

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Robert Thompson— And Ezra Pound

Editor, Daily Worker:

Reports of how Bob Thompson continues to suffer from the results of his murderous attack by the anti-Communist thug while Thompson awaited trial here in New York are heart-rending. Although a silver plate has been removed from his skull, and replaced by a new one, it's obvious his suffering remains acute. Any ordinarily decent prison administration would want to make his recovery as easy and as complete as possible. Especially, one would think, since Bob Thompson has done more than duty required during the war, and has committed no crime any sane person can possibly understand.

He should be free.

But what is one to think when instead of Thompson being freed so that he may recover his health, one reads about Ezra Pound?

Ezra Pound is a poet who has lived in Fascist Italy for years, written much in praise of Mussolini and fascism, is violently anti-Semitic and anti-racist, and obviously despises democracy. He made anti-Semitic speeches for Mussolini over the radio during the war and urged American soldiers to desert. When he was arrested at the end of the war he was convicted of treason, but he was never hung because he was adjudged insane.

Insane? He lives now like a potentate at St. Elizabeth's hospital in Washington, D.C. He is allowed full freedom of movement within the spacious grounds; he conducts a vast correspondence with all and sundry; he interviews and holds court with regular crews of sycophants; receives awards for his poetry from the most respectable sources; and reads almost daily effusive and shameless eulogies about himself coming from well-known writers who crowned all this by publishing a volume dedicated to more praise of his achievements.

Among his "disciples" whom he meets regularly is, or was John Kaspar. Who is John Kaspar? He is one of the leaders of the White Citizens Council who launched the terror against Negro students in Clinton, Tenn. His views and Pound's views coincide, and he concedes his ideological indebtedness to Pound.

The head of St. Elizabeth's

takes a very broad and liberal attitude toward all this. Although he concedes that Pound may be "mad," he still adds that his mind operates logically enough in many political realms. There are many strange cultural figures in this country who are not at all embarrassed to hail this mad traitor as their mentor, and are not at all struck by the ludicrousness of making pilgrimages to an insane asylum to bestow medals on him and to listen with deep respect to his ravings.

I'm sure they "deplore" his anti-Semitism, his anti-democratic views, his hatred of Negroes, but only when Pound expresses them in prose. When those ideas are expressed in what is called poetry, they reward him lavishly.

Alice in Wonderland would have recognized all this as standard equipment in a madhouse. But what about a country that can reward a traitor and punish at the same time a man who fought bravely in that very war for those very democratic ends this traitor fulminated against day after day? After all, though Pound might have been mad, Mussolini and the fascists both in Italy and Germany were not. Or if they were, they were the kind of madmen nevertheless who conducted governments and sent millions of human beings to their doom.

Is anything more than a comparison between the treatment of these two opposite types needed to highlight the real aims of those who talk democracy while they practice everything but democracy?

I ask the readers of the Daily to bombard the government with demands for clemency for Thompson, and at the same time confront those apologists for a treason, if only it can be classified as "mad," with this moral question (since moral questions are their food and drink): which is moral—keeping a patriot in jail, suffering terribly from a head wound given by somebody who could easily have been a devotee of Pound; or—but who needs the second half of this "dilemma"?

— PHILLIP BONOSKY

Is Gomulka's Way The Way?

BRONX, N. Y.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Joe Clark has been hailing the "democratization" in Poland. He

has found the Gomulka peg on which to hang his revisionist anti-Leninist cap.

It may very well be that the Gomulka way may be the road to Polish socialism. Certainly, I hope that unfortunate land may avoid the Hungarian travail.

But what about greater democracy there? Is the concession to the Church to allow religious instruction in the public school greater democracy? Certainly no Jeffersonian will agree, or a proponent of religious freedom.

Is the abolition of collective farms greater democracy? No partisan of socialism can accept that.

Or the disquieting stories of anti-Semitism? These are taking place under a regime of "democratization" and, despite Joe Clark's charge that that is inspired by the pro-Stalin (Nato-lin) faction, it is the duty of the Gomulka group to enforce the law and end it. Something must be wrong with a group that hurls the charge of anti-Semitism against its factional opponents and fails to proceed against the reactionary forces who are always the source of racism. Maybe Clark believes it, but it is hard for me to swallow the idea that Jacob Berman and Hilary Minc, among others, are promoting anti-Semitism.

Last spring I hailed the DW line for the independent road to American Socialism, for the interpreting of Marxism-Leninism in accord with American tradition. But it seems to have evolved into something quite different. According to Clark the way to socialism lies through Gomulka and Tito and anti-Sovietism.

M. G.

Must Be Independent

Editor, Daily Worker:

I believe that the American Communist Party must be completely independent in every sense of the word. This means a thorough and painstaking evaluation of the American scene as the basis for our program and theories.

I am skeptical upon reading the abridgement proposed to the Draft Resolution which says "our relations with other Communist parties must be based on the bed-rock of proletarian internationalism." This is a fine-sounding slogan which has been abused to cover a host of sins in the past. In any event, it should be made equally clear

that our relations with any other party or movement are based fundamentally on the best interests of the American working class and the American people.

AMERICAN COMMUNIST

Press Quotes On Mid East

Editor, Daily Worker:

What follows may enable readers to get a glimpse, even if an small one, about the government mishandling of its foreign policies.

The current debate on Middle Eastern policy has again pointed up the bipartisan nature of the coalition that governs America today. . . . Certainly bipartisanship has decided advantages, at least for the time being . . . yet there are sound arguments against making bipartisanship a permanent way of political life, against treating it as more than a temporary crutch.

In the first place, our national government is not well organized for bipartisanship leadership. . . . Secondly, bipartisanship enfeebles the opposition party over the long run. Third, bipartisanship erodes responsibility. A great advantage of partisan government is that the party in power can be held to account by the voters. But when the leaders of both parties have had their hands on the wheel, responsibility fades. (N.Y. Times Magazine, Jan. 27.)

The House of Representatives will pass a resolution this week endorsing the Eisenhower Doctrine for the Middle East—but it will be just rubber-stamp approval forced by a take-it-or-leave-it procedure. The Democratic leadership decreed a 'gag' rule—one day debate but no amendments except those approved by the Foreign Affairs Committee. This is a dangerous habit on legislation that may change the destiny of every American. (Editorial—Wold-Telgram & Sun, Jan. 29.)

In referring to the likelihood of Congress giving consent to the Eisenhower doctrine substantially as the President has presented it, you add: "Any other response would be sheer folly conveying an impression of division which the Soviet Union would be quick to capitalize upon." I disagree with the interpretation to be drawn from the statement. It seems to me that debate and division are both necessary and inevitable, and that they should be allowed to run their natural course in the

Congress before a final decision. (A letter—Herald Tribune, Jan. 31.)

. . . seldom since the war has there been a more responsible or better balanced opposition speech of foreign policy than Senator Mansfield delivered yesterday. Yet the President remarked: "Now all these critics, notice this—they don't bring out any particular project. They just talk about great blunders and lack of leadership." He (Mansfield) has come to the conclusion—and he is not alone in this—that the Administration is not so much interested in consulting with the Senate on foreign policy as it is in managing the Senate and maneuvering it into a position of having to go along with the President on policies such as the Middle East resolution. (James Reston dispatch —N.Y. Times, Jan. 31.)

The playing of partnership really amounts to the biggest deceit of all. That is why the members of Congress who are vitally concerned about the Middle East situation have been angered by the notion that they are somehow being made co-secretaries of the Eisenhower Doctrine. They are suspicious of why they have been called in. From what Mr. Dulles has told them so far, they are not sure whether the Doctrine is directed at the Middle East or at them. (Dulles and Congress Playing Partnership — The Reporter, Feb. 7.)

—ANALYST.

Negro History Issue of Worker

Looking Forward: An NAACP Leader Talks of the Job Ahead, by Lester Rodney.

Langston Hughes Tells Why He Wrote "Pictorial History of the Negro in America," by Roosevelt Ward, Jr.

African and Afro-American Music, by Paul Robeson.

The Camp Hill Story: An Episode from the Heroic Battle to Organize Southern Sharecroppers, by Elizabeth Lawson.

Reports on Civil Rights in Four Northern Cities: Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Milwaukee, by Carl Hirsch, Wm. Allan and others.

Negroes in Movies and TV, by David Platt.

The American Road to Socialism: Two Views, by John Gates and Joseph Starobin.