

EZRA POUND—AMERICAN VOLCANO IN ITALY

BY VIVIAN BIRD AND GEORGE FOWLER

The Irish poet William Butler Yeats saw his friend Ezra Pound much as the ancients saw the volcano—a divine voice of displeasure and wrath, bursting awesomely over the land. But in its wake, the volcano's wrath leaves fertile fields, streams, rivers and precious stones amid bucolic landscapes. But the righteous powers of liberal democracy saw themselves as fully enlightened, and Pound as a threat to their perception of Utopia. The mountain that was Pound would have to be silenced.

Ezra Pound was born October 30, 1885 in the then shabby dot on the map of Hailey, Idaho, the only child of Homer and Isabel Weston Pound. His father had moved there to operate a government land office registering mining claims. His mother was descended of a Massachusetts Brahmin family that had settled Weston.

In Michael Reck's *Ezra Pound—A Close Up* the author noted that frontier Hailey's single street was composed of a plank sidewalk, 47 bars, a hotel and a single newspaper. When Ezra was four the family moved to Pennsylvania and settled at Wincote, near Philadelphia.

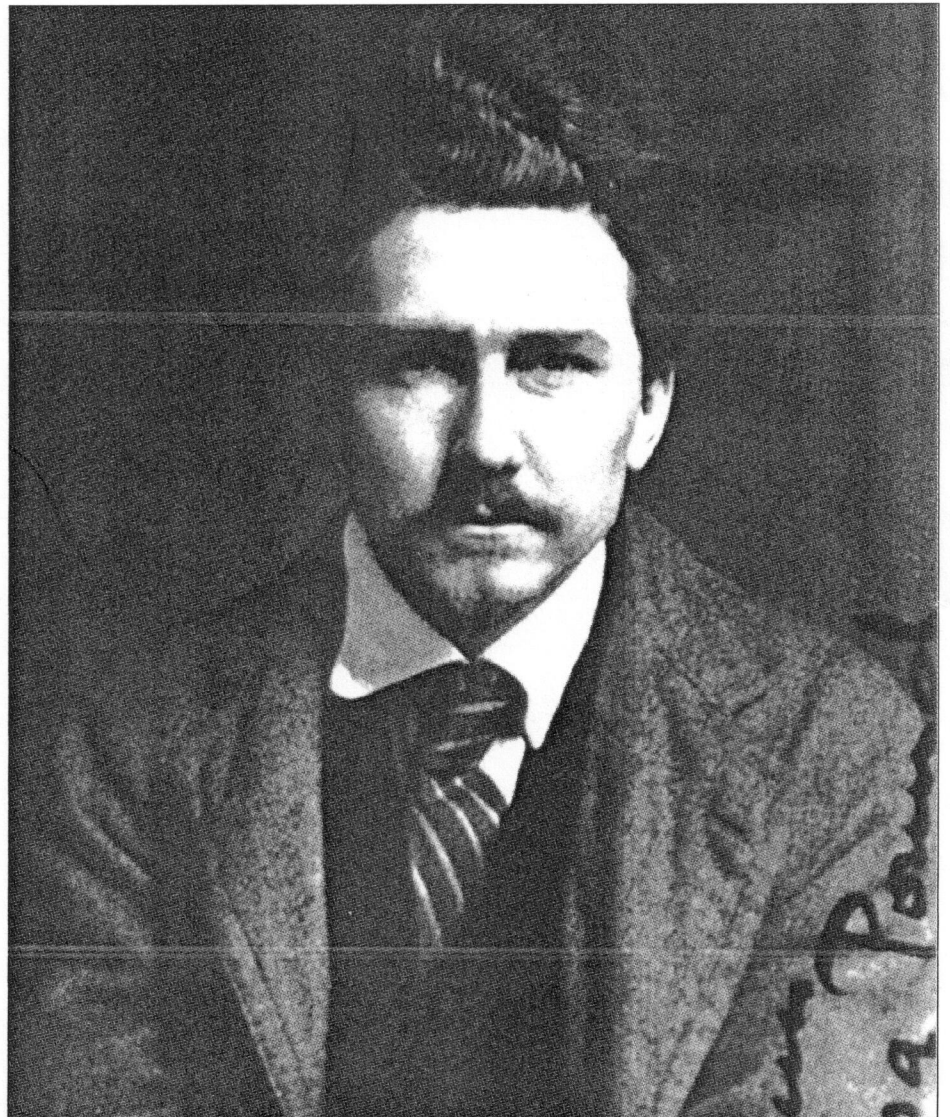
Sent to a Quaker school at six, Ezra was dubbed "the Professor" because he wore glasses and used complex words. At 12 he entered Cheltenham, a military school two miles from home. He took to Greek and Latin but detested military drill.

In *Ezra Pound—The Solitary Volcano* author John Tytell noted that Pound wrote his first poem at 11, about William Jennings

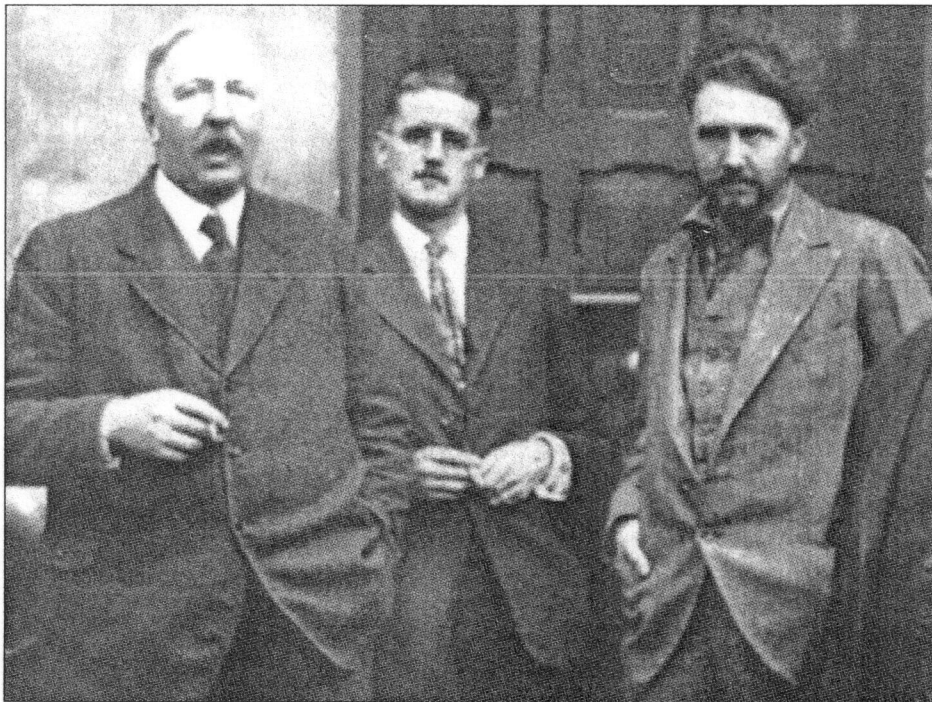
Bryan. It was 1896, the year of "The Great Commoner's" populist free silver campaign against the Eastern banking trusts. Tytell states that the Nebraskan's "attempt to defeat the

banking establishment and the gold standard left a formative impression on Pound if we consider his later economic theories."

In 1898 a generous aunt took Ezra



Ezra Pound in 1916, while residing in London. He had begun his epic poem *The Cantos*. In that year Pound interceded with W.B. Yeats and others to assist him in championing the careers of two then-struggling immortals of literature, T.S. Eliot and James Joyce. Joyce had completed *A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man* and was laboring on *Ulysses*.



A trio of literary giants pose for a photo in Paris in the spring of 1923: Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce and Ezra Pound.

and his mother on a three month excursion to North Africa and Europe, including Venice. Tytell saw this trip as "an opening door for Ezra, a push in the direction of history and culture." At 15, young Pound was ready to begin university study and "He had already defined a purpose in the poet's vocation."

Ezra Pound's high intelligence and profound erudition made him an immediate standout among scholars. Entering the University of Pennsylvania at the tender age of 15, he was regarded as a brilliant student, known for his poetic genius and scholarship as well as a flamboyant manner of dress befitting his individualism. He was also an exceptionally handsome young man, quite attractive to the opposite sex.

At Penn Ezra became a good friend of the poet William Carlos Williams. Subsequently, Williams recalled that Pound wrote a sonnet each day. Unfortunately, these efforts were not preserved. In 1903 Pound went on to Hamilton College in upstate New York. There he studied Anglo-Saxon, the Romance languages and medieval history.

Pound returned to Penn in 1906 to become a Harrison Fellow in Romantics. It was at this point that he began to think about writing a long epic poem. For a short period he

taught at Wabash College in Indiana. But as a result of a romantic involvement with a young actress he was obliged to leave.

Such incidents are often fortuitous. The incident soured him on campus life. Had it not occurred, Ezra Pound might have become inexorably entwined in ivy, the academic equivalent of a tennis bum.

In February 1908 he sailed for Europe to live in Venice, taking residence over a bakery close to the Grand Canal. Ezra Pound would not return to live in America for almost 40 years. When he did so it would be under tragic and brutal circumstances.

Pound published his first collection of poems under the name *A Lume Spento (With Tapers Quenched)* in Venice in June, 1908. This publication was paid for out of his own modest pocket. In a letter to his parents he stated his determination to have his works published in America, even if it meant writing his own reviews for them under another name!

Later that year, he traveled to London (with three quid in his pockets and copies of *A Lume Spento*) in order to resume an acquaintanceship with the famed Irish poet William Butler Yeats. They had met during Yeats' 1903 American lecture tour.

The two became close friends, and Yeats was the intermediary through whom Pound met other renowned writers such as T.S. Eliot, Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce and artist and poet Wyndham Lewis. More than a few such friends would stick by him in the dark times to come.

Pound's poetic output soon grew to prolific proportions, and he rapidly gained critical acclaim. His skill as a poet was complemented by his expertise in medieval and Romance literature, as evidenced by such works as his 1910 *The Spirit of Romance*.

In *The Roots of Treason—Ezra Pound and the Secret of St. Elizabeth's* author E. Fuller Torrey, M.D. stated that Pound became interested in fascism "as an alternative form of government" in 1922. Many Pound students concluded that the expatriate developed early admiration for Benito Mussolini, a dictator who had restored order to a fractured nation, stimulated industry and agriculture, drove organized and very powerful criminal gangs, such as the Mafia, deep underground and promised a return to the glories of ancient Rome.

Pound corresponded regularly with Il Duce, signing his letters "with devoted homage" and "with all my faith." By 1931 Pound's stationery noted the Fascist calendar (which commenced with Mussolini's coming to power in 1922) and the Mussolini motto: "Liberty is a Duty, Not a Right."

The poet and the dictator met in 1932, and discussed poetry and economics. Apparently Ezra was too swift for Benito on both counts, as the vain leader begged off future meetings. But Pound's admiration for the regime did not waver.

The first war year of 1939 began sadly for Pound, with the death in the south of France of his old friend William Butler Yeats. He had not been to America since 1911, and at the urging of the Italian government he accepted first class booking on an Italian liner sailing for New York. Quite soon after arrival he left for Washington, staying with two sisters, old friends, living in Georgetown. His aim was to reach governmental leaders with reasonings of peace.

President Roosevelt would not entertain the thought of a visit from Pound, but the poet did confer with

Senators Bankhead, Borah, Byrd, Wheeler, Taft and Vandenberg; six of the Senate's most significant members. He dined with influential friends such as Archibald MacLeish. He offered the interesting suggestion that, as a means of allaying tensions in the Pacific, the United States give Guam to the Japanese in exchange for 300 films of Noh plays.

Back in Italy on June 29, he heard of Ford Madox Ford's death, also in the south of France. Within three months, the war had begun, and Pound began writing to everyone in America he knew, urging neutrality. H.L. Mencken wrote Pound a number of times that FDR was working hard to the contrary. Dr. Torrey wrote that Mencken's letters "reinforced Pound's views that the President was a tool of Jewish financial interests."

Pound began radio broadcasts for Italy's Ministry of Popular Culture in January, 1941. His vehicle was the *American Hour*, seven minutes of commentary 10 times a month. He traveled from his home in the village of Rapallo to Rome to record several programs (of his own composition) at a time. His talks centered on the theme of Roosevelt, Churchill and the Jews as the perpetrators of Western destruction.

Pound's central themes of philosophy, economics, government and an abiding disdain for the Jews did not translate to *carte blanche* championship of the white race. A Pound-recorded broadcast, ironically aired while Pearl Harbor was being bombed, included:

"As for the Australians, they deserve a Nippo-Chinese invasion. Criminals were their granddads, and their contribution to civilization is not such as to merit even a Jewish medal. Why the heck the Chinese and Japs don't combine and drive that dirt out of Australia, and set up a bit of civilization in those parts, is for me part of the mystery of the Orient."

Pearl Harbor stunned Pound and he vowed immediately that he would broadcast no more. He seemed deeply and sincerely conscious that any subsequent words could negatively affect America and its armed forces in time of war; no

matter how that war came about. His perception was that he had been using his Fascist microphone as a weapon *for* America and its vital interests, a perception that would in time cause him to break his vow and return to the recording studio to resume his broadcasts.

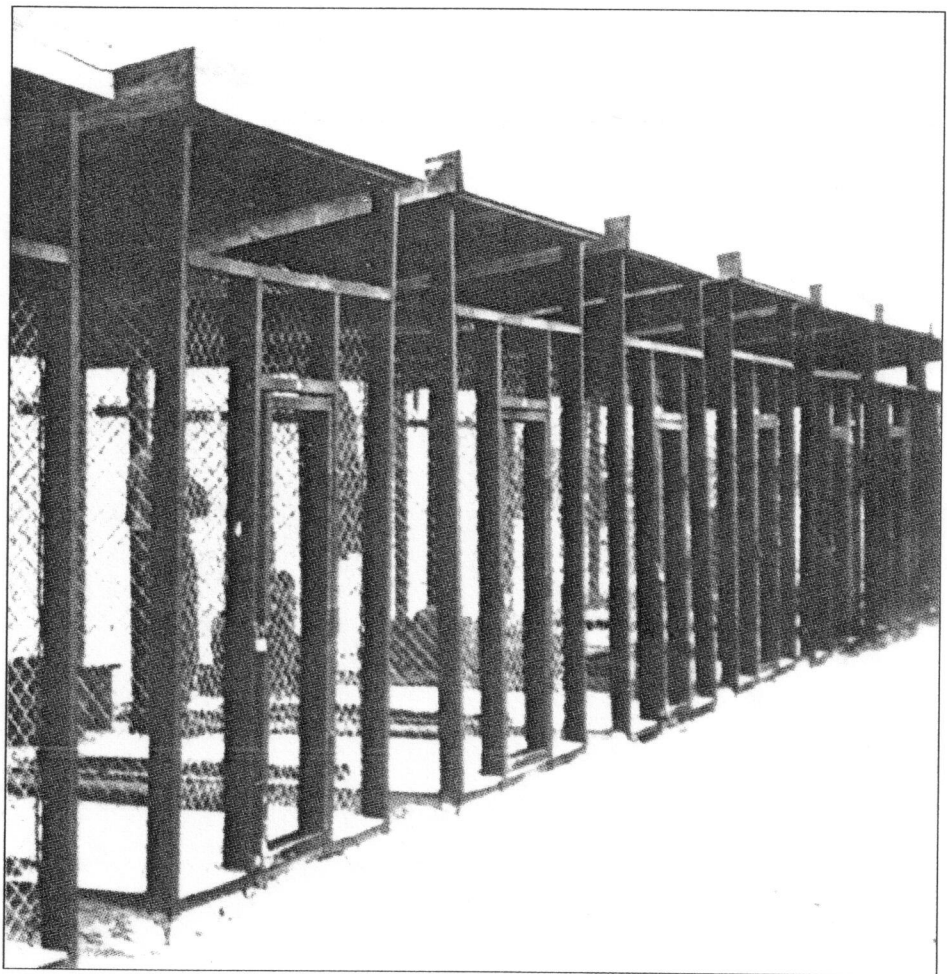
The January 26, 1942 issue of *Time* magazine reported that Pound would no longer broadcast, that he had "retired to Rapallo to continue his study of Chinese philosophy." But the poet's mind would not content itself with remote Chinese wisdom. Shortly, he was back on the air.

His first broadcast after the U.S. entered the war may have been one of his most incisive: "[Roosevelt] had, so far as evidence to me showed, broken his promises to the electorate; he had to my mind violated his oath of office. He had to my mind violated the oath of allegiance to the United States Constitution which even the ordinary

American citizen is expected to take every time he gets a passport . . . the United States has been led down the garden path . . ."

In a March 15, 1942 talk he reiterated his conviction that influential Jews were the enemies of Axis and Allied alike: "No Rothschild is English . . . No Baruch, Morgenthau, Cohen, Lehman, Warburg, Kuhn, Kahn, Schiff, Sieff or Solomon was ever born Anglo-Saxon. And it is for this filth that you fight. It is for this filth that you murdered your Empire. It is this filth that elects, selects, your politicians."

In *The Solitary Volcano* Tytell points out that July, 1943 was a significant month for Pound. On July 26 the District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia indicted him for violations of the Treason Statute. In Italy the previous day the tiny ceremonial figurehead, King Victor Emmanuel, asked Benito



The security cages in Pisa, Italy where Pound was kept and displayed in 1945 after his arrest by Communist partisans and prior to his being taken to the U.S. for his years of institutional confinement.

Mussolini to resign. The new government outlawed the Fascist party.

In a long letter to U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle, Pound showed his deep concern regarding the charges. In part, he stated: "I have not spoken with regard to this war, but in protest against a system which created one war after another, in series and in system. I have not spoken to the troops, and I have not suggested that the troops should mutiny or revolt.

"The whole basis of democratic or majority government assumes that the citizen shall be informed of the facts. I have not claimed to know all the facts, but I have claimed to know some of the facts which are an essential part of the total that should be known to people.

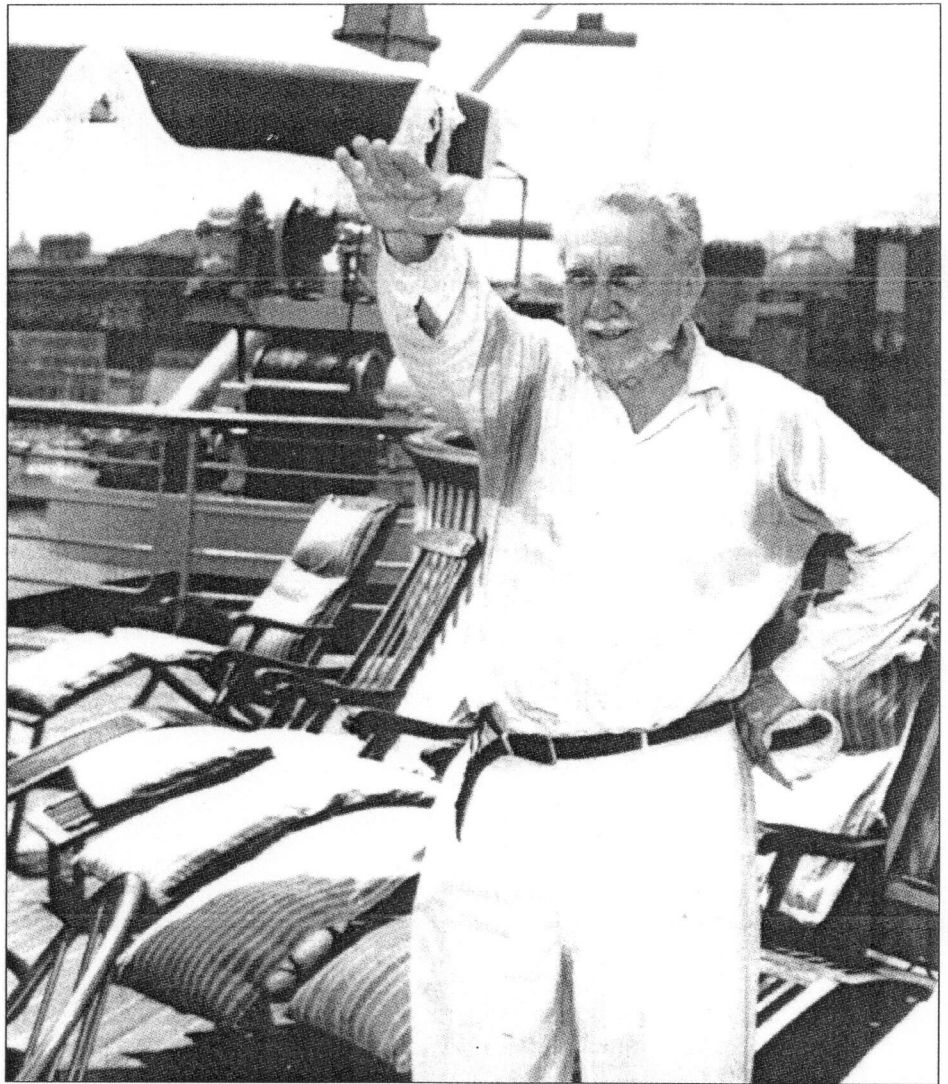
"I have for years believed that the American people should be better informed as to Europe, and informed by men who are not tied to special interest or under definite control.

"The freedom of the press has become a farce, as everyone knows that the press is controlled, if not by its titular owners, at least by the advertisers. Free speech under modern conditions becomes a mockery if it does not include the right of free speech over the radio."

In early September, 1943 Italy capitulated, just as American and British forces prepared to invade the mainland. Pound was in Rome, a city in chaos, with nowhere to go. Two friends, an Italian and his English wife, helped Pound prepare to journey north to Rapallo. There he continued to publish tracts. The war, save for low level bombing hits (a propagandist's dream) on a church and an orphanage, had not physically affected the charming town.

The poet's final wartime article, on economics, was published April 9, 1945. In *The Life of Ezra Pound* Noel Stock noted some confusion as to Pound's arrest. According to Mrs. Pound two Communist partisans bearing Thompson machine guns arrested him in late April or early May. Stock concluded from army intelligence reports that Pound had been in custody at the counterintelligence center in Genoa since May 3.

After interrogations Pound was moved to the Disciplinary Training



The ever-feisty poet offered press photographers a defiant salute aboard the Cristoforo Colombo upon the ship's arrival in Naples, July 9, 1958.

Center just north of Pisa and placed in one of ten gorilla cages that held particularly notable prisoners, several of whom were slated for execution. The cages measured six by six and a half feet, ten feet high, and were kept out in the open, their occupants exposed to the elements. In *The Roots of Treason* Dr. Torrey wrote: "Nobody was certain what to do with him next, and there was no word from Washington. Army regulations covered most contingencies, but they did not mention poets charged with treason."

Ezra Pound was caged for 25 days, wearing loose fitting army fatigues. Eventually he was shipped stateside, arriving in Washington, D.C. on November 18. He was taken directly to D.C. jail.

The question of Pound's treason defense concerned his friends.

T.S. Eliot wrote a friend: "I think that both you and I realize that Ezra is 'sane' and the world is insane, but since it is the world which habitually hangs or torments men of genius or vision this solution [an insanity plea] seems the more practical."

The Justice Department had brought over seven Italian radio technicians to testify that Pound, in their presence, broadcast treason against the United States. In *The Roots of Treason* Torrey pointed out that "the difficulty for the government lay in the fact that the Italian technicians spoke no English. It was therefore impossible for them to say that they had heard Pound make a particular remark [that would be quoted to them by government prosecutors]."

Pound's literary, personal and ideological allies realized that, given Pound's reduced condition in captiv-

ity and the political temper of those who would see him done in, an insanity plea was the best course. It appears that any number of prestigious figures were prepared to offer an opinion of insanity if called to testify in a treason trial in which Ezra Pound's life was in the balance.

Public sympathy began to swing Pound's way when even unexpected sources supplied sympathetic morsels. The *New York Herald Tribune*, then the Anglophilic "Chase Bank Republican" version of today's *New York Times*, quoted Pound's lawyer Julien Cornell as stating that his client was suffering from claustrophobia and disorientation after having been "kept 'incommunicado' in an iron cage for seven months." The *Washington Post* quoted Cornell as stating that Pound "may even lose his life if he is not sent to a hospital."

But on Sunday, November 25, 1945 the *Post* ran an extensive feature on the poet headlined "Benito's Boy." It reprinted a number of his pro-Axis and anti-Semitic broadcast remarks. Equally damaging in anti-Pound quarters was an extensive story on him in the openly pro-Communist New York tabloid *PM*.

The overriding legal-psychiatric question in regard to Ezra Pound's trial was of course whether he could understand the charges against him and whether he could assist in his own defense. The court, no doubt after a great deal of back-room politics, agreed to attorney Cornell's request that his client, in urgent need of care, be placed in a hospital.

Pound was transferred to St. Elizabeth's, Washington's mental hospital, on December 21, 1945. As noted by Torrey, not a sympathetic biographer, he gave the admitting psychiatrist a detailed and rational lecture on why he was not guilty of treason:

He had broadcast his ideas from Italy because in the U.S. during the war it would have been impossible to do so. He had been saying the same things prior to the war as during it. He had been performing a patriotic duty as an American in discussing the true causes of the war. He felt that he must emphasize to the American people that President Roosevelt had

violated the Constitution and that America should get out of a costly war not in its interest.

Generally overlooked in Pound biographies is the fact that, by the end of 1945, time was running against his more intrepid antagonists. Troop ships were returning with tens of thousands of G.I.s who had fought in Europe and who were telling the folks back home that "we fought the wrong people." And well before the newly self-anointed anti-Communist crusader Winston Churchill turned against his wartime pal Stalin with his July, 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri, Americans were becoming aware of Soviet brutality and acts of arrogant ingratitude in "war-torn Europe."

Pound's first "St. E's" quarters were in Howard Hall, a locked ward with barred windows surrounded by high walls. In January, 1947 Cornell's bail application was denied, but the court and the Attorney General

reached an agreement allowing Pound to take a room in a more pleasant section of the hospital, overlooking the Potomac, where Dorothy Pound and others could visit comfortably.

Throughout the 1950s the poet continued to read, write, and, in a somewhat tragi-comic sense, hold court. His surroundings, including part of the hospital grounds, became an intellectual salon. John Tytell wrote that Pound "was being visited by the literati, the scholars, the Social Creditors and right-wing sympathizers . . . Several of the resident psychiatrists at St. Elizabeth's complained about the fawning sycophants who came to adulate."

In the late 1950s such literary figures as Robert Frost, T.S. Eliot, Archibald Macleish and Ernest Hemingway lobbied hard for Pound's release. Then Washington super-lawyer Thurman Arnold of Arnold & Porter agreed to take the case. On May 7, 1958 Ezra Pound was officially discharged from



The poet gets acquainted with his grandchildren, Patricia and Walter de Rachewiltz, days after returning to his home in Italy in July, 1958 following his long confinement. One wonders whether Pound was amused by the photo's ironic symbolism, just behind the happy trio.

the hospital in the custody of Dorothy Pound. Years later Attorney General William P. Rogers said that Robert Frost had negotiated an understanding to the effect that Pound would leave the country if released.

Dorothy and Ezra Pound arrived in Italy that June. He got bad press in the States when he was photographed in Naples giving the fascist salute. Noel Stock wrote: "Home at last, surrounded by many of his books and papers, he was full of energy and despite his 72 years ready for work and to entertain friends." Shortly after his arrival he received a check for a thousand dollars from Ernest Hemingway, who thought Pound might be in need of cash. The poet wrote to the novelist with thanks, saying he didn't need the money but would value the check, which he would have "duly framed for posterity."

In January 1965 T.S. Eliot died and Pound flew to London to attend the funeral at Westminster Abbey, then on to Dublin to visit with William Butler Yeats' widow. Through Yeats, Pound had become a strong proponent of Irish freedom, the removal of the last Union Jack and Orange sash

from Irish soil. He always referred to a meeting he had with Arthur Griffith, the founder of the IRA's political wing Sinn Féin, as "one of the most illuminating hours of my life in conversation."

He turned 80 in October of that year, and Stock noted that "articles and tributes were published in many newspapers, periodicals and magazines in England, the United States, Germany, France and Italy and he was also the subject of wireless and television programmes; he himself celebrated with a trip to Greece."

On June 4, 1969 Pound and his longtime friend Olga Rudge flew to the United States, 11 years after his release from St. Elizabeth's. The day after his arrival he attended the annual meeting of the Academy of American Poets at the New York Public Library. On June 8 he and Miss Rudge motored upstate to Pound's alma mater, Hamilton College, where he received an honorary Doctor of Letters.

Their friend James Laughlin lent them an apartment on Bank Street in the Village and Pound visited bars and restaurants such as the White Horse Tavern on Hudson St., where the famed Welsh poet Dylan Thomas had suffered a "massive insult to the

brain" (as the death certificate at St. Vincent's Hospital read) while stacking a pyramid of downed shot glasses on the bar.

That summer the poet returned to Italy, the last surviving leader of the "modern movement" in English literature. Critics noted that Pound knew little of the work of later craftsmen such as Dylan Thomas and Evelyn Waugh, but that Pound's own literary influence was and would remain immense. He died in his sleep the night of his 87th birthday, having been too tired to attend a cake and champagne party in his honor. His body was taken to San Giorgio, and after a brief ceremony attended by family and friends the old warrior was rowed across the lagoon by four gondoliers, to the burial island of San Michele.

Michael Reck concluded that "Pound's attitude toward democracy separated him from most of his countrymen intellectually. Like that very American writer, H.L. Mencken, he didn't believe in it—or at any rate, didn't swallow it whole . . . However, Pound wanted no tyranny or autocratic government . . . but republican government as it existed in the years just after the American republic was founded—a Quixotic ideal!" ♦

MY MEMORIES OF EZRA POUND

BY EUSTACE MULLINS

A personal friend of the late poet Ezra Pound, who visited him regularly during his confinement at St. Elizabeth's, relates his recollections of the man.

Each springtime, my mind becomes flooded with memories of my old friend, the poet Ezra Pound. I remember well my visits with this remarkable figure, as we sat on a lawn at St. Elizabeth's Hospital during pleasant afternoons.

Although the grim walls of the institution towered a few feet behind us, we seemed to be sitting in an elegant park. The grounds had originally been planned as a national arboretum. They were planted with rare

specimens of trees from all over the world. Ezra always had a snack for me; hard boiled eggs from lunch, bread, ham and other leftovers from the basic but plentiful hospital meals.

After some months of these feasts, I decided to surprise the Pounds with a bottle of white wine to accompany our meal. His wife Dorothy became uneasy, thinking her husband's visiting privileges might be curtailed, as alcohol was forbidden to patients. Ezra had no such misgivings. He insisted on uncorking the bottle himself, and liberated the bottle's contents with a great pop, which echoed across the lawn. Soon he was tipsy on the first wine he had tasted in years. But I continued to smuggle it in, and no one ever interfered with our festivities.

Pound enjoyed such all too brief hours as his only relief from the grim days and years spent in the "hellhole," which was his term for the mental institution in Washington, D.C. This was and is an insane asylum where the occasional federal offender (such as current inmate John Hinckley, who shot and wounded President Ronald Reagan in 1981) is detained. It is a grim, foreboding brick complex that had been built to house Civil War veterans whose minds had been shattered by the horrors of its battlefields.

Ezra Pound was no returning veteran, and to my knowledge he had never committed a violent act against anyone, let alone a president of the United States (although he unashamedly loathed the president who, in effect,



The smartly attired poet at his home in Italy, April 1969. That June he made a quietly triumphal return to New York, and died at home on his birthday, October 30th.

got him there). He had been imprisoned because he was against war. He had broadcast speeches in which he warned his fellow Americans not to listen to the siren songs of the international bankers yet another time.

He asked Americans to avoid becoming embroiled in the Second World War. Although he had exercised his constitutional right to free speech, he was sentenced without trial to spend the rest of his life on earth in this gloomy and morale-shattering place. His captors assured anyone who inquired that he would never be allowed to leave St. Elizabeth's alive.

Our first meeting had come when one of my professors asked me to accompany him on a visit to Ezra Pound. The famed poet had already spent three years in detention. The hospital occupies a bluff that overlooks Capitol Hill in the distance. Seated on the lawn, we could almost see, and could certainly visualize, those in power who had

done so much harm to our country.

Pound's wife, Dorothy Shakespeare Pound, always sat with her husband on such afternoons. She lived in a tiny apartment a few blocks from the hospital. Throughout his 13-year confinement, she walked to the institution each day to be with her husband. An Englishwoman, she knew little of this country and was totally at a loss here.

After 13 years of his confinement, I began to smell a rat. Despite having hired a lawyer to appeal his confinement, there had been no action to either hear his case or place a limit on his "sentence." I brought a well-known Washington journalist, Rex Lampman, to visit Pound. He and Rex were two of a kind; native American curmudgeons. After a few minutes of conversation, Rex exclaimed: "What the hell are you doing in here?" "What do you mean?" said Pound. "The government put me in here." To this, Lampman replied: "Well, the government may have put you in here, but I am sure as hell going to get you out!"

Like most Americans, Rex had

assumed that one would be committed to an insane asylum only if one was insane. He did not know of the well-developed Soviet MKVD (later KGB) technique of placing political dissidents in such places. There they could be discredited, given drugs, and in many cases driven insane.

Some maintain that it was leading Roosevelt administration State Department figure and convicted Soviet ally Alger Hiss who suggested this Stalin-esque treatment for Pound. When visitors to St. E's suggested that Pound could derive some satisfaction from the fact that Hiss too was now in prison, he would sniff: "Hell, he ain't served half as long as I have."

Rex Lampman was as good as his word. He contacted Congressman Usher Burdick of North Dakota, and called in a marker. Lampman's father, an influential newspaper editor in that state, had been of considerable help to Burdick in his campaign for Congress. Burdick agreed to return the favor.

Speaking on the House floor, Burdick said in reference to Pound: "Why is the government still holding this man?" The government gave no answer. But shortly afterward the Department of Justice held a brief hearing, and all charges against Pound were dismissed. Pound's enemies, led by the vicious columnist Walter Winchell, were furious. When Winchell heard that a move was underway to free Pound, he boasted on his national radio program: "Ezra Pound will be freed only over my dead body." Now, Ezra was free. Winchell, nevertheless, continued on for a few more years.

Shortly after I had met Pound at the hospital, his friends had asked me to explore chances for his release. I had lunch many times with George Stimpson, a founding member of the National Press Club. Stimpson had furthered the careers of more than a few powerful Washington figures. As I discussed Pound's plight with him, he was not encouraging. But seeing my disappointment, he finally said: "Well, I'll see what I can do." A week later, he told me that he had asked two of his friends, General Lucius Clay and Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark, about Pound's chances for release.

Both men had assured Lampman that Pound could never be released. George demanded to know why. Clark said that he had heard his fellow Justice (and FDR intimate) Felix Frankfurter refer to Pound in terms of utter vitriol.

I could not be the bearer of this grim news, and I never mentioned this matter to either Ezra or Dorothy Pound. More than a decade would pass before Rex Lampman made his entrance at St. Elizabeth's to inaugurate procedures for Pound's release.

As Pound's only authorized biographer, I included this story in his biography, *This Difficult Individual, Ezra Pound*. All of Pound's other biographers, a dozen or so, give most credit for Pound's release to another poet, Robert Frost. Frost, when he was a struggling young poet, arrived unknown and destitute in England. Pound not only supported him from his own meager funds, but arranged to have Frost's poems published. Frost later stated that, had he not met Pound, he probably would have committed suicide, due to his hopelessness at the time.

During the years of Pound's mental institution imprisonment, Robert Frost never visited him. He feared that the establishment, to which he was beholden for publishing his books, might be offended if he made even that token gesture of repayment for what Ezra had done for him.

After Congressman Burdick's championing of Pound's cause, the machinery for his release was set in motion. At the hearing, government lawyers produced Robert Frost, and claimed that he alone had requested Pound's release. Subsequently Pound's biographers, themselves liberals, claimed that Pound's release resulted from the intervention of their fellow liberal Robert Frost.

When quintessential Washington liberal columnist Mary McGrory, then employed by the *Washington*

Star (it folded in 1981, when she went to the *Post*) interviewed Pound following his release, she asked why he had not been expressing his gratitude to Frost. Pound growled at her: "Well, he certainly hasn't been in a helluva hurry." A few years earlier, I had gone to McGrory's office at the *Star* and suggested that she might want to go with me to St. Elizabeth's and interview Pound. She refused.

Soon after Ezra's release, he and Dorothy began packing for their return to Italy. I asked him to remain here for a few months, as I could see that freedom in America was in jeopardy due to the climate of "liberal democracy." This sugar-coated term for insidiously dictatorial government had been riding high since its claims of victory following World War II. Dorothy was aghast at the prospect of spending any more time here. In her experience, America was the St. Elizabeth's environment and double-talking officials and lawyers.

Ezra was himself anxious to return to the northern Italian environment he loved, and no leading American academic, intellectual or writer had urged him to stay. This despite the fact that he was and is the literary giant of the 20th Century.

Four of his protégés—Ernest Hemingway, T.S. Eliot, William Butler Yeats and James Joyce—had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, after they had been edited by Pound. Today, there is not in residence on any American campus a literary figure of distinction. We lost our opportunity to make use of Pound's presence, thereby further dimming our literary heritage.

But from my personal standpoint, this man's wretchedly contrived years of incarceration were certainly not wasted. It would be a mistake to leave the impression that those afternoons on the lawn at the hospital, sitting on green park benches, were devoted merely to political discussion and chit chat. In fact, Ezra and I were engaged in deadly serious work.

We were editing the results of my research at the Library of Congress on our fraudulent banking system. This resulted in the first impartial study of the Federal Reserve System,

published in 1953 by Kasper and Horton as *Mullins on the Federal Reserve System*. The book has been in continuous print ever since. It has sold over a million copies despite the fact that it has never been reviewed by a major publication nor enjoyed bookstore distribution. It is to Ezra Pound that I owe a great deal relative to the book's success, which Pound suggested I research and write.

Ezra believed at the time, probably correctly, that if I dedicated it to him, it would only make his precarious existence at the "hellhole" even more difficult. But many years later I was able to properly dedicate it to him, under the title *Secrets of the Federal Reserve*.

Today, there are no longer any records of Pound's unjust imprisonment at St. Elizabeth's. A nurse, whom I knew, purloined his entire file from the psychiatrist's office. It is believed that she sold them for a small fortune.

Possibly, some day, those records may be "found." If so, they will prove to be among the strangest and most enlightening in the long annals of man's inhumanity to man. ♦

NEXT MONTH IN THE BARNES REVIEW:

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treatment of Allied
POWs at Japanese
hands . . . The
personal story of
one of the men who
dropped the A-bomb
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and Nagasaki . . .
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Eustace Mullins is an author and artist who lives in Staunton, Virginia. His book, *Secrets of the Federal Reserve*, is available from Liberty Library, 300 Independence Ave., SE, Washington, D.C. 20003, for \$20.

Ezra Pound was the leading figure in the "Imagist Movement," and remains one of the most highly esteemed poets of the century, due to his wide-ranging intellect, the power of his literary output, his sheer literary skill, and his celebration of the best of Western and other cultures.

He drew his themes from classical mythology, economic theory, Confucian ethics and other seemingly disparate sources, all in an attempt to interpret cultural history. Imagists worked with ideas, stressing vivid, sharp images as a means of poetic expression, colloquial language, precision in their choice of words and complete freedom in their choice of subject matter. It is this last aspect that got Pound in trouble after World War II. For his poetry was just one means of expressing the ideas and beliefs he held so dear. That these ideas ran counter to the prevailing interests of FDR and his crowd is what condemned him to St. Elizabeth's mental hospital in Washington, D.C., the Establishment not daring to try him for treason.

His friends included William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot and Robert Frost, all of whom knew him as a man of great personal generosity and powerful intellect. But, his post-World War II years of incarceration without trial speaks volumes—even, or rather, particularly, today—about the tyrannical potential of "liberal democracy" as it prevailed over the principles set forth by our Founding Fathers. The ordeal of Ezra Pound, we submit, stands as a lesson central to contemporary America.

According to one of Pound's infamous radio broadcasts:

"Usurers provoke wars to impose monopolies, so that they can get the world by the throat. They provoke wars to create debts, so that they can extort the interest and rake in the profits resulting from changes in the values of monetary units. A nation that will not get into debt drives the usurers to fury. This war is a chapter in the long and bloody tragedy which began with the foundation of the Bank of England in far-away 1694, with the openly declared prospectus: 'The bank hath the benefit of the interest on all moneys which it creates out of nothing.' "

A snatch of Pound's verse reveals his self-imposed mission. Yes, the critics everywhere in academia and the popular press regard Pound as one of the greatest literary craftsmen of this or any age. But have any listened to what he actually had to say?

"God hath put me here
In earth's goodly sphere
 To sing the song of the day,
A strong, glad song,
If the road be long
 To my fellows in my way.

So I make my song of the good, glad light
 That falls from the gate of the sun,
And the clear, cool wind that bloweth good
 To my brother, everyone."

