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Dr. W. J. LEYDS
KANTOOR.

Peace or War with the Transvaal ?

An attempt is being made to silence those who wish to protest against war with the Transvaal Republic, by telling them that they are unpatriotic. Believing as we do that, even if war is ever justifiable, it certainly is not so in this instance, we hold that it is the truest patriotism to urge our countrymen to pause before even threatening a war, which we consider would be a crime and a disgrace to our Country. We have not forgotten how Bright and Cobden were similarly called unpatriotic when they protested against the war with Russia in 1854. But the judgment of posterity has vindicated their patriotism.

We rejoice at the prominent part which Great Britain has taken in the International Conference now being held at the Hague. It is an honour to our nation that, largely through the efforts of our representatives, the result of that Conference will probably be the establishment of a permanent tribunal to which disputes between nations will be referred. While we are thus striving that arbitration should be made universal, to decline it when offered to us by President Kruger seems to us criminally inconsistent. We have on a former occasion referred a matter in dispute with him to arbitration ; yet now we refuse at Pretoria the course we are urging at the Hague.

The very offer of President Kruger as regards arbitration shows a conciliatory spirit. We must remember that by the Convention of 1884 Great Britain definitely promised to abstain from interference in the internal affairs of the Transvaal Republic. Whether this promise was wise or unwise, surely any infringement of it is a breach of national good faith.

The Uitlanders have their grievances, and we may think that the best way to redress these would be to confer on them the rights and duties of citizenship. But we have no right to impose this theory by force on the Transvaal Government. If a British subject has suffered oppression or wrong, our Government may claim redress. But to urge that this redress must come through his losing his nationality, may be matter for argument, but cannot reasonably be taken as a cause for war. On this point President Kruger has gone a long way to meet the wishes of the Uitlanders by reducing the term of residence needed to obtain the franchise. And if our Government will continue the negotiations in a friendly spirit, there is little doubt that further substantial concessions may be obtained.

We believe that our fellow countrymen, if they are informed as to the facts, will not wish to treat President Kruger with anything but fairness, or with less consideration than we should treat a powerful European State. We maintain that there is no question at issue which may not be settled by negotiation or arbitration in a way consistent with the honour and interests of both Countries, if warlike demonstrations and irritating language are avoided.

Signed on behalf of the Executive of the Birmingham Peace Society,

- GEORGE BAKER, *President.*
 - ALFRED F. MORGAN, F.R.G.S.,
 - J. C. STREET,
 - GEORGE TANGYE,
 - FREDERIC IMPEY,
 - R. F. MARTINEAU, *Chairman.*
 - J. W. SHORTHOUSE, *Treasurer.*
 - JOSEPH STURGE, *Hon. Sec.*
 - J. J. ELLIS, *Agent.*
- } *Vice-Presidents.*

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