Symbols of Nationalism: National Anthems

Nationalism: Devotion or love of one’s country; patriotism. Desire for self-rule.

When people wish to promote a strong sense of group identity, they often use a variety of symbolic activities and objects that become identified with the group. National groups very frequently use flags and national anthems that make reference to or symbolize things considered important in defining the nation and creating a sense of national pride and unity.

While the act of singing a national anthem helps create an on-going sense of common group identity, national anthems are also historic documents, often reflecting in their lyrics issues that were salient (prominent, important) during the period of national formation. Examination of the lyrics of national anthems can provide insight into the different concepts which nations have of themselves, and the kinds of things that are important in defining a sense of national identity.

Directions:

1.) Write the name of each country in your notebook. Leave space in between the countries to write answers for each song.

2.) Read each national anthem and answer questions 1-5 for each anthem in your INB.

3.) Answer questions 6-9 after reading all of the anthems.

National Anthems Questions:

National anthems often represent core values and ideas that countries believe in at the time they are adopted.

For each song, answer the following questions:

1. Does this song refer to the land? If so, what kind of feelings does it project?

2. Does this song refer to history or some kind of common past? If so, list the phrases referring to the past.

3. Does this song refer to some kind of common future? If so, list the phrases referring to the future.

4. Does this song refer to any political ideas? If so, what are they?

5. Does this song refer to the people of the country? If so, what kinds of things does it mention that might provide them with a common identity?

6. Which, if any, of the songs seem to support the idea of the nation as based primarily on political rights and liberties?

7. Which of the songs, if any, seem to emphasize the concept of the nation as a people with a common ancestry and common history?

8. Do any of the songs seem not to fit the modern concept of the nation-state? Why do you think this might be?

9. Which song most closely matches the idea represented in the U.S. motto, E pluribus unum?