

The Samoan Women's Revolt: Race, Intermarriage and Imperial Hierarchy in German Samoa*

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A graduate of the German Colonial School in Witzenhausen, the self-professed racial hygienist Carl Eduard Michaelis settled in Samoa in 1910, bringing with him clear ideas about the nexus between empire and racial purity. Colonialism, he argued, was an undertaking which aimed at the 'enduring use and welfare of our people, our race'. Citing the United States as an exemplary, racialized colonial space, he declared that he would prefer life in an English-speaking colony with strict racial principles to life in a German-speaking colony without them. He was, he declared, 'above all white and only secondarily German'.¹

Michaelis's hard-line views on racial mixing, which he made public in a provocative open letter shortly after his arrival, were poorly suited to German Samoa, where 'mixed' marriages were commonplace. His stance on racial hygiene not only outraged other German colonists (many of whom had Samoan or part-Samoan wives); it also sparked a riot by Samoan women, who understood that Michaelis was both insulting them and attempting to put an end to mixed marriages like theirs. Condemned in the Samoan press and threatened with mortal violence by an agitated populace, in 1911 Michaelis was forced to flee Samoa, leaving Acting Governor Erich Schultz to reassure Samoa's women that Michaelis's views on racial mixing did not represent the attitude of the colonial administration.²

In some ways, the Michaelis episode problematizes current approaches to intercommunal relations and colonial hierarchies that, building on the work of Ann Laura Stoler, see empires as sites 'where "whiteness" was a palpable obsession', and as such either foreground racial exclusion above other indices of social and imperial domination or read all markers of colonial status differentials as intrinsically racial.³ Stoler's important insights into the racialized nature of Europe's colonial settings have spurred a generation of historians to think carefully about the impact of racial categories on imperial notions of social hierarchy and intercommunal relations in a host of colonial settings far beyond her chosen Dutch and French exemplars. Her sustained Foucauldian engagement with discursive formations, her insistence on the unity of the colonial periphery and the imperial metropole, and her foregrounding of race as a 'primary and protean

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¹ Carl Eduard Michaelis, *Wozu hat Deutschland eigentlich Kolonien? Wie es einem Deutschen in einer deutschen Kolonie erging* (Berlin, 1911), pp. 38–40.

² On the Michaelis episode, see also recently Livia Loosen, *Deutsche Frauen in den Südsee-Kolonien des Kaiserreich: Alltag und Beziehungen zur indigen Bevölkerung, 1884–1919* (Bielefeld, 2014), pp. 407–13.

³ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, 2002), p. 13.

category' of both colonial power and the emergence of European self-understandings have greatly assisted in highlighting how 'the racial lexicons of the nineteenth century have complex colonial etymologies'.⁴ So too, Stoler's notion of an 'implicit racial grammar' in colonial settings, which she has argued saw 'racial thinking and notions of "whiteness" as formative', has done much to demonstrate the importance of the concept of race for understanding sexuality, citizenship and marriage in a number of colonies.⁵

Without contesting the continued importance of the category of race for studying imperial settings, the gradual translation of Stoler's nuanced investigation of colonial biopolitics into a historiographical truism which posits racial mixing as having been universally viewed as a threat to colonial order and European identity has arguably obscured the ways in which some colonial spaces, particularly those in the Pacific region, became increasingly ethnically mixed prior to World War One.⁶ It is transparently the case that not all colonizers in mixed-race relationships were viewed by their contemporaries as those who had 'degenerated out of the European camp'.⁷ In its success, Stoler's overarching model of a 'racialized economy' of colonial sex has arguably seen the racialization of other complex questions of economic, political, cultural and national hegemony.

Just how sufficient this conceptualization of race is for offering a totalizing theory of colonial sexuality and the multifaceted attempts to stabilize the social and legal status of Europeans in the colonies is a question some have begun to ask. In terms of Stoler's own Dutch case study, a survey of the recent literature by Susie Protschky, for example, has suggested that 'race and class were frequently co-dependent', with 'gender clearly inflecting both categories'. Given the flexibility of the forms of colonial domination, new studies must, she argues, 'examine when, under what circumstances, why and for whom gender, class and/or race became social markers of distinction'.⁸ Bart Luttikhuis has gone further, arguing that because Stoler insists that "'European" identity in the Indies was a *racial* identity', her work takes race as 'the *a priori* starting point for the deconstruction of historical categories, even when "race" was a term mostly shunned at the time'. For Luttikhuis, Stoler's hierarchy 'has a tendency to link all discriminating practices to the concept of race, blinding itself to the possibility that other categories may sometimes predominate'. Not for one moment seeking to disqualify race as a necessary category of analysis, Luttikhuis nonetheless posits that it is not sufficient, and seeks to ensure that other useful categories of analysis are not dissolved into 'race', thereby allowing historians to determine 'which discriminatory categories dominated in which situations and for what reasons'.⁹

⁴ Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, N.C., 1995), pp. 49–54; Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, pp. 13, 140–61.

⁵ Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, pp. 12, 16.

⁶ Ann Laura Stoler, 'State Racism and the Education of Desire: A Colonial Reading of Foucault', in Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley (eds), *Deep hiStories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa* (New York, 2002), pp. 3–26.

⁷ Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, pp. 123–36, 182.

⁸ Susie Protschky, 'Race, Class and Gender: Debates over the Character of Social Hierarchies in the Netherlands Indies, circa 1600–1942', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 167, 4 (2011), pp. 554–5.

⁹ Bart Luttikhuis, 'Beyond Race: Constructions of "Europeanness" in Late-Colonial Legal Practice in the Dutch East Indies', *European Review of History*, 20, 4 (2013), pp. 540–1; italics in original.

Somewhat more theoretically, a recent body of literature has emerged arguing for a shift towards conceptualizing 'race' and its encoding not merely as the reification of an overarching discursive formation, but as an embodied, lived set of experiences and exchanges. This research persuasively suggests that historians of race might profit from closer attention to the immediate, site-specific logic of racialized encounters, that is to say to the microhistories of encounters between racialized bodies in specific contexts. In shifting the work of historians from macro-level discursive mapping to the study of precise, racialized transactions, new micro-histories might, in the words of Arun Saldanha, see race 'reontologized'.¹⁰ By viewing 'race' as neither a totalising, 'polyvalent' category nor an epoch-governing '*episteme*' but instead seeking to assess empirically the varying dynamics of racialized interactions in specific colonial sites, historians of colonialism might uncover highly productive new understandings of the multiple social resonances of race. In this way the individuating features of colonial sites come to the fore, enabling histories which can better cope with the heterogeneous nature of frontier situations and the various ways phenotypical difference was encountered and negotiated within them.¹¹

Without jettisoning Stoler's important contribution to the study of race in colonial settings, this article suggests that a complementary 'praxiographic' approach which focuses on the porousness of the 'colour line' and the heterogeneity of colonial intercommunal relations is necessary.¹² As Julia Martinez has argued in the case of the 'polyethnic' Australian city of Darwin, there were some colonial sites in which 'segregation was the preoccupation of a small portion of the white population'. Despite its undeniable impact, Martinez argues, this preoccupation 'should not be allowed to dominate our image of ... society',¹³ because by focusing on the attempts of some to stabilize essentialist notions of race, historians may overlook other operative power differentials and the extent to which colonial sites were also sites of 'negotiation and tentative integration'.¹⁴ Tony Ballantyne has also pointed to the complexity of frontier encounters in the case of colonial New Zealand, by illustrating how 'imperial networks generated new entanglements, which wove previously disparate groups into new relationships of interdependence'.¹⁵ Without rationalizing the myriad inequalities of empire that generated these entanglements, historians should nonetheless seek to understand the diversity of intercommunal relations in colonial sites without simply reverting to the assumption that the racial awareness or racial anxieties of some colonizers (or of metropolitan commentators) were seamlessly translated into a clear, racially stratified colonial order.

Given the negative teleology of twentieth-century German history, an emphasis on the explanatory power of 'race' has long been a feature of German colonial

¹⁰Arun Saldanha, 'Reontologising Race: The Machinic Geography of Phenotype', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24 (2006), pp. 9–24.

¹¹Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, pp. 204–6.

¹²Iris Clever and Willemijn Ruberg, 'Beyond Cultural History? The Material Turn, Praxiography, and Body History', *Humanities*, 3 (2014), pp. 546–66.

¹³Julia Martinez, 'Ethnic Policy and Practice in Darwin', in Regina Ganter (ed.), *Mixed Relations: Asian–Aboriginal Contact in North Australia* (Perth, Aus., 2000), p. 132.

¹⁴Julia Martinez, 'Plural Australia: Aboriginal and Asian Labour in Tropical White Australia, Darwin, 1911–1940' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Wollongong, 1999), p. 4.

¹⁵Tony Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire: Missionaries Maori and the Question of the Body* (Durham, N.C., 2014), p. 17.

historiography, even prior to Stoler's work. As early as 1985, Franz-Josef Schulte-Althoff's seminal essay on racial mixing in colonial sites positioned 'race theory' as the fundamental category for any analysis of colonial hierarchy, while in the wake of Stoler, Helmut Walser Smith highlighted what he saw as the centrality of 'racist assumptions' in the Reichstag debates regarding colonial citizenship.¹⁶ In 2000, Pascal Grosse forcefully foregrounded eugenics and concerns for racial purity as of central importance to governmental attempts to regulate male citizens' sexuality in German colonial settings.¹⁷ So too, Lora Wildenthal's pivotal 2001 monograph firmly positioned the interlocking categories of race and gender as fundamental to the stabilization of imperial rule in the German colonies.¹⁸ Others, however, have remained more cautious. Birthe Kundrus has demonstrated the difficulties associated with relying on the concept of race to understand the maintenance of colonial social hierarchies,¹⁹ while, for a slightly later period, Christine Winter has cautioned, 'it is an easy trap, when analysing the past racialisation of individuals, to treat the categories of "race" developed in the past as if they were stable entities and practices based on them as if they were coherent'.²⁰

With some notable exceptions, such as the contributions of Winter and Wolfgang Liedtke,²¹ the majority of the work devoted to German colonialism and race has focused on Africa, most particularly German South-West Africa.²² Other than the case of Wilhelm Grevel (discussed below), colonial Samoa has often been seen as extraneous to the dominant metropolitan debates regarding race, excised from debate on the

¹⁶Franz-Josef Schulte-Althoff, 'Rassenmischung im kolonialen System: zur deutschen Kolonialpolitik im letzten Jahrzehnt vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 105 (1985), p. 54; Helmut Walser Smith, 'The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation: Notes on Debates in the German Reichstag concerning Southwest Africa, 1904–1914', in Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox and Susanne Zantop (eds), *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy* (Ann Arbor, 1998), pp. 108–9.

¹⁷Pascal Grosse, *Kolonialismus, Eugenik und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland, 1850–1918* (Frankfurt/Main, 2000), pp. 145–92; Pascal Grosse, 'What Does German Colonialism Have to Do with National Socialism?', in Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz and Lora Wildenthal (eds), *Germany's Colonial Pasts* (Lincoln, Nebr., 2005), pp. 115–34. On sexuality in the German colonies more generally, see Daniel J. Walther, 'Sex, Race and Empire: White Male Sexuality and the "Other" in Germany's Colonies, 1894–1914', *German Studies Review*, 33, 1 (2010), pp. 45–71.

¹⁸Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884–1945* (Durham, N.C., 2001), pp. 10–11. Wildenthal's earlier critique of Rogers Brubaker's binary of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* citizenship laws, however, forthrightly (and correctly) insisted that in the colonial context '*jus sanguinis* was not a racial principle'. See Lora Wildenthal, 'Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial World', in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), p. 266; Roger Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, 1992).

¹⁹Birthe Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten: das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 222–3; Birthe Kundrus, 'Transgressing the Colour Line: Policing Colonial "Miscegenation"', in Oliver Janz and Daniel Schönplüg (eds), *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective: Networks, Biographies, Gender Orders* (New York, 2014), pp. 219–42.

²⁰Christine Winter, 'Changing Frames: Identity and Citizenship of New Guineans of German Heritage during the Interwar Years', *Journal of Pacific History*, 47, 3, (2012), p. 347.

²¹For a discussion of race in colonial Samoa, see Wolfgang Liedtke, 'Die Überschreitung der "colour-line": "Mischehen" und "Mischlinge" in der deutschen Kolonie Samoa', in Katja Geisenhainer and Katharina Lange (eds), *Bewegliche Horizonte: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Bernard Streck* (Leipzig, 2005), p. 283.

²²Although many historians have noted at a minimum a marked intensity of the political relevance of race after the 1904 Herero uprising. See, for example, Frank Becker, 'Die "Bastardheime" der Mission: zum Status der Mischlinge in der kolonialen Gesellschaft Deutsch-Südwestafrikas', in Frank Becker (ed.), *Rassenmischehen—Mischlinge—Rassentrennung: zur Politik der Rasse im deutschen Kolonialreich* (Stuttgart, 2004), p. 118; Daniel J. Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and Settler Identities in Namibia* (Athens, Ohio, 2002), p. 35.

grounds of its presumed Polynesian exceptionality.²³ The parallels with recent historiography on the Dutch case, however, suggest that while Samoans were perhaps privileged over Africans and even Melanesians in German anthropological discourse,²⁴ a close study of the function and status of race in German Samoa has much to contribute to a broader history of imperial structures of domination, both in the German Empire and elsewhere.

Following the lines of analysis established by Kundrus, Winter and Liedtke, this article seeks to demonstrate how in German Samoa racial considerations came exceedingly late to the social and legal codification of colonial sexuality and marriage. Furthermore, it illustrates that when they arrived, they were resisted by Samoans and German settlers alike, were contested in the colonial metropole and were subverted by some leading officials in the colony, who continued to use cultural, religious and agnatic criteria to circumvent strictly racial assessments of the citizenship status of individuals in the colony. More broadly, while agreeing that the category of race remains indispensable to mapping the construction and maintenance of imperial hierarchies, this article argues that it is not sufficient.²⁵ Far from being a universally accepted first principle, racial thinking was seen in colonial settings such as Samoa to be a highly controversial, inflammatory and ultimately counterproductive approach to maintaining the asymmetrical communal power relations engendered by colonialism.

With Protschky's and Lutikhuis's calls for a fresh openness to the variety of forms of imperial hierarchy in mind, this article reappraises the complexity of the category of race, and asks whether the fears of racial 'pollution' and 'contamination' explain the emergence and maintenance of systems of domination in the German colonies. By examining how attempts to restrict intermarriage in German Samoa met with riotous protest from Samoan women and resistance from German men, the following questions the extent to which the dominance of the colonizers was a product of the mobilization of racial categories. Tracing a historically discernible shift in the importance of race within a concrete colonial situation, it seeks to move beyond the application of a flattening, static model of racialized frontier situations to argue that any explanation of the development and maintenance of colonial hierarchies must also include attention to the site-specific imperial structures which protected the political and economic interests of the colonizers but also spawned frontier entanglements that only sporadically served these structures.

²³Robert Tobin, 'Venus von Samoa: Rasse und Sexualität im deutschen Südpazifik', in Alexander Honold and Oliver Simons (eds), *Kolonialismus als Kultur: Literatur, Medien, Wissenschaft in der deutschen Gründerzeit des Fremden* (Tübingen, 2002), pp. 197–220.

²⁴George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa and Southwest Africa* (Chicago, 2007), pp. 243–315, 346–55. There is evidence that suggests that racial divisions were not insurmountable in Melanesia and Micronesia either. See, for example, Hermann Hiery's argument that here 'European men who lived with indigenous women improved their local standing. Their social, political and not least economic position became more secure', Hermann J. Hiery, 'Germans, Pacific Islanders and Sexuality: German Impact and Indigenous Influence in Melanesia and Micronesia', in Hermann J. Hiery and John M. MacKenzie (eds), *European Impact and Pacific Influence: British and German Colonial Policy in the Pacific Islands and the Indigenous Response* (London, 1997), p. 301.

²⁵The colonial function of race has been similarly problematized in the case of American Samoa by Julian Go in "'Racism" and Colonialism: Meanings of Difference and Ruling Practices in America's Pacific Empire', *Qualitative Sociology*, 27, 1 (2004), pp. 35–58.

I: The Michaelis Letter and its Effects

With Europeans composing just over 1 per cent of the population of German Samoa in the first decade of the twentieth century, and the overwhelming majority of these settlers being male, women of half-Samoan and (less frequently) complete-Samoan parentage had long been sought-after as wives for German men and, as a consequence of Germany's patriarchal *jus sanguinis* citizenship laws, mothers of German children. The normality and officially sanctioned nature of this tradition of intermarriage was described by the German-Samoan diarist Frieda Zieschank, who commented that she 'got the impression that these mixed marriages were encouraged by those in charge, on the correct assumption that they would bind officials more strongly to the country, which was far more advantageous than continuous replacements'.²⁶

In 1911, however, as a recent arrival from Germany, Carl Eduard Michaelis publicly denigrated the established practice of mixed marriages, arguing in the colony's newspaper of record, the *Samoanische Zeitung*, that 'racial corruption' had produced a 'yellow mongrel spawn' that threatened the vitality and German nature of the colony. His remarks not only sparked a tumultuous public demonstration by Samoan women (which by some accounts almost cost Michaelis his life), but also unleashed a press and political furore in Germany.²⁷ The incident was acerbically described by Zieschank, who scorned Michaelis's insensitivity to local values:

In 1910 a very fine man arrived, a 'Member of the Racial Hygiene Association', as he announced on his calling card. This boy in sandals and some sort of swimming trunks (so such racial men run around!) looked around with great fervour. The half-whites seemed to interest him in particular. Considering that he enjoyed their company so extensively for months on end, one might have been entitled to think that his efforts for racial hygiene were aimed at more intensive racial mixing! But his hosts were suddenly woken from this dream. One day an article appeared in a weekly paper with the title 'Welcome to the Country!' A wonderful greeting that was! In the meanest of terms, like 'yellow half-caste spawn' the half-white and harmless children of the country were insulted.²⁸

Despite having no discernibly useful occupation, Michaelis had initially been kindly received by the tight-knit settler community, which numbered around 400 (eighty-one of whom were men married to Samoan women) in a colony which was also home to over 35,000 Samoans.²⁹ He was entertained and temporarily housed by a number of families, including one prominent German settler and his half-Samoan wife, before moving to the idyllic environs of Lake Lanoto'o, an area that Michaelis planned to transform into the colony's first national park.

With his first major public statement of racial-segregationist principles in the *Samoanische Zeitung* in April 1911, however, Michaelis was anathematized by Samoa's

²⁶ Frieda Zieschank, *Ein Jahrzehnt in Samoa (1906–1916)*, (Leipzig, 1918), pp. 50–1.

²⁷ Carl Eduard Michaelis, 'Offener Brief an den Pflanzerverein von Samoa', *Samoanische Zeitung* (1 Apr. 1911), pp. 1–2, a copy of which can be found in Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BA Berlin), R1001/3066, pp. 80–1. For an English translation of the letter see 'Trouble in Apia for a Bold Young Man. Threatened Lynching', *The Fiji Times* (13 Apr. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 98.

²⁸ Zieschank, *Ein Jahrzehnt in Samoa*, pp. 110–11. Zieschank was the wife of a German doctor who was a long-time resident in Samoa.

²⁹ The population figures are drawn from Governor Wilhelm Solf's 1905 estimate. See *Samoanische Zeitung* (23 Sept. 1905), in BA Berlin, R1004F / 75414, Behörden des Schutzgebietes Samoa, Personal-Akten Dr Solf, pp. 252–3. The figures for German men married to Samoan women are from the Social Democrat Georg Ledebour's 17 February 1912 speech in *Verhandlungen des Reichstages*, 283 (Berlin, 1912), p. 98.

settler society. Demanding that Germans cease marrying and having children with ‘half-caste’ Samoan women, Michaelis insisted that it was better to have young German men marry before they had established themselves in the colony, rather than allow them to risk ‘racial corruption’.³⁰ This deliberate declaration of racial-hygienist principles was the first time that the specific issue of mixed marriages and half-caste children had been so openly and sharply problematized in the Samoan context.³¹ ‘Never before’, Zieschank opined, ‘had there been a sharp opposition between white and mixed-race inhabitants.’ The immediate result was an expression of indignant rage by Samoan women, particularly the Samoan spouses of German men:

A storm of outrage arose amongst the insulted ... An expedition of angry women and children set off, to ‘feather’ him (that is to stick him in a barrel of tar, stick feathers to him and then to set him alight). The government, however, caught wind of this in time and quickly sent an official and took the endangered boy into protective custody. With the next steamer he was sent away.

Although Michaelis left just as quickly as he had arrived, in the period that followed, Zieschank argued, settler society in Samoa became polarized: ‘The peace of the land was destroyed! ... What a few years earlier had been self-evident and actually happily seen—mixed marriages—were now proclaimed to be objectionable!’³² In a colonial space hitherto seemingly unaffected by the racialized marriage prohibitions of other colonial sites (most notably post-1904 German South-West Africa), intercommunal relations were now seriously destabilized.³³

II: The Response to Michaelis in the Pacific

Michaelis’s trenchantly racist letter and its effect on Samoa rapidly became news throughout other Pacific colonies and in Germany. Several newspapers outside Samoa (but working from Samoan sources) argued that Michaelis was only just saved from being murdered by an angry crowd of ‘mixed-race’ women. The 13 April 1911 edition of the English *Fiji Times* suggested that the angry crowd of women had ‘threatened lynching’, while the *Berlin Neueste Nachrichten* reported that Michaelis had placed himself in danger of being lynched (*gelynched zu werden*) in a ‘women’s revolution’ and that he could be happy ‘to have escaped with his bare life’ from the ‘threatening lynch justice of the fair sex’ (*drohenden Lynchjustiz des schönen Geschlechtes*).³⁴

³⁰Michaelis, ‘Offener Brief’, pp. 1–2.

³¹Despite its obvious deficiencies, the term ‘half-caste’ is used here (as it was by the Germans and English in Samoa in 1911) as the English equivalent of the German ‘*Mischling*’, as well as the most correct translation of the Samoan term ‘*afakasi*’.

³²Zieschank, *Ein Jahrzehnt in Samoa*, pp. 110–11.

³³On the shift in attitudes towards mixed marriages in German South-West Africa after the Herero-Nama Wars, see Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (Münster, 2002), p. 97; Daniel J. Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and Settler Identities in Namibia* (Athens, Ohio, 2002), p. 35; Frank Becker, ‘Die “Bastardheime” der Mission: zum Status der Mischlinge in der kolonialen Gesellschaft Deutsch-Südwestafrikas’, in Frank Becker (ed.), *Rassenmischehen—Mischlinge—Rassentrennung: zur Politik der Rasse im deutschen Kolonialreich* (Stuttgart, 2004), p. 185. In the English case, Ronald Hyam has suggested that India’s 1857 rebellion played a similar role in radicalizing attitudes towards interracial sexual relations; see Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester, 1990), p. 118.

³⁴‘Trouble in Apia for a Bold Young Man. Threatened Lynching’, *The Fiji Times* (13 Apr. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 98; ‘Das Mischlingsunwesen in Samoa’, *Berlin Neueste Nachrichten* (13 July 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 129.

That Michaelis faced the threat of murder for his racist sentiments was played down by Acting Governor Erich Schultz in his official report to Berlin. Schultz had personally discussed the demonstration with a delegation of Samoan women (including the wives of both Samoan *matai*, or chiefs, and German settlers) to assuage their concerns and to entreat them to refrain from taking the law into their own hands.³⁵ In his report Schultz argued that, while it was difficult to say exactly what would have happened to Michaelis had he not been brought into protective custody, he felt sure that his would-be attackers had merely come together to perform a form of citizens' arrest, to forcibly bring Michaelis to the court house and to make him publicly apologize.³⁶ This account, however, is difficult to square with that of Samoa's Swiss-born Commissioner to China, A. R. Fries, who testified to having seen the women carrying whips, as well as another eyewitness newspaper report that drew a picture of a fully fledged insurrection of women armed with sticks and whips.³⁷ Other sources such as Zieschank's diary, the *Fiji Times* and the *Samoanische Zeitung* argued that Michaelis had risked being 'tarred and feathered'.³⁸ The governor also played down that the (in the event successful) petition demanding the expulsion of Michaelis, signed by sixty-six settlers and presented on 5 April 1911, explicitly referred to a need to hinder further 'domestic disturbances and riots'.³⁹ The acute physical danger to Michaelis in Samoa was also underscored by the fact that, despite having fled to Fiji, he was still assaulted by a Samoan in Suva, an attack which forced him to flee even farther afield, to Vancouver.⁴⁰

Far from sharing the guiding intellectual assumptions of the racial hygienists that Michaelis had left behind in Germany, prominent German settlers came out strongly and angrily against Michaelis's attempt to racialize marriage in Samoa. In the next edition of the *Samoanische Zeitung*, the German settler Haensfell accused Michaelis of having been in the colony for only five minutes before attacking its social dynamics. If he had been there longer, Haensfell argued, Michaelis might have understood the settlers' position, which, he explained, was that mixed marriages and their offspring represented the future of the colony:

I know of no differences in favour of white children born here in comparison to well-raised half-whites. In any case it is clear to me that it will not be purely white children born here but children strengthened by a

³⁵Loosen, *Deutsche Frauen*, pp. 408–11.

³⁶Schultz to Lindequist, 17 Sept. 1911, in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, pp. 176–8.

³⁷AR Fries to Schultz, 12 Sept. 1911, in R1001/3066, pp. 180–1; 'Weiber-Aufstand auf Samoa', *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (20 June 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 127. See also 'Deutsche Schutzgebiete. Revoltierende weibliche Bastarde auf Samoa', *Hamburger Nachrichten* (21 June 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 184.

³⁸Letter by 'Spectator', in *Samoanische Zeitung* (8 Apr. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 90. A letter from Apia published in the *Fiji Times* of 11 April also said that the author of the 'idiotic letter' was threatened with 'being tarred and feathered etc'. See 'Samoa', *The Fiji Times* (11 Apr. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 95. See, too, *Samoanische Zeitung* (2 Aug. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 164; Zieschank, *Ein Jahrzehnt in Samoa*, pp. 110–11.

³⁹BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 111. The petition said, 'We the undersigned settlers of Samoa humbly request Your Excellency, with due regard for local relations, for the maintenance of social peace among the population and in order hinder domestic political disturbances and riots [*Ausschreitungen*], that Edmund Carl Michaelis be removed from the colony as quickly as possible.'

⁴⁰Michaelis left Suva for Canada on 18 April 1911; see *Samoanische Zeitung* (13 May 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, pp. 91, 99–100.

mixing with Samoan blood that will be in charge here in later years. Even the most stringent measures by the government will be powerless against this.⁴¹

A letter writer from Apia whose reflections appeared in the *Fiji Times* was of the same opinion, arguing that mixed marriages had afforded many German settlers a degree of social mobility:

It is well known that some of our most prominent citizens have to thank their coloured wives for the position they are in now. Some of our leading merchants are half-castes and men of repute who have a staff of Europeans in their employ; others are mechanics and journeymen; others are in the Government service, being masters of three languages ... The Government have done all they could to create a good feeling and unite all classes.⁴²

On 15 April 1911, the *Samoanische Zeitung* again published an article arguing for the absolute necessity of mixed marriages in Samoa. It was yet to be medically proved, the paper argued, that Europeans could successfully remain in the tropics over the long term. As a result, the Germans had to decide whether to rule Samoa without ever settling it or to create a mixed German-Samoan population capable of living in such a climate. According to the newspaper, it was absurd to view the question of miscegenation in Samoa through the lens of other, particularly African, colonies, as Polynesian Samoans, who more or less had the appearance of 'South Europeans', were not the same as Papuans or the Herero. While it was true that some children of mixed parentage suffered from birth defects, the article continued, these were no more, indeed perhaps less prevalent than amongst purely European families. For someone who could afford to leave his business frequently and travel with his white wife on recuperative voyages to temperate lands, marrying a European was perhaps a possibility, but for someone who needed to stay and work for a living, an *afakasi* (half-caste) woman with deep familial roots in Samoa would always be committed to life in the colony and was a far better option. Any problems related to mixed-race children were to be solved, the paper concluded, neither by an 'immature zealot' or by 'racial fanatics' nor by sharpening the colony's racial distinctions, but by ensuring that an adequate German education system was established for them in Samoa. Education, and not the 'ill-judged statements' of propagandists for racial hygiene, would preserve the social harmony of the colony.⁴³

The colonial paper continued its condemnatory tone towards Michaelis into August 1911, calling him a 'sponger', a 'loafer' and a 'degenerate'. His April letter, the paper said, was indicative of 'a weak-minded character'.⁴⁴ The insults Michaelis levelled at half-castes as 'bastards' failed to respect the colony's practice of 'not judging our fellows by their skin colour and origin but by their capabilities and their disposition'. The desire of racial hygienists to follow the example of the English and Americans in the question of miscegenation was also criticized as intrinsically pointless. Even with the

⁴¹W. Haensfell in *Samoanische Zeitung* (8 Apr. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 89.

⁴²'Samoa', *The Fiji Times* (11 Apr. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066.

⁴³'Zur Rassenfrage in Samoa', *Samoanische Zeitung* (15 Apr. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 94. Educating half-castes in European schools was no idle claim. One government report from August 1908 claimed that in the government school, 121 out of the 125 pupils were *Mischlinge*; see Liedtke, 'Die Überschreitung der "colour-line"', p. 301.

⁴⁴*Samoanische Zeitung* (21 Aug. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 164.

strictest regulations in the world, the article argued, these nations had been unable to stop racial mixing.⁴⁵

III: Responses in Germany

If Michaelis played a catalytic role in galvanizing Samoan women into action, their robust, spontaneous and public expression of outrage was viewed in Germany as a threat. The spectacle of rioting indigenous women insisting on their rights was interpreted by influential (particularly National Liberal) sections of the metropolitan press as evidence of the security risks associated with intermarriage. To metropolitan observers, that Samoan women could so brazenly make demands on colonial authorities through street violence was an inversion of patriarchal and colonial order. The spectacle of empowered indigenous women and of a German man so terrorized by them that he was forced to flee to an English colony for his safety indicated to many metropolitan Germans precisely how colonial laxness had contributed to the decline of Germany's imperial power in the Pacific. With the press having positioned Samoan women as a violent threat, metropolitan officials now sought to implement plans to bring Samoa into line with Germany's African colonies, by banning mixed marriages in an attempt to reduce the number of *afakasi*.⁴⁶ Importantly, this metropolitan pressure was itself not in response to any parliamentary push demanding the racialization of colonial marriages, but quite the inverse, with the Reichstag steadfastly refusing to pass a racist citizenship law in response to the incident.⁴⁷ Rather, it was an importation of an approach to racial segregation variously described by attuned German commentators as a 'British', 'American' or 'African' approach to race.

Where Samoan newspaper reports resolutely rejected Michaelis as an 'unripe fanatic' and condemned his intervention in Pacific race relations, he found a more receptive audience in Germany, where reports of an 'uprising' (*Aufstand*) and threats of violence had revived memories of the Herero uprising in German South-West Africa.⁴⁸ The initial, lurid reports that reached Berlin of enraged and violent 'Amazons' and 'hyenas' racing through the streets of Apia 'snorting with rage' to the cries of 'we ketch that damned fellow' led to a broader debate in Germany's press about the nature of racial relations in the plantation colony.⁴⁹ Leading the charge in favour of Michaelis and for the outright

⁴⁵ 'Die Mischlingsfrage in Samoa', *Samoanische Zeitung* (21 Aug. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 165. On the transmission of attitudes towards race between the United States and Germany, see Jens-Uwe Guettel, *German Expansionism, Imperial Liberalism, and the United States, 1776–1945* (New York, 2012), pp. 130–61. On the social prohibition on miscegenation in British India see, for example, Satoshi Mizutani, *The Meaning of White: Race, Class and the Domiciled Community in British India, 1858–1930* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 30–8.

⁴⁶ For earlier discussions of intermarriages and their resultant children in Samoa, see Roland Samulski, 'Die "Sunde" im Auge des Betrachters—Rassenmischung und deutsche Rassenpolitik im Schutzgebiet Samoa 1900 bis 1914', in Becker (ed.), *Rassenmischehen—Mischlinge—Rassentrennung*, pp. 329–56; Liedtke, 'Die Überschreitung der "colour-line"', pp. 283–308. For Samoa's connections to nineteenth-century U.S. debates concerning race, see Damon Salesa, 'Samoa's Half-Castes and Some Frontiers of Comparison', in Ann Laura Stoler (ed.), *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, N.C., 2006), pp. 71–93.

⁴⁷ On the Reichstag debates, see Cornelia Essner, 'Zwischen Vernunft und Gefühl: die Reichstagsdebatten von 1912 um koloniale "Rassenmischehen" und "Sexualität"', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 45, 6 (1997), pp. 503–19; Smith, 'Talk of Genocide', pp. 107–23.

⁴⁸ *Samoanische Zeitung* (26 Aug. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 166.

⁴⁹ 'Der samoanische Tragikomödie zweiter Teil', *Die Post* (21 June 1911), p. 185.

banning of intermarriage in Samoa was the National Liberal Party-aligned *Hamburger Nachrichten*, which lambasted the ‘bastard women of Samoa’, who had (according to the paper) ‘pointedly been told the truth by a young planter, and who became publicly enraged and managed to force this planter out of the colony’. In the Hamburg paper’s opinion, it was now time for an ‘iron broom’ to sweep clean the colony.⁵⁰ With the putative weakness of Samoa’s colonial administration now laid bare, questions also began to be asked about the nature of German colonial rule by the Free Conservative *Die Post*:

If the authority of the German officials in Samoa is so weak that they cannot protect a solitary German from the rage of Samoan women, then it is such a declaration of the bankruptcy of these officials that it must be asked what grounds and conditions are responsible for such a sloppy response.⁵¹

Throughout the second half of 1911, the German press closely discussed the ‘women’s uprising’ and what it signified for German imperial power. In supporting Michaelis, they also came to share his racializing language and to emphasize the gender dimension of the incident. For the National Liberal *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, the revolt was indicative of the state of a colony where ‘Germandom and white blood are in retreat’. Complaining that the Germans had failed to follow the example of the English by strictly forbidding interracial relationships, the newspaper demanded that the uprising sparked by the ‘fearless and racially proud’ Michaelis lead to a ban on German officials’ marrying Samoan or part-Samoan women. ‘It is an undignified scene’, the paper declared, ‘when the coloured wives of German officials participate in rallies against the white race’. In the future, ‘Samoa must cease to be a racial kaleidoscope, where the white, the brown and the half-brown blur together in indiscriminate and casual sexual relations’.⁵²

For the National Liberal *Berlin Neueste Nachrichten* too, Samoa’s ‘women’s revolution’ was a ‘highly regrettable symptom of the racial neglect in Samoa’. Vigorously supporting Michaelis’s argument that German settlers should take white wives, the newspaper argued:

Today, when Samoa is an entirely civilized country with good steamer connections, there is not the slightest necessity for a white man in the actually climatically exceedingly comfortable Samoa to take a coloured partner for life and as the mother of his children. If he does so, he sins irrevocably against his own white flesh and blood.⁵³

The *Hamburger Nachrichten* repeated the demand that German officials be banned from taking Samoan or part-Samoan wives, as a first step towards lowering the number of half-caste children, which, the newspaper reported, had ‘increased shockingly’ due to the colonial administration’s (in particular Governor Wilhelm Solf’s) lack of action.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ ‘Deutsche Schutzgebiete. Revoltierende weibliche Bastarde auf Samoa’, *Hamburger Nachrichten* (21 June 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 184.

⁵¹ ‘Der samoanische Tragikomödie zweiter Teil’, *Die Post* (21 June 1911), p. 185.

⁵² ‘Weiber-Aufstand auf Samoa’, *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (20 June 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, pp. 127–8. The wives of two German officials (Berking and Kruse) did take part in the disturbance, as Schultz was forced to admit to the Secretary of the Colonial Office. See Schultz to Lindequist, 14 Nov. 1911, in BA Berlin, R1001/3067, pp. 4–5.

⁵³ ‘Das Mischlingsunwesen in Samoa’, *Berlin Neueste Nachrichten* (13 July 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 129.

⁵⁴ In November 1911, seven salaried German officials (*Beamte*) were married to half-Samoan women, while two were married to fully indigenous Samoan women (i.e., women with two Samoan parents); see Schultz to Lindequist, 14 Nov. 1911, in BA Berlin, R1001/3067, p. 5. Solf had raised the issue of German officials’ marrying Samoan women in his report to Berlin in 1905, but had not taken any concrete steps against it; see Liedtke, ‘Die Überschreitung der “colour-line”’, p. 299.

According to the paper, the task now was to follow the example of German South-West Africa, to ensure that the terms 'racial pride' and 'racial purity' became part of the colonial lexicon in the Pacific.⁵⁵ Fast earning a reputation in Samoa for muck-raking (*Schmutzleistung*), the *Hamburger Nachrichten* maintained its stinging attacks against Governor Solf and in support of Michaelis, arguing in August 1911 that the rebellious half-caste women were not merely a racial threat, but also a pro-British fifth-column population with close links to Australia.⁵⁶ These agents for the British Empire, the paper argued, had come out openly in opposition to the German presence in Samoa by establishing the English-speaking Samoan Ladies Social Club. This 'club of Amazons', the newspaper reported, had been emboldened by their success in having the defenceless Michaelis expelled from the colony. The danger of pro-British sentiment amongst these self-confident Samoan women was heightened, the paper warned, because of Solf's own 'known' pro-British tendencies.⁵⁷

Finding in the more receptive German metropole the validation for his racial theories that had been missing in the Samoan periphery, Michaelis repeated and expanded his attack on miscegenation in a 1911 book written from the safety of Canada. Littered with emphatic racist axioms such as 'More racial pride! More racial instinct! More love of race!!!', the book argued that even if individual half-caste women might seem to be acceptable wives or sexually appealing, the issue was not the characteristics and behaviour of the individual, but the racial future of the entire nation.⁵⁸ Warning against what he called the 'hyper-erotic hallucination' of the racial acceptability of Samoans as wives, Michaelis insisted on the primacy of the racial community, arguing that 'biologically there is no such thing as the private person, no individual existence'. All colonial mixed marriages were an 'unforgivable sin' committed by 'race traitors against the spirit of our racial soul'.⁵⁹ Broadening his attack, Michaelis declared that Germany needed a 'new race religion' to displace Christianity and its 'degenerative and individualistic otherworldly tendencies and nation-threatening love of one's neighbour', which represented to him a threat to a healthy 'racial egotism'.⁶⁰ Lauding the Australian state of Queensland for deporting its Pacific Islander workers and putting 'race first and profits second', he accused those governing and profiting from the plantation economy of Samoa of wantonly encouraging the growth of the half-caste population. For Michaelis, 'our present colonial economics is unfortunately a predominantly anti-national bastardization designed purely for capitalist profiteering'.⁶¹

With his renewed attack on Samoa's mixed marriages, once again Michaelis found an appreciative audience in Germany. Unsurprisingly, the National Liberal *Hamburger*

⁵⁵ 'Die Mischlingsfrage auf Samoa', *Hamburger Nachrichten* (18 July 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 131.

⁵⁶ *Samoanische Zeitung* (26 Aug. 1911), in R1001/3066, p. 166.

⁵⁷ 'Zu den Mischlingskandalen auf Samoa', *Hamburger Nachrichten* (11 Aug. 1911), in R1001/3066, p. 147. Zieschank would later argue that during the First World War Samoan women in these clubs married to German men were not pro-British and demonstrated their loyalty to Germany; see Zieschank, *Ein Jahrzehnt in Samoa*, pp. 111–12.

⁵⁸ 'Mehr Rassenstolz! Mehr Rasseinstinkt! Mehr Rasseliebe!!!', Michaelis, *Wozu hat Deutschland eigentlich Kolonien?*, p. 43.

⁵⁹ Michaelis, *Wozu hat Deutschland eigentlich Kolonien?*, pp. 52, 65, 68.

⁶⁰ Michaelis, *Wozu hat Deutschland eigentlich Kolonien?*, p. 75: 'Wir brauchen eine neue RASSE-RELIGION!' (emphasis in the original).

⁶¹ Michaelis, *Wozu hat Deutschland eigentlich Kolonien?*, p. 47.

Nachrichten applauded the publication, recommending that Germany's Reichstag deputies learn from its denunciation of the 'bastard economy' of Samoa.⁶² So too, the colonial propagandist Paul Leutwein (son of the liberal governor of German South-West Africa Theodor Leutwein) came out in support of Michaelis's book in Berlin's *Der Tag*, defending Michaelis's commitment to racial hygiene and affirming foundational principles that he considered to be indispensable for colonizing powers:

A nation which does not comprehend that it must keep its race pure and that it must insist on its language and its state authority has no colonial future. Our nation must dedicate itself in flesh and blood to these three elements of colonial policy just as the British have, who offer us a superb living example of this.⁶³

IV: Antecedents of the Michaelis Affair

Although his ideas elicited a stormy wave of protests in polyethnic Samoa, Michaelis was not the first to have suggested action to end miscegenation in the colony. In fact, three years earlier Governor Wilhelm Solf had published a pamphlet in Berlin entitled *Natives and Settlers in Samoa* that had suggested controlling mixed marriages, albeit for different reasons.⁶⁴ As George Steinmetz has argued, in 1903 and 1905, Solf was outspoken in his belief that 'each individual colony has to develop on its own with no analogy to the other protectorates'.⁶⁵ By the time of his 1908 pamphlet, however, Solf had shifted away from this position, to embrace for the first time the notion that Samoa required a prohibition on mixed marriages, but one that differed from those of the African colonies.

A reworked version of a 1906/7 treatise which had paid far less attention to the question of racial mixing, Solf's 1908 work scrutinized the intercommunal entanglements that had proliferated under his own governorship and, remarkably, found them wanting.⁶⁶ Unlike for Michaelis, for Solf the primary solution was to greatly restrict the numbers of Germans settling in Samoa in the first place. Beginning by problematizing the 'prolonged residency of the white race' in Samoa on climatic grounds, he went on to warn of the prohibitive expense of recuperative trips to temperate countries for settler families. Similarly, he bemoaned the costs of sending settlers' children to Germany to be properly educated, and argued that sending them to nearby Australia or New Zealand risked diluting their German identity. Complicating the issue, he claimed, was the 'fact' that German children educated in Samoa would inevitably grow up with Samoan children and learn to speak Samoan and to think like Samoans. As a result, these children would become culturally alienated from German life, or, as Solf described them, 'degenerates', a 'travesty of their race'.⁶⁷ This risk of cultural cross-pollination did not

⁶² 'Wozu hat Deutschland eigentlich Kolonien?', *Hamburger Nachrichten* (25 Nov. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 167.

⁶³ Paul Leutwein, 'Die Mischlingsfrage', *Der Tag* (25 Nov. 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 168.

⁶⁴ Wilhelm Solf, *Eingeborene und Ansiedler auf Samoa* (Berlin, 1908). A copy of this booklet can be found in BA Koblenz, N1053 / 6, Nachlaß Wilhelm Solf, Eigne Veröffentlichungen. Reden, Abhandlungen usw. vol. 1, 1886–1914.

⁶⁵ Steinmetz, *Devil's Handwriting*, pp. 346–7.

⁶⁶ 'Denkschrift—Entwicklung des Schutzgebiets Programm', 1906, in BA Koblenz, N1053 / 27, Nachlaß Wilhelm Solf, Amtliches und Politisches. Gouverneur von Samoa 1906 (1907).

⁶⁷ Solf, *Eingeborene und Ansiedler*, pp. 19–24.

deter most settlers, he continued, who ordinarily married Samoan or half-Samoan women. This, Solf said, was leading to the gradual 'Kanakafication' (*verkanakern*) of German settlers, a cultural process analogous to the process of 'going native' (*verkaffern*) in Africa, but less damaging because the skin colour of children resulting from mixed marriages in Samoa meant that they 'could be taken for southern Europeans'.⁶⁸

Crucially, Solf's racially inflected critique of German colonists' mixed marriages intersected with a class perspective, and served his broader agenda of precluding large-scale settler colonialism from Samoa. By presenting intercommunal colonial marriages as a more or less inevitable deleterious social consequence of mass settlement in Samoa, he sought to stave it off, so as to preserve the existing and profitable settlement model of a thin veneer of large-scale planters on the island. Solf dismissed out of hand the idea that settling large numbers of poor farmers on the land of Samoans (who would be dispossessed and helotized) would bring about a more thoroughgoing Germanization of Samoa, arguing instead that lower-class German settlers could 'hardly be seen as bearers of culture, nor can they be expected to have a civilizing influence on the Samoans'.⁶⁹ Rather, in erotically charged terms, Solf maintained that these poor farmers would simply abandon the cultural standards of Germany in favour of the corporeal pleasures of Samoan life:

In this environment of cozy familiarity between the races it comes to the point where the Samoans have more influence over the lifestyles of the humble man than vice versa. The *dolce far niente* of the chiefs, the careless living from hand to mouth, the lack of regard for money, the numerous feasts and picnics, and alongside this the agreeable bearing of the Samoan women and girls, with their insatiable attachment, the silky sensuousness of the pretty but superficial and intellectually impoverished half-caste girls. All of this exercises a gradual, energy-sapping effect which makes Samoa the Capua of the humble man.

Under such conditions, Solf argued, the colonist ceased to be capable of exercising authority over indigenous people and became instead the loincloth-clad European who lounged about with the Samoans and spoke pidgin.⁷⁰ Germany's permissiveness, Solf argued, was in contradistinction to the situation in model English colonies, where anyone marrying an indigenous woman would be brusquely cut off from colonial society, and where no reputable club would accept a half-caste. 'Foreigners visiting British India find these foundational principles to be harsh and inhuman', Solf conceded, continuing, 'Often the English are reproached for their accentuated racial reserve.' In Solf's eyes, however, such reproaches were undeserved because this reserve was 'the expression of their steady instinct for national self-preservation and is one of the secrets of the

⁶⁸Solf, *Eingeborene und Ansiedler*, p. 25.

⁶⁹See for example Solf's letter to Dr Reinecke, 20 Apr. 1906: 'Indeed, and this I freely admit to my opponents, the natives play an entirely different role in my plans for the development of Samoa than that wished for by some settlers, who view them as expendable in their plans for profit and exploitation', BA Koblenz, N1053 / 27, Nachlaß Wilhelm Solf, Amtliches und Politisches. Gouverneur von Samoa 1906 (1907), p. 17. The opposition between the plantation and settler colonial models was the cause of the Deeken controversy some years earlier. Solf also remained ambivalent about the importation of Chinese labour. See Holger Droessler, 'Germany's El Dorado in the Pacific: Metropolitan Representations and Colonial Realities, 1884–1914', in Andrekos Varnava (ed.), *Imperial Expectations and Realities: El Dorados, Utopias and Dystopias* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 112–13; Steinmetz, *Devil's Handwriting*, pp. 348–50; Peter Hemenstall and Paula Mochida, 'The Yin and the Yang of Wilhelm Solf: Reconstructing Colonial Superman', *Journal of Pacific History*, 33, 2 (1998), pp. 159–61.

⁷⁰Solf, *Eingeborene und Ansiedler*, pp. 26–7. The reference to Capua refers to the city's reputation as a centre of decadence and licentiousness in the ancient world.

English form of prestige wherever the Union Jack flies'. The 'healthy' racial instincts of the British, Solf continued, were unfortunately not apparent amongst the Germans, who needed to learn quickly that if they were to become truly successful colonizers, they 'must incorporate the concepts of racial pride and racial purity into their code of honour'. Otherwise they would fall victim to the type of racial mixing that had plagued the United States and French Tahiti.⁷¹

Solf was also worried about the political ramifications of mixed marriages. A necessary consequence of Germany's patriarchal *jus sanguinis* marriage and citizenship laws was that children born of a German father and a Samoan mother within a solemnized marriage had the same rights as a colonizing European. Although these children might 'live like Samoans', they would enjoy the political privileges of Germans 'without any of the responsibilities of the ruling race'. They would be on an equal legal and political footing with the German authorities despite the fact that they 'might be tattooed and run around half-naked'. Consequently, the number of half-castes needed to be managed by the colonial government, both 'in the interests of the natives and in the interests of the ruling race'.⁷²

'Race' was always viewed by Solf as a porous concept. An earlier draft of Solf's pamphlet had suggested permitting marriages where the indigenous bride had formally declared that she had left her Samoan family and way of life behind forever, although the final version left out this preferred way of dealing with mixed marriages in favour of simply restricting German settlement in the colony. Focusing on the correct performance of German cultural life, Solf's understanding of 'race' and colonialism differed markedly from Michaelis's, which focused on a putative intrinsic biological difference. As Solf later informed the eugenicist Eugen Fischer, he was not interested in matters of biology: 'I approached the question not from a somatic-anthropological standpoint, but rather more from the standpoint of the differences in mentalities.'⁷³

While Solf's misgivings about mixed marriages were applauded by some in Berlin,⁷⁴ they formed a peculiarly self-critical stance for the governor of Germany's most unabashedly polyethnic colony. The gap between the 'discursive Solf' in Berlin and the permissive governor of Samoa was striking, as contemporaneous critics pointed out. In a satirical piece in the conservative Agrarian League's *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, Solf's discussion of racial relations was quoted approvingly chapter and verse without revealing its provenance. Having painted a (somewhat exaggerated) picture of an author committed

⁷¹Solf, *Eingeborene und Ansiedler*, pp. 28–31. The idea that the British were far stricter in policing the 'colour line' was also evident in Zieschank's remark that 'as opposed to the predominant views in English colonies, the coloured women are considered here as being socially in good standing', Zieschank, *Ein Jahrzehnt in Samoa*, p. 50.

⁷²Solf, *Eingeborene und Ansiedler*, pp. 31–2. In addition, Solf thought that more white women might be brought to the colony.

⁷³See BA Koblenz, N1053 / 6, Nachlaß Wilhelm Solf, Eigne Veröffentlichungen. Reden, Abhandlungen usw. vol. 1, 1886–1914, pp. 191–2. Solf wrote to Fischer after Fischer had sent Solf a copy of his work on 'European and Polynesian crossings', N1053 / 82, Nachlass Wilhelm Solf, Amtliches und Politisches im Ruhestande, vol. 5, July–Dec. 1930, p. 31.

⁷⁴See for example the appraisal of Friedrich Wilhelm von Loebell, Under-State Secretary of the Reich Chancellery, who wrote to Solf on 18 June 1908, 'I have noted your work with great interest and can only wish that the racial pride that you have unfortunately hitherto missed in our compatriots in the colonies may grow not only in the colonies but also in our homeland. Had we more of it, the interests of Germans in the mixed language parts of the Fatherland would be better served', BA Koblenz, N1053 / 8, Nachlaß Wilhelm Solf, p. 14.

to racial purity, the newspaper ironically opined that had such a man of principle been governor of Samoa over the preceding eleven years, then 'terrorist scandals such as that committed by the half-caste women which recently resulted in the expulsion of the planter Michaelis would be impossible!' In its final paragraph, the article revealed that it had been none other than the governor of Samoa who had expressed these sentiments, noting the yawning gap between discourse and practice, and between Solf the colonial theorist and Solf the governor who had been responsible for Samoa for more than a decade.⁷⁵ The indefatigably critical *Hamburger Nachrichten* similarly pointed to the dissonance between Solf's ostensibly strong theoretical position on mixed marriages and his clear permissiveness as governor.⁷⁶ So too the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* alleged that despite Solf's declared opposition to miscegenation, Samoa under Solf had become a 'colonial swamp'.⁷⁷

V: Legal Practice: Cultural and Racial Criteria for Citizenship

While Solf had canvassed a colour bar for Samoa, as governor he never translated this proposal into action. Whatever Solf may have written, what Lutikhuis has made clear for the Dutch case is also apparent for German Samoa under Solf: although racial considerations were detectable in the assessment of citizenship claims, legal questions of status and belonging were rarely if ever reduced to a simple question of racial belonging. Bestowing or withholding citizenship by assessing an individual's cultural affinities and disposition was not simply a 'recoding' of race.⁷⁸

Beyond Solf, most other prominent German officials in Samoa were even less interested in reinforcing racial separateness. In addition to the nine government officials who were actually married to Samoan women, Chief Magistrate and (frequently) Acting Governor Erich Schultz was a noted supporter of mixed marriages and had consistently maintained that race was a poor guide to assessing the worth of an individual.⁷⁹ Schultz conceded that the 'damaging' effects of 'social prejudice' had an impact upon half-castes, but nonetheless insisted that the cultural disposition of the individual mattered far more than biology. Understanding that the specific context of racialized encounters mattered, he also conceded that 'race' was adjudged differently in the colonial periphery from in the metropolitan core, and that it was more contentious in some colonial contexts (such as Africa) than in others. For Schultz, however, character defects had more to do with the familial and educational 'milieu' within which a half-caste moved, and those displaying signs of intellectual or physical 'inferiority' were just as likely to have inherited this from their German father as from their Samoan mother.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ 'Erkläret mir, Graf Oerindur!', *Deutsche Tageszeitung* (15 July 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 130.

⁷⁶ 'Die Mischlingsfrage auf Samoa', *Hamburger Nachrichten* (18 July 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 131.

⁷⁷ *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (20 July 1911), in BA Berlin, R1001/3066, p. 133.

⁷⁸ Lutikhuis, 'Beyond Race', p. 549. For a running overview of *Mischlinge* who had their status as 'foreigner' (that is, non-Samoan) confirmed between 1903 and 1905, see BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, *Rechtsverhältnisse der Mischlinge*, pp. 57–187.

⁷⁹ Schultz to Lindequist, 14 Nov. 1911, in BA Berlin, R1001/3067, p. 5; Liedtke argued that Schultz had been a prominent guest at mixed marriages and that on these occasions 'there was no prejudice, no criticism, never any official reservations about this type of marriage. On the contrary'; see Liedtke, 'Die Überschreitung der "colour-line"', p. 295.

⁸⁰ Erich Schultz-Ewerth, *Erinnerungen an Samoa* (Berlin, 1926), pp. 125–30.

The stout defence of case-by-case assessment of the citizenship claims of *Mischlinge* according to cultural and educational criteria offered by Schultz helps explain why, despite Solf's personal ambivalence about mixed relationships, the legal status of half-castes was not changed to 'indigenous' in Samoa at the same time as in other German colonies. Beyond that, the system of legal classifications under Solf also militated against a simple racial dichotomy. Officially, the German administration categorized individuals into one of two groups, 'Samoan' or 'foreigner'.⁸¹ Children stemming from marriages of Samoan women to German men were German citizens, and therefore classified as 'foreigners'. This same status was accorded to children stemming from marriages between Samoan women and men of other (ordinarily European or American) nationalities if their parents' claim to be lawfully married was verified by the relevant consular official.⁸²

Theoretically, all other children of mixed parentage should have been classed as 'Samoan', that is to say as indigenous. On 1 January 1910, however, a report on the colony's half-caste population noted that the number of *afakasi* with the status of 'foreigner' was 1,003, and that this number included '382 half-castes stemming from unlawful marriages who due to their lifestyle have been granted the legal status of foreigners'.⁸³ The inclusion of these offspring from legally unrecognized *fa'a samoa* (Samoan style) marriages demonstrates not only Samoa's growing polyethnicity, but also the clearly flexible official approach to nationality and citizenship in Samoa that persisted well past Solf's discursive 'racial turn'.⁸⁴

This acceptance of polyethnicity was often not appreciated by German officials newly posted to Samoa with post-1904 experience in Africa. In 1910, one district judge who had just arrived from German East Africa, Adolf Schlettwein, foreshadowed Michaelis's 1911 racial reasoning when he disregarded prevailing colonial Samoan legal practice by refusing to officiate at mixed marriages. His legal reasoning, transferred from Governor Friedrich von Lindequist's October 1905 proclamation in German South-West Africa forbidding mixed marriages, was that the relevant legislation—paragraph seven of the *Schutzgebietsgesetz* (Protectorate Act)—had not explicitly condoned marriages between Europeans and indigenous peoples.⁸⁵ Based on this

⁸¹ Steinmetz, *Devil's Handwriting*, p. 351.

⁸² British children from mixed marriages were also recognized as rights-holding British nationals in German South-West Africa; see Ulrike Lindner, 'Contested Concepts of "White"/"Native" and Mixed Marriages in German South-West Africa and the Cape Colony 1900–1914: A *histoire croisée*', *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 6 (2009), pp. 57–79.

⁸³ BA Berlin, R1001/3065, p. 230. The report went on to mention that beyond these rights-holding half-castes, there was also a large number of half-castes 'living like natives and considered to be such'. For the actual lists of half-castes granted the status of 'foreigner' see BA Berlin, R1004F/75489.

⁸⁴ Samoa's polyethnicity was deepened by the appearance of children of mixed Samoan-Chinese parentage. See Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the Modern History of Western Samoa* (Suva, 1987), p. 168. See, too, the newspaper report in *Ole Sulu Samoa* (June 1914), in BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, p. 134, which noted 'the incredible increase in the intermingling of Chinese with Samoan women in the town of Apia'.

⁸⁵ On Lindequist's legal innovations in German South-West Africa, see Nils Ole Qermann, 'The Law and the Colonial State: Legal Codification versus Practice in a German Colony', in Geoff Eley and James Retallack (eds), *Wilhelmianism and Its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism, and the Meanings of Reform, 1890–1930* (New York, 2003), pp. 177, 184. On §7 and mixed marriages more broadly, see also Felix Hanschmann, 'The Suspension of Constitutionalism in the Heart of Darkness', in Kelly L. Grotke and Markus J. Prutsch (eds), *Constitutionalism, Legitimacy, and Power: Nineteenth-Century Experiences* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 256–61.

silence, he insisted that the law's authors had not mentioned mixed marriages because they did not wish to enable such marriages. Accordingly, he reasoned, they must be illegal and the governor must proclaim a law to that effect:

I am of the opinion that the lawmakers did not mention the solemnization of marriages between non-natives and natives because they did not wish for such marriages. A marriage between a white man and an African black woman, or even between a black man and a white woman so heavily contradicts the racial sensibility that one cannot presume that the lawmakers would have wanted to allow them. Although it might be said that the Samoan is closer to us from a racial standpoint than an African black, it is not feasible that the Protectorate Act, which is equally valid for *all* colonies, allows a different interpretation for Samoa than in Africa.⁸⁶

On 27 September 1910, Acting Governor Schultz replied to Schlettwein, reminding him of the standard legal principle of *nulla poena sine lege* and pointing out that had metropolitan lawmakers wished for a prohibition on mixed marriages, there had been ample opportunity to enact one. Schultz took further issue with Schlettwein by arguing that the recent apparent interest in a legislative prohibition on mixed marriages was a product of the 'South-West African revolt' rather than Samoan conditions. Such imported racial thinking, Schultz stressed, needed to be tempered by the 'requirements of humanity'. From his perspective, 'it is doubtful that the current state of law should be attacked with such constructivist interpretations'. Schultz insisted that 'mixed marriages in Samoa are legal', and denied Schlettwein the legal competency to decide for himself which marriages he should solemnize, insisting that the government alone 'has the capability to hinder cases of an indubitable injury to racial sensibilities via administrative means'.⁸⁷

Having outlined his principled opposition to attempts to ban mixed marriages, in the same letter Schultz sketched out a minimalist model for any future marriage law, should it become mandatory, as Lindequist, now colonial secretary, was demanding in Berlin.⁸⁸ Schultz's model still allowed for mixed marriages, but did accede to restrictions on marriages between Germans and fully indigenous Samoans or half-castes who were clearly living as Samoans; all others, he proposed, should without doubt remain unaffected.⁸⁹ When he formally became governor, Schultz's attitude towards Berlin's interference in racial matters remained deeply hostile, referring to racial propagandists there as anachronistic (*ci-devant*), and arguing that metropolitan meddling was mere troublemaking based on 'the *fable convenue* that the high society of Samoa did not adequately observe the colour line in the past, and that it is now a profitable task to demonstratively observe the racial standpoint'.⁹⁰

⁸⁶Schlettwein to Schultz, 19 June 1910, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, pp. 61–5. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁷Schultz to Schlettwein, 27 Sept. 1910, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, pp. 67–72.

⁸⁸Lindequist had placed pressure on the governor to respond to calls (in particular those of the racial propagandist and Samoan planter Werner von Bülow in 1908 and 1909) to implement racial laws along the lines of Lindequist's own German South-West African measures. See Lindequist to Schultz, 18 June 1910, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, p. 92. For Bülow's original *Hamburger Nachrichten* article 'Der Reinerhaltung des Deutschtums auf Samoa', calling for racial separation, see R1004F/75489, p. 49. For Lindequist's correspondence requesting an update on the racial situation in the colony, see Lindequist to Schultz, 3 Sept. 1909 (and again 18 June 1910), in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, pp. 47, 92.

⁸⁹Schultz to Schlettwein, 27 Sept. 1910, BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, pp. 67–72.

⁹⁰See Schultz to Solf, 8 Apr. 1914, in BA Koblenz, N 1053 / 132, Nachlaß Wilhelm Solf, Schriftwechsel mit einzelnen Persönlichkeiten. Schultz, Erich, Gouverneur, 1904–1916 (1935), p. 120.

The attitude of the old Africa hand Schlettwein towards mixed marriages shifted from a theoretical objection to practice in 1911 and 1912, when he refused to officiate at the marriage of the German planter Dr Wilhelm Grevel and his long-term *de facto* Samoan spouse, Savali. As a result Grevel brought an (ultimately unsuccessful) suit against Schlettwein. Grevel remained undeterred, however, determined that his marriage would be recognized by the German state.⁹¹ As far as Grevel was concerned, not only was marrying Savali his right; it was also his responsibility, both to Savali and to their children.⁹² Schlettwein held fast to his refusal until Grevel's ingenuity ultimately defeated him. Grevel threatened that if permission to marry were refused, he and Savali would simply leave the colony for Germany, where they could legally marry, before returning to Samoa as a formally married couple.⁹³ Upon hearing of this threat, Solf, now in Berlin as Lindequist's successor as colonial secretary, advised Schultz that he should use 'all permitted means' to hinder Grevel and Savali from leaving the colony.⁹⁴ Grevel also complained directly to the Reichstag, which while lacking the formal power to overturn the decision of the governor, could publicly embarrass Colonial Secretary Solf and Governor Schultz. When Grevel's complaint was heard by the Reichstag Petitions Committee, it met with the strong sympathy of the Social Democrat Georg Ledebour, the left-liberal Siegfried Heckscher (who reported his personal acquaintance with 'a fine, educated Samoan woman from a mixed marriage') and the Centre Party's Adolf Gröber, who demanded that Solf explain why 'the woman was prevented from leaving the colony to be legally married outside of Samoa'. The petition was earmarked for further Reichstag consideration, with the committee remarking that Savali could not be forbidden to leave Samoa.⁹⁵ To head off further debate, Grevel was quietly given permission to marry Savali.⁹⁶

In the midst of the Grevel case, and despite having done nothing during his own period as governor to obstruct such marriages, Solf now demanded from Berlin that Schultz implement a version of his 1908 plan, arguing that it was 'high time to use radical measures to attack the spread of half-castes'. To this end, Solf sent Schultz a set of guidelines which were meant to stop Samoa from developing into what he saw as a 'Dutch' system of intercommunal mixing.⁹⁷ While a clear departure from his earlier permissiveness, the measures were still far more inclusive than those in other German colonial settings, with the final guideline allowing for the governor's discretion effectively

⁹¹ BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, Dr Grevel, 24 Apr. 1911, p. 15. For an earlier discussion of this case, see Wildenthal, 'Race, Gender, and Citizenship', pp. 270–1.

⁹² Marggraff to Solf, 31 Aug. 1911, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, pp. 45–7. This was also in tune with elite Samoan sentiments, which urged European men in relationships with part-Samoan women to regularize their *fa'a samoa* relationships and marry. See 'Fuer unsere deutschen Leser', *Ole Lulu Samoa* (1912), in BA Berlin R1004F/75489, p. 139.

⁹³ Marggraff to Solf, 31 Aug. 1911, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, pp. 45–7.

⁹⁴ Solf to Schultz, BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, p. 41.

⁹⁵ 'Auszug aus der Reichstagsdrucksache 72. Sitzung Verhandelt, Berlin, den 7. März, 1913', in BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, pp. 57–60. Solf hoped to prove that the English and the French also occasionally forbade their colonial subjects from moving outside their jurisdiction, but found that there were no such prohibitions on travel; Reichskolonialamt to Schultz, 25 July 1913, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, p. 64.

⁹⁶ 'Eine Mischehe in Samoa anerkannt', *Darmstädter Täglicher Anzeiger* (17 June 1913), in BA Berlin, R1004F/75490 p. 63

⁹⁷ Steinmetz, *Devil's Handwriting*, p. 352.

eroding any strict racial criteria for citizenship and confirming that Germanness was performative:

- (i) Marriages between non-natives and natives will no longer be permitted.
- (ii) The children of the hitherto legitimate and recognized mixed marriages are white.
- (iii) Providing they are included in the current list of half-castes, half-castes stemming from illegitimate relationships are to be viewed as white. This list is to be revised and the undeserving are to be struck from it.
- (iv) Half-castes born after the announcement of these rules are natives.
- (v) Those natives who speak fluent German and can prove a European education can apply to be deemed white.⁹⁸

Although Solf's decree was widely reported in the region, Schultz was slow to implement it.⁹⁹ He did not even answer Solf's letter until first discussing the issue with district judge Dr Guido Schubert in April and May 1912. To Schubert's mind, the reforms would make it illegal to officiate over mixed marriages between Samoans and non-Samoans (which, with Schlettwein in mind, he argued was already beginning to occur), but would (unlike in German South-West Africa) still allow half-castes and future half-caste issue of already solemnized marriages to keep their access to the full suite of citizen rights.¹⁰⁰ Schultz finally replied to Solf in late July 1912, admitting that Solf's guidelines for managing mixed marriages and the 'half-caste question' had still not been formally announced, because of the differences in legal interpretation they might elicit. Returning the issue to Berlin, Schultz asked Solf to adjudicate on which interpretations of his regulations should be seen as correct. Stalling for time, Schultz argued further that as the new regulation had sparked two rival motions in the Reichstag in March 1912, he did not want to pre-empt the Reichstag discussions.¹⁰¹ In any case, he reasoned, there was no hurry because 'unofficial practice' (as per Schlettwein) had more or less stopped marriages between Europeans and full Samoans anyway.¹⁰²

Nonetheless, on 2 August 1912, Solf's decree was finally announced in Samoa, despite protests from both the Catholic and British Protestant missions.¹⁰³ Alongside the decree, Schultz issued strong instructions that irrespective of Berlin's new guidelines, individual cases were still to be assessed on their merits.¹⁰⁴ In 1914, these instructions were supplemented with a set of ordinances that, given the tighter restrictions on formally taking responsibility for their offspring through marriage, obliged non-Samoan fathers to support children stemming from *fā'a Samoa* relationships until they

⁹⁸Solf to Schultz, 17 Jan. 1912, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, pp. 134–5. See also R1004F/75490, pp. 41–4; Verhandlungen des Reichstages, 7 May 1912, p. 1725. This cultural criterion is conceded by Schulte-Althoff in 'Rassenmischung im kolonialen System', p. 78.

⁹⁹See for example *The Fiji Times* (20 Feb. 1912), in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, p. 138.

¹⁰⁰Schubert to Schultz, 15 May 1912, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, pp. 152–3.

¹⁰¹BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, pp. 186–7. One of these motions was sponsored by the Christian-Social Party's Reinhard Mumm, who sought to legislate to restrict mixed marriages; the other motion, which sought to protect them, was sponsored by the Catholic Centre Party's Matthias Erzberger, Alois Löwenstein, Hans Praschma and Peter Spahn.

¹⁰²Schultz to Solf, 29 July 1912, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, pp. 162–5.

¹⁰³See the letters to Solf in BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, pp. 38–42. For the Catholic Mission's argument, see BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, p. 41. For the London Missionary Society's request that Solf's decree be repealed see also the letter of 6 January 1913, BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, p. 3. With Schlettwein working as acting governor while Schultz was briefly in Germany, there was little chance of a change of heart.

¹⁰⁴Bekanntmachung, 2 Aug. 1912, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75489, p. 169.

were fourteen.¹⁰⁵ Schultz also continued to help children from mixed marriages be upgraded to non-indigenous status according to cultural criteria.¹⁰⁶

VI: Conclusion

Despite the riot caused by Michaelis's ill-judged intervention into colonial marriage practices, it was the growing intransigence of the metropolitan media and Colonial Office officials such as Lindequist (and later Solf), mediated by old Africa hands in Samoa like Schlettwein, that ensured that the long-standing settler tradition of taking a Samoan or part-Samoan wife was outlawed. By 1914, Governor Erich Schultz had noted a sea change in racial attitudes in the colony itself, as 'African' attitudes towards race and colonial rule, emanating from German South-West Africa via the colonial metropole, came to overwhelm the earlier acceptance of mixed marriages. For Schultz, the advent of a heightened racial awareness and a desire for 'absolute domination' over the colony had led to a noticeable deterioration in both security and colonial morale:

Since returning to the colony, I have found a marked change in the mood of the Europeans towards the Samoans. Earlier it was tolerable and on average much better than in other colonies, but it has worsened since ... Although it is difficult to offer concrete evidence of this, I have no doubt that in this the leaders in this direction are the officials that were once in Africa.¹⁰⁷

The arrogance of officials recently transferred from Africa to Samoa who treated Samoans as they had Africans had led to heightened intercommunal tensions with the Samoans, Schultz argued, exemplified by the shooting of Germans in the street by Samoan youths who claimed that the Germans now wanted to make them 'slaves'. In Schultz's eyes, these recently arrived officials from Africa who viewed colonial relations primarily through the lens of race lacked the requisite finer-grained understanding of how German imperialism in Samoa worked, and as a result the Samoans had come to deeply resent what they saw as a new colonizing strategy.¹⁰⁸

Taken together, the gap between Solf's theoretical musings on race and his actions as governor, the 1911 Michaelis affair, the resulting unrest in Samoa, the press outcry in Germany and the fraught attempt to regulate mixed marriages offer the concrete historical context within which the porous concept of 'race' only gradually, grudgingly and very belatedly came to operate as a functioning category of imperial demarcation in Samoa. They also illustrate the tension between those Germans with little understanding of the Samoan context such as Michaelis, Lindequist and Schlettwein, who viewed matters of race as central to the colonizing project, and those such as Schultz, the German colonists who married local women and, of course, the Samoan women

¹⁰⁵Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Samoa betreffend die Rechtsverhältnisse der unehelichen Mischlinge, in BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, pp. 49–50, 120–1.

¹⁰⁶See for example the case of Carrie Cromwell in February 1914, BA Berlin, R1004F/75490, p. 87.

¹⁰⁷Schultz to Solf, 8 Apr. 1914, BA Koblenz, N 1053 / 132, Nachlaß Wilhelm Solf, Schriftwechsel mit einzelnen Persönlichkeiten. Schultz, Erich, Gouverneur, 1904–1916 (1935), pp. 118–20. Schultz also pointed to the effects of the arrival of former German South-West African official Hans Tecklenburg and his introduction of 'African' colonizing techniques in stirring up intercommunal violence; see BA Berlin, R1004F/75479, Behörden des Schutzgebietes Samoa Ermordung der Pflanzer Treviranus und Schlitt, p. 229.

¹⁰⁸Schultz to Solf, 8 Apr. 1914, BA Koblenz, N 1053 / 132, Nachlaß Wilhelm Solf, Schriftwechsel mit einzelnen Persönlichkeiten. Schultz, Erich, Gouverneur, 1904–1916 (1935), pp. 118–20; Damon Salesa, 'Cowboys in the House of Polynesia', *Contemporary Pacific*, 22, 2 (2010), pp. 330–2.

who protested on the streets of Apia, who were all determined to preserve the polyethnic porousness of colonial Samoan society. Prevaricating between these two camps was Solf, who professed a desire to halt mixed marriages, but only sought to act on this once his extended period as governor was at an end and he had returned to Berlin.

Far from stabilizing German rule, the precepts of racial hygiene were a late, destabilizing import that was unwelcome to both Samoans and German settlers. As a site-specific, praxiographic study makes clear, accentuating racial divisions between the European colonizers and the Polynesian colonized was not the primary means by which German rule in Samoa was secured. Contrary to approaches that highlight 'state racism' as the primary strategy of colonial rule, the antinomian impulses of human sexuality and a locale-specific sense of the necessity of fluid and functioning inter-communal relations saw other imperial structures predominate.¹⁰⁹ To accept that race might not have been the operative category of difference underpinning colonial power is not to deny the existence of other 'regimes of difference that reproduce relations of power', as Patrick Wolfe once pointed out.¹¹⁰ Like other colonial sites, German Samoa always remained a site of asymmetrical imperial power relations, in this instance robbing Samoans of their political, military and economic agency. As Malama Meleisea has made clear, if the German governors of Samoa were uniformly loathe to assert their formal power on behalf of the German Empire when racial boundaries were transgressed, they did so quickly and forcefully whenever the overarching structural economic or political monopoly of the Germans was questioned by Samoans.¹¹¹

Responding to Protschky's call to investigate 'when, under what circumstances, why and for whom gender, class and/or race became social markers of distinction', this investigation of the colonial entanglements of German Samoa makes clear that racial critiques of Samoa's polyethnic population were viewed by German settlers and Samoans alike as an unwelcome intrusion from the metropole, from German South-West Africa and from other non-German colonial states that regulated their affairs with stricter attention to the colour line. Although the legal divide between 'Samoan' and 'foreigner' was a deliberately hierarchical one designed to enforce asymmetrical political rights and property relations between the colonizers and the colonized, the social, civic and sexual role of 'race' was far more complex than Stoler's picture of a 'racialized economy of sex' suggests.¹¹² As Kundrus and Luttkhuis have argued, policing the divide between ruler and ruled was not always simply a matter of solidifying anthropological discourses of racial difference into operative social, legal and political categories.

Abstract

While the category of race remains indispensable for mapping the construction and maintenance of imperial hierarchies, this article argues that it is not sufficient. Far from being a universally accepted first principle in all colonial settings, racial thinking was viewed in German Samoa as an unwanted, highly

¹⁰⁹Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, p. 206.

¹¹⁰Patrick Wolfe, 'Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race', *American Historical Review*, 106, 3 (2001), p. 904.

¹¹¹Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva, 1987), pp. 112–21. On Samoan passive and active resistance to these political and economic forms of domination, see Jocelyn Linnekin, 'The Teacher and His Copra: Debts, Taxes and Resistance in Colonial Samoa', *Ethnohistory*, 41, 4 (1994), pp. 539–59.

¹¹²Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, p. 182.

controversial and even inflammatory approach to maintaining the asymmetrical communal relations necessitated by colonialism. Examining the civil unrest sparked by the publication of a racial theorist's manifesto in the colony's newspaper of record in 1911, and the ensuing furore this triggered in Germany, this article suggests that in German Samoa racial considerations came exceedingly late to the social and legal codification of colonial sexuality and marriage. Furthermore, when they arrived, they were resisted by Samoans, contested in the colonial metropole and subverted by leading officials in the colony.

Keywords: colonialism, race, gender, sexuality, German history, Samoan history

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