

Published for the Vanguard Amateur Press Association by Robert W. Lowndes, 325 West 11th Street, New York 14, New York. Volume 2, Number 2. May, 1945. Unless otherwise credited, material herein is editorially written.

A FOUND OF JUDGMENT

Reading the account of Ezra Pound's trial in "E. P. Ode Pour L'Election de Son Sepulchre", I am immediately impressed and somewhat mystified by the fact that neither the prosecution nor the defense considered the difference between the "fascism" Pound believed in and the Fascism he actually supported. This is no minor quibble, for the two are well-nigh polar opposites, and there can be no intelligent reason for a believer in the first to use the term "fascism" any longer in regard to the socio-economic order he favors. However, since the unfortunate practice persists, we shall distinguish the two by calling Pound's intellectual convictions "book-fascism" as differentiated from the Fascist regime in Italy, or the Nazi regime in Germany.

(The term "book-fascism" is an apt one, for it exists only in books. It is a proposed socio-economic order not without considerable merit; it was conceived and promulgated by the intellectual followers of Mussolini -- prior to his establishment as Duce -- sheerly for the purpose of deceiving the Italian intellectual into supporting the Fascists. The principles outlined were not put into practice by the Mussolini regime, and were never intended to be used, once power had been attained.)

Such outstanding characteristics of Fascism as the official promulgation of "inferior race" theories and the compulsory adoption of anti-semitism on the part of the populace; the destruction of such art, literature, science, as might serve to encourage any opposition to the Fascists; the pursuit of war as a necessary part of the national existence -- none of these would have a place in a regime administering "book-fascism".

There is no evidence to show that Pound accepted the Mussolini regime under duress; no, we must assume that he deliberately swore allegiance to a government which, in practice, was the deadliest enemy of Pound's beliefs existing at the time. If not a crime, it was certainly a blunder.

In Pound's case, the results of this blunder were not confined to himself. As a figure of repute, in a position to sway others on intellectual grounds (and to elicit sympathy toward himself as a result of the shabby treatment he received from America), Pound must bear responsibility for any others who were converted to Fascism (not "book-fascism") through his rhetoric over the air, or by his example.

Nor can there be any evasion of the accusation of being an accessory to the crimes of the regime he supported. This was not merely an administration, subject to change at public disapproval; it was an absolute dictatorship wherein the official attitude of the government was forced upon the populace. (Dr. Merlyn's reply to the accusation: "If I advocate democracy, and because of that someone calls me an accessory to every lynching in the South, would you take that accusation with equal solemnity?" is sadly inept for one of his acumen. Lynching in the South -- or in any

other part of the USA -- is not an act of democracy, but an act of rebellion against democracy. It may at times involve public officials, but public officials in the USA are subject to recall on the basis of popular disapproval -- while the murder of Jews and/or political dissenters in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany was not an act of rebellion against the basic ideal of the regime, but an act of faith and affirmation. (In the USA, it is the right of the private individual to believe in the nonsense of "inferior races", and to hate Negroes, Jews, Chinese, Japanese, etc., per se. In Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany it was the duty of the private individual to embrace such beliefs and to indulge in such hatred -- the murder of members of "inferior" races and/or political opponents was not a crime, there, but an act of highest virtue.)

2.

It is still uncertain as to whether or not any High (or Middle or Low) Commission will ever try Pound for treason; he hardly rates. True, as this is being written, he has just been captured by American troops, and there is a federal indictment against him. And perhaps the government will put on a show and present Pound's head to the public on a silver platter -- partly as a sop to the still-indignant over the comic opera that went on in Washington a few months back under the title of a Seditious Trial. (In which the accused were not "book-fascists" but true-blue blood-bretheren to the Nazis and all their works.) Ezra Pound, however, is unimportant -- and can be sacrificed if it appears to be necessary.

In any event, he will be condemned by the future, not for what he did but for what he didn't do. At a time when far greater men were undergoing enormous personal sacrifices, either to warn the world of the true nature of Fascism, or to defeat its projects in motion, Pound sulked in the enemy's camp and salved his ego with petty spite.

Granted that he received considerably less than a fair deal from America; he isn't the first or the greatest to receive shabby treatment from his own people. Granted that, being a sensitive soul, he was fed up with what he called (and not without justice) the "cultural backhouse"; he could have picked other havens than that of a cultural charnelhouse. And I am not sure that he didn't know the true nature of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany: such fits into the infantile pattern of his later behaviour. His own land didn't appreciate him, so he'd come here where his hatred of America would be a useful commodity, and hope that the unregenerate boobs at home had their guts blown out. (It is reported that he did try to return to America in 1942, but was prevented from doing so. What lies behind that, if it be the case, will undoubtedly come forth in Pound's trial, should there be any.)

It would have been poetic justice had he been lynched by a Fascist-hunting Italian mob. He, the foreigner, the erudite American who came to approve of their misery. There's a just reason for the European peasant to distrust intellectuals; up to but recently, the vast majority of brains were always on the side of oppression. An Italian teamster who said, looking at Pound's car-

cass decorating some fig tree: "Served him right for being so damn smart", would be voicing an age-old grievance. And he'd have been right so far as he went -- except that Pound wasn't smart enough to know at which point it's distinctly unhealthy to take the side of reaction.

In regard to Pound's poetry, and other works, they'll stand or fall upon their merits. Should a High Court find him guilty of equally High Treason and hang him still Higher, it won't make any difference. We didn't return General Burgoyne's sword to him, and declare the battle of Saratoga off, when General Benedict Arnold sold out, some time later. Nor need we burn Ezra Pound's books, whatever the event with Pound himself.

Dr. Merlyn suggests that Pound was ineffective over the Rome radio, and that it is most unlikely that his harangues thereon had much, if any, effect -- either in converting persons to Fascism, or swaying them from supporting the war. That being the case, when a Pound of justice is administered to Ezra, perhaps an Ounce of prevention will suffice.

LOWNDES FOR PRESIDENTE (By El-Hanyf)

Esconced in his litter, borne along Riverside Drive on the backs of sturdy Brooklynese, attended by a blonde and his feline, Blackout, Candidate Lowndes spoke glowingly of the proposed wonders of New America.

"Scientists," declared the Aspirant, "will earn their keep in my regime". He took a black notebook from his pocket and looked inside, then spoke of items upon which technicians of the Lownds America would devote unflagging energy, even unto success.

(1) The Zone of Silence. To be available in small, portable units, room-size, and apartment-size models. The Zone, when applied, envelops those within, so that no outside noises can enter. "You can see," the Great Man said, lighting his pipe, "what a boon this will be. Music lovers can play the battle section from 'Heldenleben' at Four A.M. without arousing the wrath of neighbors; jive fiends can jam-session the weekend around without inviting split skulls." He permitted Blackout to lick his hand. "Cats can make love at midnight undisturbed by sleepless humans; babies" -- he glanced at the blonde -- "infants, rather, in the home can be seen, but not heard." He sucked on his pipe meditatively. "Divorces will fall off, indubitably, as otherwise happy homes need no longer be ruptured by the fact that one partner is a Yankee fan and the other a Dodgers demon -- thus impelled to mayhem upon each other when a crucial game is in progress. Or should one partner be a secret lover of swing, Steiner, or Cowboy Ballads -- why here again, through the virtue of the Zone, tolerance can bring forth joyous fruit."

A brief pause followed while the Tribune of the People conversed with his blonde then the Noble One fell to proclaiming other marvels.

(2) The Stocking Dispenser. This machine solves the silk or nylon stocking situation. At night, our fair lady removes her stockings and tosses them into the hopper. Immediately they are rotated at high speed to remove any and all particles of dirt;

they are then reduced to their basic elements, respun and rewoven, so that, in the morning, my lady can have a brand new pair of stockings through the simple expedient of pressing a button." He closed his eyes for a moment as the blonde murmured words of sheer adoration. "I think we'll have something similar for dishes -- and diapers."

(3) The Insect Destroyer. Persons bothered by insects will take injections, completely harmless to humans, and without visible effect -- except that any insect of any kind coming within a ten-foot radius of persons so injected perishes immediately. "I expect," said the Candidate, "that nature will be discovered andw once the blight of crawling, buzzing, and flying things is over."

(4) Intoxication-governors. This will be a chemical preparation, to be taken on prescription from your doctor, as the human metabolism varies with the individual. It is a fact that just at the time when one is at the peak of pleasant intoxication, one has an increasing desire to continue drinking. The intoxication-governor will begin to operate at this point, absorbing all the alcohol ingested thereafter, so that total drunkenness and/or ensuing hangovers will not occur. "After awhile," The Benefactor continued, a person will begin to sober up as, since the governor's soaking up all the alcohol, the person in question is gradually assimilating it. Then, however, the governor shuts itself off and the process of direct saturation with Demon Rum can continue until the 'peak' is again reached -- at which time the governor goes in to action once more."

(5) The Love Combination. Again a harmless ingredient will be introduced painlessly to the populace, this time with the result of a combined prophylactic-contraceptive. "It will last indefinitely," declared the Presidente-presumptive. "As a matter of fact, we shall see to it that everyone is so treated, and make it necessary for people to obtain various articles from their doctor or their local drug stores, when they want to have babies."

(To Continue)

OF MAILING #1

Summa cum laude: Tumbrils, VR Record Review, (seeing that we had no connection in its preparation -- only turned ye old mimeo handle) and Heeling Error.

Cum laude: "A Window on Bok" and "The Cow flop Hour".

Well worth reading: K'Taogm-m, Vantage Point, and the contents page of Banshee.