

By KAREL HUJER

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LONDON — What determines the boundary of a country? Journeying to Tibet in May 1935 close to the Himalayan border pass Jelep-La, 16,400 feet above sea level along the trade route to Lhasa, I approached the village Gnatong. In this mountain solitude on the "roof of the world" some 50 miles from Mount Everest, now prohibitively inaccessible to any peaceful pilgrim, stands a small cemetery of several British soldiers killed during the border skirmish with Tibetans who wanted only to be left alone. Their tombstone inscription reads: "Died for King and Country." At one Yorkshire fusilier's tomb I pondered pensively: Where is that king and that country?

In 1923, in England's green and pleasant land, I hiked from Salisbury to Stonehenge where I saw the Roman fortress Old Sarum. Even farther north in England stood the Roman wall built to defend distant Rome in the first centuries of our era. With primitive transportation, Rome to England was then much farther than the Tibetan border to London today.

Enduring Tenacity

Rome as a city state and as "my country" had a most enduring tenacity, yet its boundary was so vague that Roman legions as far away as Mesopotamia struggled to sustain the pride of their city. But when Dante was banished from his beloved Florence, he found himself in exile anywhere in today's Italy. Also Venice, that kingdom by the sea, in 1687 had mercenaries bombing the Athenian Parthenon. Venetians felt justified to protect their own port's presumed prerogatives.

Then there were those successfully Latinized Teutons, the French, who inherited from the Romans the boundary on the Rhine until their Germanic cousins made "Watch on the Rhine" the national anthem of imperial Germany. There, through the centuries, rivers of blood have flown because Romans once defended here

against Teutonic barbarians the myth of their expanded city.

Modern Comparison

And is there any difference today? Once on the Siberian express four thousand miles east of Moscow, in the Trans-Baikal region bordering Mongolia, a conductor, a well indoctrinated, patriotic Communist, entered our compartment and solemnly announced "Comrades, Moscow speaks." The entire train was beamed to the short wave broadcast from the "holy city."

A similar scene occurred on board the steamship "City of Baroda" in the vastness of the Indian Ocean. With only three continentals aboard, British passengers listened proud and spellbound to the broadcast of the chimes of London's Big Ben. The year was 1934. We sailed along the life-line of the British Empire — Gibraltar, the Mediterranean Sea, Suez, Aden. Where was the boundary of Great Britain?

In 1924, I was a guide for continental tourists at the British Empire Exhibition in Wembley. After the shock of World War I, although in apparent culminating glory, the empire was already in the advanced decline of an Indian summer. Its boundaries were a replete checkerboard scattered over the globe and contained such special territories, "crown colonies," which now represent a portentous nemesis for impoverished England. Citizens of these remote regions today carry the same passports as British subjects, giving them

the right to enter England although following World War II, England discharged the empire — "white man's burden" — as the tired British called it. Consequently, that land of proud Nordic race, very much like its former colony America, is destined to become a land of mixed races. Even during the Empire Exhibition, such names as Strand, Fleet Street, Bank of England, Oxford Street, still sounded high, perhaps by some reverberation of the glory of the nineteenth century, the Victorian era.

In Gandhi's ashram at Wardha, India, his disciple, Miss Slade, known as Miraben, described the funeral procession of Queen Victoria which she attended as the daughter of a British admiral. Miraben remarked: "The feeling was that something had gone which would never return." Still this proud Victorian era is the same period when Charles Dickens wrote his pathetic stories reflecting the abysmal contrast between poverty and wealth, the misery of ordinary people alongside the glory of the empire, now petrified in the motley of marble monuments in Westminster Abbey. Then, too, Karl Marx, who was exiled from the continent, wrote in London "Das Kapital" and died in poverty, buried in a lost corner of Highgate cemetery.

Yawning Abyss

Today two empires in global expansion of their boundaries are poised at the yawning abyss of ICBM nuclear warheads, almost daily boasting of the potentiality

of their annihilating power. Russia's boundaries extend from Berlin deep in Europe, over the immensities of Asiatic steppes, all the way to the Pacific. There, only the narrow Strait of Bering separates Russia from America's 49th state, Alaska, then from the Arctic region to the Caucasian Mountains and towards the strategic Chitral Pass of Hindu Kush.

America, on the other hand, has now inherited in Europe the predicament of the watch on the Rhine and the British concern in the Mediterranean sea, the "Mare Nostrum." Also, what is the meaning of that gorgeous Hilton Hotel in poverty stricken Istanbul beyond the Dardanelles? In the Pacific, the boundary as expanded far beyond the Hawaiian Islands, somewhere close to the Chinese coast.

Similarities Cited

Now some striking similarities appear with ancient Rome, which should be an ominous warning. Ancient Rome had its "founding fathers" whose virile character had been shaped by arduous simplicities. Its ruling class was also relaxed in wealth and the freedom of unbelief. Even 2,000 years ago Rome had its own urban congestion where many differences rubbed themselves into indifference. Their moral and esthetic value and standards, too, were lowered by the magnetism of the mass wading through appalling slums where powerlessness fermented into violence. Then American technology, in this 20th century, has also built an advanced counterpart of Roman roads — our concrete expressways from coast to coast, and the fantastic jets that in a matter of hours can deliver American soldiers to almost any point on the globe just to ascertain the myth of the boundary of a shrinking world. After all, this may not even be needed when a pushbutton robot on order of a Mr. Hyde will deliver its ICBM.

It is then that scientific engineering accomplishments will proudly display another boundary — the successful construction of a greenhouse in the airless desolation of the moon. No boundary, no matter how secure, will provide peace that man is seeking unless he will find it in his own heart.

Space Cooperation

From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

A conference held in connection with the International Congress of Genetics in Tokyo is worthy of note, more because of the participants than because of any startling disclosures. In a laudable instance of cooperation, Soviet and American scientists compared notes on the genetic impact of space travel on living things.

The only consensus was that there appears to be a factor or factors in space travel that upset at least some of the hereditary processes. Exactly what this is, and

how to offset it, is a problem that has to be overcome before prolonged space travel is undertaken. Obviously, the problem is one that affects the human race without regard to nationality, so there is every reason for a cooperative effort to find an answer.

The effort to conquer space should enlist the cooperation of all the nations. If the inhabitants of the earth cannot stand together to explore the universe, it is difficult to see how they can cooperate on purely earthly matters.