Nationalism and Nationalism.

As a writer in last week's "International" remarked, in this election no political issue need be decided on either side, 1st. It's "Up Smuts", 2nd. "Dutch Smuts", and that is enough. Unless we are absorbed in the immediate scramble for office, however, we cannot escape some serious and far-reaching questions on this subject by itself; and as a matter of fact the various parties are after all introducing, not policies indeed, but nationalist appeals all unworthy of the occasion and inapplicable 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 it has as yet no positive benefit for the enthusiasts from overseas, and indeed he no more promises any to the Pact bars it—and they cheer the Pact!

Smuts and Crewe compete in appealing to British nationalism, for which the most effective is their appeal to "the man in the Union Jack," but a slogan every bit as nationalistic as Hertzog's was.

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

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 are hard, irredeemably enough, on 'alien' finance') a class fight between British and Dutch capitalists and British and Dutch workers.

That is the bright side of it. The dark side, inherent in nationalism, is that the unbalanced character of our system, to which the Natal race is an exception and 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; it is the very essence 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 of the enslaved and exploiting nationality as well as of the enslaved and exploited one). A nationalism that wishes equally well to all other nations, and sections, is a figment.

Thus nationalism is frequently 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, which wants 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 suffering from the resultant cheapening of labour. The "poor whites" who cheer for the Volkswerk and the workers and unemployed who shout for the British connection are thereby alike inviting their own degradation to the economic and political level. They are cheering only the gain of the boss and landlord class at the price of their own undoing.

If they discover this truth, they are lured with the cry of "segregation," "re-patriation of Asians," etc., as if these would really mitigate cheap labour competition. (Indeed, the Asiatic cry at least is almost always made by the workers themselves 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 states, for example. We see 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 Labourer is willing to let the flag of Big Business (due to the fact that he typifies not labour but Small Business) is simply foolhardy, and serves no useful purpose whatsoever.

"NATIONAL BOLSHEVISM"

What then, of the national pride which undoubtedly appears even in a Moscow demonstration or in the difference of 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 least loyal in the Workers' public. The first act of which was to decry the whole Russian revolution of other races. (And so we find a considerable proportion, and those not the least enthusiastic, of those cheering the Bolshevik revolution and members of non-Russian races formerly subject but now emancipated.

Yes, there is still the element of nationalism AGAINST some other nation; because the revolution has taken place so far only within the Russian nation (if a couple of 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 Union 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 sentiment from the front with the cry, "Peace and Bread," which was the foundation of the Bolshevist revolution?

THE NOBILITY OF CLASS LOYALTY

As in March, 1922, on the Rubel, so in a world scale, in an intone crisis of the class struggle, the question of class loyalty is taught and used by the ruling classes for their own ends at last dissolve into the supremely enunciating 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 politics of the class which, because it reflects not the false struggle of races but the real struggle of classes, and strives for the only victor worthy 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 adept at concealing unpleasant facts from the House. On the occasion of the debate, the Secretary for the Board of Trade referred to publish the reports, and Mr. Ponsonby, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 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 Leone among the contract labourers.

Gangs, "contract" labour. Sounds whizky, Mr. Ponsonby. A "Labour" Minister, too. Oh, hell!

American Fascisti.

The American Legion is one of the names under which American Fascisti masquerade, the Wilkesbarre, Penn., local post of this White Guard organisation, which broke up the Luzhin Memorial rally, has been made a matter of public record by Mayor Hart to decide what meetings shall and shall not be held in future.

This decision was made at a conference with Mayor Price, Winitsky and Herbert Benjamin, representing the Workers' Party, declared that they would insist on the right of free speech in Wilkesbarre. The American Legionnaires at the conference tried to intimidate the workers' representatives and seemed to be on the point of attacking them physically, but the police, on the strength of the American Legionnaires having in the past committed civil liberty will be dispersed, the Mayor and legionnaires 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. P.