

"PEOPLE" ARE PEOPLE, BUT WHAT'S "A PEOPLE"?

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Depends on who's doing the defining, and why. The word's dynamite--religiously, culturally, politically. Many of the checkmarks on this chart I made to fiddle with the questionnaire challengeable! The point of this Thinksheet is to help me, and maybe also you, to be a bit more reflective when we hear, and use, "a people" and "peoplehood." Is our reason being un/consciously derailed by others/ourselves?SUGGESTION: Before looking at my checkmarks, place a piece of paper over them, draw the lines, and make marks of your own. Then compare with mine in light of my few following remarks. Also, add, if you wish, to my alphabetical listing of possible "peoples." (Challengeable also are my vertical categories, of course.)

	blood, race	tribe, ethnos	language	culture	territory	religion
1	Afrikaners ✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	American Blacks ✓		✓	?	✓	
3	Americans		✓	?	✓	
4	Amerinds ✓				✓	
5	Arabs ?		✓	✓		
6	Aussies				✓	
7	Black Africans ✓				✓	
8	British		✓	✓		
9	Canadians			✓	✓	
10	Cubans ?		✓	✓		
11	Hungarians ✓		✓	✓		
12	Germans ✓		✓	✓		
13	Indians			✓	✓	
14	Jews		✓	✓		?
15	Romanians ?		✓	✓	✓	

1. A people's territory and their political boundaries vary as many ways as are conceivable. It's so true it's almost a circular surd to say it: peoplehood is the major factor in territorial disputes. As I write, Iraq & Iran, after their long war, are arguing territory. They both are and aren't one people linguistically, culturally, and religiously. So far in history, almost no territorial disputes have been settled nonviolently, and no territory has ever long been held nonviolently.

2. The right of "a people" to resist challenges to its existence (to resist, in this sense, genocide) may, in some cases, be seen as qualified by the cost thereof to another people or other peoples. Hitler was wrong in believing that Jewish existence was too costly to other peoples, especially the Germans; but is Afrikaner existence too costly to the other peoples of the Republic of S. Africa, who constitute 92% of the population (Black African, British, and other)? Does the right to exist include the right to flourish?

3. On my chart, what if any is the correlation between a people's right to exist and the number of checks? Arithmetically, the chart says something preposterous: the Afrikaners have more right to exist than has any other people! A morally responsible politics will strive to foster the interests of all peoples within a territory, avoiding swamping of any one by any other or others (in Lebanon, S. Africa, Belfast, et al). Black rule in S. Africa would not be a morally responsible politics, and I am ashamed of church leaders who promote it. Arithmetic egalitarianism (one-person-one-vote) would not be a responsible politics, for it would foster the interests not of the peoples of S. Africa but only of individuals (on the Enlightenment dogma that individuals, though they do not exist except in peoples, are more real than peoples); shame

on church leaders who identify this simpleminded politics with the gospel, or at least use the Christian religion to support it. What is clearly wrong in the light of biblical religion is that any people anywhere be voiceless, politically nonparticipant--as the Korean population of Japan and the Black population of S.Africa ("homelands" voting in no sense being participation in the national government).

4. Note that some "peoples" exist only territorially: Americans, Aussies, Canadians, Indians. Each of these is an agglomeration of cultures with a dominant culture penetrating the others (except for some remote groupings of Maori in Australia). The underlying culture of the government in all four cases is British, as the French was in Lebanon and the Hapsburg (late Holy Roman [German] Empire) was, earlier, in much of Europe. The peaceful government of peoples in a multi-people territory requires a dominant culture, or at least has so far in history. And a dominant culture includes a dominant language: in post-Ghandian India it was to be Hindi, but it's English (as it is in the USA, where it should be declared the official language, as it is in California).

5. To peoplehood, language is even more important than blood ("race"). Even though Jews are not all of one race, and even though most of them are neither Hebrew-speaking nor Hebrew-reading, the Hebrew language is the cultural and cultic center of Jewish peoplehood....Since religion is a culture's heart and language is its voice, why does my chart separate the three? or at least, why do I separate language and culture? My different checking of the three columns explains why.

6. Diaspora, the scattering of a people beyond its territory of origin, is for some peoples--supremely the Jews--a huge factor. I could not check "territory" for the Cubans: especially since Castro, many of them are in diaspora.

7. Nor could I check "territory" for the Hungarians: they have 13,000 villages in Romania, and the USA has pockets of Magyars (the United Church of Christ including a Magyar synod)....In an extended sense, almost all earth's peoples could be said to be in diaspora in the USA!

8. Coming from Budapest a few weeks ago, a Hungarian leader told us in Vienna that 8,000 of Transylvania-Rumania's 13,000 Hungarian villages are now in process of demolition, the bulldozers destroying even the ancient and beautiful village churches. The Romanian government hopes to obliterate even the memory of the presence of Hungarians on Romanian territory. (This was confirmed today on our National Public Radio.) As Hitler revived a dream of the Holy Roman (German) Empire, so Ceacescu is reviving the dream of the Visigothic Empire, now under the impetus of a new paganism, viz communism. Here's the insane, yet reasonable, logic: a territory should have only one people, only one language-culture-religion.

9. Note the complexity: I asked the Hungarian leader whether he agreed with the principle that territory should be coterminous with language--in this case, Hungary should include those 13,000 villages now under the Romanian heel. He said yes. But that was Hitler's principle and argument in taking over the Rhineland, the Sudetenland, Austria, and German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia! German-speaking central Europe should be under Germany, the Third Reich. How powerfully persuasive was the argument I experienced firsthand by talking with a few of the 99% Austrian electorate who in 1938 enthusiastically voted for the Anschluss, for Hitler's annexation of Austria to Germany (as Hitler had gotten 99% of Germany's electorate in 1933).

10. Why do I have to use "?" in some of the chart's boxes? Because (1) there are clearly more than one way to view that people, or (2) that people's case is too complex or ambiguous for either a check or a blank. The most I can say for my decisions is that I can support them; I can't claim they're beyond dispute.

11. Surprisingly, the Afrikaners here are the only people defined by a religion, Dutch Calvinism in their case. Why not the Jews? A far greater % of them is nonobservant, more or less secularistic, than is true in the case of the Afrikaners. And the Arabs? They've significant nonMuslim percentages, Christian and Druse.