

NATIONAL ANTHEMS

It is well known that the declaration of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 was the result of compromise. It did not fulfill the visions of either of the two largest communities in Cyprus. In fact both communities initially viewed the solution of independence, as an intermediate solution, probably more so the Greek Cypriots, until quite some time later, when Makarios came to distinguish the feasible from the desirable and to drop ENOSIS (Union with Greece) as an aim, for ever.

It is indicative of the ambiguous nature which the independence of Cyprus took, that there was no national anthem for the new state. Instead it was agreed that on official occasions a certain piece of classical music would be played, the existence of which has remained a mystery for over 20 years. Thus, we are not sure if it was really a piece from Händel's "Scipio the African" or a piece by Beethoven. The playing of this piece was abandoned in 1966, two years after the Turkish Cypriots left the government and we Greek Cypriots could do "whatever we wanted". Among the other "achievements" up until the invasion when Turkish Cypriots moved to the north, the national anthem of the country of which they were citizens (they had the country's ID cards and passports), was the national anthem of Greece!

It is not the intent at this juncture to discuss the playing of the Greek national anthem as the official anthem of the Cyprus State. We just want to present a quick review of the book by Reed and Bristow "National Anthems of the world" in which 172 countries in total are reviewed.

We observe at the outset that all independent countries have their own national anthem, even the smaller and less important ones, such as Andorra, Antigua, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Butane, Botswana, Brunei, Burkina Fasso, Burundi, Fiji Islands, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Iceland (whose first inhabitants were Norwegians), Kiribati, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Maldives, Malta, Monaco, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Surinam, Swaziland, Tonga, Trinidad, Tuvalu, Vanuatu etc.

Even Wales which forms a part of Great Britain has its own national anthem.

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that when they formed two states, North and South Yemen, each had its own anthem. The same happened for the two Germanies when

they were separate states. Moreover until this very moment, North and South Korea have their own national anthems.

It is also noted that the Finnish anthem which was adopted in 1848, is also sung in Swedish because of the existence in Finland of a Swedish minority (about 8% of the population). In other words, the Finns of Swedish background do not have the Swedish as their own anthem but the Finnish, which is sung in their own language, Swedish. A similar arrangement has been made in Sri Lanka where the national anthem of the country is written in both Singhalese and Tamil because of the existence of two ethnic communities. The same is the case in Belgium where they have not adopted either the French or the Dutch anthem but a Belgian national anthem, which is sung both in Flemish and in French because of the existence of two ethnic communities also.

Similarly in Switzerland, where despite the existence of three ethnic communities, they have neither adopted the French, nor the German nor the Italian national anthem, but instead have their own, which is written in the five languages that are spoken in the country.

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that the Yugoslav and Polish national anthems have the same music, while the national anthem of Albania was written by a Romanian, Cyprien Borumbescu who also composed the music for the Romanian anthem. Francisco Figueroa wrote the anthems of both Uruguay and Paraguay, while the renowned Nobel price-winner Rabindranath Tangore wrote both the Indian and Bangladeshi anthems.

It is noted that there are only two cases in the whole world where two countries share the same anthem, those of Cyprus and Greece and those of the Cap Verde Islands and of Guinea Bissau. The Isle of Man uses the same anthem as Britain, but it does have its own Manx anthem.

It is perhaps worth adding that countries with the same cultural background, but which form different states, do not have the same anthem but each has its own (the year of adoption is indicated in brackets).

This occurs for example in :

- (a) Countries with a Spanish culture
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|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Argentina (1913) | Bolivia (1842) | Chile (1941) |
| Colombia (1905) | Costa Rica (1853) | Ecuador (1865) |

Salvador (1953)	Guatemala (1896)	Uruguay (1845)
Paraguay (1846)	Peru (1913)	

(b) The same holds for the countries of the old Indian subcontinent.

India (1950)	Pakistan (1953)	Bangladesh (1972)
Sri Lanka (1952)	Nepal (1899)	

(c) The countries which make up the Arab nation also have their own separate anthems:

Bahrain (1971)	Lebanon (1927)	Oman (1972)
Kuwait (1978)	Morocco (?)	Sudan (1972)
Mauritania (1960)	Saudi Arabia (1950)	Tunisia (1958)
Qatar ()	Yemen ()	Egypt (1979)
Syria (1936)	United Arab Emirates (1971)	
Jordan (1946)	Libya (1969)	

On the above basis, it is easy at first sight to draw the following conclusions:

National anthems are directly connected with the sovereign status of each of the different states. Typically the prologue of the book under review begins with the phrase: "Since the last edition of the book, no new states with their anthems have appeared", thus indicating the immediate connection between statehood and national anthem. Even though they may be called "national", the anthems have nothing to do with ethnicity or the common culture but with the creation of a state. Thus, whereas the Arab nation stretches from the West Coast of Africa (Mauritania) to Iraq, there is no Arab national anthem as such but instead as many anthems as there are Arab states.

This is also obvious both in central and South America where the vast majority of the relevant countries retain, or are the evolution of, Spanish Culture. Even so, each has its own national anthem.

It is the rule - with exceptions of course - that the national anthem coincides with the attainment of independence of the particular countries, even though in some cases they are not chronologically coincident. It is also the rule that the anthem praises the natural beauty of a country and refers to the struggles to throw off colonial domination and the achievement of independence.

The NCA has in the past, tried, without success, however, to show that the national anthems although called national are not about nations but are immediately and solely connected with the modern state as their starting point.

In our opinion, all the above as well as the content of the various national anthems which have been analysed and studied, one by one, confirm the contention of the Association. Nevertheless, the reader is free to draw his own conclusions.

In view of the conditions which exist in Cyprus, from the point of view of the structure of the population of the country, it is perhaps worth following the practice adopted in other countries with a pluralist society, or with more than one ethnicity, such as Belgium, Switzerland and Finland.

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