

Hearing Alexander Haig repeatedly warn the Senate of the Soviet menace, I recalled a similar incident that occurred well over 21 centuries ago in the Roman Senate. In 175 B.C., after Cato the Elder had completed his official mission to Rome's rival city, Carthage, whatever subject he spoke on in the Senate, he always concluded with his dour conviction: "Ceterum censeo delendam esse Carthaginem (Besides, I think that Carthage must be destroyed)." Through succeeding centuries this statement grew in fame, and the subject of Rome's three Punic Wars, which stretched over more than a century, could always be expected during final oral examinations in any European pre-university schooling.

European history and (for that matter) the trend of Western civilization, would undoubtedly have followed an entirely different course with a Carthaginian victory, to the detriment of human society. Similarly, there would be disastrous consequences if the Soviet plan of world domination should accomplish another step by absorbing remaining free Western Europe which is now in jeopardy. Both Phoenician Carthage and Latin Rome were set for expansion from their foundation in the 9th century, B.C. The cultural level of Carthaginians, however, was brutalized by the enduring ritual sacrifices of living children to one of their gods, Baal-Haman. Rome itself — not without blemish — had, by the time of the second Punic War, absorbed Greece with its advanced Athenian democracy, and was exposed to more refined cultural influences. For example, in the course of time it offered Apostle Paul relatively favorable conditions for his missionary activity.

Considering the two world powers today — the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. — America, with all its problems, is nevertheless guided by civic laws rooted in its Constitution which reflects Christian tradition. On the other hand, the Marxist-Leninist Soviet Union considers human life its cheapest commodity, inhumanly torturing and liquidating millions in its countless Siberian gulags, under the myth of a "proletarian paradise." It is a tragedy that these slave labor camps remain a permanent part of the decrepit Soviet economy. Therefore after so many centuries, how does the Soviet diabolic scheme, with its millions of human victims, differ from the Carthaginian myth of the monstrous deity Baal-Haman devouring living children?

Lessons Of the Past

Upon Cato's visit to Carthage 25 years after the Carthaginian defeat in the second Punic War, he was shocked by the Carthaginians' rapid recovery from the disastrous Hannibalic war. This war devastated Italy, and Rome trembled with Hannibal at its gates; yet the Roman victor, Scipio, spared Hannibal's life. Rome achieved dominance over the western Mediterranean which reversed the relationship, as Rome headed toward world empire. In 814 B.C., half a century before the foundation of Rome, Carthage was founded by seafaring Phoenicians from the Biblical Tyre. More than two centuries prior to establishing this permanent port of call, Carthage, the enterprising Tyrian navigators discovered the mineral wealth of Spain. Then their fleet of merchant vessels plied the Mediterranean not only to the Spanish coast but beyond the dreaded Pillars of Hercules, as Gibraltar was then known, into the Atlantic.

While Rome, after its foundation, struggled with Etruscans in her zest for expansion of her latifundias (landed aristocracy), Carthaginians preferred to trade with what others produced, and, as Roman historian Polibius wrote, "at Carthage nothing that results in profit is regarded as disgraceful." The mineral wealth of Spain, especially since the discovery of iron by one millenium B.C., produced a critical divide of ages; today it is oil in the Persian Gulf. Nuclear energy, so far in the disturbed world, offers more danger than blessing as a peaceful commodity. Thus, most historians today believe Cato cannot be accused of over-estimating the Punic threat.

Alexander Haig in the Senate hearing staunchly pointed toward the evidence of Soviet-sponsored global terrorism. Development in the Caribbean region would be utterly unthinkable half a century ago. Romans customarily looked at Carthagian

population as groups always prone to subversion, so are the Soviets considered today.

The terrorists who took the American Embassy in Tehran and the torture they perpetrated on its occupants even to their last moments of imprisonment, is distinctly the work of the KGB-trained element. "Carthaginian faith" was for the Romans a synonym of treachery as today is any treaty with the communists. Do the Soviets observe the obligation of the Helsinki agreement, a document they solemnly signed with plenipotentiaries of some 35 other nations? It was to assure a minimum of human rights and dignity of man. So what about Afghanistan and the human rights of all captive nations of Eastern Europe? No, it is one of the many treaties they abrogated as mere rags of paper, which they never intended to be faithful guides for a peaceful, civilized life.

The history of nations and human society is riddled by conflicts, and the Punic Wars as seen today are merely a provincial affair. Nonetheless, in our age of technology they offer an image enlarged on the global scale. Yet peace through weakness is a sure road to disaster. Haig, confronting the Senate inquest before his appointment as Secretary of State and after his experience as commander of the wavering NATO forces, affirmed: "Unchecked, the growth of Soviet military power must eventually paralyze Western policy altogether. The transformation of Soviet military power from continental and largely land army to a global offensive army, navy, and air force, fully capable of supporting an imperial policy... has produced perhaps the most complete reversal of global power relationship ever seen in a period of relative peace... It is the most critical issue America and the free world is facing."

"We the people" of America are to be congratulated that the new administration has placed distinguished individuals in positions of leadership. In President Reagan's inaugural address, this was characterized by the sacrifice of the simple soldier of WWI who expressed his pledge "Therefore I will work, I will save, I will sacrifice, I will endure...and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone."

Dr. Hujer is Guerry Professor Emeritus of Astronomy and Physics at UTC