When the Imperial German flag was raised in Mulinu’u on 15 March 1900, Europeans and Samoans had been engaged for more than two decades in a constantly-fluctuating struggle over the right to control the Samoan group’s political and economic destiny. Samoan affairs had dissipated a disproportionate amount of diplomatic energy in the capitals of the Western Powers as the islands became a focus of imperial rivalry in the late nineteenth century.

European familiarity with Samoa dates back to 1722 when the Dutchman, Jacob Roggeween, first sighted the island. He described the inhabitants as ‘a harmless, good sort of people, and very brisk and likely, for they treated each other with visible marks of civility and had nothing in their behaviour that was wild or savage ...’ Subsequent visitors were to rue the words of Roggeween.

A series of sporadic and largely disastrous contacts took place over the years until 1830, when John Williams and Charles Barff of the London Missionary Society arrived off Savai’i. Malietoa Vai’inupo had just triumphed decisively over a rival for the paramountcy, and this fortuitous circumstance, together with the practical and polytheistic leanings of the people, served the missionaries well, for the Samoans readily took to the formal structure of religious observances and the new education. Already by 1860 over 5000 adherents were contributing £1200 each year to the upkeep of the mission, and upwards of a thousand individuals had been influenced directly by the teaching seminary established at Malua in 1844. In following decades the Samoans voluntarily adopted compulsory schooling, to the extent that, by 1905, twenty-five per cent of the population could claim an education from the London Missionary Society alone.

The Christian revolution was, however, neither wholehearted nor complete. Samoans were not necessarily prepared to accept all the Western religious sanctions which missionaries attempted to superimpose on indigenous life, and, in the absence of a monopoly of foreign influence, the missionaries were forced to acquiesce in what amounted to an exchange of religious cultures as the Samoans institutionalised
their own interpretations of Christian doctrine. Without recourse to Western military power, the growing community of beachcombers and itinerant traders also had to accept traditional authority, for the Samoans refused to compromise either their standards of propriety regarding the behaviour of foreigners or the sanctions imposed for transgressions of the social and political code.

With the growth of Samoa as an entrepôt and as a centre for plantations, the balance of physical power tended to swing in favour of the European community. Expectations of Western support and intervention accompanied the advent of consular representatives, and European navies now provided the means to intimidate the local populations. Island chiefs gradually found themselves competing with the consuls and the navies for the loyalty of beach residents. It was only a short step to a situation where Europeans began treating the Samoans as a second-class race, a hindrance to the development of commerce, and an exploitable commodity.

European interests soon began to attempt to dictate the outcome of Samoan district rivalries in a way most favourable to themselves. In 1869 the London Missionary Society and the foreign consuls interfered in the Tafa‘ifā titles dispute between Malietoa Talavou and Malietoa Laupepa. Inter-district war followed inevitably until 1873, when, by mission entreaties and consular intervention, once again an uneasy peace was secured. But Samoan allegiances were now deeply divided between the two Sā Malietoa parties. In quick succession there followed an abortive republican experiment under an American premier and, from 1876 to 1881, a new war between Malietoa Laupepa and Malietoa Talavou.

The exigencies of warfare led to the growth of a vigorous arms trade operated by the planters and land speculators now crowding into Apia. Ridiculously large amounts of land were alienated from the Samoans for guns and ammunition, and fraudulent practices were the order of the day on both sides. By 1880 American and British interests laid claim to 185,000 hectares of land throughout the group; Godeffroys, the old German firm under Theodor Weber, claimed 61,500 hectares on Upolu alone. Only a quarter of this had been purchased with cash—largely with debased Chilean dollars—the rest was acquired in guns and kind at enormously inflated prices. Weber was no more scrupulous than his competitors, but he was a far more methodical man. Careful to reinforce title by effective occupation, he founded large copra and cotton plantations in north-western Upolu, and imported native labour.
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from the Gilberts and Melanesia to work them since the Samoans could not be induced to do plantation labour at an 'economic' wage rate.

By the 1880s, Germany was the power least trusted by the Samoans, as German merchants were ruthless in seeking conditions favourable to the development of their lands and business. Godeffroy's strict occupation of land, the use of German gunboats to overcome resistance to occupation, the dependence of the Islanders on Company credit, and the importation of Melanesian labour were all objects of Samoan resentment. Germany's political capital was not improved when it appropriated two harbours in 1879 in order to extract a 'treaty of friendship and commerce' from the Samoans. Britain had already secured a similar treaty voluntarily. There had always been a historical and perhaps temperamentally preference for the English, and Apia was all but a British colony in appearance, composition and manner. The Germans, despite their commercial preponderance, gave the impression of being outsiders. Very few considered Apia their home; most were employees of 'the Firm' and intended to leave Samoa as soon as they had made some money.

Two distinct centres of power had by now crystallised in Samoa: the chiefs in their districts, and the Municipality in Apia. The Municipality was formed in 1879 to protect the infrastructure of trade built up by foreigners, and to regulate relations between the Samoans and the Europeans. Interactions between these two groups were determined thereafter largely by the conflict of interests within each. Rivalries among the consuls who now assumed command in the Municipality evenly matched Samoan intrigues in the districts: the governing ability of this European oligarchy was regularly impeded by mutually incompatible instructions from Home Offices, and by the tendency of incumbents to take matters into their own hands when any problems arose bearing in any way on national interests.4

The major problem was, of course, the continual political disturbances among the Samoans themselves. Throughout the 1880s, settlers and consuls threw their weight behind whichever Samoan party seemed most capable of creating a semblance of European-style order. Misconstruing the essentially delicate balance between the paramountcy and the powers of chiefly groups in the various districts, the Europeans contrived to establish a centralised monarchical regime which would be able to control all Samoans. To strengthen one of the parties sufficiently to hold the others in order, arms were constantly dispensed to the warring factions by different national interests. For their part, the
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Samoan district factions encouraged such European interference where it aided their candidates in the competition for the *Tafa'i'fa* titles. It is impossible to determine the exact numbers of firearms in the possession of Samoans during these years, but the DHPG admitted in 1886 that it had supplied 467 rifles to the Islanders between January and October, declaring that it could have been thousands more had the company not had the peace of the group at heart. The same year, non-German firms were rumoured to have sold 700 rifles in full view of the Municipality, while many more were smuggled in through outlying harbours. None of the attempts made in the 1880s and 1890s to regulate the flow of arms into Samoa worked because of the mutual suspicions of the three Powers.

In November 1884, the German Consul, Stuebel, forced upon Malietoa Laupepa a treaty designed to give Germany overriding influence in the conduct of native affairs. When the chief ignored the treaty, as was Samoan custom with agreements which hedged their fundamental political freedoms, Stuebel used it as a pretext to drive him from the seat of Samoan government at Mulini'u and raise the flag of the German Empire. His coup, however, was repudiated by Bismarck who was hopeful of obtaining Samoa through negotiations with the other two Powers. A firm negative stand by America thwarted Bismarck's hope; however, and, together with continuing damage to German interests through Samoan fighting, this provoked Berlin into approving unilateral action by her local representatives. War was declared on Malietoa Laupepa and he was deported on a German warship. In his place the Germans installed Tamesese Tupua, who accepted alignment with Germany as an effective means of checking the aspirations of a new contender for the *Tafa'i'fa* titles, Mata'afa Josefo, also of the Sā Tūpua lineage.

Tamasese Tupua's regime, under the tutelage of a former employee of the DHPG, Eugen Brandeis, was very soon discredited in the eyes of Samoans and non-German Europeans by the methods it used to eliminate political opposition and to impose the demands of a centralised government on the decentralised Islanders. A revolt, with Mata'afa Josefo at its head, broke out in 1888, and the German navy found itself hard pressed to cope. In an attempt by German marines in December 1888 to disarm a party of rebels near Vailele plantation, sixteen Germans were killed and over thirty wounded in a well-executed ambush by Mata'afa Josefo's forces.

This event rather upset all the previous European assumptions about
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Samoan powers of resistance. Bewildered German officers and other eye-witnesses commented on the apparently ‘un-Samoan’ action of firing on Germans. The ferocity of Mata’afa Josefo’s attack was rationalised by blaming ‘a white American’ at the head of the Samoan troops for firing the first shot and encouraging others to do likewise. The German set-back contributed greatly to the growing movement towards resolution of the international conflict by negotiation. The final result was the Berlin Conference of 1889. A diplomatic rather than a realistic solution to the ethnic and political confusion in Samoa, this whole exercise simply converted the dangerous imperialist rivalries of the three Powers into a delicate balance of interests. The fiction of an autonomous Samoan kingship was preserved, and the tribunal of consuls was replaced by a tribunal of specially-created international officials. The arrangement was meant to function as a tridominium, but the retention of a monarchical concept for which Samoa was not well suited only perpetuated the political confusion and provided the leverage by which the various Samoan factions continued to exploit European power in their own interests.

The sequence of Samoan initiative and European response continued when Mata’afa Josefo was deported in 1893 for rebellion against the established regime of Malietoa Laupepa. His adherents, the real ‘kingmakers’, carried on the struggle in his name, skilfully manipulating the shifts of power and alliance within the European community, and growing stronger and more uncontrolled. While the navies of the Powers in conjunction probably prevented the disquiet from boiling over into a general conflagration, the measure of their control was strictly limited, extending little further than the range of their deck artillery. The Germans, in particular, acknowledged that if the Samoans withdrew to the bush, where they could live off the land and move with a facility that eluded European troops, the naval forces’ tenuous control would vanish completely.

It was brought home vividly in 1898 when, after the death of Malietoa Laupepa, Malietoa Tanumafili I and the newly-returned Mata’afa Josefo contested the Tafa’ifa titles. The weight of Samoan preference clearly lay with Mata’afa Josefo, but, in a surprise move, the European Chief Justice of the tripartite administration declared his opponent ‘king’. At this point all European pretension to control of the situation broke down. Mata’afa Josefo’s huge body of supporters, which included the districts of Atua, A’ana and half of Savai’i, rose up against the party of Malietoa Tanumafili I in a civil war of unequalled
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ferocity, for Mata'afa Josefo, spurned by the very powers that claimed to be preserving Samoan autonomy, was fighting for a decade of lost rights. His ability to marshal a large force behind him was due in great measure to the support of the leading orator chief of Safotulafai, and thus the virtual spokesman for Savai'i, Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe.8 Lauaki traditionally supported the Sā Malietoā lineage, but he despised at the indecisiveness of Britain in refusing, time and time again, to give a watertight guarantee to the Malietoa regimes despite their English sympathies. In 1898 he decided to give his allegiance to Mata'afa Josefo as the only hope for uniting and stabilising Samoa in the face of foreign intervention. In so doing he demonstrated a power to mobilise sentiment and a political flexibility which, ten years later, made him the scourge of the German government.

The American navy led the operations on behalf of the legally-constituted monarch, Malietoa Tanumafili I, while Germany, in a defensive bid to arrest the decline of her influence in the group, threw her weight behind Mata'afa Josefo. Open engagements with the Anglo-American forces were studiously avoided. However, when the Americans pounded Mata'afa Josefo's villages with artillery fire, the rebels attacked the European lines in Apia itself and killed three sailors. In addition, they ambushed a party of troops which attempted to pursue them into the interior in April 1899, forcing the soldiers into a hasty and disorganised retreat and leaving three officers and several men killed and decapitated. It was an indication of what might be expected if the campaign deteriorated into guerrilla warfare. Mission societies provided a refuge for non-combatants and dispensed medical care to the wounded of both sides. Though both major missions, the London Missionary Society and the Marists, officially maintained a discreet neutrality, Samoan pastors of the London Missionary Society did appeal to Lauaki in early 1899 to use his considerable influence in the cause of peace. Lauaki refused. 'We have not been a party to war with the Powers', he responded. 'We do not wish to resist. But we have the right to claim the privilege of free men and ask to be told plainly what is to be our future status.'9

A move in this direction was made when a Three-Power Commission was despatched to Samoa the same year. It brought about a temporary cease-fire, and both Malietoa Tanumafili I and Mata'afa Josefo were persuaded to renounce permanently future claims to the 'kingship', though their acquiescence was more a gesture of goodwill than a renunciation of traditional political ambitions. Meanwhile Britain and
Germany were conducting negotiations concerned with tidying up loose ends of empire. Influenced by a recent naval assessment as to the greater strategic importance of Tonga, Britain agreed to waive her claims to Samoa in favour of Germany. Subsequently America agreed to the German annexation of Upolu, Savai'i and Manono, with Tutuila becoming an American dependency. The solution was greeted with great joy in the Reich, where Samoa had been elevated to the status of a test case of the new Weltpolitik: Samoa had come to be considered an indispensable jewel in the crown of German prestige.

The solution to the international destiny of Samoa did not exorcise the difficulties that Germany faced in Samoa itself. The Islanders had at first shown signs of resenting the partition of the islands. A High Chief of the Malietoa line sent a petition of protest to the Kaiser, and the chiefs of Safotulafai—significantly enough, Lauaki's political base—refused to hold a fono to greet the news, in the mistaken belief that the United States was about to veto the agreement.\(^7\) By early 1900, however, these initial reservations had been overcome and the parties of both great lineages declared their acceptance of German dominion before the flag was raised.

On the part of Mata'afa Josefo and his adherents there was a great deal of sympathy for Germany in 1899-1900, but it was rooted in gratitude for support in the recent civil war rather than in an inherent predilection for German culture and hegemony. Mata'afa Josefo's supporters reasoned that Germany's capacity to help during the war had been restricted by the provisions of the Berlin Conference of 1889. Now that Samoa was German, there was nothing to stop her from recognising Mata'afa Josefo as Tupu Sili, or supreme chief, and his faithful band of chiefs and speakers as the Malo, the government of Samoa.

There was no doubt that Mata'afa Josefo was the Chosen One of the majority of Samoans. Since the late 1880s he had been the focus and inspiration of a purely Samoan movement in opposition to the candidates favoured by the Powers. Despite his own renunciation of the 'monarchy', his chiefs and speakers had never relinquished their right to choose, or more exactly to create, a 'King of Samoa' according to recent tradition, and to have their creation installed in Mulinu'u. Accordingly, before the German flag was raised, Mata'afa Josefo, under the tutelage of Lauaki, called an assembly of the Tanu people to effect a reconciliation, and a government was set up with Mata'afa Josefo and
thirteen chiefs claiming widespread executive powers. Residing in Mulinu’u and styling themselves ‘the rulers of Samoa’, this band proceeded to collect taxes and issue regulations concerning Samoans and Europeans alike.

There was little Germany could do. In 1900 Mata’afa Josefo’s party still represented the strongest military force in the Samoan islands. It numbered some 2500 and was in a state of perpetual mobilisation, armed to the teeth with Western firearms. The Germans possessed one small cruiser which occasionally visited the islands, and two decades of erratic naval intervention had diminished considerably any deterrent effect such a warship could hope to have on the local population; there were no colonial troops beyond a largely-decorative force of thirty Samoan police (*Fitaita*) designed to keep order within the Municipality. Drawn from the young men of the more important families, the *Fitaita* was employed to do mechanical tasks for the administration, such as sentry duty and dispatch-carrying. Later on, the corps came to be regarded as a symbol of the interdependent relationship between Samoa and Germany, but in 1900 it offered no guarantee of security against sectarian violence.

Half a century of European penetration had not cowed the Samoans, nor had the traditional culture and its reinforcing values undergone any radical dislocation. At village and district level, established power elites were still very much in control of social and political activities, and they were extremely jealous of their prerogatives. Germany was faced with the problem of establishing a colonial relationship with a people who had never really accepted the premise of subjection as Europeans conceived it. As Herr Meyer-Delius, local head of the DHPG advised, it was a situation requiring freedom for the Samoans in their own administration and a governor who was not only purposeful in his methods but experienced in handling the Islanders.¹¹

The man whom the Colonial Department chose for the task was Wilhelm Solf, then head of the provisional government instituted by the three Powers in 1899. Solf was a distinct departure from the usual German colonial official. Better educated than the majority of his service colleagues, a man of the world familiar with British colonial policy from his experience in India, Solf felt altogether superior to the more middle-class, nationalistic, somewhat pettifogging German administrator. He brought to Samoa a natural respect for the intrinsic value of exotic cultures and a readiness to deal with the Samoans on their own terms. Above all, he renounced force as a means of
implementing policy. ‘All radical measures are evil. Time and goodness and justice are the best means of governing in Samoa’, was his firm conviction. Together with the qualities which Samoans associated with leadership—an imposing presence, paternal interest, and the power of rhetoric—Solf’s attitude was well suited to the social and political conceptions of the inhabitants.

Solf was convinced, as had been the International Commission before him, that nothing short of a major transformation of the traditional political system would guarantee peaceful development. If the customary system of factional rivalries continued to operate independently of the German government, then a constant state of uneasy peace would degenerate into civil war at Mata‘afa Josefo’s death, with disastrous results to plantation agriculture and trade, which was already at a low ebb after two decades of unrest. Solf set himself three immediate objectives: to reconcile the opposing parties, to abolish the ‘kingship’, and to break the power of the chiefs and speakers presuming to speak as the government of Samoa. A longer-term aim was gradually to shift the concentration of indigenous political interest from national to local level and in this way undermine the durability of political parties. Solf possessed a conception of an ancient Samoan ‘parish’ organisation and political system which he believed would eliminate the unstable influence of the Samoan districts. He envisaged a return to a Golden Age which had no interest in national politics.

In the early months of 1900, however, Solf was powerless to implement his plans in the face of the superior power and influence of Mata‘afa Josefo and his thirteen chiefs in Mulinu‘u. In the weeks following the flag-raising, they badgered Solf with questions about the date and formation of a new government, and, led by Lauaki, pressed for a one-party administration that acknowledged Mata‘afa Josefo’s sovereign position. Mata‘afa Josefo himself warned Solf that a failure to recognise him as Tupu Sili would be construed by his followers as ‘disregard of a long-established right’ and could endanger the peace. It was clear that ‘the thirteen’ considered Germany simply to be assuming the former functions of the tripartite regime, and that the Governor was obviously a High Chief sent out by the Kaiser to complete, together with Mata‘afa Josefo and his chiefs, the governing power, Malo o Samoa.

Solf waited for instructions from Berlin, though he knew it was futile to expect his resources to be increased substantially. In the Wilhelmstrasse, Samoa was regarded as a windfall colony: a ready-made,
productive, going concern on the periphery of the overseas empire. Since the Director of the Colonial Department was responsible to a Reichstag which guarded jealously its right to examine the colonial budget, Berlin's first concern was for economy of administration in the colonies. There was a particular reluctance to underwrite expansion in the Pacific where the empire seemed so insignificant and potentially unrewarding in comparison with Africa and China. Consequently Solf, like his colleagues in New Guinea and Micronesia, had little but moral authority on which to fall back in trying to sustain his regime. When instructions had not arrived by April, Solf took matters into his own hands, in the manner of the consuls before him. But, unlike them, he could act with comparative freedom as the sole, legitimate, foreign authority in western Samoa. Unlike most of them, too, Solf was capable of creating virtue out of political necessity and of organising a system which served his ends while seeming to serve those of the Samoan high chiefs.

Accordingly, on 11 April 1900 he announced the institution of a new Samoan government with the Kaiser as Tupu Sili, Solf as his principal delegate in Samoa and Mata'afa Josefo as Ali'i Sili, or paramount chief, 'the channel through which the wishes and orders of the government are conveyed to the Samoans'. As an auxiliary to this office, and to disarm those chiefs who regarded themselves as the true Malo, a bipartisan council of advisers to Mata'afa Josefo was set up—the Faipule—which was to contain chiefs of both royal lineages together with district representatives. Finally, the existing Samoan judicial establishment was retained, and provision was made for indigenous administrative officers ranking from district chiefs to village policemen. Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe was prominent among the appointees to the Faipule. Indeed the London Missionary Society complained that 'all the old rowdies' had obtained high positions in the new government.

The position of Ali'i Sili and a central government in Mulinu'u were not part of Solf's ideal plan for Samoan politics; nor, for that matter, was a local administration based on the districts, the historic centres of mobilisation for political intrigue. Solf harboured plans to abolish all of these institutions when the time was right. He anticipated difficulties, especially from 'that body of indolent intriguers' as he called the Tumua and Pule chiefs who were constantly scheming over the Tafa'ifa titles issue, and they did not disappoint him as they became aware of his real political intentions. In the meantime, Solf was able to consolidate his administration by capitalising on the first flush of
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co-operation that followed his apparent submission to the desires of Mata’afa Josefo’s party, and on widespread satisfaction that peace finally prevailed in the islands. In May 1900 the Colonial Department accorded him a great deal of freedom ‘to determine the manner in which the question of native administration will be best solved while maintaining peace and order’.18

The most urgent problem was the disarmament of the population. None of the attempts made by the three Powers to control the number of arms in the possession of the Samoans had been successful until the International Commission in 1899 recommended the principle of financial compensation, the cost to be met by the Three Powers. The first experiment took place the same year and netted 3410 firearms. No-one doubted that the Islanders still retained considerable quantities of guns and ammunition, nor that a complete restructuring of the customs system was necessary if shipments of arms were to be prevented from reaching the Samoans in the future. The promised compensation money for 1899 (about US$41 000) finally arrived in 1900, but Solf delayed its distribution until December, by which time he had carried through the necessary reforms and had the arms trade under control. Shortly afterwards, he announced that all further arms and ammunition were to be surrendered against payment by 31 January 1901. It was a discerning move, designed to exploit the momentary euphoria of the Samoans at receiving the promised cash after so long. By mid-February the people had delivered up most of the remaining hoard, some 1500 guns.19

A number of other elements of colonial control and development were introduced without resistance in the first two years of German rule. In August 1900 Solf promulgated an ordinance directing every Samoan ‘landowner’ (the matai) to plant fifty coconuts annually on unused land, in order to offset the decline in production over the preceding years. Samoan ‘plantation inspectors’ were appointed to supervise the process. Samoans were also obligated to maintain public roads in their localities with tools supplied by the government, and the customary right of eviction of the defeated party in a district by the victorious was outlawed.

The final link in the chain of regulations was a poll tax, levied from late January 1901. Adult males were required to pay four marks annually, later raised to twelve, then to twenty-four marks for matai, and the tax yield rose each year: from 40 000 marks in 1901 to 211 000 marks in 1912.20 The head tax was the only one of these early
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regulations to encounter some resistance, for Samoans openly dis­trusted the whites where money was concerned. Solf was able to obtain the chiefs’ agreement only after conceding to their demand that it be used solely for the upkeep of the Samoan administration and not for the white community. Until 1905, at least, the Samoan administrative system was tied closely to the head tax revenue, and the size of official salaries was made dependent upon the amount collected. Then, in 1908, resentment over the poll tax and the Governor’s use of the revenue played a prominent role in the great confrontation between Solf and the old chiefs, which had been threatening from the early years of German rule.

The political complications which Solf predicted in 1900 did not take long to emerge. For a start, there were substantial practical difficulties in the operation of his ‘self-governing’ local administration. Despite the appointment of functionaries who already possessed local authority, and the protection of matai from pressures to support intrigues beyond their villages, the fact was that Samoan officials were expected to pursue European objectives which were governed by German colonial policy and legal practice. They had to collect taxes, supervise road main­tenance and coconut planting, and maintain German conceptions of law and order. These actions often clashed with Samoan ideas of law and order, and with their habit of discussing and debating demands on community resources. Moreover, in judging criminal acts, Western law, unlike Samoan custom, made no allowance for the respective social position of offender and offended, nor did it recognise the civil wrong suffered by the relatives of the victim. The contradictions with which individuals were faced were reflected in the high turnover of Samoan officers between 1900 and 1905, either through dismissal or rotation. Dismissals most often followed instances of dictatorial behaviour by village ‘mayors’ (palenu’u) and district magistrates (faamasino).

Threats to the new system came also from established chiefs in Mulinu’u and in individual districts, who assumed authority over newly-appointed officials on the grounds that they—the chiefs—were the true representatives of traditional custom, prestige and influence (fa’a Samoa). From the beginning Solf had been forced to create the post of district chief (Taitai Itu) to placate a number of dissatisfied elites. His final objective, however, was to abolish these positions, and several others, so as to have as few ‘middle men’ as possible between himself and his European district officers.21

A more serious threat to the Governor’s entire juggling act occurred
after 1900-01 as the chiefs of the Mulinu'u *Malo* began to recognise the divergence between the form of political power conceded to them and the real intentions of the German government. Shortly after the new Samoan administration had been founded, a house of *Taimua* was created at Mulinu'u, consisting of the principal contenders for high Samoan titles from both of the leading families. Seemingly it was meant to encourage, in the minds of Samoans, the idea that competition for the great titles of the land now had no meaning, and that government service should thenceforward be the highest aspiration of the prominent families. This did not at all accord with the expectations of the *Malo*: the *Taimua* was a body quite foreign to Samoan custom.

The *Malo*’s conviction that it was being stripped of its powers was strengthened by Mata’a’afa Josefo’s obvious subjection to Solf. Though the Governor was careful to protect Mata’a’afa Josefo’s dignity and always to use him as the official mouthpiece of the administration, Mata’a’afa Josefo’s image was sullied more and more by his identification with measures which were new to the chiefs and contrary to custom. The most radical of these included the removal of Samoan responsibility for the financial affairs of the *Malo*, and Solf’s division of several traditional districts into independent administrative units, thus splitting the political support which ‘royal’ candidates could normally expect.

Dissatisfaction was aggravated by the presence within Mata’a’afa Josefo’s party of traditional, non-Mata’afan elements, especially Safotulafai of Fa’asaleleaga in Savai’i. Safotulafai was the spiritual centre of *Pule* and usually pro-Malietoan. But in 1898, under Lauaki’s influence, and in order to increase the chances of Samoan unity, Safotulafai had opted for Mata’a’afa Josefo. The chiefs of Safotulafai were well aware that the support of their district had given Mata’a’afa Josefo his overwhelming strength in 1898-99, and that they held a virtual balance of power in the new coalition of parties under Solf.

Lauaki was one of the first to read Solf’s design. Outwardly he was a Samoan who manifested a confident acceptance of European civilisation. A devout adherent of the London Missionary Society and deacon of the local church, Lauaki moved easily among Europeans. He recognised and accepted the benefits of the European economy; he even named his son Tivoli after a hotel in Apia. Internally, however, Lauaki’s life was guided by tradition. He had made and broken high chiefs in the era of the Three Powers, and skilfully exploited the latter’s rivalries to gain benefits for his party and candidate. More than any other *tulafale*, Lauaki embodied the highest values of Samoa in his
knowledge of custom and his skill in politics, and he remained com-
mitted to the cause of Sā Malietoā and to the prerogatives of the Tumua
and Pule chiefs.

Mata'afa Josefo's alliance was therefore an uneasy one, with Lauaki
and his district acting as power brokers. Increasingly, confrontations
between the Malo and Solf became confrontations between Lauaki and
Solf, though the ultimate crisis was still some seven years away. But in
1903 it was already whispered around that Lauaki had issued a warning
against the Governor and his subtle ways. He acknowledged that Solf
was a good man, but added that he was 'too tricky' for Samoans:

At first he cuts up all the different districts so as to weaken them,
and takes away gradually the power from the Taitai Itu, and lastly,
he deprives the Samoans of the high position of Faamasino Sili
[Chief Samoan Magistrate]. After this the Governor will even take
away the position of Le A li'i Sili, so that no higher office remains
for the Samoan people.24

At this stage Solf did not dare move against Lauaki because of the
chief's power and Solf's own obvious lack of it. Fear of passive, if not
active, resistance made the Germans very cautious in their early
relations with the Malo, despite provocation. During Solf's absence in
1902, Lauaki and the Faipule organised a strike by Samoan road
workers for better pay and food, with the apparent purpose of intimi-
dating Solf's deputy Heinrich Schnee into granting the Faipule a salary;
they hoped thus to legitimise their occupation of Mulinu'u as imperial
officials. Schnee stood his ground, knowing the Governor's desire to see
the Malo dispersed, but he made no move to punish anyone for the
disturbance, in fear of disaffecting the most powerful chiefs and
speakers.25 It was not until 1903 that Solf risked his first major
confrontation with the Malo, when he exiled two orator chiefs to
Herbertshöhe, one for preaching the hope of British annexation, the
other for inciting his people to murder. The threat of deportation had
always been a powerful argument in tripartite times, and Germany had
early established a reputation for quick and determined action in such
circumstances.

A new threat to Solf arose from a different quarter in 1902. In that
year the white population of Samoa increased dramatically as a number
of immigrants with very limited capital arrived from Germany to try
their hand at plantation agriculture, several retired military officers
among them. They had been influenced directly by one Richard Deeken,
a young artillery officer in the German Reserve, who visited Samoa
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briefly in 1901 and proceeded to write an extravagant and superficial account of the opportunities that awaited the small settler with moderate capital. The impact his fertile imagination had on people was reinforced by mounting propaganda in Germany in favour of occupying the colonies with small capital holdings. Deeken founded a plantation company, the Deutsche Samoa Gesellschaft (DSG), to compete with the DHPG, and in August 1902 he returned to Samoa as its director.

The new settlers were quickly disillusioned. They had been led to expect abundant land ideal for growing cocoa. The reality was far less hopeful. At Solf’s invitation, an agricultural scientist, Dr F. Wohltmann, came out to Samoa in 1902-03 to assess its proper agricultural potential. Wohltmann concluded that Samoan soil was already considerably worked out and that only four per cent of it was suitable for cocoa cultivation, of which half was already being used by the Samoans for their own crops. A prospective settler would need at least 50,000 marks, he estimated, and must still cope with high land prices and labour costs. In addition, settlers had to confront the formidable competition of the DHPG, which in 1900 already possessed 82 hectares of cocoa besides its lucrative thousands of hectares of mature coconut plants dating from the 1880s. The old firm’s most telling advantage lay in its privileged access to cheap Melanesian labour from the Bismarck Archipelago. As if this were not enough, the first settlers had to endure a drought in 1902, and try to acquire leasehold land from the Samoans who were withholding leases in the hope of inflated prices. It is little wonder that in 1903 Wohltmann found twenty-five of forty-six small planters urgently in need of government aid.

They received scant sympathy from the Governor, who had done his best to correct the fanciful impressions of a colonial planting life in Samoa. As their early expectations were disappointed and their capital depleted, the small settlers became increasingly militant and chauvinistic, and at last turned on the government. Deeken, who was also discovering that the land and labour monopoly of the DHPG was virtually impregnable, gathered the dissidents around him in a Planters’ Society (Pflanzerverein) which was founded in January 1903.

Deeken found a constant source of provocation in the intimate collaboration between Solf and the DHPG. ‘The Firm’ was the heir to the oldest German company in Samoa, Godeffroys, and had operated an extensive trade and plantation business throughout two decades of civil war. Its metropolitan directors were all old ‘Samoa hands’, familiar
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with the people, their customs, and their limits of tolerance. By 1900 the major conflicts between the company’s exploitation of Samoa and its social concern had been resolved, and a relationship quickly developed with Solf which was characterised by mutual respect and support. Solf was careful to uphold the firm’s monopoly of land, labour and trade, not only against local enemies but also against the attacks of Governor Hahl in New Guinea, who was pressuring Berlin to curtail the DHPG’s recruiting privileges in the Bismarck Archipelago. In return, Solf could count on the company’s support for his protective native policy, and there is no doubt that the pattern of his rule was strengthened by the friendship of men who had spent decades trying to establish orderly community relations in the Samoan islands.

In 1903–04 the Governor was in very real need of the DHPG’s influence in Berlin, for Deeken used his position as president of the Pflanzerverein to launch a campaign against Solf’s administration. Deeken was able to mobilise considerable influence in Germany through close contacts in the Catholic Centre Party (Zentrumspartei), and a press attack was orchestrated, alleging that Solf had done nothing for the small planters since the flag-raising, that he was pandering to the political whims of the Samoans, and that the administration was extravagant in its expenditure. There was even talk of a plan by Solf to deport twelve colonists and their families from Samoa. Deeken’s proposed solution was to replace Solf’s regime with a military one which would be more attentive to the ‘demands’ of colonial development.28

It did not take long for the unrest in the white community to percolate through to the Samoans. In the Pflanzerverein Deeken had inspired a resolution that the Samoans be compelled to work for Europeans at least eight months of the year. In June 1903 the chiefs of the Malo petitioned Solf to save them from its implications since it was Samoan custom ‘that no one on these islands should perform servile labour’.29

The Governor had no intention of dragooning Samoans into plantation labour for the likes of Deeken, knowing as he did that the people were quite capable of effective counter-action: at the very best, copra cutting would cease, white traders would be boycotted, and the people would revert to subsistence agriculture. Since the export/import economy depended on Samoan production and consumption, the financial ruin of European business would inevitably follow. At worst the Samoans might rise in armed rebellion.

Solf was fortunate in having the support of the DHPG on this question. With privileged access to the recruiting grounds of Melanesia,
the company's interest lay in the Samoans as trading partners, not as a labour force. Nevertheless, there was a definite increase in intercommunal tensions, and Solf predicted that 1904 would bring further discontent in view of the projected poor copra harvest and sinking world prices. This would be grist to Deeken's mill.

By now Solf was a bitter enemy of Deeken and his clique of small planters. His liberal, cosmopolitan paternalism and Deeken's pan-German philosophy of colonial exploitation were irreconcilable. Deeken conceived of colonies simply as economic appendages to the fatherland, and considered that colonial resources and manpower were meant to benefit industrious settlers. Solf, while he did not despise the economic ethic, hated its apotheosis. Colonial development was, to him, a process in which the economic prosperity of European settlers should be balanced by the preservation and encouragement of the local Islanders. Solf therefore refused to treat the Samoans as an exploitable commodity, considering their cultural achievements worthy of particular respect. There was a more practical reason too. A reading of Samoan history persuaded the Governor that the Islanders would not be bullied into subjection, and that foolishness, irresolution or excess on the part of the German regime would lead to passive resistance and general anti-white hostility. Before Deeken arrived, Solf had been working to convince the Colonial Department that he could guide the Samoans in the desired direction by a non-militant policy of close contact with them at village level.

Deeken presented a direct threat to the Governor's image in Berlin, and to the patriarchal authority which he was assiduously building up with the Samoans. In late 1903, Solf warned the Colonial Department of the dangers which an opposition of 'Catholics, pan-Germans, the disillusioned and the dissatisfied' presented in the young colony, and in desperation pleaded with the Department to put pressure on the Deutsche Samoa Gesellschaft to have Deeken removed. He even declared himself prepared to resort to deportation if the occasion warranted.

But neither entreaties nor threats moved Berlin, which remained very cautious of Deeken's influence in the Reichstag, and the Governor had to wait until early 1904 for a chance to rid himself of his bête noire. The chance came when Deeken was involved in suspicions of fraud concerning his company's first shipment of Chinese coolies to arrive in Samoa as plantation labour; Solf immediately revoked the company's recruiting permission. Provoked, Deeken insinuated that the Governor
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had been inciting his workers against him, after several of the coolies complained of maltreatment. Solf responded with a libel action and in addition charged Deeken with brutality to his employees. There followed a series of legal manoeuvres, smear attacks, calumnies and intimidations as Deeken attempted to wriggle out of the charge but he was finally brought to trial, and, in June 1904, convicted on two counts of assault and one of slander. The court sentenced him to two months' imprisonment.

It was during this period that contacts between the settler opposition and certain sections of the Samoan community came to light. In June the British and American consuls reported several rumours: that the Samoans were demanding that Mata'afa Josefo should countersign all ordinances; that the Malo be paid a monthly salary; and that it have the right to scrutinise quarterly balance sheets showing the details of government revenue. Both consuls were convinced that the demands could be inspired only by whites. The local newspaper even printed a rumour that the Islanders had refused to pay the head tax.31

Solf tried to calm everybody. He admitted the existence of a letter from the Faipule in Mulinu’u making imperious demands, and he agreed that it was inspired by whites, more specifically by Deeken who wished to discomfort the government. In a rare moment of discernment, Deeken replied that the Samoans ‘follow proceedings among the whites with the closest attention and use them for their own purposes’.32 For Solf had failed to consider the possibility that, as the local native bureaucracy consolidated its influence, the central government in Mulinu’u might seek to exploit dissatisfaction in the white community in an effort to offset its increasing loss of influence with the mass of Samoans. In this sense, the petition was an attempt to reassert the Faipule’s position, and it is possible that the Mulinu’u chiefs encouraged the rumours of unrest in order to wring concessions from the administration.

Solf would not be bluffed. As far as he was concerned, only a few of the Faipule—Lauaki at their head—would dare to go so far; Mata’aafa Josefo and the majority, he knew, had no heart for the matter. The Governor demanded an apology from the body or they would be dismissed. He got his apology.33 He was then able to dissuade the foreign consuls from reporting trouble to their governments, particularly as it was obvious that the general populace had remained completely unaffected by the Malo’s conduct. The captain of a German
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cruiser visiting Samoa in September 1904 endorsed Solf's view. 'I gained the impression anew', he wrote,

that loyalty, confidence in the government, and attachment to the present representatives of the government are deeply rooted in the hearts of the Samoans; that they are contented with their lot and that they will not hear of rebellion and disturbance unless they are misguided and led on.\footnote{34}

The Deeken saga was far from finished with his conviction, for he was released immediately on appeal and the old intrigues began again. His appeal may well have been upheld thanks to the good offices of Deputy Trimborn, his uncle in the Reichstag, but, at the last moment, when it seemed that a full pardon might be granted, the Kaiser himself intervened on Solf's behalf and refused to sanction one. Instead Deeken's sentence was commuted to two months' confinement, and, at Solf's insistence, he was made to serve it in Germany, at the fortress above Koblenz-Ehrenbreitstein. The young reserve officer managed to alienate most of the fortress personnel during this stay there in 1905. In June 1907 he was back in Samoa to take up the reins of his company, and to continue his campaign to discredit the 'Solf system'.

The Oioa Movement

In the last months of 1904, it became evident that reports suggesting the Samoans were generally content with life under the Germans were premature. The activities of the settler opposition had significantly altered the equilibrium of relations between the two racial communities. New rumours were already circulating in September that Solf was in disgrace and about to be recalled, while Deeken came to be regarded as a powerful figure because he continued to go free in spite of his calumnies.

On top of this came the deterioration of the Islanders' economic prospects, as Solf had predicted in 1903. Copra produced by the Samoans was the backbone of the export trade, and through it the people were able to satisfy their demands for European consumer goods, as well as pay the administration's head tax. The Islanders produced well over half the 7614 tonnes of copra exported from the colony in 1903-04, but a slump in the world market price of copra in those years reduced their copra income from eight or nine pfennigs a pound to five pfennigs.\footnote{35} The Samoan community was disgruntled at the drop, and Solf only fanned the discontent when he rejected an
application by the chiefs at Mulinu’u to stabilise the price of copra in Samoa at nine pfennigs a pound. Thus, with the chiefs in Mulinu’u mortified at the loss of their power, the stage was set for a major challenge to the white community. This came when Pullack, a young half-caste son of a German customs officer, mooted the idea of a copra-marketing company to be run by Samoans themselves, with its own shipping facilities and guaranteeing a high, stable price for copra.\textsuperscript{36} The Mulinu’u chiefs seized on the idea. They believed that not only would it solve the present copra crisis and help to update the industry, but also that it was an opportunity to acquire the economic power which, from their observations of European commercial enterprise and colonial practice, they perceived to be a prerequisite of political power. The Malo immediately began spreading propaganda in favour of the idea and ordered that every male Samoan was to contribute between four and eight marks (Lafoga Oloa) to the project, which ran under the name of the Cumpani or Oloa. To mobilise the widest possible amount of sentiment, the Cumpani was launched as a patriotic venture which would emancipate the Samoans from their ‘slavery’ to the white copra traders. Since manifold abuses and deceptions were practised on the Samoans by European traders, this approach was calculated to bring results.\textsuperscript{37}

The government became fully aware of the significance of the scheme by about December when there was a drastic drop in copra cutting by the Samoans. For several reasons, Solf determined to put a stop to the Oloa. First, in common with most other Europeans in the colony, he was convinced that the Samoans did not possess the commercial knowledge or expertise to make the scheme viable. Second, it was a challenge to one of the platforms of colonisation—the white trader and the European monopoly of commerce—to which the Governor at heart was committed. Third, Solf recognised that it also was a bid by the chiefs and speakers in Mulinu’u to make a resolute stand against his projected native policy. They had never failed to assert that they were the ‘kingmakers’ of Samoa, with a mandate to carry out the affairs of the Samoan administration under the direction of Mata’afa Josefo. By institutionalising its power in the co-operative, the central government might have succeeded in regaining influence over the activities of the Samoan districts and thus restoring the traditional system of politics to which Solf was adamantly opposed. From this perspective the Lafoga looked very much like a form of direct taxation, to be used as a lever against the German administration.
Solf reacted quickly, and in early December he journeyed round the districts with his officials trying to persuade the people that the venture was hopelessly utopian. Pullack, who was suspected of preparing a major swindle for his own benefit, was deported. However, the Malo remained defiant, and the district fonos revealed that the idea of a co-operative had a broad appeal to most Samoans, including Mata'afa Josefo. Solf did not dare to risk a frontal assault. He did strictly prohibit the payment of any Lafoga; and he attempted to break the united front of the Mulinu'u chiefs by forbidding all native officials of the administration to participate in any way, under the threat of dismissal. Lauaki was even pressured into a promise to 'assist the government in keeping peace and tranquillity' by using his influence to turn the movement into more amenable channels. By the end of December 1904, these dividing tactics had succeeded in discouraging many officials and their localities and slowing the flow of funds to the movement. Solf, confident that the affair would soon become a laughing stock as district rivalries asserted themselves, embarked on a voyage to New Zealand.

His departure was the signal for the revival of the movement. The Oloa had not been forced out of existence at all, merely pushed out of sight of the Europeans. Suddenly Solf was in danger of becoming a laughing stock himself. Rumours began circulating that Solf was involved in a conspiracy with the white traders against Samoan copra growers, and, in disgrace, had been recalled by the Kaiser. The pent-up frustration of the Mulinu'u chiefs at Solf's obstructionist tactics finally came into the open. Inspired by a recent petition of the Tutuila natives against the American administration, the chiefs addressed a petition to the Kaiser himself, complaining that Solf was discriminating against a legal Samoan venture and reiterating their demands for recognition as the official organ of native government. A new campaign to solicit funds for the Cumpani was led by Lauaki's brother Namulau'ulu Pulali who claimed that the Governor and his deputy were in favour of the scheme. At a large fono in Fa'asaleleaga on 5 January 1905, one of Solf's appointed village mayors, Malaelu, went so far as to threaten that if Solf did not consent to the Oloa, the Samoans 'must scrape his body with pipi shells', and the decision was taken to restart the Cumpani.

The situation looked desperate to Erich Schultz, the Imperial Magistrate and Lands Commissioner who was Solf's deputy in his absence. Aware that he could not risk forceful suppression of the movement because of the danger of Samoan resistance, he was equally afraid that,
unless he made an example of the ringleaders, the authority of the German administration would effectively be subverted by the Malo. Schultz decided to arrest Malaeulu and Namulau'ulu Pulali. On 26 January they were put in Vaimea prison on charges of disturbing the peace, spreading false reports and insulting the Governor, charges which were, Schultz was careful to emphasise, fa'a Samoa liable to punishment.

The Faipule in Mulinu'u presumed that the two chiefs had been imprisoned for being members of the Oloa, and Schultz's action was construed as an unfair belittlement of Pule, to which both chiefs belonged. Custom demanded that the chiefs' adherents come to their aid. Mata'afa Josefo sent a letter requesting the release of the two men since they were only doing the will of the Malo. 'When a white man has been sentenced for any violation of the law', he protested, 'his sentence is not executed'—an obvious reference to Deeken's case. Before Schultz could reply, several chiefs broke into Vaimea prison on 31 January and freed the prisoners, as a gesture of the independence of the Samoan government and in an attempt to reinforce a sense of solidarity.

In actual fact the unity of the Oloa movement had been dissolving under internal stresses. The non-Mata'afan members among the Faipule suspected that the adherents of Mata'afa Josefo were seeking to establish the superiority of their party through the Cumpani, and they made it clear that any attempt to raise taxes for it by force would be met with resistance. The Vaimea incident only had the effect of increasing the tensions between the two rival parties, and Schultz began to receive declarations of support from the non-Mata'afans. Mata'afa Josefo and the majority of the chiefs immediately regretted their action, and, in a meeting with Schultz the day after, agreed to return Malaeulu and Namulau'ulu Pulali to prison, which they promptly did. With the solidarity of the whole movement breaking down around them and the rumour of Solf's recall proving untrue, the chiefs feared for the consequences of their actions and hoped, by their repentance, to appease Solf on his return. Pleading that 'all is due to ignorance on our part', they pressed Schultz for a full pardon for the two chiefs. Schultz refused, recognising from his knowledge of fa'a Samoa, that from this entire debacle, Solf could extract the grounds he had been seeking to remove the Mulinu'u government permanently.

By the time Solf returned in mid-March, the Cumpani virtually had shipwrecked itself and the 'patriotism' of the movement was a dead
issue. Solf set about trying to restore his own authority and break permanently the influence of the chiefs and speakers in Mulinu’u. In this he was assisted by the eagerness of Mata’afa Josefo and the chiefs to salvage some of their prestige. First they prepared a lavish welcome festival for his return, and then they performed the traditional ceremonial act of atonement and self-humiliation (Ifoga) before his house: Solf ostentatiously rejected both. Accompanied by the captain and officers of SMS Condor, Solf then made a speech in Luflufi, one of the two great political centres of Tumua, in which he ridiculed the actions of the chiefs in fables transparent to every Samoan. He confronted Mata’afa Josefo with his ‘deceit’ in encouraging the events connected with Vaimea and styled the guilty chiefs ‘treacherous rebels’ who were fit only for deportation.

It was a shrewd strategy of intimidation entirely in accord with Samoan custom in such circumstances. Ridicule and loss of face, particularly before the public in a hallowed place like Luflufi, were powerful sanctions among Samoan elites, so that in June, when Solf issued an order that Mulinu’u be vacated, the chiefs complied; they had expected much worse.

Solf followed up with an assembly on 14 August in which he explained the necessity to dissolve the central government of chiefs and speakers because ‘they had proceeded against the decrees of the regime whose allies they had been’. He also imposed a series of punishments for individual misdemeanours: Moefaauo and Lauaki, as chief representatives of the Tumua and Pule were to be deported, though Lauaki was later placed on probation for fear of making him a martyr to the Samoan people; those responsible for the Vaimea incident were dismissed from their government posts and fined 1000 marks; Malaeulu lost his position as village mayor while Namulau’ulu Pulali was imprisoned for two months. These individual penalties were accompanied by a purge of the Samoan judiciary and of certain native commissions.

Solf also took the opportunity to make changes to the Samoan administration, changes which would place it entirely in his hands. The house of Taimua was abolished and a new salaried council of Faipule established, consisting of twenty-seven deputies who were to reside in their districts and assemble in Mulinu’u twice a year. Only loyalists and those too influential to dismiss were considered for the appointments, but Solf was careful to select members of both major parties and to establish a parity between Protestant and Catholic officials. By limiting
the number of orator chiefs in the new council to a maximum of seven, Solf was able to restrict their influence at the national level. By ‘promoting’ district governors (Taitai Itu) to deputies and making appointments to sub-districts which traditionally did not hold power, he was also able to achieve his original objective of reducing the institutional importance of the districts, as well as to create a nucleus of supporters dependent on him for their positions.

The new system destroyed completely the fiction of a Samoan ‘self administration’ which Solf had cultivated in 1900, using Mata’afa Josefo as mouthpiece. From now on all appointments emanated from the Governor himself and were to be terminated at his discretion, while the Faipule were now directly responsible for conveying his orders to the pulenu’u of the villages.

The seeds of a new Samoan reaction were sown in these changes of 1905, for it was clear to the chiefs and speakers that they had lost all semblance of independence. Solf made it explicit when, in his speech announcing the alterations, he excluded the power cartel of Tumua and Pule from any further say in Samoa’s official future:

... there is no room in that Government for Tumua and Pule. The old fa’alupenga or formal traditional salutation of Samoa which was made use of by the former Council to arrogate power to themselves is no longer in existence, and I shall make a law forbidding use of that salutation in any meeting.45

But not all initiative had been removed from the chiefs. Solf’s one big error of judgment was to allow Lauaki to remain in the islands. Lauaki’s colleague, Moefaauo, on the eve of his deportation, had warned Solf to get rid of the Savai’i orator while he could. He claimed vehemently that Lauaki was ‘the root of all evil’ in Samoa: ‘He has a sweet tongue and [is] a slippery man at that—the palagi don’t understand him as well as the Samoans do’.46 Solf would soon rue Moefaao’s words, for Lauaki’s presence was a pledge of continuing resistance to the Governor’s politics.

Lauaki had championed consistently the conservative cause against Solf. During the Oloa movement he figured prominently, notably in restarting agitation after Solf’s departure and in joining the petition to the Kaiser. Some confusion exists about his role in the Vaimea incident, but since Namulau’ulu Pulali was his brother, it is more than likely that Lauaki supported, if he did not directly encourage, the freeing of the prisoners.47 When retribution seemed near, with the return of the
supposedly-disgraced Solf, Lauaki was very deft in retracing his steps and working against the co-operative idea, so successfully that he weaned his entire district away from it. It was undoubtedly Lauaki’s about-face which increased the confusion in the Samoan camp and contributed to the rapid disintegration of Oloa solidarity before Solf’s return. His final triumph was in convincing Solf and Richard Williams, district administrator on Savai’i, that his repentance was genuine, his loyalty unimpaired. Over the protests of Mata’afa Josefo, and with the unanimous disapproval of the other Faipule, this ‘crafty and perceptive man’, as Solf described him, was given a place on the new council. Though Mata’afa Josefo was highly implicated in the train of events, Solf refused to sacrifice him to the reaction from the white community which followed the affair. Solf blamed Deeken for leading Mata’afa Josefo astray. He also blamed the settler clique for the original rumour of his disgrace, as well as for the Malo’s petition to the Kaiser and the subsequent Vaimea incident. Nothing could be proven against Deeken, but there was ample evidence of contacts between his group and the leading chiefs in Mulini’u. Direct contacts between Lauaki and Deeken could not be traced, but Schultz at least was convinced that Lauaki was clever enough to use the planter for his own purposes, which perhaps was corroborated by the fact that Deeken was regarded by the majority of the Malo as prospective manager of the Cumpani in succession to Pullack. This ploy was obviously both a business manoeuvre to exploit Deeken’s expertise, and a contingency measure against the future: if Deeken proved more powerful than Solf and the Governor really were disgraced, it obviously made sense to support Deeken and commit him to the future of the co-operative. At no time, however, did the Samoans openly engage themselves in Deeken’s cause. In fact, they had strenuously opposed from the start his campaign to force them onto the European plantations, and considered it an affront that he should retain his freedom in Samoa after his conviction.

Deeken’s group of disaffected small planters led the white reaction to the Vaimea incident. In a petition to the Chancellor, purporting to represent the majority of business opinion in Apia, the opposition presented the affair as evidence of the complete shipwreck of Solf’s control policy. They argued that the European population was now ‘completely at the mercy of the Samoans’ and that it was essential to act with a mailed fist—to send naval cruisers, to deport chiefs and to establish a garrison of colonial troops. The petition received short shrift from the Colonial Department which had no intention of
increasing administrative, let alone military involvement in the Pacific, in the face of the demands made by the recent Herero rebellion in South-West Africa. Solf's success, not only in maintaining peace and security, but also in breaking the power of the corporation of chiefs and speakers in Mulinu'u without the use of force of any kind, was the strongest possible vindication of his policy. And in Samoa itself, Deeken's panic patently was not shared by all. The DHPG newspaper, the *Samoanische Zeitung*, declared confidently, if predictably, in Solf's favour. It concluded there were now better grounds 'for anticipating a lasting peace for Samoa than have previously existed within the memory of living men' (26 August 1905).
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