

## A Goodwill Mission?

### REVISITING SĀMOA–NEW ZEALAND RELATIONS IN 1936



SĀMOA'S POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE in 1962 is acknowledged internationally as a success story.<sup>1</sup> However, the road to independence was long and complex, and was shaped by the political climate of the early twentieth century. The path to independence, and Sāmoa's resulting constitution, was also shaped by a blend of custom and Western liberal democratic principles, which in turn originated from a 1936 Goodwill Mission under the newly elected New Zealand Labour Party.<sup>2</sup> Ten years prior to the mission's visit, Sāmoa–New Zealand relations had reached an impasse after the emergence of the Mau resistance movement in 1926. In her 2017 biography of part-Sāmoan Mau leader Ta'isi Olaf Frederick Nelson (1883–1944), historian Patricia O'Brien describes the atmosphere in Sāmoa during the mission's visit. Led by Labour ministers Frank Langstone and John O'Brien, the delegation 'arrived in Apia among the jubilation. Unlike the three previous ministerial delegations since New Zealand's rule commenced, this one came with a tone of conciliation. They declared a new era had begun. But had it?'<sup>3</sup>

In reflecting on the mission, this article examines the disconnect between its objectives and the hopes of the local community, particularly since historian and constitutional advisor for Sāmoa Jim Davidson noted that 'the establishment of lasting harmony ... [was] superficial', because although 'unpopular laws had been repealed and unpopular policies abandoned ... no real basis had been laid for the attainment of the Mau's objective of "Sāmoa mo Sāmoa".'<sup>4</sup> This article explores the climate of exchange in 1936 to better understand the contrast between local views and New Zealand's desire to meet its domestic and international commitments. It argues that while the diplomatic mission played a significant role in shaping the move towards political independence — by enabling a dialogue between the New Zealand government and Sāmoa — New Zealand colonial and paternalistic attitudes continued to dictate Sāmoa–New Zealand relations.

### **Sāmoan Resistance**

Prior to consistent contact with Europeans, the highest Sāmoan honorific title was the Tafa'ifa, a combination of four paramount titles held by an individual through victory in warfare and genealogical connections, which had emerged

in the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> However, Malietoa Vainu'upo, the last Tafa'ifa, on his deathbed in 1841 dispersed the four titles.<sup>6</sup> Warring factions of rival candidates emerged in the mid-to-late nineteenth century; various chiefs and their supporters allied themselves with the prominent Three Powers — Germany, Great Britain and the United States of America — all establishing a power base in Sāmoa. An attempt in the 1860s by Sāmoan leaders to form a government at the new political centre of Mulinu'u ultimately failed.<sup>7</sup> Despite the Berlin Treaty (1889) having established a European Municipal Council in Apia, and later German rule (1900–1914) in the western islands, and United States rule in the eastern islands under the Tripartite Treaty (1899), Sāmoan resistance to colonial rule continued by way of the Oloa Kamupani movement in 1904 and the Mau a Pule (1908).<sup>8</sup> The first sought to establish a Sāmoan copra-buying venture to counter the German-backed Deutsche Handels-und Plantagen-Gesellschaft (DHPG) monopoly on copra. The Mau a Pule was led by the orator groups of Savai'i (Pule) and sought increased recognition of Sāmoan participation in government, of which Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe, an orator from Safotulafai, was a key leader. This protest saw the banishment of Lauaki and his supporters to German Saipan in 1909.

New Zealand's early period of rule was not without its problems, especially concerning alcohol prohibition, of which local Europeans disapproved.<sup>9</sup> Sāmoan discontent at the New Zealand military's poor handling of the influenza epidemic in 1918, which killed about 8000 people in eight weeks after the end of the First World War, alarmed local and international communities.<sup>10</sup> However, following the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919, through the League of Nations, Sāmoa was handed over to Great Britain as a C-Class Mandated Territory to be administered by New Zealand. Under this mandate, New Zealand laws could be applied to Sāmoa 'subject to such local modifications as circumstances may require' in order to 'promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the Territory'.<sup>11</sup>

Civil administration began in 1920, and the Mau resistance movement emerged soon after, and saw the initial co-operation of the local European community and the Sāmoan population.<sup>12</sup> However, the Mau transformed into a different movement, one which was soon led by Sāmoans, including Ta'isi Olaf Nelson. During the ten years of the Mau (1926–1936), Sāmoa endured political instability, with three military administrators dispatched from and later recalled to Wellington.<sup>13</sup> Tragically for Sāmoa, those years saw the imprisonment of Mau members, many without trial, and the deportation

of key leaders such as Ta'isi. The death of several prominent matai (chiefs) in 1929, most notably Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III, at the hands of New Zealand police, drew international attention, especially since the deaths had occurred during a peaceful Mau demonstration.<sup>14</sup> This tragic event, known as 'Black Saturday', is recorded and remembered in Sāmoan songs.<sup>15</sup> Requests for political participation by movements such as the Mau a Pule during the early resistance period would not bear fruit until the post-Mau period following the 1936 Goodwill Mission visit.

New Zealand media reported on the mission's visit, with one Auckland newspaper recording Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage's explanation that the purpose of the mission was 'to find out the true position of affairs in Sāmoa, to meet the Sāmoan people and to explain to them that it is our intention to work with them for the good of the territory as a whole. They will be charged with investigating the grievances of the natives and they will bring back recommendations regarding the best method of approach for their solution.'<sup>16</sup>

Historically, although this visit has been recognized as a key instrument of change in Sāmoa–New Zealand relations, there is very little written about the exchanges that took place, with much of the literature tending to focus attention on the resolutions from the visit.<sup>17</sup> This article thus offers the first insights into the mission's objective and local community responses. It makes extensive use of Island Territories archival material relating to the visit held at Archives New Zealand, categorized under the title of 'Delegation to Sāmoa, 1936 – Educational Matters'. These materials reveal a tense climate of exchange, and extend the understanding of the complex relationships at play. While they document particular views associated with the work of colonial officials, the extensive documentation of the meetings with Sāmoans provides an opportunity to explore Sāmoan perspectives, and importantly, how Sāmoans responded to the delegation.

## The Mission Delegation at Work



**Figure 1:** The arrival of the delegation to Sāmoa in front of the Central Office in Apia. From left to right: Acting Administrator Alfred Turnbull, Hon. Frank Langstone, Mrs Langstone, Mr James O'Brien, Mrs O'Brien, and High Chief Faumuina wearing the Mau uniform.

*Source: New Zealand Herald, 11 July 1936.*

The Goodwill Mission was a mechanism for change in Sāmoa–New Zealand relations. Prior to their visit to Sāmoa, Members of Parliament Frank Langstone<sup>18</sup> and James O'Brien<sup>19</sup> had, together with Savage, met with Ta'isi in March 1936. This meeting marked a significant change in New Zealand's engagement with Sāmoa. Under the previous Reform government Ta'isi had been exiled to New Zealand and the Mau labelled a 'seditious organisation'.<sup>20</sup> In 1935 the First Labour government swept into power under the leadership of Savage, who had replaced Harry Holland on his death in 1933. Holland had been vocal in his views on the Reform Party's administration of Sāmoa. In a pamphlet supporting the Mau in 1928, he had stated: '[o]ur government of Samoa constitutes an accumulation of intolerable administrative acts, outrageous injustices against individual Samoans, and

the infliction of raw wounds upon Samoan dignity and self-respect which will take long in their healing.<sup>21</sup> With Labour now in power for the first time, and as successor to Holland, Savage was keen to build a bridge, even an unsteady one, between the two countries.

In his analysis of Sāmoa's independence process, R. A. Herr noted that '[I]t was not so much humility abroad as pride at home that determined Samoa's limited aspirations in international relations'.<sup>22</sup> Davidson captures this sense of pride in his description of the mission's arrival on 23 June 1936 as forging a 'dramatic transformation of the political atmosphere. Its members were greeted, as they stepped ashore, both by Malietoa and the Faipule and by the leaders of the Mau. As they entered the town, in a procession headed by the Mau band, Apia's main street was lined by thousands of people in Mau uniform holding aloft Mau flags.'<sup>23</sup> Not everyone in the community embraced this public gathering, which was endorsed by the Mau. In fact those who had been loyal to the previous Malo (government), such as Malietoa, and anti-Mau protesters particularly from the villages around Apia, expressed disapproval by wearing a uniform comprising a khaki lavalava (a single rectangular garment worn like a skirt) decorated with a red stripe.<sup>24</sup> This was worn in opposition to the Mau's uniform of a purple lavalava with a single white stripe.

At the time of the visit Langstone held the portfolios of Minister of Lands and Commissioner of State Forests, while O'Brien was the Chair of the Goldfields and Mines and the Parliamentary Native Affairs Committee. Both were socialists and had been prominent trade unionists in their own electorates of Waimarino and Westland respectively.<sup>25</sup> Langstone was a fluent Māori speaker and appeared to sympathize with Māori issues, but prominent Māori political figures such as Āpirana Ngata critiqued Labour's welfare and electoral reform policies because he felt they were 'undermining tribal ties and communal values, and leading to individualism'.<sup>26</sup> In the case of Sāmoa, the Goodwill Mission's visit demonstrates how poorly New Zealand understood the situation. New Zealand's social and political context was much different from Sāmoa's, and the local community had their own views on how their country should be managed under the new Labour government. Like Āpirana Ngata, Sāmoans were to become disillusioned with the Labour government.



**Figure 2:** A ceremonial feast held to welcome the delegation.  
**Source:** *Northern Advocate*, 14 July 1936.

Over the course of four weeks, the mission's grueling schedule involved meetings at the Central Office of government with various parties, some of whom comprised the local European community. Topics discussed included improved wages for local-born Sāmoan workers, the establishment of a Finance Committee, and much-needed reforms for the public service.<sup>27</sup> Sāmoa's acting Administrator, Alfred Clarke Turnbull,<sup>28</sup> who had been in Sāmoa since 1930, was for the most part actively engaged in these conversations. He had a mixed reputation amongst the local community, and was known to be largely 'indecisive'.<sup>29</sup>

Such was the popularity of the mission that its members fielded numerous enquiries and requests. For example, a Mr Wallace of Apia enquired about the possibility of obtaining an old age pension, as did a Mr Aspinall of Sapapali'i village in Savai'i, specifically for British subjects living in Sāmoa.<sup>30</sup> Sāmoan teacher and interpreter I'iga Pisa presented a request for a meeting on behalf of Sāmoan planters for the mission's consideration.<sup>31</sup> Eighty-three-year-old Louis Belford, a plantation worker at Fasito'outa, complained about the payment of wages owed to him by plantation owner Mr Morgan.<sup>32</sup> Produce



Inspector Mr Newton, on top of his ordinary wages, requested a special allowance in consideration of the long hours taken to examine banana exports.<sup>33</sup> In Savai'i, European residents urgently appealed for the building of foot-bridges. Ms Vaiula from Satapuala requested the release of her brother from prison,<sup>34</sup> and the President of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, based at Pesega, appealed for an increase in the number of missionaries working in Sāmoa.<sup>35</sup>

On the topic of employment, Amando Stowers, President of the Local Born Labour Party, criticized the Sāmoan administration for carrying out 'unpatriotic and destructive policies', including the preference of former administrators to employ 'Chinese Artisans' or former plantation workers, who were perceived to be taking jobs from the local-born community, returned soldiers, Sāmoans and the large number of the unemployed.<sup>36</sup> These requests were, for the most part, referred to Turnbull or deferred for Prime Minister Savage's consideration.

Employment was also raised by the European Planters Association, who met with the delegation on the morning of 11 July. Comprising long-time residents Mr Morgan, Mr Miedecke, Mr Eden, Mr Carruthers and Mr Cobcroft, the association emphasized that:

The growth of agricultural enterprise in Western Samoa since the beginning of this century has been both rapid and extensive. Large areas of land have been cleared and planted up either under crops systematically planted for the first time, or under crops newly introduced, and established crops have been cultivated on a much greater scale. This has occurred, primarily in response to the increasing demand of the world's markets for tropical products, and in the second place, to the wise and far sighted policy of the German Government who administered these Islands in the early part of the nineteenth century, and later to our present Administration who developed the Sāmoa industry.<sup>37</sup>

Productivity and the economy were key issues for planters, who tabled statistics about available land area, the land tenure system, cultivatable lands for agriculture, land cultivated, and the current use of land. European planting interests, they stressed, were a 'very great and important part ... in the economic life of these Islands', and they emphasized how 'essential they are to the future progress and prosperity of this Territory and its indigenous population'. Unlike Stowers, though, the association supported the importation of Chinese labourers 'to supplement the local labour supply' since a labour shortage 'would be a disaster of the first magnitude to both the European and Native agricultural interests, would seriously affect the commercial prosperity of the colony, and the advancement and well-being of its people'.<sup>38</sup> Planters claimed that 'in the majority of cases the incentive

to work [among Sāmoans] is lacking, and it is only when the village decides to build a Church, or School, or they themselves require money for some specific purpose, they seek work.<sup>39</sup> Langstone dismissed their concerns, saying ‘we do not like cheap labour. We hate it as we hate the devil, and it is no good talking to us about the Chinese’. O’Brien added that ‘you will quite understand that our interest in Samoa primarily is to look after the native population. The reason is that under the Mandate we must see that these natives live as well as possible and be comfortable and not exploited’.<sup>40</sup> For Langstone, it was ‘not a question of labour’ but ‘trying to get a stabilized price for your products’. The opportunity afforded to the European Planters Association to present their case was not extended to the Sāmoan planters, whose request for a meeting was declined by the delegation, who advised they liaise with Turnbull.<sup>41</sup> As a result, we do not know what their concerns or requests would have been.

A few days later the mission met at length with local citizens and planters Alfred Smyth<sup>42</sup> and Ian Carruthers on several matters, including the function of the legislative council, the hospital, water supply and telephone rates.<sup>43</sup> This conversation would later form part of the 13 points presented by the mission to Mau members.

### Meetings at Vaimoso Village



**Figure 3:** A gathering to welcome the Goodwill Mission to Samoa, and to celebrate the King’s birthday.

**Source:** *Northern Advocate*, 15 July 1936.



At their first meeting with representatives on 16 July with ‘all Samoa’ — including the delegation, Mau members, and district representatives — at Vaimoso village, the headquarters of the Mau, the delegation presented ‘an agreement to effect a combined and united Samoa’.<sup>44</sup> On their arrival, with the assistance of public servants like New Zealander Cyril McKay (Secretary of Native Affairs), the mission presented a statement to the meeting of four main laws that had been recommended for repeal by the Secretary of Native Affairs Office: the proclamation of the Mau as a seditious organization; the restrictions on free movement within the territory; the removal of personal and medical tax on Sāmoans; and the Samoan Offenders Ordinance.<sup>45</sup> The delegation acceded to the request, and thus, the arrears of Sāmoan taxes (£28, 786.18s.9d, owed to the New Zealand government since April 1929) were written off. The Samoan Offenders Ordinance 1922, which gave the Administrator power to banish people from their villages, and to cancel chiefly titles, was also abolished.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the term ‘disturbed area’, which had been applied to certain districts and villages, was revoked.<sup>47</sup> These repeals included the repeal of Ta’isi’s term of exile and subsequent return to Sāmoa, along with his three daughters, and an increase in the price paid by the Administration for bananas per case.<sup>48</sup>

Ta’isi, with his three daughters, returned to Sāmoa on 21 July, five days after the first meeting in Vaimoso. Greeted by Langstone and O’Brien on board the ship, the party arrived to a theatre of celebration ‘marked by more music, a parade more than a mile long, ceremonies, and honors’.<sup>49</sup> When a second meeting was held between the delegation and ‘all of Samoa’ on 23 July, with Ta’isi now in attendance, the theme of disconnection took precedence over ideas of redress on the part of the Mau. First, Mau member spokesman Tuala Tulo, a high chief from Leauva’a, acknowledged the delegation, and Tuimaleali’ifano opened the meeting with a prayer. Although a new plan was put forward for the mission, documentation on these points is not included in the archives.

Taking advantage of the enactment of the repeals, a further 13 points were announced by the New Zealand delegation and put forward to the Mau for their consideration and approval. The Goodwill Mission wanted Sāmoan representation in the Legislative Council to increase from two to four; and it wanted to increase the Fautua<sup>50</sup> (Samoan Advisors) from two to three (Malietoa, Tuimaleali’ifano and Tupua). Legislative Council members were to be paid £50 per year, and the Fautua were to be paid £100. It recommended that a Finance Committee be established comprising three representatives (three Sāmoans and one European) to discuss issues concerning public accounts, revenue, taxation and expenditure with the Administrator, Treasurer

and Secretary of Native Affairs. The mission wanted information on public accounts to be published in the government *Savali* newspaper. It sought provision for the Legislative Council to discuss financial estimates of the territory before submission to New Zealand for government approval and consideration of the Council's recommendations. It also wanted to revoke immediately the Fono a Faipule (district representatives), and to organize a re-selection so that full representation of the Sāmoan people would take place. A request for the date of re-selection was proposed for 30 September 1936. The reselection of the Faipule was to be an item of disagreement. In addition, the mission requested to increase the number of medical practitioners and nurses in the hospital and medical system throughout Sāmoa, to have qualified dentists provide dental treatment for school children and to ensure a complete school dental system. The final request was to ensure a census was completed by the end of the year.<sup>51</sup>

In response, Tuala Tulo acknowledged that the meeting had taken place in order that the mission 'could leave the country with a settlement', and advised that 'it was the wish of the people that High Chief Taisi, who was present, should say a few words'. In a report on the meeting the New Zealand delegation recorded that:

Taisi expressed his gratitude to the Hon. Minister and Mr O'Brien and to His Excellency the Acting Administrator for the opportunity given him to attend the conference. He stated that perhaps no other living person had suffered as much as he had under the policies of past Governments but was glad to see that in the few weeks the Ministerial Party had been in Samoa they had helped to undo much of the causes of unrest and dissension of the past, and that the better understanding between the Mandatory Government and the Samoans was amply demonstrated by the happy relations which one could see on every hand and also by the very kind and friendly gesture on the part of the Hon. Minister and the Ministerial Party in joining with the Mau and other Sāmoans in welcoming his family and himself back to his homeland.<sup>52</sup>

Ta'isi was referencing a painful history of his exile to New Zealand in 1927 and 1934, and his efforts in lobbying international support for the Mau.<sup>53</sup> Ta'isi's speech referenced events that had taken place under the previous government, but he saw the mission's visit as a peace offering for Sāmoa. He emphasized the need to establish 'mutual Goodwill, respect and confidence' towards 'an amicable and a lasting settlement' and 'he hoped a new Phoenix would arise'.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, Ta'isi emphasized that the Sāmoa and New Zealand contexts were vastly different 'with regard to culture, environment and conditions' as 'New Zealand is a white man's country', but 'it was quite the other way round in Samoa'. He added that previously the new government was the opposition,

and referred to expenditure as a wrong by the previous government. Although Langstone replied that all had been explained at previous meetings, Ta'isi reiterated that the Sāmoans 'were not quite clear about the matter nor quite satisfied about it'. Moreover, the matters for 'redress and reparations' should be 'held over' in order to dispel any 'new basis for dissatisfaction'. Ta'isi reiterated that 'any influence he had with the Samoans would be used to get the desired result'.<sup>55</sup>

In between these discussions, Tuala raised 40 points (later with an addition of 16 points) that had been presented by Mau President Faumuina (who was absent due to illness) to the delegation at their first meeting on 16 July. Langstone argued that the 40 points had been summarized into five points, and claimed he had responded to these. However, Tuala rejected this claim and reiterated that each point required a response before the Mau would consider the delegation's 13 points, which had been brought back to the Mau, after the mission's visit and consultation with various groups. To this and Ta'isi's points, Langstone defended the aspirations and methods of the mission:

We endeavoured to see much of Samoa and its people as possible so we would understand Samoan cultures, conditions and outlook of the people, and during all those meetings we explained, in as clear words as possible, everything in detail. We answered everything in the best and most friendly and open spirit. We have tried to shed light in dark places and to clear away the misunderstandings which were befogging the minds of the people so that they could see what the Goodwill Mission and the New Zealand Government was desirous of doing, so we could meet and agree on a foundation basis with the result of a united and combined Samoa. No person in your territory, Sir, has been denied access to us, whether he was a European, a Samoan, or native born. Whether he was a member of the Mau or Malo, it made no difference.... It has filled our hearts with pleasure and joy. There are no two European men in the world today who are better champions of the Samoan people than Mr O'Brien and myself.... We want to educate the Samoan people and gradually give them the opportunity of becoming officials of the territory and because of their holding those positions, automatically take their places in the Legislative Council, and in the process of time gradually become the full and self government of Samoa ... anything we laid down is not bargaining, but it is to meet a sacred trust and to lay down a foundation for the people of Samoa to come together upon.<sup>56</sup>

Ta'isi had stressed the need for mutuality between both parties, but Langstone's emphasis was on New Zealand's role in educating Sāmoans in the practice of governance before independence was possible.

In reference to the Mau's point about reselection of the Fono a Faipule, Langstone agreed this was important since 'the Mau people had said they took no part in the previous selection of the Faipules and we wanted a united Sāmoa'. There was discussion about the criteria of representation as some

thought fa'alupega (village constitutions) was appropriate. On revisiting some of the points, Langstone explained that although they recognized loan money from New Zealand of about £200,000 was not 'spent wisely', and that 'this money which came from our country was used for forces and arms and caused such damage', Langstone reiterated that the issue of redress was impossible since the Labour government was, at the time, not in power. He further stated, 'Sāmoa has nothing to fear from the Labour Government in New Zealand.... The most important question and the greatest and fundamental question here today is not the 40 points, nor all other questions but the thing is to come to an agreement'. The delegation further recognized the significance of their mission stating 'our historical meeting here today will start a new era, the signing of [a] charts [sic] of a new order as far as Sāmoa is concerned'.<sup>57</sup>

Ta'isi advised that a 'resolution' may not be 'acceptable' as Sāmoans needed more time to consider it because 'the Samoan system was that decisions were not reached by majority but by unanimity'. Rather than a resolution, he wanted 'a definite understanding with satisfaction on both sides'. When O'Brien questioned why the Sāmoans were not co-operating, Ta'isi reminded him that the memories of repressive colonial policies were still fresh in people's minds: 'at the time there were conditions which did not make it possible for the Mau to cooperate. There were certain laws, restrictive laws, whereby they were not free to move about. It was not acceptable to any man who had any self-respect to ask a Policeman for a permit.' Furthermore, he stated that 'while the Samoans were being asked to forget the past, the past would ever remain in their minds until such changes had been brought about in the administration of Sāmoa which would make it easier for the Samoans to forget'.<sup>58</sup>

Where the Mau sought answers to their points, the delegation was constrained by time and by the objective of returning to New Zealand with an agreement from 'all of Samoa'. Nonetheless, this heated exchange between Mau members and the delegation reveals the mission's poor understanding of the situation in Sāmoa, and the Mau's desire for redress and compensation. When Tamasese posed the possibility of a British Protectorate, Langstone berated him: 'All right, if you are stupid enough to believe you would be better off that way, well, go right ahead. We don't want Samoa; we don't want your bananas; we don't want the [ship] *Maui Pomare*. When you get a protectorate, see where it will land you. You will be in for a hot time, believe me.'<sup>59</sup> This outburst was a far cry from New Zealand's 'liberal and calm approach to Samoan politics'.<sup>60</sup> The mission's failure to understand the broader discussions and cultural subtleties during the meeting indicated, although unlikely, the possibility of Sāmoa's dismissal of New Zealand.

Despite having validated the Mau through the appointment of Mau leaders to key positions in government offices,<sup>61</sup> this final meeting revealed deep-rooted misunderstandings and the impracticality of finding a way forward.

### **Unresolved Matters**

The symbolism of the mission's visit had drawn local and international attention and resonated with the community at various levels. On his return to New Zealand, Langstone claimed the mission as a success. This was a message he was at pains to convey in his letters to Mau leaders in Sāmoa:

Our minds are filled with pleasant recollections of our visit to your country, and our lives have been enriched by the many friendships we formed with representatives of the Samoan people. It was indeed a Goodwill Mission and our Prime Minister is delighted to learn that, as a result of it, our Samoan brothers have been brought into one main unit whose object will be to work with the Administration through the channels we have provided, for the general prosperity and well-being of the territory.<sup>62</sup>

In response, Mau member Ainu'u Tasi assured Langstone that the work of the mission was continuing: 'The feeling throughout these meetings is to work in with the Administration having as a basis the foundation laid down by your good selves for the prosperity of Samoa as a whole. Mistrust and suspiciousness of the past have disappeared, thanks to the able manner you both handled the situation.'<sup>63</sup> Government interpreter Matatumua expressed his appreciation and allegiance to the Malo:

I was glad also to see the silly quarrel with the Mau dying away, when your Party pointed out how easy it was for all the Samoan people to pull together in peace.... In Samoa Mau and Malo will always remember the Labour Government of New Zealand with the warmest memories, and I will always remember your Party which came here, and will keep your letters and gift before me to remind me of the 'Goodwill Mission' of 1936.... Yet I understand that in New Zealand your government also has its 'Mau' to contend with.<sup>64</sup>

In reporting on Ta'isi, Acting Administrator Alfred Turnbull wrote explaining: 'You will be glad to know that everything is proceeding in good order. Mr Nelson is co-operating in every way. Last night when a Ball was given at Vailima to the American visitors, he and his 3 daughters attended, and relations were of the best. After all this is an acknowledgement of his respect towards the Malo.'<sup>65</sup>

The delegation's visit was a matter of international interest. In New South Wales, the *Barrier Miner* newspaper in Broken Hill noted that '[m]embers of the New Zealand Goodwill delegation to Samoa said on their return to

the Dominion that Samoan people were now united and were determined to work in harmony with the administration ... that all mistrust, grievances and misunderstandings of the past had been cleared away.<sup>66</sup> In contrast, the Tasmanian *Advocate* emphasized Tupua Tamasese Meaole's view that: 'They did not want to break away from Britain. They wanted New Zealand protection, but had the right to manage their own affairs'.<sup>67</sup>

Indeed, the mission's visit revealed various levels of disconnection and left many issues unresolved. Locals continued to press for government action, such as resident Stowers who had written to the New Zealand Prime Minister in October 1936:

We are very sorry to state that after five months since we stated our grievance to the Goodwill Mission, things remain the same ... we pointed out to him [Langstone] whereas our men are walking the streets, the Public Works Department still employ Chinese Artisans, and the only satisfaction we get from him were false promises ... now we turn to you and beg to give us our rights, right to get work and to earn a living in our own country.<sup>68</sup>

Stowers argued for 'splitting up the coconut plantations, say 250 to 300 acre blocks; this will give employment to our Returned soldiers and also to our army of unemployed landless. It will also relieve you of the upkeep of a large clerical staff and the difficulties of the labour question.'<sup>69</sup>

Despite admirable changes brought about by the Goodwill Mission and the repeals, the Faipule continued to press for the recognition of issues important to them. Thus, a petition signed on 20 October 1936 at Mulinu'u by 39 Faipule was endorsed by both the Mau President Faumuina Fiamē and the executive committee of Tuala Tulo, Anapu, Leleisi'u, and Tagaloa. The 21 points outlined in the appeal were made on behalf of the Sāmoans to the New Zealand government 'on matters which have been unanimously agreed to by the Faipule in the fono but not allowed by the New Zealand representatives at the Fono.'<sup>70</sup> It is unclear what became of the petition and whether there was a response from the administration in Sāmoa or the New Zealand government.

### **Conclusion**

As this article demonstrates, the Sāmoa–New Zealand exchanges were complex and the Goodwill Mission, despite its intentions, did not wholly address local responses. Most pressing for the Mau members was the issue of 'redress', which was bypassed by the mission as being outside of its scope. In fact, although carefully orchestrated by New Zealand, Ta'isi's return had brought an air of optimism which the Mau and Ta'isi himself were keen to exploit. Furthermore, support for Ta'isi as a representative of the Mau



was clear in the exchanges at Vaimoso. In fact, two years later, Ta'isi led a delegation to Wellington in January 1938 along with Tupua Tamasese Mea'ole (Mau President), Fa'alava'au 'Au, Alipia Galu, Leiataua and Malienafau (Ta'isi's daughter).<sup>71</sup> Even though there was ill-feeling from officials towards Ta'isi and the 'New Mau', Ta'isi explained that the trip 'was to discuss concerns in person rather than via correspondence, and so achieve the best government of Samoa through a partnership with the New Zealand government and Samoan leaders'.<sup>72</sup> Although the delegation was welcomed in Wellington, they never met with Savage (only Langstone), and had to pay for their own accommodation.<sup>73</sup> The delegation sought action for the further repeal of ordinances, particularly those in reference to banishment and exile, travel permits and increasing salaries for Sāmoan officials. At the time of the Sāmoan delegation's visit, New Zealand was preparing to celebrate the centenary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi with the *New Zealand Centennial Exhibition* (1939–1940), which included Sāmoa under the Island Territories umbrella.<sup>74</sup> The outbreak of the Second World War meant that New Zealand's Labour government was to become preoccupied with responding to that crisis.

Although the Goodwill Mission has been acknowledged as a key part of the transition to independence, it represented the combination of global and local events that paved Sāmoa's path to self-government. This article demonstrates the complex climate of exchange between the New Zealand government and the local community in Sāmoa. It highlights Samoa's continued resistance to New Zealand's administration during the mission, which combined with global decolonization and the formation of the League of Nations, contributed towards achieving independence.

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## NOTES

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36 Letter from Amando Stowers, 4 April 1936, IT1/65, part 1, ANZ.

37 Meeting between Delegation and Planters Association, Central Office, 11 July 1936, IT1/65, part 1, ANZ.

38 Meeting between Delegation and Planters Association, Central Office, 11 July 1936, IT1/65, part 1, ANZ.

39 Meeting between Delegation and Planters Association, Central Office, 11 July 1936, IT1/65, part 1, ANZ.

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42 He had been exiled to New Zealand in 1927 with Ta’isi Olaf Nelson and Edward Gurr. Smyth was later to return to Sāmoa.

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