressed to His Excellency from Malietoa and Tuimaleali'ifano, 28 June 1919, G 2967/19.

⁵⁶ Tate to Liverpool, 21 August 1919, G 2396/19; 1 October 1919, G 2965/19.

⁵⁷ Tate to Liverpool, 3 September 1919, G 2695/19. See also IT 82/8.

⁵⁸ Tate to Liverpool, 3 September 1919, G 2695/19; *Samoa Times*, 13 September 1919.

⁵⁹ *Samoa Times*, 11 October 1919.

the heirs of the D.H.P.G.⁶⁰ In retrospect it can be seen that Afamasaga was the forerunner of a new generation of educated Samoan and part-Samoan title-holders and traders who were to lead the movement to self-government. As for the Toeaina club it was both a successor to the chiefly company formed at Mulinu'u in 1905 in defiance of Dr Solf's orders and a predecessor of Nelson's firm which provided the Mau with a ready-made nationalist organisation in 1926. The petition of January 1919 was but the first of a series of protests against the New Zealand administration that culminated in the petition to the United Nations in 1946 humbly beseeching that Samoa be granted self-government. The legacy of the military occupation and the influenza epidemic was an attitude of resentment that was rapidly transmuted into rejection after New Zealand was given the mandate for Western Samoa at Versailles.

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⁶⁰ This time Afamasaga proposed that they should take £1 shares in a recently formed N.Z. company, Merediths Samoa Ltd., which were employing him; but Tate put a company ordinance through the legislative council prohibiting Samoans from becoming partners and shareholders in trading concerns. See IT 82/8.

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