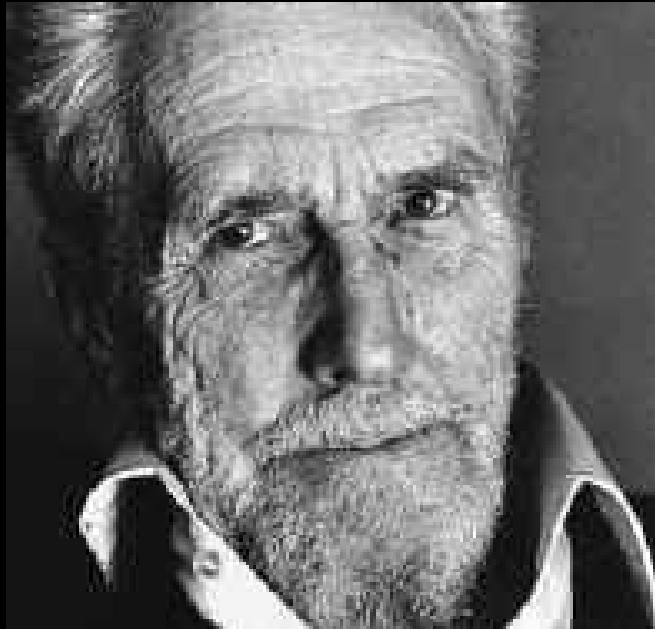


# Perspectives on Ezra Pound: **WHAT DID EZRA POUND REALLY SAY?**



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From *Barnes Review*

## WHAT DID EZRA POUND REALLY SAY?

From 1945 through 1958 America's iconoclastic poet--the flamboyant Ezra Pound, one of the most influential individuals of his generation--was held in a Washington, D.C. mental institution, accused of treason. Pound had merely done what he had always done--spoken his mind. Unfortunately for Pound, however, he had made the error of criticizing the American government in a series of broadcasts from Italy during World War II. For that he was made to pay the price.

The July 1995 issue of *The Barnes Review* told the story of Pound's travails. Here, however, TBR presents a fascinating in-depth overview of precisely what Pound had to say in those now-infamous broadcasts. Was Pound a traitor--or a prophet? Read his words and judge for yourself. By Michael Collins Piper.

American students have been taught by scandalized educators that famed American poet and philosopher Ezra Pound delivered "treasonous" English-language radio broadcasts from Italy (directed to both Americans and to the British) during World War II. However, as noted by Robert H. Walker, an editor for the Greenwood Press: "Thousands of people have heard about them, scores have been affected by them, yet but a handful has ever heard or read them." This ignorance of Pound's most controversial political rhetoric is ironic, inasmuch as: "No other American--and only a few individuals throughout the world--has left such a strong mark on so many aspects of the 20th century: from poetry to economics, from theater to philosophy, from politics to pedagogy, from Provencal to Chinese. If Pound was not always totally accepted, at least he was unavoidably there." One critic called Pound's broadcasts a "confused mixture of fascist apologetics, economic theory, anti-Semitism, literary judgment and memory" Another described them as "an unholy mixture of ambiguity, obscurity, inappropriate subject matters [and] vituperation," adding (grudgingly) there were "a few pearls of unexpected wisdom."

Despite all the furor over Pound's broadcasts--which were heard between January of 1941 through July of 1943--it was not until 1978 that a full-length 465-page compendium of transcriptions of the broadcasts was assembled by Prof. Leonard Doob of Yale University in association with aforementioned Greenwood Press. Published under the title "Ezra Pound Speaking"--Radio Speeches of World War II, the volume provides the reader a comprehensive look at Pound's philosophy as it was presented by the poet him self in what Robert Walker, who wrote the foreword to the compendium, describes as "that flair for dramatic hyperbole."

What follows is an attempt to synthesize Pound's extensive verbal parries. Most of what is appears here has never been printed anywhere except in the compendium of Pound's wartime broadcasts. Thus, for the first time ever--for a popular audience--here is what Pound really had to say, not what his critics claim he said. When he was broadcasting from Italy during wartime, Pound evidently pondered the possibility of one day compiling transcriptions of his broadcasts (or at least expected--quite correctly--that one day the transcripts would be compiled by someone else). He hoped the broadcasts would show a consistent thread once they were committed to print. Pound recognized relaying such a massive amount of information about so many seemingly unrelated subjects might be confusing listeners less widely read than he. However, the poet also had very firm ideas about the need of his listeners to be able to synthesize the broad range of material that appeared in his colorful lectures.

Pound was sure his remarks on radio were not seditious, but were strictly informational and dedicated to traditional principles of Americanism--including the Constitution, in particular. In response to media claims that he was a fascist propagandist, Pound had this to say: "If anyone takes the trouble to record and examine the series of talks I have made over this radio it will be found I have used three sorts of material: historical facts; convictions of experienced men, based on fact; and the fruits of my own experience. The facts . . . mostly antedate the fascist era and cannot be considered as improvisations trumped up to meet present requirements. Neither can the beliefs of Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Jackson, Van Buren, and Lincoln be laughed off as mere fascist propaganda. And even my own observations date largely before the opening of the present hostilities. "I defend the particularly American, North American, United States heritage. If anybody can find anything hostile to the Constitution of the U.S.A. in these speeches, it would greatly interest me to know what. It may be bizarre, eccentric, quaint, old-fashioned of me to refer to that document, but I wish more Americans would at least read it. It is not light and easy reading but it contains several points of interest, whereby some of our present officials could, if they but would, profit greatly." Pound's immediate concern was the war in Europe--"this war on youth--on a generation" --which he described as the natural result of the "age of the chief war pimps." He hated the very idea that Americans were being primed for war, and on the very day of Pearl Harbor he denounced the idea that American boys should soon be marching off to war: "I do not want my compatriots from the ages of 20 to 40 to go get slaughtered to keep up the Sassoon and other British Jew rackets in Singapore and in Shanghai. That is not my idea of American patriotism," he added. In Pound's view, the American government alliance with British finance capitalism and Soviet Bolshevism was contrary to America's tradition and heritage: "Why did you take up with those gangs?" he rhetorically asked his listeners. "Two gangs. [The] Jews' gang in London, and [the] Jew murderous gang over in Moscow? Do you like Mr. Litvinov? [Soviet ambassador to Britain Meyer Wallach, alias Litvinov, born 1876.--Ed.] "Do the people from Delaware and Virginia and Connecticut and Massachusetts . . . who live in painted, neat, white houses . . . do these folks really approve [of] Mr. Litvinov and his gang, and all he stands for?" There

was no reason for U.S. intervention abroad, he said: "The place to defend the American heritage is on the American continent. And no man who had any part in helping [Franklin] Delano Roosevelt get the United States into [the war] has enough sense to win anything . . . The men who wintered at Valley Forge did not suffer those months of intense cold and hunger in the hope that . . . the union of the colonies would one day be able to stir up wars between other countries in order to sell them munitions."

What was the American tradition? According to Pound: "The determination of our forbears to set up and maintain in the North American continent a government better than any other. The determination to govern ourselves internally, better than any other nation on earth. The idea of Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, to keep out of foreign shindies." Of FDR's interventionism, he declared: "To send boys from Omaha to Singapore to die for British monopoly and brutality is not the act of an American patriot." However, Pound said: "Don't shoot the President. I dare say he deserves worse, but . . . [a]ssassination only makes more mess." Pound saw the American national tradition being buried by the aggressive new internationalism.

According to Pound's harsh judgment: "The American gangster did not spend his time shooting women and children. He may have been misguided, but in general he spent his time fighting superior forces at considerable risk to himself . . . not in dropping booby traps for unwary infants. I therefore object to the modus in which the American troops obey their high commander. This modus is not in the spirit of Washington or of Stephen Decatur." Pound hated war and detected a particular undercurrent in the previous wars of history. Wars, he said, were destructive to nation-states, but profitable for the special interests. Pound said international bankers--Jewish bankers, in particular--were those who were the primary beneficiaries of the profits of from war. He pulled no punches when he declared: Sometime the Anglo-Saxon may awaken to the fact that . . . nations are shoved into wars in order to destroy themselves, to break up their structure, to destroy their social order, to destroy their populations. And no more flaming and flagrant case appears in history than our own American Civil War, said to be an occidental record for size of armies employed and only surpassed by the more recent triumphs of [the Warburg banking family:] the wars of 1914 and the present one.

Although World War II itself was much on Pound's mind, the poet's primary concern, referenced repeatedly throughout his broadcasts, was the issue of usury and the control of money and economy by private special interests. "There is no freedom without economic freedom," he said. "Freedom that does not include freedom from debt is plain bunkum. It is fetid and foul logomachy to call such servitude freedom . . . Yes, freedom from all sorts of debt, including debt at usurious interest." Usury, he said, was a cause of war throughout history. In Pound's view understanding the issue of usury was central to understanding history: "Until you know who has lent what to whom, you know nothing whatever

of politics, you know nothing whatever of history, you know nothing of international wrangles. "The usury system does no nation . . . any good whatsoever. It is an internal peril to him who hath, and it can make no use of nations in the play of international diplomacy save to breed strife between them and use the worst as flails against the best. It is the usurer's game to hurl the savage against the civilized opponent. The game is not pretty, it is not a very safe game. It does no one any credit."

Pound thus traced the history of the current war: "This war did not begin in 1939. It is not a unique result of the infamous Versailles Treaty. It is impossible to understand it without knowing at least a few precedent historic events, which mark the cycle of combat. No man can understand it without knowing at least a few facts and their chronological sequence. This war is part of the age-old struggle between the usurer and the rest of mankind: between the usurer and peasant, the usurer and producer, and finally between the usurer and the merchant, between usurocracy and the mercantilist system . . . "The present war dates at least from the founding of the Bank of England at the end of the 17th century, 1694-8. Half a century later, the London usurocracy shut down on the issue of paper money by the Pennsylvania colony, A.D. 1750. This is not usually given prominence in the U.S. school histories. The 13 colonies rebelled, quite successfully, 26 years later, A.D. 1776. According to Pound, it was the money issue (above all) that united the Allies during the second 20th-century war against Germany: "Gold. Nothing else uniting the three governments, England, Russia, United States of America. That is the interest--gold, usury, debt, monopoly, class interest, and possibly gross indifference and contempt for humanity."

Although "gold" was central to the world's struggle, Pound still felt gold "is a coward. Gold is not the backbone of nations. It is their ruin. A coward, at the first breath of danger gold flows away, gold flows out of the country." Pound perceived Germany under Hitler as a nation that stood against the international money lenders and communist Russia under Stalin as a system that stood against humanity itself.

He told his listeners: "Now if you know anything whatsoever of modern Europe and Asia, you know Hitler stands for putting men over machines. If you don't know that, you know nothing. And beyond that you either know or do not know that Stalin's regime considers humanity as nothing save raw material. Deliver so many carloads of human material at the consumption point. That is the logical result of materialism. If you assert that men are dirty, that humanity is merely material, that is where you come out. And the old Georgian train robber [Josef Stalin--ed.] is perfectly logical. If all things are merely material, man is material--and the system of anti-man treats man as matter." The real enemy, said Pound, was international capitalism. All people everywhere were victims: "They're working day and night, picking your pockets," he said. "Every day and all day and all night picking your pockets and picking the Russian working man's

pockets." Capital, however, he said, was "not international, it is not hyper-national. It is sub-national. A quicksand under the nations, destroying all nations, destroying all law and government, destroying the nations, one at a time, Russian empire and Austria, 20 years past, France yesterday, England today."

According to Pound, Americans had no idea why they were being expected to fight in Britain's war with Germany: "Even Mr. Churchill hasn't had the grass to tell the American people why he wants them to die, to save what. He is fighting for the gold standard and monopoly. Namely the power to starve the whole of mankind, and make it pay through the nose before it can eat the fruit of its own labor." As far as the English were concerned, in Pound's broadcasts aimed at the British Isles he warned his listeners that although Russian-style communist totalitarianism was a threat to British freedom, it was not the biggest threat Britain faced: You are threatened. You are threatened by the Russian methods of administration. Those methods [are not] your sole danger. It is, in fact, so far from being your sole danger that I have, in over two years of talk over this radio, possibly never referred to it before.

Usury has gnawed into England since the days of Elizabeth. First it was mortgages, mortgages on earls' estates; usury against the feudal nobility. Then there were attacks on the common land, filchings of village common pasture. Then there developed a usury system, an international usury system, from Cromwell's time, ever increasing." In the end, Pound suggested, it would be the big money interests who would really win the war--not any particular nation-state--and the foundation for future wars would be set in place: "The nomadic parasites will shift out of London and into Manhattan. And this will be presented under a camouflage of national slogans. It will be represented as an American victory. It will not be an American victory. The moment is serious. The moment is also confusing. It is confusing because there are two sets of concurrent phenomena, namely, those connected with fighting this war, and those which sow seeds for the next one." Pound believed one of the major problems of the day--which itself had contributed to war fever--was the manipulation of the press, particularly in the United States: "I naturally mistrust newspaper news from America," he declared. "I grope in the mass of lies, knowing most of the sources are wholly untrustworthy." According to Pound: "The United States has been misinformed. The United States has been led down the garden path, and may be down under the daisies. All through shutting out news.



Ezra Pound's Outdoor Cage Where He Was  
Kept Like An Animal By The American "Victors"

## Two Selected World War II Broadcasts

[Pound broadcast at least 120 original editorial and manifestos over Radio Rome in Italy from 1941 to 1943. We are reprinting two of these broadcasts to encourage discussion of them and to point readers toward the entire book. The full text of 120 broadcasts is available in *"Ezra Pound Speaking": Radio Speeches of World War II*. Ed. Leonard W. Doob. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978.]

March 15, 1942

The enemy is Das Leihkapital. Your Enemy is Das Leihkapital, international, wandering Loan Capital. Your enemy is not Germany, your enemy is money on loan. And it would be better for you to be infected with typhus, and dysentery, and Bright's disease, than to be infected with this blindness which prevents you from understanding HOW you are undermined, how you are ruined.

The big Jew is so bound up with this Leihkapital that no one is able to unscramble that omelet. It would be better for you to retire to Darbyshire and defy New Jerusalem, better for you to retire to Gloucester and find one spot that is England than to go on fighting for Jewry and ignoring the process.

It is an outrage that any clean lad from the country - I suppose there are STILL a few ENGLISH lads from the country - it is an outrage that any nice young man from the suburbs should be expected to die for Victor Sassoon, it is an outrage that any drunken footman's byblow should be asked to die for Sassoon.

As to your Empire, it was not all of it won by clean fighting. But however you got it, you did for a time more or less justify keeping it, on the ground that you

exported good government or better government than the natives would have had without England.

You let in the Jew and the Jew rotted your empire, and you yourselves out-jewed the Jew. Your allies in your victimized holdings are the bunyah, you stand for NOTHING but usury.

And above metal usury; you have built up bank usury, 60% against 30 and 40%, and by that you WILL NOT be saved. Corrupting the whole earth, you have lost yourselves to yourselves.

And the big Jew has rotted EVERY nation he has wormed into. A millstone. Well, an exceptionally good swimmer MIGHT conceivably be cast into the sea with a stone tied round his neck. He might perhaps untie it. If he were a Scotchman, he would remember his jackknife, before being thrown overboard.

You seem to remember NOTHING. It were better you were infected with typhus. As to federal union, or JEW/nion. There is NO question of race in Streit's proposition. It is as proposed a union of slaves, under jewry. Offered by liars and abettors of thieves.

You have stolen land from your late Allies, and land slips from your control. The ONLY conquests of Britain and Rosenfeld are conquests FROM their alleged allies.

All right, say that Franklin Delany swipes ALL South America - to what end? And ruin the United States of America while he is doing it. What's that to you? It is not England's salvation. Will you ever LOOK at the story of empire? You are NOT even in the mercantile system, you are in a fake mercantile system, not even mercantile. It was for a time called mercantile or the mercantilist system and defined as considering the happiness of a nation to consist in the amount of MONEY it owned, and its process to consist in STEALING, welching, pouching the greatest possible amount of same (i.e., of money) from other nations.

That defines the USURY system, the ONLY system Anglo Saxons have known or used in our time.

And it will not save you. NOR will Judaized Russia. Nor will the Kahal, the Jew's central committee of bleeders. WHAT is their system? Unvarying, cheap goods, sweated out of cheap labor, dung dust hurled on the world, the WORLD conceived as sweat shop, to hell with the 8-hour day, down with abundance. DUMPING sweated goods, dumped against any and every nation that pays a just price for labor. That is your ALLY.

And in your past a trail of blood and of infamy. You bought Hessians to kill your own blood in America. You bought 'em from a stinking feudal overlord, who was in the hands of the ROTHSCHILD; that is HISTORY. You stirred up the American



savages against your own kin IN America. But now Eden and Cripps have called in the Muscovite, to bum and destroy all Eastern Europe, and kill Finland, for the sake of the stinking Jews nickel mines.

Your infamy is bound up with Judaea. You can not touch a sore or a shame in your empire but you find a Mond, a Sassoon, or a Goldsmid. YOU HAVE NO RACE left in your government.

God knows if it can be found still scattered in England.

IT must be found scattered in England. The white remnants of England, the white remnant of the races of England must be FOUND and find means to cohere; otherwise, you might as well lie down in your grave yards.

You have for years had cheap goods DUMPED in from Russia. Your alliance with Moscow will bring no relief to that wound. Your Jews have ruined your home manufactures. Loans from the city of London, loans to the Orient, interest paid in cheap cotton goods, loans to the South American countries, interest paid in beef from the Argentine, and ruin of English grazing. The laws of durable government have been known from the days of King Wen. When empires go to ROT, they go to rot for known reasons.

The Times, Telegraph, Manchester Guardian, are there to conceal these reasons. Your press is an infamy, has been throughout our time.

The laws of durable government have been known from the days of King Wen, and when the Roman Empire perished it perished from the same follies that your kikes, your Rothschilds, Beits, Sieffs, Schiffs, and Goldsmids have squirted into your veins.

Cheap grain dumped from Egypt, ruin of the Italian farming, usury, and more usury, THAT is the answer.

For two centuries, ever since the brute Cromwell brought 'em back into England, the kikes have sucked out your vitals. A mild penetration, for a hundred years they have bootlicked your nobility and now where is your nobility? You had at least the semblance of control; you had, let us say, some influence with the Lords of Judaea as long as they WANTED your titles, as long as Levy Levinstein Lawson WANTED to be addressed as Lord Burnham. You could turn the worst edge of their avarice, or rather you could turn it OFF, the upper or huppar clawses; and turn it ONTO the peer. As you did without mercy.

But when the same scroungers have moved over to New York City, how will you manage 'em? The same bloody minded extortioners, or their descendents. The same FINANCIAL HOUSES. The same Rothschilds who plotted with Sherman, and Vandergould to KILL the American nation, who betrayed the United States in the

"sixties". Head office in London, agents in the U.S. of America.

Now the address is altered. Main office in Wall Street and Cohen in London. You send Willie over to spy on us. You send 5000 usurers' pimps over to Washington and give special passports, diplomatic, to inveigle the United States into your plans to get cannon fodder from Idaho and from Iowa to weld your slaves cellar on Europe. And this time you get dumped into the ash can.

You have even forgotten your Kipling. Pig Baldwin has forgotten his cousin; if his obscene and treacherous mind ever grasped the meaning of Rudyard's stories. Let me recall one passage to the sow face:

"The Americans," wrote Rudyard, "obligingly slaughtered each other in order that the Czechoslovaks might inherit Boston Common." *Cras tibi*, tomorrow is your turn. Damn it all, you slaughtered the flower of England in the Boer War. Then in 1914 in the first three months, the best of you went out and got slaughtered.

. . . been seen only too clearly. And your foul papers, the filth of your newsprint has been subsidized to keep your minds off it.

A dirty bit of meat by the name of Gollancz has used your book trade to conceal it. You have almost NO means of communication.

When a Brooks Adams writes five volumes that would help you to see it, six copies reach England. You have LOST the health of the mind. God knows how the scattered handful of Englishmen still in England can still speak one with another.

I see NO remedy in your parliament. I don't mean as parliament. I mean in the personnel. It is your problem. You do not NOW even elect your own parliament. Whether WITH an election you could get anything save old dead meat, I do not know. During the last war a few men had a glimmer of instinct. On whatever formula, they called it pacifism. Was it? All of 'em I ever met were pugnacious. Was it an instinct to save the butt end of the RACE by not fighting? Is it a mistake to combat Germans by force?

Is there a RACE left in England? Has it ANY will left to survive? You can carry slaughter to Ireland. Will that save you? I doubt it. Nothing can save you, save a purge. Nothing can save you, save an affirmation that you are English.

Whore Belisha is NOT. Isaccs is not. No Sassoon is an Englishman, racially. No Rothschild is English, no Strakosch is English, no Roosevelt is English, no Baruch, Morgenthau, Cohen, Lehman, Warburg, Kuhn, Khan, Baruch, Schiff, Sieff, or Solomon was ever yet born Anglo-Saxon.

And it is for this filth that you fight. It is for this filth that you have murdered

your empire, and it is this filth that elects your politicians.

You have lost your tradition. You have not even learned what Lord Byron told you. You are, as even that foul rag the Times tells you, a little late in making a start.

In the year 1942 Anno Domini, there is only one start you can make. And that is a start toward being England. A refusal to be a province of Israel, or an outpost of Yankee-Judaea.

*Quando tutti saremo forti.*

**April 27, 1943**

I think quite simply and definitely that the American troops in N. Africa, all of 'em ought to go back to America: IF they can get there.

America ought not to be makin' war on Europe, and America knows it. I think it is time the American U.S. citizen studied Mr. Morgenthau's treasury reports, whether or not he is out in front proclaiming the coming of Zion or not. I think it is time you opened Kipling's memoirs "Something about myself." I think it is time more American Masons developed a curiosity about the possible relations of their order to Jewry as such, and to at least a sect or portion or selection of ORGANIZED Jews as a possible enemy of mankind, and of the American people, the British people in particular.

I think it might be a good thing to hang Roosevelt and a few hundred yids IF you can do it by due legal process, NOT otherwise. Law must be preserved. I know this may sound tame, but so is it. It is sometimes hard to think so. Hard to think that the 35 ex-army subalterns or whatever who wanted to bump off all the kike congressmen weren't just a bit crude and *simpliste*. Sometimes one feels that it would be better to get the job done somehow, ANY how, than to delay execution.

A chair has been founded in the Sorbonne to study modern Jewish history, i.e., the role of the kike in modern history. It would be well to have similar chairs in ALL American universities, though Harvard and the College of the City of N. York might find it hard to get the necessary endowments. I don't think there is any American law that permits you to shoot Nic. Butler. It is a pity but so is it. No *ex post facto* laws are to be dreamt of. Not that Frankfurter or any other damn Jews care a hoot for law or for the American Constitution. But we are not here to uphold Frankfurter or the Jewish vendetta. In the midst of which YOU jolly well are. And every American boy that gets drowned owes it to Roosevelt and Baruch, and to Roosevelt's VIOLATION of the duties of office.

It is on the ground of those violations, those that occurred before Pearl Harbor,

that you should impeach him. It is time that the matter was studied.

It is time that the practical means for doing the job were made subject of study. It will be difficult insofar as your press and radio are mostly in Jewish hands. It will be difficult to coordinate effort in our so all-fired anarchic country.

Instinctively anarchic BUT controlled, by an organization. An organization well worth your study. Be you Mason or Non-Mason. You will have to form cells, nuclei, and communicate. You will have to maintain some freedom of the press and get radio stations somehow. Congress should go on the air. Failing that, state senates and legislatures should go on the air. And state universities in states not wholly run by their ghettos should start a study of history of the Jew's role in history, of the role of usury, and currency control BY extraneous private bodies, all that should be made subject of study. You've got to start sometime.

You have got to learn a little, at least a little about the history of your allies. About Jew-ruin'd England. About the wreckage of France, wrecked under yidd control. Lousy with kikes. Blum, Zay, and the rest of 'em pushed France into war, when it was dead certain France would get beaten. Preparing ANOTHER. Oh, yes. ANOTHER ten or twenty years war between the U.S. and Slavic Russia to start just as soon as this one shows signs of relaxin'. Don't think the kike WANTS to stop wars as long as non-kikes will go on killin' and drowning each other, in order to provide dividends for loan capital. And SOME capital. A part of loan capital is, maybe you have heard this before, some part of loan capital IS really in Jewish hands. Mebbe you haven't yet heard that. And some of the American dollars that went for gold, went OUT of America to buy gold, well some of that went out to KIKERY. And Heinrick ben Sloman, ben Soloman, ben Isaac, ben Morgenthau, son of his father, was the sheeny that sent it right out.

And you go on taking it, you go on being diddled, and listening to the Jerusalem synagogue radios from London and Jew York City. Gawd ellup you. Bags of money, offered thru fear or guilt, have been uniformly refused by the mobs, wrote Mr. Jefferson to John Jay from Paris, July 19th, 1789. Paris was lively. On September 6 Jefferson was blissfully dreaming an ideal republic as follows:

But with respect to future debts would it not be wise and just for the nation to declare in the Constitution that they are forming, that neither the legislature nor the nation itself can validly contract more debt than they may pay within their own age, or within the term of 34 years?

Think it over. That was T. J. writing to Madison, from Paris, 6 September 1789. It is the famous letter containing the words: "the earth belongs in usufruct to the living." That theme he later repeated, in the form "the earth belongs to the living." And the "within their own age" was reduced to 19 years.

First, he thought of the "own age" as the period into which the average inhabitant of a nation would survive. Then he figured that children and those under age wouldn't have any say in contracting the debt. So they ought not to bound. That is, sold into slavery for its payment. These are fine points of the ethics. They won't appeal to Mr. Constantine Brown. They will have no effect upon those of you who are given over to the comforting (comforting if it comforts you) theory that devastation just doesn't matter and to whom.

Shakespeare and Bach are a bore. Architecture is dangerous. Sculpture is taboo. Mr. Brown wants a bright new world; and debt is after all only the prelude to slavery. One can conceive a regime in which there is NO economic liberty. I mean absolutely NO economic liberty for anyone. Not by accident, but by program. It is much easier, in fact, to conceive a slave state than a free state. A state wherein all men are slaves, and no man has any right whatsoever to life, liberty, and where even the pursuit - marvelous phrase that "pursuit" of happiness - would be illegal, or at least regarded as a grave misdemeanor.

A really severe Puritan like Eden or Morgenthau would probably tell you that the pursuit of happiness is on a level with chippy-chasing. I know you don't THINK you are ripe for a real revolution. You don't think YOU are ripe for the end of the capitalist system altogether. You would rather such revolutions occurred in the Punjab or in Bessarabia. But one thing leads to another.

And yet, Civilization was not yours to destroy.

The logo features the name "Ezra Pound" in a large, red, serif font with a slight shadow effect. Below it, the subtitle "and the Occult" is written in a smaller, black, serif font. The entire text is enclosed within a thin red rectangular border.

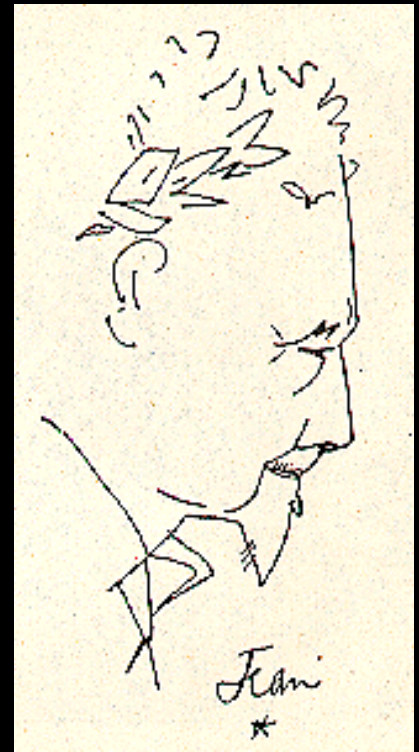
**Mountain Miguel**

## **Ezra Pound and the Angel**

**by Miguel Serrano**

From aims of the Thirties to half-full of the forty and, still more, later it interested

greatly the personality to me of American poet Ezra Pound. I saw myself reflected in him, in good part. In effect, during World War II it put itself against the government of his country and embraced the cause of Italy and Germany. Also I did it of a way similar when opposing me to the position that adopted my uncle, Joaquin Fernandez and Fernandez Minister of Outer Relations of President Juan Antonio Rivers, that also were in favor of Germany. My uncle broke relations with the Axis and I, by many years, broke my relations with him. My difference with the great poet went that to him the government of his country jailed it, first in a cage for animals, in It is above, and soon it confined it by thirteen years in a house of crazy people in the United States, going ahead thus to the Soviet tortures to the political dissidents in the USSR. To me nothing like this happened to me, even though the allied powers (that is to say, a foreign power, not of my own mother country) maintained me by four years in "commercial a black " list, that it prohibited to employ any to me in Chile and I suppose that in the world. It was a disaster; nevertheless, nothing comparable to the happened thing to Ezra Pound and Knut Hamsun, another enormous writer and Norwegian Nobel prize, who also outside bordered in an asylum of insanos besides to confiscate all its properties and properties to him, by the same fact of to have showed its support to Germany.



They spent many years and I did not return to hear of Ezra Pound. I knew, yes, that it had been released, returning immediately to Italy. It declared: "I go away of the United States, because here it is only possible to be lived in an asylum of crazy people ". And one settled in Venice.

A day my secretary, in the embassy in Vienna, passed a cut to me with a photography of Pound in London, where she attended the funerales of his friend, English poet T. S. Eliot, author of "the uncultivated Earth " poem that Pound helped him to compose. There also one said that Ezra Pound resided in Venice.

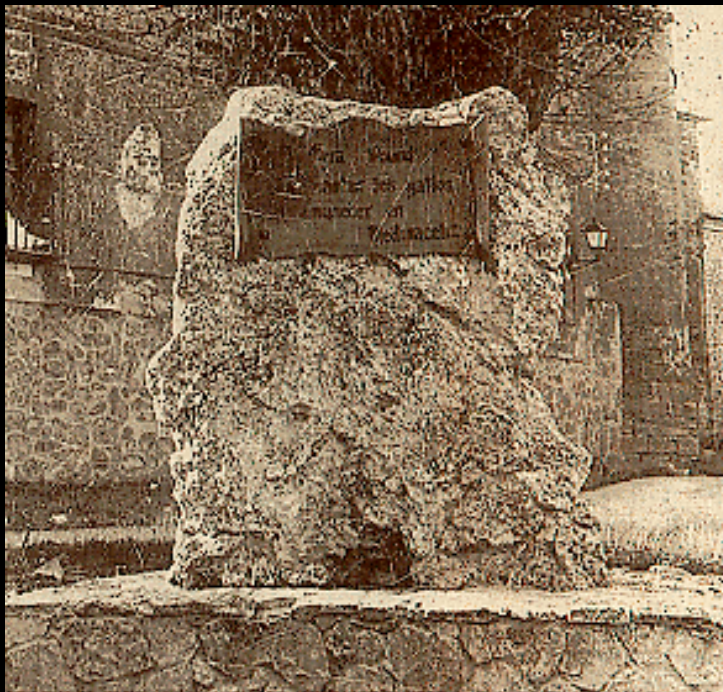
I decided to go in its search and I traveled mainly to that beautiful city of the Adriatic, installing to me in a well-known pension of the venecianos and that had been recommended me in India by the Ambassador of Italy. Count Iusti of the Giardino, owner of the famous gardens of the same name in Verona. Her family resided in Onara I gave Tombolo. The ambassador was a great admirer of the poetry and recited to Neruda in Italian and of memory. The pension that it had recommended to me called "To the Salute gives Cici " and had left in a later district the cathedral of the Salute, in Venice, near the wharves and of artisan factories of the famous veneciano crystal. There the countrymen of the city went only and was enough to give the name of the pension so that the gondoleros and

the conductors of "the vaporetos " dealt it to one with special deference. The house of Ezra Pound, in Via Querini, was almost next to the pension of "Cici " And he was his owner who gave his direction me, warning to me, that yes, that Pound did not receive to anybody.

I tried it, and without success.

What follows I have narrated it already in articles published in "Mercury " of those years. It now did not want to repeat it, since also they reproduce in a publication book recent of the University Publishing house, "Anthology of Ezra Pound. Tribute from Chile " of Arming to Uribe Maple and Arming Nibbles Avenue.

He was the gentile owner of the pension that facilitated the encounter to me with Ezra Pound in the end, advising to me that in my trip of return to Trithis and my passage by Udine it tried to see Mr. Ivancic, of the Italian nobility, who lived there in a palace of her family, bombed during the war and constructed by the same architect of the cathedral of the Salute. He was this one a patron, spontaneous young person and, friend of Hemingway, of whom had unpublished manuscripts. He was the protector and patron of Ezra Pound in addition, painted. One communicated immediately by telephone with the house of the poet. And I had to return that same afternoon to Venice, because Ezra Pound invited to me to take the tea with him to the following day.



My interview I have narrated it in two articulos: "The shout of silence " and "celestial Signs in tribute to Ezra Pound " Both they were published by "Mercury " of Santiago and "the Press " of Buenos Aires of those years. Now I am going only to be centered in the extraordinary phenomenon that I lived there. Rather, that we lived there, Ezra Pound and I. The poet remained in total silence, did not speak, did not pronounce a single word. I was who spoke. I spoke single, by more of half an hour, I recited to him until a poem of Herman Hesse, I spoke to him of the war, the cátaros, the poem of Bertrand de

Born, "the praise of the war " that he translated. Nothing, silence was absolute. Then, suddenly, like in inspiration and remembering my own childhood in fields of Chile, when not yet she was "I " and I remained like floating outside same me, "compenetrado " with "the Angel of Guarda " that from outside watched me, came that expression at the top to me: "The second childhood of the old ones " and was happened to me, then, that Ezra Pound "would have left " itself and

returned to its "Angel Guardian " It was, thus, an error that I tried to speak to him to "him " here down, having to do it to his Angel "directly " there above. And, then, it responded to me.

I will keep for always what it said to me. They are prophecies, like those of Fátima, and they have given force me to continue maintaining to me signs "in the old dreams, so that our world does not lose the hope... "

I was the one who delivered the greater attack to raise in his tribute the only monument that to the memory of Ezra Pound exists today in this earth, in the city of Medinaceli, Spain. An enormous rock of Cantabrian mounts was brought to mules by the villagers and with letters inlaid in bronze, done by the blacksmith of the town, the question was recorded there that Ezra Pound did to the Spanish journalist Eugene to him Mounts when this one visited it in Venice: "Still sing the roosters of the Cid in Medinaceli? "

To the inauguration of the monument I traveled with Ivancic and the beautiful Olga Rudge the faithful friend of Ezra Pound. It also accompanied my older son to me. I spoke there with difficult, almost inaudible voice, with the great emotion of the comrade. Perhaps, and in its memory, I had to do it with the voice of silence, with "the shout of the silence " which he is the one that better it has been arriving until the Angel, who to him received it, for already much, long time.

Please excuse the poor translation from the Spanish language. It is a computer translation.

The original article in Spanish is from:

<http://www.chileedu.com>





## Diverse opinions regarding Pound's Fascism

From: Jackson Mac Low (tarmac@PIPELINE.COM)

Subject: Pound etc.

To: Multiple recipients of list POETICS  
(POETICS@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU)

I will begin something about Pound below, but may not finish it in this posting:

Writing about EP is very painful and difficult. In a real sense, he introduced me to modern poetry in 1938 when I was 15 or 16, in my late 3rd year or early 4th year of high school.

I visited the University of Chicago campus, traveling from Kenilworth, a North Shore suburb, to the South Side of Chicago, to talk with my high school hero, Bertrand Russell. He was very nice when I phoned him (when I got out there!) but wasn't able to see me. (I met him several months later at a party out there.) So I went over to the U of C bookstore & found *Culture*, the New Directions 1938 version of *Guide to Kulchur*. I read most of it standing up at the book table. I'd literally never read anything like it. (I must not have noticed the fascism--there was so much exciting and new in it.)

On the way home I stopped by at the main Chicago Public Library & got out several of EP's early books--*Lustra*, *Ripostes*, *Cathay*, and possibly *Personae*, (tho the aforementioned were collected eventually in that book). Whichever they were besides *Lustra*, I read them in a high state of excitement all the way home on the El & North Shore Line trains. \*That\* led me (with some assistance from George Dillon & Peter DeVries, who then were the editor & asst editor of *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse*) to all the rest of the modernists,

except for Stein, whom I'd discovered in the Marshall Field's in Evanston several years earlier, and who later became my "favorite" of them all. I first read Pound, then Eliot, then Williams, then . . .

By the spring of 1939, my later senior year in HS, I was giving lectures on modern poetry up thru Auden to our English class.

Before reading Pound, I had only read with pleasure Whitman and Sandburg (who were both very inspiring to me--before coming across them, I disliked poetry). (It was about the same time that I discovered Donne and Herbert and the other 17th-century Metaphysical poets, and the Shakespeare of the Sonnets (I'd read several of the plays, of course.) My first poems were political--antiwar. Having been a New Deal liberal earlier, I was by then a democratic socialist and pacifist. Funny that, like Olson, I had my life changed, especially as a poet, by that fascist --and wonderful poet

Several years later--in 1945--Robert Duncan and I crashed a reading by Williams at the 92nd St YMHA. We talked a little to him & then I wrote to him a little later, among other things, asking how Pound was.

Next thing I got a note from Pound telling me to visit Hubert Creekmore at New Directions, and the latter told me how to write back to Pound. By then I knew about the fascism, but not yet about the radio talks. EP & I exchanged sporadic notes & eventually he was sending me Social Credit and other papers and I was sending him pacifist anarchist papers. (I was by then working with an anarchist pacifist group that put out a paper first called Why? and later Resistance. (I did so 1944-54.) Among those who came to our discussion group were Robert Duncan, Paul Goodman, and once Julian Beck and Judith Maline who later began The Living Theatre. Goodman, as well as James Baldwin (once, anonymously) and myself wrote for the paper, but I don't think Duncan did. However, he often came to our discussions (we had first met my first day in NYC--on 12 September 1943, my 21st birthday).

From 1945 to 1955, fascism never came up between Pound & me. I noticed that the Social Credit papers were antisemitic (advertised the Protocols of the Elders of Zion!) but I discounted Pound's fascism as psychosis. He never *\*said\** anything that seemed fascist and he was fine to Jewish friends of mine who visited him at St Elizabeths (tho they sd he got riled up & talked crazy when his Praetorian Guard of Southern boys showed up. He sent me books about Andrew Jackson and a bound copy of the Democratic Review that contained some first publications by Hawthorne and a speech or 2 by Calhoun, which I didnt read, tho that must have been what EP wanted me to read.

From 1945 to 1955, then, we talked (on paper--I never met him) about poetry mainly, tho he did give suggestions for what the anarchist-pacifists shd look into (money, of course). (Those notes from EP seem to have been spirited away.) My

attitude was that you don't kick an old men in his paranoia.

But then, after reading several sections of the \_Cantos\_ that I hadnt read before, I brought the subject up (probably in March 1955). He denied being antisemitic ("I never bitched Louis [Zukofsky] or Mina Loy (Levy) [EP's paren.--near enough--her name was Loewy]!" & of course he hadnt. \_Culture/Guide to KucIchur\_ was dedicated to Zukofsky as well as Bunting, (That's where I first saw their names.)

I then pressed EP about the meanings of certain lines in the Cantos. I also mentioned that my father's name until about 1906 or 7 (when he was 18 or 19) was Michalowski. My father changed the name to MacLow, along with the other younger brothers of a group of 8--the older brothers changed it to Michalow-- a little before he came to the US in 1908, when he was 20.

(I didn't know it then, when I mentioned it to Pound, that my father's name was Jacob MacLow when he came to the US. He changed it to Jackson MacLow at the urging of his Baltimore boss. He told me this in the early 1970s, when he'd forgotten he was hiding all his background. It seems that his Southern boss, who liked him a lot, told him: "Jack, I want to call you "Jackson," after our great general, Stonewal Jackson"! & so I became "Jackson MacLow, Jr. when I was born in 1922. (My parents, fleeing their Judaic background, gave me that very unJewish name. I separated the "Mac" from the "Low" & dropped the "Jr." in 7th or 8th grade.)

At first Pound was in denial & defensive, but after I sent him, of all things, a page from Stein's \_Wars I Have Seen\_ in which she made it plain that though the Rothschilds may have controlled gold in the 19th century (I don't remember whether she mentioned the Sassoons & silver--one of EP's other hobbyhorses), they sure didn't do so now (i.e., in the 40s & earlier decades of the 20th century).

I also mentioned that an acquaintance of mine, Gideon Strauss, who was then the first Israeli consul in New York, when he was given the job of setting up a branch of the Bank of Israel in New York, couldnt find a a single Jewish banker to work with him!

The upshot, of course, was a blow-up. Pound's parting shot to me was "You'll do better as Michaelovitch than MacLow."

So why am I still conflicted about the bastard? I think it's obvious. He wasn't *\*only\** a fascist, and only a relatively small proportion of his poetry is fascist. (Of course this sounds like "she's only a *\*leetle bit\** pregnant.") But could it be that what Pound told Allen Ginsberg when he visited him in Venice--that it was "a stupid suburban prejudice!"--was really what he thought it was? Could THAT have led to supporting Mussolini & even Hitler?

I think Major Douglas & his Social Credit (a version of money reform that was dripping with antisemitism--not \*all\* money reformers are antisemites--had as much to do with it as Pound's moving to Italy. (I think he met Douglas before leaving London.) The whole concatenation of Western "populism", the Silver Movement, &c., had as much to do with the turn toward fascism. (Ez had all too much in common with Pat Buchanan! Curiously, there were even hints of interest in Bolshevism around the time of An Objectivist Anthology!)

The fact is that Pound could be a fascist and also write wonderful poetry--even \*after\* turning into a fascist! People are not integral. Certainly Pound wasn't (and neither am I). One is a different person at different times. What I referred to once--much to my surprise--as "the spirit of Ezra Pound" was not that of a fascist. Tho he may have thought that he was writing a populist-reformist anticapitalist-fascist montage when he was writing the Cantos (& I think even this was sporadic) turned out to be a collage poem such as few if any had written before. (Thanks, Charles, for pointing this out, despite the fact that you hate Pound much more than I do!) It certainly \*doesn't\* "all cohere!" (I won't even do more than mention, Roy Campbell, a fine poet who fought on the Franco side in Spain--more of a monarchist than a fascist-- and wrote not only some fine poems of his own but good translations of Baudelaire and St. John of the Cross. [I even have a faint suspicion that he was one of the first to translate Lorca--but I may be mistaken.]

When I wrote Words and Ends from Ez in the early 1980s, I was fully aware of Pound's fascism & anti-semitism, but I still found much of his poetry--the non-fascist parts--inspiring. I think many of us--especially my younger friends who are called "language poets"--learned a great deal from Pound. The whole process of juxtaposing disparate elements within the space (in all senses) of a poem was given to us primarily by him and his b<sup>^</sup>ete noir Stein! How he'd gnash at that sentence!

I think the contributions of the dadaists & surrealists to this kind of poem-construction were minor compared to those of Pound. & he taught many \*different\* groups of poets--not only the imagists, the objectivists, and the projectivists--new ways of making poems and of making \*verse\*. It's incredible when one thinks of the lineages of poem-makers descending from EP! (Think, for instance, of Pound-Olson-Duncan . . . !) Think of all the ears he taught to hear (\*helped\* teach--remember how many of us learned as much or more from Stein--& also, in my case, in approaching hearing and the putting together of disparate things, Cage--especially his music of the early 1950s).

Would he have been as great a teacher--even to those of us who came to reject as much as we accepted--if he'd not have been such a fucking authoritarian? Probably for some--but that authority thing is what often drives teachers--good & bad.

One cannot obliterate Pound because he was in so many ways a fascist (in so many ways, he wasn't!) or Heidegger because he was for a very short time a Nazi (for a much much shorter a time than Pound was a fascist). I've recently learned that not only Arendt but also Celan! visited Heidegger in his late years. We cannot be totalists about poets and philosophers any more than we can be about society. Like Whitman, we all contain multitudes.

The way I chose in the early 80s was to read through the Cantos by a deterministic (nonchance) nonintentional method--the "diastic reading-through text-selection method"-- which gleaned whole words & "ends" of words-- everything from the last letter of a word to all the letters except the first--that successively had the letters of "Ezra Pound" in corresponding places (e.g., E's and P's in the first place, Z's & O's in the second place etc). I spelled out the name diastically over and over until I found no more z's. (Thus the last section of the poem is a silence.) I tried to follow this method out exactly. But of course I made mistakes.

Just as Pound projected a great anticapitalist montage, I attempted to write a completely deterministic nonintentional work by reading through The Cantos to select words & ends "diastically". But chance intervened in the shape of mistakes. Luckily, I decided long ago, to accept my own mistakes (tho not others' typos!) once a poem is in print. I accept the fact that Words and Ends from Ez is a partially deterministic poem modified by completely unintended chance interventions (uncaught mistakes). I also accept the fact that others, such as Charles, find it valuable despite its deviations from its intent. (A curious word to use for the project of writing a deterministic \*nonintentional\* work!)

I've gone on much too long already. Forgive me, fellow polisters!

Jackson mac Low  
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Taken from SUNY Buffalo, EPC <http://epc.buffalo.edu/>

**From: Charles Bernstein (bernstei@UBVMS.CC.BUFFALO.EDU)**

**Subject: Pound & Man at Yale**

**Subject: Re:reading Pound**

To: Multiple recipients of list POETICS  
(POETICS@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU)

I wrote a follow-up piece to "Pounding Fascism" (which is in A Poetics) called "Pound and the Poetry of Today". It was published in The Yale Review in 1986 (I

don't have the exact citation handy). The speech was originally presented at the Pound Centennial at Yale: an occasion at which at I was made to feel (and no doubt also made myself feel) very unwelcome. I was just about the youngest person invited to speak, and the only Jewish one; it didn't seem a coincidence that I was also the only person to raise the question of Pound's fascism at this occasion. The spirit of the supposedly academic event was set by the Pound's daughter asking us to observe several minutes of silence in honor of the anniversary of her father's death, which coincided with the Yale event. In keeping with this reverential spirit, the tone of the event was solemn and studiously respectful. In contrast, my speech would have seemed boisterous and structurally irreverent; though insofar as this was so it was oddly more in the mood of the putative subject. While I was excluded from some of the social occasions set up for the participants (for example the lunch just before my talk), I was invited to a formal dinner at one of those Yale halls filled with dusty oil paintings of important Yale men (fortunately, Susan Howe, who was living in nearby Guilford, came to the dinner with me). This was the sort of occasion where you'd hear people murmuring to one another, "you know, despite it all, maybe Pound was right about social credit" (and maybe some other things too). Creepy.

The Yale Review had written to me saying they wanted to publish works from the proceedings. After the event, at which it was made clear to me that I should not have spoken the way I did (not a new problem for me however), I wasn't surprised that Yale Review turned the piece down. While they may have had other reasons to reject it, since it was advocating an approach to poetry antipathetic to their aesthetic agenda, I couldn't help but interpret it as an extension of the reception I had gotten at the centennial. I made my views known to them and they reluctantly relented, agreeing to publish the work not as an article, but as "commentary" which meant the back of the ... book and in a smaller point size.

After insisting on the necessity and value of reading Pound in terms of his fascism, my speech begins with a discussion of Jerome Rothenberg's anthologies as a counter to the Core Curriculum mania (then in full swing), which I suggest is a logical extension of Pound's ideas of master texts. (Here I distinguish between Pound's "panculturalism" and "decentered multiculturalism".) I go on to differentiate Pound's desire for "montage" (the use of contrasting images toward the goal of one unifying theme) from his practice of "collage" (the use of different textual elements without recourse to an overall unifying idea). The piece ends with a discussion of Jackson Mac Low's great book *Words and ends from Ez*, which it still seems to me is a fundamental resource for any consideration of Pound.

**From: Charles Bernstein (bernstei@UBVMS.CC.BUFFALO.EDU)**  
**Subject: Re: reading Pound**

To: Multiple recipients of list POETICS  
(POETICS@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU)

What Greek logomachy had in common with the Hebrew poison was debate, dialectic, sophistry, the critical activity that destroys faith. ....

The Hebrew attack, crying out for vengeance, began by destroying the Roman Gods. ...

But faith is weakened by debates, [which are] more or less rabbinical and if not rabbinical at least anti-totalitarian.

\_`Che l'intenzione per ragione vale."\_

Faith is totalitarian. The mystery is totalitarian. The sacred symbols are totalitarian. The destruction of the images of the Gods did not increase faith. ...

... That fatal inclination to want to understand logically and syllogistically what is incomprehensible is Hebrew and Protestant.

--Ezra Pound, 1942 (in \_Meridiano di Roma\_), qtd  
by Peter Nicholls in \_EP: Politics, Economics and Writing\_

\*

THUS, in thanks to Jerry, Marjorie, Jackson, Rachel, and the rest of the Poetics "Jews" and Protest-ants (irregardless of ethnic origin) who insist on debating what they/we cannot understand.

This is Charles Bernstein speaking ... from the Upper West Side of Manhattan, home of Zabar's and Barney Greengrass, the Sturgeon King.  
& now for some further sophistry: "the critical activity which destroys faith":

\*

Many of the poets and critics who discount Pound do not do so because of his fascism but because of a dislike for collage, parataxis, and the very strikingly rhetorical surfaces of Pound's poems. They also discount other poets, working in related modes, whose politics are quite contrary to Pound's. The converse of this is also true, as the remarkable posts by Rothenberg, Mac Low, and Perloff, among others, have shown. In this context, I don't take the new wave of Pound criticism that regards fascism as central to Pound's poetic project to be a move away from reading Pound or as a way of undermining his significance or influence. This new Pound criticism, which in some ways incorporates aspects of what has come to be called cultural criticism, or cultural and gender studies, tries to integrate Pound's political and economic ideas with his poetic practice. Like all critical projects, this one is limited. Much of the best Pound criticism before this period tended in various ways to cauterize or surgically remove the cancerous

parts of Pound's work, or career, in an attempt to save the good parts. Partly this was a strategy to "save" the work, but it was equally a forceful interpretative system, an "apolitics" of poetry if you will. (Peter Nicholls: "Most previous criticism of [Pound's] work has, from a variety of motives, sought to keep these different strands separate, tending in particular to drive a web between the 'literary' and political dimensions in his writing.")

Starting in the 1980s, critics like Nicholls (a deep lurker on this list), Rachel DuPlessis, Richard Sieburth, Jerome McGann, Burton Hatlen, Bob Perelman, and others, but most militantly Robert Casillo, tried to integrate Pound's political and economic and gender ideologies into the "tropical system" that is his poetry. In doing this, these readers were giving Pound the respect of taking him at his word, in contrast to those critics who, like well meaning relatives, were often forced to say Pound didn't know what he was talking about. The point here is not to say one approach or the other is right but to note that these approaches allow for different readings of Pound's poetry. None of this work, it seems to me, ought to drive one from reading Pound; quite on the contrary. (Possibly this may be the work of a distinctly younger generation of scholars who no longer felt that raising these issues aligned their views with those who roundly dismissed Pound in the postwar period; this earlier polarization pushed those who went to the defense of Pound's poetry to avoid dwelling on the relation it has to his politics and views on money.)

Casillo and Sieburth actually brought me back to reading Pound; that is, reading through the fascism and masculinism brought me from a passive, largely unarticulated, aversion to Pound, to an active, and ongoing, interest in all aspects of his work. Certainly I have been polemical in my essays on Pound, but not without the ironic realization that Pound relished just this sort of poetic polemicism. Reading Pound through the fascism means reading Pound in the most specific social and historical terms. It also means reading poetic forms politically, as an economy of signs; it means thinking through the implications of poetic structures, rather than imagining them ever to be neutral or transparent. A poem including history means we must read the history too, and this history is writ in the style, in the symbolic/semiotic economy of the poem, in the material means of production, as much as in Pound's "disembodied" "ideas" -- a matrix of material meanings that Christine Froula so brilliantly calls "The Pound Error": error as much in Joan Retallack's sense of typos and errancy as in political misjudgment: it's all there.

Poetry is not worth reading because it is comfortable or happy or understandable or uplifting, any more than history or philosophy is. Nor does reading for a politics of poetic form mean that forms are liberating; more often we find, as Ray DiPalma once wrote, that "all forms are coercive". If one starts with the assumption that a poetry should be truthful or beautiful, that it's meaning should transcend the circumstances of its production -- then of course talk of the politics of Pound's poetic forms will seem dismissive of Pound's work, since it pulls that



work down from the heights of poetic vanity into the real-politics of the actual poem in actual history.

People say, Pound was deluded, Pound was insane, Pound was paranoid, Pound was delusional, as a way to explain away, or possibly contextualize, his fascism. I don't doubt this, but it doesn't get me anywhere. Fascism itself was (IS) delusional and paranoid, and Hitler and Mussolini and Goebbels are certifiable in my book, as are the shouting Brown Shirts pictured in *Triumph of the Will* (don't we call this "mass hysteria"?). [Highly recommended, in this context, in the recent documentary on Riefenstahl, "The Wonderful, Horrible World of Leni Riefenstahl".] I agree with Pierre Joris that what's important to understand as we approach the end of this long century is the nature of this delusion, of this insanity, that has attracted so many otherwise admirable, sometimes brilliant, people, groups, indeed cultures. Of course Pound was delusional during the period of his Radio Speeches; reading Pound means reading through these delusions, trying to come to terms with them. It doesn't mean that in making these judgments one is free of one's own delusions, or that such a reading gives a complete account of this poetic works, which demands multiple, contradictory, readings.

Pound was not just a fascist; he had different politics, and poetics, at different points in his life and even at some of the same points. Nicholls notes that from 1930 to 1937, Pound was eager to keep a dialogue open with the American Left; and earlier in his life his views seemed more Left than Right, although, reading Nicholls, one begins to see this as much as a weakness in the Life/Right distinction as an inconsistency on Pound's part. Nicholls also shows that "perhaps the most disquieting thing about [Pound's] savage propaganda is that it was to some degree an extension of ideas that had governed the earlier Cantos." Indeed, Nicholls's tracings of the (de?)evolution of the practice of "authority" and "ideological closure" in Pound's work is crucial for understanding a fundamental dynamic of modernism.

Yet Pound's poetry is never simply a direct reflection of his politics; indeed, I would argue quite to the contrary that Pound's work contradicts his fascism. The fascist reading of Pound's poetic practice is valuable as one approach; it is not a final or definitive reading; as with all critical methods, it illuminates some issues while obscuring others. Of course, as Casillo's book and other Pound criticism shows, it also may push the criticism to the polemical and even hysterical, as if the critic feels she or he is wrestling with a demon more than interpreting a poem. This too needs to be historicized and contextualized before it can be judged.

Pound told Allen Ginsberg he suffered from "that stupid, suburban prejudice of antisemitism", as if he should have been immune from such a low, "suburban" consciousness. But one thing that is notable about Pound is that he does not appear to have been "personally" antisemitic, which would have been in no way

unusual for a person of his generation and background. His attacks on Jews are not related to his hatred of individual Jews or his desire to be a member of an "exclusive" country club. His views of Jews are highly theoretical and structural, projecting Jewishness, more than individual Jews, as the core force in the destruction of the most cherished values of the West. This demonization is not a "stupid suburban prejudice", it is the systematic paranoia-producing ideology that has come to be called by the fascism. (Burton Hatlen: "we will all seriously misunderstand fascism if we insist on seeing it as a "right-wing" political movement. For fascism ... blended an authoritarianism usually associated with the 'right' and a 'populism' usually characteristic of the 'left'.") Marjorie Perloff is quite right to point to it in Buchanan and the fundamentalist right; they too have gone well beyond "stupid suburban prejudice", even as they bank on it. It is scary to see the degree to which fascist ideas have rooted themselves so deeply in mainstream American life, often in the guise of family values and consonance with a natural order. Pound's most fascist polemics resonate in an eerie way with the current wave of attacks on the arts, gays, the disenfranchised poor, immigrants, feminism, and the cities. I say this because there is often a tendency among Americans to exoticize fascism; Pound did his best to bring it home.

There are any number of fascist writers who are of virtually no interest to many or probably any of us on this list. And there are virulent antisemites like Celine, whose work I like more than is comfortable to say, but which I don't find as structurally and "tropically" rich in terms of the sort of issues I am raising here. Pound's work, it seems to me, not only allows for but provokes an ideological reading; it insists that it be read, form and content, for its politics and its ideas. And it is precisely this that is one of the enduring values of his work. The dystopian aspects of Pound's work are important to fully explore, even with tempers flying off the page, because he is a fundamental part of that elective tradition (thinking of Christopher Beach's useful sense of Pound's influence in his ABC of Influence: Ezra Pound and the Remaking of American Poetic Tradition) that, as Beach and others have noted, consists mostly of poets whose politics and economics differ so radically from Pound's. But the more important Pound is for that tradition, then the more important it is to understand the disease that consumes his work, which cannot be disentangled from what is "good" about it. Nicholls, for example, notes how Pound's insistence on "making it new" made for an affinity with related fascist ideals. The significance of "the Pound tradition" requires that we interrogate it for what it excludes as much as what it makes possible: interrogate the assumptions of poetic lineages not just to acknowledge their effects but also to counteract their effects. (Perhaps one aspect of this elective tradition is a commitment to difficult writers and difficult writings; after spending some weeks lately writing about Laura (Riding) Jackson, that possibility is hard to miss.)

Marjorie urges us to "begin at home" with our political concerns, to look around at what is happening in 1996 in America. Given the context of her own life experience, her warning is all the more ominous, all the more to be heeded. But also, I would say, I hope within the spirit of her wake-up call, but also in the

spirit of "debate", that in the context of this Poetics list, taking on Pound's fascism is also a way of starting at home.

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N.B. The first paperback edition of The Cantos (expanded) is due this spring from New Directions

Taken from SUNY Buffalo, EPC <http://epc.buffalo.edu/>

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# MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

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## A Perspective from the Right:



## EZRA POUND: PROTECTOR OF THE WEST

By: Ursus Major

Ezra Pound was arguably the finest American-born poet and a first rate Classical scholar. He happened to be born in Idaho, a state not noted for either its poets or Classicists. It was, however, a center of the American Populist Movement, which pitted the (usually family) farmer against the banks and railroads. The Populists called themselves "National-Socialists," long before that term was heard in Europe.

Pound was born in 1885, making him less than two-years younger than his later hero, Benito Mussolini. This was at the apex of the Populist movement. The Populist Party's platform for the 1886 election was almost entirely written by Edward Bellamy. Bellamy was a novelist-journalist, whose utopian work, *Looking Backward* had sold over 1 million copies in the U.S. alone. (Some idiot - and we do get more than our share of them around here - confused *Edward* Bellamy with one *Francis* Bellamy, a hack-journalist who is remembered only as the author of The Pledge of Allegiance. This "pundit" then went on to lambast the article on The Pledge, which appears on the ESU website, for failing to mention that it was written by "an atheistic socialist," when in fact *Francis* Bellamy was anything but. Just another idiot flaunting his stupidity. The ESU has to put up with a lot of that.)

*Looking Backward*, is set in the year 2000, and recounts the victory of National-Socialism: the nationalization of the banks and railroads, along with a host of reforms to alleviate the lot of the working-man *without* invoking Marxism. The syndicalism of Georges Sorel was a major influence upon the Populists, as it was upon the one-time Socialist, Benito Mussolini. (Mussolini had been named "Benito," which is not an Italian name, by his anarchist father, in honor of Benito Juarez, the Mexican revolutionary responsible for the execution of Maximillian. Actually, Juarez didn't last that long: he was disposed of by his lieutenant Diaz, who proceeded to set up a dictatorship, which was 100-times more repressive than anything envisioned by the liberal Austrian Arch-Duke, who had been tricked by Napoleon III into accepting a "crown," which was created by the French, the Catholic Church, and the Mexican latifundistas: huge landowners. One should remember that the Spanish Habsburgs had ruled Mexico for centuries. The Habsburg arms - the Roman Double Eagle - are to be found on the Governor's House in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which was founded during the Habsburg era. So Maximillian, being offered the crown as Emperor of Mexico wasn't off-the-wall.)

What happened with the Populists? Basically, William Jennings Bryan stole their rhetoric; and Theodore Roosevelt along with Taft gave support to the trade-union movement. Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech, in support of the free-silver movement, caused the Populists to support Bryan, and they shared in Bryan's

defeat. Imperialism was the impetus of the hour, as the U.S. attacked and defeated Spain, taking what remained of the Spanish Empire (and sending the Marines to the Philippines, to show them that it was merely a "change of title," by shooting half-a-million of the "liberated").

Oscar Wilde once commented, "When a good American dies, he goes to Paris." Pound didn't wait until he was dead before leaving the Land of the Free and Hopelessly Vulgar. By 1908, he was living in London. In 1920, he moved to Paris (which was less expensive); and in 1924, he moved to Italy, where he was to remain until the U.S. Army brought him back to the Land of the Victorious and Hopelessly Vulgar - in a cage! Pound was an ardent Fascist and remained one until the day of his death, well over 30 years after the Duce and his mistress, Clara Petacchi, were hung like sides of beef from the rafters of a bombed-out gas station in Milan.

Pound found in Fascist Italy both the "National-Socialism" of the Populists plus a reawakening of the "civilizing" mission of Ancient Rome, of which Pound (the Classicist) was so fond. Pound referred to his poems as "Cantos" - lyrics! - which drew upon the greatest Euro-poets, from Homer on, as their inspiration; and, in his *Pisan Cantos* (written while confined to a cage in Pisa after WWII, and for which he was awarded the 1949 Bollingen Prize in Poetry) incorporating inspiration from that other great High Culture: the Culture of Confusian China. What was Pound doing in a U.S. Army cage? Awaiting some decision by the U.S. government as to what to do with its most famous poet - who had regularly broadcast pro-Axis speeches from 1941 on!

In the Plutocratic-Marxist alliance of WWII, he found all he had despised since his youth: the joint determination of Bankers and Barbarians to destroy Western Civilization (which, in Pound's view was personified in Fascist Italy, with Germany a distant second). His slim prose work *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* drew attention to Jefferson loathing of banks and compared the tyranny of International Finance with British Mercantilism, finding the former worse than the latter. His anti-Semitic speeches were directed solely against Jewish financial control. (Unlike most anti-Semites, he was rabid in his loathing of Jewish financial interests, but totally indifferent toward the Jews *qua* Jews and was quite disturbed when Mussolini sanctioned the deportation of Italian Jews, who were obviously *not* financiers.) He described Italian Fascism as "paternally authoritarian" and subscribed to the view that freedom was for those who'd earned it. He described the American concept of free speech as merely "license": "Free speech, without radio free speech is zero!" was a comment he made in one of his own broadcasts.

Although manifestly guilty of treason under U.S. law, the government felt embarrassed at the prospect of trying him, so they had some medical hacks from the military certify he was insane, and committed him to St. Elizabeth's, the federal asylum in Washington from 1946 until 1958, when he was allowed to leave, providing he immediately left the country. That he did, returning to Italy;

his last act in the U.S. being to accord the Statue of Liberty the Roman/Fascist salute!

The first of the "Cantos" had appeared in 1917. The last (96-109: *Thronos*) in 1959. The Whole he considered one vast epic poem, on a Homeric scale; however, it is more an epic reflecting the maturity of an artist and Classicist, in an age which marked the decline of both. One can see in influence of Yeates (who was also markedly pro-Fascist, but died before that could produce a crisis [1939]), Ford Maddox Ford and James Joyce were "cross pollinators" with Pound. T.S. Eliot and Earnest Hemmingway, once Pound's protégés and remaining his close friend, despite their totally opposite political views (It is said that Hemmingway came up with the "St. Elizabeth Compromize.") died before him; therefore, Ezra Pound became the last of the expatriate artists, a tradition that began with Henry James. Certainly some brief excerpt of his work is called for. The following is taken from one of the Pisan Cantos, written in the cage:

-----this breath wholly covers the mountains  
 -----it shines and divides  
 -----it nourishes by its rectitude  
 -----does no injury  
 -----overstanding the earth it fills the nine fields  
 -----to heaven  
 -----Boon companion to equity  
 -----it joins with the process  
 -----lacking it, there is inanition  
 -----When the equities are gathered together  
 -----as birds alighting  
 -----it springeth up vital  
 -----If deeds be not ensheaved and garnered in the heart  
 -----there is inanition

I selected this example, because it draws upon the High Culture of China for inspiration, and incorporates within this a Classical maxim, which even those who know no Latin should be aware of. The final phrase ("if deeds be not ensheaved and garnered in the heart / there is inanition") is a restatement of ACTA NON VERBA! (For those denied access to a dictionary of sufficient scope, "inanition" means "emptiness, a need - like a need for food or drink.") So Pound combines the *essence* of Mandarian art with the *essence* of the West, affirming the Spenglerian premise that all High Cultures are "transportable." How many full-time Western symphony orchestras does Tokyo support? EIGHT! (Pound, by the way, was a excellent bassoonist.)

Leaving aside all other considerations, Ezra Pound - Poet and Traitor - PROVES the essential unity of all Euros. From Hailey, Idaho to London, Paris, Rapallo, Rome, an asylum in Washinton, DC back to die in his beloved Rapallo (where the aging Gore Vidal now spends most of his time), Pound showed that no part of

Magna Europa is alien to any Euro. Art, like an orchid, requires a special soil, a special climate to blossom in. A poet was born in the prairies of Idaho, but his genius could not thrive in the same soil as potatoes. Even as thousands of years before, the genius of Ovid atrophied in Tomis, where Augustus had banished him (Ovid had a *great* influence on Pound), so the genius of Ezra (what a horrid name!) Pound, Classicist, Poet-Supreme, would have atrophied in that backwater of Magna Europa. And so the Euro had to return to the primal soil, that his genius might bloom - yes, and be driven into treason, lest greed and barbarism destroy Magna Europa. "If this be treason, let us make the most of it!" Patrick Henry admonished his colleagues. Pound made as much of it as he could.

That what he saw as a deadly threat to his Race-Culture, he put ahead of the color of his passport may be heinous or not. That is not the issue. *The issue is that Hailey, Idaho could give Magna Europa one of Her greatest poets, whose greatness ensued in the main from his ability to absorb all that had gone before and say it anew - even deploying adoptive forms!*

## **MAGNA EUROPA EST PATRIA NOSTRA!**

For the definitive biography of Ezra Pound, I recommend H.M. Meachem's *The Caged Panther* (1967), written while Pound was still alive and in consultation with him. If his poetry - which demands a great deal from the reader - is not your metier, I recommend his slim volume *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*, which gives a very clear delineation as to why he put his Race-Culture ahead of his citizenship.

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**On the Protocols**

## Ezra Pound

[Ezra Pound, arguably one of America's greatest poets, moved to Italy in 1924 and became involved in the newly regenerated Italy of the time. He soon broadcasted from Fascist Italy during the Second World War. His broadcasts were a mix of politics, personal commentary, anecdotes, and old fashioned wit. These were heard in England and America with his aim to try and enlighten people on *why* the war was fought and for *whom*. His message was against the hyper-internationalism that held the world hostage under the thumb of finance bankers and criminal politicians.

"To send boys from Omaha to Singapore to die for British monopoly and brutality is not the act of an American patriot...This war did not begin in 1939. It is not a unique result of the infamous Versailles Treaty. It is impossible to understand it without knowing at least a few precedent historic events, which mark the cycle of combat...*This war is part of the age-old struggle between the usurer and the rest of mankind: between the usurer and peasant, the usurer and producer, and finally between the usurer and the merchant, between usurocracy and the mercantilist system ...The present war dates at least from the founding of the Bank of England at the end of the 17th century, 1694-8. Half a century later, the London usurocracy shut down on the issue of paper money by the Pennsylvania colony, A.D. 1750. This is not usually given prominence in the U.S. school histories. The 13 colonies rebelled, quite successfully, 26 years later, A.D. 1776.*"

With the close of the war because of his broadcasts Pound was tried by the US government for treason and locked away in a mental institution in Washington D. C. He was later released and died in solitude in Italy. Following is a radio broadcast from Italy of April 20, 1943 discussing the controversial *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* Ed.]

If or when one mentions the Protocols alleged to be of the Elders of Zion, one is frequently met with the reply: Oh, but they are a forgery.

Certainly they are a forgery, and that is the one proof we have of their authenticity. The Jews have worked with forged documents for the past 24 hundred years, namely ever since they have had any documents whatsoever. And no one can qualify as a historian of this half century without having examined the Protocols. Alleged, if you like, to have been translated from the Russian, from a manuscript to be consulted in the British Museum, where some such document may or may not exist.

What we know for certain is that they were published two decades ago. That Lord Sydenham wrote a preface to them. That their content has been traced to another sketch said to have appeared in the eighteen forties. The interest in



them does not lie in [the] question of their having been, or NOT been concocted by a legislative assembly of Rabbis, democratically elected, or secretly chosen by the Mysterious Order of Seven Branched Antlers or the Bowling Society of Milwaukee. Their interest lies in the type of mind, or the state of mind of their author. That was their interest for the psychologist the day they first appeared. And for the historian two decades later, when the program contained in them has so crushingly gone into effect up to a point, or down to a squalor.

What is interesting, perhaps most, to the historian is their definite campaign against history altogether, their declared intention to blot out the classics, to blot out the record, and to dazzle men with talk of tomorrow. That is a variant on the pie in the bait. As far as reality is concerned, as far as you and I are concerned it makes little difference whether prosperity is in heaven, or in the year 2300, or just round a corner that will never be turned.

A religious man might think his reward might be in heaven, but even a religious man ought to know that his reward will not be on earth in a hundred years time. In fact, the pie in the sky is a more reasonable proposition: an opium with more to it than Mr. Keynes' day after tomorrow.

I am not concerned with fixing blame retrospectively so much as with judging the present: those who are against the true word, the protocolaires. Now Keynes whose fair is foul, foul is fair sentence can be taken as the quintessence of something or other, is the perfect protoclaire. It comes over me that on the one occasion I had the curious experience of seeing him, he managed to utter two falsehoods in a very short space of time. In fact never opened his mouth without doing so. First in stating that he is an orthodox economist, which he is not, second in saying that the then high cost of living was due to lack of labor, when there were millions of men out of work.

You couldn't have done much better in two sentences if you were out for a record in the falsification. Protocol No. 8, second [paragraph]:

"We shall surround our government with a whole world of economists. That is the reason why economic sciences form, etc. Around us again will be a whole constellation of bankers, industrialists, capitalists and the main thing, millionaires, because in substance everything will be settled by the question of figures."

Is it possible to arouse any interest in verbal precision? Is it possible to persuade more than six or eight people to consider the scope of crossword puzzles and other devices for looking at words for something that is NOT their meaning? Cabala, for example, anything to make the word mean something it does NOT say. Anything to distract the auditor from the plain sense of the word, or the sentence? Even to communism that is NOT communism. To communism of the episcopal sort, which they want in England. A Bolshevism that is to leave the

archbishops and curates just where they are, each with his living or benefice. A revelation against capital, allegedly against capital, that attacks property and leaves capital setting pretty.

Lenin all out for making banking a state affair. And then twenty years during which it has seemed to drop decidedly into the background, when the world revolution was very busy about something else.

It should by now be clear that some people fear NOT the outcome of the war, but the END of the war. Churchill, for example. Not defeat, not the ruin of the Empire that worries him, but the END of the war. End of the slaughter, end of the war conditions.

Robert Clive has been clear enough, ex-British ambassador in Tokyo. Tells you and the world Japan can not be beaten. But the war must go ON, according to Churchill and Roosevelt. Churchill sees the end of monopoly and privilege, or at least a shift when the war ends, no matter HOW. That is the point you should consider. In regard to the protocols, either there is and was a plot to ruin all goyim, all nations of Europe, or some people are stark raving crazy. They want war to go on to certain wreck. WHO are they?

Mere cannon fodder. The American troops in N. Africa know they are not there thru any wish of their own. The war was started for gold, to maintain the fetish value of gold. Plenty of other sidelines. Minor advantages have been COMMERCIALY taken. Did the present regime in England WANT the troops to return after Dunkirk? Every move for reform in England is a fascist reform, or proposition along fascist lines.

The supreme betrayal of Europe is inherent in the alliance of Anglo-Jewry with Moscow. Debts rise. That is one part of the war. It is a contest between STOPPING the war and going on with it. And only one side does any fighting. Namely the party that STARTED the war. They are for its continuance. Who are they?

BUT they are also for starting the next one. They openly proclaim that AFTER (that is IF) America finishes with Japan, she will have to fight Russia. IF Russia should break into Europe.

Only blindness and deafness can keep you unaware of these proclamations. The U.S. must protect the world? Why? Does the world want it? The U.S., once this war is over, must be strong enough to beat Russia.

The U.S. had a chance to maintain her prestige and unique position by staying NEUTRAL. Neutral while other powers exhausted themselves. And she DID not.

Who are the lunatics? Was there a deliberate plot? That is what should concern

you. WAS there a plot? How long had it been in existence? Does it continue, with its Lehmans, Morgenthau, Baruchs? Proposals to send the darkies to Africa, to work for Judea, and the rest of it? And WILL you, after Japan is thru with you, take on Russia? In order to maintain the banking monopoly? With Mr. Wille Wiseman, late of the British secret service, ensconced in Kuhn, Loeb and Co., to direct you and rule you?



Cimitero di San Michele - Ezra Pounds Grave

## **THE ROOTS OF TREASON:**

### **Ezra Pound and the Secret of St. Elizabeths.**

**By E. Fuller Torrey. Illustrated.**

**339 pp.**

New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.

\$19.95.

## Review from NY Times , October 23, 1983 By Robert Coles

ON the evening of Sunday, Nov. 18, 1945, the poet Ezra Pound returned from Italy to the United States, of which he was a native and a citizen, after a long and exhausting flight from Rome. He had traveled on an Army C-54 that landed at Bolling Field, not far from downtown Washington. He was a Federal prisoner and was taken immediately to jail to await arraignment on a charge of treason. During World War II, he had frequently participated in Italy's short-wave broadcasts to North America, making speeches that were not only full of praise for Mussolini and Hitler but outspokenly opposed to America's wartime purposes and its political leadership. The Constitution defines treason as "levying war" on the United States or "giving aid and comfort" to its enemies, and Pound certainly did the latter in his broadcasts, the Government was preparing to argue in the courts. Text:

We know the outcome: Pound never was put on trial because he was evaluated by a team of psychiatrists who unanimously concluded that he was insane and thus unable to be tried. The result was a prolonged hospitalization of the world-famous poet at a Government facility, St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington. (Pound was released in 1958 after 12 years of confinement, but he was never pardoned.) A Federal judge was told by a prominent Government psychiatrist that the potential defendant was "suffering from a paranoid state which has rendered and now renders him unfit to advise properly with counsel or to participate intelligently and reasonably in his own defense, and that he is, and has continuously been, insane and mentally unfit for trial." The doctor's affidavit even declared the patient "permanently and incurably insane."

Almost 40 years later, E. Fuller Torrey, a Washington psychiatrist who has worked at St. Elizabeth's Hospital and has a considerable interest in and knowledge of the complex and sometimes elusive phenomenon known as schizophrenia, offers us a chance to reconsider Pound's experience after he had been accused of treason. Dr. Torrey has been able to write about it, he tells us, because of a "recent release of files in the Department of Justice" through the Freedom of Information Act and because St. Elizabeth's Hospital has lately been equally forthcoming with its psychiatric records. There were, of course, other reasons to prompt him: "My interest in Pound began when I noticed that I was following him around. I grew up in the town where he went to college, helped build a road through his grandmother's homestead (near Clinton, N.Y.) in Nine Mile Swamp, and as a student focused on the work of his protege T. S. Eliot." Later this literary interest took a new shape: "I became intrigued with the myths Pound's friends had created, and I began playing hide-and-seek with him in the stacks of the Library of Congress."

The results of all that curiosity and research, "The Roots of Treason," is a book meant to remind us again of the many confusions prompted by the use of the insanity defense. When his research was done, Dr. Robert Coles is a child psychiatrist who teaches at Harvard University. Torrey felt confronted with

"disturbing questions about the influence of the literati, the role of psychiatrists, and the performance of justice in our society. "It is his contention that Pound was not insane, that the four psychiatrists who examined him in 1945 and 1946 knew that to be the case and that three of them were swayed by the powerful, if not manipulative, influence of the fourth to affirm a diagnosis sufficiently grave to preclude a trial.

The psychiatrist who engineered that outcome was the late Dr. Winfred Overholser, the superintendent of St. Elizabeth's, who lived and worked for many years at the hospital. He was secretary-treasurer of the American Psychiatric Association and had a reputation as one of the nation's "foremost authorities on the legal aspects of psychiatry." Dr. Torrey has some astonishing statements to make about him. He says there is reason to believe that Dr. Overholser destroyed all records "of his meetings with Ezra Pound" and that "the destruction was deliberate, according to a psychiatrist who worked closely with him ."

As one reads the comments of the other psychiatrists who talked with Pound, one surmises their perplexity. What to make of this 60-year-old man who had been screaming for years against Wall Street bankers, American Presidents, British prime ministers, magazine editors, book company executives, professors and university officials, fellow writers from many countries and most of all Jews, always the Jews? How to comprehend his writer's mixture of sharply stated wisdom, marvelous irony and penetrating imagery with hysterical exaggerations, obscene bigotry and hateful distortion? Nor was it a matter, the doctors knew, of the poetry's being immune to the meanness and nastiness that characterized the infamous broadcasts and many personal letters. Some of Pound's "Cantos" reveal the same moral sensibility that the poet displayed when he was paid by the Fascists to make speeches on Rome radio during the war.

Anti-Semitism was Pound's major obsession, a tenacious, virulent hatred that compelled him finally to fawn at the feet of genocidal Nazi power. Only in the last few years of his life did he renounce this idee fixe that had inspired decades of murderous invective that angered and disgusted some of his writing friends but only embarrassed others, who preferred a more genteel kind of a prejudice. For the latter, Pound could at times demonstrate the contempt a true hater feels toward men and women who use a particular prejudice as a mere social convenience.

The doctors at St. Elizabeths quickly learned that psychological tests weren't going to be of much help. Dr. Torrey reports that "the Rorschach test was interpreted as suggesting 'a marked personality disorder of long standing.'" But we also learn that the psychologists could find "no evidence of psychosis." Nor was Pound unaware of the implications of his wartime behavior. In 1943, he had prepared a careful outline of how he would defend himself against a charge of treason after being warned in several ways that the Justice Department would not ignore a continuation of his broadcasts. Despite all his quirkiness and histrionics and all his bitter and even scatological outbursts, psychiatrists who

examined Pound in late 1945 and a number of others who examined him during his 12-year-long stay at St. Elizabeths found him sane in the legal sense of the word - that is, able to face a judge and jury, understand the nature of the proceedings and defend himself vigorously and thoughtfully.

"We decided almost unanimously that he was neurotic," one psychiatrist who worked at St. Elizabeths told Dr. Torrey. (To make such a diagnosis, Freud told us, is to declare someone a human being.) But then there were second thoughts: "Out of loyalty to Win (Overholser) we had to respect Win's diagnosis. And since we had come to such a different conclusion we finally decided not to make any formal diagnosis at all. Then it wouldn't embarrass him." When the doctors told Dr. Overholser of their conclusions, he was "cordial." "He said he respected our diagnosis and that we had had more time to examine Pound than he had. However he said that we didn't need to disturb the practicalities of the situation by making it public and that we should just keep it to ourselves."

A marvelous phrase, "the practicalities of the situation" - one that surely would have amused the Confucian Pound of, say, Canto LIV. The not especially lyrical word "cover-up" might be used these days to describe what happened at St. Elizabeths. Dr. Torrey does not pull his punches: "Overholser had exaggerated Pound's symptoms and disabilities; when exaggeration under oath crosses an indefinable line it can be perjury. Some of Dr. Overholser's colleagues think he may have crossed the line but say such perjury was carried out with the best of intentions. As one of them succinctly summarized it: 'Of course Dr. Overholser committed perjury. Pound was a great artist, a national treasure. If necessary I would have committed perjury too - gladly.'"

Such remarks make this book memorable and quite instructive. One wonders at times whether Dr. Torrey's real subject, notwithstanding his long chapters on the poet's childhood, is Pound's mental life but rather the profession of psychiatry, its moral standards and its continuing moral authority among the secular bourgeoisie, including those who make and administer our laws. Certainly the author is restrained and dispassionate in his presentation of a life by no means easy to comprehend or find admirable. There is in these pages an edifying refusal to account for Pound's literary achievements by recourse to psychological theory. At the end, Pound himself seems to have known how wacky some of his ideas were; they expressed an energetic social conscience (and a profound anti-capitalism) run amok, one suspects. Dr. Torrey emphasizes the truculent vanity of the man, the prickly pride that drove him to do and say such odd and self-damaging things and, in the compact and felicitous phrase used by George Eliot before Pound was even born, his "unreflecting egoism."

With this book, as with others on Pound, we are once more reminded that psychiatry as a pontifical presence can serve the law poorly and that some of us will grant liberties to certain influential figures we certainly would deny other men and women who presumably are entitled to their fair share of this nation's "equal justice under the law." Not least, we are reminded that a human being can be

intellectually accomplished, talented as a writer or artist, and also be a moral and political dimwit. That kind of ambiguous characterization was rendered by William Carlos Williams of his long time friend: "Ezra Pound is one of the most competent poets in our language, possessed of the most acute ear for metrical sequences, to the point of genius, that we have ever known. He is also, it must be confessed, the biggest damn fool and faker in the business. You can't allow yourself to be too serious about a person like that - and yet he is important. He knows all this and plays on it to perfection."

THE saddest part of this book is the chronicle of willing, even eager seduction it documents: doctors, writers and teachers allowing themselves to be demeaned, to be caught in a bewildered mind's mirror games, played, as Williams said, "to perfection." As a consequence, a well-known asylum became for years the location of an eerie literary salon that was surrounded by special privileges and run by a man, alas, whose reported remarks about and behavior toward some of his fellow patients may be as damning as any of his published words. At the end of his life, during the years he spent in self-imposed exile in Italy, Pound took stock and repented this way: "Any good I've done has been spoiled by bad intentions - the preoccupation with irrelevant and stupid things." Dr. Torrey offers no evidence that similar self-criticism will be coming from the doctors and administrators at St. Elizabeth's Hospital.



*When, when and whenever death closes our eyelids,*

*Moving naked over Acheron*

*Upon the one raft, victor and conquered together,*

*Marius and Jugurtha together,  
one tangle of shadows.*

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