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FROM  
**BOER**

*heyds*

TO  
**Boer and Englishman**

BY  
**PAUL M. BOTHA**

Member of the late Orange Free State Volksraad for Kroonstadt

*Translated from the Dutch by his Son, ADVOCATE C. L. BOTHA, LL.D.*



LONDON: HUGH REES, LTD.

124, PALL MALL, S.W.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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I have been a member of the Volksraad of the late Orange Free State for twenty-one years. During that period I have consistently followed the party, headed by Mr. Fraser, which supported and advocated President Brand's policy of friendliness towards our powerful neighbour and protector, England. Unfortunately Kruger, the Bond, and the foreign press, more especially *The Bloemfontein Express* (which latterly even suppressed my anti-closer union speeches), became too powerful, and our little band of opposition gradually lost all influence in the Volksraad and in the country.

It was a sad day for the Orange Free State when John George Fraser was defeated at the polls by Marthinus Theunis Steyn!

As I sit to-day in Kroonstad and see the ruin of my country, homesteads burnt, my people reduced to the beggar's staff, and widows and orphans deprived of their bread-winner, then I regret deeply that I did not make greater efforts to save my country when there might have still been time. My reasons for not doing so at that time

were that the people, inflamed, led astray, and duped to an incredible degree by ambitious leaders would not listen. Any one not in favour of Kruger and Closer Union was hooted and stigmatized as "Engelschgezind," and a traitor to his own people.\*

In September, 1899, I tried to hold a meeting at Kroonstad, to protest against the war, but I had to leave the room because my own constituents even, with a few exceptions, prepared to do me bodily harm.

I then said to myself, "If I insist upon a hearing now I shall not only weaken the little influence I still possess, but I shall deprive myself of any future opportunity of being listened to in the interests of my country."

And with a heart full of sad forebodings I remained silent.

After the surrender of Bloemfontein I made attempt after attempt to stop the war: first with President Steyn, then with Mr. Luyt, the Chairman of the Volksraad ; and lastly I tried to get General

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\* In proof of this I may state that at the four previous elections for the town of Kroonstad I was returned unopposed, while at the last, which turned entirely on the Closer Union Question, I was elected by a majority of only three votes. My opponent was Mr. J. N. Blignant, a most violent partisan of Paul Kruger, a man who publicly said, "I wish that all the English had only one neck between them, and that I had the axe to cut off that neck"!

Christiaan de Wet to give me an hearing. But all in vain.

And now I feel that it is my duty to speak and to speak as strongly as I can, for I burn with indignation when I see the ruin around me. I ask my people to remember that I am one of themselves—a Boer with no better advantages or education than they have had.

I have a right to be heard, for I am an old man, and I belong to the soil of the country, and come of a family which has fought and done as much as any other to make the Orange Free State.

These lines are an appeal to my fellow-countrymen to admit their own faults and to recognize that it is best for South Africa, under the present circumstances, to become one harmonious whole, under the British flag.

For under no other flag is peace and prosperity possible for South Africa.

It is also an appeal to Englishmen to try and understand us, and to help us to become a part of that harmonious whole. Let England realize that through her mistakes it became possible for unscrupulous leaders to dupe an ignorant people.

I shall further try to show my countrymen what these leaders really are, and how they were misled and duped by them.

People may say that I am hitting these men now that they are down. I deny this. For it is

not the leaders who are suffering the bitterness of the war. I have lived amongst the ruin which these men have brought upon my unhappy people. I have witnessed scenes which would stir pity in the most callous heart. And if I go into personalities it is because only by such means can I make my people realize their folly in the past.

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## ENGLAND'S MISTAKES.

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### THE BOERS.

IN the past England's first and greatest mistake in South Africa was to refuse to accept the responsibility and trouble of governing the country which she had acquired—whether that country was acquired by treaty or conquest makes not the slightest difference. England said it was her country, and she ought to have governed it.

One day England blew hot and the next cold. One moment she insisted on swallowing us and the next moment she insisted on disgorging us. For example, the Orange Free State was declared British territory, because a Governor said: "You can never escape British jurisdiction." Then we were abandoned because the next Governor said "the country was a howling wilderness." The Transvaal was annexed, and Sir Garnet Wolseley declared: "The rivers will sooner run back in their course than that England will give up the Transvaal." Shortly after that the Transvaal was

retroceded, *after Majuba*, because the British Ministry said: "We have been unjust in annexing this country."

The Slavery Question was handled with astounding negligence and ignorance of the circumstances of the people. Although England was perfectly right in emancipating the slaves, yet the way it was done irritated, annoyed, and disgusted the people, and sowed seeds of distrust, which have never been eradicated. England failed to carry out effectively her promises of compensation.

This, coupled with the abandonment of the Border farmers to Kafir raids, caused the Great Trek. My father himself abandoned a flourishing farm in the Cape Colony, and I have vivid recollections of the Trek, being then five years old.

On the minor grievances, such as Slachter's Nek and other so-called injustices of England, I lay no stress whatever. It was a rough period, and rough measures were used by all Governments. As a child I often heard tales of the cruelty of the Dutch East India Company's officials, which makes me think that, anyhow, British rule was heaven compared to the rule of the Dutch East India Company.

England's weak and spasmodic policy in South Africa has made the Boer what he is to-day—distrustful and contemptuous of British statesmen. By further receding into the interior, and having



to fight wild beasts and hordes of Kafirs, he became blown out with vanity at his own prowess, and more and more ignorant.

Through this ignorance it is easier to mislead than to lead him. A man who plays upon his vanity and prejudices against England quickly obtains influence. A loud talker and blusterer gets a better hearing than a quiet reasoner.

I ascribe this to want of education and complete isolation on the veld, from generation to generation. The depth of their ignorance will hardly be understood by one who does not know them as well as I do.

They have a nameless terror of all new things. Because I was in favour of railways in the Orange Free State they threatened to stone me. The devastations of locusts they regard as a plague sent by God, against whose will it would be sinful to fight!

Unfortunately, the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, greedy for the fat lamb, the fowl, and the purse, foster this ignorance. One parson actually had the audacity during the war to tell his congregation that God *must* help His chosen people, otherwise He would lose His influence.

On the other hand, the Boer has a keen sense of justice, and although of an extremely independent nature, he is law-abiding, and has a great respect for life and property. Considering their ignorance,

want of education, and the roughness of the country, it is remarkable how few crimes are committed; wife-beating, murder, and other crimes of violence being almost unknown amongst the real Boers. They make good husbands and fathers, and their good nature and hospitality are proverbial.

They have been accused, as a people, of treachery. I absolutely and entirely repudiate this. On the contrary, because they refused to break their oath and take up arms again, many respectable Boers who were caught by flying commandoes have been lashed with the sjambok. Anyone acquainted with the Boer nature will know how terribly he feels such an insult. In every town in the Orange Free State which was recaptured by the British after it had been re-occupied by the Boers one heard in the newspapers of numbers who treacherously assisted the Boers, but one heard little of those men who were found in prison, having preferred imprisonment, with a charge of high treason hanging over them, to being false to their oath.\*

It is my fixed opinion that a just and firm Government, with uniformity of treatment, will control and satisfy the Boers, and will eradicate in

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\* I am told that in Bothaville alone the British found forty such prisoners.

time that feeling of distrust and fear which was engendered in their minds by the halting and unequal policy of England in the past.

It is the jerky hand on the reins which makes them jib.

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## POLICY OF THE PROGRESSIVE FREE-STATERS.

### PRESIDENT BRAND.

“It was a sad day for the Orange Free State when Fraser was defeated at the polls by Steyn!” For we depended upon him to continue President Brand’s policy and to rectify the muddle created by Reitz.

President Brand’s policy was friendliness to all neighbours, with a frank recognition of British preponderance in South Africa. It was the only dignified policy possible for the Orange Free State.

On the whole, we owed much to England, and by frankly admitting this and by recognizing that our larger interests were identical with those of the British, we could have been great in all things that a little country can be great in.

My own conviction is that it was to England that we owed peace in our land. England pro-

tected us from foreign invasion, and if the presence of Great Britain had not restrained it, we would have been plunged into continual civil strife in South Africa itself. To anyone acquainted with the turbulent history of the Transvaal this will be clear. From the very birth of that Republic there have been acute internal squabbles. The people now splitting up, and even coming to blows, for separate little Republics, such as Lydenburg; then, again, Church disputes rose to such fury that only the dread of England's interference averted civil war. They always united, however, when there was a chance of raiding or grabbing territory. They raided the Orange Free State, they raided Bechuanaland, they raided Zululand, and founded the "New Republic," now Vryheid, and as recently as 1891, they attempted to acquire territory in Rhodesia. The Jameson raid was possible only because the Transvaal was misgoverned, and showed that a certain section of the English element was ready to be as turbulent as the Transvaal.

Further, but for the presence of England, European adventurers, like Leyds, would have exploited the country far more.

If it were possible to imagine that England's restraining influence were withdrawn, we would have witnessed in South Africa scenes such as I have read of in South America.

President Brand saw the dangers which threatened us on all sides. He recognized in the misgoverned Transvaal a subtle enemy, who, while pretending to be our brother and friend, wished to draw us into his clutches only to make use of us as soldiers in the event of war. For the rest, our friend and brother intended to take good care to keep our neck well under his heel. President Brand saw the pernicious influence of certain politicians on our people, and continually exerted his strong personal influence against the Bond. I remember one occasion at a Wapenschouwing, at which he indignantly pulled down the Afrikander Bond flag, which had been hoisted by some hot bloods.

I shall now try and show that we, as the Orange Free State, had to fear aggression more from our "brother and neighbour," the Transvaal, than from what our big talkers call "our enemy," England.

For although England undoubtedly behaved towards us in some cases as a big boy does to a little boy, yet our powerful neighbour's injustice was tempered with equity—an equity which we did not experience in our relations with the Transvaal.

I shall take instances. The action of England in the Basuto War and in the Griqualand West Boundary Question was used by Reitz and Steyn as a powerful weapon to induce the burghers to

follow them in their anti-British pro-Transvaal policy. That it was a powerful weapon cannot be denied, as the arguments were understood by the most ignorant burghers and appealed to their distrust of England. Every Boer on commando realized that after years of hard fighting he was robbed of the fruits of his victory. At the last moment the British Government unjustifiably interfered, and forced the Orange Free State to relinquish a portion of Basutoland already occupied and proclaimed, and to which it was entitled. I wish to draw attention, however, to the fact that through this injustice the Orange Free State gained certain advantages which it would probably not have obtained but for that interference. For from that time the Conquered Territory has been quietly occupied by the burghers, and has proved to be the most fertile portion of the Orange Free State. There was no further danger of war with the Basutos, because the responsibility of maintaining peace was thrown on the shoulders of the British Government.

The Griqualand West Boundary dispute was as easy to understand. The burghers of the Boshof district, who knew the country and the boundaries of their district, could not be deceived by long-winded correspondence and specious arguments. They realized fully that the richest portion of their district was cut off from the Orange Free State.

Even in this case I contend that we received some little compensation for the wrong done to us. The British Government admitted its error and paid us £90,000 as compensation—a fairly big sum for land of speculative value in those days, for, let it be clearly understood, that no one knew at that time that it was going to turn out De Beers.

Contrast with this the action of the Transvaal towards the Orange Free State in similar questions. It may not be remembered by everybody that the Transvaal in 1857, during the Presidency of Boshof, invaded the Orange Free State territory with an armed force. Why? Because they preposterously claimed the Orange Free State. I have particular knowledge of this matter, because I took part in the commando which our Government sent to meet the Transvaal forces. The dispute was eventually amicably settled, but, incredible as it may seem, the Transvaal had actually sent five persons, headed by the notorious Karel Geere, to Moshesh, the Basuto Chief, to prevail upon him to attack *us*, their kinsmen, in the rear! I was one of the patrol that captured Geere and his companions, some of whom I got to know subsequently, and who revealed to me the whole dastardly plot.

Thereafter we had a boundary dispute with the Transvaal, of which I fortunately also know the

details; for my father, at that time member of the Volksraad for the ward Onder Valsch River, was a member of the Commission which, with President Brand at its head, twice met the Transvaal Commission on an island in the Vaal River. Directly in conflict with the Zand River Convention, the Transvaal had issued title deeds for ground this side of the Vaal, and had even laid out a township there. The Orange Free State objected to its land being grabbed, but the Commission was unable to obtain satisfaction from the Transvaal, and to avoid war we were forced to arbitration. The arbitrator, Governor Keate, of Natal, decided in favour of the Transvaal—a decision which to this day remains a mystery to me. The majority of Free Staters look upon this as a small matter, but I think that we were robbed of territory which even to this day forms one of the most valuable portions of the Transvaal\*—and we did not receive a penny in compensation.

When, therefore, I compare the conduct of the Transvaal, “our friend and brother,” according to Reitz and Steyn, with that of England, “our enemy,” then I can only say that for myself I prefer to deal with my enemy.

Since 1870 the British Government maintained an attitude of great friendliness towards the Orange

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\* Wakkerstroom District.



Free State. From that date England left us in peace to govern ourselves, and it is my firm belief that we should still be governing ourselves if Reitz and Steyn had been honest patriots and had not used the Free State as a stepping-stone for their own ideas and ambitions.

President Brand saw clearly what our policy ought to have been. He always avoided offending the Transvaal, but he loved the Orange Free State and its independence for itself and *not* as an appendage to the Transvaal. And in order to maintain its character he always strove for the friendship of England.

President Brand realized that closer union with the turbulent and misgoverned Transvaal, led by Kruger's challenging policy, would inevitably result in a disastrous war with England.

I felt this as strongly, and never ceased fighting against Closer Union. I remember once stating these arguments to the Volksraad, and wound up my speech by saying: "May Heaven grant that I am wrong in what I fear, because if I am right, then woe, woe, to the Orange Free State!"

The devastated condition of the *Orange River Colony* to-day transcends even my gloomiest forebodings.

## PAUL KRUGER AND CO.

## THE BOND, THE FOREIGN PRESS AND THE PULPIT.

I have been told that there are people in Europe, in England, and in America who admire Paul Kruger. I can understand our ignorant Boers being misled by a man of powerful personality, who, knowing them well, can play upon their weaknesses and prejudices like an expert player on the strings of a violin. But that Oom Paul should dupe well-educated people, that I cannot understand. The only way I can explain this mystery is that a veil of romance has grown round this rugged old man, and that Europe, being six thousand miles away, accepts him as seen through the eyes of his duped burghers. He made the burghers believe that he was a prophet who, like Moses, was the means of communication between God and His chosen people. This is literally true. In the earlier days he often vanished for long periods, and when he came back he made the people believe that he had been communing with God. It was absolutely believed by the burghers that Kruger, who was in Heidelberg at the time—one hundred miles from the scene—knew the result of the battle of Majuba on the very morning on which it was fought!

Add to this his indomitable will, through which he made himself believe that there were two Gods,

one in Heaven and Paul Kruger on earth, and his undoubted courage, proved in many Kafir wars, then you will understand his despotic influence.

Let me tear this veil of false romance from him, and let me try and show the man to you as he really is and as those Boers whom he has not succeeded in duping always knew him to be. We know him—an avaricious, unscrupulous, and hypocritical man, who sacrificed an entire people to his cupidity. His one aim and object was to enrich himself, and he used every means to this one end. His ambition for power was subordinate to his love of money. He used the Transvaal as a milch-cow for himself, his children, and his following.

I ask his admirers to show me one good thing he did for his country during all his years of power ?

He spent millions of the country's money in pretended benefits—millions which were in reality expended for the purpose of feeding up a crowd of greedy favourites and aasvogels (vultures), men who were necessary to him for the furtherance of his own ends. Paul Kruger has been accused of creating many monopolies, but the greatest of all was the Monopoly, on a truly impudent and colossal scale, for swindling the Transvaal, at the head of which he himself stood.

Anyone behind the scenes knows how impossible

it was even for the most dishonest man *outside* of this ring to gain any advantage out of the Transvaal.

In proof of what I say take the scandals over the mealies and donkey contracts, the dynamite monopoly, the liquor and jam concessions, the Netherlands Railway, and numerous others—and I ask : What benefit has the *country* derived from any one of these ?

Are there any institutions for the public benefit in the Transvaal, such as schools, universities, industrial institutions, public works, roads, or railways, to justify the vast expenditure of money ?  
No.

If you want to know where the money has gone, search the pockets of Paul Kruger and Company.

To show Kruger's avarice and hypocrisy, look at minor matters. His salary as President was £8000 per annum, an £8000 which he hoarded year after year ; he lived not like the President of a country, but like any "dopper" farmer, never expending a single sixpence in charities or any other matter of public benefit ; and then he actually had the effrontery to make an application to the Volksraad for an extra allowance of £300 a year as entertainment money, of which he also pocketed the larger portion, as the only entertaining he ever did was to give cups of morning coffee and a pipe of tobacco !

The matron of the Dynamite Explosion Hospital talks to this day of "Oom Paul's crocodile tears." When he visited the wretched sufferers, mostly Dutch, he talked of his "arme burghers" (poor burghers), large tears rolling down his cheeks, but never gave a single sixpence to help them.\*

During the war how did Kruger and Steyn feed the destitute wives and children of their "arme burghers," who were risking their lives on commando? Their rations consisted of mealie meal, Boer meal, and nothing else whatsoever. I know; because I was on the Relief Commission in Kroonstad.

When I now see the country round Kroonstad made into a desert, the farms burnt, and the Boer men, women, and children huddled together in refugee camps, absolutely destitute, and living on the charity of the British, then I tingle with indignation to hear that the cruel author of all this avoidable misery, rich, snug, and safe, is in Europe, and going to be received by the Queen of Holland and made a hero of. A hero who was known in the Free State, thirty years ago, before he found better means of enriching himself, as a swindling dealer in oranges and tobacco, and one whom we strongly suspected of being a very cute slave dealer.

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\* He donated £10, which was not paid.

Paul Kruger's successful policy against England, for which England is much to blame, perverted the minds of the greater portion of the Dutch population of the whole of South Africa.

I am convinced that Kruger's influence completely changed the character of the Afrikaner Bond—an organization which I believe Hofmeyr started at the Cape with the legitimate purpose of securing certain political privileges, but which, under Kruger's henchmen—Sauer, Merriman, Te Water, and others—raised unrest in the Cape Colony.

This successful anti-British policy of Kruger created a number of imitators—Steyn, Fischer, Esselen, Smuts, and numerous other young educated Afrikaners of the Transvaal, Orange Free State, and the Cape Colony, who, misled by his successes, ambitiously hoped by the same means to raise themselves to the same pinnacle.

Krugerism under them developed into a reign of terror. If you were anti-Kruger you were stigmatised as “Engelschgezind,” and a traitor to your people, unworthy of a hearing. I have suffered bitterly from this taunt, especially under Steyn's regime. The more hostile you were to England the greater patriot you were accounted.

This gang, which I wish to be clearly understood was spread over the whole of South Africa, the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and the Cape

Colony, used the Bond, the press, and the pulpit to further its schemes.

Reitz, whom I believe to have been an honest enthusiast, set himself up as second sponsor to the Bond and voiced the doctrine of this gang: "Africa for the Afrikanders. Sweep the English into the sea." With an alluring cry like this, it will be readily understood how easy it was to inflame the imagination of the illiterate and uneducated Boer, and to work upon his vanity and prejudices. That pernicious rag, Carl Borckenhagen's *Bloemfontein Express*, enormously contributed in spreading this doctrine in the Orange Free State. I myself firmly believe that the *Express* was subsidised by Kruger. It was no mystery to me from where Borckenhagen, a full-blooded German, got his ardent Free State patriotism.

In the Transvaal this was done by the *Volksstem*, written by a Hollander and subsidised by Kruger; by the *Rand Post*, also written by a Hollander, also subsidised by Paul Kruger; and in the Cape Colony by the *Patriot*, which was started by intriguers and rebels to their own Government, at the Paarl—a hot-bed of false Afrikanderism. *Ons Land* may be an honest paper, but by fostering impossible ideas it has done us incalculable harm. It grieves me to think that my poor people, through want of education,

had to swallow undiluted the poison prepared for them by such unscrupulous schemers.

When I come to think of the abuse the pulpit made of its influence I feel as if I cannot find words strong enough to express my indignation. God's Word was prostituted. A religious people's religion was used to urge them to their destruction. A minister of God told me himself with a wink that he had to preach anti-English, because otherwise he would lose favour with those in power.

These parsons, however, who snorted fire and destruction from the pulpit, carefully stayed at home during the war; they did not venture near the firing line, even as stretcher bearers. I heard one unctuous parson, in a war sermon, urge the burghers: "Go forth; meet the enemy. I shall remain on the mountain, with my arms uplifted, praying for you, like Moses of old," solemnly adding, that his dear wife, who felt for them as much as he did, would take the place of Aaron and Hur, and support him when he got tired!

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## THE WAR.

### STEYN: FOOL OR DISHONEST?

When, as a true Free Stater, I think of the war and realize that we have lost the independence of



our little State dear to us, then I feel that I could curse Marthinus Theunis Steyn and the Kruger gang—Steyn, a Free Stater born, used his country as a stepping-stone for his ignoble ambition, and sacrificed his whole people for the furtherance of his private ends.

How was it that an unknown man, who had never shown any ability or statecraft whatever, was preferred to John George Fraser, a man of proved integrity, ability, and experience? I say this was due to the influence of Paul Kruger, who, by his emissaries, agents, and secret service money undermined the Free State. His subsidised organ, the *Bloemfontein Express*, was the first to advocate Steyn's candidature. Paul Kruger did not want an honest Free State patriot like Fraser, whose first thought would have been his own country, at the head of the sister Republic. He wanted a servile tool. Steyn's own ambition did the rest. *He* sold his country, body and soul, to the Transvaal, in the hope that Paul Kruger's mantle would fall on him. The first time that Kruger visited the Orange Free State after Steyn's election, the latter introduced him at a public banquet with these words, "This is my father." The thought occurred to me at the time, "Yes, and you are waiting for your father's shoes." He hoped to succeed "his father" as President of the Transvaal, of the combined republics, aye, even

of United South Africa! For this giddy vision he ignored the real interests of our little State—he was false to his oath, and dragged the country, whose integrity and independence he had sworn to uphold, into a wholly and absolutely unnecessary and insane war.

Is it possible to imagine that Steyn, Fischer, and the other educated men of the Free State did not know that, following Kruger's hostile policy of eliminating the prepondering Power in South Africa, meant that that Power would be forced either to fight in self-preservation or to disappear ignominiously? For I maintain that there were only two courses open to England in answer to Kruger's challenging policy—to fight or to retire from South Africa. It was only possible for men suffering from tremendously swollen heads, such as our leaders were suffering from, not to see the obvious or to doubt the issue. Was this the only reason that Steyn entered so gaily upon such an absurd and wicked policy, or was he consoled with the thought that he could always share the rich spoils with Kruger in case the larger project went wrong? Will he be found presently to be as comfortable and well hedged as Kruger?

I ask any man to tell me what quarrel had WE with England? Was any injury done to US?

Were WE threatened in any way?

Were we suffering from any grievous wrong, which alone justifies a small country to risk its all in an attack on a mighty Empire ?

These questions make one's hair stand on end. One stands aghast to think how recklessly we staked our independence in a quarrel which was not even our own !

Whether knave or fool; Theunis Steyn did not prepare himself to any extent adequately for his gigantic undertaking. In the words of a Hollander, "he commenced this war with a firm trust in God, and the most gross negligence."

I shall not go into the details of the course of the war. They are well known to everybody.

In my opinion Steyn ought to have stopped the war after the surrender of the majority of the responsible burghers of the Orange Free State. We should then have been spared this futile loss of life and destruction of property by the marauders who followed Steyn and who are kept together by the most atrocious lies.\*

When Lord Roberts was marching on Kroonstad, I went one morning with two other members

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\* In March, 1900, Steyn addressed the burghers at Kroonstad. He told them that up to that time the British had lost 64,000 in KILLED, while we had lost only 200. He asked them to see the hand of God in this—"God was clearly fighting for us," he said !

of the Volksraad, Messrs. McDonald and Bergstedt, to interview Steyn in the hope of inducing him to make peace. He flatly refused to see us officially, but was willing to receive us in a friendly way in the afternoon. Later, during the same morning, he made a speech to the burghers, in which he said that he would dispute every inch of Free State territory, and that so long as there was one man next to him he would continue the fight. I saw the futility of further argument with him.

Thereupon I addressed myself to Mr. Luyt, Chairman of the Volksraad. I said to him: "Luyt, is it not advisable and urgently necessary for you to convene the Volksraad to stop further bloodshed?" He shrugged his shoulders. I then said to him solemnly, "Luyt, you are shirking your duty! The responsibility must now rest upon you." "These are hard words," he said. "Yes," I replied, "it is now the time for hard words." He made no reply.

After the British occupation of Kroonstad, Mr. McDonald and myself wrote to Luyt, who was then at Heilbron, and again urged him to convene the Volksraad. To this letter we have received no reply up to this moment.

Even to-day I would be thankful to do anything to save my people from further ruin. But it is impossible to reason with the men who are now at

the front. With the exception of a few officials, these men consist almost exclusively of the poorest and most ignorant class of "bywoners," augmented by the desperate class of men from the Cape Colony, who have nothing to lose, and who lead a jolly, rollicking life on commando—stealing and looting from the farmers who have surrendered, and whom they opprobriously call "Handsoppers," but doing very little damage to the English. The officials gull them with promises of farms belonging to the landowners—most of whom have surrendered to the British—which the Orange Free State Government intend confiscating after the war!

These "bywoners" believe any preposterous story their leaders tell them in order to keep them together. One of my sons, who was taken prisoner by Theron because he had laid down his arms, told me, after his escape, that it was common laagar talk that 60,000 Russians, Americans, and Frenchmen were on the water and expected daily, that China had invaded and occupied England, and that only a small corner of that country still resisted, that God was killing the British all over the world with the bubonic plague. They declared "We are now only fighting for the cost of the War, as our independence is secured!"

It seems that even General Christiaan de Wet believes that the English are eager to make peace

on any terms. About six weeks ago, the Commissioner of Kroonstad asked me to accompany him to see De Wet, who had expressed his willingness to meet him and discuss terms. De Wet immediately precluded all discussion by demanding the recognition of the independence of the two Republics as a condition precedent. I had no chance of saying anything at this conference, as De Wet insisted on my silence, saying, "I object to Paul Botha saying anything at all." Whilst I was waiting outside the room, the burghers around me talked to one another in a loud voice, evidently for my benefit. They described their wonderful feats, and said, "In Kroonstad there are only the 'handsoppers,' who ought to get a bullet through their lungs, and a few sick little Englishmen. We can take the place whenever we want it!"

These are the men who are ruining the country, stealing from and terrifying their own people, at the instigation of Steyn, Hertzog, and others.

They are encouraged to roam about the country in small parties for this purpose. If I had space, I could instance hundreds of cases to show their atrocious conduct. Notorious thieves and cowards, such as Commandant Nel, of this district, who has never been in a single fight, are allowed to clear the isolated farm houses of every valuable. Even widows whose husbands have been killed on

commando are not safe from their depredations, and there have been cases, such as Prinsloo's, of this district, where they have even set fire to the dwelling houses while the inmates were asleep inside.

As I have said, these marauders possess no property, and have the natural delight of the bywoner class to injure anyone better off than themselves.

The property of their instigators is situated mostly in the large towns. And seemingly up to the present, these men have suffered no loss from the war, as their property has been left untouched, and is even protected by the British.

Steyn had absolutely no right to continue the war after he himself crossed the Free State Border into the Transvaal, because the constitution of the Free State forbids the President to leave the country or to appoint an Acting President, without the consent of the Volksraad. This question was decided in Reitz' time, who had gone to the Transvaal without first obtaining leave of the Volksraad. A motion was thereupon made in the Raad to the effect that the President had acted in contravention of the Constitution. Reitz made a lot of fuss about the matter, and even resigned, but was prevailed upon to reconsider his decision. The motion, however, was passed, and was still in force when Steyn crossed the

border. From that moment I hold that there was no responsible man at the head of the Free State burghers who were still on commando.

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## WARNING AND APPEAL TO ENGLAND.

### SUGGESTIONS.

By letting things slide in South Africa, and by trying to muddle through on the cheap, you failed in your duty towards the country which you called your own.

You weakly threw off the burden of governing us and protecting us from the black races, whenever it became convenient to you, drawing us back into your fold when the whim seized your statesmen.

By your hot and cold policy you confused and engendered distrust in the people sold to you by Holland, and even strained the loyalty of your own subjects to breaking point.

Because you failed to carry out your promises of compensation when you liberated the slaves you created rebels.

Because you failed to carry out the promises made when you annexed the Transvaal you gave Paul Kruger a lever to raise rebellion and war.

By retroceding the Transvaal *after Majuba* you



abandoned and exasperated your own loyal subjects, and brought yourself into contempt. The Bond was born.

In your later dealings with Oom Paul, who was backed by Hollander and German advisers, your statesmen cruelly allowed him to score time after time. Thereby you raised in the brain of the Dutch population of South Africa the phantom "South Africa for us alone!"—a false hope which, knowing the number of your subjects here, and that it was impossible for you to retire from South Africa, you, in justice to Dutch and English alike, should have crushed at its birth. Now you have had to crush this hope at the cost of much blood on both sides. If you had sent a capable, strong man like Sir Alfred Milner years ago, he would have understood the situation, and this bloodshed might have been avoided.

Only through this weak policy of yours was it possible for unscrupulous and ambitious men to foster rebellion in your colony, and to even dream of succeeding in a challenging policy against the British Empire.

Now that you have conquered us, and we are again your people, I implore you to give us your best statesmen to govern us—men who will make it their business to understand us, and who will study South African problems from the South African point of view. Your statesmen have so

often failed for want of knowledge of the people of South Africa. Follow the advice of your greatest South African Statesman, Cecil Rhodes, in South African affairs. Rely on men of integrity in the country, such as J. G. Frazer, Advocate J. W. Wessels, Innes, and others who know us and our wants. It must be *your* duty now to make South Africa from the Cape to the Zambesi into one harmonious whole, in which in a few years' time, there will be no discord between Boer and Englishman.

As I have said before, strict justice and uniformity of treatment, even if somewhat severe, of the conquered people, and a loyal fulfilment of your pledges, will do much to remove distrust and help to this end.

Remember that the backbone of the country, the majority of the responsible inhabitants, have surrendered themselves after an honest fight, and have loyally kept their word. Do not let those people feel that you make no distinction between them and those who have so flagrantly and treacherously broken their oath of neutrality, or those who are simply making the war into an excuse to rob, loot, and steal. By your cuddling rebels and traitors, you have made it a byword in South Africa amongst your own loyal subjects, "Loyalty to England does not pay!" Do not let your new subjects also discover that this is indeed

the literal truth. I see some newspapers in England advocate the wholesale deportation as prisoners of war of those men who surrendered, as being preferable to the severe treatment of those who have treacherously broken their oath. I see that it is also advocated to put Krugerites and men who have made themselves notorious as anti-English, into positions of trust. Unless a very careful selection is made in the choice of such officials, this course will create great discontent amongst the men who have surrendered, and who have suffered much at the hands of these men. And it will only make the irreconcilables think that you are weak and afraid. For the chance of reconciling one irreconcilable, do not run the risk of making ten disloyal. I solemnly warn you against such a course. Justice and equity is all we ask. The country is ruined. Many of these men have been reduced to beggary. Help and compensation are urgently needed to set the men, who will make the country, on their feet again.

You must do away as much as possible with the intriguing foreign element in South Africa—especially Hollander and German. They have fomented the discord between Boer and Englishmen in the past, and will try and prevent the reconciliation desired by all right thinking people, and which will come about if we are left to ourselves. We do not wish to be used any further as puppets of any European combination.

To Englishmen such as Mr. Labouchere, Dr. Clark, Mr. Stead, and others who misled the Transvaal and urged it on in its folly before the war, I say that it was inhuman of you to use the Boer as a pawn in your political game—6000 miles away—and as a peg to hang your European fads on. It is a thousandfold more cruel and inhuman now to keep their minds restless and so prolong the struggle. If you are honest in your wish for peace in South Africa, and a peaceful solution of the difficulties ahead of us, then I, an old Boer, say to you, “Leave us in peace to find ourselves. You do not understand *us* or the requirements of this country.”

It is difficult to attack the liberty of the Press. But some means ought to be found to curb it from hurting and inflaming feeling on both sides. The necessity of this will be even greater after the war, if we are going to shake hands and let by-gones be by-gones. Irreconcilable newspapers such as *Ons Land*, *South African News*, and *The Midland News*, which keep alive discord in the Cape Colony, and others which may be re-started in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, by foreigners, as before, such as *The Volksstem*, *The Rand Post*, and *The Bloemfontein Express* on the one side, and *The Star* on the other side, ought to be restrained.

I am glad to see that the first English paper to start in the Orange River Colony, *The Bloemfontein*

*Post*, is fully alive to the requirements of the times. It has avoided giving offence to us as the conquered people, and consistently advocates reconciliation on the best principles.

On the native question you must listen to South Africans—Boer and Englishman agree on this point, that the Kafir must be treated as an inferior, at the same time protecting him from cruelty and injustice. Your missionaries should confine themselves to saving the soul of the Kafir, and should not meddle with politics. To give the black races a vote would simply make this country impossible for the white man, and will ultimately bring about a war between white and black.

I think I may say without fear of contradiction that on the whole the laws of the Orange Free State in regard to Kafirs are just and equitable. For the sake of making labour more plentiful, however, I would suggest that an alteration be made which would make it impossible for large landowners to keep huge Kafir kraals on their farms. These Kafirs are allowed by their masters to sow as much as they like, and are therefore quite comfortable, and never feel the necessity of going out to work. As the case stands at present, some farmers have more Kafir servants than they want, while others can get none.

Above all things education is urgently needed in this country. Money must not be spared in

this respect. We ought to have the schools brought as near as possible to the farms, and then education must be made absolutely compulsory from a certain age. Technical schools and industrial institutions are a great want, and agricultural shows and exhibitions ought to be encouraged.

A seemingly minor question, but which is really of great importance, is that the Englishmen you send out here must recognize that this is a country without caste. The lofty and superior demeanour affected by some of the men from England is most galling to the independent mind of the colonials who are accustomed to consider one white man as good as another, so long as he behaves himself decently.

For some time after the war I would suggest that a Governor should rule the Colony directly under the High Commissioner. He should be assisted by a Council, consisting of members partly nominated by himself and partly elected. I suggest this form of government because I think the people must become accustomed to the new order of things before party politics are allowed to stir up their minds. The wound caused by the war ought to have a little time to get healed.

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## APPEAL TO MY OWN PEOPLE.

What had WE Free Staters to gain by this war?

What quarrel had WE with England ?

How were we threatened ?

Were we suffering from any grievous wrong which alone justifies a small country to risk ALL in an attack on a mighty empire ?

Was the friendship of the Transvaal worth the risk ?

Could WE have become more independent than we were ?

Has the war not yet taught us that the Transvaal merely wished to make use of us as soldiers in its cause ?

Supposing for one moment that we could have been victorious, how would that have benefited us ?

I tell you, and I believe you realize it yourselves now, that victory would have meant for us a worse defeat. We may be unhappy now, but we should then have been doubly unhappy. For the Transvaal would have bullied us and made us a dependency.

Do you think that the Transvaal was strong enough to maintain peace in South Africa ?

Could you have crushed England and made yourselves entirely independent of the protector of our sea coast ? Instead of chasing the English

into the sea, you have drawn Englishmen from all parts of the world into this country.

I tell you we have and had as little chance of driving the English out of South Africa as they have of getting rid of us.

We must get rid of the idea of one nation preponderating in South Africa to the exclusion of the other. Recognition of this fact on both sides is the first preliminary to a peaceful life, and it must be the keynote to all our future relations with one another.

We have fought for the maggot in the brains of a few unscrupulous politicians, and now we can surrender with honour, because we have fought gallantly.

I am convinced that the people of England recognize this and bear us no ill-will. They are willing to settle down alongside of us as friends ; they hold out their hands as in the prize ring after the fight is over, and it is our duty to shake the outstretched hand and let by-gones be by-gones.

Have any of the things that Steyn promised, prophesied, and foretold, come true ? Where are the thousands of Colonial sympathizers who were going to rise up as one man ? What has the Bond done for you ? Where is the promised foreign intervention ?

We have had a rude awakening !



Where are your leaders to-day, and where are YOU, the Boers, who have borne the brunt of the war? Our leaders have played the game with you of heads I win, tails you lose.

Paul Kruger, rich and comfortable, has "retired from business," and is being borne to Europe and safety in a Dutch man-of-war.

Leyds, the wise man, long ago saw the storm brewing, and, after realising his assets *here*, continued the partnership from a safe distance in a comfortable home on the continent of Europe.

Esselen, the man who would not wash until he had conquered Durban, after living in safety under the Red Cross during the war, is now living safely in Scotland.

Fischer, Wolmarans, and Wessels have been spending *your* money in delightful trips from one country to another. Surely their business in Europe was completed long ago. Why did they not come back to fight side by side with you?

I do not know where the rest of Kruger's fire-eating gang is at the present moment, but I strongly suspect that they keep themselves well out of danger and hardships. Have any of our political leaders who have pushed *you* forward into the fight, been killed or wounded fighting gallantly on the battlefield, or are they in any way injured by the war? Steyn, Hertzog, and others still fulminate fire and sword in proclamations, but has

Steyn or his gang ever been heard of on the battlefield? I truly believe that these braves will also retire at the convenient moment to Villas in Sicily.

But YOU, where are YOU? YOUR blood has been spent like water, YOUR homes have been destroyed, YOU have been deported to strange countries, and you and your women and children have been huddled together in refugee camps and reduced to live on the charity of your enemy.

Because you are unenlightened these men have played upon your weaknesses and prejudices, and you had to pick the chestnuts out of the fire, and now, after ruining you, they save themselves and abandon you to your fate.

Do you now realize that the Hollanders, Germans, and French egged you on to fight, not because they loved you so much, but that they hated England more? What do they want in South Africa? They merely want to create dissension between you and the English to give themselves a chance of deriving benefit from your quarrels.

Don't let them confuse you any longer as to what your real interests are. Turn this intriguing foreign element out of the country. There can be no real prosperity where there is continual strife.

I repeat Boer and Briton *must* live side by side

in South Africa. We must both realize this and make it the keynote of our future. Let us work together to create a peaceful, united, self-governing South Africa, under the British flag, because, as I have explained, peace and prosperity are not possible under another flag. If every one of us does his best towards this end, we shall still see the words of our beloved old President Brand fulfilled in this unhappy country :

“ ALLES ZAL RECHT KOMEN.”