

Dr. W. J. LEYDS  
KANTOOR.

# CHAMBERLAIN'S WAR,

By C. A. V. CONYBEARE.

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BELIEVING that all War, not absolutely and without any alternative necessary, is a crime, and that any Statesman who can be proved to have brought so great an evil upon his Country by unworthy or dishonest methods, by reckless and inflammatory language or by blundering incompetence, deserves the severest punishment which can be meted out to him by his fellow citizens, I submit the following statement regarding Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, for which I challenge contradiction and disproof. I believe every count in the indictment to be capable of the clearest proof. On some points indeed, "there is suspicion which amounts to knowledge but not to proof that you can bring forward in a Court of Law"—to adopt Mr. Chamberlain's own words respecting the alleged Boer Conspiracy. But there is this difference between his case and theirs; that while his suspicion against the Boers has been dispelled by facts, the suspicion against himself rests upon documentary evidence, which is known to exist, which he has caused to be suppressed, and which he refuses to produce. And this suspicion is deepened and confirmed by the letters presently referred to (see Note).

Mr. Chamberlain is mainly and directly responsible for the War; for the horrible suffering and slaughter it is causing; for the disasters and loss of prestige which it has already brought upon the Empire; for the vast financial and military burdens which it will impose upon the taxpayers of this Country; and for the well-nigh insoluble problems, that any scheme for the restoration of order out of the weltering chaos into which he has wantonly plunged South Africa, must involve. The loss of prestige already sustained may be gauged by the following from the Paris correspondent of the *Times*, January 17th. "Whatever happens henceforth, the prestige of England abroad is undergoing a fearful crisis, and it will not be long before the attitude of an important portion of Europe will prove to England how serious this loss of prestige is."

Mr. Chamberlain was implicated in and assisted the Rhodes-Jameson Conspiracy of 1895. He conspired with the Chartered Company to pack the South African Committee appointed by the House of Commons "to enquire into the origin and circumstances" of the Raid; and joined in hushing up the most vital point in the inquiry, viz., the Complicity of the Colonial Office, and in suppressing the Evidence tending to incriminate himself.

Mr. Chamberlain signed the report of the Committee condemning Mr. Rhodes for "subsidising or organising and stimulating an armed insurrection" in the Transvaal. He afterwards lavished upon him in the House of Commons a fulsome eulogy in which he declared "there existed nothing which affected Mr. Rhodes' personal character as a man of honor."

On the 19th October, 1899, he stated a deliberate falsehood to the House of Commons when he said "I presented myself for examination to that Committee. *I told them what I knew*" The fact being that he twice entered the witness box, on each occasion merely to explain away the evidence of Mr. Rhodes' emissaries; and that he said never a word about the correspondence which had passed between his office and Mr. Hawkesley (Mr. Rhodes' solicitor); or of the cablegrams between Mr. Rhodes and his London agents, which had been submitted to him by Mr. Hawkesley.

Mr. Labouchere states in *Truth* (January 18th):—"It is no secret that Mr. Hawkesley had placed the correspondence in the hands of an M.P., who was pledged to read it to the House of Commons if Mr. Chamberlain said one word against Mr. Rhodes. Nothing in all the Dreyfus trials was so scandalous."

Recently a further batch of letters, all tending to corroborate the "suspicion amounting to knowledge" that Mr. Chamberlain was incriminated, has been published by a Belgian newspaper. These have not been disavowed or denied. And by an almost universal conspiracy of silence on the part of the English press, they have been ignored, and scarcely a word has been allowed to filter through of the sensation which their publication has caused on the Continent. If public policy in 1897 necessitated (as the conspirators pleaded) the suppression of the Hawkesley correspondence—public policy and the National Honor to-day call yet more loudly for a thorough investigation.

Mr. Chamberlain in October, 1897, gratuitously and recklessly revived the Suzerainty Controversy 13 years after it had been disposed of by a deliberate bargain between this Country and the Transvaal, in which, to quote Lord Salisbury, "in order to get that hated word Suzerainty out of his Convention, President Kruger made considerable Territorial and other Concessions." And in the words of Sir Edward Clarke, Lord Salisbury's late Solicitor-General, "For any British minister since 1884, to assert that this Country had a Suzerainty over the Transvaal, is not only a statement made in defiance of fact, but also a breach of National Faith."

Yet this dishonest and fraudulent claim Mr. Chamberlain again insisted upon, in order to force War upon the Boers, in his dispatch of the 28th August last, when he found that President Kruger had practically conceded all the Franchise demands, which he had hitherto been putting forward as a blind to conceal his ulterior designs; and when he found that the remaining



difference between President Kruger and himself was so infinitesimal (in his own words "we accepted at least nine-tenths of the whole . . . I do not think the remaining one-tenth was worth War") that even with his chicanery and duplicity he could not have forced on the War, upon so flimsy and frivolous a pretence.

During the prolonged diplomatic controversy with President Kruger last Summer, Mr. Chamberlain misled the House of Commons and duped the Country, by deliberate misrepresentation of facts, by suppression and garbling of important Dispatches, and by inflaming the Jingo spirit on both sides with abusive speeches in denunciation of President Kruger. And yet he assured the House of Commons in October that he had all along been most sincerely anxious for peace.

Having thus gained his object—which was War—he now sets up a justification for his crime in the pretended discovery of a vast Conspiracy on the part of the Cape Dutch (embracing our own Colonists and the Orange Free State as well as the Boers) to oust the British from South Africa—a Mare's-nest for which there is not a shred of evidence or an atom of foundation; any more than for that other fabrication, to which the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has lent the sanction of his world-wide authority, and which is echoed in the speeches of Mr. Chamberlain's Colleagues, Lord Salisbury and Sir M. Hicks-Beach, that the Transvaal had been arming to attack our Colonies for years before the Raid.

Mr. Chamberlain is further directly responsible for all our disasters in the Field. For having been advised long before the outbreak of hostilities by Sir Wm. Butler, the Commander-in-Chief at the Cape, that in the event of war 100,000 troops would be required for the Invasion of the Transvaal and 20,000 to hold the line of the Tugela River, he recalled that gallant officer under circumstances which exposed him to the most violent and unfair attacks by the Yellow press (from which, needless to say, Mr. Chamberlain took no steps to shield him), rejected his advice, and endeavoured to get Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman and the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons to assent to the dispatch of a handful of 10,000 men to Natal avowedly to bluff the Boers, who (as Mr. Balfour has informed us) the Government, in their childlike ignorance, had not the least idea would face them in the field.

For the above reasons (amongst others) I charge against Mr. Chamberlain that he is a Traitor to the best interests of this Country, that the dishonesty, duplicity, and chicanery of his conduct throughout make him unworthy of the confidence of the Country and that he has disgraced the fair name of England. And I hold that it is the duty of every Patriotic Citizen to demand a full and thorough investigation into his alleged complicity with the Rhodes-Jameson Conspiracy.

## NOTE.

HAWKESLEY to FAIRFIELD (of the Colonial Office).—*July 22nd, 1896.*

My Dear Fairfield.—Is the rumor true that the Government have decided the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the circumstances of Jamesons' action in December last? If so, I suppose it will be possible for the views of the Directors to be to some extent considered in appointing some of the members? In this case may I suggest the names of Carson, Q.C., A. C. Cripps, Q.C., George Wyndham? Will it be possible to have an opportunity of discussing with you the terms of reference to the Select Committee?

(N.B.—Carson was not appointed but Cripps, Wyndham, and J. C. Bigham were).

HAWKESLEY to BEIT.—*July 27th, 1896.*

Have seen Bourke, Wyndham, and Fairfield. Doing all possible to secure Wyndham as well as Chartered nominee.

HAWKESLEY to FAIRFIELD.—*August 1st, 1896.*

Let me know any difficulties or change as to constitution of Committee.

BIGHAM to HAWKESLEY.—*August 7th, 1897.*

The Committee meet (privately) at 4.30 in Col. Legge's room, and I could see Mr. Charles Leonard [one of the Johannesburg conspirators] immediately after the meeting breaks up. [Bigham has since been rewarded with a judgeship.]

HAWKESLEY to EARL GREY.—*February 20th, 1897.*

I do not think we are by any means out of the wood, but there does seem an off-chance of the plea of public interest being recognised, and the cables of the last half of 1895, or rather the negotiations of that period, not being disclosed, though I am bound to say that personally I think the balance of probability is that they will have to come out. If they do Mr. Chamberlain will have no one but himself to thank.

MRS. RICHARD CHAMBERLAIN (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's sister-in-law) to HAWKESLEY. (no date).

I quite agree with you that very little good, if any, [can be done with J(oseph) C(hamberlain) now. He knows what he has to expect, and will have had plenty of time to think it over by the time C. J. R(hodes) arrives.

No wonder Mr. Courtney has described these letters as "most ugly and terrible reading."

And the Foreign papers are quite justified in writing "If these revelations are accurate Chamberlain is branded as a criminal of the deepest dye." —(*Wiener Extrablatt*).