The three years 1905 to 1908 were a period of relatively peaceful development. Trade and agriculture took an upward turn, and in 1906 Samoa achieved a favourable balance of trade for the first time. From 1908 onwards, the administration was able to prepare its annual budgets without relying on a Reich subsidy. For their part, the Samoans were enjoying an increase in purchasing power as copra prices began to rise once more in 1905. With the regulation of Samoan copra production following the ordinance of 1900 and the administration’s struggle to improve its quality through legislation and closer supervision, the Samoan community was able to maintain its high degree of participation in the export economy: between 1905 and 1908 it produced on average two-thirds of all the copra exported from Samoa. Moreover, encouraged by the example of several new plantation companies in these years, Samoans had planted 1362 hectares of the new cash crop, cocoa, by 1906. They also continued to meet the fiscal demands made on them by the head tax, but were showing a greater interest in the way the taxes were being employed.

In the wake of the political changes of 1905, the Samoans were now being governed by an unrestrained, patriarchal regime founded squarely on Solf’s authority and his conviction that ‘a tactful Governor can rule the natives without laws’. Understanding better than most Europeans the limits to which Samoans would allow themselves to be pushed, Solf used only indirect methods to bring the Samoans within the colonial economy. The regular planting of young coconuts, which the Governor enforced through plantation inspectors, together with the head tax levy, helped to stimulate use of village land and increase productivity; legislation against false weights and measures protected the Samoan grower against the unscrupulous copra buyer; while at the village level salaried Samoan officials were the levers of government. Solf interfered in this ‘fa’a Samoa hinterland’ only when a breakdown in law and order was imminent, or when Samoan economic aspirations clashed with the vital interests of European commerce, as the cooperative movement had.
Solf was determined that his rule should provide a preferable alternative to the 'para-administrative' organisation which the various mission societies had come to represent to the Samoans through their long history of contact. The Governor had maintained consistently good relations with the missions since 1900. There had been a number of controversies—for instance, with the London Missionary Society over the extent of their annual district collections (Me) and the puritan regulation of Sunday activity, and over the Marists' privileged influence with Mata'afa Josefo—but these had been only temporary irritations. Solf was realistic enough to concede that the Samoans could not be expected automatically to transfer their primary allegiance from the one form of Western discipline they had accepted for fifty years to a still largely unfamiliar secular regime.

With the conversion of the Samoans virtually complete by 1905, the missions were now concentrating on meeting the educational demands of the community. In 1906 the London Missionary Society could count 24,808 Samoan adherents, or two-thirds of the population; 6,022 Samoans were Catholics while the remainder spread themselves among a number of smaller Christian societies. An elementary school functioned in every one of the London Missionary Society's villages, and there were a series of district high schools as well as the Malua seminary. In all, 299 schools of various denominations existed in Samoa in 1906, with 470 teachers and nearly 10,000 pupils. The government began its own public school in 1907.2

It was the Samoans' avidity for education, as well as their economic activity, which moved Solf to respond to their appeals for a permanent prohibition on the further sale or leasing of Samoan land to whites. Samoans rarely seem to have been losers in the rush by Europeans for land holdings before 1900. There were more cases of Samoans defrauding Europeans in land deals during the 1880s than the reverse, and successful local wars had been financed from the profits. In 1889 the Berlin Conference had established the principle of prohibiting the sale of Samoan land to foreigners and of restricting leaseholds, while the land commission set up by the three Powers in the following years confirmed only a small percentage of past European purchases.3 Most claims were rejected on the grounds that the sale had not been made by the rightful owner, an ironic indication of Samoan accomplishments in land transactions.

But the advent of new plantation companies after 1900 brought widespread pressure to bear on the German government to reintroduce
freehold sales or at least to permit long-term leases. Prominent Samoans countered with the argument that Europeans had long overestimated the area of cultivable land in the group, an argument supported by Dr Wohltmann’s analysis in 1902-03. Wohltmann found that only half of Upolu’s land area was suitable for cultivation, and only one-fifth of the area of Savai‘i. Whites had already alienated more land than was safe in the circumstances, and Wohltmann advised that 50,000 hectares be reserved to the Samoans for their own needs.

Solf and the Faipule discussed the question at length in the August 1907 meeting of the Mulinu‘u council. The result was an ordinance of 26 November, providing that land could be transferred by sale or lease only in the ‘plantation district’ around Apia. Outside this limit the government might lease land to foreigners provided that Samoan cultivable lands were not diminished to less than 1.29 hectares per head of population. It was a solution which patently favoured the DHPG, since it possessed the only considerable land holdings outside Apia already in the hands of Europeans.

Predictably, Solf had to withstand a new storm of criticism from small planters. Their opposition to the Governor was reinforced during these years by the return of Richard Deeken. Deeken arrived this time with instructions from his company to keep out of Solf’s way, but it was not long before the two men clashed openly over an attempt by Deeken to inveigle his way into the advisory council for settlers which Solf had set up early in his administration.

Solf’s critics in the colony and abroad did not waver in their opposition to his ‘system’. The Governor’s self-conscious independence, and his reliance on personal authority in dealing with the Samoan community were a continual affront to the Deeken faction. They wanted to see more direct mobilisation of Samoan manpower to ease the shortage of labour for small plantations, and advocated the use of ‘positive’ force should the Islanders resist. Solf reacted to all this badgering with occasional petulance and self-righteousness, but he stubbornly refused to abandon his Samoan policies: ‘I will not be the grave digger of the colony which I have helped to baptise’, was one of his favourite retorts.

Wilhelm Solf (like his deputy Erich Schultz-Ewerth) was a man sensitive to the ethics and history of Samoan society, and outspokenly determined to preserve its integrity. His administrative strategy of defending Samoans, their land and their labour had its roots in a well-reasoned analysis of Germany’s role in Samoa, which he articu-
lated in a series of reports to the Colonial Office in 1906 and 1907. Sent in response to a general request for ideas about the future of Germany's colonies, Solf's 'program' was much more than a survey of past achievements and a list of developmental priorities. With his cosmopolitan background and outlook, and his small 'l' liberalism, Solf found it necessary to offer some form of ideological rationale for his involvement in Germany's Kolonialpolitik, with its blatantly economic ends and occasionally brutal consequences. The result was a conception which comes closer to a philosophy of colonialism than any other official collection of ideas in the German Pacific.

The Governor made it clear from the beginning that his plan for Samoa revolved primarily around the Samoan people: they would be the focus of his energies rather than the small community of German and English colonists. He argued that with the raising of the imperial flag in 1900, Germany had accepted the legal and moral obligation to create for the island people 'better and more rational conditions of life than they themselves in the narrowness of their hearts and minds could create'. To do so required not force but patient and sensitive leadership. The Samoan people were only 'wild, truculent, superstitious children', susceptible to cajolery, and capable of reaching a higher ideal of civilisation if led by guides and mentors who, like Solf, were prepared to ground themselves in the emotions and thought processes of the island people. Solf's ideal was development with and through the Samoans, not in spite of them.

To suggest that these ideas represent a liberal humanism years ahead of its time in Germany would be an exaggeration. Solf may not have subscribed to the crude rhetoric of Social Darwinism, but his sympathy for Samoans was based on a subtle variation of the same theme, namely, that Germany, as the foremost Kulturstaat, possessed the duty to civilise a society which had achieved as much as had Samoa in the pursuit of the West's educational values; in other words, that the Samoan people should continue to prosper as deserving servants of the colonising intelligence. It was also impractical politics to exploit the people ruthlessly, since, in his scheme of things, they were to provide the engines of Samoa's future development within the Reich. As Solf saw it, he was merely preparing a seedbed in Samoa for other generations of colonists. They would reap the benefits of his cultivation. Wilhelm Solf's ideas thus occupy a place firmly within the intellectual traditions of Wilhelmine Germany. If further evidence were needed, it might be seen in his approval of the English disdain for 'over-fami-
liarity’ with the coloured races of their colonies. Solf, in the final analysis, believed firmly that, to achieve anything in the colonies, Germany must maintain strict standards of racial pride and purity.7

Towards the end of 1908, the focus of attention swung back dramatically to indigenous politics. Mata'afa Josefo, at seventy-six years of age, was fast becoming senile, and a series of illnesses he suffered in 1908 raised in the minds of Samoans the question of succession to the paramount chieftaincy. There were four candidates for the position—Malietoa Tanu, Tamasese, Fa'alata and Tuimalealiifano (two from each of the royal lineages)—and efforts were being made by the influential chiefs to have Mata'afa Josefo prepare a political testament in which he would designate his successor.

Alongside this purely Samoan movement sprang up another in opposition to Solf's government. Solf was convinced the next challenge to his authority would be the occasion of Mata'afa Josefo’s death, at which time he planned to abolish the post of Ali'i Sili. But he reckoned without the orator chief from Savai'i. Lauaki, whose whole life had revolved around political activity, was not prepared to accept the role of spectator forced on him by Solf in 1905. The official suppression of Tumua and Pule, and the dispersal from the sacred seat of government of those chiefs who came to power in 1899 had lifted the veil from the Governor's real intentions. Lauaki was already convinced of Solf's deviousness; the recent events inevitably confirmed it, and, despite an outward show of conformity, Lauaki resented Solf deeply.8

In addition he was, at heart, a Sā Malietoā man because of the traditional affiliations of Safotulafai district. His expedient support for Mata'afa Josefo in 1898-99 did not, in Samoan eyes, impose the obligation of unqualified loyalty, and Lauaki looked to the day when a Malietoan should succeed to the apex of Samoan politics, with Lauaki at his side. Mata'afa Josefo's deteriorating condition, plus the fact that Solf went on leave in mid-1908, presented the chief with a perfect opportunity to take up the fight for Tumua and Pule, as well as for a reconstructed central government over which his candidate, Malietoana Tanu, would preside.

Lauaki, now over sixty years old, began a propaganda campaign in August 1908, after the close of the fono of Faipule in Mulini'u. Realising that he must create a united front amongst Samoans if he was to have an efficient lever against Solf, he planned to organise a mass demonstration of thousands to greet the Governor on his return in
November, and, after the welcoming ceremonies, to present Solf with a list of petitions. These were to urge four main reforms: that the upper house, Taimua, together with the Faipule, be reinstated permanently in Mulinu'u as salaried advisers to the government; that the four contending 'princes' be appointed as salaried officials at Mulinu'u; that the Samoans be furnished with records of administrative revenue and expenditure; and that the head tax be eased.

The first demand was designed to achieve the restoration of a 'national' political structure which Solf had toiled so hard to dismantle, even though the Taimua and Faipule would not represent a traditional Malo. The second would safeguard the principle of continuity to the paramountcy by the presence of the 'royal' candidates at the seat of government. By ostensibly supporting everybody's candidate for the succession, Lauaki was able to recruit chiefly support throughout Upolu districts as well as in Savai'i; no doubt he was assisted by some general resentment at Solf's high-handed action of dispersing the Malo in 1905. There can be also little doubt about the orator chief's real objective: to prevent Mata'afa Josefo from declaring unilaterally whom his successor should be until Lauaki had secured Malietoa Tanu's prospects; then the question of the re-establishment of the role of Tumua and Pule would be introduced. The remaining petitions were calculated to strike a responsive chord among the people, for they played on the prevailing Samoan suspicion of money matters where Europeans were concerned. In particular it was suggested that the head tax made Samoans into slaves of the whites.

The parallels with the Oloa movement are obvious. In fact, in its conservative aspects, Lauaki's campaign was simply an extension of the Oloa: a rearguard action by a minority which longed for the days when it was the strongest power in the land and could manipulate Samoa's political fortunes at will. This time it was 'diplomacy by intimidation', a ploy which had a respectable antiquity dating back to the period of Three-Power rule. As to what would happen after the Apia demonstration, Lauaki was probably unclear. The visit in August 1908 of sixteen ships of the United States battlefleet may have induced him to believe that the Powers would once more come to the Samoans' aid.

It was not until November, on the eve of Solf's return, that Deputy Governor Schultz learned of the movement. By that time Lauaki had managed to mobilise the most important political districts of Samoa by capitalising on the traditional elite status of chiefs and orators as 'kingmakers', and on his own standing as high priest of the political
Lauaki versus the Solf System

citadel. Saleaula and Safotulafai in Savai'i, along with Leulumoega and Lufilufi in Upolu, accepted Lauaki's appeal to the old ways and corporate political issues. Their support, representing the power of Tumua and Pule, theoretically put him in a formidable position.

Schultz could not afford to let the demonstration take place. He realised at once the meaning of the petitions, and knew that Solf's response must be negative. Not only might the presence of so many Samoans create difficulties for the government, but a refusal could provoke the spread of passive resistance to subsequent administrative demands. Schultz immediately sent letters round the Upolu and Savai'i districts forbidding all but those officially connected with the welcome for Solf to congregate in Apia, while the administration's most trusted local officials journeyed round the islands to argue against the Apia demonstration. Lauaki, however, maintained his determined stance and, with twenty-two boats of Savai'i supporters, he moved to Manono and the district of A'ana in Upolu, seeking some excuse to go to Apia 'to bring forward their opinions'.

At this point Mata'afa Josefo, who originally had been brought on side by the promise of suitable honours for his high position, left the movement. He was not prepared to risk a confrontation with the government, and instead began to apply his considerable weight as Ali'i Sili in support of Schultz's efforts to keep the people in their districts. In the face of this pressure Lauaki finally submitted to Schultz's injunction and remained absent from Apia on 19 November, when Solf arrived with his newly-wedded wife. The demonstration failed to take place.

Solf now took the reins in his own hands and embarked on a tour of Upolu and Savai'i to remind the chiefs of their duties and warn them against disloyalty. Lauaki he confronted in Safotulafai, but in the presence of so many followers of the orator chief Solf was powerless to do more than warn Lauaki of 'the vengeance of the German eagle'. Lauaki retorted that there was no rebellious intent among the chiefs of the Pule and, declaring that he was appointed by the people to guard 'the sons of old Samoan Kings and the darlings of the Nation', he beseeched Solf to allow again the 'Faipule Kaiserlike' to assemble in Mulinu'u.

Despite the fact that, as a result of Solf's tour, the local press was prepared to consign the rumours of unrest to the realm of fable, it was just at this stage, in late December, that the movement got under way with renewed vigour and began to take on rebellious overtones.
Schultz's original refusal had had serious repercussions for Lauaki. In the failure of his demonstration he had lost face fa’a Samoa and exposed himself to Samoan ridicule. He would not see his plans so easily thwarted. After Solf's departure from Savai’i, the rumour spread that Lauaki had humbled the Governor in their encounter. Then Lauaki took an action which effectively cut him off from any hope of clemency by the German government: he sent his aide, the chief l’oga Pisa, to seek the support of the United States regime in Tutuila in case Lauaki found himself in difficulties. Clearly Lauaki was directing the movement, which now acquired the names mau e pule (opposition movement of Savai’i) or o le mau, against the German grip on Samoan powers of decision-making. Pule was ‘on the march’ again, as one of Solf's more trusted Faipule put it.13 The Faipule of the Governor's council were themselves caught up in the movement. Some chose to wait and see if Lauaki would be successful. Others, as well as many ordinary Samoans, followed Lauaki because of his authority as a traditional leader and because of his oratorical powers, though the evidence suggests they were unsure of his ends.

Solf was in an unenviable position, faced with a developing opposition front of Tumua and Pule, with the masses at their heels, while he lacked any sort of military support with which to assert his authority. As in the early stages of the Oloa, Solf could not simply break the movement by imprisoning its leader. Lauaki had been careful to organise o le mau along the lines of a legitimate, fa’a Samoa form of protest and opposition. Direct suppression would have been construed by the majority of Samoans as tyranny and injustice.

However, cracks were already appearing in the alliance which Lauaki had constructed. Upolu chiefs were always suspicious of political initiatives which did not originate in their own districts, and the relationship between Tumua and Pule was often attended by covert distrust. Lauaki found that even his base of support in Savai’i was not firm: some of the Fa’asaleleaga villages would not join him, while one of the most powerful chiefs of Safotulafai was his committed opponent.14 Perhaps most importantly, Lauaki found that among ordinary Samoans he could not count on any general movement aspiring to change the state of society. Since 1900 village Samoans had experienced a minimum of deprivation under Solf’s low-key administrative policies. German rule had brought a peace the Samoans had not known for decades: their lands were secure and they were protected from the labour demands of planters; regulated copra production
ensured a steadily rising standard of living; and they were governed by local officials who were also familiar village chiefs. None of this had been changed by the abolition of the Malo in 1905; indeed there had followed three years of peace. Under these conditions, the intrigues of orator chiefs did not have the appeal they once had.

Solf's close rapport with fa'a Samoa, developed sensitively over the years through study, through consulting, through touring and feasting from village to village, enabled him to recognise the signs of instability in Lauaki's relationships. He decided to play Lauaki at his own game—in the circumstances his only recourse. At a fono of Upolu chiefs and speakers in mid-January, the Governor baited his audience, carefully and sarcastically painting a picture of Lauaki installing himself in Mulinu'u with his Savai'i adherents at the cost of Lufilufi and Leulumoega, the districts which represented the majority of Tumua. 'Your glory is gone', he taunted them,

for Lauaki is the maker of kings. He confers the high honours, not you. He anointed Mata'aafa. He will anoint himself—as Tafa'iifa he will go with his queen Sialata'ua to Mulinu'u and will be lord over you fools.15

So successful was he in persuading the chiefs that Lauaki's plans did not include them in the final victory (which was not altogether devoid of truth), that most of A'ana and Atua deserted the alliance immediately and, with parts of Tuamasaga, began making preparations for war against Lauaki and his district Fa'asaleleaga.

Solf summoned Lauaki to Apia for a private interview on 16 January. When Lauaki landed in Upolu and became aware of Tumua's attitude, he instructed his Savai'i followers to accompany him, and, as he made his way to Apia, a thousand of his men lodged themselves in Vaiusu and in sympathetic parts of Tuamasaga district. Solf now refused to negotiate with Lauaki until his 'army' had dispersed. The chief answered that they were simply supporters who wished to farewell him in case he was apprehended and hanged.16 A few boatloads of Lauaki's supporters left Vaiusu in the next few days, but they went only as far as Manono on the pretext of bad weather. Lauaki himself remained in Vaiusu.

Throughout the different confederations of districts preparations were now being made for a full-scale war, a prospect which in no way consoled Solf. A Samoan war meant not only the plunder of Apia and the German plantations, and the possible ruin of the cash-cropping
industry, but also probably acts of violence against Europeans. It would signify a return to the confusion and bitterness of the last century and make illusory any gains which the administration had made since 1900. To forestall an outbreak Solf sent his most trusted and influential Samoan officials, the secretary Saga and the chief Taumei, to dissuade Tumua from taking up arms.

Meanwhile, on 18 January, two letters arrived in Solf's office. One was what Solf termed 'an open declaration of war' from Lauaki, in which the chief declared that if he were forced to take a 'holiday' to Tonga and Fiji as the Governor had requested in their recent interview, 'on that day when I set foot upon the steamer, the Samoans will fight'. It confirmed what he had already told the chief Taumei: 'I fight for the liberty of Fa'asaleleaga and for Pule. Whether I die or be banished is the same to me'. The other letter came from the corporation of chiefs representing Savai'i and Manono, Pule and A'iga, and reiterated the demand that Samoans be given responsibility for their own monies. Other information reaching Solf from loyal chiefs warned that Lauaki had assembled his forces in Vaiusu. From the DHPG in Vaitele came a report that Samoans, painted for war and armed, were headed for Apia. The situation looked more and more desperate, and, after a hasty consultation with his deputies, Solf decided that he must confront Lauaki in Vaiusu and try to dissuade him from violence.

The Vaiusu meeting stayed vividly in Solf's memory, and he later admitted to being genuinely afraid at the size and temper of Lauaki's gathering. He had chosen not to take an armed escort for fear of provoking Lauaki's supporters, and it was well that he had, for crowds of blackened warriors, well-armed and chanting for war, surrounded the meeting house. The scene had about it the air of a confrontation between the leading warriors of opposing sides — which traditionally took place in Samoan wars before the commencement of hostilities. Both the Governor and his European aide were convinced that they stood on the knife-edge of a rebellion similar to that of the South-West African Herero in 1904.

In reality, it was an object lesson in the political skills which had preserved Lauaki throughout his long career. After Solf refused to give Lauaki his hand, the 'silver-tongued' orator chief launched into an impassioned speech which lasted more than an hour, begging the Governor's pardon for his obstinate conduct and swearing on the Bible that the 'evil genius' behind all the Samoan disturbances since 1904 was really Mata'afa Josefo. The speech transferred the moral onus squarely
to Solf's shoulders. By accusing Mata'afa Josefo, Lauaki had answered the accusations of conspiracy upon which the governor had built the basis of inquiry against him. Since Mata'afa Josefo in his reply to the speech, made no attempt to repudiate Lauaki's allegations, Solf was faced with the possibility that there were now two guilty chiefs. To punish one and free the other would not have accorded with the Samoan concept of justice; to raise the question of Mata'afa Josefo's disloyalty at the time might only have hastened the prospect of civil war. At the same time it was clearly impossible to take Lauaki from his followers and examine him in court. Solf's only alternative was to grant Lauaki the pardon which he had requested. But he did so reluctantly, and it was only a conditional pardon. He insisted that Lauaki retire immediately with his supporters to Savai'i and cease all agitation. He also made it clear to Lauaki that the pardon would not apply if Lauaki was found to be guilty of treason by sending political ambassadors to Tutuila for American aid.

The next day, 19 January, found Lauaki on Manono where, again using the weather as a pretext, he remained. The conflict was obviously unresolved, particularly so when Solf's investigation revealed that attempts had been made to draw the United States in to aid the dissidents. Tension between the Samoan parties and between the Samoans and the European community increased steadily. The first reports of unrest since late December now appeared in the local press; rumours of war and general animosity to German rule flooded in and out of Apia; Solf was continually beseeched by Tumua chiefs to supply them with weapons to capture Lauaki and defeat his followers. At a fono of Faipule at the end of January there was strong pressure on Solf to begin military action against Lauaki, and only four chiefs spoke against dismissing Lauaki from the assembly and deporting him from the islands.19

Solf managed to withstand the pressure of the Upolu chiefs while he worked to prevent a panic among the whites. While the government's more loyal collaborators, the chiefs Saga, Taumei and a few of their colleagues canvassed the districts, testing the attitudes of their people and arguing in the councils against taking up arms, Solf hid the colony's explosives, and immobilised the weapons in the magazine. He gave strict instructions to the Europeans not to resist any attempt by Tumua forces to seize the weapons lest this provoke them to an attack on the European quarter. 'In all cases we must try to keep the peace', he urged, 'even on the condition that Lauaki restores peace in Savai'i'.20
It was a hollow hope: Lauaki seemed to have no intention of restoring the peace anywhere in the islands. Though by this time he had returned to Savai'i, his agitation continued unabated. A new crop of rumours maintained that Solf had sworn on the Bible against Lauaki's deportation and that the Governor had agreed in principle to all the orator's original demands. From Lauaki's allies in Manono came the particularly ominous threat that every German in Samoa would be killed if Lauaki were deported. In the face of these mounting events, Solf finally lost hope that he alone could stabilise the situation. Reluctantly, with a sense of defeat of his hard-won policies, he telegraphed Berlin on 5 February 1909 for the urgent dispatch of military support.

Six weeks of anxious waiting followed, during which Solf was reduced to inaction against Lauaki. His energies were concentrated on restraining the Upolu chiefs from taking action on their own initiative and on calming the Europeans. On 18 March a German cruiser, SMS Leipzig, arrived from the East Asian Squadron in Kiautschou, under the command of Rear Admiral Coerper. By 26 March it had been joined by a further two cruisers and a supply ship, bringing some 680 sailors and marines to Samoa's undefended shores.

Solf now dropped his pretence and returned to the initiative. His plan was still to avoid military action at all costs and to rely on the mere presence of the largest German naval detachment Samoa had seen since the civil war of 1898-99. Resort to physical force would provoke Lauaki to take to the bush where, as history had shown, European forces were at a serious disadvantage; only a long, bloody and costly guerrilla war would then dislodge the rebels. There was the added danger that eventually the loyal Samoans would make common cause with Lauaki and his supporters in a liberation crusade against colonial rule. Solf found a staunch ally for his caution in Coerper, who deferred completely to the Governor's discretion.

On 22 March Solf sent an ultimatum to Savai'i ordering Lauaki to report for deportation by 29 March along with eight other ringleaders: Letasi Tuilagi, Namulau'ulu Pulali, Malaeulu, Tagaloa, Tevaga Matafa, Asiata Taeatoloa, Asiata Ma'agaolo and I'iga Pisa. It was accompanied by a letter from Mata'afa Josefo urging obedience for the sake of peace. When these messages reached Lauaki the confrontation entered its most critical phase. Lauaki and his two deputies, Letasi Tuilagi and Namulau'ulu Pulali, replied the following day, protesting that Pule and A'iga had been pardoned and declaring that they would rather fight and die than be deported. As Lauaki's supporters on
Savai'i began conveying their goods into the bush and stockpiling provisions, the navy moved in to blockade the island and confine any revolt to Savai'i alone. Rumours that the Melanesian police-soldiers accompanying the vessels were to be released 'like dogs' on the Samoans and that the 'rebels' were to be hanged from the yard-arms, only hardened resistance in Lauaki's villages and made loyal Samoans uneasy. Coerper immediately repudiated all these stories, and at a fono on 27 March he made a personal appeal to the movement's leaders to surrender, promising that no force would be used if Solf's directions were obeyed. There was no response. At this juncture, Reverend John Newell of the London Missionary Society, partly motivated by accusations from the settler community that he had been sending letters of encouragement to the disaffected districts, offered his services to try and persuade Lauaki to surrender without violence. When Newell reached Savai'i on 27 March, he found that the whole west of Savai'i, as well as Palauli, Sapapalii, Saleaula and Matautu were in fact opposed to Lauaki, and he was greeted as the harbinger of peace. However, feelings of defiant solidarity were still strong in Lauaki's own villages, and, in a last-ditch effort to retrieve the situation, Lauaki appealed to the British Vice-Consul in Apia, Thomas Trood, to call in the Three Powers to the protection of Samoa. On 28 March Trood replied shortly that Samoa was now under German rule and there could be no redress from the other Great Powers.

The first break in Lauaki's immediate circle of support came when Reverend E. G. Neil, of the Methodist Mission, persuaded one of the ringleaders, Asiata Taetoloa of Satupaitea, to surrender. This virtually defused the rebellious situation from Satupaitea to the west coast, and left Fa'asaleleaga isolated in the east. Other chiefs followed Asiata Taetoloa's example when they realised that the Germans were not extracting a brutal revenge from their colleague. In a public meeting in Safotulafai, presided over by Newell, Lauaki's brother, Namulau'ulu Pulali, declared that he was prepared to surrender if it meant avoiding war for Samoa. A further round of discussions finally led Lauaki to send Newell a message on 29 March, promising that he and the Safotulafai chiefs would give themselves up on 1 April. In response, Coerper and Solf agreed to extend the deadline of the ultimatum. Lauaki and his men arranged their affairs and took leave of their friends. As the ships Leipzig and Arcona steamed towards Savai'i to take up positions for a military assault, they received a message that Lauaki and five chiefs had presented themselves punctually on board SMS
Jaguar. On the same day the chiefs, numbering nine in all, together with their families, left Apia on board the Jaguar, bound for Saipan in the Mariana Islands where they were to live in exile.

Solf later remarked privately that there had been a moral onus on Lauaki to accept his fate ever since the first chiefs had surrendered, for the respectful treatment accorded them by the Germans had done a great deal to legitimise German authority in the eyes of ordinary Samoans. Imponderabilia like the people’s ethical expectations and notions of duty and reciprocity no doubt played a part in Lauaki’s decision. However, as a devout Christian and deacon of the local church, Lauaki had been convinced finally by Newell’s arguments that rebellion would only lead to Samoan fighting Samoan and to ‘the opening of the flood gates of misery that might last for years and years’.

His surrender was no doubt also made easier by the fact that Solf, too, with the Admiral’s support, was anxious to avoid bloodshed. No actual charges were laid against Lauaki in a court of law. If the German code had been employed, the movement’s leaders would have been guilty of rebellion and treason, which presumably would have led to their execution. Deportation was, in the circumstances, a restrained course of action. Solf continued to act temperately in punishing the errant districts, studiously avoiding any impression of a witch-hunt or a wholesale purge of Samoan officials. The Lauaki affair had shown that fears of the Samoans taking to the bush if pushed too far were well founded, and there seemed even greater need now for adhering to the existing lines of Solf’s native policy. The Governor dismissed for twelve months all officials in the districts of Manono, Fa’asaleleaga, Saleaula and Satupaitea; land was confiscated at Tuasivi in Fa’asaleleaga for government purposes; in the guilty districts every matai was fined thirty marks and all shotguns on issue for hunting purposes were withdrawn.

For the rest, Solf vented his righteous anger on Richard Deeken’s planter clique, which, he tried to convince himself, had stirred up the entire hornets’ nest. Rumours were rife during the critical period that, once again, Europeans were mixed up in the movement and the local press argued that the Samoan petitions relating to public money could only have been inspired by whites.

In fact, the settler opposition had been guilty only of spreading false rumours about the Governor, in particular that he had sworn on the Bible in Vaiusu to pardon Lauaki and meet all his demands. The American planter and trader, H. J. Moors, was known to be
Plate I  *Above right:* Mata‘afa Josefo, Paramount Chief of German Samoa (from Kramer, *Die Samoan Inseln*, Stuttgart, 1962)

Plate II  *Below left:* Richard Deeken (from *The Cyclopedia of Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti and the Cook Islands*, 1907)

Plate III  *Below right:* Lauaki Namulauulu, Orator Chief of Safotulafai with his wife Sialatana awaiting deportation, 1909 (from New Zealand National Archives)
Plate IV  Above: Solf’s Faipule meeting at Mulinu’u (from *The Cyclopedic of Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti and the Cook Islands*, 1907)

sympathetic to the chief’s claims, and he had leaked news of unrest and rebellion to the New Zealand press long before most Europeans in Apia were aware of what was going on. But he was acquitted in court of any attempt to assist Lauaki in his cause, or of encouraging the use of force. No concrete evidence existed to suggest that Deeken and his friends were deliberately inciting Lauaki. The truth was, as Deeken had suggested at the time of the *Oloa* movement and as Reverend Newell now perceptively agreed, that the Samoans were quite capable of twisting anything the whites said or did independently to buttress their own demands.30

The Lauaki affair inspired the *Pflanzerverein* to rear its head in a new attack on Solf’s policies. It was linked closely to the government’s failure to settle the still-pressing labour question, for the Chinese government was making difficulties over the conditions for further shipments of coolies to Samoa. The small planters blamed Solf’s native policy for these difficulties, and they regarded his forbearance of the Samoans as a direct encouragement to the Chinese to be obdurate and unreasonable in their demands about conditions of employment.31

Yet another campaign was initiated in Germany to prove the inadequacy of Solf’s administration. This time Solf was accused of moving too fast to destroy indigenous organs of government and strip old and experienced chiefs of their powers. In a petition in June 1909 addressed to the Kaiser, Deeken argued that the establishment of a garrison of colonial troops after the *Oloa* movement in 1904-05 would have forestalled the recent unrest, and he submitted that the only guarantee of peace for Samoa was ‘a consistent policy to some extent based on the customs and traditions of the Samoans, but with force at hand’. His uncle in the Reichstag, Deputy Trimborn, was influenced to urge the Colonial Office for a permanent military presence in Samoa, while the Deutsche Samoa Gesellschaft harassed it with petition after petition in 1909 and early 1910 demanding that, together with a garrison of Melanesian troops, a naval vessel be stationed constantly in Samoa.

The Colonial Office remained unimpressed, and made no secret of its disinclination to alter the existing line of policy on Samoa or to put restrictions on Solf’s security decisions. An article in the semi-official *Norddeutsche Allgemeine* in mid-1909 dismissed the question of militarisation as far too expensive and dangerous. Not only was Samoa not worth the two million marks which would be needed to maintain a battalion in the islands, it claimed, but a garrison would also be a
constant source of disturbance for whites and the native people. Pressure for a military establishment came from whites who had little knowledge of the Samoans themselves, it argued, and from whites who saw themselves as absolute masters and saw 'natives' as subjects without rights. The piece concluded:

Such a people (as the Samoans) can not be ruled with the mailed fist, but only with benevolence, justice and considerable attention to their laws and customs.\textsuperscript{32}

The argument could only have come from an old Samoa hand, probably Heinrich Schnee, who believed, like most Europeans in Samoa, that military mobilisation would only incite the Islanders. As early as 1899, the wider European community in Samoa had rejected the proposal of the German Consul and naval representative that a volunteer European corps be established to protect the settlers, for it was convinced that the best guarantee of security lay in the fact that the European residents were not armed for war.\textsuperscript{33} Fear of the Samoans as formidable enemies if provoked, was, in the following years, a central leit-motiv running through Berlin's decision to maintain a non-militant posture in the islands. Despite the constant battle by the pan-German settler clique to have the Samoan Fitafita replaced by a more effectual garrison of Melanesian troops, Berlin refused to capitulate. Staffed with men of Samoan experience for much of the period, the Colonial Office shared Solf's opinion that to substitute Melanesians for the Fitafita would be considered an unforgivable affront by the Samoan community because of the special tie between Germany and Samoa which the Fitafita symbolised. The resentment which followed the rumour that the Melanesians were to be released 'like dogs' on Lauaki and his followers tended to corroborate their view.

So, in 1909, Colonial Secretary Dernburg himself took up the cudgel in Samoa's defence to tell Deputy Trimborn that the Reich must 'come to terms' with the Samoans since only at great expense could they ever be tamed by colonial troops. And at the same time the Deutsche Samoa Gesellschaft was informed flatly that troops were not 'absolutely necessary' since a second cruiser had just been approved for the Pacific station.\textsuperscript{34}

In Samoa itself the majority of the European community gave Solf its vote of confidence. One of its oldest and most eminent residents, the former British Vice-Consul, Thomas Trood, paid the Governor his highest compliment when he remarked that even England could never
have guaranteed nine years of peace in the group without the employment of ‘humane repression’. And Lauaki’s chiefly enemies had already celebrated Solf in biblical terms, likening him to Moses who had freed his people from bondage to the old ways.35

So, in the end, the Lauaki affair proved not a defeat but a victory for the Governor’s non-military style of administration. In August 1909 Solf was able to affirm that he would continue to govern the Samoans ‘with love and peace and no tyranny will be exercised’.

There was one political issue, however, which still faced Solf, the issue which originally inspired Lauaki’s movement and which, until solved, would continue to thwart the German Governor’s control policy: the position of paramount chief and the question of succession after Mata’afa Josefo’s death.

It took Solf the next eighteen months to devise a formula which would complete this control over the Samoan political structure. ‘If . . . the German Government [showed] power, together with goodwill in respecting the holy traditions of the Samoans’—proven ingredients in Solf’s Samoa—then the Governor guaranteed to preserve peace among the Islanders.36 His idea was for a proclamation from the Kaiser as Tupu Sili, declaring his will that no more Ali’i Sili be appointed after Mata’afa Josefo’s death because of the implied slight to the just claims of both ‘royal’ families. Instead, Solf suggested the naming of two advisers to the Governor (Fautua), one from each ‘royal’ lineage.

Paradoxically, Solf’s solution, and the Colonial Office’s acceptance of it, was a considerable achievement for the Samoan people. It reveals the extent to which the Samoans and their actions had purchased respect in the formulation of colonial policy. Berlin acknowledged this respect by allocating some 40 000 marks to be used by the Governor as compensation for Samoan leaders who showed themselves dissatisfied with the solution.37

In the end the Samoans denied Solf any final, personal triumph over the islands’ politics. For Mata’afa Josefo was still very much alive late in 1910, when the Governor departed for Berlin the last time. His old enemy, Richard Deeken, had already gone in February.

The Governor’s final directive to his officials was entirely in keeping with his concerns of the past ten years as chief executive:

While not losing sight of the natural desire of our Government to have some advantage from its colonies, never forget that they are the homelands of human people who have been promised our protection and for whom we must provide. Remember too that one
Pacific Islanders under German Rule

does not achieve success merely from the legal relationships between people, and that even a Christian attitude towards life is not enough. Unless one has lived for years among a people and shares their joys and sorrows, unless one's heart beats with theirs, unless one feels Christian charity for these people of different thoughts and feelings, one will never understand the delight and enthusiasm with which the inspired coloniser and missionary attack their work.\textsuperscript{38}

This was no mere statement of an unattainable ideal nor a simple admonition to fair-mindedness. It was a plea for cultural sensitivity and for a breadth of vision which saw beyond national goals. Tinged though he may have been with the conviction of Germany's world mission, Solf had shown that his vision could work. He had made a covenant with the Samoan people that they should not be destroyed by colonial rule, but prosper. They, with few exceptions, remained loyal, if not to the German eagle then to Solf himself.

And they continued to remain loyal, though Solf never returned to Samoa. In December 1911 Solf became State Secretary for Colonies in succession to Friedrich von Lindequist, who had resigned suddenly in protest at a treaty which, without consultation, the Foreign Office negotiated with France over the Cameroons. The period after the First World War brought Solf to Japan as German Ambassador. There, in September 1923, in the aftermath of the earthquake which destroyed Tokyo and Yokohama, Solf received a telegram from 'the Samoan people', asking him to return as Governor once more.\textsuperscript{39}

His successor in Samoa had been the man who had held the posts of Native Secretary, Chief Judge and Deputy Governor successively since 1902, Erich Schultz-Ewerth. Schultz was an ardent supporter of Solf's way of government, and he openly sympathised with the problems Samoans had to face in conditions of intensifying contact with Western civilisation. By a meticulous observance of their ethical and ceremonial values, he had already achieved understanding with the Islanders, and they accepted easily the mantle of patriarchal authority which Solf bequeathed to Schultz.

It was Schultz who was left to deal with the contentious issue of Mata'afa Josefo's death and succession. As the old chief became ever more bed-ridden, Schultz had to contend with increasing pressure from a variety of Samoan groups all seeking a definitive expression of Mata'afa Josefo's political testament. Schultz resisted them all, gently insisting on the prerogatives of the \textit{Tupu Sili} in Berlin, and attending
Lauaki versus the Solf System

the ailing High Chief regularly. His harshest act was to banish, reluctantly, two chiefs from Falefa who had aroused public excitement by extracting from Mata'afa Josefo a declaration in favour of Tui-malealiifano. Mata'afa Josefo, for his part, approached death stoically, knowing he was the last of his kind. Practically his last thoughts were for the exiles in Saipan, for whose forgiveness and return he petitioned the Kaiser. Finally, on 6 February 1912, the High Chief died, amid great demonstrations of grief from the people whose political fortune he had embodied for more than two decades.

Schultz's low-key approach and his deterrence of political agitation seemed to have had the desired effect. He encountered no excited indignation when he proclaimed at Mata'afa Josefo's funeral: 'the clouds have burst asunder, the titles have fallen to pieces'. In fact, explicit assurances were received from some of the chiefs that, in order to observe the Government's wishes, they would not carry through the customary practices associated with a great chief's death. There would be no fono, no funeral feasts, no fine mats or gift offerings (mea alofa); the bereaved family would be left in peace. This boosted Schultz's optimism, and he made no move against the office of Ali'i Sili during the time of mourning. So confident was he of the security of Samoa that he risked a trip to Germany at the end of 1912 to work out with colonial officials the final details for a public abolition of the paramountcy. The event took place on 12 June 1913, at a fono in honour of the Kaiser's twenty-fifth anniversary as Head of State. Malietoa Tanu and Tamasese were appointed as the Fautua and, in the shadow of SMS Cormoran, the occasion passed off in harmony. The navy had been unable to send the East Asian Cruiser Squadron for the occasion, but a visit was planned for August, to drive home the appropriate impression.

Schultz dared to look to the future with cautious hope. The new political system had still to be tested: although the term Fautua carefully avoided any connotation of independent powers of decision, no-one could say how the new advisory positions would develop. But the Governor had no doubt about the 'undeniable administrative gifts' of the Samoans, and he put great faith in the people's essential vitality (Lebenskraft), which, he felt, would enable them to make a significant contribution to the future prosperity of the colony.

In economic terms the Samoans were already showing the way. The Islanders returned quickly to copra and cocoa production after the Lauaki episode, and throughout the last five years of German rule they still supplied the overwhelming proportion (three-fifths) of export
copra for the colony. In 1909-10 experts put the number of coconut palms belonging to Samoans at 800,000, with an annual rate of increase of 25,000-30,000 trees; Samoan stands of coconuts covered three times the area of European copra plantations. Moreover, because of the labour shortage, Samoans were able to earn the very high wage of three marks a day plus food working casually on European plantations.

European industry also prospered, though not uniformly. None of the small German plantations was a success. Deeken's own firm lost 253,000 marks on cocoa in 1913 alone, and never paid a dividend. The DHPG remained pre-eminent, protected by its land and labour monopoly. It acquired forty-nine per cent of all copra produced by Samoans between 1902 and 1913, and its annual turnover in copra alone amounted to two million marks. Furthermore, the company's extensive plantations enabled it to maintain consistently higher profits over smaller firms which relied on trade copra. The general base of European industry expanded with the development of cocoa and rubber plantations, and by 1914 these represented forty-five per cent of all cultivated European-owned land. German exports quadrupled between 1900 and 1912, though copra remained the staple. There was even a pineapple canning industry by 1914.

Samoa was, on the surface, a prosperous and peaceful corner of the empire. But the prosperity was brittle and the peace hollow. It is easy to say with history's hindsight that Samoa would never have been the same for the Germans had they returned in 1918, for Germany's reign since 1900 had been Wilhelm Solf's reign and there could have been no guarantee of continued peace and stability once he and Schultz had left. Pressure from white settlers to acquire greater autonomy and a more influential role in the running of the community was mounting in all the colonies in 1914, and there were signs that Berlin would have granted these wishes if the war had not intervened. Moreover, by 1918 Germany would have inherited a colonial world in which tropical produce was at a discount and economic depression rampant. Such developments, coupled with the first faint stirrings of colonial nationalism, would have been bound to affect adversely relations between Samoans and Germans, as they did between Samoans and New Zealanders.

But, in 1914, there were also more immediate signs of coming trouble, which tarnished Samoa's external image of well-being. Socially, the colonial relationship was undergoing subtle but considerable change in the final years of German rule. Exile and old age
had removed the stronger elements of traditional leadership by 1912, which partly explains the people’s acquiescence in the abolition of the Ali’i Sili title. A new, more literate and Westernised generation of Samoans was coming of age and causing distortion to the indigenous authority structure; chiefs were complaining that they were finding it increasingly difficult to assert their authority over young Samoans. For his part, Schultz was worried that ‘advancing democratisation’ would undermine the social structure and increase the rate of social change, thereby loosening Germany’s hold over the Islanders.45

The changes to the Samoan community were matched by a deterioration of racial attitudes among German administrative staff. In one of his last private letters to Solf before the outbreak of war,46 Schultz remarked that his higher officials were now mostly old Africa men, distinguished by their ‘mental laziness, complacency and a defective capacity for comprehension and adjustment’. He complained of getting bare support for his accommodative native policy because of the ‘master race’ attitude which these men adopted towards the Samoans. Such an attitude was particularly dangerous. The Samoans laid great stress on outer forms, honour and mutual respect in inter-communal relationships. Without them, Schultz argued, an isolated disturbance might easily become a mass riot; Schultz’s period of office had already been marred by several ugly racial incidents. It was a sour note on which to end fourteen years of German rule, and it foreshadowed the communal collisions that would occur in the 1920s during New Zealand’s administration.

**Epilogue**

Lauaki and his fellow exiles in Saipan were provided with land, seed, livestock, fishing gear and household utensils, and expected to procure their own living, as well as to participate in the labour corvée organised by the local German administration. They were given no idea of the length of their exile, though there seems to have been some expectation that it would last no longer than two years. Solf remained firmly opposed to the return of the chiefs until Lauaki’s death, but in the end he left the decision to Schultz. Namulau’ulu Pulali died within the first year of banishment. The others were finally picked up on the orders of the New Zealand administration in Samoa in late 1915 and arrived back in Apia on 18 December. Lauaki was not among them: he had caught dysentery while on the voyage home and was landed at Tarawa, in the Gilbert Islands, where he died four days later. His body was later
removed to Samoa and buried at Fogapoa, Savai'i. By 1919 none of the originally-exiled chiefs was alive. Some died shortly after their return, others in the influenza epidemic of 1918. Lauaki's grave still exists, and occasionally washing is spread out to dry upon the basalt and coral mound. This is not an irreverent habit: the memory of Savai'i's most eminent orator chief lives on; his skills find constant emulation.