

CHAPTER FIVE

The Samoan Government in the 19th Century

Contributors:

Malama Meleisea
Penelope Schoeffel Meleisea
Gatoloi Peseta S. Sib

The Maio of Malietoa 1830-1848

The history of Samoa in the 19th century is very complicated since it was a period of revolutionary change and upheavals. Although from 1830 there are many written records of events, the majority were written by Europeans, many of whom were only in Samoa for a short time. The most reliable records of the period are those by English missionaries, however only a few wrote detailed accounts of what was going on among the Samoans; most of their writings concerned the work of the churches. The Samoans of the 19th century were becoming literate but there are very few written records by Samoans from this period. There are families and villages throughout Samoa who have stories about this period but since most of these stories are concerned with claims to matai titles, they do not always agree about what happened or why. This chapter attempts to outline Samoan political history from 1830 to 1900, but it should be remembered that there are other interpretations of the events of this period than those presented here.

There are a number of points of view about the papa titles and the office of Tafa'ifa (see Chapter 2) in the history of Samoa prior to 1830. While it is agreed that Salamasina was the first Tafa'ifa there is no

agreement as to whether the Tafa'ifa was held continuously after that time or whether it was not held again until the 1800s. According to one tradition l'amafana held the Tafa'ifa prior to 1802. The four titles had been passed down in the Sa Tupua descent line since the time of Salamasina. This tradition says that l'amafana in his mavaega (his dying testament) gave the titles to Malietoa Vainu'upo in 1802. Malietoa received the Gato'aitele and Tamasoali'i titles from Afega and Safata which made him the Tafa'ifa. Another tradition says that from 1810 the most powerful chief was Tamafaiga of Manono who gave himself the title as 'Tupu o Salafai'. According to this tradition, the only person to hold the Tafa'ifa since Salamasina was Fonoti who was known as 'Fonoti the King' (he probably lived early in the 17th century). Malietoa Vainu'upo won the titles Tui A'ana and Tui Atua after Tamafaiga was killed in 1829, and afterwards the two other papa were bestowed on him because he was the leader of the conquering side.

When Malietoa Vainu'upo died in 1841 he made a mavaega which was very controversial. His wish was that the Tui A'ana should be given to To'oa of Faielatai (who was later Tuimaleali'ifano Sualauvi of the Sa Taua'ana). To'oa's mother was the sister of Malietoa Ftisemanu. The Tuiatua was to go to Mata'afa Fagamanu of the Sa Tupua in Upolu. The titles of Gato'aitele and Tamasoali'i, and Malietoa and Tupu o Salafai were to go to Malietoa's brother Taimalelagi. Some of the parties who had helped to win the war did not like this. It seems probable that Taimalelagi did not accept it either. Many people wonder still why Malietoa Vainu'upo broke up the Tafa'ifa, instead of passing them to his brother Taimalelagi.

One explanation is that Vainu'upo, having become Christian wanted no more wars over the titles. other explanations are that Malietoa believed that he would be the last overall ruler of Samoa because of the coming of the Gospel and Nafanua's prophecy (see Chapter four). The other reason suggested is that Malietoa did, not have the right to choose his successor to the Tafa'ifa since the papa belonged to the orator groups of Upolu; his mavaega was only for the Malietoa.

In 1842 Malietoa Taimalelagi rejected the 'Lotu Ta'iti' after the death of his son and defied the missionaries by going to war with his forces from Fa'asaleleaga against Satupa'itea and Palauli. After this war Taimalelagi had the support of Manono, Tuamasaga and most of Savai'i.

The villages of A'ana had been devastated by the war of A'ana in 1829-1832, but ten years later with the encouragement of the mission they were beginning to become strong again. The chiefs of Manono did not like this because they wanted to keep their position as conquerors and rulers. In 1847 a party from Manono was returning from Sale'imoa in Tuamisaga and the people of Fasito'outa were afraid that the

Manono party would attack them. So they posted young men to watch during the night. When the Manono party heard this, they believed that the real intentions of Fasito'outa were to attack them as they sailed by, so they sent warriors to Fasito'outa, who destroyed many houses, collected all the taro and pigs they could find and did other insulting things, then returned to Manono. Shortly after this, Manono began to call together all their allies from various parts of Samoa despite the missionaries' intercession and the promises from A'ana that they wished to live in peace. The A'ana people did not have the resources to fight another war with Manono and the other parties of the malo, and so they were forced to abandon their homes and villages and go to other parts of Samoa where they had relatives and supporters. The majority of the A'ana people established themselves in the other Tumua district of Atua. Atua was also the vaivai (conquered party) because they had given support to A'ana during the previous war.

The Struggle Between A'ana and Manono 1848 - 1860

In 1848 another war broke out. The A'ana people and their allies in Atua and from a few places in Tuamasaga and Savai'i employed Europeans to build them boats with guns mounted on them. This was the first time in many centuries that any other party could challenge Manono whose military power was based upon their big fast canoes which ruled the seas around Samoa. The A'ana people and their allies built forts at Lufilufi and Si'umu which were designed to stop war parties landing from the sea. War parties from Manono came to Tuamasaga and built a big fort at Mulinu'u so they could stop the A'ana people from returning to their lands in A'ana or sailing along the north west coast of Upolu. This war dragged on for the next three years. It was not an all out war but consisted of short battles and ambushes in which parties from both sides tried to trap and kill small groups of people from the enemy side.

In 1851, with the backing of the missionaries, a truce was declared. This was not really satisfactory to either side because there was no conquering party and no conquered party, and both sides considered themselves the winners. This was the last war to be fought over political issues which were exclusively Samoan without involvement by European interests. It was also the first war to be fought on a large scale using European styled boats and weapons. The period from 1851 to 1857 saw a number of violent confrontations but by 1856 some A'ana people had begun to return to their lands. In 1858 Malietoa Taimalelagi died and was succeeded by Malietoa Moli an elder son of Malietoa Vainu'upo.

During the 1850s a number of significant events took place almost unnoticed by the warring Samoans. A foreign settlement had sprung up around Apia harbour and Apia had become one of the main ports in the South Pacific, along with Papeete in Tahiti and Levuka in Fiji. The settlers in Apia built stores, hotels and liquor saloons to cater to the increasing number of ships calling into the harbour. In the 1850s and 60s Apia was regarded as one of the 'hell holes' of the South Pacific, a town of wild, dangerous, drunken adventurers from all over the world. Aside from seamen and traders Samoa began to attract growing numbers of Europeans wanting land on which to plant tropical crops for European markets in the hope of making their fortunes. The European presence in Samoa had two awful consequences for the Samoans. Firstly, it had been customary from the 1830s for naval vessels from Europe and America to intervene on behalf of their citizens in Samoa. During the war of the late 1840s-1850s a number of Europeans claimed damages from the Samoans who were accused of destroying European-owned property. Secondly, the war had allowed European settlers to lay claim to areas of land which had been deserted by Samoans during the war. Although the European settlers paid for land thus acquired, there was doubt and confusion about whether the matai receiving payment had rights to dispose of village, district or family owned land. When settlers' rights were challenged by the Samoans they were likely to call in support from naval vessels of their own nationality. Because of the very different ideas which Europeans had about property rights in comparison to Samoans, European claims were usually upheld.

An initial code of laws had been drawn up in 1838 which had no effect on the Samoans but which were obeyed by at least some of the visiting ships for the first few years. British and American consuls were appointed in this period both of whom had connections with the LMS mission. Consul Williams who represented America was the son of the Rev. John Williams and the British consul, George Pritchard, had been an LMS missionary in Tahiti. While these men had some sympathy for the Samoans, their main responsibility was to the foreign citizens they represented. Malietoa MoIT suffered a number of humiliating experiences in the late 1850s when he was seized on several occasions by captains of warships of various nations as a hostage to secure the capture of Samoans who had offended European settlers. In 1860 Malietoa Moli died.

There were two candidates for the title, Talavou, the half brother of Moli, son of Malietoa Vainu'upo by a different wife and Laupepa, Malietoa MoIT's son. The two candidates were very different kinds of men; Talavou was a mature man who was not friendly to the powerful London Missionary Society and who had supported his father's brother,

Malietoa Taimalegali, in the recent wat. (Malietoa Talavou also held the title Tonumaipe'a and was widely known as 'Pe'a'.) Laupepa was a very young man who had been a student at the Malua Seminary and who was a faithful Christian. He had grown up in Malie and had the strong support of the Sa Malietoa in Tuamasaga. Talavou was supported by the Sa Malietoa in Savai'i. The two branches of the family could not agree on the succession and so both were given a saofa'i (installation ceremony) by their respective sides. To'oa Sualauvi, whose right to the Tui A'ana was accepted by Tumua in the 1860s, (To'oa was of the Sa Malietoa and the Sa Tupua) was given the titles of Gato'aitele and Tamasoali'i on the understanding that they would go back to a Malietoa in time.

Two Malietoa and the failure of the Confederation 1860 - 1873

During the 1860s foreigners had become increasingly numerous and influential. The German company J.C. Godeffroy & Sohn had begun their planting and trading operations in Samoa in the 1850s and were expanding rapidly. Theodore Weber, the manager of this firm, was appointed German Consul. Trading posts were being operated by foreigners throughout the islands and if the claims of European settlers are to be believed, Samoans were selling their land recklessly and indiscriminately. Another problem for the Samoans was that the chiefs of Apia no longer had any control over the Apia municipal area. As a result the Samoans faced a situation of lawlessness and trouble-making amongst and between Samoans and Europeans. The consuls and mission leaders and some European settlers felt that it was essential to establish a central government which could make laws and conduct courts. While many of the chiefs of Samoa thought this was a good idea and some had made laws in the districts, there was no authority which could speak for all Samoa. Because of the long history of having two parties in Samoa, the ruling side and the conquered, many Samoans either feared that their enemies might gain control through such an arrangement or found it hard to understand how all parties in Samoa could be equally represented in the central government, in a way which would avoid jealousy. The British Consul, Williams, thought that Malietoa Laupepa could be made king since he had the support of Tuamasaga which had the biggest foreign population. It was very hard for Europeans to understand Samoan ideas about political authority. For the Samoans, paramount chiefs were like flags representing the dignity of the extended families of Samoa.

The carrying out of government was the work of the orator groups who represented the villages and districts of Samoa. This division of

political authority was different from European ideas about kingship, even though in many countries in Europe during the 19th century, kings had lost most of their powers to parliaments which in those days were elected by men of property only. Centralised monarchies had been established with European encouragement in several parts of Polynesia and it was an arrangement of this kind which Williams had in mind. In Tonga, Taufa'ahau Tupou had made himself 'King George I' in the 1830s, with missionary assistance. He had succeeded in establishing a centralised monarchy because he had become king immediately after winning a war which gave him unchallenged power. In addition he had genealogical claims to all the highest ranking titles in Tonga. The situation with Malietoa Laupepa in Samoa was quite different. The Savai'i branch of his family did not recognise him and he held none of the papa which in the old days would have given him sacred authority throughout Samoa. The Tui Atua was Mata'afa Fagamanu and Tui Aana was Tuimaleali'ifano To'oa Sualuavi, who also held the Gato'aitele and Tamasoali'i.

Nevertheless, Malietoa Laupepa's supporters made plans for a confederation (faitasiga) based at Matautu (Apia), in which all the districts of Samoa would be represented as a kind of parliament; with Malietoa Laupepa as the king. When this news reached Malietoa Talavou's supporters, among whom there were also many Europeans, they established a rival headquarters at Mulinu'u near Apia declaring that only Talavou could be the proper leader of the faitasiga confederacy of districts. When all the district leaders came to discuss the matter, they went to Malietoa Talavou's headquarters which created a split amongst the chiefs of Tuamasaga who were divided between the two Malietoas. Malietoa Laupepa's supporters tried to resolve the matter by gathering together an army from various villages and districts who supported Laupepa's claim and in 1869 a new war began. This was called 'the war of the Faitasiga'. Malietoa Talavou's party became the most closely identified with the confederation although Laupepa's side had been the first to support the idea. Malietoa Laupepa's side chased Talavou and his supporters from Mulinu'u in 1869 but as the war developed between the two sides a combined force from Manono, Savai'i, Atua and A'ana formed behind Malietoa Talavou. The strongest support for Malietoa Talavou came from Pule. In the early days of this war, the only district to give strong support to Malietoa Laupepa was Tuamasaga, particularly the villages on the north coast. The war was fought in and around the Apia area because of the location of the two rival headquarters and later in the year of 1869, Talavou's side re-established themselves at Mulinu'u and invaded the Laupepa head-quarters at Matautu. During this battle Talavou's side damaged the

British Consulate and the British flag was torn down and destroyed. When this happened, Talavou's side performed an ifoga (ceremony of apology) before the British Council, who refused to accept it, (The Consul was Williams, who had earlier been American Consul but then left Samoa and on his return became British Consul.) The Samoans expected that British warships would come to punish them and when this did not happen, the prestige of the British was weakened and Consul Williams was regarded, along with Malietoa Laupepa's party, as one of the vaivai; the conquered side.

By the early 1870s European settlers were beginning to feel that Samoa should be colonized. The war between the two Malietoas had caused extensive damage to European property and Malietoa Talavou was given most of the blame. However, the Europeans were not united and there were conflicting German-British and German-American interests.

An account of the Civil War of 1869 by Thomas Trood

The first shot was fired on the night of Good Friday 1869; I saw the flash from McFarland's verandah where I was sitting, and for three days and nights afterwards the battle raged around the town. Talavou was held at bay, his forces being the greatest, by a palisade extending from the Mulivai River to Vaea hill on the west, and from Moataa on the east to a spot some distance inland. Laupepa placed his troops who were in full possession of Apia proper, and of the coast line as far as Moataa; under a system of watch and watch every four hours, and their food was obtained by purchase from the stores. In this year, principally through the war, the natives in order to raise money to buy arms and food supplies began to mortgage and sell their land.

For nearly two years previously several thousand men, through being under arms, had been prevented from working on their food plots or otherwise doing anything to support their families, and so the sale of the land as stated became absolutely necessary, for like nearly all the island races the Samoans are thoroughly improvident; what will become of them or their children and successors in future years gives them no anxiety so long as the present necessity is grappled with; and pieces of land which would have supported them and their families for the next hundred years were bartered away for a rifle or a few tins of biscuits; their full cash value, and as proved subsequently more than their value, as far as the purchasers were concerned, but of a value to the natives who sold them not to be reckoned in money.

The battle was carried on, as said, around Apia for 72 consecutive hours, without any intermission, during which time perhaps a couple of hundred men were killed or dangerously wounded.

Then on a signal given by a cannon shot from Matutu by Laiafi, one

f Laupepa's commanders, at midnight, the main part of his troops began their march across the island on the Faleali'ili road, of which they had retained possession, detachment after detachment following them until a little before daybreak the remainder - picked men left behind to scout and fire occasional shots along the palisades and so prevent the enemy from perceiving the retreat - broke into a full run along the road and ultimately joined the main body. Proceeding then to Safata they entrenched themselves there so strongly that it was impossible to dislodge them, and ultimately some months afterwards peace was patched up between the two men, but in a temporary form only, for war in one way or another continued between them to their supporters until the year before Talavou's death (in 1880) when he, Laupepa, and Mata'afa formed a joint government at Mulinu'u under the protection of the three Consuls. It is worth noticing that in consequence of events arising out of such disturbances the de facto Samoan Government in the beginning of 1878 assigned to the United States Government the privilege of establishing a naval coaling station at the port of Pago Pago.

The scene along the palisades and in other places where there had been hand to hand conflicts was one not easily forgotten.

Bodies half buried left to be torn to pieces by the dogs, arms and limbs partly covered with soil, partly stretched out above it, the conquerors making brutal jokes at the spectacle.

Their temper when they took possession of Apia proper on the morning referred to was of the worst kind; the eyes of many seemed to be starting from their heads positively protruding from the socket in an abnormal and uncanny manner. At first Andrew McFarland and I thought that they might attack us, but they had no such intention, even sparing those Europeans, the British Consul for instance, who had espoused Laupepa's cause, although they gave him a mild hint of their feelings towards him by shooting at his hall door one of their own men who had been wounded, and then attaching his head to one of the fence palings in its front.

Having taken possession of Apia and all the coast line on the north side of Upolu the victors began to sell the land belonging to their enemies, and as they were in want of money disposed of it at very cheap rates. In consequence of this the latter when they returned to Apia, a good many months afterwards, were disagreeably surprised at the course events had taken, and many disputes arose between them and the foreigners who had acquired their land, some of which was carried into the Courts, but I am unable to say with what results, expecting that in one or two cases which came under my notice such 'war titles' were declared valid; that fact, however, not protecting the occupants against the repeated attempts of the original owners to regain possession in one instance continuing till the present day. Certainly such sales ought to have been at once barred by the authorities, although here again the war did away with all native

authority, and the Consuls had no power to act in the matter. Although the fighting took place in the very streets of Apia the combatants took every precaution to safeguard foreigners, and business was not interrupted by it. People passing from the east to the west end of Apia, on foot or horseback, were requested as they reached the palisades to cross over the road or bridge in front of them as quickly as possible so that the firing might continue; having done which the combatants renewed hostilities. Being fairly good marksmen any men who taking cover behind coconut trees as most of them did, exposed incautiously their elbow or foot were certain to be picked off, a good many deaths from wounds of this nature being caused by tetanus. At the back of the town on the adjacent hills where scouts from both sides were posted, one or two of them lost their lives in a singular way. Men employed on this service always blackened their faces to prevent identification and so those referred to having fallen in with other scouts also with faces blackened they gave the wrong answers to their questioners, and so were shot down by their own party generally too much in a hurry to make lengthened enquiries, especially if the circumstances were suspicious.

It is interesting to note the difference between the attitude then, 1869, of the Samoans towards foreigners and that in the 1899 war.

In the latter the war between Mata'afa and Malietoa every foreigner's house, situated within five miles of Apia, was looted by both parties, although no Europeans were attacked by the natives, ominous threats were made more than once against the whole European population, showing the danger of interfering in native wars between rival war parties. Had a massacre taken place in 1899, the natives could hardly have been made responsible for it.

It may be said that important interests were at stake necessitating interterence, and that is, to a certain extent, strict truth, but when the safety of hundreds of Europeans and their families was trembling in the balance is evident that the action of some individuals, whoever they may be, calls for something more than a mild rebuke on the part of the historian who may write impartially on the occurrences which took place in Samoa between the 31st December 1898, and the 14th May, 1899, when the Commisioners arrived bringing peace in their hands.

The Malo of Malietoa Laupepa 1873-1876

Following peace talks between the rival Malietoa factions, Malietoa Talavou returned to Savai'i and it was agreed that Malietoa Laupepa would be joint king with a representative of the Sa Tupua. Tuimaleali'ifano To'o Sualauvi died in 1870 and Tui A'ana, Gato'aitele and Tamasoali'i titles were vacant. The Sa Tupua of Atua suggested that Tui Atua Mata'afa Fagamanu be appointed as the other king, but eventually the office was given to Tupua Pulepule. The new govern-

ment was made up of the two kings, a Fono of Ta'imua with seven members representing each main district and the Fono of Faipule with 36 representatives from the sub-districts. Secretaries of Treasury, State, Interior, War and Land were appointed as well as a Chief Judge and a Registrar. The main concern facing the government was land claims. The Ta'imua and Faipule wanted all unproven land claims to be dismissed. This did not suit European interests.

The biggest plantation interests in Samoa were German, and Godeffroy & Sohn was frustrated at both Samoan and rival European restrictions upon the expansion of their enterprises. The German Consul and Company Manager, Weber, had pioneered the export of copra from Samoa. Previously locally processed coconut oil was exported, this was prepared mainly by Samoans who extracted the oil from grated coconut which had been left in the sun in old canoe hulls. By the time the oil reached Europe it had to be reprocessed before it could be used (for soap, cosmetics and medicines). Weber invented the method of drying the coconut meat which could then be exported in bags and processed in Europe. The residue of the copra after the oil had been extracted, was used as cattle feed, which added to the value of copra at that time. The fibre of the nut was also exported and used to make coarse mats and upholstery filling. To develop the industry the Germans needed more land and labour, and measures which would force the Samoans to grow and sell more coconuts. This provided the German company with a strong reason to press Germany to colonise Samoa.

American interests were mainly in trading before 1871 but in that year a new company was registered in California; the Central Polynesian Land and Commercial Company (CPLCC). The owners of the company were land speculators - men who bought and sold land to make a profit. They took advantage of the wars of the late 1860s to buy land from the Samoans who wanted money for guns and the company intended to sell the land to European settlers for plantations. In 1872 the company claimed to have acquired 300,000 acres of Samoan land - half the land area of the islands. If this was added to German and other foreign land claims, there would have been no land left for the Samoans. What had been happening was that Samoan matai had been selling the same pieces of land to different buyers. One matai sold the entire lands of the village of Vaitele, including the land where the village was built. Some of the land claims were made for 12 square miles at Sale'imoa, 38,400 acres at Falealili and 6 square miles of land at Malie. As in the case of the German planters, the American land speculators tried to influence their government to colonise the islands or to declare

a 'protectorate' which would allow their land claims to be, legally recognised, surveyed and registered. Fortunately for the Samoans, the CPLCC went bankrupt before it could press its land claims with force. (The first European resident to promote the idea that Samoa was a place where men could make fortunes from land was George Pritchard. He publicised untruthful claims that there were hundreds of thousands of acres of empty fertile land in Samoa and Upolu could support up to five million people.) Another source of American interests was their need for a Mid-Pacific coaling station. In 1872 Captain Meade of the US Navy conducted a survey of Pagopago harbour on Tutuila and negotiated an agreement with Chief Mauga for recognition of American shipping rights to the harbour in exchange for US protection. It was the representation of these American interests in Samoa which led the President, Ulysses S. Grant, to authorise Colonel Albert B. Steinberger to visit Samoa as his emissary.

Steinberger spent 3 months investigating the situation in Samoa. Confident that he could influence the course of affairs in Samoa, Steinberger, who had connections with the CPLCC, visited Hamburg in Germany early in 1874 where he made a secret agreement to act on behalf of German commercial interest in exchange for their support for his efforts to negotiate a workable government in Samoa. Steinberger agreed to try to bring about four things which would serve the interests of Godeffroy & Sohn. Firstly, to obtain the consent of the Samoan government for the importation of indentured labour. Secondly, the recognition of all German land claims. Thirdly that the government would levy a tax on every Samoan matai to provide the government with 60 pounds of copra and 60 pounds of coconut fibre which the government would sell to Godeffroy. The fourth thing was that Godeffroys would act as bankers to the Samoan Government.

In 1874 Steinberger returned to Samoa. Although he had no definite undertaking from the US Government that they would establish a protectorate, he carried a letter of greeting from President Grant and gifts for the chiefs. Steinberger arrived on the US Naval ship *Tuscarora* which made a great impression upon the Samoans. He arranged with the Government to call a great fono which was attended by 8,000 Samoan leaders, at which he presented the gifts and read the letter from the President, which was translated into Samoan by George Turner of the LMS. The Samoans presented the Captain and crew of the *Tuscarora* with 700 chickens, 70 pigs and tons of taro and coconuts. Steinberger gave the Samoans the impression that the US Government wanted to establish a protectorate over Samoa. This was understood by the Samoans to mean that the US would protect their land from foreign intrusion and allow them internal self government. They did not seem

to realise that a protectorate might mean that they would lose all the land claimed by Americans. In fact the US Congress was opposed to the idea of American colonies and resisted President Grant's interest in the South Pacific and the Caribbean. It is not clear whether Steinberger knew this and was deliberately deceiving the Samoans, or whether he genuinely believed that he could make Samoa an American Protectorate in time.

He soon became enormously influential and popular with Samoan leaders of the day and acted as an advisor in establishing a new constitution which restructured the Government and the fono of Ta'imua and Faipule. The new constitution provided for a member of the Ea Malietoa and Sa Tupua to take turns in being King instead of the previous arrangement in which they jointly occupied the Throne. The first king was to be Malietoa Laupepa. In 1875 Steinberger became the first premier (Prime Minister) in the newly organised government. There were 14 Ta'imua - 'the House of Nobles' nominated by the districts and appointed by the King; and 19 Faipule - 'the House of Representatives' - elected from the districts for a term of two years. Each district was to have a governor (kovana) appointed by the Ta'imua and responsible to the King and Premier; the Governor's duties were to supervise tax collection and law enforcement.

The new government passed many laws which it made clear, would be enforced upon all. Some of the laws placed moral restrictions on both Europeans and Samoans, including the sale of Liquor. Many of the Apia traders disliked these laws and European feelings against Steinberger began to grow. Steinberger wanted to protect the Samoans from bad influences; he also said that he might hold an enquiry into land matters. The new American Consul, S.S. Foster, had originally come to Samoa to work for the CPLCC, disliked Steinberger and suspected that he was using the Samoan government to further his own personal interests and those of Germany in Samoa. The British London Missionary Society Missionary, George Turner, also became opposed to Steinberger. Although the LMS had originally approved of him, and certainly the code of laws he promoted, rumours of his German involvement worried them. There was also hope among the LMS that Samoa would become a British Protectorate, as Britain had just established a crown colony in Fiji. Steinberger, despite his possible earlier involvement with the CPLCC, opposed the land claims of this company, with which the American Consul, Foster, was still involved. Although the company had gone bankrupt, Foster was selling its land interests. This provided further reasons for Consul Foster's hostility and in 1876 he used his official position to denounce Steinberger's actions as 'unauthorized' by the American Government. When the HMS

Barracouta, a British warship called into Apia the Captain found all the American and British residents opposed to Steinberger. The Samoan government had not been worried about their previous lack of official credentials and as European opposition grew, their support for Steinberger became stronger. Captain Stevens and the Consuls informed the Government that they had no jurisdiction over Europeans, which the Samoans then even angrier. Finally, Consul Foster obtained evidence from the American Government that Steinberger had no official backing. This was the news he was waiting for, and with the help of Turner, from the LMS, Foster persuaded King Malietoa Laupepa to sign a deportation order. Steinberger was arrested and taken aboard the British warship. (Although Steinberger never returned to Samoa, the British Captain, and the British and American Consuls were eventually dismissed from their posts for the actions they had taken.)

The Ta'imua and Faipule were very angry with Malietoa for what he had done and rejected him as the King. Malietoa explained that he had done it under pressure but nevertheless he was deposed by the Government. The Consuls tried to reinstate Malietoa but still the Samoan Government would not accept him. The Ta'imua and Faipule suspected that the British were acting against Samoan interests and wanted to prevent the establishment of a United States protectorate over Samoa. Malietoa Laupepa returned to his home at Malie and began to call together his supporters from various districts of Samoa, to take action against the Ta'imua and Faipule who had deposed him.

The Samoan Government did not appoint another King immediately, because there was disagreement in the Sa Tupa who were divided in support of Tupua Pulepule, Tamasese Titimea and Tui Atua Mata'afa. The government stood firmly on land matters and refused to allow further sales, which angered some of the foreign settlers. But the greatest weakness of the government was in dealing with the foreign powers and the increasing rivalry between them. Malietoa Laupepa headed a rival government at Malie, with the support of Tuamasaga, A'ana and the Fa'asaleleaga district of Savai'i. Known as Puletua (rural authority: even in those days the Samoans had begun to think of the rural areas as 'the back' and the town as the important place) it followed the constitution of the pre-Steinberger government. The foreign cliques of Americans, Germans and British became entangled in the Samoan factions, adding foreign great power rivalry to the existing complicated divisions among the Samoans. Puletua was supported by the Germans and eventually by a number of Americans. The former American Consul, Jonas Coe, had also been temporarily deported along with Steinberger. Coe had lived in Samoa for many years and had many contracts with Samoan families through his Samoan wives. He had

not directly supported Steinberger but tried to stop Foster from taking such drastic actions which would upset the Samoans. It is not easy to decide whether Steinberger was a good or a bad influence for the Samoans. On one hand he gave the government strength at a time when they faced many difficulties. On the other hand he was secretly involved with German plantation interests and may have been interested in enriching himself at the expense of the trust placed in him by the Samoans.



Plate 9. Samoan army assembled at Mata'afa's residence at Mulinu'u, 1890s.



Plate 10. Samoan army marching through Apia, 1890s.