

**Committee III**  
Nationalism AND World Unity:  
Educating for the 21st Century

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**DISCUSSANT RESPONSE**

by

**Willy Wielemans**  
Department of Psychology and Education  
Catholic University of Louvain  
Louvain, BELGIUM

to Papers by W. Mitter and J. Kim

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NATIONALISM AND WORLD UNITY  
EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Chapter 2.

EDUCATIONAL NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM  
IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

Comments on the foregoing papers: W. MITTER

J. KIM

by W. WIELEMANS

Introduction

There is not much similarity between the papers of Mitter and Kim. Mitter treats 'nationalism-internationalism' in Europe where international institutions constitute an undeniable foundation for 'internationalism'. Kim talks about Korea and Japan, between which close co-operations don't exist; at the contrary Koreans seems to have some remaining feelings of hostility as a consequence of the Japanese occupation of Korea. In Kim's paper 'internationalism' is mainly identified with an attitude. In this conception Kim is much more optimistic than Mitter. Especially in the light of many recent expressions of violent 'nationalism' (The USSR, India, Arab countries) this optimism seems to be at least overheasty and perhaps rather unrealistic.

W. MITTER: NATIONALISM, REGIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM IN EUROPE. AN EAST-WEST COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Summary

Mitter starts from the thesis that the peaceful changes in Eastern Europe, the fade-down of the West-East conflicts, the progress in, and the expansion of the European Community are all signals of a new era: the era of 'internationalism' and of an 'undivided' Europe. At the start of this new epoch all political conditions seem to be present in order to conquer the many anti-humanitarian characteristics of 'nationalism',

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such as hegemonial thinking, ideological doctrinairism, chauvinism. However, at the same time, feelings of desillusion and fear related to the 'new' Europe must be recognized as well, e.g. xenophobia, racism and chauvinism in many European countries.

Mitter states that the issue 'nationalism versus internationalism' is embedded in the basic tension of European history, viz. the tension between unity and diversity. In that particular tension the history of Europe would always have been rooted. And the challenges inherent in that tension would have permanently determined the European development.

The origin of modern educational systems (in the 18th century) goes hand in hand with the emergence of the modern states. This development is not limited to Western Europe only, but is also recognizable both in the Russian Empire and in South East Europe. However, there is a fundamental difference. West European countries, on the one hand, established themselves as 'nation-states' built on the principle of one national language. This monopolising position was associated with both some very important cultural patterns and a feeling of national identity. Education was utilized in this process of value and identity transfer. Initially this 'socialization' occurred in subjects such as history and literature, later also in more specific subjects such as civics and social studies. On the other hand, East Central and Eastern European countries (the Habsburg and Russian Empire) were multinational and multicultural, which made them unable to solve the problem of coexistence of different 'nationalities'. In education this brought about many difficult problems as e.g. the establishment of 'underground schools' may prove. The USSR, that emerged after the breakdown of the Empires at the end of World War I, inherited the unsolved 'nationalities problem'. The partition of Europe in 'East' and 'West' as the outcome of World War II reconfirmed once more this division.

During the past 45 years the trends towards internationalism were of a different kind respectively in Eastern and Western Europe. In Western Europe the foundation of the Council of Europe (1948) and the development of the European Economic Community (later, in 1957, the EG) intensified the process towards integration and unification. Also education has been

affected by this trend: introduction of new syllabi, exchange programmes etc. The principle of a 'proletarian (socialist) internationalism' propagated in Eastern Europe, turned out to be a disguise of "the hegemonial policy of the Soviet Union in her relations to her Western neighbours and to her own non-Russian nationalities" (p. 12). In education this policy became manifest in the so-called process of 'Russification': the imposition of Russian language instruction upon non-Russian nationalities.

The opening of Eastern Europe and the fade-down of the West-East conflict create, Mitter states, new potentials to an internationalism which could be able to overcome the anti-humanitarian characteristics of nationalism. This new era brings about a number of new challenges for education both in its relationship with socio-economic, political and cultural subsystems and within its own system. Mitter indicates seven different challenges, viz.:

1. Value education: what could be done in education in order to make sure that humanistic and democratic values will be both accepted and internalized?
2. How could education contribute to end up the tension between supranational centralism and national renaissance? Mitter presumes that the approval of the drive to forms of regional and local autonomies could provide for a positive support to this endeavour. In this regard he also pleads for a decentralization of the educational system.
3. Multicultural education: in a multicultural setting, already existing in many European countries, education should promote integration as much as possible. This kind of education is not necessarily denying the national identity of peoples. However, this education to national identity or 'patriotism' should be embedded in the superordinate values of individual freedom, social justice and democracy and the respect of human rights.
4. How to settle the interrelations between equality or equity of educational opportunities and quality of education?
5. To what extent is local autonomy of schools desirable?
6. To what extent could curricula and methods become internationalized?

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7. Is the model of the teacher as a 'change agent' to be reconsidered since youngsters are 'socialized' by a many-fold of parallel activities of other influencing (educational?) agencies (media, church, peer-groups, family, clubs)?

#### Comments

Mitter's paper contains many propositions and interpretations which could be as many starting points for comments. Such comments are certainly based on rather limited and even personal knowledge of, and experience in the field of education. By way of example, I would like to mention the following two:

1. On p. 26 Mitter calls the revival of intolerant nationalism in Eastern Europe "un undesired side-effect of the democratic liberation movements in former 'socialist' Eastern Europe". I think that different phenomena clearly show that nationalism in East European countries is not only a 'side-effect' of the democratisation movement, but as much a reason/cause of it.
2. As one of the challenges of the future Mitter stresses on value education. My question is whether Mitter is not too optimistic as far as the potentials of education and schooling are concerned. In educational and sociological research one is conscious of the fact that the school as an institute of socialization is increasingly treathened by other societal subsystems. Many of those subsystems, such as the economy and its implicate image of man, have a contradictory socialization code which could neutralize the effects of value educations at schools. Consequently, in order to be successful, value education should include at the same time a society-critical education aiming at a decodification of hidden messages interwoven into the many (indirectly) influencing domains of life and society.

In addition to this kind of comments (which could be mainly related to Mitter's seven challenges) there seem to be a more fundamental problem in Mitter's paper, viz. in connection with his interpretation of the origin of modern educational sys-

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tems. According to Mitter, the origins of modern educational systems in the 18th century are closely interrelated with the emergence of the modern State; he further argues that the evolution of educational systems is embedded in the tension between unity and diversity in European history. Education in Western Europe should be characterized by unity, whereas in Eastern Europe it should be qualified by diversity. In East European countries the problem of 'nationalities' has never been solved because of this diversity. At the same time Mitter is implicitly saying that this problem in Western Europe has been solved thanks to the factor of 'unity'.

Reading carefully Margret Archer's well-known study "Social Origins of Educational Systems" (London, 1979) it seems to be very doubtful to describe and interpret national structures and educational systems in Western Europe in terms of 'unity'. Especially in decentralized West European countries (e.g. the UK) there is evidence of many characteristics of 'diversity' as well, though this kind of characteristics should be reserved to Eastern Europe only, Mitter states. In other words, it would be interesting to compare Mitter's meaning of the concept 'unity' with the one of Archer. My first impression is that Archer's concept contains more capacity both to make and to produce very detailed distinctions because of the sociologically based construction of her concept.

#### J. KIM: THE PRACTICE OF NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM IN EDUCATION. THE CASE OF KOREA AND JAPAN.

##### Summary

Kim recognizes an evolution from nationalism towards internationalism, though today both are intermingled in mutual coexistence. As to the past, nationalism has been a very important value; today it seems to become more and more invalidated, being "one of the major causes of conflicts and divisiveness among nations, blocking the way to the world unity and harmony, posing a serious problem for mankind." (p. 1)

Internationalism could be perceived as a higher value carrying the potential to compensate for the limitations of misguided

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nationalism.

Kim examines the practice of nationalism and internationalism in the educational system of two neighbouring countries, viz. Korea and Japan. The issue of nationalism is treated first. Kim applies successively the same approach to the two countries: after a brief historical overview, the meaning of nationalism and its expression in education are explained. According to Kim, Korea took the form of 'democratic nationalism' after the liberation in 1945, whereas in Japan to a considerable extent the old tradition of a rather 'authoritarian nationalism' seems to continue.

In his second part the author deals with internationalism. Once more each country is taken separately. (Is this a sign of a rather low degree of internationalism?)

Kim is of opinion that recently Korea has experienced a series of events unparalleled in her long history which are leading towards further internationalization: "The overall liberalization and democratization process prevailing, the 1988 Olympiad, the Northern politics, and many other factors, not excluding her expanding economy..." (p. 20). These processes bring about some changes (which for the rest are remaining implicit) in the system of education: international co-operation and exchange, strengthening foreign language education etc.

The situation of Japan is different. Because of her special position in the post-war period "Japan had to face the world reality and increasingly came to moderate previous practice of nationalism, leaning gradually towards internationalism" (p. 23). However, Kim states, this promotion of internationalism in education "has been quite vocal". "In terms of policy statements and declaration of intentions the policy direction is rather explicit and clear. The practice in terms of political socialization, however, seems lagging behind" (p. 24).

In his concluding remarks Kim first summarizes his paper and repeats once more that the emerging needs of internationalism are clearly perceived in both Korea and Japan. Both countries are stressing the important role of education in promoting internationalism. Internationalism is perceived as carrying the potential to solve many important problems. "...let us remember that practice of internationalism is the only way to coexistence and coprosperity. The role of education can hardly

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be overemphasized in pursuit of this goal" (p. 27).

### Comments

1. The treatment of the two countries is remarkably different: Korea is mainly praised; Japan is predominantly criticized because of her attitude towards Korea (negative, denigrating... see p. 24-25; 17-18). The paper seems to express a (not always latent) tension between historical events and facts on the one hand and a nationalist interpretation of those facts on the other. The way in which Kim has constructed his paper argues against, or at least compromises his plea for transcending feelings of narrow nationalism (see also p. 24).
2. The meaning of (inter)nationalism seems not to be very clear. The two interpretations of these concepts are in many cases confusingly mixed up: sometimes (inter)nationalism is conceived as a given condition pushing education towards certain changes; on the other hand the same notions are also taken as ideals or objectives to be realized in education. Some examples are following:
  - "...nationalism is one of the basic motivating forces of nation-building and national development..." (p. 1);
  - "Internationalism is an outgrowth of an international age" (p. 2);
  - "It is truly said that education is affected by whatever changes taking place outside the schools even more than by whatever changes taking place within the schools" (p. 20).

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  - "And no doubt education has played, and has continuously to play a pivotal role not only in development of both nationalism and internationalism..." (p. 1);
  - "The educational policies directed to nationalistic orientations are manifested in many different ways..." (p. 6);
  - "To meet the challenges of the on-coming 21st century, Korea and Japan must practice internationalism between them first. And education must cope with this immediate and hard-pressed demand" (p. 26-27).

In order to set up realistic educational activities it seems to be necessary to know more precisely about the socio-political reality of (inter)nationalism in the coun-

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tries under study. Consequently, the two meanings mentioned above should be taken distinctively. Starting from the examined socio-political reality education could be committed as an effective means of socialization towards (inter)nationalism.

3. The description of nationalism/internationalism gives often the impression to be oversimplified. Nationalism is "one of the major causes of conflicts divisiveness among nations, blocking the way to the world unity and harmony, posing a serious problem for mankind" (p.1). Or further on: "Cognizant of the scars of wars, mischievous consequences of colonialism and imperialism, exploitations and oppressions, we are beginning to realize the limitations of misguided nationalism, being compelled to look for an alternative course of internationalism" (p. 2-3). According to Kim, the 'new road to internationalism' (p. 3) is very promising and will bring about solutions for many problems. However, Kim scarcely makes mention of important factors such as the cultural identity of peoples, regional differences or disparities etc. In other words the author is quite silent of very important facts and processes which will be of crucial interest as to the construction of the world in the 21st century.
4. In Kim's argument the 'legitimizing content' of internationalism is not made very clear. Is internationalism based on universal principles such as the belief in human reason (rationalism), human rights, universal values, global awareness etc.? Or is internationalism rooted in, and emerging from, a particular national common past, nationalist values, heroic and inspiring nationalist founding fathers, nationalist symbolic orders etc.? Or is the author preferring a mixture of both categories of content?
5. Another oversimplification of both the notion and the expected effects of internationalism could be included in the fact that internationalism is predominantly seen as a juxtaposition of interrelated and autonomous countries. Internationalism is expected to extinguish patterns of

oppression, (neo-)colonialism, wars... Internationalism could do justice to all nations involved.

However, referring to the dependency theories, it appears that international relations are, could be, or become very often unequal and unfair relations (see the notions of 'centre' and 'periphery' in the dependency theories).