

**New Zealand's 'Critics of Empire':
Domestic Opposition to New Zealand's
Pacific Empire, 1883-1948.**

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A thesis submitted to Victoria University
of Wellington
in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts in History

Victoria University of Wellington
2014

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Abstract

The recent resurgence of interest in the ‘other side’ of New Zealand’s colonial history has reaffirmed the need to view the nation’s history in its Pacific context. This historiographical turn has involved taking seriously the fact that as well as being a colony of Britain, New Zealand was an empire-state and metropole in its own right, possessing a tropical, Oceanic empire. What has yet to have been attempted however is a history of the ‘other side’ of the imperial debate. Thus far the historiography has been weighted towards New Zealand’s imperial and colonial agents. By mapping metropolitan critiques of New Zealand’s imperialism and colonialism in the Pacific (1883-1948), this thesis seeks to rebalance the historiographical ledger. This research adds to our understanding of New Zealand’s involvement in the colonial Pacific by demonstrating that anticolonial struggles were not only confined to the colonies, they were also fought on the metropolitan front by colonial critics at once sympathetic to the claims of the colonised populations, and scathing of their own Government’s colonial policy. These critics were, by virtue of their status as white, metropolitan citizens, afforded greater rights and freedoms than indigenous colonial subjects, and so were able to challenge colonial policy in the public domain. At the same time this thesis demonstrates how colonial criticism reflected national anxieties. The grounds for criticism generally depended on the wider social context. In the nineteenth-century in particular, critiques often contained concerns that New Zealand’s Pacific imperialism would disrupt the sanctity of ‘White New Zealand’, however as the twentieth-century wore on criticism bore the imprint of anti-racism and increasingly supported indigenous claims for self-government. By examining a seventy year period of change, this thesis shows that at every stage of the ‘imperial process’, New Zealand’s imperialism in the Pacific was a subject open to persistent public debate.

Acknowledgements

For the following work I am most indebted to my supervisor, Dr Adrian Muckle. He has not only been wonderfully generous with his time, advice and support over the past twelve months but can also be credited with fostering my interest in Pacific history as an undergraduate student. For all the opportunities he has provided me with since, I am very grateful.

Acknowledgements must also go to the wider history department at Victoria for creating and maintaining a hospitable learning environment. Special thanks are due to Professor Charlotte Macdonald for opening my eyes to the fact that imperial history could be an exciting and vital field of historical inquiry.

I cannot forget to salute my fellow history postgraduates, particularly those who I had the pleasure of sharing an office with. They have made this a memorable process. So I thank Ben, Alex, Louise, Richard, Esha and Lauren for sustaining morale at all hours of the day and night.

I am very appreciative of the helpful library and archival staff who have put up with me at the Rankine Brown library, J.C. Beaglehole Room, Alexander Turnbull Library, Archives New Zealand, Auckland University, John Kinder Theological Library, Hocken Library and Hewitson Library.

And last but not least, my thanks extend to my family and friends (near and far) for their company, encouragement and well-timed distraction. I am aware I can no longer use my thesis as an excuse for avoiding social engagements.

This research was made possible thanks to a Victoria University Masters (by thesis) scholarship and the F P Wilson scholarship in NZ history. The project was also aided by a Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences summer research scholarship and two subsequent research grants.

Abbreviations

AJHR – Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives

ANZ – Archives New Zealand

ATL – Alexander Turnbull Library

CPNZ – New Zealand Communist Party

JICH – Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History

JPH – Journal of Pacific History

JPS - Journal of the Polynesian Society

LMS – London Missionary Society

NZJH – New Zealand Journal of History

NZLP – New Zealand Labour Party

NZPD – New Zealand Parliamentary Debates

PMB – Pacific Manuscripts Bureau

PMC – Permanent Mandates Commission

RSA - Returned Services' Association

WILPF - Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Introduction

One of the key questions regarding the colonial period is how to write about it.¹

The colonial Pacific has been written about extensively. The nature of Pacific Islands historiography has swung from ‘fusty, hidebound, backward-looking’ imperial history to J. W. Davidson’s ‘islands oriented’ approach first inaugurated in the 1950s.² In the years since, various scholars have transcended the ‘Canberra school’ by adopting and/or exploring an ‘Islander point of view’ imbedded in indigenous epistemologies, while others have persisted with the colonial archive, albeit read ‘against the grain’.³ Brij V. Lal and Doug Munro have used a maritime metaphor to describe the myriad approaches: ‘there are other ships of state, under different navigators, following different stars, flying their distinctive flags, and each plying its own trade.’⁴ This research project has drawn inspiration from ‘new imperial history’ and its focus on the themes of race and racism, place and space, gender, class, and violence in the imperial cultures of the colonial periphery and metropolitan centre.⁵ By examining domestic opposition to ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’ between 1883 and 1948, this thesis presents a new perspective on the way the colonial Pacific is understood. Its focus on those men and women who contested the imperial order from the vantage point of the metropole demonstrates the contestability of the imperial order and the complexity of the imperial experience.

¹ Robert Borofsky in conversation with Gyan Prakash, ‘A View From Afar (South Asia)’, in Robert Borofsky (ed.), *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts: an invitation to remake history* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2000), p.296.

² Stephen Howe, ‘Introduction: new imperial histories’, in Stephen Howe (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (London & New York: Routledge, 2010), p.10; J. W. Davidson, *The Study of Pacific History: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at Canberra on 25 November, 1954* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1955).

³ Nicholas Thomas, ‘Partial Texts: representation, colonialism, and agency in Pacific history’, *The Journal of Pacific History (JPH)*, Vol. 25, no. 2, 1990, p.153. Robert Nicole is one of several Pacific historians to read the archive against the grain, see Robert Nicole, *Disturbing History: resistance in early colonial Fiji* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011), p.6.

⁴ Brij V. Lal & Doug Munro, ‘The Text in Its Context: an introduction’, in Doug Munro and Brij V. Lal (eds.), *Texts and Contexts: reflections in Pacific Islands historiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006), p.3.

⁵ See Howe, ‘Introduction’, pp.1-20.

The genesis of this project lies in an attempt at disentangling H. E. ('Harry') Holland's so-called 'Samoan Complex'.⁶ Convinced that the New Zealand Labour leader was the only significant metropolitan voice opposed to the colonial policy of the New Zealand Government, I studied his 'complex' with the intention of recovering his role in the Samoan struggle for self-determination. I had hoped to portray the politician as someone who stood out in a society where citizens were largely ambivalent towards 'their' colonial Pacific. However, the historical record shows that Holland was not exactly the anomalous figure I had originally imagined. There were a range of metropolitan figures and organisations—religious, political and otherwise—who also questioned New Zealand's particular brand of sub-imperialism. The realisation initiated a new project of its own. My scope had widened and the search for critics of 'New Zealand's Pacific' had begun. Yes, Holland was perhaps the most noticeable critic; his position of political prominence enabled this, but what about voices from the other, perhaps less prominent, quarters of society? As it was, there existed an abundance of colonial criticism that, in my mind, could not remain unexamined. This thesis is the result of my task to unearth and find meaning in it all.

The types of people that emerged from the archive and existing literature can be broadly classified into two categories. The first, and most prominent, category constituted the political, intellectual and creative Left. These were people like the poet-cum-activist R. A. K. Mason, novelist Roderick Finlayson, and feminist-campaigner Miriam Soljak. In addition to individual critics, there were left-wing organisations such as the New Zealand Communist Party (CPNZ) and the unions affiliated to them, as well as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The second category, albeit more conditional than the Left, were Christian humanitarians. In the absence of a uniform policy from New Zealand's major denominational Churches, several individuals made leading stands. The Methodist minister Arthur Liversedge, a man who 'always seemed to have the mark of Christ on his brow',⁷ was one such individual, and the Anglican Vicar, the Reverend Arthur John Greenwood, was another. The assertions of these individual clergymen were often complemented by non-denominational Christian

⁶ See Nicholas Hoare, 'Harry Holland's 'Samoan Complex'', *JPH*, Vol. 49, no. 2, 2014, pp.151-169.

⁷ Ormond Burton, *Arthur Liversedge: a biography* (Auckland: Forward Books, 1951), p.8.

organisations, of which ‘the splendid women’ of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) were the most prominent.⁸ There were others too who did not fit these categories quite so neatly; here I refer to people like legal advisors to the Samoan *Mau* T. B. Slipper and P. B. Fitzherbert, and some Māori figures such as Te Puea Herangi, and to a degree, the politicians Sir Apirana Ngata and Sir Maui Pomare.

Although my thesis maps different expressions of dissent over a period of roughly seventy years—from the height of ‘new imperial’ jingoism to the beginning of the ‘trusteeship’ era—it is not an exhaustive account of the period that covers all sides of the anti-imperial coin. I have focused on illustrative and representative cases that reveal key themes residing within New Zealand’s sub-imperial debates at different stages of the imperial process. My study begins in 1883, when the first major legislative step towards Pacific expansion was passed in New Zealand’s Parliament, and it ends in 1948 when imperialism, as formerly understood, had lost most of its lustre, and colonial binaries had been eclipsed by a more cooperative and conciliatory approach from both sides of the imperial divide.⁹ The cumulative effect is a portrait of colonial New Zealand that stands in contrast to the popular perception that ‘New Zealanders dreamed of their country as the future “Britain of the South,” destined to dominate the Pacific as the old country ruled the Atlantic.’¹⁰ Historians have generally avoided making hard-and-fast claims about the pervasiveness of sub-imperial feeling, however the tendency to frame the narrative of ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’ around the imperial ambitions of leading political figures has given rise to the impression that New Zealand’s ‘Pacific Destiny’ was something of an axiomatic truth.¹¹

This thesis argues that even though colonial critics were always a minority, criticism was more present than previous scholarship has acknowledged.

⁸ Arthur Liversedge, ‘Letter to the Editor’, *NZ Methodist Times*, 28 Aug. 1920, p.13.

⁹ Stephen Howe has written that by ‘the 1950s if not earlier, such real faith as there had ever been in an imperial mission had been almost wholly lost.’ Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: the Left and the end of Empire, 1918-1964* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p.326.

¹⁰ Bernard K. Gordon, *New Zealand Becomes a Pacific Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p.2. Also see Angus Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

¹¹ ‘Pacific Destiny’ is Damon Salesa’s term, see Damon Salesa, ‘A Pacific Destiny: New Zealand’s overseas Empire, 1840-1945’, in Sean Mallon, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai and Damon Salesa (eds.), *Tangata O Le Moana: New Zealand and the people of the Pacific* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2012), pp.98-99.

Commencing my study by unearthing the strains of uncertainty present during the late nineteenth-century—a period regarded as the high-point of New Zealand’s sub-imperial zeal—I show that even at the apex, criticism was prevalent, ideas were contested, and equivocation was far from unusual. And although twentieth-century criticism of New Zealand’s colonial administrations is recognised more readily in the historiography, the true extent of this dissent has not been accounted for either. It is no coincidence that all the critics listed above can be traced to the interwar era. If the late nineteenth-century marked the height of support for New Zealand’s ‘Pacific Destiny’, the interwar period arguably represented the low point. During the 1920s, controversy surrounding New Zealand’s Samoan Mandate brought Pacific questions to the forefront of the nation’s conscience; opinion was divided, and the volume and forcefulness of criticism caused considerable unease amongst Government and colonial officials.

As well as arguing that criticism of New Zealand’s imperial ambitions and colonial rule in the Pacific was an important feature of the nation’s colonial discourse, I have also explored the links between domestic dissenters and anticolonial nationalists residing either in the colonies or, as was often the case, in New Zealand; a cross cultural collaboration that Leela Gandhi has described a ‘politics of friendship’.¹² Like Gandhi, I show that even though one of the central features of colonial rule was the carefully managed maintenance of social and political distance between the coloniser and the colonised—what Partha Chatterjee terms the ‘rule of colonial difference’—the intersection of the two dissenting parties meant this divide was often dissolved and confined to colonial fantasy.¹³ Similar to the way the presence of ‘half-castes’ challenged colonial boundaries, metropolitan sympathisers posed problems for colonial regimes by exposing the fallibility of their administrations, effectively limiting the dispersion of imperial hegemony.¹⁴ Criticism during the interwar period undermined the increasingly flimsy imperial façade of white dominance yet as cases of official censorship, deportation, and whitewash (not to mention the colonial archive itself)

¹² Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: anticolonial thought, fin-de-siècle Radicalism, and the politics of friendship* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp.9-10.

¹³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: colonial and postcolonial histories* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.10.

¹⁴ For discussion on how ‘half-castes’ disrupted colonial divisions see Damon Salesa, ‘Half-castes Between the Wars: colonial categories in New Zealand and Samoa’, *New Zealand Journal of History (NZJH)*, Vol. 34, no. 1, 2000, pp.98-116.

illustrate, colonial governments were willing to go to great lengths to ensure that metropolitan dissenters would not ‘stir up the natives’.¹⁵ For officials, ‘natives’ were incapable of agitating on their own accord; when the blame was not directed at a ‘troublesome half-caste’ like Ta’isi O. F. Nelson, or a New Zealand-based ‘trouble maker’ such as Albert Henry, it landed at the feet of sympathisers like Holland, or the lawyers Slipper and Fitzherbert, or in the case of the Cook Islands agitation, Auckland Unionist, T. J. (‘Pat’) Potter, who were all accused of unduly influencing the ‘natives’.¹⁶

By combining metropolitan criticism with expressions of anticolonialism from within the colonial Pacific, the intellectual distance between the metropolitan centre and the colonial periphery collapses as well. This analytical move, promoted by scholars such as Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, has the advantage of overcoming the very Manichean colonial binaries of coloniser and colonised, civilised and uncivilised, that were arbitrarily developed and enforced by colonial administrations and enshrined in the histories of colonial rule by old-fashioned imperial historians.¹⁷ In recent years, scholars have taken heed of Cooper and Stoler by placing ‘New Zealand and “other Pacific Islands” in a single interpretative frame’, as well as reaffirming New Zealand’s status as an ‘empire-state’ in the Pacific.¹⁸ Driven largely by the work of Damon Salesa, there is a renewed impetus on acknowledging the ‘other half’ of New Zealand’s colonial history;¹⁹ a realisation that this history did not only encompass ‘domestic

¹⁵ S. S. Allen to George Forbes, 10 Jun. 1930, PB Fitzherbert, IT1 446, EX 79/109, Archives New Zealand (ANZ).

¹⁶ For further examination of these types of racial attitudes in Samoa see Mary Boyd, ‘Racial Attitudes of New Zealand Officials in Western Samoa’, *NZIJH*, Vol. 21, no. 1, 1987, pp.139-155.

¹⁷ See Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, ‘Between Metropole and Colony: rethinking a research agenda’ in Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp.1-56.

¹⁸ Frances Steel, *Oceania Under Steam: sea transport and the cultures of colonialism, c. 1870-1914* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), p.8. See also Katerina Martina Teaiwa, ‘Our Sea of Phosphate: the diaspora of Ocean Island’, in Graham Harvey and Charles D. Thompson Jr. (eds.), *Indigenous Diasporas and Dislocations* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), pp.169-192; Damon Salesa, ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’, in Giselle Byrnes (ed.) *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (Australia and New Zealand: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.149-172; Sean Mallon, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai and Damon Salesa (eds.), *Tangata O Le Moana: New Zealand and the people of the Pacific* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2012); Alice Te Punga Somerville, *Once Were Pacific: Māori connections to Oceania* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp.xxii; Patricia O’Brien, ‘Ta’isi O.F. Nelson and Sir Maui Pomare Samoans and Māori Reunited’, *JPH*, Vol. 49, no. 1, 2014, pp.26-49.

¹⁹ For antecedents to this concept see P. J. Stewart, ‘Annexation of the Kermadecs and New Zealand’s Policy in the Pacific’, *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 28, no. 1, 1959, pp.67-71;

colonialism', but also New Zealand's fully-fledged overseas tropical empire comprising of Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue and three out of the four Tokelauan atolls, not to mention the vast series of informal connections between New Zealand and the islands of Oceania.²⁰ However, by acknowledging this imperial past, historians must also be wary of re-inscribing former colonial frameworks. That is, there is a danger when writing colonial history of treating core tenets of colonial regimes such as exploitation and white supremacy as unavoidable historical processes.²¹ This is why the shift to 'new imperial history' has taken notice of postcolonial and subaltern scholarship and scholarship such as Salesa's on 'New Zealand's Pacific' is punctuated with critical reflection tempering any possibility of a celebratory tone.

Another way to avoid the perpetuation of colonial legacies is to bring the contemporary critics of colonialism into the frame. Bernard Porter, author of one of the original books on the history of British anti-imperialism,²² recently observed the 'strangely neglected' nature of the "other side" of the imperial debate in Britain', noting that for 'every hundred books on imperialism published over the past fifty years, there can't have been more than one on its critics.'²³ There are signs that the 'scanty existing literature', as Porter described it, is multiplying in the historiography of other former imperial powers.²⁴ However

Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific*; Angus Ross (ed.), *New Zealand's Record in the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century* (New York, London: Hurst Humanities Press, 1969); F. H. Corner, 'New Zealand and the South Pacific', in T.C. Larkin (ed.) *New Zealand's External Relations* (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Public Administration, 1962), pp.130-153; Barrie Macdonald, *Massey's Imperialism and the Politics of Phosphate: Massey memorial lecture 1982* (Palmerston North: Massey University, 1982).

²⁰ Olohega, or Swains Island, the southern-most atoll of the island group, was and is still administered by the United States as part of American Samoa. For examples of New Zealand's informal imperial links see D. K. Fieldhouse, 'New Zealand, Fiji and the Colonial Office', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 8, no. 30, 1958, pp.113-130; J. A. Salmond 'New Zealand and the New Hebrides', in Peter Munz (ed.), *The Feel of Truth: essays in New Zealand and Pacific history* (Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1969), pp.113-135; David Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen: a history of the Melanesian Mission, 1849-1942* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1978).

²¹ Henry Yu, 'The Cantonese Pacific, Anti-Asian Politics, and the Making and Unmaking of White Settler Nations' (Keynote address), NZHA Conference, Otago University, Dunedin, 22 Nov. 2013.

²² Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radical attitudes to colonialism in Africa, 1895-1914* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1968).

²³ Bernard Porter, 'Review of Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics*', *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 Mar. 2011, pp.24-5.

²⁴ Nicholas Owen, 'Critics of Empire in Britain', in Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: the twentieth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.188-211; Kevin Grant, 'Christian Critics of Empire: missionaries, lantern lectures, and the Congo reform campaign in Britain', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*

such a study has not been attempted within the historiography of New Zealand and the Pacific. The recent ‘turn to empire’ by Salesa and others, presents an opportunity to arrest Porter’s observation from the outset.

Before the ‘other side’ of the imperial debate is defined, it is necessary to demarcate what the imperial side of the debate involved because the contemporary definition is not immediately obvious. I will be using imperialism to denote the act of a metropolitan State, in this case New Zealand, or other metropolitan actors, who sought to acquire a foothold, whether it be territorial or evangelical, in the Pacific, while colonialism is the actual practice of administering Pacific territories by colonial governments that occurred after imperial expansion. Yet it cannot be assumed that contemporaries understood imperialism in this way. This is because the term ‘imperialism’ did not enter popular usage until the 1890s,²⁵ and when it did enter the British lexicon, as Porter has remarked, it encompassed ‘not so much a policy as a *state of mind*’. Radicals conflated it with popular jingoism; a mix of ‘Anglo-Saxon ‘manifest destiny’ and race-pride as well as a worshipping and glorification of power, force and war’, which they opposed bitterly.²⁶ As Leela Gandhi argues, ‘imperialism was troped as shorthand for all that was wrong and iniquitous in the world’ by fin-de-siècle Radicals.²⁷ Foremost of these British Radicals was J. A. Hobson whose wide-ranging critique of imperialism, first published in 1902, became the inspiration to countless numbers of anti-imperialists.²⁸ Hobson viewed imperialism as the product of capitalists who only sought to expand Britain’s borders to open up new markets to invest their surplus capital. Summed up by Nicholas Owen, the imperialism that Hobson attacked ‘was manipulated by parasitic interests’, where

(*JICH*), Vol. 29, no. 2, 2001, pp.27-58; Jonathan Derrick, ‘The Dissenters: anti-colonialism in France, c. 1900-1940’, in Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur (eds.), *Promoting the Colonial Idea: propaganda and visions of Empire in France* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp.53-68; Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Julie Evans, Patricia Grimshaw, David Philips and Shurlee Swain, ‘Imperial Expansion and its Critics’, *Equal Subjects, Unequal Rights: indigenous peoples in British settler colonies, 1830s-1910* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University, 2003), pp.17-39; Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British critics of Empire, 1850-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); J. P. Daughton, ‘Behind the Imperial Curtain: international humanitarian efforts and the critique of French colonialism in the interwar years’, *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 34, no. 3, 2011, pp.503-528.

²⁵ Although the first appearance of the term can be traced to the 1870s, Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), p. 60.

²⁶ Emphasis authors; Porter, *Critics of Empire*, p.88.

²⁷ Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, p.8

²⁸ J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a study*, 3rd ed. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

‘only a narrow coterie benefited from Empire’ despite the whole nation bearing the costs.²⁹ Hobson’s arguments heavily influenced New Zealand’s twentieth-century colonial critics even though his surplus capital argument did not necessarily apply to the New Zealand context. Some advocates for Pacific imperialism did have trading aims in mind, but these were not significant enough to make a lasting influence on policy. More to the point, as a new colony of its own with ample domestic resources, New Zealand hardly needed to seek new Oceanic markets to invest in.³⁰

Imperialism, as understood in New Zealand, was differentiated even further by the fact that the term was usually employed to convey ties to Britain. The French political scientist, André Siegfried, provides a useful model for understanding imperialism in New Zealand’s colonial context. On his visit to the Dominion in 1899, Siegfried observed there were ‘two distinct currents of imperialism in the English colonies of the Pacific’. The first current he termed ‘greater imperialism’, which linked New Zealand and Australia to the British Empire, and the second current, the sub-imperialism I have been referring to thus far, he termed ‘local imperialism’, where New Zealand adopted its own ‘private attitude to Oceania’.³¹ This type of imperialism may have been distinct from greater imperialism but was not opposed to it because, as Siegfried noted, its most regular manifestation was the desire to attain “‘Oceania for the Anglo-Saxons.’”³² On the one hand, New Zealand’s local or sub-imperialists were motivated by a desire to defend their shores from hostile foreign powers, but on the other hand they were also moved by the same crude, jingoistic, race-pride that British Radicals rebelled against. Yet for all their imperial posturing, New Zealand was at once a colony of the British Empire, as well as its own empire-state. As Salesa has written, ‘Pākehā New Zealanders were colonisers, to be sure, but they were also in some ways colonised’.³³ At all times New Zealand’s imperial autonomy was circumscribed by either the Colonial Office or the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) of the League of Nations. For this reason we can only refer to New Zealand,

²⁹ Owen, ‘Critics of Empire in Britain’, p.189.

³⁰ Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific*, pp.290-291.

³¹ André Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, trans. E. V. Burns, 2nd ed., (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1982), p.350.

³² *Ibid.*, pp.350-351.

³³ Salesa, ‘A Pacific Destiny’, p.103.

however damaging its colonial rule was to its Polynesian subjects, as a sub-imperialist power.

As for Porter's 'other side' of the imperial debate, historians have employed different parameters for the subject. Although terms have varied there exists a general degree of uniformity amongst scholars over the need to distinguish between the anti-imperialism of the Marxist Left who, according to Barbara Bush, opposed 'imperialism *per se*' and critics of colonialism 'who directed their energies to reforming rather than abolishing colonial rule' and ultimately, remained 'implicitly rooted in the dominant discourses of power.'³⁴ Other scholars, such as Jonathan Derrick, have also omitted examining criticism of the material or self-centred variety.³⁵ My study will employ a relatively loose definition of dissent which encompasses both anti-imperialists, colonial critics, and those who were opposed to colonialism for self-interested reasons. Apart from the New Zealand Communist Party (CPNZ), there were very few strict anti-imperialists in New Zealand. By 1927, even the left-wing of the Labour movement had abandoned their advocacy for the dissolution of the British Empire, and replaced it with a desire to see a Socialist Commonwealth throughout the world.³⁶ Operating with a larger working definition of dissent helps capture the wide array of perspectives New Zealand citizens held in regards to 'their Pacific'.

As well as contributing to the historiography of the colonial Pacific and New Zealand, this thesis adds to the wider field of international anti-imperial historiography. Out of this literature, Stephen Howe's sketch of the typical British anticolonialist provides a useful framework for this study. According to Howe, British left-wing anticolonialists shared: a commitment to the principle of self-determination for all subject peoples; an acknowledgement that all independence struggles were interdependent and a subsequent awareness that international cooperation was necessary; a belief in the equality of European and non-European people; and an understanding that colonialism had to first be eradicated in one's own nation. A fifth claim, though less absolute, was that anticolonialism also

³⁴ Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p.16.

³⁵ Derrick, 'The Dissenters', p.53.

³⁶ 'Dissolution of the Empire', *The New Zealand Worker*, 12 Oct. 1927, p.4.

implied an anti-capitalist standpoint.³⁷ Although many of New Zealand's critics fit comfortably into Howe's framework, there were just as many who did not. As Bush has argued, colonial criticism did not necessarily imply ideological opposition to imperialism, and this is most convincingly illustrated in the example of Christian dissent. Susan Thorne has argued that although Christian missionaries generally embraced the imperial ideal, this did not 'preclude vociferous criticism of colonial practice'.³⁸ Kevin Grant has furthered this argument by demonstrating that it was Christian humanitarianism, rather than the radicalism of Edmund Dene Morel, that drove the British Congo Reform campaign.³⁹ Both these studies have reaffirmed the need to look beyond 'traditional' socialist anti-imperialism, and search for less unequivocal, but no less compassionate, attitudes to New Zealand's Pacific imperialism.

Contained within fin-de-siècle imperial critiques and interwar colonial criticism are a multitude of statements on metropolitan attitudes towards nationhood and national identity. A central concern of this thesis is to reinforce that as well as being fashioned in opposition to a growing number of immigrant Chinese, 'White New Zealand' was also created against a multi-coloured Pacific. Just as Stoler and Cooper contend that 'Europe was made by its imperial projects', so too was New Zealand.⁴⁰ Implicit in many of the debates over Pacific imperialism were appeals to settler nationalism. Edward Said and other postcolonial historians have proclaimed, 'In nationalism, there is always an "other."'⁴¹ Like European imperial powers and their colonies, New Zealand's Pacific territories 'constituted an imaginary and physical space in which the inclusions and exclusions built into the nations of citizenship, sovereignty, and participation were worked out.'⁴² In the case of the Pacific, the 'we-they' opposition served to promote a vision of New Zealand that included Māori but excluded other Pacific peoples, or peoples who happened to be residing in the Pacific like Chinese and Indian labourers, deemed

³⁷ Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics*, pp.1-2.

³⁸ Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in 19th Century England* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), p.8.

³⁹ Grant, 'Christian Critics of Empire', p.29.

⁴⁰ Stoler and Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony', p.1.

⁴¹ Edward Said, 'A View from Afar (Middle East)', in Borofsky (ed.), *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts*, p.445.

⁴² Stoler and Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony', p.3.

racially inferior.⁴³ Imperial dissenters were at the forefront of these debates. This thesis shows that in the nineteenth-century in particular, criticism was more regularly inspired by an aversion towards closer contact with Pacific populations than from any concern for their well-being.

Treating 'New Zealand' as an analytical whole, as has been done thus far, does not properly capture colonial reality. Tony Ballantyne has called for a greater appreciation of place and space within New Zealand historiography.⁴⁴ Different parts of New Zealand experienced different relationships with the Pacific. Salesa has explained that '[p]ublic interest in a Pacific empire for New Zealand did not circulate among all New Zealand subjects in uniform ways'. According to Salesa, interest 'was usually specific, concentrated in certain locations or among particular groups', groups he labelled 'domestic colonies of imperial interest.' These 'domestic colonies of imperial interest' did not constitute 'diffuse or amorphous configurations of "public opinion", but generally clustered around concrete formations – companies, banks, churches, cabinets, correspondence networks, readerships and political groups.'⁴⁵

The same line of argument can be made for colonial critics; that is, there were domestic colonies of *anti*-imperial interest. Individuals and organisations in New Zealand were drawn to different kinds of colonial injustices depending on their own interests. For example, the Labour movement was more readily drawn to issues of labour exploitation and naturally led the campaign against indentured labour. Moreover, individuals and organisations would similarly *not* comment on certain colonial activities due to conflicts of interest. Here, the relative silence of the New Zealand's Protestant Churches is illustrative. And despite having a long history of falling on the side of Pacific labourers, Peter Fraser's Labour Party of the 1940's decided not to act strongly on issues of Cook Island labour exploitation because they were now in Government and wanted to distance themselves from the Communist Party which Henry and the Cook Islands Progressive Association

⁴³ For discussion of Māori inclusion in 'White New Zealand' see James Bennett, 'Maori as Honorary Members of the White Tribe', *JICH*, Vol. 29, no. 3, 2001, pp.33-54; Barbara Brookes, 'Gender, Work and Fears of a 'Hybrid Race' in 1920s New Zealand', *Gender and History*, Vol. 19, no. 3, 2007, p.513.

⁴⁴ Tony Ballantyne, 'On Place, Space and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *NZJH*, Vol. 45, no. 1, 2011, pp.50-70.

⁴⁵ Salesa, 'New Zealand's Pacific', p.154.

(CIPA) had allied with. This illustrates that every debate on Pacific colonialism was highly contingent and clouded by realpolitik, there was generally more to colonial criticism than just personal conviction.

Aware of the need to address this topic from a perspective that incorporated as many non-official, or 'ordinary', voices as possible, I intended to use the official colonial archive sparingly. However I soon found myself, like countless historians before me, scouring the Island Territories files at Archives New Zealand. I discovered the official records were important depositories for colonial dissent precisely because the colonial authorities were keeping track of what aspects of their administrations were being criticised. Files were kept on individual critics, and in many cases, the most compelling criticism could be found in letters and petitions to the Government. That said, I have complemented what I have found in the official archive with 'public opinion' found in newspapers, magazines and pamphlets.⁴⁶ Yet the archive, both official and unofficial, can only capture so much; I acknowledge that the existing traces of criticism still only convey a fraction of real life dissent. There is every possibility that a lot of criticism went unheard, and this is especially the case when it came to the smaller Pacific territories, like Niue, Tokelau, and Nauru, that did not capture the attention of the nation in the same way as Samoa and the Cook Islands (at least the islands of Rarotonga and Aitutaki) did. Though being 'open' to a wider scope encompassing the entirety of 'New Zealand's Pacific', the final scope of this thesis has been influenced by the available material. The numerous critiques relating to internal Pākehā colonialism of Aotearoa New Zealand fall outside the reach of this research also. The latter topic demands further consideration in its own right, but as most critics of Pacific colonialism held simultaneous views on colonial injustice involving Māori, I have acknowledged this when appropriate.

Finally, even though this study arguably goes against the grain of the Canberra school of Pacific Islands historiography, it has been driven by the same ethos that drove the original adherents. Davidson himself was a colonial critic, he possessed

⁴⁶ For a concise comment on the limitations of using newspapers as representative of public opinion see Roger C. Thompson, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980), pp.4-5.

‘a commitment to decolonisation, well before it became fashionable.’⁴⁷ According to one contemporary, his ‘pro-“native” sympathies and commitment to indigenous self-determination’ did not make him overly popular with ‘the people who mattered’ during his career at Cambridge in the 1940s.⁴⁸ Borofsky has rightfully emphasised the importance of writing about the colonial period ‘without getting entangled... in the colonial entanglements themselves’.⁴⁹ I hope to prove that a focus on the metropolitan side of the colonial equation does not necessarily involve a re-centring of the colonisers, or tacit approval of the ‘colonising project’, or even neo-colonialism, rather I argue that by focusing on the metropole, through the eyes of the critics, we can open up a novel lens through which to approach the colonial Pacific. Like Graeme Whimp’s scholarship on the New Zealand Resident Commissioner in the Cook Islands, Walter Edward Gudgeon, I see my work ‘as one half of a project the other half of which, the re-centring of other participants, may more sensitively and accurately be taken up by others.’⁵⁰

This thesis is divided into three sections that aim to convey the relatively steady-stream of imperial criticism that emerged within New Zealand whenever Pacific imperialism or colonialism was debated. The first chapter covers the years 1883 to 1919 and argues that even though this was the period generally referred to as the era of ‘new imperialism’, New Zealand’s citizens were, mainly for a mixture of pragmatic and anxiety related reasons, far from unanimous in their response to top-down schemes of annexation or federation of Pacific territories. Annexation of the Cook Islands and Niue was tenable for many (although some thought it unnecessary), however, federation with Fiji—with their larger, and darker, population—proved less acceptable.

⁴⁷ Doug Munro, ‘J.W. Davidson and Western Samoa: university politics and the travails of a constitutional adviser’, *JPH*, Vol. 35, no.2, 2000, p.198.

⁴⁸ Peter Laslett (then a fellow postgraduate student), pers. Comm., 11 May 1999 in *ibid*.

⁴⁹ Robert Borofsky, ‘A View From Afar (South Asia)’, p.296.

⁵⁰ Graeme Whimp, ‘Writing the Colony: Walter Edward Gudgeon in the Cook Islands, 1898-1909’, in Brij V. Lal & Vicki Luker (eds.), *Telling Pacific Lives: prisms of process* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008), fourth to last paragraph. Also see Doug Munro, ‘Who “owns” Pacific history: reflections on the insider/outsider dichotomy’, *JPH*, Vol. 29, no.2, 1994, pp.232-37.

The second chapter reveals that once formal control of Pacific territories was assumed, New Zealand's colonial policy and administrative record were widely criticised for its shortcomings, perceived or otherwise. The Government's policy of indentured labour in Samoa, its decision to send the warship *Tutanekai* to Fiji in response to an Indian strike, and the mishandling of indigenous agitation for self-determination in Samoa and the Cook Islands will be used as case studies. These examples demonstrate that critics framed their arguments around a concept of 'British justice' that was not extended to the non-white populations of 'New Zealand's Pacific'. New Zealand's colonial administrations were more than willing to grant cultural sovereignty to their colonial subjects, yet they were not prepared to hand over political sovereignty despite extensive protests.

The final chapter addresses the interconnection between anticolonial movements and metropolitan sympathisers; an illustration of Leela Gandhi's 'politics of friendship' characterised by 'dissident crosscultural collaboration'.⁵¹ Here I argue that since suitable constitutional avenues for airing colonial grievances were denied to the colonial populations, indigenous peoples were almost forced to turn to 'white' critics who, as recognised citizens or on account of the colour of their skin, were able to address grievances on behalf of the colonised in national and international arenas. Ironically, by having to turn to metropolitan sympathisers, indigenous anticolonial movements were able to gain momentum that might have otherwise been absent. It was through these anticolonial networks that the divides between colony and metropole were bridged most demonstrably. My study culminates in 1948 when Henry and the CIPA severed ties with Pat Potter and the Communist Auckland trade unions and, in the words of Mason, took 'things off at a tangent with a co-operative trading venture' backed by the New Zealand Government.⁵²

⁵¹ Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, p.10.

⁵² Mason to the secretary, World Federation of Trade Unions, 26 Nov. 1951, in Rachel Barrowman, *Mason: the life of R.A.K. Mason* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2003), pp.296-297.

Chapter One

‘Greater New Zealand’: Questioning New Zealand’s ‘Pacific Destiny’

‘At both a practical and theoretical level, anti-colonialism goes back to the beginnings of colonialism itself.’¹

Since the time of European exploration in the South Pacific, visions of Pacific grandeur were projected onto the islands of Aotearoa.² Nowhere did the image of New Zealand as ‘Britain of the South Seas’ sit more comfortably than in the minds of the ‘great men’ of the newly created colony. Salesa has noted that since the beginning of New Zealand’s history as a British colony, ‘prominent colonials, from all walks of life and regions, had yearned to bring one or other South Pacific islands under New Zealand rule.’³ Individuals like George Grey, Julius Vogel, Robert Stout and Richard Seddon sought to add to their personal legacies through Oceanic imperialism. Yet this story of New Zealand’s ‘Pacific destiny’, widely propagated throughout the historiography, is overly top-heavy.⁴ It privileges official documents and papers, and gets its remit from the thoughts and proclamations of ‘prominent colonials’—and *New Zealand Herald* newspaper editorials—without due attention to dissenting voices. The narrative’s wide appeal has led to conclusions such as the following by Keith Sinclair. Reviewing Angus Ross’s *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century*, Sinclair wrote: ‘the most important theoretical issue which Ross explores is one of motive: why was it that public opinion in New Zealand was so unanimously imperialistic?’⁵

¹ Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: an historical introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), p.74.

² Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific*, pp.1-2.

³ Salesa, ‘A Pacific Destiny’, p.97.

⁴ R. M. Dalziel, *The Origins of New Zealand Diplomacy: the agent-general in London, 1870-1905* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1975), p.91.

⁵ Keith Sinclair, ‘Review of Angus Ross *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century*’, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 9, no. 2, 1965, p.171.

This chapter challenges Sinclair's summation by widening the frame of reference. While 'prominent colonials' may well have been 'howling empire from an empty coast', it is less certain that the not-so-prominent citizens of New Zealand shared this feeling.⁶ By looking at the wide-range of public discourse that surrounded debates over New Zealand's Pacific imperialism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the rhetoric of grandstanding politicians, largely accepted by subsequent historians, will be somewhat moderated. This is not to argue that large sections of the public did not endorse the ambitions of its leaders, but rather to show that other opinions existed, and thus should not be marginalised from the historiography. Taking newspaper opinion from this time period as a measure of public opinion (imperfect as it is), with its myriad of responses to New Zealand's involvement in the Pacific, leads to the conclusion that it would be misleading to label the New Zealand public as 'unanimously imperialistic'. In the process this chapter extends the largely forgotten argument made by Merz Tate and Fidele Foy almost half a century ago, by further demonstrating that there was no 'unanimity of domestic opinion on the wisdom of annexing Pacific islands or creating a South Sea federation...'.⁷

To demonstrate the existence of imperial dissent and assess the extent to which Pacific ambitions were challenged, this chapter follows the ebbs and flows of press discourse over three key events, or periods of time, when Pacific imperialism captured public attention. The first of these is the passing of the Annexation and Confederation Act in 1883 which was part of an (ultimately failed) attempt at implementing an Australasian Monroe Doctrine, but also a signal of New Zealand's own imperial ambitions.⁸ Next is Seddon's turn-of-the-century imperialism, including the annexation of the Cook Islands and Niue in 1901 as well as failed schemes for wider Fijian or Polynesian federation. The final stage is the granting of the League of Nations Mandate for German Samoa to New Zealand in 1919-1920 when 'anti-imperial' critiques began to first feature with the rise of Labour.

⁶ Allen Curnow, 'The Unhistoric Story', in *Sailing or Drowning* (Wellington: Progressive Publishing Society, 1943), p.20.

⁷ Merz Tate & Fidele Foy, 'Slavery and Racism in South Pacific Annexations', *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 50, no. 1, 1965, p.18.

⁸ See Merz Tate, 'The Australasian Monroe Doctrine', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 76, no. 2, 1961, pp.264-284.

Accurately recovering nineteenth-century public opinion can be a problematic task. By relying on newspaper editorials as its primary source, this chapter does not purport to be a history from below, nor does it claim to effectively capture public opinion. Social-science historians have convincingly dismantled the naïve assumption ‘that public opinion is identical with public presentation of opinion.’⁹ This assumption, despite the contemporary rhetoric of newspaper editors themselves, would be particularly inaccurate for nineteenth-century New Zealand.¹⁰ For the years 1840 to 1880 Ross Harvey has speculatively argued that since newspapers readership was low, ‘perhaps in the order of 5-8%’ of the population, editorials could not have influenced public opinion to any considerable extent.¹¹ Similarly, Patrick Day has characterised newspaper reading in New Zealand as primarily an upper-class activity for much of the nineteenth-century.¹²

By the late nineteenth-century however, the pattern of newspaper publication and readership had changed. Day has found that the growth in newspaper circulation from the hundreds to the thousands in the 1860s and 1870s, alongside increased publication frequency, and a reduction in price eroded some of the impediments to readership and gave the growing number of working class migrants greater access to newspaper opinion.¹³ Furthermore, the increase in daily newspapers meant the New Zealand reader became exposed to wider perspectives. This included, for the first time in New Zealand, a labour newspaper in the form of the *Grey River Argus* (to be joined by the *Maoriland Worker* in 1910). Despite operating under tight business models, editorials remained highly political through the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The new commercially-oriented nature of the news press meant editors no longer felt bound to their political patrons, and gained the freedom to profess their own ideology or political beliefs.¹⁴ Although Day argues this occurred most noticeably in regards to

⁹ George F. Pearce, ‘Assessing Public Opinion: editorial comment and the annexation of Hawaii – a case study’, *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 43, no. 3, 1974, p.326.

¹⁰ Ross Harvey, ‘The Power of the Press in Colonial New Zealand: more imagined than real?’, *BSANZ Bulletin*, V. 20, no. 2., 1996, pp.131, 134-5, 138.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.138.

¹² Patrick Day, *The Making of the New Zealand Press: A study of the organizational and political concerns of New Zealand newspaper controllers, 1840-1880* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990), p.174.

¹³ Day, *The Making of the New Zealand Press*, pp.174-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-8, 181.

newspapers stand on the provincial question, this chapter will suggest that the Pacific imperial question from the 1880s also provides an indication that individual editorial discourse was flourishing.

Debating Confederation and Annexation

The Confederation and Annexation Bill was introduced on behalf of Sir George Grey in June 1883. If passed, this Bill would have authorised the New Zealand Government to annex any 'unclaimed' Pacific territory providing that the indigenous leaders of the territory or territories in question agreed.¹⁵ On the one hand, the Bill was a reaction to the growing presence of France and Germany in the Pacific. It was part of an Australasian-wide initiative to ensure Oceania would remain predominantly Anglo-Saxon. On the other hand it needs to be viewed as another attempt by a leading colonial man to fulfil 'New Zealand's Pacific Destiny'. The latter reading is particularly apposite given the man behind the Bill was definitely no stranger to schemes of Pacific imperialism. Grey's enthusiasm for 'New Zealand's Pacific destiny' shone during his speech on the Bill in Parliament. He proclaimed, 'I think that New Zealand has been ordained by Nature virtually to be the future Queen of the Pacific.'¹⁶ Grey's enthusiasm was at least partly reflected in the nation's imagination. The *Waikato Times* felt that 'annexation mania' had 'taken so firm a hold on the public mind' with supporters adopting Grey's measures with 'feverish, anxious eagerness' rather than 'in a calm judicial spirit'.¹⁷

As Grey's statement implies, there was a nationalistic strain to the movement. The Colonial Office would have the ultimate say in any decision, but by allowing New Zealand to embark on its own foreign policy the Bill would have extended New Zealand's sovereign rights to an unprecedented degree. Unlike Vogel's and Grey's earlier Pacific schemes, the Bill was passed in August after several spirited readings. At this point, the only obstacle to New Zealand empire-building was approval from the Imperial Government. However, the Bill did not receive a favourable hearing; the Colonial Office downplayed the threat to Australasian security, while it was clear they had their own geo-political concerns to contend

¹⁵ See Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific*, pp.141-145.

¹⁶ Sir George Grey, *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD)*, Vol. 45, 1883, p.19.

¹⁷ *Waikato Times*, 21 Jul. 1883, p.2.

with elsewhere. Nonetheless, in abstract terms, the passing of the Confederation and Annexation Act (1883) signified the domestic realisation of what Siegfried would later term New Zealand's 'local-imperialism'.¹⁸ Because of this, the debate over the Bill provides a suitable departure point for examining whether Young's statement regarding the origins of anti-colonialism applies in the New Zealand context.

A number of significant international currents emerged during the 1880s that potentially influenced New Zealand's local imperial discourse. Foremost of these was what is now termed 'new imperialism'. As Andrew Porter has written, these were years of 'hectic European expansion.'¹⁹ Territorial acquisition in this period was justified on the basis that imperialism was a benign, regulated process that brought 'civilisation' to the colonised populations. The 'Scramble for Africa', formalised by the 1884 Berlin Conference, was mirrored to a lesser degree in Oceania. Germany, France and the United States competed with Britain to acquire 'unclaimed' Pacific territories. The effect was deeply unnerving for the Australasian colonies. However, as well as being a reflection of their insecurity, Australasian attempts to act on their own accord were also a demonstration of pride. The colonies believed that by annexing Pacific Islands they were contributing to the glorious expansion of the British Empire.

Less directly influential on New Zealand, but no less important for anti-imperial discourse globally in this decade, was the development of 'new unionism' and the 'socialist revival'. By the 1880s anti-imperial radicalism had become a significant, if small, sub-culture in Britain due to the socialism of the Radical party.²⁰ The same cannot be said for New Zealand as the first socialist organisations in New Zealand did not appear until the late 1890s. The Radicals' opposition to the Australasian colonies' plans for Pacific annexation did feature in the nation's press though was routinely dismissed.²¹ 'New unionism' had more of an effect in New Zealand as trades and labour councils began developing in the 1880s. But even here, growth was sluggish due to the depression, and they had not yet

¹⁸ Siegfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, p.350.

¹⁹ Andrew Porter, 'Introduction' in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914* (Michigan and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), p.1.

²⁰ Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, p.8; Porter, *Critics of Empire*, p.xi.

²¹ 'Australian Federation', *Auckland Star*, 16 Jun. 1883, p.2.

adopted an explicitly socialist agenda.²² There were perhaps signs of anti-imperial engagement at the end of 1883. The *Thames Advertiser* published an editorial on a new 'party' called the Trades and Labour Council which planned to launch in 1884. One of the policies of this new movement calling itself 'Labour' was a statement that 'It will oppose any confederation and annexation policy similar to that proposed at the Sydney Convention.'²³ It is difficult to tell whether this opposition was out of principle or expediency. Even if these global trends were acknowledged in New Zealand, the extent to which they actually influenced commentators' attitudes to the annexation question is difficult to ascertain. A more obvious driver of criticism was the pragmatic considerations that arose out of the depression, the realisation that New Zealand was still an undeveloped colony itself, and the derogatory characterisation of Pacific Islanders.

The majority of opposition to the 1883 Bill was parochial in nature, and did not bear the imprint of international anti-imperialism. John Holmes, MP for Christchurch South, encapsulated the feeling of parliamentary opposition when he declared that 'the whole question for the House to consider is, Will it pay?'²⁴ Criticism of the scheme largely appealed to this sense of rationality; a Pacific Empire was too grand an idea to befit a young colony. For example, Legislative Councillor Morgan Stanislaus Grace said 'It is one thing for a colony within its own limits to enter upon an enterprising policy, and another thing for half a million of people to enter upon a Colonial-Imperial policy, if I may so describe it.'²⁵ The division of opinion in both the upper and lower Houses illustrates that even amongst the colony's 'leading men', there was no unanimous desire for Pacific expansion.

Wider public debate around the Bill was generally restrained. Future imperial debates would draw significantly more attention and opprobrium. Those against Confederation and Annexation often only opposed the Bill because there were

²² James Bennett, *'Rats and Revolutionaries': the labour movement in Australia and New Zealand 1890-1940* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004), p.36. Erik Olssen & Len Richardson make this point but note that unemployment caused by the depression stimulated the drive for unionism as well, Erik Olssen & Len Richardson, 'The New Zealand labour movement, 1880-1920', in Eric Fry (ed.), *Common Cause: essays in Australian and New Zealand labour history* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1986), p.2.

²³ 'A New Party', *Thames Advertiser*, 28 Dec. 1883, p.2.

²⁴ John Holmes, *NZPD*, 1883, Vol. 45, p.9.

²⁵ Dr Morgan Grace, *NZPD*, 1883, Vol. 44, p.145.

more pressing matters to address on the domestic front. The Christchurch *Press* believed that ‘most people’ would feel ‘that all these projects are just a little out of place, while so much yet remains to be done to develop the resources of the territory we already possess.’²⁶ In Taranaki, a precursor to the Reform Party, the Political Reform Association, declared ‘That Confederation and Annexation is unsuited for this Colony at present.’²⁷ The fiscally conservative Association rallied against rising Government expenditure so their policy is unsurprising. And although it was not mentioned, the memory of Parihaka and earlier colonial strife between Māori and Pākehā in the region would have surely weighed on the minds of the Association as they were deciding whether to enter into new, uncertain, relationships with indigenous peoples. Similarly, leader of the Opposition William Montgomery, who had a troubled relationship with Grey, was reported to have described the aging statesman’s plans for Pacific annexation a ‘dream and delusion, which, if attempted to carry it out, would prove a snare.’²⁸ Montgomery’s criticism of Grey’s plans was delivered during a speech where the depression and concerns over growing public debt were his main themes. His attack on Grey’s Pacific Island scheme was linked to his desire for fiscal conservatism rather than any outright aversion to the principal of annexation. The *Wanganui Chronicle* believed that opponents to the Bill ‘would have New Zealand “mind her own business,” of which they do not reckon confederation and annexation to form a part.’²⁹

With its close ties to the MP William Hutchison, who stated that there was ‘really nothing of greatness’ in Pacific Island schemes, the *Wanganui Chronicle* made the strongest stand against the Bill.³⁰ It labelled it ‘entirely worthless’, and was critical of the impression it made ‘at Home that New Zealand is inclined to act by herself in the matter of Annexation rather than in conjunction with the other colonies.’³¹ It accused supporters of annexation as only having ‘a very hazy notion of the part which New Zealand ought to play’. Pro-annexationist views were ‘not only ill-defined’ but they ‘frequently profess to hold views which are

²⁶ *Press*, 8 Oct. 1884, p.4.

²⁷ ‘Urenui’, *Taranaki Herald*, 11 Jul. 1884, p.2.

²⁸ ‘Montgomery at Akaroa’, *Grey River Argus*, 14 Apr. 1884, p.2.

²⁹ *Wanganui Chronicle*, 2 Aug. 1883, p.2.

³⁰ William Hutchison, *NZPD*, 1883, Vol. 45, p.20.

³¹ *Wanganui Chronicle*, 26 Nov. 1883, p.2.

more or less contradictory of each other.’ The *Chronicle* did not subscribe to the ‘trade follows the flag’ theory; although admitting it did ‘place a value, though an undefined one, on commerce with the Pacific Islands’, it believed ‘that any advantage likely to accrue from that source will come to New Zealand without seeking to extend the borders of her Government.’³² In a similar vein the *Waikato Times*, referring mostly to Australasian support for Queensland’s annexation of New Guinea, was not convinced of the trade benefits of the move, nor did it think much of the perceived threat to security. ‘This sounds very much like bosh’, the editorial announced. It argued that if there was such a threat then ‘the best thing for us to do will be to look after our own safety, and not burden ourselves with the care of innumerable dependencies, which are bound to drain our resources, and which would be just as likely to fall into the hands of an enemy then as they are now.’³³ These doubts may of course reflect a regional bias. Pacific Islands trading was largely dominated by Auckland firms so they had plenty to gain from a reduction in tariffs, while the rest of the country’s prospects for trade were not as prominent.

Of particular interest to this study are the critics who justified their opposition on racial grounds. Race did not play as big an issue in the debates during this period as it would at the turn of the century and in the 1920s when the notion of ‘White New Zealand’ was at its apogee, but it did feature in debate. For example, Colonel Robert Trimble of Taranaki asked the House why would they ‘propose to make fellow-citizens’ with ‘a race of men’ who ‘have not hitherto advanced in civilization at all.’ In a statement at odds with later opinions of Chinese in New Zealand, Trimble commented, ‘we keep out the civilized Chinese, and we bring in the barbarous Pacific islanders.’³⁴ To Trimble, the Pacific Islands possessed ‘no people worth governing’.³⁵ A brief comment in the *Otago Witness* accused the Pacific Islands Annexation Committee of taking too many precautions ‘for the benefit of the natives’ while not showing enough concern ‘for the interests of

³² *Wanganui Chronicle*, 2 Aug. 1883, p.2.

³³ *Waikato Times*, 21 Jul. 1883, p.2.

³⁴ Colonel Robert Trimble, *NZPD*, 1883, vol. 45, p.105.

³⁵ Trimble, *NZPD*, 1883, Vol. 45, p.107.

Australasia.’³⁶ In Parliament, several MPs asked why New Zealand would go to all this trouble just to ‘defend a lot of cannibals’?³⁷

Race would go on to play a role in shaping the attitudes of critics towards the Pacific in the decades to follow. Despite the Imperial Government’s rebuke and the prevalence of sober-minded editorials, ‘annexation mania’ appeared to continue. Negotiations to seek control of Fiji, Tonga, New Hebrides, Samoa and the Cook Island group continued intermittently until the turn of the century. These ambitions were eventually realised when the Cook Islands were placed under a British protectorate overseen by a New Zealand appointed Resident agent that would eventually develop into a New Zealand territory in 1901 along with Niue when Britain submitted to New Zealand’s imperial desires.

‘Seddonia’

Seddon’s vision for a ‘Greater New Zealand’ was only partially fulfilled at the turn of the century with the annexation of the Cook Islands and Niue. In the eyes of many sceptical observers, this territorial expansion left little to brag about. The *Timaru Herald* wrote that New Zealanders ‘allowed the Premier to have his Cook Island toy, but they took no interest in the matter, except in as far as they entertained some misgivings as to the outcome of the venture.’³⁸ Seddon had much grander plans of course; he envisioned a Polynesian federation in the style of Vogel before him.³⁹ Though the public may have allowed the annexation of the Cook Islands and Niue to pass with little fanfare, plans for a more substantial Polynesian federation drew much wider interest and opposition. In some respects, the turn of the century debates mirrored the concerns expressed during the Confederation and Annexation Bill; people deemed Seddon’s schemes overly ambitious for a young colony, while the fear of escalating costs was a consistent refrain. Yet in other respects, criticism had a new edge. This, after all, was the era of ‘White Australasia’, and questions of race were at the forefront of people’s

³⁶ ‘Comments’, *Otago Witness*, 3 Nov. 1883, p.13.

³⁷ Colonel Brett, *NZPD*, 1883, Vol. 44, p.142; William Swanson, Vol. 45 p.166; Montgomery, Vol. 45, p.8.

³⁸ *Timaru Herald*, 15 Oct. 1901, p.2.

³⁹ With Britain ceding its claim to Upolu to Germany in 1899, Seddon had to move his imperial gaze elsewhere. Fiji became the most sought after Pacific territory, with Tonga not too far behind. The Cook Islands, Niue and the Society Islands would make up the rest of Seddon’s planned Polynesian federation.

minds. Critics of the schemes openly expressed their discomfort at the prospect of incorporating large non-white populations within New Zealand's domain.

In response to Seddon's plans, conservative colonists reaffirmed their commitment to a 'White New Zealand'. An *Evening Post* editorial invited New Zealand's workers 'to pay some attention' to the proposed annexation and federation given the likely effect such a move would have on employment. Not known for its concern for the working class, the newspaper nonetheless referred to the 'abundance of coloured labour' in the Islands and remarked how this posed a threat to 'the white labour of New Zealand'.⁴⁰ The *New Zealand Herald* came out against plans proposed by Seddon, and encouraged by Fijian colonists, for Fijian federation. The newspaper noted the 'preponderating sentiment' in the Australian Commonwealth was for a 'white Australia' forgoing imported 'black' plantation labour. The *Herald* endorsed Australia's policy believing it was necessary given 'the many complicated problems which arise when a white and a black population participate in the same government.' The editorial concluded that 'New Zealand could not take in Fiji as a part of our political administrative system' primarily because of the 'disastrous confusion' that would occur if they treated 'the native Fijians as we treat the comparatively small number of Maoris which we have amongst us.'⁴¹ Amongst other reasons, the acknowledged leader of the opposition, Captain William Russell, opposed an Island federation due to the fear that 'the coloured population' comprising Māori as well as Cook Islanders and Fijians, would 'dominate us in our legislation'.⁴² Citing the evidence given by a Wesleyan Reverend W. Slade who wrote that Fijians were not 'true men' due to their lack of 'character', Russell questioned why these types of people, 'devoid of truthfulness or courage' should be allowed into 'our Parliament'.⁴³

White supremacy and the derogatory depiction of Pacific peoples was plainly apparent in an article that first appeared in the *Sydney Bulletin*, titled 'Annexing

⁴⁰ 'Imperial New Zealand', *Evening Post*, 4 Oct. 1900, p. 4.

⁴¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 22 Mar. 1901, p.4.

⁴² Captain Russell, *NZPD*, Vol. 115, 1900, p.476. Also See Tate & Foy, 'Slavery and Racism in South Pacific Annexations', p.19.

⁴³ Russell, *NZPD*, Vol. 115, 1900, p.477. Russell twisted Slade's evidence to suit his own agenda. The Wesleyan was pro-federation due to his belief that New Zealand's assimilationist policy was better suited to administering indigenous subjects than the British protectionist/separatist strategy.

the Kanaka', and was widely published throughout New Zealand.⁴⁴ The article was not out of place in a newspaper that carried the masthead slogan 'Australia for the White Man', but its wide exposure suggests that it tapped into popular sentiment in New Zealand. The *Bulletin* article began by noting that 'in his desire to swell up and bloat out at any cost, Richard of Kumara is trying hard to build up a Maoriland Federation or empire in the Pacific, and to increase the population of his province by a large annexation of niggers and sundries.' The 'niggers and sundries' the newspaper referred to were both Cook Islanders and Fijians, and the author went on to doubt 'whether an enlargement which arises through the annexation of inferior races is the kind of enlargement that is worth having'. The piece also conveyed the often repeated working-class concern about the deleterious effect that supposedly 'inferior races' would have on the availability of white jobs given their status as low wage labour. New Zealand's total population was close to a million at this point, while the Māori population was around 40,000. If wider federation with Fiji (a territory that the *Sydney Bulletin* article so pleasantly reminded readers possessed 'about 120,000 niggers') and other Pacific territories was fulfilled, and political representation and citizenship rights were granted, there was the real sense that the ideal of a 'White New Zealand' was under threat.

Given the unofficial Labour newspaper the *Grey River Argus* was one of the organs that published 'Annexing the Kanaka', it is an indication that the working-classes had not yet been imbued with the kind of internationalist anti-imperialism that drew favour amongst the Left in later decades. After offering no editorial comment on Pacific annexation in 1883, the *Grey River Argus* was highly sceptical of plans to confederate with Fiji and called for a referendum on the matter before any decision was made.⁴⁵ The *Argus* asked 'Where is any advantage going to come to New Zealand out of an arrangement of the kind?' However, as in 1883, there were outliers who possessed sympathetic attitudes towards Pacific Islanders. The parliamentarian John Rigg, a trade union leader and socialist, was one of these. He voiced concern at the lack of consultation with the Cook Islands Parliament over annexation and also bemoaned New Zealand's track-record when

⁴⁴ See *Evening Post*, 17 Oct. 1900, p.6; *Grey River Argus*, 25 Oct. 1900, p.4; *West Coast Times*, 24 Oct. 1900, p.4.

⁴⁵ *Grey River Argus*, 8 Dec. 1900, p.2.

it came to Māori land issues; he worried whether New Zealand ‘shall be able to deal satisfactorily with the lands of other natives about whom we know so very little?’⁴⁶

Pragmatic and ‘greater imperialistic’ concerns meant New Zealand’s willingness to undertake the responsibility for islands already under British protection was questioned.⁴⁷ One correspondent to the *Evening Post* called the ‘whole thing... vulgar and unstatesmanlike’, believing New Zealand to have ‘no power to annex territory – if these little Cook islets and atolls can be called territory – only through the Government of Great Britain...’.⁴⁸ Yet interpreting Seddon’s aims as anti-imperial (in the sense of ‘greater-imperialism’) was wide of the mark. As D. K. Fieldhouse has reminded us, ‘Seddon’s period as an empire-builder came at the high moment of British imperial sentiment’.⁴⁹ The liberal *Auckland Star* ran newspaper articles praising Chamberlain’s speech titled ‘We are all Imperialists’, nor can it be forgotten that New Zealand had demonstrably displayed its loyalty by sending men to South Africa.⁵⁰ The Anglican press celebrated the formalisation of British imperial presence in the Solomon Islands; ‘The Empire has thus taken one more step forward; the Church must not be slow to follow it. Forward!’⁵¹ Even New Zealand’s fledgling socialist organisations experienced a decrease in numbers as adherents defected to the ‘imperial’ side.⁵² As a result, Seddon made sure to avoid the impression that he was the selfish imperial partner seeking to break rank and create an empire of his own; rather, in an act of imperial solidarity, he emphasised New Zealand’s willingness to take on the British burden in Oceania for them.

In private, Seddon was most attracted by the trade opportunities that federation with Fiji would present. Wary of being overshadowed by the new Australian Commonwealth, the prospect of monopolising the Fijian market had obvious

⁴⁶ John Rigg, *NZPD*, 1900, Vol. 114, p.352.

⁴⁷ ‘Imperial New Zealand’, *Hawera & Normanby Star*, 16 Oct 1900, p.2. The Cook Islands, Niue, Fiji and Tonga were all under British protection at this point.

⁴⁸ Richardson Rae, ‘The British Flag at Rarotonga (to the Editor)’, *Evening Post*, 25 Oct. 1900, p.6.

⁴⁹ Fieldhouse, ‘New Zealand, Fiji and the Colonial Office’, p.113.

⁵⁰ “‘We Are All Imperialists’: great speech by Mr Chamberlain’, *Auckland Star*, 4 Dec. 1900, p.3.

⁵¹ ‘Melanesia’, *New Zealand Church News*, 1 Feb. 1900, p.15.

⁵² H. Roth, ‘The New Zealand Socialist Party’, *Political Science*, Vol. 9, no. 1, 1957, p.51.

allure.⁵³ At the same time, Seddon sought those quintessential 'new imperial' qualities of status and prestige. He publically denied that Cook Island and Niue annexation was 'not actuated by jealousy towards Australia',⁵⁴ but there was a widespread belief that Seddon looked toward creating a Pacific Island federation as New Zealand's bulwark or counterpoint to the Australian Commonwealth.⁵⁵ This move was not overly popular with the New Zealand public. Critics were quick to note that the late Liberal leader and Premier John Ballance had argued against federation with Australia by saying that '1,200 miles separating New Zealand from Australia were 1,200 good reasons against federating'.⁵⁶ Yet Rarotonga was almost 2000 miles away from Auckland.⁵⁷ The general feeling was that the New Zealand federation scheme would come off a distant second best to the Australian Commonwealth.

Finally, even if one accepts the argument that there was little genuine opposition to the plans, by the same token, there was little in the way of public enthusiasm for the move. The *Timaru Herald* believed 'New Zealanders are perfectly content to let the islands of the Pacific alone if they are under the protection of the Imperial Government.'⁵⁸ The *Christchurch Press* concluded 'we certainly think New Zealand is likely to have its hands quite full during the next few years in looking after its own affairs, without taking the government of Tonga, Fiji, and the Cook Archipelago on its shoulders.'⁵⁹ In 1901 the *Tuapeka Times* perhaps came closest to conveying the general feeling throughout New Zealand when it reported that:

The thirst for annexation, which is the natural complement of a robust Imperialism of which, as a matter of course, Mr Seddon is the loudest exponent in the colony, seems to have disappeared with almost the same suddenness that it manifested itself. The wild outburst of excitement in the House of Representatives that followed the announcement of the Premier that he had annexed the Cook

⁵³ Fieldhouse, 'New Zealand, Fiji and the Colonial Office', p.115.

⁵⁴ 'Speech by the Premier', *New Zealand Herald*, 14 Nov. 1900, p.5.

⁵⁵ Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific* p.271.

⁵⁶ John Ballance, *NZPD*, Vol. 73, 1891, p.70.

⁵⁷ G. W. Russell, *NZPD*, Vol. 114, 1900, p.405.

⁵⁸ *Timaru Herald*, 15 Oct. 1901, p.2.

⁵⁹ 'New Zealand and the Pacific Islands', *Press*, 10 May 1900, p.4.

group of Islands in the Pacific, consisting of Rarotonga and six other small islands, was ludicrous to the point of foolishness.⁶⁰

Regardless of the prevalence of this view, the potential for federation and annexation did not simply die out after 1901. In the years that followed Cook Island and Niue annexation, comment and speculation continued among the colonial elite in regards to ‘acquiring’ Fiji and Tonga. In 1903 a Parliamentary Delegation embarked on a Pacific sojourn to assess for themselves the relative merits of their Island neighbours. James Allen’s account of the trip left zero doubt about the prospecting and surveying motivations driving this imperial speculation. Even though Allen was critical of New Zealand’s role in aiding the (‘inevitable’) population decline in the Cook Islands and Niue, it was only because this meant New Zealand would lose out on valuable manpower in the future.⁶¹ Equally, he saw great trading potential in Tonga, it had the ‘best harbour in the Pacific’, and encouraged the formalisation of ties with the territory.⁶² Allen’s acquisitiveness remained a feature of his politics when his Government championed the annexation of Samoa after the War. But in this case, as others before it, the dominant viewpoint was not allowed to remain unchallenged.

Samoa: ‘The Brightest Pearl in New Zealand’s Chaplet’?⁶³

New Zealand’s first act of the Great War concerned the Pacific. In what Frank Corner termed an ‘atavistic flurry of imperialism’, the German colony of Samoa was ‘seized’ by a New Zealand expeditionary force in 1914, and was ruled by a New Zealand military administration on behalf of Britain until the close of the War.⁶⁴ This was the closest New Zealand had yet come to acquiring these long sought after islands. The post-War fate of Samoa was debated from the time Prime Minister William Massey and his War-time Deputy Sir Joseph Ward attended the Imperial Conference in London in 1916 until the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. It was widely felt that New Zealand had a logical claim to the

⁶⁰ ‘Annexation in the Pacific’, *Tuapeka Times*, 3 Apr. 1901, p.2.

⁶¹ James Allen, *New Zealand’s Possessions in the South Seas: Notes of the Parliamentary Cruise, 1903* (Christchurch: The Christchurch Press Co., 1903), p.20.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁶³ ‘The Pacific’, *Nelson Evening Mail*, 10 Jun. 1918, p.4.

⁶⁴ Corner, ‘New Zealand and the South Pacific’, p.137

islands given that they were already under New Zealand military control, yet with the establishment of the League of Nations, the imperial climate was changing and nothing was guaranteed. By 1918, Labour's 'no annexations' campaign attempted to thwart New Zealand's imperial destiny once again. As it was, the Versailles Peace Conference placed German Samoa in New Zealand's hands, to be administered as a League of Nations 'Class C' Mandate on behalf of Great Britain. Notably, this decision was made without consulting the Samoan people who were not at all enamoured with New Zealand rule after the military administration's mishandling of the influenza epidemic that caused the death of 22% of the Samoan population in 1918-19.⁶⁵ Although New Zealand had not technically acquired the territory in any formal sense, becoming a Mandatory Power was interpreted by New Zealand's leaders as the next best thing.⁶⁶ Before the more cogent anti-imperial campaigning by the Labour Party is examined, it is useful to locate some of the earlier attitudes towards Samoa. As the previous debates plainly suggest, one did not have to be an anti-imperialist to question the Government's imperial ambitions.

In anticipation of Massey and Ward's participation in the 1916 Conference, the Dunedin *Sun* journalist Mark Cohen issued a special circular 'inviting representative men to express their opinions' on five questions relating to imperial matters.⁶⁷ Of these questions, one had direct relevance to this study: whether representatives of the Dominions should be able to claim that the colonial possessions of the enemy be administered by the Dominion that is closest to that territory. Forty responses were published by Cohen, offering a rare, and relatively unfiltered, snapshot of public opinion on the Samoan question (even if, as Sinclair has written, it is admitted that 'in those days, [public opinion] meant "middle-class" or "respectable" opinions: those of churchmen, businessmen, politicians').⁶⁸ While many of the respondents replied without hesitation that New Zealand should take control of the islands, a significant proportion also expressed

⁶⁵ Salesa, 'New Zealand's Pacific', p.157. See also John Ryan McLane, 'Setting a Barricade against the East Wind: Western Polynesia and the 1918 influenza pandemic', PhD thesis, Otago University, 2012, pp.201-205.

⁶⁶ William Massey, *NZPD*, Vol. 185, 1919, p.520.

⁶⁷ Mark Cohen, *An Empire Symposium On Important Imperial Issues: being the opinion of representative New Zealanders* (Dunedin: 'Star' Print, 1916), p.1.

⁶⁸ Women did not fit into this strata either. Sinclair, 'Review of Angus Ross New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century', p.171.

some reservations. Perhaps this kind of measured deliberation was to be expected from ‘level-headed’ representative men, but the range of possible outcomes offered did not exactly present an image of jingoistic confidence.

It was not uncommon for respondents to defer their answer to the future dictates of Imperial interest. The Dunedin Barrister Roger Gilkison represented this feeling, even going so far as condoning the possibility of Germany re-entering the Pacific, when he replied that the ‘Mother Country must not be embarrassed by claims made by her children. The present war was not commenced by Britain for plunder, and if it is thought advisable... to return to Germany any of her colonies, it is not for us to stand in the way.’⁶⁹ Most were less tolerant of the Germans however. Although James Robert Kirk, a barrister and ex-mayor of Gisborne, believed the ‘question must be looked at from the Imperial as opposed to the parochial aspect’, he also had the security of the Dominion in mind as he thought ‘[i]t is essential that no such mistake as was made when Samoa was transferred to Germany be repeated.’⁷⁰ Most respondents expressed similar feelings to Kirk and appeared certain that whatever happened they would not tolerate a German colony so close to New Zealand’s borders.

A lack of confidence in New Zealand’s ability to govern others was expressed by Dunedin businessman, runholder, and benefactor J. A. Johnstone who did ‘not think that the young countries comprised in the British Dominions have attained the knowledge and experience essential to the successful administration of outside territories.’ He also shared the widely held belief, heard every time annexation debates occurred, that New Zealand was better off looking after itself first. He wrote that ‘All our abilities and energies are required for the successful development of the land we live in.’⁷¹ In contrast, Johnstone’s Invercargill partner at Wright, Stephenson, and Co., W. D. Hunt, voiced a relatively rare concern for the prosperity of the colonies themselves. Hunt professed that when ‘considering who is to administer the various colonial possessions taken from the enemy, the object to be aimed at is the welfare of the territory to be administered.’⁷²

⁶⁹ Cohen, *An Empire Symposium*, p.9.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.15.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.13.

⁷² Ibid., p.12.

Trading incentives entered the equation for some. W.B. Scandrett, representing Southland Pioneers, could admit that retaining the former German colonies would benefit the British Empire. He responded, 'I see no advantage to New Zealand to take over the government of Samoa' except for 'the fiscal benefit that would or might accrue to our traders by reason of our productions entering that island free of duty if it formed a part of the Dominion of New Zealand.'⁷³ The Otago and Southland bias of the survey needs to be taken into account for the lack of agitation on the trade issue. A survey of representative Auckland men, where Pacific trading firms were more prevalent, could have resulted in a different picture. However, the wide-spectrum of responses elicited from Cohen's questionnaire are representative of the kinds of attitudes that would continue to be expressed in the following five years as New Zealand's future role in Samoa continued to be a point of contention.

In contrast to the 'representative' attitudes just canvassed, the Labour movement took a less equivocal position. Their policy of 'no annexations' cannot be overlooked, especially as the movement had, by this stage, begun to command considerable support among New Zealand's working classes, and others, due to their anti-War position. The *Maoriland Worker*, edited by Harry Holland, reiterated Labour's internationalist line of 'no annexations and no indemnities' and supported the international socialist policy of 'the frank abandonment of every form of Imperialism', 'leaving to each people the freedom to settle its own destiny'. The editorial called pro-annexation politicians 'shallow' and was worried that their protestations supported by 'the Jingo Press of the Empire' might hold up peace negotiations.⁷⁴

Holland's stance in the *Maoriland Worker* was further expanded upon in a pamphlet titled *Samoa: a story that teems with tragedy*, which presented Samoa's post-contact history as a tragic tale of imperial injustice where Samoans were used 'like pawns in a game played by trading gamblers' backed up by their respective Governments.⁷⁵ The pamphlet was an anti-capitalist polemic, clearly inspired by Hobson's and Lenin's critiques of capitalist imperialism. Holland believed New

⁷³ Ibid., p.20.

⁷⁴ 'Samoa & the Peace Settlement', *Maoriland Worker*, 23 Jan. 1918, p.4.

⁷⁵ H. E. Holland, *Samoa: a story that teems with tragedy* (Wellington, 1918), p.3. See Hoare, 'Harry Holland's 'Samoan Complex'', pp.154-160.

Zealand ‘capitalists’ viewed Samoa as ‘a field for exploitation’, and argued that the future of Samoa had been distorted by those capable of viewing the issue only ‘from the narrow vantage ground of an ignoble class interest.’⁷⁶ He argued not only that New Zealand should not receive control of Samoa, but that no other imperial-minded, militaristic, and exploitative nation or groups of nations should assume power either. His pamphlet was released before the creation of the League of Nations, so it dealt with the question of annexation rather than the Mandates system. But in the immediate post-War years, Holland’s position on the League of Nations was clear. Alongside Peter Fraser, Holland would damn the League of Nations as a ‘mere continuation of the wartime alliance of capitalist states; not a true league of peoples’.⁷⁷ Holland’s commitment to self-determination was also reflected in his commentary on India and Ireland, and in all these cases he drew inspiration from the wider international socialist and Labour movements. Although New Zealand’s earlier imperial discourse remained unaffected by the socialist anti-imperialism of the nineteenth-century, the rise of the New Zealand Labour Party (NZLP) with its socialist agenda would mean that from this point onwards, imperial criticism took on a much sharper form.

That said, the influence of Labour’s stance must not be over-emphasised. As with the 1883 debates, the main concern was to keep foreign powers out of the region. The *Evening Post* summed up the nation’s, if not Massey’s, mood in the lead up to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 by commenting ‘New Zealand was not concerned to extend her own boundaries, nor even those of the British Empire, but to exclude a robber and a pirate Power from recovering its foothold in these peaceful seas...’.⁷⁸ This is why the Mandate system met wider approval in New Zealand rather than pure annexation. It was only the *New Zealand Herald* that consistently rallied for the annexation of Samoa. Through its editorials the paper attempted to mobilise the public on this issue, even calling on the mayors of every municipality to agitate for its cause.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Holland, *Samoa*, pp.3, 18.

⁷⁷ Gerald Chaudron, *New Zealand in the League of Nations: the beginnings of an independent foreign policy, 1919-1939* (North Carolina & London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), p.48; H. E. Holland, *NZPD*, 1921, Vol. 190, p.196.

⁷⁸ ‘The Compromise’, *Evening Post*, 4 Feb. 1919, p.6.

⁷⁹ ‘The Retention of Samoa’, *New Zealand Herald*, 7 Feb. 1918, p.4.

The rhetoric of the *New Zealand Herald* editorials matched the behaviour of Prime Minister Massey and Ward at the Paris Peace Conference. There appeared to be a disjunction between the ambitions of the pair and the more humble aspirations of everyday New Zealanders. The *Auckland Star* reported how they did ‘not believe that in their [Massey, Ward and the Australian Prime Minister ‘Billy’ Hughes] eagerness for annexations they represent popular feeling in their own countries. Certainly there is no enthusiasm in New Zealand for the attachment of Samoa to this country.’ The newspaper was particularly scathing of Hughes’ self-interested ‘table-banging’ which in their opinion did ‘not conform with the new spirit of the times, and are not consistent with the ideals with which and for which the British Empire has been fighting.’⁸⁰ The *Evening Post* acknowledged the ‘great energy, not to say precocity’ with which New Zealand and Australia’s leaders were showing at the Conference in trying to push their claims but asked ‘Has New Zealand the faintest idea of the responsibilities in which she would be involved if she were really to be taken at her word and given charge of Samoa as a small nation?’ The editorial concluded that ‘[t]he burden of Samoa would be an intolerable one to New Zealand if she took it by annexation and on the footing of individual control and responsibility.’⁸¹ It ended on an optimistic chord, remarking that ‘administration under the League of Nations would be so much easier a task’. As future events would show, this view was mistaken as New Zealand’s Samoan administration came under fire in the late-1920s and early 1930s.

Finally, it cannot be forgotten that the Peace Conference also dealt with the future of Nauru, a Pacific territory that New Zealand was equally, if not even more interested in ‘acquiring’ than Samoa on account of its phosphate deposits.⁸² However, even on this question a minority of commentators were not blinded by the benefits a share in the territory would bring to the farming industry and New Zealand’s economy. Despite its rural constituency, the *Wairarapa Daily Times* complained that ‘Massey seems bent upon placing as many millstones round New Zealand’s neck as possible.’ The newspaper foresaw the ‘nightmare’ Samoa could

⁸⁰ ‘Mandates and Morals’, *Auckland Star*, 18 Mar. 1919, p.4.

⁸¹ ‘The Compromise’, *Evening Post*, 4 Feb. 1919, p.6.

⁸² Macdonald, *Massey’s Imperialism and the Politics of Phosphate*, p.5 Katerina Teaiwa has argued that ‘Banaba was central, not peripheral, to the development’ of New Zealand, in ‘Our Sea of Phosphate’, p.187.

be, let alone ‘having another island foisted on to us... because there happens to be a few pounds of phosphates there.’⁸³ Other critics argued that the eventual agreement between Britain, Australia and New Zealand went against the spirit of the League of Nations. For instance, the *Auckland Star* observed how ‘[s]ome critics of the agreement, of which this paper has been one, contend that such a monopoly is contrary to the spirit of the League, and that all members of the League should have access to the island’s wealth.’⁸⁴ Resource-rich islands were there to be exploited; the only apparent concern was that the resources were exploited fairly amongst the developed nations of the Western world. In all their self-confident, enlightened, posturing, the nations involved in the Paris Peace Conference felt it unnecessary to consult the wishes of Pacific Islanders when deciding their futures. This culture of ‘we know best’ was pervasive. Although some observers remained unconvinced about the benefits that a joint administration would bring to the Dominion, very few took the well-being of the indigenous population into consideration. A similar lack of concern was shown when Tokelau was annexed to New Zealand in 1926, and administered by the Samoan Administration, in a geo-political move that allowed the Samoan regime to banish chiefs further away from their home islands. That no concern was expressed over the deleterious effects of mining on the people of Nauru and Banaba demonstrates the marginality of the anti-imperial idea at this point.

This chapter has canvassed the wide-range of attitudes that Pākehā New Zealanders possessed when it came to Pacific Island annexation. In doing so it has shown that even before formal colonial administration had begun, Pākehā New Zealanders—notwithstanding the consistent pro-annexation line of the *New Zealand Herald*—were generally wary of undertaking too great of a ‘burden’ in the Pacific. Once formal administration began, many of these concerns proved to have been prescient. Although none of the more paranoid statements about being swamped by ‘inferior races’ ever eventuated, other concerns over the burdens of administering Pacific peoples were realised.⁸⁵ The few commentators who

⁸³ ‘Another Millstone’, *Wairarapa Daily Times*, 20 Feb. 1919, p.4.

⁸⁴ ‘Nauru and the League’, *Auckland Star*, 22 Jul. 1920, p.4.

⁸⁵ Although Tate & Foy commented that the New Zealand public’s ‘concern over the “shadow of the coloured races” was not unfounded’ because in 1958 it was revealed to them that one in four

queried whether New Zealand had the required experience to govern others saw their concerns validated as under-qualified New Zealand administrators would go on to make copious blunders in the interwar period. Faced with challenges from indigenous resistance movements, paternalistic New Zealanders were forced to reassess their beliefs. Some were willing to admit that Pacific Islanders could decide for themselves what was in their best interests, while others hung tight to the sentiment expressed at the League of Nations: the idea that these people were not yet ready to stand on their own two feet.

New Zealanders had a Pacific Island relative, Tate & Foy, 'Slavery and Racism in South Pacific Annexations', p.21.

Chapter Two

Mischievous Elements: Metropolitan Criticism of 'New Zealand's Pacific' between the Wars

*'The spectre of race war and 'clashing tides of colour'
haunted the privileged world of whites between the wars.'*¹

In 1920s New Zealand, many people—both Māori and Pākehā—still looked upon the fact they lived in a 'white man's country' with utmost pride.² The *Evening Post* lauded the fact that the 1926 census revealed that 95% of the population were, 'broadly speaking', white (the definition of 'whiteness' for the purposes of the census included Pākehā and Māori). Yet concern was voiced over the remaining 5%—the proportion of the country labelled 'race-aliens'; that is, the real 'coloured' population of the country. Of these, the 'great majority' were 'Asiatics' (5147), while 'Fijians and other Polynesians' counted for a mere 697.³ Although the proportion of 'race-aliens' was minimal, their presence was enough to cast a shadow over 'white New Zealand'. At the same time, it is arguable that New Zealand's Pacific Empire, with its diverse, 'coloured' populations, cast an even bigger shadow over the nation. Even though analogies between colonialism and Africa and the Pacific are problematic, Barbara Bush's description of the interwar colonial condition introduced above provides a useful starting point for this discussion. Simply put, the post-War inauguration of New Zealand's Pacific Empire brought the 'spectre of race war' closer to home. Increased colonial entanglements with non-white populations raised the possibility of increased racial violence. The two issues troubled white New Zealanders. The presence of

¹ Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance*, p.43.

² 'Coloured Races', *Evening Post*, 22 Feb. 1929, p.11; see also Brookes, 'Gender, Work and Fears of a 'Hybrid Race' in 1920s New Zealand', p.502.

³ 'Coloured Races', p.11.

‘race-aliens’ both within and adjacent to New Zealand’s domestic borders sparked fears that the ‘clashing tides of colour’ could erupt at any moment.

This chapter is concerned with three different case studies that illustrate the tensions between races in the interwar period. The debates over indentured labour in Samoa, New Zealand’s involvement in suppressing Indian unrest in Fiji, and New Zealand’s attempts at dealing with Samoan anticolonialism, all referenced this concept of an impending ‘race war’. Whether it was an imagined ‘invasion’ of Asiatic hordes from Samoa, or a perceived threat to white prestige on account of growing ‘race consciousness’ in Samoa and Fiji, events in New Zealand’s colonial sphere haunted the metropolitan mentality. New Zealand’s Pacific Empire brought white New Zealanders into closer contact with Pacific Islanders, Chinese and Indians; just how they dealt with these new relationships is reflected in what side of the imperial debate observers sided. In contrast to the Government, colonial officials and its supporters, I argue that the critic did not abide by the ‘white versus black’ false dichotomy, and took a more critical view of the behaviour of his or her own race for inciting dissatisfaction in the first place. Tony Ballantyne has written that ‘the cultural entanglements of empire... made questions of ethnic origins and the boundaries between peoples urgent’.⁴ While the Government and Colonial Administrations did their best to maintain the ‘rule of colonial difference’, domestic critics tended to view Pacific Islanders as fellow citizens who deserved the same rights as Pākehā and Māori. In the interwar era public figures like Harry Holland believed that the colonised populations of the Pacific were capable of governing themselves according to their own needs; the old belief that the ‘white race’ had a divine right to govern ‘inferior’ races began to be challenged.

A critical difference between the interwar period and previous eras is that criticism suddenly ‘mattered’. New Zealand was administering Samoa as a ‘sacred trust’ on behalf of both the British Empire and the League of Nations. Therefore when it came to New Zealand’s Samoan administration at least, the Government was held to account by the PMC charged with making sure the Mandated power was administering the territory ‘to the utmost the material and

⁴ Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p.190.

moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the Territory'.⁵ The *Evening Post*'s London correspondent would write in 1927 that '...the world, as through a telescope, watches Samoa from Geneva... Experts, practising politicians, ordinary intelligent people, take a serious and growing interest in the mandated territories.'⁶ Given this added international scrutiny, the Government was in no mood to be embarrassed by what were routinely labelled unpatriotic, mischievous elements.

The Government still possessed the ability to suppress dissent in both Samoa and its domestic sphere. Even in New Zealand—a renowned liberal democracy—to openly criticise the Government was a fraught exercise. Jared Davidson has written that during the Great War, 'New Zealand was one of the most stringent suppressors of dissent in the western world.'⁷ War regulations were used to suppress 'anything deemed critical of the New Zealand government, the war effort, and conscription.'⁸ Official attitudes remained similarly draconian throughout the interwar period also. The War Regulations Act (1914) had turned into the War Regulations Continuance Act (1920) which preserved many of the previous regulations regarding sedition.⁹ Importantly, successive conservative Governments took advantage of these regulations to control the dissemination of information regarding their Pacific territories. Conservative sections of the nation's press argued for the need to maintain non-partisan equanimity on matters of colonial policy, yet for critics on the Left especially—who recoiled at the prospect of acquiring imperial possessions in the first place—the possibility of adopting such an ambivalent attitude was inconceivable.¹⁰

Left-wing critics advocated for a free press, arguing that it was especially important on colonial and imperial matters. In a speech against the Government's action in Fiji in 1920, Holland cried: 'There was nothing more dangerous to our

⁵ 'Mandate for German Samoa', in Chaudron, *New Zealand in the League of Nations*, p.219.

⁶ 'Samoa Mandate', *Evening Post*, 29 Nov. 1927, p.14.

⁷ Jared Davidson, *Sewing Freedom: Philip Josefs, Transnationalism & Early New Zealand Anarchism* (Edinburgh, Oakland, Baltimore: AK Press, 2013), p.126.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.127.

⁹ War Regulations Continuance Act 1920, *New Zealand Legal Information Institute*; http://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/wrca192011gv1920n22370/; Matthew J. McKillop, 'Emergency Powers of the New Zealand Government: sources, limitations, and the Canterbury earthquake', Law Honours Thesis, Otago University, 2010, pp.4-5. The Act remained in force until 1947.

¹⁰ 'A Very Convenient Doctrine', *The New Zealand Worker*, 22 Feb. 1928, p.4.

common civilisation than the exercise of the press censorship.’¹¹ He was certain more would have been made of the expedition by the public if only there was not such a paucity of information available regarding colonial events throughout the Empire. Holland argued that the public were oblivious to what was occurring in India so when confronted with something like the Fijian affair they were not able to place the events in the context of wider Indian disillusionment with British rule and a growing sense of global ‘race consciousness’ amongst colonised populations. It was Holland’s sincere wish that ‘Some day the people of this country and of Australia, and of every part of the British Empire would insist on their right to know everything taking place in every part of the world.’¹² Critics who knew the full extent of colonial maladministration could not remain silent. They felt it was their duty, not only to the people that New Zealand was administering, but to the reputation of the young nation itself, to hold the Government’s colonial record to account.

‘Beneath the New Zealand Flag’: criticism of New Zealand’s policy of indentured labour.

Labour practices in the Pacific provided one of the earliest triggers for critical engagement by New Zealand observers. Chinese indentured labour in Samoa became the first real issue of public contention in the interwar period. While at the same time, controversy erupted over the decision to send a warship to Fiji in response to Indian industrial action. In both these cases, the ‘cultural entanglements of empire’ were thrown into stark relief as New Zealand was drawn into wider colonial problems in ‘its Pacific’. Unease over these new arrangements was particularly reflected in the arguments that emerged over indentured labour as organisations from all corners of New Zealand society debated the topic. As with earlier imperial debates, criticism was split between the humanitarian and the parochial. To some, the issue hinged over whether or not New Zealand could morally continue a system of bonded immigrant plantation labour, while to others, the predominant concern was the presence of a Chinese population in a New Zealand territory. This section shows that critics opposed the policy for widely contrasting reasons.

¹¹ ‘The Strike in Fiji’, *Maoriland Worker*, 25 Feb. 1920, p.5.

¹² *Ibid.*

The differing rationale for opposition was reflected by the range of critics the issue attracted. The Methodist minister, Arthur Liversedge criticised the ‘moral indifference’ displayed by his own Church for not taking a stronger stand on the issue. He regretted that the ‘task of arousing the country to the gravity of the issues... was left to a discredited Labour Party, the feeble Theosophists, a few consistent advocates of a White New Zealand policy, and the splendid women of the W.C.T.U.’¹³ The following section aims to capture the mood of domestic criticism by elaborating on the positions taken by the organisations he identified and some of those he omitted from his list such as secular women’s groups. The range of critics identified by Liversedge demonstrates how this was an issue that went beyond traditional Labour interests and became a key talking point in wider society. The issue came to dominate debates surrounding New Zealand’s acceptance of the Mandate for Samoa in 1919 and remained in the public sphere until the policy was revoked in 1923. The Christchurch *Press* commented that out of all the problems which the Samoan Mandate presented, ‘none is so grave as the problem of indentured labour.’¹⁴

The literature on indentured labour both globally and in the Pacific is vast and well developed.¹⁵ Historians have argued that after the abolition of slavery, indentured labour emerged as the next best system for guaranteeing cheap labour for capitalist developers.¹⁶ Even though it was not technically slavery, the system originated from the same foundation, and it shared many of its disagreeable qualities. Moreover, the system operating in Samoa was comparable to the one abolished by the British in Fiji in January 1920.¹⁷ Extensive humanitarian campaigning by British missionaries Charles Freer Andrews and W. W. Pearson contributed to the Fijian decision.¹⁸ The revelations regarding conditions in Fiji by

¹³ Arthur Liversedge, ‘Letter to the Editor’, *NZ Methodist Times*, 28 Aug. 1920, p.13.

¹⁴ ‘Our Responsibilities in Samoa,’ *Press*, 29 Mar., 1920, p.6.

¹⁵ Kay Saunders, ‘Introduction’ in Kay Saunders (ed.), *Indentured Labour in the British Empire, 1834-1920* (London & Canberra: Croom Helm, 1984); Doug Munro, ‘Patterns of Resistance and Accommodation’, in Brij V. Lal, Doug Munro, & Edward D. Beechert, *Plantation Workers: resistance and accommodation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1993), p.4.

¹⁶ Munro, ‘Patterns of Resistance and Accommodation’, pp.3-4; Tracey Banivanua-Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: the Australian-Pacific indentured labor trade* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), p.1.

¹⁷ K. L. Gillion, *Fiji’s Indian Migrants: a history to the end of indenture in 1920* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.189.

¹⁸ C. F. Andrews & W. W. Pearson, *Indentured Labour in Fiji: an independent enquiry* (Calcutta, 1916); C. F. Andrews, *Indian Indentured Labour in Fiji* (Perth: The Colortype Press, 1918).

Andrews and Pearson, as well as the ones made in earlier decades by New Zealand migrant and Methodist missionary, John Wear Burton, meant that indentured labour was widely touted as virtual slavery.¹⁹ In the face of accusations by the Labour contingent in 1919, Massey was willing to admit that ‘indentured labour may be slavery under some flags’, however he would defiantly claim that ‘it is never slavery under the British flag.’²⁰ With Massey’s pronouncement, New Zealand formally accepted the Mandate for Samoa in October 1919, and his Government agreed to continue operating the system of indentured Chinese labour that the German administration had developed in 1903.²¹

The Government’s decision was not taken lightly. Massey was doubtlessly aware the move ran contrary to the tide of official British opinion as systems of indentured labour were being dismantled across the Empire. The decision also came close to transgressing article three of the Mandate which stipulated the prohibition of the slave trade and forced labour (‘except for essential public works and services, and then only for adequate remuneration’).²² Even if the Government could justify that their system was both essential and adequately remunerated, it was harder to argue that indentured labour was in the spirit of the League of Nations. Yet faced with the prospect of failing to live up to promises that the Samoan Mandate would not become a financial liability, the Government felt they had no other alternative but to announce that ‘coloured labour’ was necessary.²³

As well as being driven by the desire to obtain cheap labour, this need for ‘coloured labour’ was also influenced by nineteenth-century scientific and medical orthodoxy which dictated that the copra plantations could not be worked by white men given the inability of the ‘white race’ to survive in tropical

¹⁹ On Burton’s revelations see J. W. Burton, *The Fiji of To-day* (London: C. H. Kelly, 1910), esp. pp.271, 272, 274.

²⁰ Massey, *NZPD*, Vol. 185, 1919, p.517.

²¹ Before the Chinese, Gilbertese and Melanesian labour was used by German firms since the establishment of commerce in Apia in the 1850s. New Zealand’s military administration did not change the system but it did commence a repatriation policy. Colonel Logan repatriated some 1200 Chinese labourers without replacement during the years 1914 to 1918. However, by the time New Zealand’s civil administration was set up in 1919 there was still over one thousand Chinese labourers in Samoa.

²² ‘Mandate for German Samoa’, in Chaudron, *New Zealand in the League of Nations*, p.219.

²³ Massey, *NZPD*, Vol. 185, 1919, p.517.

climates.²⁴ Racial stereotypes were also employed when it was said that the Samoans could not be relied upon to fill the void because they—presumably as ‘lazy natives’— simply could not be compelled to work.²⁵ The radical option of leaving the land ‘unworked’, as proposed by Sir Apirana Ngata, was ridiculed.²⁶ The New Zealand Government urgently needed labour to restrict the spread of the introduced rhinoceros beetle; it was deemed irresponsible to allow the plantations to return ‘back to nature’.²⁷ Apart from the Labour contingent, only Ngata objected to indentured labour in the House of Representatives. He asked caustically, ‘Which is to be the chief policy at Samoa, a good balance-sheet continually increasing, or the happiness of the Samoans?’²⁸ Massey and his colleagues did not believe one had to come at the expense of the other, rather they felt both could be achieved. This self-confidence was illustrated in Allen’s remark that ‘there is no country that has a fuller knowledge of the Polynesian race, and is more able to take this responsibility, than New Zealand.’²⁹

For the Labour movement, led on this issue by Holland, indentured labour was an attack on the dignity of the worker, and was labelled as slavery ‘in all but name’.³⁰ By focusing on the exploitation of Chinese labourers, Holland found himself standing on more familiar Labour ground than when he argued against annexation in 1918. Bernard Porter has argued that in Britain, the Labour MPs critical of the Boer war and South African colonialism ‘enthusiastically seized on its implications *vis-à-vis* the exploitation of labour’ to a greater degree than attacking the iniquity of colonialism as a whole.³¹ Holland was able to draw on a long tradition of fighting the exploitation of the working classes by the capitalist

²⁴ Holland would point out that the White Australia policy showed that white labourers could work in tropical Queensland without difficulty. For the creation of racial science in the nineteenth-century see Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: science, health and racial destiny in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), pp.73-86. And for altered Australian perspectives in 1920 see Russell McGregor, ‘Drawing the Local Colour Line’, *JPH*, Vol. 47, no. 3, 2012, pp.236-7.

²⁵ Even if the Samoans were employed, the Government would have encountered a labour force shortage due to the destructiveness of the 1918 influenza epidemic. Perhaps in an attempt to deflect attention from New Zealand’s role in exacerbating the death toll, this argument was not employed as frequently as racial arguments. P. S. O’Connor, ‘The Problem of Indentured Labour in Samoa Under the Military Administration’, *Political Science*, Vol. 20, no. 10, 1968, p.22.

²⁶ Sir Apirana Ngata, *NZPD*, Vol. 185, 1919, p.523.

²⁷ Sir James Allen, *NZPD*, Vol. 185, 1919, p.508.

²⁸ Ngata, *NZPD*, Vol. 185, 1919, p.523.

²⁹ Allen, *NZPD*, Vol. 185, 1919, p.505.

³⁰ H. E. Holland, *Indentured Labour: is it slavery?* (Greymouth, 1920), p.1.

³¹ Porter, *Critics of Empire*, p.134.

class, and received widespread support throughout the growing Labour movement. His pamphlet, *Indentured Labour: is it slavery?* outlined the hypocrisy of the Reform Government by continuing a system that had been proven untenable in British colonies in South Africa, New Guinea, Fiji and Queensland. Holland drew on his first-hand investigations in Samoa as a member of the 1920 Parliamentary Delegation to the Pacific Islands. While in Samoa Holland not only discovered that the conditions of the system left much to be desired, but that the Samoans were resolutely against the continued immigration of the Chinese men. He referred to an interview with a young Samoan engineer who told him the Samoans were perfectly willing to work, only they were not prepared to lose their dignity by accepting the pitiful wages on offer.³² Holland was not alone in his stance, the Napier Branch of the NZLP sent a letter of protest to Massey citing the detrimental effects of the system on all involved, while the Labour newspaper, the *Wellington Citizen*, believed indentured labour was 'slavery' and therefore 'beneath the New Zealand flag'.³³

As far as Labour was concerned, race did not factor as much as concerns regarding the immorality and injustice of the system. Drawing on the work of G. R. Warburton, Jacqueline Leckie has noted that Labour 'by no means shared common views on non-white immigration or exhibited the blanket racism so often attributed to the working class.'³⁴ Holland, for example, believed in the socialist concept of 'international brotherhood' which Leckie has noted was a widely held idea before the Great War.³⁵ Speaking to a Social Democratic Party meeting at Alexandra on the topic of the Indian strike in Fiji, Holland said 'it does not mean anything to me that the workers happen to have black skins. Their interests are identical with the white workers in New Zealand.' Holland believed a better response to the Indian strike would have been for New Zealand 'to point out to the Government of Fiji that the way out of the difficulty was economic justice –

³² See Holland, *Indentured Labour*, p.15 & Holland, *NZPD*, 1920, Vol. 186, pp.894-895. These discoveries were clandestine. The leader of the Parliamentary Delegation, Allen, ruled that delegates could not talk to labourers or ordinary Samoans.

³³ F. Hodge to Massey, undated, received 17 Jul. 1920; *Wellington Citizen*, 27 October 1919, p.1; 'Slavery', *Wellington Citizen*, November 15, 1919, in *Indentured Labour*, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

³⁴ Jacqueline Leckie, 'Nurturers or Watchdogs of Labour? New Zealand and Trade Union Internationalism in the South Pacific Islands', in Pat Walsh (ed.), *Pioneering New Zealand Labour History: essays in honour of Bert Roth* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1994), p.82.

³⁵ Ibid.

decent living conditions and proper remuneration – such remuneration as white workers would demand.’³⁶ The NZLP felt indentured labour or the exploitation of workers in general, was not a necessary or inevitable evil even though the Reform Government portrayed it in those terms. Holland’s colleague Peter Fraser believed indentured labour went ‘against the spirit of New Zealand liberty’.³⁷ For Labour, New Zealand liberty was a right that should extend throughout all its territories and to all its inhabitants, regardless of ethnicity.

Not every critic of the system shared Labour’s commitment to internationalism. Many were explicitly xenophobic and showed scant regard for the well-being of the Chinese labourers. For instance, the Returned Services’ Association (RSA) did not oppose the policy because of its resemblance to slavery; on the contrary, they were determinedly anti-Chinese, and worried that the Chinese presence in a territory administered by New Zealand might encourage further migration. One member of the Wellington RSA conveyed the level of concern with the remark, ‘If they got one ounce of Asiatic labour into New Zealand then it was a case of “Good Night, Nurse!”’³⁸ At a 1921 annual conference the RSA agreed ‘they should be absolutely unrelenting in their hostility to allowing any Asiatics into the country.’ It was common to come across theories arguing that ‘race-mixing’ would result in an inferior breed.³⁹ The ‘mingling’ of Samoans and Chinese concerned the organisation, one member said ‘before long this mongrel breed would be desiring the rights of New Zealand citizenship.’⁴⁰ An *Auckland Star* editorial also begged the question: ‘Will all the coloured inhabitants [meaning in this case both Samoan and Chinese]... eventually rank as citizens of New Zealand, and will they be free to settle here?’⁴¹

Citizenship under the Mandate system was a vexed issue. Article two of the Mandate gave New Zealand ‘full power of administration and legislation’ over Samoa ‘as an integral portion of the Dominion of New Zealand, and may apply the laws of the Dominion of New Zealand to the Territory, subject to such local

³⁶ ‘The Strike in Fiji’, *Maoriland Worker*, 25 Feb. 1920, p.5.

³⁷ Peter Fraser, *NZPD*, Vol. 188, 1920, p.25.

³⁸ ‘Good Night, Nurse!’, *Evening Post*, 26 Nov. 1919, p.10.

³⁹ Brookes, ‘Gender, Work and Fears of a ‘Hybrid Race’ in 1920s New Zealand’, pp.501-510; Salesa, ‘Half-castes Between the Wars’, p.115.

⁴⁰ ‘Asiatic Influx’, *Evening Post*, 14 Jun. 1921, p.8.

⁴¹ ‘Colour and Politics’, *The Auckland Star*, 4 June 1921, p.6.

modifications as circumstances may require.⁴² Despite appearing comprehensive, this stipulation did not grant New Zealand sovereign control over Samoa. James C. Hales made an important study of the sovereignty question in 1937, where he reasoned that:

Whereas in a colony the Sovereign is accountable to no one, in a Mandated territory the Mandatory merely has the right to exercise the powers of sovereignty; therefore the territory is not owned by, and its inhabitants are not Nationals of, the Mandatory.⁴³

His conclusion came out of a series of resolutions made by the PMC in 1923.⁴⁴ Here it was decided that ‘status of the native inhabitants of a Mandated territory is distinct from that of the nationals of the Mandatory Power’, and, like a Protectorate, they ‘are not invested with the nationality of the Mandatory Power...’.⁴⁵ This ruling implies New Zealand’s xenophobes had no need to be so concerned.

Yet these pronouncements were not made until 1923; the answer to the citizenship question was still open-ended in 1919 and 1920 when these debates were occurring. It needs to be remembered that the League of Nations and the PMC were novel bodies attempting novel experiments in diplomacy. All that people could draw on was an imprecise statement about treating Samoa ‘as an integral portion of the Dominion’. Given the precedent set by previous colonial arrangements, like the Cook Islands and Niue, where the indigenous inhabitants became nationals of the metropolitan power, individuals assumed the same arrangement applied for Samoa. Nor is it any surprise then that the old concerns about being ‘swamped’ in their own country by ‘inferior races’ re-emerged. In this instance however, since the Samoans were closely related to Māori (a people

⁴² ‘Mandate for German Samoa’, in Chaudron, *New Zealand in the League of Nations*, p.218.

⁴³ James C. Hales, ‘Some Legal Aspects of the Mandate System: sovereignty, nationality, termination and transfer’, *Transactions of the Grotius Society*, Vol. 23, 1937, p.94.

⁴⁴ The resolutions came out of a 1922 sub-committee set up to analyse the problem of nationality in ‘B’ and ‘C’ Mandates. Their recommendations led to an original set of propositions that were revised after British consultation to the 1923 resolution. See *Ibid.*, pp.104-5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.105.

the Pākehā respected), and had not yet shown much resistance to New Zealand rule, they were not as castigated as the Chinese.⁴⁶

Anti-Chinese racism was particularly rife in New Zealand in the 1920s and the debate over indentured labour cannot be separated from this context. After decades of trying to perfect policies to prevent Chinese immigration, the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act was passed in 1920. Because the Act 'gave the Government complete control over who could immigrate to New Zealand', Nigel Murphy has identified it as the moment where the 'White New Zealand' policy was officially inaugurated.⁴⁷ Barbara Brookes has examined anti-Chinese attitudes held by both Māori and Pākehā by looking at the controversy that erupted when Māori women were discovered working on Chinese market-gardens in the late-1920s.⁴⁸ According to Brookes, this affair strengthened the shared definition of 'whiteness' between Māori and Pākehā as both ethnicities excluded 'Asiatics' from their version of the nation.⁴⁹ Leading Māori politicians, like Ngata, promoted hostility towards Chinese immigrants, and after hearing allegations of miscegenation between Māori women and Chinese gardeners, Ngata put his weight behind the 1929 Committee of Inquiry set up to investigate the matter. Supported by the men of Te Akarana Maori Association, Ngata sought to preserve the purity of Māori women and guard against a creation of a 'hybrid race'. Brookes writes that '[i]n seeking to promote 'race consciousness', Apirana Ngata upheld a view of white New Zealand that encompassed Maori, but excluded the Chinese and the Indian.'⁵⁰ Ten years earlier, Ngata was similarly on guard against 'race pollution'. During the Parliamentary debate centring on indentured labour he compared the 'Indians and Chinamen' to 'refuse'.⁵¹ It appears that it took the existence of another racial 'other' to mend some of the differences between elite Māori and Pākehā; extending the boundaries of the

⁴⁶ Mary Boyd, 'Racial Attitudes of New Zealand Officials in Western Samoa', *NZJH*, Vol. 21, no. 1, 1987, pp.141-142.

⁴⁷ Nigel Murphy, 'Joe Lum v. Attorney General: the politics of exclusion', in Manying Ip (ed.), *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: the Chinese in New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003), pp.51-52.

⁴⁸ Brookes, 'Gender, Work and Fears of a 'Hybrid Race' in 1920s New Zealand', pp.501-518.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.502.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.513.

⁵¹ Ngata, *NZPD*, Vol. 185, 1919, p.524.

tropical Empire to include Samoa threatened their shared vision of 'White New Zealand'.

If New Zealand's Labour movement had few doubts about the immorality of indentured labour, the Dominion's major Protestant denominations were less certain. Traditionally seen as the moral conscience of society, the three major Protestant churches allowed the issue to pass without taking a definitive stance.⁵² Out of the three, it was the Methodist Church who displayed the most concern. The question caused ruptures within the Methodist Church as individual loyalties were torn between the New Zealand Government, the indigenous population, the immigrant labourers and God above. Although the New Zealand Methodist Church held no mandate for Samoan missionary work, in 1919 they were hoping to secure the responsibility for both Samoa and Tonga as well as their eventual missionary responsibilities in the Solomon Islands.⁵³ Hence in November 1919 the missionary secretary had been corresponding with Allen in an attempt to gather as much information on the system as possible.⁵⁴ At the same time, the Wellington synod came to their own conclusion, sending a request to Massey 'that the system be at once brought to an end.'⁵⁵ Allen replied comprehensively to both Methodist correspondents. His argument was the same as already expressed in Parliament: 'the Samoans themselves will not work', it was a case of either 'back to nature, or progress', and the 'latter is only possible by securing labour from outside.' If labour was not imported Allen believed 'Samoa would be worthless to New Zealand, to the Empire or to the League of Nations.' Allen assured his correspondents that under the 'conditions and safeguards imposed' there would not be 'any reason to be alarmed'.⁵⁶

Outwardly, the Church promised to give 'serious consideration' to the matter at their annual conference in March 1920.⁵⁷ However, inwardly, Allen's reply appeared to have settled the matter. The conference's resolution, drafted by the Rev. A. B. Chappell, virtually echoed Allen's argument. It contended that the

⁵² Catholic opinion was outside of the scope of this project.

⁵³ 'Our Missionary Policy: Some Historic Resolutions', *NZ Methodist Times*, 21 Jun. 1919, p.2.

⁵⁴ W. A. Sinclair to Allen, 29 Nov. 1919, in *Indentured Labour*, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

⁵⁵ F. T. Read to Massey, 28 Nov. 1919, in *Indentured Labour*, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

⁵⁶ Allen to F. T. Read, 3 Dec. 1919; Allen to W. A. Sinclair 3 Dec. 1919, in *Indentured Labour*, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

⁵⁷ 'Foreign Missions and Indentured Labour', *NZ Methodist Times*, 17 Jan. 1920, p.12.

system of indentured labour itself was not inherently evil, only some its manifestations were, and these could be mitigated under best practice.⁵⁸ In other words, the Church endorsed the Government's policy. Attached to the forwarded Conference resolution to Massey was a request that gifts made to the Church's Foreign Mission Fund would not be 'subject to a penalty to which other charitable and religious gifts are not subject.'⁵⁹ It is possible to speculate that this request and the Conference's decision were in some way linked. Nor should Chappell's influence be discounted. Eight years later, the conservative minister and newspaper columnists authored a pamphlet that although claiming to be 'an independent review' was heavily weighted towards the side of the Samoan Administration in the midst of the Samoan controversy.⁶⁰

A handful of individual Methodists publically distanced themselves from their Church's phlegmatic pronouncement. For several months after the conference, the *Methodist Times* received a series of letters criticising the resolution. Outspoken Hawera minister, Liversedge, was the most persistent of these. He argued the Church's tacit endorsement of indentured labour—an issue he believed was 'perhaps the most important political question ever submitted to this country'—was a poor reflection on a supposedly Christian New Zealand.⁶¹ Liversedge believed the system was 'anti-Christian' as it went against the 'sanctity of personality'; labourers became 'Indispensable as a productive machine' but held no value as individuals.⁶² Another correspondent noted the Labour Party's uncompromising opposition was more Christian than the Church's. He or she believed the Conference resolution 'adroitly side-stepped the principle involved, seeking merely to improve the conditions of what is essentially an evil thing' and condemned the system from a 'Christian and humanitarian standpoint.'⁶³ Liversedge was eventually convinced to change his tune in August 1922 after being told that the London Missionary Society (LMS) and Methodist missions in Samoa believed that imported labour was necessary for the well-being of the

⁵⁸ 'Indentured Labour', *The New Zealand Methodist Times*, 24 Apr. 1920, p.8.

⁵⁹ A. Ashcroft to Massey, 16 Mar. 1920, in Indentured Labour, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

⁶⁰ A. B. Chappell, *The Stir in Samoa: an independent review* (Auckland: Wilson & Horton Ltd., 1928).

⁶¹ A. Liversedge, 'Letter to the Editor', *NZ Methodist Times*, 10 Apr., p.14.

⁶² A. Liversedge, 'The Church and Chinese Indentured Labour (letter to the editor)', *NZ Methodist Times*, 28 Aug. 1920, p.13.

⁶³ J. R., 'Letter to the Editor', *NZ Methodist Times*, 24 Apr., 1920, p.4.

territory, 'Natives and Europeans alike', while they were also of the opinion that the Chinese presented 'no real moral menace' to the Samoans.⁶⁴ This is symptomatic of a wider pattern where the home Church deferred to the judgement of the colonial missions.

In contrast to the Methodist Church, the other two major Protestant denominations offered little in the way of (recorded) public debate on the matter. The Presbyterian press, in what was perhaps a reflection of their limited ties to Samoa, only touched upon the issue once. This, however, involved publishing the Labour Party's condemnatory official report of their visit to Samoa which, if taken as an endorsement of Labour's stance, was consistent with the Presbyterian tradition of opposing indentured labour and the practice of 'blackbirding' in the New Hebrides.⁶⁵ Meanwhile the Anglican Church's silence on the issue was more conspicuous given the ties between the Anglican Church and the LMS who dominated missionary activity in Samoa.⁶⁶ Granted, the Anglican Church had less of a conscious social and political agenda than the Methodist Church, and New Zealand Anglicans had no direct missionary jurisdiction over Samoa, but this silence is typical if later attitudes on Samoan problems are to be taken into account. In all probability, their silence on indentured labour reflected their desire to follow the Government line. It needs to be appreciated that missions were in highly contingent positions, the last thing they desired was a situation where their home Church jeopardised their relationship with the Administration they were reliant upon. The same logic explained why New Zealand Presbyterians were critical of French colonialism in the New Hebrides but dared not speak ill of British rule in the Condominium.

Non-denominational Christian organisations such as the Christchurch Council of Churches and the Auckland Minister's Association spoke with more moral authority, however. Both organisations wished to see the system discontinued

⁶⁴ Gray to Liversedge, 22 Aug. 1922; Liversedge to Gray, 26 Aug. 1922, in *Indentured Labour*, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

⁶⁵ 'The Facts About Samoa', *The Outlook*, 19 Apr. 1920, pp.17-20. It was also published in the *Maoriland Worker*, 7 Apr. 1920, p.5; and the *Grey River Argus*, 9 Apr. 1920, p.3. The NZ Presbyterian missionary Peter Milne was renowned for resisting 'black-birding' schooner captains, Dennis McEldowney (ed.), *Presbyterians in Aotearoa, 1840-1990* (Wellington: Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), p.93.

⁶⁶ There was one Protestant Church in Apia where all European Protestants worshipped.

immediately.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, the ‘splendid women’ of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) came out in force on the issue in the latter half of 1920. Their protests were widely published in the press,⁶⁸ while branches from Invercargill in the south through to Ponsonby in the north sent letters urging the Government to rethink their position.⁶⁹ The letters were uniform in tone: indentured labour was ‘a form of slavery’ that was ‘degrading and demoralising to the natives of Samoa’ and ‘should not be permitted in any country or dependency under British rule’.⁷⁰ The WCTU’s concern for the wellbeing of indigenous Samoans did not appear to extend to the Chinese labourers. The Ponsonby branch cried ““Down with Slavery and Race pollution!”” They believed the system, and mainly the ‘threat’ of miscegenation, would lead to ‘much degradation to a proud, intelligent and moral people’.⁷¹ Although the branch was not explicit over who they were referring to, the adjectives were typical of the language employed to describe the Samoans by sympathisers, but seldom heard when the characteristics of the Chinese were described.

If the Churches fell short of their billing as the ‘conscience of the nation’, New Zealand women, another group traditionally characterised in this way, appeared willing to fill that void, as secular women’s organisations joined the WCTU in protest also. Having already played an important role in the abolishment of indentured labour in Fiji, women’s groups were well equipped to mobilise once again to oppose the system in Samoa.⁷² The Women Citizens’ Association in Dunedin devoted a monthly meeting to the issue in July 1920.⁷³ Addressed by the pacifist, Millicent Macmillan Brown, the meeting resulted in a resolution to

⁶⁷ ‘Council of Churches: Annual Meeting’, *Press*, 27 Jul. 1920, p.5; ‘Ministers’ Association: Indentured Labour Question’, *New Zealand Herald*, 27 Aug. 1919, p.8.

⁶⁸ See ‘Slavery Camouflaged’, *Maoriland Worker*, 18 Feb. 1920, p.6; ‘Women’s Christian Temperance Movement’, *Otago Daily Times*, 10 Apr. 1920, p.4; ‘Women’s Corner’, *Press*, 30 Jul. 1920, p.2; ‘W.C.T.U.’, *Feilding Star*, 7 Aug. 1920, p.1; ‘W.C.T.U. Convention’, *Evening Post*, 9 Sep. 1920, p.9; ‘W.C.T.U.’, *Hawera & Normanby Star*, 10 Sep. 1920, p.7.

⁶⁹ See Indentured Labour, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

⁷⁰ A. Webster (WCTU Pahiatua) to Massey, 10 Aug. 1920, in Indentured Labour, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

⁷¹ S. Plummer (WCTU Ponsonby) to Massey, undated, received 20 Aug. 1920, in Indentured Labour, IT1 443, EX 79/30, ANZ.

⁷² C. F. Andrews took his battle to end indentured labour to Australia and New Zealand in 1917, enlisting the support of various women’s groups. See Emma Catherine Alexander, ‘Contentious Exploitation? The Abolition of Indentured Labour Migration from India to Fiji, 1910-1920’, MA Thesis, University of Victoria (Canada), 1994, pp.137-8.

⁷³ ‘Women Citizens’ Association’, *Otago Daily Times*, 7 Jul. 1920, p.6.

forward a strong protest to the New Zealand Government.⁷⁴ Similar resolutions were passed by the National Council of Women and the Auckland Branch of the Women's International League.⁷⁵ These protests cast doubt on Jessie Mackay's description of the state of New Zealand women at the end of 1920 as 'not only politically unorganised, but ... not politically alive.'⁷⁶ Dorothy Page has noted that as this death knoll was sounding, 'change was in the air', and the outlook for the women's movement looked more optimistic. As evident in the reaction to indentured labour and later colonial scandals, I suggest that New Zealand's Pacific colonialism was perhaps a catalyst for the reinvigoration of the New Zealand women's movement.⁷⁷

Lastly, while it is not clear who Liversedge had in mind when he referred to the 'feeble Theosophists', there is a strong possibility he was referring to the New Zealand India League who were influenced by the work of theosophist and Indian self-rule advocate, Annie Besant. Like Holland, the League published a pamphlet in 1920 responding to Massey's claim that indentured labour could not be slavery under a British flag. The pamphlet featured an article of Besant's which outlined the depravity of the indentured labour system.⁷⁸ This interest in Fiji by the New Zealand India League illustrates that the debate over indentured Chinese labour in Samoa was inseparable from the debates over indentured Indian labour in Fiji and wider international contexts. It also shows that even though the British Crown Colony did not fall under New Zealand's formal sphere of influence, events and news from Fiji were still closely followed. Hence, it is unsurprising that New Zealand's involvement in the Indian strike in Fiji in 1920 drew significant interest also.

⁷⁴ Macmillan Brown was the daughter of John Macmillan Brown, and future mother of James K. Baxter.

⁷⁵ 'National Council of Women', *Auckland Star*, 28 May 1919, p.7; 'Women's International League', *Auckland Star*, 13 Feb. 1918, p.7.

⁷⁶ 'The New Zealand Woman', *Time and Tide*, 10 Dec. 1920, quoted in Dorothy Page, 'Women and Nationality: Feminist Organisations in the Inter-War Period', in Barbara Brookes, Charlotte Macdonald & Margaret Tennant (eds.), *Women in History: essays on European women in New Zealand* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1986), p.157.

⁷⁷ Page, 'Women and Nationality', p.158.

⁷⁸ N.Z. and India League, *Some of the Facts and Statements Regarding Indentured Labour* (Wellington: Maoriland Worker Co., 1920). Also see 'India from the Indian Viewpoint', *Maoriland Worker*, 21 Jan. 1920, p.4. The League also re-printed Besant's appeal to British Labour on the subject of Indian Home Rule in Annie Besant, *From Within the Iron Ring: being an appeal to British labour* (1919).

‘No Jurisdiction Whatever?’ Reactions to the Fijian expedition.

In February 1920, 50 New Zealand military personnel were sent to Fiji on the armed warship, the *Tutanekai*, in response to an urgent call for assistance from the Governor of Fiji, Cecil Rodwell. Many in the Labour movement viewed the expedition as a cold and calculated strike-breaking mission, a further extension of Massey’s anti-labour policies—the re-emergence of ‘Massey’s Cossacks’ last seen in 1913. The striking Indian workers had only just been freed from the indentured labour system, so left-wing commentators, like Holland, believed the New Zealand contingent were sent to keep the former *girmitiya* in bondage. Massey, on the other hand, was adamant the ship was going to Fiji as a ‘precautionary’ measure. He was of the opinion that the presence of the warship, armed with a twelve pound Maxim gun and four-pound Lewis gun, ‘will have a very wholesome effect.’⁷⁹ In the words of Governor General, the Premier thought it was necessary to inform the public that the operation was ‘for [the] safety of [the] white population.’⁸⁰

The differences between the Government’s attitude and that of Holland and the Labour movement were stark. Holland queried why New Zealand should interfere in the affairs of a Crown Colony at all. He wrote:

Had Fiji been under New Zealand control the dispatch of an armed force to intervene in an industrial dispute would have been sufficient to call forth the united protest of the Labour movement. The position becomes infinitely worse when an armed force is sent from New Zealand, whether to intimidate or coerce, working men and women of another race, enslaved and struggling against their enslavement, in an island 1500 miles away from us and over which New Zealand has no jurisdiction whatever.⁸¹

⁷⁹ ‘Sensational Rumours’, *NZ Times*, 3 Feb. 1920, in *Tutanekai (ship) – Instructions for carrying troops to Fiji in connection with native strike*, M1 1081, 17/11/143, ANZ.

⁸⁰ Liverpool to Rodwell, 2 Feb. 1920, in *Courts Martial and Courts of Inquiry – Disturbances – Fiji*, AD1 770, 22/228, ANZ.

⁸¹ H. E. Holland, ‘Letter to the Premier’, *N.Z. Times*, 4 Feb. 1920, in *Tutanekai (ship) – Instructions for carrying troops to Fiji in connection with native strike*, M1 1081, 17/11/143, ANZ.

To this Massey replied he was ‘only sorry that a more suitable ship was not available’, claiming ‘[i]t is not the Briton’s way to turn his back when his neighbour requires assistance’.⁸² And despite professing his ignorance of Indian work arrangements in Fiji, he cited ‘similar trouble’ that had erupted in India albeit on a larger scale as justification for his decision.⁸³ It is surprising so little has been made of the affair in the existing historiography.⁸⁴ New Zealand’s response was not only made without hesitation, but came faster than the Australians. New Zealand’s foray into Fijian affairs signifies first of all that ‘greater imperialism’ was still a strong current at least in the upper echelons of society, and secondly that ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’ was not limited to its own territories, but to the wider ‘Anglo-Saxon Pacific’.⁸⁵ The critical responses to the affair demonstrate a further commitment to stamping out colonial abuses throughout the Pacific.

The veil of secrecy supposedly surrounding the expedition was soon lifted due to the circulation of ‘exaggerated rumours’ regarding the ship’s destination.⁸⁶ Some were led to believe that the men were heading to Samoa because the constabulary force recently sent to the territory had been “‘wiped out.’”⁸⁷ Massey put these rumours straight, allaying fears of an uprising in New Zealand’s new territory. However he could not quell the impression that it was a strike-breaking expedition. Holland, in a published letter of protest to the Premier, believed the New Zealand armed forces were being sent to deny the Indian workers, who had only just been freed from ‘one of the worst forms of slavery known to civilisation’, their right to improved work conditions.⁸⁸

⁸² ‘The Fiji Trouble’, misc. newspaper clipping, 5 Feb. 1920, in Minor disturbances – Disturbances at Fiji, 16/9/5, N1 471, ANZ.

⁸³ This was undoubtedly a reference to the Jallianwala Bagh or Amritsar massacre in April 1919 where General Reginald Dyer’s British forces killed 379 people and wounded 1200 (Indian estimates are much higher), Derek Sayer, ‘British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre 1919-1920’, *Past & Present*, no. 131, 1991, p.131.

⁸⁴ Ken Gillion has written on the 1920 strike, though did not focus on New Zealand’s involvement, K. L. Gillion, *The Fiji Indians: challenges to European dominance, 1920-1946* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977), pp.18-47.

⁸⁵ It must also be noted that the military preparations for this mission were sent and signed off by Brigadier Major General George Richardson of later Samoan notoriety.

⁸⁶ Liverpool to Rodwell, 2 Feb. 1920, in Courts Martial and Courts of Inquiry – Disturbances – Fiji, AD1 770, 22/228, ANZ.

⁸⁷ ‘Sensational Rumours’, *NZ Times*, 3 Feb. 1920, in Tutanekai (ship) – Instructions for carrying troops to Fiji in connection with native strike, M1 1081, 17/11/143, ANZ.

⁸⁸ H. E. Holland, ‘Letter to the Premier’, *N.Z. Times*, 4 Feb. 1920.

Holland's interpretation gained currency on the Auckland waterside where the waterside workers refused to load the ship with coal on 5 February. After deciding to go on without the extra coal, the *Tutanekai* was held up further still—this time on account of the firemen who refused to work the stokehold. The firemen were arrested for their troubles, however after being persuaded that the goal of the expedition was not to break the strike but 'simply to see that no harm was done to the 4000 white men, women and children by the 16,000 dissatisfied coolies', the firemen agreed to return to the ship.⁸⁹ After the event, the President of the Auckland Waterside Workers' Union, distanced himself from the waterside action, stating that the men were acting on their own initiative.⁹⁰

Not everyone was as easily convinced of the expedition's purpose as the Auckland watersiders and firemen. Criticism continued once the ship had left New Zealand. The Mt Eden and Edendale Branches of the Labour Party forwarded a resolution to Massey expressing their concern over New Zealand's interference in 'what is practically an industrial dispute between slave-owners and slaves and ex-slaves.'⁹¹ The General Laborer's Union seconded this judgement,⁹² as did the Wellington North Branch of the Labour Party.⁹³ Working women also protested. The Wellington Housewives' Union carried a unanimous motion condemning the 'unconstitutional action of the Government' in sending armed men to Fiji, 'a British possession over which New Zealand has no jurisdiction whatsoever'.⁹⁴ The women believed Massey's action 'intended to intimidate or coerce the workers there into accepting wages, conditions of working, and social conditions that are a disgrace to any country calling itself civilised'.⁹⁵

Women came to play a further role in the debate as *Walsh's New Zealand Magazine* claimed the returned servicemen were induced to go on the condition of

⁸⁹ This account is taken from 'Trouble Over the Tutanekai', misc. newspaper clipping, 5 Feb. 1920, in Minor disturbances – Disturbances at Fiji, 16/9/5, N1 471, ANZ; and 'Tutanekai', *N.Z. Times*, 9 Feb. 1920, in Tutanekai (ship) – Instructions for carrying troops to Fiji in connection with native strike, M1 1081, 17/11/143, ANZ; and Colonel, Officer Commanding District to NZ Military Forces HQ, 6 Feb. 1920, in Courts Martial and Courts of Inquiry – Disturbances – Fiji, AD1 770, 22/228, ANZ.

⁹⁰ 'Tutanekai', *N.Z. Times*, 9 Feb. 1920, in Tutanekai (ship) M1 1081, 17/11/143, ANZ.

⁹¹ A. Ritchie to Massey, 6 Feb. 1920, in Courts Martial and Courts of Inquiry – Disturbances – Fiji, AD1 770, 22/228, ANZ.

⁹² 'Inquiry Demanded', *Maoriland Worker*, 18 Feb. 1920, p.6.

⁹³ 'N.Z. Labor Party', *Maoriland Worker*, 18 Feb. 1920, p.5.

⁹⁴ 'Housewives Protest', *Maoriland Worker*, 25 Feb. 1920, p.5.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

protecting the white female population. The magazine labelled this ‘a proper Tory lie.’⁹⁶ The ‘gentlemanly’ pretence of evoking the safety of white women was used to justify further colonial repression in 1928 when two armed war ships were sent to Apia to intimidate the *Mau*, whose programme of non-violent resistance had hamstrung the effective administration of the archipelago.⁹⁷ One of the justifications for this measure by the Reform Government was that they had received a coded message from Apia that implied white women were in grave danger.⁹⁸ Both these instances are illustrations of what Fiona Paisley has termed ‘race hysteria’, where fears of the racial ‘other’ are suddenly manifest into a kind of paranoia over the safety of the most ‘vulnerable’ and the most ‘pure’ symbol of white society, white women.⁹⁹

There were several ‘affrays’ in Fiji between strikers and white police throughout the restive period. Whether or not the New Zealand forces, who had arrived at Suva on 12 February, were involved in these is difficult to ascertain. Official correspondence conveyed the impression that only local police had been involved in the conflict. The *Evening Post* reported that the ‘New Zealanders were never in actual conflict with the strikers’, but mentions that a ‘detachment went with Captain Wilkes as far as sixty miles up-river, where the natives and Hindoos were amazed by a demonstration of Lewis gun firing.’¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, *Walsh’s New Zealand Magazine*, edited by Thomas Walsh, Secretary of the Seamen’s Federation, claimed that the New Zealanders were the ones who fired revolver shots into an Indian crowd during a confrontation on 14 February where three Indians were wounded and one died.¹⁰¹ Regardless of the direct involvement in colonial violence by the New Zealand expedition, the interpretation of the episode by *Walsh’s New Zealand Magazine* revealed just how far the Labour movement

⁹⁶ ‘Chronicle and Comment’, *Walsh’s New Zealand Magazine*, 20 Mar. 1920, p.22.

⁹⁷ ‘Dirty Propaganda’, *New Zealand Worker*, 21 Mar. 1928, p.4.

⁹⁸ This charge was denied almost as swiftly as it was proposed. Former Administrator Colonel Logan came to the defence of Samoan men, and Coates himself later admitted that those reports were greatly exaggerated, ‘The Warships in Samoa’, *New Zealand Worker*, 21 Mar. 1928, p.6; ‘Dirty Propaganda’, *New Zealand Worker*, 21 Mar. 1928, p.4.

⁹⁹ Fiona Paisley, ‘Race Hysteria, Darwin 1928’, in Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (eds), *Bodies in Contact: rethinking colonial encounters in world history* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), pp.234-252.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Island Tour’, *Evening Post*, 18 Mar. 1920, in *Minor disturbances – Disturbances at Fiji*, 16/9/5, N1 471, ANZ.

¹⁰¹ ‘Chronicle and Comment’, *Walsh’s New Zealand Magazine*, 20 Mar. 1920, p.22. For the basis of Walsh’s claim see Thomas Bennett, *House of Commons Debates*, Vol. 126, 1920, p.437; Lieut-Colonel Leo Amery, *House of Commons Debates*, Vol. 126, 1920, p.1277.

believed Massey and other colonial agents were prepared to go to preserve white prestige and maintain the colonial order.

The magazine ascribed the events in Fiji to a pre-meditated plot on behalf of the Fijian colonial Government and the sugar growers who were disgruntled over the decision to abolish the indentured labour system.¹⁰² By creating disaffection amongst the Indian workers, the colonial regime would be provided with the justification for re-enforcing strict work conditions. Adding to the deceit, the magazine argued that the plan had been brewing for six months. White women and children had been arranged to vacate the area in advance and returned servicemen had been deliberately recruited as far back as November 1919 because, in the words of one plantation owner, 'They are used to murder.'¹⁰³ The New Zealand press had been enlisted 'to "prepare" the people for this stunt' by publishing images of the 'Indians in Paradise', speculating on a potential Indian massacre of the white population and publishing statements by the Bishop of Melanesia, Dr. Twitchwell, who 'made a lot of statements proving how nice it was for the Indians to slave in Fiji.' According to the magazine, 'Every arrangement was made for a cool, cold-blooded massacre of the Indians, after the example of General Dyer.'¹⁰⁴

As Bush has noted, fears of racial uprisings were widely-held by white populations in colonial settings. Soon after the New Zealand force arrived in Fiji, Rodwell—who surely had Amritsar in mind—judged the unrest to be more racial outbreak than strike.¹⁰⁵ For their part, *Walsh's Magazine* reversed the Government's argument by pointing out that it was in fact the 'white people' who were 'menacing the Indians with the threat of starvation' and 'forcing them to work for sugar growers whose profits defy calculation.' It was alleged that the Sugar Companies were paying for the expedition, and that the New Zealand Government were willing to accept their request 'is enough to sicken every New Zealander'. The magazine argued 'If the Sugar Company can pay for strike-

¹⁰² For the full detail of the plot, see 'The Fijian Stunt', *Walsh's New Zealand Magazine*, 20 Feb. 1920, p.20.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Gillion, *The Fiji Indians*, p.30.

breaking, white terrors, and subsidise every anti-labour campaign in Fiji, Australia and New Zealand... it can afford to pay its slaves a living wage.’¹⁰⁶

It is clear that the magazine, unlike metropolitan and colonial elites, recognised the foundations of the ‘privileged world of whites between the wars’ perhaps more closely resembled a house of cards. Like many others on the Left, *Walsh’s Magazine* linked colonialism with exploitative capitalism. As in Samoa, New Zealand had important trading interests in Fiji that were predicated on an iniquitous colonial order and the continued imposition of unequal labour conditions. The Indian revolt brought the threat of ‘race-war’ into focus and this section has shown that whereas critics responded by emphasising the discrepancies between metropolitan justice and colonial justice, the colonial powers did what they could to protect their vested interests and maintain their positions of privilege. In several years’ time, critics would once again voice their concerns over violations of ‘British justice’, as the colonial order in Samoa found itself under threat.

‘The War on Samoa’: Attitudes towards New Zealand’s handling of the *Mau*

While concerns over colonialism in the immediate post-War period more regularly focused on labour policies, by the mid-to-late-1920s and early-1930s criticism became more avowedly anti-imperialist. Following the lead of the Samoan anticolonial movement known as the *Mau*, critics in New Zealand questioned the legitimacy of New Zealand’s colonial rule. Despite Porter’s generalisation about British Labour seizing on colonial labour injustices at the expense of tackling the root of colonial problems, the NZLP took the lead on the issue.¹⁰⁷ They were the only major political party to recognise the Samoan desire to reject New Zealand’s paternalistic control.¹⁰⁸ The Communist Party of New Zealand (CPNZ), who had formed in 1921, also entered the debate—adopting an even stricter anti-imperial stand than the Labour Party. A number of writers,

¹⁰⁶ ‘The Fijian Stunt’, *Walsh’s New Zealand Magazine*, 20 Feb. 1920, p.20. Going by the comprehensive expenditure accounts of the expedition however, the magazine’s allegation appears to be wide of the mark. See Tutanekai (ship) – Instructions for carrying troops to Fiji in connection with native strike, M1 1081, 17/11/143, ANZ.

¹⁰⁷ Porter, *Critics of Empire*, p.134.

¹⁰⁸ The term is Davidson’s, see J. W. Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa: the emergence of the independent state of Western Samoa* (Melbourne & New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp.114-160.

intellectuals, clergymen and lawyers joined the two Parties in condemning the events in Samoa to varying degrees also. The connections between the *Mau* and New Zealand-based sympathisers will be discussed in the following chapter but for now, I will be limiting my focus to criticism emanating from metropolitan New Zealand as opposed to its territories. In the process I will recover a spectrum of dissenting voices.

The rise of the *Mau* was followed with interest by politicians and the press in the Dominion from its conception in October 1926. From the first, the movement was identified as a threat to New Zealand's colonial administration. Although the Government tried to downplay its significance, labelling it a mere 'half-caste movement',¹⁰⁹ by the end of 1927, the *Mau* claimed to represent 90% of the Samoan population and its strategy of non-violent resistance was seriously hindering the operation of the Administration. Growing domestic and international criticism meant the Reform Government could no longer pass the movement off as inconsequential. A diplomatic mission by Minister of External Affairs William Nosworthy and a Royal Commission of Inquiry were notable attempts to extinguish the affair, but both only heightened unrest. Less public, but no less telling, was the fact that External Affairs were concerned enough about their handling of the affair that they were keeping a file of Holland's criticism throughout 1927-28.¹¹⁰

Holland's controversial pamphlet, *The Revolt of the Samoans*, was released at the start of 1928 and reached a wide audience.¹¹¹ Holland attacked the autocratic style of rule adopted by Administrator George Richardson, and cited a long-list of Samoan grievances. Primarily referring to the banishment and deprivation of chiefly titles, and the deportation without trial of European 'agitators' Nelson, A. G. Smythe and E. W. Gurr, Holland argued the Richardson Administration had not only co-opted and corrupted Samoan custom but had also shown zero regard for the principles of British justice. Reflecting the level of concern over

¹⁰⁹ Richardson to Nosworthy, 24 Jul. 1927, in Salesa, 'Half-castes Between the Wars', p.100.

¹¹⁰ Criticism of Samoan Administration – by Mr H. Holland, 1927-28, IT1 31, EX 1/18/2.

¹¹¹ Reviews were made in newspapers as far away as Madrid, see "'The Revolt of the Samoans'", *New Zealand Worker*, 13 Jun. 1928, p.5.

metropolitan criticism (and how little they thought of the Samoan intellect), the Government attributed Holland's polemical stance as a cause of unrest.¹¹²

As the official organ of the Labour Party, the *New Zealand Worker* supported their leader's stance; Samoan news featured heavily throughout the first three months of 1928. The *Worker* portrayed the Richardson Administration as a tyrannical, military dictatorship. Richardson was likened to Mussolini, and Prime Minister Gordon Coates and his Minister of External Affairs, William Nosworthy, were not far behind.¹¹³ To be sure, there was hyperbole in much of the *Worker's* coverage, nonetheless the paper's main argument was sensitive to the situation on the ground as well as portraying the wider mood of anti-imperialism. To the *Worker*, the 'exalted' motives of imperialism had been exposed. The Samoans were clearly dissatisfied with New Zealand's rule, and no amount of whitewash and censorship could hide this fact. According to the following editorial, the hypocrisy of New Zealand's rule was all too evident:

But if the subjugated people ever become so bold as to entertain the feeling that their country is their own, and that they should be allowed to govern it, imperialism speedily shows the stuff it is made of. The patriots who wish to possess their native land become "rebels against constituted authority," "agitators," "seditionaries," and "treason-mongers"; floods of repressive ordinances are released; soldiers and warships appear upon the scene; terrorism is resorted to to put the "disaffected natives" in their places. And when the "rebellion is crushed," what is called "law and order" is re-established.¹¹⁴

For these critics, New Zealand's Samoan Administration bore no difference to the worst imperial regimes of bygone eras. The editorial struck at the essence of the colonial order; it reflected the inconsistent binaries of colonial rule that anti-imperialists the world over hoped to overcome.

Despite the conservative press' image of Labour as 'Labour-Socialists', 'Bolsheviks', 'pro-Germans', and all-round unconstructive critics, there was more to the *Worker's* commentary than pure opprobrium. The newspaper published

¹¹² Holland, *NZPD*, 1928, Vol. 217, p.574.

¹¹³ 'The Dictators', *New Zealand Worker*, 25 Jan. 1928, p.4.

¹¹⁴ *New Zealand Worker*, 29 Feb. 1928, p.4.

Holland's proposed solutions numerous times. If Labour became the Government, Holland made it clear that they would restore the right of a fair trial to the people of Samoa in line with British justice, recall the banishment and deportation orders, lift the 'senseless' muzzling of the free press, meet the Samoans in a conciliatory spirit, nationalise the copra industry, and finally, they would appoint an Administrator 'with a full knowledge of Samoan history and an understanding of the psychology of the Samoan people.'¹¹⁵ Under a Labour Government, Holland was convinced 'there would be no insurmountable difficulty in administering the mandate'.¹¹⁶

The last statement did not appeal to those who stood to the left of Labour. Although the CPNZ shared Holland's distaste for the oppression of subject peoples under imperial rule, they denounced Labour's proposed remedies as imperialistic. For the CPNZ, the question was not how could the Mandate be administered more effectively, rather it was how could the Mandate be revoked entirely. By 1930 they argued the Labour Party was paying lip service to their belief in the right to self-determination of subject peoples. The CPNZ took umbrage with Holland's argument that the Samoans should be 'given an adequate share of their own government.'¹¹⁷ Emphasising the word 'adequate', the official Party organ, the *Red Worker*, ridiculed Labour's anti-imperialist credentials. Labour did 'NOT propose that the Samoans be allowed to decide this matter for themselves, and that the stranglehold of New Zealand Capitalists and the Trading Companies be withdrawn, or that the Mandate System is a swindle and a mask to disguise the predatory aims of Imperialism!'¹¹⁸ The Party's Samoan stance was settled at their inaugural annual conference in 1928. New Zealand represented 'junior imperialism', and its policy was 'robbery and oppression', the Party recognised the Samoan claim for 'complete national independence'.¹¹⁹

The murder of the nominal leader of the *Mau*, Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III, and seven other Samoans on 28 December 1929 (since referred to as Black Saturday)

¹¹⁵ 'The Iron Heel in Samoa', *New Zealand Worker*, 4 Apr. 1928, p.15; 'Policy of Labour Party', *New Zealand Worker*, 6 Jun. 1928, p.9.

¹¹⁶ 'Policy of Labour Party', *New Zealand Worker*, 6 Jun. 1928, p.9.

¹¹⁷ Holland, *NZPD*, 1930, Vol. 226, p.450.

¹¹⁸ 'Stop the War on Samoa', *Red Worker*, 1 March 1930, p.3.

¹¹⁹ Communist Party of New Zealand, 'Annual Conference 1928, Central Executive Report', pp.6-7, Griffin, Gerald John, 1904-1976: Papers relating to left-wing politics, 86-043-4/19, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

triggered a new wave of criticism within New Zealand. The *Red Worker* labelled it and the subsequent raids on *Mau* families a 'war on Samoa', while Holland compared it to the 'work of the Black and Tans in Ireland.'¹²⁰ Soljak wrote a highly critical letter which was published in the *Samoa Guardian*.¹²¹ While Finlayson attempted the same, lamenting 'Sorrow in Samoa! ... Once again we see the results of the encroachment of European races upon the territory of a native people' (except the *New Zealand Herald* chose not to publish it).¹²² The CPNZ urged the working classes to 'down tools' on 3 February in protest. 'A One Day Strike on February 3rd will be a clear and unmistakable repudiation by the working-class of the war against Samoans,' the *Red Worker* reported.¹²³ In contrast, the Methodist Church placed the onus of blame for the tragedy on the behaviour of the *Mau*. Rev. G. S. Shinkfield, chairman of the Samoan Methodist mission, felt the *Mau* had 'overstepped the bounds completely' on 28 December, and forced the police into drastic action.¹²⁴ And finally, the Anglican Church, characteristically, remained silent.¹²⁵

The Protestant response requires some disentangling because, much like Church attitudes towards indentured labour, while official policy appeared to depend on the attitudes of their respective missions, not everybody within the Church followed suit. Rev. Greenwood, Vicar of St. Albans in Auckland, was one of the few clergymen who protested against the Government's response to the *Mau*. His case is comparable to Arthur Liversedge's vis-à-vis indentured labour. Greenwood frequently wrote letters of protest to Prime Minister Ward yet was met with no suitable reply.¹²⁶ His stance was influenced by his relationship to Tamasese (and his family), which began when the paramount chief was jailed at

¹²⁰ Holland, *NZPD*, 1930, Vol. 226, p.449.

¹²¹ Dorothy Page, 'Soljak, Miriam Bridelia', in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: Volume Four, 1921-1940* (Auckland & Wellington: Auckland University Press & Department of Internal Affairs, 1998), p.487.

¹²² Roderick Finlayson to the Editor of the *New Zealand Herald*, Jan. 1930, MS-2383/009, Hocken Library.

¹²³ *Red Worker*, 1 Feb. 1930, p.2; 'Down Tools on February 3rd!', *Red Worker*, 1 Feb. 1930, p.1. By all accounts the protest was a failure, a correspondent to the *Evening Post* took delight in labelling it 'splendidly ineffective'; even the Party organ could not deny its lack of success. The newspaper blamed the disappointment on the 'weakness of the working-class' characterised by a powerless 'Reformist led Trade Union Movement', see 'One Day Strike!', *Evening Post*, 5 Feb. 1930, p.10; 'Stop the War on Samoa!', *Red Worker*, 1 Mar. 1930, p.3.

¹²⁴ 'The Position in Samoa', *NZ Methodist Times*, 22 Feb. 1930, p.16.

¹²⁵ 'The Church's Silence', *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 29 Oct. 1931, p.4.

¹²⁶ C.M., 'Samoa (letter to the editor)', *Auckland Star*, 12 Apr. 1930, p.8; A.J. Greenwood, 'Samoa (letter to the editor)', *Auckland Star*, 16 Apr. 1930, p.6.

Mt. Eden prison for six months beginning in December 1928.¹²⁷ Despite this connection, Greenwood stressed he had no association with ‘any political or pro-Samoan party’, but was acting out of Christian compassion.¹²⁸ Like a prior correspondent to the *Auckland Star*, Greenwood regretted the Church’s ‘profound silence’ on the entire affair.

An examination of the Anglican press corroborates the view that the Church, Greenwood excepted, was conspicuously silent on the matter. The *Church Gazette* for the Diocese of Polynesia, despite regularly commenting on Samoan developments, made little of the *Mau*. The Bishop of Polynesia, Rev. Kempthorne, made a brief mention to the political situation in November 1928, when he commented that he ‘was particularly glad to find that the political life of Samoa had improved so markedly although it has not yet returned to normal.’ His acknowledgment that ‘respect for law and order’ was ‘[o]ne of the blessings [of] British rule’, ‘and any challenge of this is always instinctively reprobated by peoples born to that tradition’ made it perfectly clear what side of the debate he identified with.¹²⁹ Furthermore, New Zealand-based Anglican newspapers avoided engaging with the issue completely. That New Zealand’s Protestant press were loath to criticise the Samoan situation can be partly explained by the fact that General Richardson was an Anglican, and a regular member of the congregation at the ‘Apia “White Church.”’¹³⁰ Moreover, his enthusiastic developmental policies were well received by the European missionary contingent in Samoa.¹³¹ The Administrator’s standing is illustrated by the fact that after he was relieved of his Samoan post mired in controversy, he continued to be revered in Anglican circles. In March 1929, just months after the V.P.B report ‘bombshell’, he was invited to address the opening ceremony of the new Melanesian museum at the

¹²⁷ Tamasese’s original charge was for failure to pay the poll tax, but he had his sentence upgraded on account of ignoring the summons to court and resisting arrest. Tamasese’s family worshipped at Greenwood’s church throughout his imprisonment; Greenwood found them ‘earnest Christians and good-living people’, ‘Tamasese’s Release’, *Auckland Star*, 5 June 1929, p.3.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ *Church Gazette: Diocese of Polynesia*, Nov. 1928, p.8; reprinted in the *Reaper*, 14 Feb. 1929, p.5.

¹³⁰ London Missionary Society, *Report of Rev. A. Hough & Rev G. Parker: Deputation to Samoa, August-December 1928* (London: London Missionary Society, 1928), p.21.

¹³¹ Ibid., pp.19, 21. Also notable are the complimentary departing letters he received from the LMS in 1927. For example LMS to Richardson, 27 Mar. & 5 Apr. 1927, in ‘Correspondence of London Missionary Society, Samoan District, with the N.Z. Administration, 1915-1946’, Micro-MS-Coll-08-0144, ATL (also available as a Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB) microfilm, 1991).

old Melanesian Mission headquarters in Kohimarama where he praised Anglican missionary endeavour in Polynesia and Melanesia, and noted how indebted colonial Governments were to them.¹³²

Church opinion was also influenced by a report made by a visiting LMS deputation consisting of the Rev. Alexander Hough and Rev. George Parker.¹³³ The pair arrived in Samoa in September 1928 to investigate a rupture in the Samoan church caused, at least partially, by the *Mau*. And while their report did not condemn the *Mau* outright, it nonetheless reinforced some of the well-worn stereotypes about the movement; ‘easily aroused’, excitable and irrational Samoans had been led astray by opportunist European agitators like Nelson.¹³⁴ The report also noted how individual missionaries of the Samoan LMS—less disinterested than the visiting deputation—‘naturally felt some indignation at the treatment which the Administrator latterly received from the Samoans.’¹³⁵ Most of the indignation appeared to come from the Rev. H. Darvill who, the report noted, was particularly close to Richardson. Darvill responded hyper-critically to an appeal for support from the Nelson-backed New Zealand Samoan Defence League distributed to the Bishops and clergy of New Zealand in March 1929. In his comprehensive reply, Darvill compared the attempt to gain the favour of the Christian community like ‘bringing about an alliance of Christ with Belial.’¹³⁶ The missionary, who had been in Samoa since the early 1920s, refuted the points made by the League, and like Hough and Parker, believed the unrest was caused by European ‘agitators’.¹³⁷

¹³² ‘Mission Buildings at Kohimarama’, *Reaper*, 14 Mar. 1929, p.4. The ‘V. P. B. Report’ included the findings of an investigation commissioned by the New Zealand government in late 1928 by three senior civil servants, Paul Verchaffelt, A.D. Park, and C.A. Berendsen. It exposed the inefficiencies of the Administration, and more importantly, it concurred with many of the original complaints of Nelson’s Citizens’ Committee, see Chaudron, p.190. The Report was edited before publication as ‘Mandated Territory of Western Samoa (extracts from report on finances and staff)’, *Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, 1929, A–4B.

¹³³ LMS, *Report of Rev. A. Hough & Rev G. Parker*.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.20–21. The report recognised that due to the large amount of *Mau* adherents in their Church (Tamasese, the nominal head of the *Mau*, was a LMS Deacon), that the affair ‘will be a “tender” subject for the leaders of the church, and will “crave wary walking.”’ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹³⁶ ‘Appendix xii’ in N. A. Rowe, *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods* (London and New York: Putnam & New York, 1930), pp.309–311; H. Darvill, *Reply to N.Z. Samoan Defence League* (Auckland: 1929), p.1.

¹³⁷ Darvill, *Reply to N.Z. Samoan Defence League*, p.1.

The *Methodist Times*' only contribution to the debate was the assessment by Rev. Shinkfield who, like the LMS missionaries, blamed the 'pernicious influence of certain white men.'¹³⁸ Although the newspaper published Shinkfield's opinion, it decided not to cover the criticism from pioneering missionary to the Solomon Islands, and that year's Conference President, John Francis Goldie in June 1929. During an address in Hamilton Goldie called for a 'clean-slate' in Samoa. He felt the appointment of military men to the administration was a mistake, and called the imprisonment of Tamasese a 'blunder' because a New Zealand citizen could not be imprisoned for a similar offence. Goldie's interpretation of the League of Nations Mandate led him to conclude that the Administration's powers in Samoa could not be any greater than the Government's powers in New Zealand. According to the missionary, a 'frank confession of error', coupled with 'a round-table conference of the leaders of all parties', and the cancellation of Nelson's deportation orders was enough to rectify the situation.¹³⁹

Whether in response to the plea of the New Zealand Samoa Defence League or of their own accord, several well-known New Zealand clergy and academics organised a petition to the Government calling for an investigation into the whole state of Samoan affairs.¹⁴⁰ Sent in September 1930, it contained the signatures of seventy-nine 'leading clergy of all denominations, University professors in each centre in New Zealand, and legal and medical professions and other public men'. Amongst the signatories were the pro-Labour and pro-Ireland, Catholic bishop, James Michael Liston and Auckland University's Professor of Law Ronald Macmillan Algie, who liked to describe himself as 'a Tory in the old tradition'.¹⁴¹ Professor J. P. Grossman, who had been dismissed from Auckland University College on charges of fraud, was another signatory.¹⁴² Even allowing for the

¹³⁸ 'The Position in Samoa', *NZ Methodist Times*, 22 Feb. 1930, p.16.

¹³⁹ 'A Methodist Bombshell', *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 27 Jun. 1929, p.3; "'Clean Slate'", *Auckland Star*, 18 Jun. 1929, p.8.

¹⁴⁰ The petition is contained in 'Samoan Petition, 1931 to Britain, the United States and Germany', p.33, in Grattan papers, MS-Papers-4879-125, ATL. For the originators of the petition, see 'Petition for Samoan Inquiry', *Auckland Star*, 2 Sep. 1930, p.6.

¹⁴¹ Rory Sweetman. 'Liston, James Michael', in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: Volume Four, 1921-1940* (Auckland & Wellington: Auckland University Press & Department of Internal Affairs, 1998), p.288; 'News of the Day', *Auckland Star*, 2 Sep. 1930, p.6; 'By the Way', *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 16 May 1929, p.1.

¹⁴² Barrowman, *Mason*, pp.211-212. Grossman also authored a pamphlet called 'An Appeal for Samoa: full investigation desired', it is referred to in 'A Scathing Attack on Dominion', *N.Z. Truth*, 22 Dec. 1930, p.1.

mixed nature of the signatories, it shows that at least some university intellectuals and clergymen took seriously their function as ‘critic and conscience’ of society. The petition also demonstrates that the tide of public opinion was changing. Colonial criticism was not limited to the anti-imperial Left, but attracted a range of figures that may not have identified as anti-imperialists, but could, when prompted, realise colonialism’s flaws. The following section will expand on aspects of ‘dissident crosscultural collaboration’ that helped expose colonial scandals to the New Zealand public.

Chapter Three

‘White and Dark Races’: The Convergence of ‘White’ Dissent and Islander Resistance.

‘Revulsion at imperial history should allow a continuing interest in the dynamics of empire.’¹

Now that metropolitan dissent has been identified and described, it is necessary to understand how those dissenters interacted with the anticolonial movements that predominantly originated from within the Pacific Islands out of dissatisfaction with New Zealand’s colonial rule. In the case of Samoa and the Cook Islands, anticolonial movements made full use of sympathetic individuals and organisations in New Zealand to further their causes.

In this chapter I argue that aggrieved colonial subjects were driven to find allies in New Zealand because the channels for genuine dialogue between colonial officials and colonial subjects were virtually non-existent. New Zealand’s Island administrations did not have the prerequisite administrative capacity to deal with democratic participation, let alone proper channels for grievances to be heard and dealt with, and nor did they endeavour to create them. The few channels that did exist were deliberately crafted so that only a minority of voices would ever be heard. In Samoa, the administration only recognised the word of the Fono of Faipules while in the Cook Islands, the same situation applied for the Island Councils. Both these colonially constructed and wholly artificial bodies consisted of officially-appointed members whose opinions were generally taken to be authoritative by colonial officials even though their status was often raised to a station above that held in indigenous life. Moreover, complaints from other quarters of society were routinely and unceremoniously dismissed for failing to

¹ Donald Denoon, ‘The Right to Misrepresent’, *The Contemporary Pacific*, Vol. 9, no.2, 1997, p.411.

represent 'true native opinion'. Taken alongside heavy censorship and the pervasive racist attitudes of officials who refused to believe indigenous citizens could articulate grievances on their own accord (and were instead 'put up to it' by mischievous European elements), this meant that aggrieved Pacific Islanders had to find or invent other ways to have their grievances heard. The non-violent resistance of the *Mau* was one such tactic, forming relationships with metropolitan sympathisers was another.

Metropolitan sympathisers possessed the advantage of existing in a society without these impediments to expression; they proved to be valuable friends to the disaffected in the colonies. As shall be seen, this is illustrated in the Samoan case by Nelson and the *Mau*, and in the Cook Islands by Albert Henry and the Cook Islands Progressive Association (CIPA). Shut out, or not fitting into the sanctioned colonial public sphere, these movements turned to the metropole for redress. In New Zealand they were received sympathetically not by mainstream organisations, but by similarly marginalised, counter-cultural, activist movements. In the case of the *Mau*, Nelson attracted a range of figures, either from the political Left or with ties to Samoa; while the CIPA found support in the Communist-dominated Auckland Trades Council. By placing these movements side by side, this chapter is interested in exploring the anticolonial 'dynamics of empire'. Just as the official side of the imperial divide concocted complex networks to facilitate colonial rule, so too did the non-official side figure out ways to obstruct or circumvent this rule. These two case studies illustrate that colonial grievances quickly turned into genuine anticolonial movements through heightened interaction, and friendship, between the metropolitan centre and the colonial periphery.

This idea, of an interwoven relationship between indigenous and metropolitan dissenters, differs slightly from postcolonial theorists in that it posits the two sides on an equal and complementary footing. In *Culture and Imperialism* Edward Said downplayed the significance of metropolitan anti-imperialism to anticolonial struggles. In the same vein as C. L. R. James and other colonial nationalist scholars, Said observed that anticolonialism only emerged in the metropolitan

centres after colonised nationalists took the lead in the colonies.² Although Said acknowledged the tradition of anti-imperialism in European intellectual circles since the mid-eighteenth century, he contended that ‘there was no overall condemnation of imperialism until... *after* native uprisings were too far gone to be ignored or defeated.’³ In certain respects this statement holds for New Zealand and its Pacific Empire. It could be argued that it was only *after* Black Saturday that metropolitan criticism intensified. But if anything, the earlier chapters of this thesis have revealed that condemnation of imperialism was not necessarily predicated on the presence of indigenous anticolonialism. Much metropolitan critical discourse was inspired by ideological considerations somewhat divorced from the practical realities of the colony. This chapter furthers the discussion by arguing that the two often operated in concert.

Whether Said’s formulation holds for the New Zealand context or not, the idea is not without merit and the motivation behind his argument forms the basis of this chapter. The blatant Euro-centricity of the assumption that metropolitan imperial criticism somehow overrode indigenous anticolonialism in importance is both obvious and unhistorical. Euro-centric interpretations were what Said was reacting against, and this is why I now turn to the dynamics that existed between the colonial and metropolitan dissenters. It is clear that metropolitan dissent and colonial resistance were not at opposite ends of the spectrum; they were working together, and therefore need to be studied in the same frame. It should not be a case of privileging one over the other, but foregrounding and exploring the connections that existed.

Metropolitan ‘mischief-makers’ were a difficult proposition for the New Zealand Government at the best of times. Their involvement in colonial politics, and more specifically the prospect of them leading the ‘child-like’, ‘simple-minded’ Polynesian astray made colonial officials anxious. That the Samoans and Cook Islands Māori were aware the New Zealand Māori were accorded almost the same rights as Pākehā was damaging enough to the very foundations of the

² Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p.242.

³ *Ibid.*, italics are Said’s.

coloniser-colonised relationship.⁴ Yet the creation of colonial ties between New Zealand and its Pacific territories meant the colonial populations were connected to New Zealand's domestic sphere, and despite every effort made by the paternalistic colonial regimes to shelter their subjects, the mixing of goods, ideas and people between core and periphery was inevitable. In a particularly heated moment during a meeting between the CIPA and the Government to discuss Cook Island dissatisfaction in 1946, CIPA member G. Hartnell interrupted Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Arthur Osborne, who had just refused to accept a CIPA representation in Rarotonga on the grounds that they, domiciled in New Zealand, were not real Cook Islanders. Hartnell replied: 'But these boys are Cook Islanders. They are constantly going backwards and forwards.'⁵ It is this 'backwards and forwards' mobility of colonial subjects and ideas that the New Zealand officials sought to limit and repress, and I aim to highlight.

While Government and colonial officials stuck rigidly to restrictive distinctions and borders, dissenters were not as encumbered. Critics regularly reminded policy-makers that the Cook Islands fell within New Zealand's national borders. R. A. K. Mason, in his critical potted history, *Frontier Forsaken*, believed New Zealand was guilty of sending the Cook Islanders into a 'poverty of the worst sort – right within the borders of our own country.'⁶ Critics employed an inclusive structure to emphasise the commonality of metropolitan and colonial populations, while officials did their best to employ distancing tactics, devised to exacerbate the 'otherness' of their Island subjects and entrench their position as colonial elites. Although neither the *Mau* nor the CIPA immediately achieved their nationalist goals, their agitation in this period exposed the frailty of white rule and laid the basis for later progress towards self-determination.

The New Zealand *Mau*

Facilitated in no small part by Ta'isi Nelson's considerable personal fortune, the *Mau* created an international network of sympathetic support for their anticolonial

⁴ The *New Zealand Samoa Guardian* asked, 'When will the Samoans be treated in Samoa as the Maoris are in New Zealand?' See 'Enforcement of Rates on Maoris', *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 25 Jul. 1929, p.2.

⁵ Notes on Meeting between Osborne and CIPA, 28 Apr. 1946, p.10 in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁶ R. A. K. Mason, *Frontier Forsaken: An Outline History of the Cook Islands* (Auckland: Challenge, 1947), p.9.

struggle. Although Nelson's networks spanned the globe, the strongest and most obvious links were forged within New Zealand where he spent most of his time during his five year exile beginning in January 1928 after being controversially deported for his role in the *Mau*, by this point declared a seditious organisation. He was deported by the Richardson administration as a precaution against further anticolonial agitation, yet in New Zealand Nelson was able to enlist the support of friends and allies to advocate on the *Mau*'s behalf. In many respects, Nelson was able to inflict more damage to the credibility of the New Zealand regime from Auckland than in Apia. From his home in the wealthy Auckland suburb of Parnell or in his offices on Queen St, Nelson took full advantage of his metropolitan surroundings to continue his campaign both individually and through the auspices of the New Zealand Samoa Defence League. As Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford have contended, the 'mau had effectively shifted its battleground from the islands to the metropole.'⁷ While in exile, Nelson's ability to gather widespread support for the *Mau* encouraged the Samoans to keep the struggle alive; at the same time, his ability to influence metropolitan opinion put the New Zealand Government's colonial policy to the test. This section aims to both explore the extent of Nelson and the *Mau*'s New Zealand network, and reveal how those who made up this network attempted to navigate or negotiate their way through a top-heavy colonial system.

The Defence League, and its corresponding newspaper, the *New Zealand Samoa Guardian*, became Nelson's primary vehicles for publicising the Samoan struggle in New Zealand. Ostensibly launched in February 1929 as a response to the imprisonment of Tamasese, the Defence League's inaugural meeting at the Auckland Town Hall was reportedly attended by over 1200 people.⁸ Made up of Samoans resident in New Zealand and Pākehā and Māori sympathisers, the League professed to be 'non-political' and desired to 'avoid all party politics'.⁹ In fact, they did not purport to be 'actuated' by any motive other 'than a sincere desire to maintain the prestige of New Zealand while securing for the Samoan

⁷ Peter Hempenstall & Noel Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1984), p.41; see also Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa*, pp.134-135.

⁸ 'N.Z. Samoa Defence League', *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 9 May 1929, p.4; 'Samoan Petition, 1931 to Britain, the United States and Germany', p.27, contained in Grattan papers, MS-Papers-4879-125, ATL.

⁹ 'New Zealand Samoa Defence League (advertisement)', *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 9 May 1929, p.4.

people a satisfactory settlement of all their grievances along the lines of British justice.’¹⁰ The League feigned impartiality, claiming that although they had been in ‘close touch with the Government and the representatives of the Samoan people’ they ‘in no way’ claimed to ‘act on behalf of one or the other.’ Complementing this non-partisan appearance was the decision to make Auckland barrister, Alfred Hall Skelton, President of the organisation.¹¹

Despite their claim to non-partisanship, the Defence League was closely affiliated to the *Mau*. Nelson may have wanted to avoid the impression that he was the orchestrator of this movement, but his imprint was indelible.¹² Just as he stressed the indigenous aspect of the *Mau* in Samoa, he emphasised the metropolitan flavour of the movement in New Zealand. However, his attempts to divorce himself from the League were not always convincing. In a late-1929 interview with the visiting Rhodes fellow, Margery Perham, Nelson claimed he had nothing to do with the newly set-up organisation.¹³ When Perham asked whether he might have some copies of their literature for her to look at, Nelson went as far as saying he knew nothing about the organisation. Thinking his clerk was in on the act, Nelson then asked whether he, ‘rather a stupid-looking man’ in Perham’s words, would be able to help her out by tracking some of it down. To this the clerk responded ‘It’s all in your cupboard, sir’ and opened the door to reveal a cupboard full of League material.¹⁴

Nelson was fully cognisant of the light in which he was cast by the New Zealand Government and Samoan Administration. He was the ‘troublesome half-caste’;

¹⁰ ‘N.Z. Samoa Defence League’, *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 9 May 1929, p.4.

¹¹ Despite Nelson’s best-efforts to secure a respectable figure-head for the Defence League, Hall Skelton’s background revealed that he was once a member of the Self-Determination League and had been labelled ‘a disloyalist and an Empire-Wrecker’, ‘An Election Pamphlet’, *NZ Truth*, 15 Jul. 1926, p.6.

¹² The organisation’s treasurer, J. Westbrook, was the son of the cantankerous *papalagi* critic and Apia store-keeper, George Westbrook. The Defence League’s activities were eagerly reported by the *New Zealand Samoa Guardian* which was originally edited by Nelson’s fellow deportee E. W. Gurr, and operated out of Nelson’s Queen Street offices. Gurr was soon replaced by Percy Andrew (a ‘well-known pressman in New Zealand’) on account of his ill-health, see ‘Mr. Gurr Retires’, *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 25 Jul. 1929, p.2.

¹³ Perham was travelling to Australasia and the Pacific on a Rhodes Trust Travelling Fellowship ostensibly to look into race problems and colonial administration. She would become an influential voice in British imperial history.

¹⁴ Margery Perham, *Pacific Prelude: A Journey to Samoa and Australasia*, ed. A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1988), p.127.

‘the cause of all the trouble’.¹⁵ His name had been smeared in the 1927 Report of the Royal Commission, and he had been denied a hearing at Geneva in 1928 as the representative of the *Mau*.¹⁶ It is not surprising that for the Defence League to have any chance of success it was assumed that it needed to publically disassociate itself from him. The model was effective. Samoan representatives were invited to speak to receptive metropolitan audiences; by June 1929, Hall-Skelton claimed the ‘League had addressed over fifty meetings and tens of thousands of citizens, with only one opponent – a “drunk” at the Remuera meeting!’¹⁷

Nelson’s New Zealand network also demonstrated its utility when it came to lodging Samoan grievances at the League of Nations. Samoans had long favoured the petition as a form of protest— Susan Pedersen has pointed out the mediums ‘nice affinity with Samoan deliberative practices’—and the *Mau* had enthusiastically adopted it as a strategy, albeit with limited success.¹⁸ While it was hopeless to try and launch a petition from within the Mandated territory because it first had to meet the approval of the Administrator, there were brighter prospects for petitions that originated from outside the territory. However, like New Zealand’s internal colonial structures, the PMC was not designed in a manner that favoured dissent. It was at the chairman of the PMC’s discretion whether or not petitions from outside the Mandated territory were accepted. One of the criteria for a favourable hearing was the ‘authority or disinterestedness of their authors’.¹⁹ The originator of the petition mattered; impartiality and reputability were crucial. Pedersen has described the contrast between the courtesy delivered to the ‘well-connected humanitarians of the Anti-Slavery Society’ by the PMC and the indifference shown when the petitioners happened to be Samoan.²⁰ Here is where Nelson’s exile benefited the *Mau*. From his New Zealand base Nelson was able to

¹⁵ O’Brien, ‘Ta’isi O.F. Nelson and Sir Maui Pomare’, p.37.

¹⁶ See, O. F. Nelson, *Samoa at Geneva: Misleading the League of Nations* (Auckland, 1928).

¹⁷ ‘By the Way’, *N.Z. Samoa Guardian*, 6 Jun. 1929, p.1.

¹⁸ Susan Pedersen, ‘Samoa on the World Stage: petitions and peoples before the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations’, *JICH*, Vol. 40, no. 2, 2012, p.252.

¹⁹ ‘Summary of the Procedure to be Followed in the Matter of Petitions Concerning Mandated Territories (1927)’, contained in Petition from “Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society” to the League of Nations, IT1 65, EX 1/63, ANZ.

²⁰ Pedersen, ‘Samoa on the World Stage’, pp.248-249. The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society petitioned the League of Nations in 1927 and 1928 in response to allegations of Samoan maladministration that made it into the London papers, see ‘Petition from “Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society” to the League of Nations’, IT1 65, EX 1/63, ANZ.

either directly organise, or inspire through his public campaign, a range of petitions from parties who could claim both authority and neutrality.²¹ I will now focus on the petition of the WILPF as it is the most illustrative of both the cross-cultural nature of the struggle and the Government's obfuscating response.

After being prompted by the international head office of the WILPF in Geneva, the Auckland WILPF, under the direction of Soljak and Emily Gibson, organised their own petition to the League of Nations on behalf of Samoan women in 1930.²² Suitably outraged at Allen's portrayal of the women's *Mau* as a group of 'many old women and all known prostitutes', the Auckland Branch of the WILPF offered to represent the Samoans on the international stage.²³ Contrary to Allen's derogatory appraisal, the WILPF asserted that the women were 'highly educated, cultured, and refined'; it was revealed that one was educated in San Francisco and the other at St. Cuthbert's College in Auckland. The women in question were Nelson's wife, Rosabel Edith Moors, and sister-in-law, Priscilla Muench (daughters of the trader H. J. Moors), who had taken up the *Mau* fight on behalf of their male partners who had been forced into hiding. In the words of the women's *Mau* they felt that 'After watching with silent grief and tears for many years the persecution, gaoling and demeaning of our people we now feel that the Women's International League will help get us Peace and Freedom some day.'²⁴ However, as the correspondence attached to the petition reveals, the WILPF were always going to be on the back-foot on account of the unequal power relations between the Government and the people. The Government was able to tap into wider societal conservatism and racism to extinguish the claims of the women. Administrator Allen's deprecating assessment of the women's *Mau* was

²¹ In 1930 the League of Nations also received petitions from Nelson, E. W. Gurr, Hall-Skelton (revoked), Greenwood.

²² 'Samoan Women', *Auckland Star*, 27 Sep. 1930, p.10; 'Petition from Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, September', IT1 64, EX 1/52, ANZ. By this point the WILPF had split from the Labour Party. Until 1930 they were known as the Auckland Women's Branch of the Labour Party.

See 'Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Minutes and Annual Reports, 1930-36', 89-107-1/01, ATL.

²³ Pedersen, 'Samoa on the World Stage', p.252.

²⁴ Women of Samoa to WILPF 24 Aug. 1930, in 'Petition from Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, September', IT1 64, EX 1/52, ANZ. The clients of Captain Slipper were listed as Princess Faamu Malietoa, Masiofo Ala Tamasese, Masiofo Pa'isami Tuimalealiifano and Faletua Taisi.

complemented further by the pejorative appraisal of their New Zealand lawyer, Thomas Slipper.

Slipper's case shows that sympathisers were prepared to physically cross the colonial divide; that is, he became a metropolitan figure who advocated for the colonised in the colonial periphery. His story reveals that 'whiteness' alone could not spare an individual from colonial repression. Men or women who either crossed the colour line or became a critic of the Administration became susceptible to the same treatment as the colonised. He had been in Samoa since April 1926 as lawyer to Nelson and the *Mau*. Because of this, he was always treated with suspicion. Prior to the investigation of the Royal Commission, Administrator Richardson had asked External Affairs for advice on how to deport the young lawyer who, in Richardson's eyes, was 'a bad influence among the Natives particularly at the present stage.'²⁵ Richardson was ultimately advised not to take any action until after the Commission had concluded their investigation, however in the meantime incriminating evidence was collected by the Administration to bolster their case against the man.²⁶ Unflattering affidavits were sent to New Zealand to indicate the reprehensibility of Slipper's character. Harry Irwin, an Apia police constable, described his appearance at a picnic where he had arrived uninvited and 'under the influence of drink. ... He was dirty and had stains on his trousers as if he had messed himself. He was unshaved and looked like a vagrant.'²⁷ What was worse however is that he spent his time in the company of half-castes and 'other bad elements.' Slipper was accused of not upholding the dignity of the white race. However, what was reprehensible in colonial Samoa, was a little less unforgivable in New Zealand society. The Solicitor-General Arthur Fair commented that his behaviour 'does not seem very harmful... although very reprehensible, cannot do any wide spread harm.' He

²⁵ Richardson to Nosworthy, 13 Jan. 1928, in TP[sic] Slipper – Deportation from Samoa, IT1 422, IT 69/56/5, ANZ.

²⁶ Richardson to Minister of External Affairs, 6 Sep. 1927; S.J. Smith to Solicitor-General 8 Oct. 1927 both in TP[sic] Slipper – Deportation from Samoa, IT1 422, IT 69/56/5, ANZ.

²⁷ Harry Irwin Police Statement, 4 Jan. 1928, in TP[sic] Slipper – Deportation from Samoa, IT1 422, IT 69/56/5, ANZ.

noted 'It is difficult to believe that the Samoans are unaware of the existence and habits of Europeans who drink heavily and are of idle and dissolute habits.'²⁸

The final straw for the Administration came in February 1930 when Slipper, on behalf of the women's *Mau*, charged Allen's Administration with 'death and bloodshed' and 'terrorisation of the women and children' of the *Mau*.²⁹ In the middle of the 'war on Samoa', Allen expressed his belief that:

'[a]n offence of this nature is far more serious when committed by a white man in a native community, and on behalf of natives, than it might be under other circumstances. It is clear also that the publication was very widespread, and that the letter was written for the actual purpose of spreading mischievous and untrue statements through the country.'³⁰

Slipper was charged with libel and sentenced to three months imprisonment alongside a fine of £105. The Samoan women pleaded to the Administrator to have the sentence imposed on them rather than their lawyer, though Allen responded by revoking Slipper's license to practice law in the islands. This meant the women had to proceed their case without counsel; it was decided not to delay their hearing until a replacement lawyer could be found. The women's appeal to the WILPF was a direct result of this unfair hearing.

Nelson, in regular contact with his wife and the rest of the *Mau*, found a replacement in the form of Patrick Fitzherbert. Treated with initial suspicion by the Administration he was nonetheless allowed to set up practice in Apia in the same offices as Slipper. Nelson sent Fitzherbert with instructions not to appear as if he had any involvement with the *Mau*. Nelson wrote to the *Mau* to let them know 'it is no good to call him the lawyer of the *Mau*, but just that he is a lawyer who has gone to see whether there is any opportunity for legal work.'³¹ Fitzherbert's façade did not last long. Like Slipper, his fraternising with the 'loose' women did not endear him to the Administration. Casting aspersions on

²⁸ Solicitor-General to Secretary External Affairs, 28 Jan. 1928, in TP[sic] Slipper – Deportation from Samoa, IT1 422, IT 69/56/5, ANZ.

²⁹ Slipper to Allen, 11 Feb. 1930, in TP[sic] Slipper – Deportation from Samoa, IT1 422, IT 69/56/5.

³⁰ Allen to Joseph Ward, 4 Apr. 1930, in TP[sic] Slipper – Deportation from Samoa, IT1 422, IT 69/56/5.

³¹ 'Letter from Taisi', 17 Apr. 1930, in PB Fitzherbert, IT1 446, EX 79/109, ANZ.

the morals of both Muench and Fitzherbert in one go, Allen wrote in reply to the women's petition that Muench spent 'at least one night till 5 a.m. in the bedroom of Mr. Fitzherbert'. Allen described how Fitzherbert 'received her clothed in his pyjamas and carried her into his room – though of course I do not suggest they met for any political reason.'³² Tales of raucous drinking and inappropriate behaviour were also tabled against him, the more serious of which concerned the sexual abuse of his Samoan domestic servants.³³ Noticeable in the action of the colonial administration is the contrast between their treatment of critics compared to the treatment of their own. The desperate claims of the women's *Mau* were dismissed on account of the supposed sexual indiscretion of their adherents and the character of their lawyers Fitzherbert and Slipper, yet they were willing to go to enormous lengths to cover up the sexual scandals of colonial administrative staff, Bigg-Wither and Foster.³⁴

Nelson and the *Mau* also created links with Māori in New Zealand where their shared Polynesian identity was stressed. Most notable in Nelson's case was his friendship with Reform Cabinet Minister, Sir Maui Pomare. Patricia O'Brien has recovered the significance of this relationship which began in mid-1919, but solidified once Nelson was in exile where the Nelson family visited the Pomares in Lower Hutt and Waitara.³⁵ The pair had originally bonded over Polynesian culture and history, but it was the deteriorating political situation in Samoa from the rise of the *Mau* onwards that dominated their correspondence.³⁶ Behind closed doors, Pomare, and Ngata (once he returned to the Government benches in 1928), tried to convince their leaders to adopt a more conciliatory policy; Pomare even turned on his own Government in Parliament during a forceful speech in 1927 over the deportation of Nelson.³⁷ Yet neither Pomare nor Ngata were able to alter policy from within Cabinet. Holland, who also remained in close contact with

³² Allen to Forbes, 23 October, 1930, p.5, in PB Fitzherbert, IT1 446, EX 79/109, ANZ.

³³ He was even found, 'on one occasion... lying in bed masturbating', McKay to Secretary of External Affairs, 16 Oct. 1930, in PB Fitzherbert, IT1 446, EX 79/109, ANZ.

³⁴ Unfortunately, there is no room to go into these cases in detail. The actions of the pair outraged Holland and the *New Zealand Worker*, see H. E. Holland, 'The Iron Heel in Samoa: The Foster and Bigg-Wither Cases', *NZ Worker*, 9 May 1928, p.9.

³⁵ O'Brien, 'Ta'isi O.F. Nelson and Sir Maui Pomare', p.44.

³⁶ Pomare collaborated with Nelson for an article on Samoan myths, see O. F. Nelson, 'Legends of Samoa: an address to the Samoa Research Society, 30 Nov. 1923', *The Journal of the Polynesian Society (JPS)*, Vol. 34, no. 2, 1925, pp.124-145.

³⁷ Sir Maui Pomare, *NZPD*, Vol. 212, 1927, pp.928-931.

Nelson and Pomare on Samoan matters, would later comment to Nelson, if 'Pomare had been prepared to walk out of the Coates Cabinet and say what he is now saying, there might have been a different story to tell relating to Samoa.'³⁸ Out of Parliament, the *Mau* also found an ally in the Te Akarana Maori Association. In 1933, the *Mau* leader Mata'afa Faumuina Fiaame Mulinu'u I expressed his condolences to the Association for the death of the Māori King, Te Rata Mahuta, while also thanking them for their 'kindly interest' shown in the struggles of the Samoan people. Again, the ethnic ties between Māori and the Samoans was stressed, Faumuina hoped 'the day is not far distant when the trials of Samoa and Aotearoa will pass away, and we all realise our common racial origin by closer relationship tending towards welfare and advancement of all Polynesian peoples.'³⁹

The final connection between the *Mau* and the metropole worth exploring is a relationship less important for its impact on the Samoan colonialism but notable for the implications it would have for the Cook Islands anticolonial struggle a decade and a half later. More by accident than design, Nelson became acquainted with the young poet, R. A. K. Mason, due to Mason's job as a Latin tutor for Nelson's daughter Olive in 1930. Little is known about the pair's relationship but Mason's biographer, Rachel Barrowman, has speculated that Mason was working for Nelson in other capacities as well.⁴⁰ At Nelson's suggestion, Mason, in his mid-twenties, embarked on the first holiday of his life to Samoa in 1930-31. While there Mason boasted about spending his time 'consorting with the heads of the "rebel" natives, going to half-caste parties, yarning for long with old traders and whites who had gone half-native'.⁴¹ And though he observed that the mood was 'jolly', Mason also noticed the people were 'very bitter against New Zealand (But then, for one reason or other, most people here are – white, castes, and Samoan)'.⁴² Mason's experience, like Slipper and Fitzherbert, was a further

³⁸ Holland to Nelson, 5 Feb. 1929, Nelson, Olaf Frederick, 1883-1944: Correspondence, Micro-MS-Coll-08-0712, ATL, (also available as PMB, 1991).

³⁹ Faumuina-Fiaame to George Graham, 10 Oct. 1933, in Samoan papers – Police v O [Olaf] F Nelson – Mau letters per 'Maui Pomare'. Copues [sic] for Auckland Committee, AAAR W3558 24460 Box 1453, Exhibit 24, ANZ.

⁴⁰ In a 1948 job application Mason would list his experience working for Nelson for a year which he added, resulted in 'the grant of three months' furlough in the Islands', Barrowman, *Mason*, p.409 n.2.

⁴¹ Mason to Eric, 30 May 1931, in *ibid.*, p.127.

⁴² Mason to Jessie Mason, 25 Feb. 1931, in *ibid.*, p.128.

illustration of the porous nature of colonial boundaries. As well as bringing the colonised to the metropole, anticolonialism brought metropolitan citizens to the colonies. Although limited in its extent, this flow fostered enduring cross-cultural ties that exposed the fallibility of the colonialism's artificial distinctions.

Nelson's patronage enabled another side of Samoa to be seen. This was a side of Samoa that the Administration and New Zealand Government had tried their best to obfuscate. Whether through print media, public demonstration or by funding trips to Samoa like Mason's, Nelson brought the Samoan colonial struggle into the purview of ordinary New Zealanders. To those that the issue resonated with, like Mason, it made a lasting impact. For Mason, his impressions of New Zealand colonial rule emerged again when a similar unrest erupted over the Cook Islands.

The Auckland Cook Islands Progressive Association

Little was made of New Zealand's colonialism in the Cook Islands during the unrest in Samoa. For most Cook Islands Māori, the 1920s were a prosperous decade (Dick Scott termed it the 'flowering twenties'); Western material comforts were a welcome novelty, and under the considerate rule of Hugh F. Ayson, Island affairs proceeded relatively smoothly.⁴³ Samoan critics occasionally viewed the Cook Islands administration with envy, deeming it the 'polar opposite' of their own wasteful, militaristic and rampantly crony version.⁴⁴ By the 1940s however, the relaxed atmosphere came to an abrupt halt; wartime poverty afflicted the territory and the arrival of the United States armed forces had shaken up the status quo. Ayson had been replaced as Resident Commissioner by the unpopular William Tailby, and dissatisfaction with New Zealand's colonial rule had awoken. It was on Aitutaki—where the Americans were based—that the anticolonial CIPA developed in 1943. The movement spread quickly into Rarotonga, and by tapping into popular discontent over grievances such as discriminatory wage rates and lack of democratic representation, Scott has written that the CIPA 'laid the basis for Maori self-government.'⁴⁵ As in Samoa, gaining meaningful redress was

⁴³ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, pp.175-188. The white community however were more critical of the Cook Islands Administration before 1940 and their views received some exposure, see for example, Sir Robert Stout, 'Charges Against the Administration at Rarotonga, Cook Islands', *AJHR*, A.-3A, 1911, Vol. 1, pp.1-12.

⁴⁴ 'N.Z. Foreign Office', *N.Z Samoa Guardian*, 15 Aug. 1929, p.3.

⁴⁵ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p.231.

a difficult proposition; petitions sent to the colonial administration and New Zealand Government generally fell on deaf ears. In Henry's words, 'Our people felt that their grievances were not reaching the right sources.'⁴⁶ Tailby's inaction over allegations of labour abuses involving Cook Island labourers on the French phosphate island of Makatea provided the catalyst for wider agitation.⁴⁷ According to Scott, '[t]o break official silence, the CIPA turned for help to a group of Islanders living in Auckland.'⁴⁸ The subsequent activity of these Auckland Cook Islanders (led by Albert Henry) from June 1945 to June 1948 forms the basis of this section.

Reminiscent of Nelson's campaign in the 1920s and 30s, Henry led the Cook Islands anticolonial agitation from New Zealand. He had been living in New Zealand (voluntarily) since 1943 after previously fashioning a reputation as a 'troublemaker' on Aitutaki.⁴⁹ In 1945 he was based in Auckland as a bus company employee and the secretary of the Brown's Bay branch of the Labour Party. As a well-known figure in the Auckland Cook Islands community, he was an obvious port of call for the disaffected CIPA delegation. Even though Mason was to describe the Makatea affair 'the worst labour scandal in New Zealand history', Henry struggled to find a receptive audience amongst mainstream organisations in Auckland (his own Labour Party included).⁵⁰ On the recommendation of Te Puea Herangi, Henry turned to the secretary of the Auckland General Labourers' Union, Pat Potter, who had been appointed a Māori liaison officer for the Communist controlled Auckland Trades Council due to the support he gave to Ngati Whatua during the Orakei Marae stand-off in 1943.⁵¹ Realising the seriousness of the situation, Potter promptly publicised the affair in the trade union journal *Challenge* (edited by Mason).⁵² As a stark illustration of the

⁴⁶ Notes of discussion held at Auckland between Osborne and CIPA, 28 Apr. 1946, p.6 in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁴⁷ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p.245.

⁴⁸ According to Mason, the evidence 'showed conclusively that over 400 Cook Islands Maoris had been virtually "blackbirded" to slave for a French Company... with the complicity of the Cook Island Administration.' Mason, *Frontier Forsaken*, p.81.

⁴⁹ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p.235.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.217

⁵¹ Mason, *Frontier Forsaken*, p.81.

⁵² H. Roth, 'Albert Henry as Labour Organizer: a struggle for power in the Cook Islands', *JPH*, Vol. 12, no. 3, 1977, p.176. For more on Te Puea and Orakei see Michael King, *Te Puea: A Biography* (Auckland, London, Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), pp.218-219.

⁵³ 'Have New Zealand subjects been sold into slavery?', *Challenge*, Aug. 1945, p.6.

differences between official and non-official lines of communication, it was said that Peter Fraser's Government received notice of the affair via the journal before it had received a report from Tailby.⁵³ In addition to publicising the scandal, Potter advised Henry to set up an Auckland Branch of the CIPA in October 1945 to receive grievances and agitate on behalf of those resident in the Cook Islands. Like the New Zealand Samoa Defence League, a Pākehā, Thomas Goode, was elected president, while Henry took on the less prominent role of secretary. The organisation also had the official aim of looking after the welfare of Auckland Cook Islanders, but under Henry's direction—not to mention the influence of the Auckland Communists—the anticolonial intentions of the organisation became apparent.⁵⁴

CIPA anticolonial networks were multi-directional. As the metropolitan representative for the aggrieved parties in the Cook Islands, Henry received petitions to be forwarded to the New Zealand Government on their behalf.⁵⁵ Henry told the Government his Auckland organisation did not feel any personal discontent towards the Administration, it was those in the Cook Islands who were unhappy; his role was merely to facilitate Cook Island grievances. A statement sent to him from a Rarotongan Island Councillor said the 'people have been docile too long under the domination of the white man'. Henry said it was his role to break the 'barrier' of discontent.⁵⁶ Yet despite what Henry told Wellington, information flowed in the opposite direction as well. Working with Pat Potter and the Auckland Trades Council introduced the Cook Islanders to new methods of protest. Henry was in constant contact with the CIPA branches in the Cook Islands, and encouraged the Rarotongan watersiders to take industrial action to improve work and pay conditions.⁵⁷ Physical mobility between New Zealand and the Cook Islands was a prominent aspect of the agitation also. Henry and Goode went on a ten week tour in October-December 1946 where the pair received long

⁵³ Mason, *Frontier Forsaken*, p.82.

⁵⁴ There was friction in the Auckland CIPA between those who wanted to pursue the officially stated aim of the organisation and those who were actuated by Henry's political aims. See Antony Hooper, 'Cook Islanders in Auckland', *JPS*, Vol. 70, no. 2, 1961, pp.186-7.

⁵⁵ Notes of meeting with Osborne, 2 Feb. 1946, in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁵⁶ Notes of discussion held at Auckland between Osborne and CIPA, 28 Apr. 1946, p.1 in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁵⁷ Roth, 'Albert Henry as Labour Organizer', p.177.

lists of grievances from the different islands and communities. By February 1947, the Cook Islands branches of the CIPA confirmed that Henry was their accredited spokesman in Auckland and called upon him to convince Fraser of the legitimacy of the CIPA as the organisation of the Cook Islands people.⁵⁸

Even though the metropolitan-colonial network was advantageous in some respects, it also proved an impediment to gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the Fraser Government. Similar to the way Nelson was dismissed as a troublesome half-caste, the fact that Henry was agitating from Auckland (not the Cook Islands) proved an impediment to the establishment of dialogue between officials and aggrieved Islanders. Fraser insisted that representations from the CIPA in the Cook Islands had to conform to 'constitutional practice'; that is, they had to come through the Resident Commissioner.⁵⁹ Fraser's Parliamentary under-secretary Arthur Osborne, who was designated the task of mediating with the CIPA, made it clear that the Government could not recognise the organisation, given that it was based in Auckland, as representative of the people in the Cook Islands.⁶⁰ In the view of the Government, recognition of Henry and the Auckland CIPA would be 'an insult to the Arikis and to the people of the Island Councils as at present constituted.'⁶¹ Given that the members of the Island Councils were appointed by the Administration, the Government's sentiment appears less convincing. Tom Davis noted how Cook Islanders believed the Island Councils had 'become merely puppets in the hands of that official [the Resident Commissioner] and have never represented the true voice of the people.'⁶² Like the *Mau*, the CIPA increasingly began to carry the weight of popular opinion yet Wellington held steady to their conception of traditional authority and failed to notice the changing tide of indigenous feeling.⁶³

⁵⁸ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p.245.

⁵⁹ Fraser to Tailby, 24 Apr. 1947, in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁶⁰ Notes of discussion held at Auckland between Osborne and CIPA, 28 Apr. 1946, p.5 in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁶¹ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p.245.

⁶² Notes of discussion held at Auckland between Osborne and CIPA, 28 Apr. 1946, p.11, in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁶³ T. R. A. Davis, 'Rarotonga Today', *JPS*, Vol. 56, no. 2, 1947, p.202.

⁶⁴ See D. J. Stone, 'Political Resurgence in the Cook Islands: the path to self-government, 1944-1965', MA Thesis, Auckland University, 1967, p.82.

The Government also had a problem with the leadership of the Auckland CIPA. The fact that Goode was Pākehā failed to lend to the credibility of the organisation in the Government's eyes. Osborne quipped, "How long have you lived there, Mr Goode?" to the President, in an attempt to discredit his standing. Henry's history also raised eyebrows. The tone of correspondence between the Government and the Auckland CIPA became noticeably sharper after Island Territories received a character reference from the Resident Commissioner describing Henry's history as a 'local agitator, trouble maker,[and] rumour aspires to lead Cook Islands people in New Zealand and represent Group in Parliament.'⁶⁴

The CIPA's decision to side with the militant Auckland unions was, however, the main factor determining how they were perceived by the Government. Fraser's Government was 'growing increasingly hawkish and anti-communist in the early days of the Cold War', and as Roth and Scott both argued, for these three turbulent years, the Cook Island's anticolonial struggle was inseparable from New Zealand's internal cold war politics.⁶⁵ By siding with the Communists, the CIPA, in Auckland and the Cook Islands, was tarnished with the same brush. The anticolonial aims of the CIPA were not too far removed from Fraser's own views. After all, this was the man who two decades earlier denounced New Zealand's colonialism in Samoa alongside Holland. Fraser was willing to accept the CIPA but first they had to break their ties with the Communist unions. Or as Roth put it, Fraser was more fixated with 'curbing the Communists'.⁶⁶ Representatives of the Government sponsored Federation of Labour were sent to the Cook Islands to investigate the situation in June 1946, and came back reporting that the CIPA, as 'little friends of the Soviet Republic' and 'self-styled Communists', had 'arrogated to themselves the right to speak for everybody in the Islands.'⁶⁷

Henry and the CIPA made non-militant relationships as well. Te Puea and Waikato Māori remained important allies. Just as shared Polynesian ancestry caused Māori to identify with the Samoan struggle, the shared whakapapa of

⁶⁴ Resident Commissioner to Island Territories, 20 Apr. 1946 in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁶⁵ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p.245.

⁶⁶ Barrowman, *Mason*, p.295; Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p. 243; Roth, 'Albert Henry as Labour Organizer', p.186.

⁶⁷ Roth, 'Albert Henry as Labour Organizer', p.178.

⁶⁷ T. F. Anderson and K. M. Baxter to PM, 26 Jul. 1946, in Roth, 'Albert Henry as Labour Organizer', p.179.

Tainui and Aitutaki Māori fostered a natural affinity between the groups. Te Puea had long been aware of problems on Aitutaki and she had received a direct appeal for help from an individual Aitutakian CIPA activist.⁶⁸ At the CIPA's request, she visited the Cook Islands in June 1947. Fraser and Tailby were insistent that she obtain 'a balanced view of Cook Islands affairs' so her movements were tightly choreographed. Nonetheless, she managed to enjoy an *umukai* hosted by the CIPA where she was invited to lay the foundation stone for the CIPA museum. Free from Tailby Te Puea received information that would inform a critical report destined for Fraser's office.⁶⁹ In this instance, Waikato Māori, Cook Islands Māori, and Auckland militants converged. Each group fell outside of mainstream New Zealand, but were not content to remain marginalised.

On a further visit to the Cook Islands in July-September 1947, Henry brought Dr. Edwin Burton Gunson with him. Gunson was the brother of Sir James Gunson the conservative former mayor of Auckland and was a renowned physician and patron of the arts in his own right.⁷⁰ Like Nelson and Pomare, the pair had struck up a friendship over a mutual interest in Polynesian history. As far as the Resident Commissioner was concerned, Gunson was visiting Rarotonga to verify certain Māori traditions for a proposed book on the history of the Māori.⁷¹ Yet in Rarotonga he was overheard participating in a late night meeting of CIPA members. According to an eavesdropping police officer, Gunson was 'disgusted' by the Government's decision to establish a counter union to the CIPA, which left the policeman with the distinct impression that Gunson was conspiring with Henry.⁷² This anecdote reveals that in these highly charged colonial settings, every cross-cultural bond between dissidents was perceived in political terms.

The relationship between Mason and Henry was of a similar nature. Through Potter, Mason was put into close touch with Henry and the pair quickly bonded over an interest in colonial history. Potter, Mason and Henry had shared a car together during their journey from Auckland to Wellington and back to meet the

⁶⁸ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p.245.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.250.

⁷⁰ 'Signal Tribute', *Auckland Star*, 12 Jun. 1930, p.7.

⁷¹ Tailby to IT, 22 Jul. 1947, in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁷² J. Best to Tailby, 17 Jul. 1947, in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

Prime Minister in June 1946 where Mason soaked up information from Henry to write his 'history and general survey' of the Cook Islands published in January 1947 (the first general history of the Cook Islands). Mason's summary of the situation is apposite, he observed that the Cook Islanders:

... were not only aroused by the general upsurge of downtrodden peoples the world over, but they had an organisation spreading rapidly, both in the Islands and in New Zealand. They had direct contact with Maori and European friends, staunch and tested allies, they had means of maintaining pressure and publicity.⁷³

Yet the limits to 'dissident crosscultural collaboration' were shown when Henry decided to sever his ties with the militant unions and side with Fraser's Government.⁷⁴ The CIPA changed its focus to economic rather than political improvement, believing it to be a more important or realistic goal than self-determination at that time. To Mason's disappointment, the CIPA transformed into an ill-fated, co-operative movement in 1948.⁷⁵ This move reflected the changing attitude towards colonial problems by the metropolitan State; it was not so much the aims of the CIPA that caused the problem as it was the company the movement kept. At the same time, Henry's separation suggests that 'dissident crosscultural collaboration' in the New Zealand context was a uniquely interwar phenomenon arising on account of the intersection between progressive Left politics, anticolonial nationalism, and conservative Government policy. Under the more enlightened colonial model encouraged by the United Nations, the need for dissident collaboration collapsed. It was no longer necessary to have dissident collaboration when the Government could offer conciliatory collaboration.

⁷³ Mason, *Frontier Forsaken*, p.85.

⁷⁴ CIPA Deputation to the PM, 23 Jun. 1948, p.2, in Cook Islands Progressive Association – General, IT1 672, IT 129/3, ANZ.

⁷⁴ Scott, *Years of the Pooh-Bah*, p.245.

⁷⁵ Barrowman, *Mason*, p.296.

Conclusion

I wouldn't give N.Z. (Britain either, for that matter) charge of a shit-house.¹

Just how typical was the type of sentiment expressed by Mason above? It is a question worth exploring further because however tempting it is to classify Mason's blunt appraisal of New Zealand's imperial credentials as characteristic of 'the New Zealand critic of Empire', this thesis has shown that there was really no such thing as a 'typical' colonial critic. Indeed, one of the aims of this thesis has been to stress the range and diversity of critical responses to 'New Zealand's Pacific'. Although Mason's attitudes were shared by many on the Left, there were others—especially pre-War commentators—whose criticism was not a demonstration of their wider dissatisfaction with the modern 'nation' or, for that matter, 'Western civilisation'. So rather than conclude with a portrait of the 'typical' colonial critic, it is more useful to reflect upon some of the characteristics that 'typified' imperial and colonial dissent in New Zealand at different times.

This thesis has looked at metropolitan dissent in two main contexts: the debates around Pacific annexation and the debates over New Zealand's colonial record. Each context resulted in a distinctive kind of criticism. As shown in the first chapter, in the context of debates around annexation, criticism was very rarely actuated by a concern for the indigenous populations of the Islands. Opposition in these periods was more frequently characterised by parochial self-interest. Commentators almost never doubted the morality of imperialism; that all the Pacific Islands would at some point come under control of 'civilised' nations was deemed a *fait accompli*. The types of anti-imperialism displayed by progressive groups in Britain had not yet trickled down to New Zealand where left-wing politics were in their infancy during this period. The 'Clarionettes', New Zealand's first major influx of socialist immigrants, arrived at the turn of the century and soon helped set up the New Zealand Socialist Party, however even they had no noticeable impact on public debate surrounding Seddon's Pacific

¹ Mason to Geoffrey de Montalk, 5 Jan. 1930, in Barrowman, *Mason*, p.125.

imperialism. Of course, every rule has its exceptions, and the trade-union politician John Rigg fulfilled this role by questioning New Zealand's ability to govern Niueans and Cook Islanders, but even his criticism was not sustained to the extent of post-War Labour criticism.

Racial stereotypes informed many commentators' attitudes during these early debates. The high-profile death of New Zealand Anglican missionary, the Rev. John Patteson, on Nukapu in the Solomon Islands in 1871 still lingered in the minds of observers who equated the Pacific Islands with savagery, darkness, and cannibalism. Māori had proven difficult enough to 'civilise' within New Zealand, therefore many doubted whether it was a good idea for the State to expand its 'civilising mission' even further. When faced with the prospect of extending New Zealand's borders or developing the land within Aotearoa (only recently 'acquired' in its own right) a large proportion of commentators believed the prudent course was to look after their own backyard first. New Zealand's economic situation in the 1880s was far from promising, and so the wisdom of entering into expansive, not to mention expensive, imperial schemes was widely questioned.

Even though economic prospects were rosier at the turn of the century under Seddon's Liberal Government, criticism still carried a similar tone as in the 1880s. Importantly, Siegfried's 'Greater Imperialism', the bonds between colony and Britain, were at their high point, meaning that New Zealand's move to federate with Britain's Crown Colony Fiji was judged an act of disloyalty. Race and racism were more noticeable at the turn of the century. Alongside existing racial arguments, was the development of a working-class consciousness that readily expressed its concern over the effect that cheap coloured labour could have on 'white' jobs. 'White Australasia' was an ideal widely aspired to, and the thought of being 'swamped' in their own legislature by the people they described as 'niggers', spooked politicians when federation with Fiji was touted. Criticism based on racial considerations was inspired by a combination of both fear and disdain. The annexation of the Cook Islands and Niue was criticised for its relative worthlessness; the people, according to Trimble in the House, were not worth governing.

Opposition to the possibility of New Zealand gaining control of Samoa at the end of the Great War was characterised by a mixture of the old-fashioned parochial criticism and a new strand of explicitly anti-imperial criticism. This new doctrinaire approach was brought by Holland's Labour Party whose 'no annexations' policy was influenced by the anti-imperialism of Lenin and the wider international socialist movement. Public debate not only included arguments from fiscal conservatives who stressed the irresponsibility of taking on the 'burden' of governing more Pacific peoples, but the campaigning of a significant left-wing minority who launched a principled critique of Pacific expansion. These critiques were both anti-capitalist, in the sense that critics believed imperialism was the highest form of capitalism, and pro-Samoan, insofar as Labour believed the Samoans were perfectly capable of governing themselves. Holland's 'Samoan Complex' remained a feature of Labour policy until his death in 1933, while others on the political Left held similar, if not more strident, views throughout the interwar period.

This brings us to the second context explored in this thesis, which covers interwar criticism of New Zealand's colonial record after it had taken responsibility for administering its Pacific territories, or, as the Fijian case demonstrated, became involved in its informal imperial sphere. Criticism in this period was still influenced by many of the same philosophies present in earlier critiques, but now had the added dimension of responding to actual colonial abuses. The second chapter of this thesis outlined the various responses to high-profile colonial scandals in Samoa and Fiji. It argued that as well as left-wing critics there were also significant, if less numerous, Christian humanitarian voices that although not opposing imperialism *per se*, nonetheless objected to the perpetuation of colonial abuses. The protests of Liversedge and Greenwood reflect a Christian humanitarian response to colonial abuse (if not the typical Christian response). Their dissent stood out from what was a largely nonresponsive attitude towards colonial controversy by the denominational Churches. The pair were driven by a sense of compassion and righteousness that they accused their Churches of failing to uphold.

Overshadowing Christian humanitarian criticism was the opposition of the political Left, many of whom were inspired by a sense of Christian compassion

similar to that of Liversedge and Greenwood. Many on the Left empathised with the plight of Pacific Islanders who found themselves under New Zealand's colonial rule. It was not uncommon for this empathy to have been derived from prior experiences with te ao Māori. At times an interest in Māori affairs appears to have been somewhat of a prerequisite for a critical stance on Pacific colonialism. Soljak, for instance, was fluent in Te Reo and spent many years teaching in Māori communities. Finlayson, better known for his fictitious portrayals of modern Māori life than he was for his dissatisfaction over Pacific colonialism, spent a large period of his life living in a Māori household in Pukehina, Bay of Plenty, and claimed to be able to speak with the 'the native mind'.² Mason and Pat Potter were well known for their affinity with Māori as well as Pacific Islanders.³ And even Harry Holland, with his legendary 'Samoan Complex', found the time to be a student of Māori history and developed ties with the Kīngitanga. Leading critics viewed crooked colonialism in Samoa in the same vein as the injustices inflicted by Pākehā colonialists within Aotearoa. In this respect, New Zealand's colonial critics conform to Howe's claim that anticolonialists were committed to eradicating the ills of colonialism in their own nation first of all.⁴

The intersection between critiques of colonialism within Aotearoa and in New Zealand's Pacific Empire needs further exploration in its own right. Māori were typically viewed by Pākehā in a different light than New Zealand's other colonised Polynesians. As is shown in chapter two, by the twentieth century Māori were included in the mainstream view of 'White New Zealand', while Samoans, despite their recognition as a 'noble people', were seen as a threat to the established order. Colonial critics, on the other hand, appeared to be less amiable to this point of view. Under instruction from the anti-imperial Comintern, the CPNZ were asked to continue their 'struggle against Imperialism first by the exposure of the oppression and robbery of Somoa [sic] at the present time, and by the past and still continuing expropriation of the Maoris'.⁵ Chapter three illustrated how shared experiences of colonisation (as well as deeper genealogical

² Roderick Finlayson, 'Roderick Finlayson', in Robin Dudding (ed.), *Beginnings: New Zealand writers tell how they began writing* (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.62.

³ Barrowman, *Mason*, p.295.

⁴ Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics*, p.2.

⁵ 'Resolution on the Tasks of the Communis [sic] Party of New Zealand', p.2, in *Communist Party of New Zealand: Annual Conference 1928, Central Executive Report*, contained in Griffin, Gerald John, 1904-1976: Papers relating to left-wing politics, 86-043-4/19, ATL.

connections) encouraged Māori to sympathise with the Samoan and Cook Islands anticolonial struggles.

At the same time, left-wing Pākehā could also arguably claim a natural empathy with Pacific Islanders due to their own experiences of subjugation in New Zealand. Although this point should not be overstated given the differences in experience, radical or progressive Pākehā were, to a degree, subject to similar treatment from the Government. They were marginalised from mainstream society on account of their politics. Like Island anticolonialists, socialists felt the brunt of the State censor. Holland was imprisoned for sedition in 1913 and regularly railed against the draconian official attitudes to freedom of expression. Finlayson was a victim of censorship as well; he commented how ‘the daily papers steadily refused all my fiercer statements concerning the suppression of the Mau in Samoa’, as well as his letters criticising British rule in Ireland ‘and the wrongs suffered by the Maori yesterday and today.’⁶ These New Zealanders, although fully-fledged citizens, were situated outside the norms of respectable society. They may not have been as marginal as late-Victorian vegetarians, homosexuals, spiritualists and so on, that Leela Gandhi has identified on account of their links to the colonised, but they were marginal all the same.⁷ Their criticism of New Zealand’s colonialism was an extension of their criticism of domestic politics.

These same individuals were utterly discontent with New Zealand society. They embraced their marginality, and identified with the colonised more than the colonisers. Finlayson’s aim was ‘to warn the Pakeha, to show him, through Maori eyes, the danger of sacrificing completely the warm vivid life of the simple and the naïve to a system grown coldly and exclusively rational and greedy.’⁸ Mason regularly scorned the narrow-mindedness of his fellow citizens and their belief that ‘the world was made and the stars ranged in order to facilitate the transport of pigs between Taupiri and Wairoa’.⁹ In the Islands they saw an ideal, an escape, a saviour. Like the socialist utopianism that Gandhi surveys— ‘immature’, but powerful and essential as a stimulant for criticism just the same—Finlayson, Mason, and even Holland’s romanticism led them to believe that Pacific island

⁶ Finlayson, *Beginnings*, p.63.

⁷ Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, pp.7-8.

⁸ Finlayson, *Beginnings*, p.68.

⁹ Barrowman, *Mason*, p.47.

societies resembled their ideal socialist utopia more closely than the ‘civilised’ world they belonged to.¹⁰ The problem was that the very people who had ruined New Zealand society were doing their best to ruin their Pacific ideal.

Romantic idealism could easily turn into paternalism. There was a fine line between speaking *for* the colonised, and standing up for them, and critics were always in danger of slipping towards the former. Derrick has argued that French socialist anticolonialists most regularly adopted paternalistic attitudes towards the colonies.¹¹ Finlayson, to his credit, recognised this inclination within his own thinking. Looking back at his manifesto for Samoan self-Government,¹² compiled as a young man in the early 1920s, he admitted it revealed his ‘tendency to didacticism’.¹³ Holland too was much maligned in Parliament for his long-winded moralising on behalf of the Samoans. His paternalism often came through in his depictions of Samoans as childish, ‘simple-minded’ and ‘primitive’.¹⁴ As Slipper concluded in 1934, despite the many friends the Samoans could call on, ‘the Samoans are more than able to speak for themselves, as they have proved time after time.’¹⁵

This brings me to my final point. For all its emphasis on anti-imperialists, this thesis has not been an intellectual history of New Zealand anti-imperialism. The focus has been on the challenge to the colonial order at ‘home’. And in this, like other studies, my thesis has demonstrated that Empire came to affect the metropole in a myriad of ways. One of the main features that I have explored is the friendships or bonds formed between Pacific Islander and metropolitan critics which were forged through a shared revulsion towards imperialism. These ties, I suggest, were essential to both the anticolonial struggle and the undermining of the colonial order. Bernard Porter has pointed out that the Empire was ‘highly vulnerable’, and that brutality by the colonisers was ‘integral to [its] every day functioning’, and while colonists on the ground were aware of this reality, those

¹⁰ Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, pp.178-9.

¹¹ Derrick, ‘The Dissenters’, p.55.

¹² Not extant.

¹³ Finlayson, *Beginnings*, p.63.

¹⁴ Holland, *Samoa*, 4, 3, 8.

¹⁵ Thos. B. Slipper, ‘New Zealand and Samoa’ (letter), *Auckland Star*, 5 Jul. 1934, p.23.

who resided in the metropole ‘were generally not’.¹⁶ The only time people back ‘home’, in the metropole, caught a glimpse of colonial realities was when ‘some particular atrocity story leaked out’. The colonial critic’s role was to publicise the brutal realities of New Zealand’s Pacific colonialism that would have otherwise gone unheard. Even though the Government did their best to dismiss criticism, its presence was still undeniably effective. Without dissent, the colonial order would have remained uncontested, and brutality would have gone on unaccounted for. Moreover, the rule of colonial difference would have remained unchallenged. Although Pacific Islanders were perfectly capable of speaking for themselves and did so regularly, this thesis has shown that their voice was even more powerful when heard in conjunction with like-minded metropolitan citizens.

This thesis has also shown that there were many more of these like-minded men and women in New Zealand’s metropolitan, even cosmopolitan, society than is often appreciated. Jonathan Schneer has written that because turn-of-the-century London ‘was an imperial metropolis it was cosmopolitan and because it was cosmopolitan it contained anti-imperialists and critics of empire.’ He went on to acknowledge that these people were not as influential as their imperial counterparts ‘but neither were they a negligible force.’ Finally, he reasoned ‘just as the champions of empire helped to shape the imperial metropolis, so too did they.’¹⁷ This study has argued that these same dynamics were in force in sub-imperial, sub-metropolitan, sub-cosmopolitan New Zealand (albeit delayed until between the Wars). We can speak of this with a certain level of confidence because it was these marginalised views on imperialism and colonialism from the interwar period that became mainstream in the era of decolonisation; an era that began in ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’ with Samoa becoming the first Pacific nation to gain independence in 1962. Although this study has not been consciously shaped by a desire to trace the antecedents of decolonisation, it has nonetheless illustrated the rich tradition of colonial criticism within New Zealand that helped bring about this change in fortune.

¹⁶ Bernard Porter, ‘Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness’, *JICH*, Vol. 36, no. 1, 2008, p.110.

¹⁷ Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: the imperial metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p.162, cited in Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, pp.1-2.

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