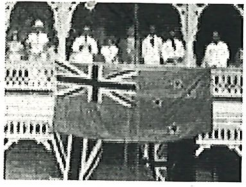


# Towards independence - NZ in Samoa



Raising the New Zealand flag in Apia

The Labour Party victory in New Zealand's 1935 general election broke the political stalemate in Samoa. A 'goodwill mission' to Apia in June 1936 recognised the Mau as a legitimate political organisation, the Samoan Offenders Ordinance was repealed, and Olaf Nelson's exile was revoked. The Mau held majorities in both a newly elected *Fono of Faipule* and the legislative assembly.

But dissatisfaction remained. Samoan self-government was slow to emerge, due in part to the Great Depression and the Second World War. A worldwide trend towards decolonisation after the Second World War and increased pressure from the newly formed United Nations led New Zealand to prepare for Samoan independence.

Western Samoa achieved independence on 1 January 1962. Tupua Tamasese Maeole, son of Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III, became joint head of state with Malietoa Tanumafili II, the son of New Zealand Administrator George Richardson's *fatua* (adviser), Malietoa Tanumafili I.

On 4 June 2002, nearly 90 years after New Zealand's Samoa Advance Party first stepped ashore at Apia, the New Zealand Prime Minister, Helen Clark, returned to Samoa. Speaking to delegates assembled to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Samoa's independence, she offered 'a formal apology' that brought some degree of closure to an uncomfortable chapter of New Zealand history:

On behalf of the New Zealand Government, I wish to offer today a formal apology to the people of Samoa for the injustices arising from New Zealand's administration of Samoa in its earlier years, and to express sorrow and regret for those injustices.

Helen Clark, speech at State Luncheon, Apia, Samoa, 4 June 2002

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# Colonial administration - NZ in Samoa



League of Nations  
mandates in the  
Pacific in 1919

The League of Nations formally allocated New Zealand the Class C mandate of Western Samoa in December 1920. Samoan leaders were not consulted as other nations decided the islands' future.

## Colonial rulers

### NZ Administrators, 1914-62:

- Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Logan (1914-19)
- Colonel Robert W. Tate (1920-23)
- Major-General George S. Richardson (1923-28)
- Colonel Stephen S. Allen (1928-31)
- Brigadier-General Herbert E. Hart (1931-35)
- Alfred Turnbull (acting) (1935-43)
- Alfred Turnbull (1943-46)
- Lieutenant-Colonel F. W. Voelcker (1946-49)
- Guy R. Powles (1949-62)

Legislation was already in place to support the mandate. On 1 May 1920, the Samoa Constitution Order had replaced the military occupation with a civil administration. The Samoa Act 1921 provided the foundations of government until Western Samoa's independence 40 years later.

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that the slave trade is  
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League of Nations  
Mandate for Samoa

Samoa Act established the British colonial model as the basis for civil administration. New Zealand's Governor-General appointed an Administrator to hold executive power. The position, based in Apia, reported to the Minister of External Affairs

in Wellington.

Law-making power was held by the Administrator and a local Legislative Council, although Wellington had final authority. Most Council members were administration officials, with local Europeans given a small minority of seats.

Samoans initially had no role in government. The *Fono of Faipule*, an advisory body of Samoan leaders established by the German administration and retained during New Zealand's military occupation, was not given legal recognition until 1923. Samoans first sat on the Legislative Council in 1928.

New Zealand was ill-equipped to cope with the Samoa mandate. It had no formal foreign service, so officials were seconded to Samoa from New Zealand's public service. Few stayed on for more than one three-year term, or took the time to learn the language or fully understand the culture.

Between 1914 and 1935, New Zealand appointed Administrators from military backgrounds who tended to take an autocratic approach to governance. They lacked experience of Pacific Island cultures, and were often ignorant of or unsympathetic towards Samoan customs and practices.

## Background - NZ in Samoa

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The Samoan archipelago, located in the southwest of the Pacific Ocean, comprises six main islands, two atolls, and numerous smaller islets. Its closest neighbours, the northern islands of the Tonga group, are 210 kms to the southwest.

In the late 19th century the Samoan islands became highly desirable to Britain, Germany and the United States as a refuelling stop for coal-fired shipping. A 'civil war' broke out between factions backed by each of these powers.

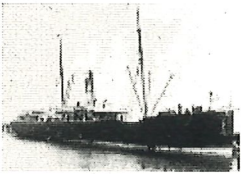
Samoans were not consulted when Britain, Germany and the United States agreed to partition their islands following the end of this civil conflict in December 1899. Germany acquired the western islands (Savai'i and 'Upolu, plus seven smaller islands), while the United States acquired the eastern islands (Tutuila and the Manu'a group) to support its Pacific fleet.



Robert Logan

When war broke out in Europe in August 1914, Britain asked New Zealand to seize German Samoa as a 'great and urgent Imperial service'. New Zealand's response was swift. Led by Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Logan, the 1385-strong Samoa Advance Party of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force landed at Apia on 29 August. There was no resistance from German officials or the general population. Next day a proclamation by Logan established a New Zealand-run British Military Occupation of Samoa. Read more about

the capture of German Samoa.



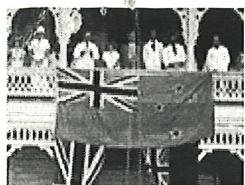
Influenza  
pandemic in  
Samoa

The relative quiet of New Zealand's wartime administration was shattered by a devastating influenza pandemic in November 1918, which killed approximately 8500 Samoans, or about 22% of the total population. For survivors, the disaster, and especially the administration's bumbling response to it, was seared into memory. It became the foundation upon which other grievances against the New Zealand administration would be built.

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