

# **PUSHFUL JOE & THE PUTSCH**

## **I. THE GOLD BUGS**

### **A. PRETORIA**

If you ambled into Pretoria, the center of Boer authority in the Transvaal Republic, you might wonder what the fuss was about.

== why would the British Empire want to bring it under their control?

– why would anybody get excited about a dink town like this, anyhow?

It was a long way from being an imperial capital.

Hares and guinea fowl ran wild in the orchards

You could shoot snipe in the swamp in the middle of town.

Houses of unburnt brick, and for the most part, no pretense at more than comfort.

The side streets weren't paved. They were simply grass-covered lanes.

No sewers, no drains.

No theaters.

And very Puritan – it was strictly against the law to shoot or dig or garden on a Sunday, and the law was enforced good and hard.

Not till 1896 did it see its first car.

The veld around it gave it life.

Folks from town went on shooting trips.

In the cold of winter they took their flocks and herds off the plateau and into the pasturage of the bushveld.

Doing that, many a Pretorian family camped out in tents carrying all their goods with them.<sup>1</sup>

## **B. Oom Paul**

And as for leaders. Let's face it; the head of the Transvaal Republic, compared to the Czar or the Kaiser, looks about as threatening to the British Empire as a cow on roller-skates.

Oom Paul Kruger couldn't have passed even the lowest civil-service exam for the Colonial Office –

not even the ones for Malaya, where all they ask is,  
“Played any cricket, have you?”

His wife could not read or write.

So whenever her husband signed anything, the kids would gather round as if it was a special event.

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<sup>1</sup> Fisher, **Paul Kruger**, 139-40.

Kruger himself – black frock-coat, black trousers, top hat, and  
little, sore, pouched eyes and straggling beard  
fringing his jaw.<sup>2</sup>

He chewed and he spat, hitting the cuspidor only about one time in  
five, in spite of much practice.

A heavy smoker, who drew so hard on the pipe that at least once  
he set fire to the bowl.

Always wore black.

Every day began by reading a chapter of the Bible.

He lived in a simple house, and ate in a simple way.

Any caller could come see him.

He didn't go in for parties.  
And didn't go to the race track.

A colleague invited him, and Kruger told him:

I'm sixty years old. I already know one horse goes faster  
than another. I don't care which one it is.

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<sup>2</sup> Fisher, **Paul Kruger**, 142.

If he had had his way, he would have made boxing illegal.<sup>3</sup>

So much for Kruger the man. What about Kruger the leader?

A bully, who bellowed, thumped the table, and lost his temper on public occasions over and over again.

There would be no census in Transvaal, said Kruger.

Didn't the Lord punish David for numbering the people?

It is wrong for man to enumerate the works of the Lord.<sup>4</sup>

Should Pretoria put up mail-boxes?

No, said Kruger – why should city folks have anything that the folks in the country weren't allowed?

This sleepy, peaceful president and his sleepy, peaceful town, however, were already being shaken to the roots by the worst good luck in the world.

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<sup>3</sup> Fisher, **Paul Kruger**, 150-51.

<sup>4</sup> Fisher, **Paul Kruger**, 156.

The Transvaal had become stupendously rich.

## **C. WITWATERSRAND**

Gold was the making and ruin of the Transvaal.

What could have been better than finding ore == the biggest gold field in the world – on the Witwatersrand<sup>5</sup> in 1886?

Great reefs of it, just a few miles south of Johannesburg.

A city of tents, overnight, housing 50,000 miners

Britons  
Americans  
Germans  
Scandinavians

Shacks, and then barracks, and then houses

Heaps of slag and vast chimneys.

This was the so-called Rand

It became the greatest gold mining site in the world.

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<sup>5</sup> Ridge of White Water, in English lingo.

Here, more gold was mined than in all America, Russia, and Australia.

By the end of 1890s, the Rand had become the biggest single producer of gold  
In the world –

1/4 of the output of the whole world.

By 1906 or so, gold was two-thirds of the value of South Africa's exports.

As of 1899, about 74 million had been invested in gold mines.

Much of it, French and German investors had put in.

But Britain still had 60 to 80% of the total.<sup>6</sup>

Hastening pace economic change.

In came foreign capital, manufactures, settlers

More labor than ever shifted from farming communities to mines.

A republic always living from hand to mouth suddenly had a flush bank

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<sup>6</sup> Jean-Jacques Van-Helten, "Empire and High Finance: South Africa and the International Gold Standard, 1890-1914," *Journal of African History*, 23 (1983): ; Peter Richardson and Jean Jacques Van-Helten, "The Development of the south African Gold Mining Industry, 1895-1918," *Economic History Review*, 2d ser. 37 (1984): 19.

account....

and a lot of new guests.

Old Oom Paul Kruger saw it plainer than most:

“Instead of rejoicing you would do better to weep,” he told his people,  
“for this gold will cause our country to be soaked in blood.”<sup>7</sup>

At first it was mostly just *peopled* in blood – new blood.

In came the gold-seekers, the outlanders – the **uitlanders**.

Footloose and single... 5 in every 6 was unmarried.

There to dig, and to git, not to settle.

A loafing, drinking, scheming lot, clustering around Johannesburg.

None of the respect for the good Dutch Sunday in them.

Men like that, one observer said, would “corrupt an archangel, or  
at any rate knock a good deal of bloom off its wings.”<sup>8</sup>

They don’t know the language,  
They don’t know the laws –  
But they live in the country of the free.

And what’s more, they shouted for all the rights of ordinary Boers.

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<sup>7</sup> Byron Farwell, *The Great Anglo-Boer War* (New York: Norton, 1976), 21.

<sup>8</sup> Farwell, *The Great Anglo-Boer War*, 21-22.

They didn't want to pay taxes.  
But they wanted the vote.

They wanted the courts to use English, rather than Afrikaans.  
They wanted to have English-language schools.

And they didn't want to be arrested except by Englishmen.

No Boer cops!

Gold made the Transvaal Republic, for the first time, more than solvent.

It gave it the resources to uphold its own political independence.

But it did more. Look beyond that sleepy president and sleepy town.

Look to the outskirts of Transvaal. And there, it looks less like a  
backwater than an empire in the making.

One and all, the tribes and African states have fallen before it.

It has ambitions northward, across the Zambezi River,  
its settlers are pushing out of the plains and into  
the jungles.

Instead of the other South Africa colonies looking to Britain, they have  
started to look to Transvaal.

Their policies, they make, hoping to win Oom Paul's favor.

Because access to the gold fields means money for them  
and jobs.

And as the Boers polished off powerful African tribes, the  
danger that kept the white folks in all the other  
colonies trembling – looking to London for the  
soldiers to protect them – got less and less.

It's like the American colonies in 1763 all over again.

Take away the French threat in Canada, and they don't  
see any reason to know-tow to London.

Who needs Redcoats, anyhow?

Take away the Zulu and the Pedi and the Basotho  
and South Africans no longer look to London.  
They look to Pretoria.<sup>9</sup>

With the gold to help them, Kruger and the Boer leaders were modernizing.

They were also gearing up to expand.

– now, at last, they could have their own route to the sea

They could pay to build a railway link to Lourenco  
Marques

– prosperity strengthened their ties to the Orange Free State.

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<sup>9</sup> Donald Denoon, **A Grand Illusion: The Failure of Imperial Policy in the Transvaal Colony during the Period of Reconstruction, 1900-1905** (London: Longman, 1973), 2, 11-12.

– in the Cape and in Natal, the farming areas could look north for their future.

As for the Uitlanders, they were put under tight control.

A five year residency, for citizenship or voting.

And this Kruger then made 14 years.

Heavy taxes were put on the miners.

If they had children, they went to Boer schools, and learned in Afrikaans.

So here is a republic, getting stronger and more independent.

All of a sudden, your enemies in Europe are courting its favor.

All of a sudden, your friends in southern Africa are making deals, in ways that stretch them further from imperial control.

All of a sudden, it's getting a railroad to the sea all its own.

Not only doesn't it need to use the line to British ports.

It can threaten any time, if Natal or Cape colony doesn't do just as it likes:

We can take OUR business elsewhere.

And you know what THAT means:

You'll go broke!<sup>10</sup>

All of which meant that Britain could no longer afford to ignore the Transvaal.

It couldn't kid itself any more, that in time the Republic would move into the imperial orbit.

Time wasn't on England's side.

Time was running out.

The only question was, how to bring it to heel?

Two ways.

1. British finance would rebuild British influence within the Transvaal

So in the 1890s, the Government encouraged the Rothschilds, as they tried to raise money in London to put together a 2.5 million pound loan for the Transvaal.

– that loan would give Britain leverage.

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<sup>10</sup> Donald Denoon, **A Grand Illusion: The Failure of Imperial Policy in the Transvaal Colony during the Period of Reconstruction, 1900-1905** (London: Longman, 1973), 12.

But the loan didn't happen. Kruger turned to Germany

German capital helped set up the National Bank of the  
South African Republic.

At the same time, state-building by the Transvaal worked against  
The large British mining interests there.

Freight rates were upped.

So was the cost of dynamite

And Kruger made it harder to get a labor supply.

So labor cost more than it would otherwise.

2. use colonial agents to hem in the Transvaal and keep it from  
pushing its borders outward.

One in particular...

## **Cecil Rhodes**

Born 1853, sixth of nine children of an austere vicar.

At 17 left England to join older brother, growing cotton in Natal.

Diamonds were discovered at Kimberley, on northern edge of Cape  
Colony.

Rhodes and brother rushed in to stake claims.

At twenty, he was making 10,000 a year, and came back to England,  
paying his own way through Oxford...

A term or two in college, then back to dig in the veldt,  
then more college.

This went on for eight years.

Played polo and joined clubs in college

Paid his bills, selling uncut diamonds he carried in little box  
in his waistcoat pocket.<sup>11</sup>

Diamonds made him very rich indeed.

By 1891 his De Beers Diamond Co. controlled diamond production  
in South Africa.

And South Africa produced 90% of all the diamonds in the world.

Already, though, another wealth had shown itself.

In 1886, gold was found in the Transvaal.

Rhodes became a top investor in the Consolidated Gold Fields Company.

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<sup>11</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 211-12.

Wealth meant power. An MP in the Cape Parliament as of 1878 –

And in 1890, at thirty seven, Prime Minister.<sup>12</sup>

Yet beyond it lay other ambitions – spreading the empire north all the way to Lake Tanganyika, and making it all one vast federated dominion.

It would force the hand of empire. Young men would grab it, the Crown would have no choice but to follow.

1. thus, Bechuanaland, the size of Texas was taken

2. Then Matabeleland, which Rhodes would call Rhodesia.

In 1894, Victoria: “What have you been doing since I saw you last, Mr. Rhodes?”

Rhodes: “I have added two provinces to your Majesty’s dominions.”<sup>13</sup>

– and, as a reward, he was himself added to the Privy Council in Britain.

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<sup>12</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 214.

<sup>13</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 214.

He added territories as big as western Europe to the Empire by the mid-1890s.

More he could do, and wanted to ...

A Cape to Cairo railroad, 6000 miles of it, up the eastern end of the continent.

“If there be a God, I think that what He would like me to do is to paint as much of the map of Africa British as possible and to do what I can helsewhere to promote the unity and extend the influence of the English-speaking race.”<sup>14</sup>

“I would annex planets if I could,” he once shouted, looking heavenward at night.<sup>15</sup>

“The Colossus,” and by 1895, only 42 years old.

You grant a royal charter to the British South Africa Company in 1889.

That’s Cecil Rhodes’s.

Rhodes has a friend in the Cape Colony governor.

He was a big investor in Rhodes’s companies.

Rhodes had good reasons to want to involve himself.

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<sup>14</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 214.

<sup>15</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 213.

He had made his wealth from diamonds in Kimberley.

But had been slow to see the potential of the Rand.

Others got to the best gold fields first.

Could there be a second Rand, further north? Rhodes meant to find out, and so he did.

He had done a big part in the negotiations getting hold of Bechuanaland (west of the Transvaal).

Now he moved to get Mashonaland and Matabeleland, to its north, under British control, between 1888 and 1893.

The second Rand didn't show there.

So by 1894, Rhodes was looking to the Transvaal itself.

Gold mining was going on, full force.

Rhodes's own company, Consolidated Goldfields, and the largest mining firm, Wernher Beit, were well positioned to take advantage of the industry's need for finance.

They had City connections.

Especially with the Rothschilds.

If anyone could exploit mine owners' resentment of Kruger, he could.

By the middle of 1895, Rhodes was confabbing with others of his mind, to work out a coup against the Transvaal.

4000 rifles, 3 machine guns, and over 200,000 rounds of ammunition were smuggled into Johannesburg under loads of coal and in oil tanks with false bottoms.

The taps on them were very well put. If a customs official tried one, it would drip, the way it should.<sup>16</sup>

## **Randlords**

What lay behind the Jameson raid?

One historian has said that it was cash, not politics.

The ones behind it were mineowners who had a stake in the deep level mines of the Witwatersrand

- Cecil Rhodes, joint managing director of Consolidated Gold fields
- Alfred Beit, one of the partners in Wernher, Beit & Co.

– and their Johannesburg associates.

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<sup>16</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 218.

Keep in mind, Wernher, Beit controlled two major mining finance houses in Johannesburg.

Deep level mine-owners had grievances that the outcroppers didn't.

Outcroppers complained. But they were raking in the moola. They had no financial or other interest in becoming rebels.

Whereas the deep level min-owners had a vested interest in replacing Kruger's republic with an efficient, modernizing state, friendly to large-scale capitalist plans.<sup>17</sup>

And needless to say, British government leaders knew that with Britain at the forefront, leading the international monetary markets, anything involving the mining of gold involved them.

It was entirely to their interests, to see that the deep level mines got what they wanted.

There's a catch. The interests of deep level and outcropper mining were not all that far apart.

– geologically

– from an engineering viewpoint<sup>18</sup>

They were just about as deep as each other.

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<sup>17</sup> G. Blainey, "Lost Causes of the Jameson Raid," *Economic History Review*, 2d series, 18 (1965): 350-66.

<sup>18</sup> Elaine N. Katz, "Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War: Re-examining the Blainey Thesis," *Economic History Review* 2d ser., 48 (May 1995): 305-06.

Even “first row deeps” were relatively shallow.

Often, whether a mine would be called an outcrop or a deep was purely arbitrary.

Both kinds had low grade ores.

Ore didn’t decrease in its grade, as the shaft went down.

So the first-level deeps weren’t struggling to survive, while the outcroppers were in the chips.

The grain of gold varied a lot, in outcrop mines.  
High grade, then low grade, and so on.<sup>19</sup>

Did the first level deeps absolutely need big labor forces?

Definitely. But so did the renovated outcrop mines.

They got more, but nowhere near as many as were required.

In fact, they may have needed it more than the deep level men did.

Each developing deep level mine employed 300 Africans.

Outcrop mines had to have 600.<sup>20</sup>

Did the first level deeps absolutely need reduced working costs?

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<sup>19</sup> Katz, “Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War,” 313-14.

<sup>20</sup> Katz, “Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War,” 318-19.

Perhaps they did. But so did the outcrop mines that were not paying dividends – and there were a lot of them.

They were retooling, reconstructing, pouring huge amounts of capital into their mines to develop them.

They, too, needed to cut somewhere, and labor costs especially.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, most of the Randlords had interlocking interests.

They had money in both kinds of mines.

Their investments overlapped in each other's companies.

So who WAS an “outcropper”, and who WAS a “deep leveller”?

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<sup>21</sup> Katz, “Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War,” **Economic History Review** (1995): 315.

How can you separate the sheep from the sheep, as it were?<sup>22</sup>

Was it true that the capital costs for deep level mines was so vast that Kruger's economic policies endangered their survival?

Yes, indeed. But it was just as true for the outcrop mines.

They needed immense amounts of capital, to renovate.

In fact, the nominal capital costs of a lot of them went way beyond what the deep levels were asking for.<sup>23</sup>

Nor, in fact, were Kruger's policies all that drastic a blow to the production costs of the deep level mines.

The working costs for the first row deeps were just about the same as those for the outcrop mines.

You see, an outcrop mine isn't a shallow underground mine, just below the surface.

Nor is it just an open air trench, like a strip mine, say.

Most outcrop mines started that way. But most of them, by the mid-1890s were being completely remade and were following hard-rock mining principles.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Katz, "Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War," 306.

<sup>23</sup> Katz, "Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War," 319-21.

Did the mine owners have a beef with Kruger? Sure.

His concession policies made dynamite and coal expensive.

But all mine owners of both kinds resented that.

Both were furious over the failure to pass laws to give the mines a consistent, efficient African labor supply.

Together, these things made production costs go up, and they absolutely had to go down.

Yet none of the outcrop mine owners, none of the poorer mines, were part of the Jameson Raid.

Think about it: why would Rhodes, or Beit have risked their whole empire in Finance, just to reduce working costs on the deep level mines a mere five pence per ton milled?

Five pence would have worked a miracle for the poorer deep level mines – but the owners of those were not part of

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<sup>24</sup> Katz, "Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War," *Economic History Review* (1995): 307-15.

the raid at all.<sup>25</sup>

And what did they win, in the end?

Yest, the Boer War did cut dynamite prices in half, and very much lowered coal Costs.

It did nothing for working costs.

And one reason was that while Kruger imposed a 5% tax on profits in 1898, he never collected it.

But MILNER DID.<sup>26</sup>

## **Jameson's Putsch**

Jameson's raid was a would-be putsch.

It wasn't planned in London.

But it had a lot of support there, and would be treated friendly.

Here was the plan, as it developed:

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<sup>25</sup> Katz, "Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War," **Economic History Review** (1995): 325.

<sup>26</sup> Katz, "Mining in South Africa Before the Anglo-Boer War," **Economic History Review** (1995): 326.

1. armed Uitlandeers would attack the Boer arsenal at Pretoria.
2. Then the attackers would come with carts, carrying away the weapons

Now the Boers have no guns  
And the uprising does.

3. British troops won't be used, but Rhodes doesn't need it.  
He has his own private army of men, working for the  
British South Africa Company.

And remember, he is chairman over it.

It's worked before. It subdued Matabeleland.,<sup>27</sup>

They won;t invade. But if the uprising gets in trouble, they will  
come in and lend a hand. And in charge of them is  
Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, Rhodes's best friend and  
Second in command.

“Dr. Jim”, as he was called, was short, stocky, balding, and loyal.

“the eyes of an affectionate dog,” one Prime Minister said of him,  
adding,”there can scarcely be higher praise.”

An officer described his eager look like “a Scotch terrier ready to pounce.”

He was a Scot, the eleventh child in a family, trained as surgeon.

He took up practice in Kimberley, much liked, good natured.

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<sup>27</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 218.

He and Rhodes quickly became close friends.

Rhodes lived in his one story bungalow of corrugated iron, two bachelors sharing two bedrooms and sitting room. They walked and rode together, shared meals and opinions on things.<sup>28</sup>

He had become the head of Rhodes's army that beat the king of Lobengula of Matabeleland – and then treated him for gout.

Now, in mid-October 1895, he started putting together the men 170 miles from Johannesburg, on Transvaal's western edge, some 500 of them, plus six machine guns and three pieces of artillery.

His orders: when you hear of the Uitlander uprising,

Wait for the summons. Then come in and take Johannesburg

But Jameson got bored waiting, and so did his men.

Where WAS that rising? Weeks went by, and nothing.

The longer it delayed, the more time for Kruger to find out what was up and prepare against it.

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<sup>28</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 218-19.

And need they wait? Jameson didn't think so: "Anyone could take the Transvaal with half a dozen revolvers."

The rising was set for Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>. But then it was postponed, and no later day set.

When Jameson heard, he couldn't stand it. Twenty minutes of pacing in front of his tent, and he decided to invade on his own, with his troopers. And so they did.<sup>29</sup>

Things couldn't have worked out worse.

A few uitlanders in Transvaal did arm themselves. But they didn't start shooting.

Instead, they sent a delegation to Pretoria to make their case.

*Better they should have attended the Idiots' Convention.  
They certainly had the credentials for it.*

Ah, said the officials – who do you represent? Yourselves?

Of course not! said the delegation. We speak for the Reform Committee. It's arming and going to overthrow your government, if you don't give us our way.

Reform Committee? Really? Naw, you're just bluffing!

Oh yeah? Oh yeah? And the delegation, to prove that it wasn't talking through its hat handed the officials a complete

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<sup>29</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 219.

list of everybody on the Reform Committee...

who were locked up immediately!

Jameson's troopers, meantime, were sent to cut the telegraph line to Transvaal.

They got drunk.

They cut the wire to Cape Town instead.

As a result, Rhodes had no idea what was happening.

And all of his warnings for them not to make the raid never got through.

It took the raiders four days to reach within 14 miles of Johannesburg.

They fought all the way there, got no sleep, and the further on they went, the more Boers came, to try to stop them.

On Jan. 2, 1896, Jameson found himself outnumbered six to one, 17 dead and 55 wounded and 35 missing. He and his men surrendered.

The men were disarmed and let go.

But not Jameson and five officers. they were carried to the Cape Government and handed over, and sent to England for trial.<sup>30</sup>

By rights, the Boers could have hanged the lot of them.

The worst they did was hammer them with a stiff fine.

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<sup>30</sup> Massie, Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War, 219.

Jameson and the five officers came to London, were tried for violating the Foreign Enlistment Act.

Jameson was the toast of the town, out on bail.

The jury found him guilty, all the same, and he got 15 months.

His officers got jail terms, too, and were stripped of their commissions in Her Majesty's Army.

It wasn't a bad jail. Comfortable, really.

But it ruined his day and his health, and after four months he was pardoned.

Eight years later, he became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.

And in 1911 the King made him a baronet.

From the time he was sentenced, he never spoke another word about the raid.<sup>31</sup>

## **Rounding Up the Unusual Suspects**

The real question, though, wasn't who led the raid, but who was behind it.

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<sup>31</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 228-229.

Some question. The fingerprints were everywhere.

It didn't take a Sherlock Holmes – and didn't get one.

Parliament set up a committee to investigate, and it was the hardest working committee in 600 years.

Never did so many work so hard to squeeze their eyes shut to the evidence implicating so few.

If you rounded up the usual suspects, there'd be two –

“Pushful Joe” Chamberlain  
Cecil Rhodes

Joe Chamberlain had been dressing for a ball at his home in Birmingham when he got the news, rushed to London by train at once, getting there just before dawn, December 31<sup>st</sup>, where he declared the raid “an act of war,” ordered that the raiders be returned to base, and offered President Kruger his cooperation to make a peaceful settlement.<sup>32</sup>

It really sounded good.

And he really meant it.

It might almost make you overlook the fact that he'd given the raiders the green light, and been in on the planning from the start.

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<sup>32</sup> Massie, ***Dreadnought***, 220.

Rhodes honestly could say that he hadn't wanted Jameson to go, and had been horrified when he was.

He felt personally betrayed.

– how could they do such a thing....

to him —

who'd supplied them with guns and  
ammunition by smuggling them in, in  
coal wagons and oil drums?

who'd set up the force that Jameson used?

If there'd been an uprising to use as an excuse, that would have been different. But *this*....

He resigned as Prime Minister and as a managing director on the Consolidated Gold Fields company.<sup>33</sup>

Jameson's raid only tilted the Transvaal further towards Germany.

Lower Saxon German in origin, the Republic always had had an affinity.

15,000 Germans were in the Transvaal for the gold rush.

German businessmen had set up branches in Pretoria.

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<sup>33</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 229.

A German consul was always at hand to advise Kruger.

German money was helping build that line from Pretoria to the sea through Mozambique.

And at Lourenco Marques it would meet the North German Lloyd and Hamburg-America lines.

It opened July 1895.<sup>34</sup>

The Jameson Raid only hurried on the moves to control the Republic in more peaceful ways, with London authorities calling the shots directly.

Squeeze bankers in the City, to shut off foreign capital for Transvaal.

Work through the big financial houses, to make it tough for the Republic to borrow money.

Transvaal found the money – in Germany, instead.

With the Jameson Raid, there was scandal. And that may be the most scandalous thing of all.

Because in the same month that Dr. Jameson's invasion set off an uproar, British

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<sup>34</sup> Massie, **Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War**, 221.

soldiers were mounting quite another invasion. And there wasn't a bit of fuss about it.

It was back of the Gold Coast, in Ashante country again.

The Ashantes weren't out of business since being punished in 1874.

They did a terrific trade with the coast and inland.

They still held the gold-fields.

Their command flourished, in cocoa and rubber.

Every day in 1893, they carried 3,200 pounds of rubber to the Cape Coast.

From the Gold Coast in 1895, over 4 million pounds of rubber were exported, and two thirds of it came from Asante.

For years, the governors down at Cape Coast had wanted to break the Asante.

“Their proper characteristics are deceit, falsehood, treachery,” the governor wrote. “In fact, there is hardly a bad quality that they have not got.”<sup>35</sup>

Joe Chamberlain was more cynical and franker.

As he put it, Asante independence was “an intolerable nuisance.”

And it was even more intolerable because, just as the Boers seemed to be cozying up to the Germans, so the Asante were on speaking terms with the French.

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<sup>35</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire: The Hundred-year War for Africa's Gold Coast** (New York: Free Press, 1995), 174-75.

In fact, they'd opened negotiations.<sup>36</sup>

That was all the excuse that the Colonial Office needed to pick a fight with them, and start an invasion.

It wasn't a war the Asantes asked for or wanted.

They actually sent a six man delegation to London to work out a treaty of alliance and peace.

Britain could have rich business concessions.

The Asante would swear allegiance to the Crown.

And they had been good.

They'd stopped human sacrifices.

They didn't make war any more.

Chamberlain at first tried to shut the doors on the delegation.

When he found that their credentials were genuine, he met them and told them to go back to the Gold Coast.

He'd follow, and work out a treaty there.

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<sup>36</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 175.

And he did head for Africa.

But before he left he told the colonial governor: start the war.

The emissaries didn't know it, but the very ship they took to the Gold Coast was stocked to the gills with guns and gunpowder and shells and bullets for a war on the Asante.<sup>37</sup>

Desperate not to give the British any excuse, the Asante king refused to call out the army.

He offered to go as a hostage to the British authorities, as proof of his good intentions.

Every offer was turned down.

British soldiers were better armed, better prepared, than Sir Garnet Wolseley had been twenty years before.

They were the very last Tommies to wear the red uniform.

But the dirt and sweat turned those black within a day's time.

Quinine they had in plenty, to be taken every day before breakfast.

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<sup>37</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 176.

The food was first-rate, and wherever they marched, they set up hospitals and depots of supplies.<sup>38</sup>

Their worst enemy was fever, and troopers died all the way through the jungle, as they cut through what had been roads, now vine-draped and cumbered with fallen trees.

Town on town they came to ... every one of them deserted, by Asantes fled inland.

... and every shrine one of which they destroyed<sup>39</sup>.

High-ranking envoys came out to treat with them.

The black soldiers under the Union Jack beat and robbed them.

(Officers did return the property and gave the thieves a thrashing).

When the British marched into Kumasi, not a shot was fired against them.

The king was told to show up and be given his marching orders at six.

He did show up, but when some of his servants weren't there on time, the commander told him that he had five more minutes to get them together.

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<sup>38</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 178.

<sup>39</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 179.

If they weren't ready, British troops would force their way into the palace.

King Prempe showed up on time, a kola nut in his mouth.

It was an old Asante custom – a symbol that the king would speak nothing but the truth.<sup>40</sup>

The King was accused of not taking good care of his roads.

He was also accused of human sacrifices.

In fact, neither one was a violation of past treaties.

And the “sacrifices” were executions of convicted murderers.

The King was too polite to point out that the British weren't taking good care of their roads,

and he didn't accuse *them* of human sacrifice!

But the charges were excuses, that was all.

The King was told he must submit to British rule and pay 48,000 ounces of gold.

(And all the while, British soldiers, standing at attention, kept distracting from the message by falling down senseless from heat stroke...

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<sup>40</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 181-82.

36 of them).<sup>41</sup>

Prempe had to do, in a moment's notice what no Asante king had ever done, any time.

He took his golden sandals off, and the golden circlet from his head.

Walking slowly with his mother to the British commander, he knelt and the two clasped their arms round the leather boots of the Gold Coast's governor.

"I now claim the protection of the Queen of England," said the last

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<sup>41</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 182.

King of the Asante.<sup>42</sup>

He got no such protection. He, his mother, and people of high rank were taken hostage till the indemnity was paid.

The palace doors were smashed down.

The rooms were looted – but there was just about nothing there to take.<sup>43</sup>

Kumasi was smashed and put to the torch.

The royal mausoleum had been spared destruction when Sir Garnet came in 1874.

Now it was ransacked. The coffins with the royal skeletons were exhumed, and on the governor's orders, the mausoleum was burned and the sacred trees around it felled with axes, fire, and, when that wasn't enough, with gunpowder.

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<sup>42</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 185.

<sup>43</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 183-84.

The exhumed bodies were examined, and the teeth were removed, to be used by the Fante carriers on strings, as necklaces.<sup>44</sup>

Leading advisors of the king were jailed for forgery.

When a court found them innocent – and there wasn't a scrap of proof for the charge – the Governor had them jailed for embezzlement.

They were innocent of that, too.

But how the governor could have any right to arrest men for crimes committed in a country where he had no jurisdiction was even more odd than the charges.

The whole take-over was illegal. Even Joe Chamberlain was shocked.

But he backed it up.

And the colonial governor came back to tell the good news to the chambers of commerce of England's big cities:

“Ashanti is now open to British trade.”

They got rich off it, too.

The puppet state handed out concessions to mine gold and export rubber and sell timber.

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<sup>44</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 185.

The land all belonged to the king.

But the king was in an English jail – not much he  
could do about it.

One goldfields company got a 99 year lease for mineral  
rights. In less than fifty years it mined 6  
million ounces of gold.<sup>45</sup>

King Prempe was barred from his homeland again.

Four years later, the British marched back into Asante country  
to get that symbol of the tribe's kingship, the Golden  
Stool.

Only by having it for the Queen, would the Asante submit  
for once and for all.

They came to free slaves, too. But slavery among the Asante was  
so mild that none of the slaves was willing to leave his or  
her master, when set free.

What was the Jameson Raid, compared to this?

But it didn't get the headlines or the stir.

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<sup>45</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, **The Fall of the Asante Empire**, 187.

Can it be that the real reason why British aggression against the Boers was so shocking was that it was against white men?