Nationalism and Nationalism.

As a writer in last week's "International" remarked, in this election no policy is considered necessary on either side. It is "Up Smuts" or "Down Smuts," and that is enough. Unless we are absorbed in the immediate scramble for office, however, we cannot escape some sense of the poverty of this subject-matter by itself; and as a matter of fact the various parties are after all introducing, not policies indeed, but nationalist appeals both unworthy of the occasion and wholly unprofitable to the masses whose "loud and prolonged cheers" they excite, besides being, as all nationalisms are, mutually contradictory—in spite of the boast on both sides of having "killed racialism."

IS RACIALISM KILLED?

Hertzog appeals to Dutch nationalism and arouses enormous enthusiasm, although he holds out no benefit for the enthusiasts from secession; indeed he cannot promise secession at all, the Pact bars it—and they cheer the Pact!

Smuts and Creswell compete in appealing to British nationalism, for what else is their rival assurance of "no secession," "no hauling down of the Union Jack," but a slogan every bit as nationalist as Hertzog's?

At the same time, Hertzog appeals for British as well as Dutch support, and Smuts and Creswell for Dutch as well as British.

How is this possible? Partly, no doubt, because the fight is at bottom (though you would never discern it from the politicians' speeches, even those that harp, irrelevantly enough, on "alien" financiers") a class fight between British-cum-Dutch capitalists and British-cum-Dutch workers.

That is the bright side of it. The dark side, inherent in nationalism, is that the unity of these white races is based on a common hostility to the black races.

NATIONALISM IS ANTAGONISM.

Modern nationalism is not "human nature." It is a superstition produced by ceaseless propaganda from the mother's knee, through the school, pulpit, press, etc., right up to old age and death, in the interest of a ruling section. And those who are loudest in protesting that it is human nature are just those who have propagated it in their own interest.

Such nationalism is always directed AGAINST some other race or nationality or section. It is really the effort of one group to enslave or exploit another and live at its expense (and this generally means at the expense of the mass even of the enslaving and exploiting nationality as well as of the enslaved and exploited one). A nationalism that wishes equally well to all other nations, groups and sections, is a figment.

Thus nationalism is frequently associated with the cause of a landowning class—Junkers, Boyars, etc.; that is, with the interest of the few land monopolisers as against the landless masses.

In this country it is very closely associated with the policy of "keeping the Kaffir in his place," i.e., really keeping him OUT of his place; in other words, driving and keeping him off his land and taking possession of it and reducing him to slavery.

British nationalism or imperialism again means "the earth for the Empire," that is, for the leading British exploiters, who want it for raw material for markets, and ESPECIALLY FOR CHEAP LABOUR.

LOYALTY TO—LABOUR CHEAPNESS!

Nothing there for any of the masses involved. On the contrary, they are direct sufferers from the resultant cheapening of labour. The "poor whites" who cheer for the Vierkleur and the workers and unemployed who shout for the British connection are thereby alike inviting their own degradation to Kaffir and Coolie level. They are cheering only the gain of the boss and landlord class at the price of their own undoing.

Lest they discover this truth, they are lulled with cries of "segregation," "repatriation of Asiatics," etc., as if these would really mitigate cheap labour competition. (Indeed, the Asiatic cry at least is almost admittedly not a worker's but a shopkeepers' affair—if you took away all the Indian labour from Natal the African continent would still supply all the cheap labour necessary to bring down the white man's standard and take away his job.)

AS OTHERS SEE US.

All these nationalisms are equally hollow. We cannot see it in ourselves, but we can all see it in the other fellow. We look upon the racial squabbles of the Balkan peoples, for instance, as madness. And in South Africa the Britisher's cheers for his flag leave the Dutchman cold, and vice versa. In favour of the Nationalist indeed it may be said that his nationalism is well founded on resentment against a conqueror, and is moreover serving, in the present crisis, a useful, anti-Imperialist purpose; but the British-born Labourite railing at "Big Business" yet loyal to the flag of Big Business (due to the fact that he typifies not labour but Small Business) is simply foolish, and serves no useful purpose whatsoever.

"NATIONAL BOLSHEVISM."

What, then, of the national pride which undoubtedly appears even in a Moscow demonstration? All the difference in the world. No trace there of the bourgeois nationalism that exploits and enslaves others. The classes that trade on nationalism elsewhere are just those that are the least loyal in the Workers' Republic, the first act of which was to deproclaim Russian exploitation of other races. And so we find a considerable proportion, and those not the least enthusiastic, of those cheering Bolshevik crowds, are members of non-Russian races formerly subject but now emancipated.

Yes, there is still the element of nationalism AGAINST some other nation; because the proletarian revolution has taken place so far only within the Russian nation (if a couple of a hundred nationalists can be called a nation) and is surrounded by other nations still hostile as nations because the majority of the workers in them still blindly support their capitalist Governments.

But the Russian workers, already the most internationally-minded in the world, are cheering not their own race as such but their local victory over local capitalism plus the hope of similar victories elsewhere. And the more the revolution spreads to other countries the less its votaries will show of nationalism. What indeed could be less "nationalist" in the bourgeois sense than that scuttle from the front with the cry, "Peace and Bread," which was the foundation of the Bolshevik revolution?

THE NOBILITY OF CLASS LOYALTY.

As in March, 1922, on the Rand, so in a world scale, in an intense crisis of the class struggle, the bastard loyalties taught and used by the ruling classes for their own ends at last dissolve into the supremely ennobling loyalty to the international working class.

There is something of that loyalty however unconscious, lying behind the cheers at our election meetings, and it will one day emerge clear and predominant over the politicians' bogus appeals, because it reflects not the false struggle of races but the real struggle of classes, and strives for the only victory worth fighting for, the victory of the workers over their oppressors and the end of all class rule.

S.P.B.

Labour Party and Slavery.

The "Labour" Ministers in the House of Commons are becoming adepts at concealing unpleasant facts from the House. On the question of Abyssinian slave trade, the Secretary for the Board of Trade refused to publish the reports, and Mr. Ponsonby, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (MacDonald's department) said: "No reports of slave owning or slave trading within or beyond Liberian territory had been received, but traffic in CONTRACT LABOUR had been from time to time brought to the notice of the Government owing to the inclusion of British subjects from Sierra Leons among the gangs.'

Gangs, "contract" labour. Sounds fishy, Mr. Ponsonby. A "Labour" Minister, too. Oh, fie!

American Fascisti.

The American Legion is one of the names under which American Fascism masquerades. The Wilkesbarre, Penn., local post of this White Guard organisation, which broke up the Lenin Memorial meeting, has been given the authority by Mayor Hart to decide what meetings shall and shall not be held in future.

This decision was made at a conference with the Mayor when Harry Winitsky and Herbert Benjamin, representing the Workers' Party, declared that they would insist on the right of free speech in Wilkesbarre.

Legionaires at the conference tried to intimidate the workers' representatives and seemed to be on the point of attacking them physically.

All meetings demanding civil liberty will be dispersed, the Mayor and legionaires declared, unless they have the Legion's permission.

Without an economic organisation and without economic power, the fruits of any political victory the workers may achieve will turn to ashes on their lips.—F. V. D[illegible].