THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL POLITICAL POETRY OF PABLO NERUDA

A Thesis

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by

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INTRODUCTION

Socially committed art and literature have played a central role in Latin America's cultural development. From before the independence of the Latin American nations until the present, such different writers as José Martí, Mariano Azuela and Heriberto Padilla have expressed their social and political views in literary form.

A case in point is the explicitly political poetry of Pablo Neruda, one of the great poets of the twentieth century. In spite of the dozens of volumes that have been written about Neruda's poetry, there is still much more to be written about it. Regarding his political poetry, while there are many articles and chapters in books that analyze España en el corazón and Canto general, criticism of Neruda's later political works is not very extensive. Since Neruda wrote a great deal of political poetry, I decided to limit this study to his three books of circumstantial poetry, which have been studied individually, but never as a group.

This study will compare España en el corazón (1938), Canción de gesta (1960), and Incitación al Nixonicidio y alabanza de la revolución chilena (1973), hereafter referred to as Nixonicidio. The three books will be examined to determine similarities and differences in content and poetic form. They will also be examined to see how the content and form of Neruda's circumstantial poetry evolves in each of the stages represented by these books.

I will first undertake a literary analysis of several poems from
each of the books studied, emphasizing meter and rhyme scheme, as well as the use of images and metaphors. These poems will be analyzed to see if the poetic devices used are appropriate to the content. As a master poet, Neruda was well versed in traditional Spanish poetical forms, and he often used these forms in both his non-committed and his political poetry. In addition, I will study each book to determine its political content, noting major themes and common ways of expressing these themes.

Two terms, circumstantial poetry and political poetry, are key in this study and must be clarified before proceeding with the analysis. Here "circumstantial poetry" will be defined as poetry written to commemorate a special event or a specific historical situation. The three books presented in this study are indeed circumstantial. *España en el corazón* was written in recognition of the Spanish Civil War of 1936; *Canción de gesta* was written to commemorate the Cuban Revolution; and *Nixonicidio* was written about the Chilean Revolution of 1970 and the United States' interventionist policies in the Third World.

According to some critics, such as Eduardo Camacho Guizado, circumstantial poetry is limited to a specific historical moment and audience and is of little intrinsic literary value. Camacho feels that circumstantial literature is created out of a writer's feeling of an external debt or commitment and not from a "real inspiration." On the other hand, many Marxist critics feel that, for art to have value, it must reflect the historical circumstances surrounding the artist. In the introduction to *Marxism and Art*, the editors assert that "clearly social tendencies and structure are...stated to be integral to the very
makeup of human experience and, a fortiori, of works of art."

Political poetry will be defined as poetry in which political events, doctrines or propaganda are the major theme. It is poetry in which the writer is trying to educate the public about political and social situations or political doctrine. In this type of literature the poet feels an ethical commitment to disseminate specific political information or doctrine.

Although the pedagogical function of political poetry often renders it tedious and uninteresting, it can also be imaginative and full of aesthetic value. Political poetry is based on doctrine. Due to doctrine's very nature -- its abstract quality and the way it is shaped to fit a large number of people -- it is difficult to write truly vibrant and imaginative poetry about it. However, the truly great artist can change doctrine into a piece of art. In her book *Poetry and Politics: 1900-1960*, C. M. Bowra argues that doctrine "deals only with conventional sentiments and lacks any life of its own. Doctrines strongly held can of course inspire noble poetry, but only by shedding their doctrinal stiffness and allowing free play to their treatment."

Pablo Neruda believed that doctrine can be effectively turned into poetry. He felt that not only can poetry, as an art form, be used as a means of political education, but also at times it is morally necessary to use it as such. Although he continued to write non-political poetry throughout his life, he felt that it is necessary at times to use the pen as a weapon of rebellion:

Escribo para el pueblo aunque no pueda leer mi poesía con sus ojos rurales.
Vendrá el instante en que una línea, el aire que removió mi vida, llegará a sus orejas, y entonces el labriego levantará los ojos, el minero sonreirá rompiendo piedras, ...y ellos dirán tal vez: "Fue un camarada." 5

Neruda considered his role to be that of denouncing the social injustice he saw around him. He said that his Communism grew out of "the suffering of the people and their hope of change." 6

Neruda often said that he and his fellow writers used literature as a weapon against oppression and oppressors. In his Memoirs, for example, he said, "I was editor of the magazine Aurora de Chile. All its literary weapons (we had no others) we aimed at the Nazis, who were swallowing country after country." 7 After Neruda was attacked by Nazis in 1941, he felt compelled to say the following:

Toda creación que no esté al servicio de la libertad en estos días de amenaza total, es una traición. Todo libro debe ser una bala contra el Eje: toda pintura debe ser propaganda; toda obra científica debe ser un instrumento y arma para la victoria. 8

The poet felt that doctrine could indeed be turned into lively and imaginative poetry. He also felt that the poet should not be afraid to take a stand on important issues, but rather should feel it his obligation to take part in the crises of the time: "Perhaps the poet has had the same obligation throughout history. It has been poetry's distinction to go out in the street, to take part in this or that combat. The poet didn't scare off when they said he was a rebel. Poetry is rebellion." 9

Pablo Neruda wrote many volumes of poetry. As major critics have
noted, Neruda's poetry in any given period tends to repeat certain
general characteristics. **España en el corazón** comes from the "Resi-
dencia" period, which consists of three books entitled **Residencia en la
tierra**, which were written between 1925 and 1947. **España en el corazón**
was included in the third **Residencia**. It contains twenty-three poems
predominantly using free verse. Some of the major themes in the book
are the destruction of war, the valor of the Spanish Republic, anti-
fascism, and brotherhood. Although the content and message of the book
are different from Neruda's other poems of the "Residencia" period, a
similar exterior format is used. As in other books of this period, the
poet uses an abundance of poetic tropes, including parallelism, enjamb-
ment, enumeration, antithesis, and images and metaphors. The following
excerpt from "Canto a las madres de los milicianos muertos" is a typical
passage from **España en el corazón**, illustrating some of Neruda's favor-
ite poetic techniques during this period:

Sus sombras puras se han unido
en la pradera de color de cobre
como una cortina de viento blindado,
como una barrera de color de furia,
como el mismo invisible pecho del cielo. (lines 4-8)

This passage comes from a poem written in free verse with a marked
rhythm, even though it does not use any standard metrical pattern. Like
most of the poems written in free verse during Neruda's "Residencia"
period, the rhythm of this passage is not based on traditional metrical
forms, but on the basis of sentiment or intuition. Verses are struc-
tured around units of thought. For example, "como una cortina de
viento blindado" gives one impression or image, as does the next verse.
Also, these units of thought may be extended or linked to other verses, as verse 4 is linked to verse 5.

In line 1 the poet uses alliteration. The hissing sound of the repetition of the letter "s" is evocative of the whispering that takes place in sombras. Another example of repetition is the use of como to begin lines 6, 7 and 8 (anaphora). In lines 6 and 7 this reiteration begins parallel lines. These lines have similar constructions because they use the same parts of speech in the same order, i.e., preposition (como), indefinite article (una), noun, preposition (de), noun, and an adjective or adjectival phrase. Lines 6, 7 and 8 are also similes linking back to the sombras in line 4. In this passage Neruda also uses enjambment; line 4 is connected to line 5 in a syntactical sense. The poetic devices that have just been described are used throughout España en el corazón and also in Neruda's other circumstantial books.

The use of repetition, parallelism, and a marked rhythm makes the above passage similar to a chant in that it is easy to recite. Since Neruda was writing for more than just the literatos of his time and was also writing for the common man, this oral quality is quite appropriate for his political poetry. Parts of poems can be memorized and repeated by even an illiterate worker.

The word sombras in the passage refers to the dead soldiers. They are united in a copper-colored meadow, a symbol of the earth that they are buried under. "Como una cortina de viento blindado" suggests that the soldiers are strong because of the allusion to armor. The next two lines are also indicative of their strength; they are like a wall and are as invincible as the forces of heaven. In the last line the sky is
personified. All of the images in this passage connote power, but they are not simple or literal images. For example, "color de furia" suggests an emotional rather than a sensorial impression. Complex images like this one can be found throughout España en el corazón.

In some respects, España en el corazón does vary from the other poetry of the "Residencia" period. Although it contains many complex metaphors and images, these images have been somewhat simplified for the comprehension of the common man. Many of Neruda's earlier "Residencia" poems show a tendency toward surrealistic imagery. Also, even though Neruda still seems to show a preference for free verse, many poems in España en el corazón have more traditional metrical styles, such as "Sanjurjo en los infiernos" and "Mola en los infiernos, which are written in hendecasyllables.

Canción de gesta corresponds to the period between 1958 and 1967. It is comprised of forty-three poems written in the romance heroico. Its major themes are anti-imperialism and the Cuban Revolution as an example for the rest of Latin America. Some of the books that Neruda published at this time are: Extravagario (1958), Cien sonetos de amor (1959), Las piedras de Chile (1961), and Cantos ceremoniales (1961). Although Canción de gesta is drastically different in content than these books, it is stylistically similar in its tendency toward more traditional forms of verse. For example, in Cien sonetos de amor Neruda uses sonnets.

Although Nixonicidio was published before Neruda died, the book fits into the trajectory of his posthumous poetry. The book contains forty-four poems written in endecasílabos heroicos. Two of the major themes in the book are anti-imperialism and the achievements of the
Chilean Revolution. *Nixonicidio* is similar to books such as *La rosa separada* (1973), *Elegía* (1973), and *2000* (1973) in that it uses simple words and images, and is therefore easily accessible to the common man. In Neruda's final years he began to write clear, easily read poetry, in an effort to broaden his potential audience.

Not only is Pablo Neruda's circumstantial poetry interesting for its political content; it is also interesting to note how the poetry fits into the overall thematic and stylistic trajectory of the poet's works. In this study I will examine both of these issues.


CHAPTER I

ESPAÑA EN EL CORAZÓN

In 1935 Pablo Neruda became the Chilean consul in Madrid. The following year the Spanish Civil War broke out; that conflict was to effect Neruda's poetry and politics for the rest of his life. Neruda thus describes the effect of the Spanish Civil War on him:

...I saw it. A million dead Spaniards. A million exiles. It seemed as if that thorn covered with blood would never be plucked from the conscience of mankind...And so the Spanish War, which changed my poetry, began for me with a poet's disappearance [referring to García Lorca] ...¹

After seeing so much pain and injustice, Neruda decided that it was time to break out of his self-centered poet's world and address himself to the problems and sufferings of mankind.

At that time, along with many other artists, Neruda took a stance against the Spanish Nationalists. Poets such as Rafael Alberti, Miguel Hernández and Neruda formed magazines and literary groups which spoke out against the Nationalists. Because of Neruda's political inclinations, the Chilean government thought it would be best to dismiss him from his consular duties in Spain. After his dismissal he went to Paris, where he continued to fight the Nationalists by aiding Republican refugees. Also, Neruda and others worked on forming an anti-fascist congress of writers from around the world.²

España en el corazón (1938) marks Neruda's change in poetic style;
it is the first of his books of circumstantial political poetry. In an interview Neruda told why he had turned away from his previous, hermetic poetry: "El mundo ha cambiado y mi poesía ha cambiado. Una gota de sangre caída en estas líneas quedará viviendo sobre ellas, indeleble como el amor."³

The book was written and published during the actual battles of the Spanish Civil War. Several editions were printed in 1938, one of them on the front lines by Republican soldiers. To make the paper on which to print it, the soldiers used everything they could find, including an enemy flag and the shirts of prisoners. Soldiers carried copies of the book with them into battle.⁴

España en el corazón is similar to other poetry of the "Residencia" cycle in that it predominantly uses free verse and incorporates an abundance of images. The book is made up of twenty-three poems and uses many of the poetical devices mentioned in the introduction.

This book is a tribute to the Spanish Republic, as is indicated by the book's full title, España en el corazón: Himno a las glorias del pueblo en la guerra. A hymn can be a song or ode in praise of a nation; that is exactly what España en el corazón is. Like other hymns, Neruda's book is majestic and dramatic and addresses its subject, the Spanish people.

Not only does the book contain praises of what Neruda calls el pueblo, or the Spanish Republic and its allies, but it also contains criticism of the people's enemies: Franco and his Nationalist generals and troops, the aristocracy, and the Catholic Church.

Neruda associates the pueblo with images of nature, such as grain,
grapes, minerals, flowers, and all the bounty of the Spanish soil. He often combines these elements in a series or list of things. For example, in "La victoria de las armas del Pueblo," he writes "pueblo, patria y avena, es tu victoria" (line 3). In "Oda solar al ejército del pueblo" Neruda says:

...adelante, España,
adelante, campanas populares,
adelante, regiones de manzana
adelante, estandartes cereales (lines 49-52)

Again, in the poem "Triunfo," Neruda associates the people and their victory with natural elements:

Solemne es el triunfo del pueblo.
A su paso de gran victoria
la ciega patata y la uva
celeste brillan en la tierra.

In España en el corazón the pueblo is comprised of workers, "the fighting proletariat." They are the ones who plough the fields, make the clothes, erect the buildings, etc.; they are the ones who made Spain what it is. In several poems Neruda lists these people. For example, in "Los gremios en el frente" he mentions miners, rope makers, leather curers, fishermen, railroadmen, etc. He places a great emphasis on labor, which he sees as right and moral. Moreover, he believes that those who work should reap the benefits of their labor. The theme of the common laborer becomes more and more prevalent in Neruda's later political works.

The poet spends much time berating the enemies of the pueblo. He considers the Church to be on the side of the rich; the poor remain
oppressed because the Church teaches them to look to the afterlife for
t heir happiness instead of trying to fight for their rights here on
earth. For instance, in "España pobre por culpa de los Ricos" Neruda
satirizes the Church's teachings about a better life after death:
"...rezad, bestias, rezad, / que un dios de culo inmenso como el culo
del rey / os espera: 'Allí tomaréis sopa, hermanos míos'" (lines 29-
31). A common image used to represent the Church is that of a cassock.
The book contains such phrases as "sotanas de agrios, hediondos perros
de cueva y sepultura" and "una ola de sotanas rabiosas." The cassock
represents a bleak, austere and deadly force in Spain.

In addition to the Church, Neruda attacks the aristocracy and
tradition as reactionary forces. He blames Spain's affluent people
for many of the problems in the country and condemns them to face up
to the destruction and misery that they have caused. "Almería," which
I will analyze in more detail later, clearly shows Neruda's thoughts
about the crimes of the rich. Moreover, the poet portrays tradition as
a stagnating and destructive force, because it keeps people from work-
ning for progress. In "La tradición" we get a view of its putrefying
effect:

En las noches de España, por los viejos jardines
la tradición, llena de mocos muertos,
chorreando pus y peste se paseaba
con una cola en bruma, fantasmal y fantástica,
vestida de asma y huecos levitones sangrientos,
y su rostro de ojos profundos detenidos
eran verdes babosas comiendo tumba,
y su boca sin muelas mordía cada noche
la espiga sin nacer, el mineral secreto,
y pasaba con su corona de cardos verdes
sembrando vagos huesos de difunto y puñales.
In this poem the author uses one negative image after another to describe tradition. He personifies it as a diseased figure spreading its deathly germs throughout Spain. In Neruda's opinion, tradition is a force that stops progress, keeping the poor oppressed.

Neruda's most ardent attacks are against Franco and the Nationalist Army, who had the most active role in the destruction of Republican Spain. The author attacks specific generals, such as Mola, Sanjurjo and Franco himself. He calls the Moorish soldiers of the Nationalist Army "African jackals and hyenas." However, he makes his most effective statement against the Nationalists by relating to the reader the ravages of war suffered by the innocent people. We are led to despise Franco and his men for bringing about widespread destruction and despair.

To portray this aspect of the war, the poet employs a somber tone and a rather vulgar and non-poetic vocabulary. He describes children crushed and blackened by explosions, crushed skulls, dismembered bodies and putrefaction. Blood and ashes are leitmotifs in the book.

In spite of the many images of destruction, the main purpose of España en el corazón is to glorify the Spanish people, as the subtitle suggests. When Neruda describes the people, he uses terms that connote solidarity and brotherhood. He uses the informal tú and vosotros to address them and uses terms such as "comrades" and "brothers." The last poem in the book is "Oda solar al ejército del pueblo," which I will analyze later. It summarizes the poet's feelings of solidarity with the Spanish people and urges them to press onward in their fight for freedom. Other poems that are dedicated to the valor of the Spanish people and their hope for the future are "Madrid (1936)," "Canto a

España en el corazón was written both in tribute to the Spanish people and in order to show the rest of the world the consequences of the war on the oppressed people. It was written to jolt the reader into social consciousness. In this respect España en el corazón is a propagandistic piece of art; not only does it chronicle the experiences of the war, but it also persuades us to share Neruda's interpretation of that devastating event.

To illustrate Neruda's interpretation of the Spanish Civil War, I will examine three poems from España en el corazón. I chose these poems because they exemplify all of the major themes and are typical of the style of the book; also, these poems have counterparts in Neruda's other two circumstantial books.

"Almería," the first poem to be considered, refers to an incident that occurred during the war. In February of 1937 a group of Republican refugees was fleeing from Malaga toward Almería. Along the way they were overtaken by Nationalist troops, and the men and boys were executed in front of their wives and mothers.5

In this poem Neruda describes in bloody detail the consequences of the slayings near Almería. He aims the description at the affluent Spaniards, hoping to stir their consciences and feelings of guilt. He blames the rich for the war, since they backed the Nationalist party.

Almería

Un plato para el obispo, un plato triturado y amargo,
un plato con restos de hierro, con cenizas, con lágrimas,
un plato sumergido, con sollozos y paredes caídas,
un plato para el obispo, un plato de sangre de Almería.

Un plato para el banquero, un plato con mejillas
de niños del Sur feliz, un plato
con detomaciones, con aguas locas y ruinas y espanto
un plato con ejes partidos y cabezas pisadas,
un plato negro, un plato de sangre de Almería.

Cada mañana, cada mañana turbía de vuestra vida
lo tendréis humeante y ardiente en vuestra mesa:
lo apartéis un poco con vuestras suaves manos
para no yerlo, para no digerirlo tantas veces:
lo apartéis un poco entre el pan y las uvas,
a este plato de sangre silenciosa
que estará allí cada mañana, cada mañana.

Un plato para el Coronel y la esposa del Coronel,
en una fiesta de la guarnición, en cada fiesta,
sobre los juramentos y los escupos, con la luz de vino
de la madrugada
para que lo veáis temblando y frío sobre el mundo.

Sí, un plato para todo vosotros, ricos de aquí y de allá,
embajadores, ministros, comensales atroces,
señoras de confortable te y asiento:
un plato destrozado, desbordado, sucio de sangre pobre,
para cada mañana, para cada semana, para siempre jamás,
un plato de sangre de Almería, ante vosotros, siempre.

The poem consists of twenty-six lines written in free verse and
divided into five stanzas. It has a marked rhythm, with the repetition
of the words un plato as an impulse pushing it along. The use of ana-
phora occurs in the first stanza, in which Neruda uses un plato to start
off each line except the final one and continues throughout the poem.
There are several instances of enjambment, such as in lines 4 and 5, 7
and 8, etc. Certain words and phrases are repeated several times.
There are many parallel structures; for example, lines 2, 6, 8 and 9
all use the conjunction con followed by a noun. These instances of
parallelism and repetition, along with the marked rhythm, serve to reiterate Neruda's theme in a vivid and aggressive manner.

In "Almería" Neruda addresses the rich with the informal vosotros. When he uses vosotros to address the people, it expresses a feeling of comradery and brotherhood; however, in this poem Pablo uses vosotros to show contempt and disrespect. The persons in "Almería" are symbolic figures: the bishop represents the Church; the banker represents the wealthy financiers; the colonel represents the military; and the ambassadors and ministers represent the government functionaries. These groups made up the Spanish establishment and were on the side of the Nationalists, the enemy. Neruda describes these people as having "suaves manos," an indication that they don't labor. This is an important factor, because for Neruda work is a virtue, and these people lack that quality.

Among the major images presented in the poem is that of blood. "Sangre de Almería" is mentioned several times and other references to blood in the poem include "sangre silenciosa" and "sucio de sangre pobre." While in some instances Neruda uses blood to symbolize the death and destruction of war, he also uses it to represent the life-force of the people. The poet presents other war images, such as hierro, cenizas, paredes caídas, detonaciones and cabezas pisadas, as well as images of lamentation, with the words sollozos and lágrimas.

Neruda describes the tragedy of Almería by comparing it to a bitter meal filled with death and disintegration. The poet serves this meal to the rich, reminding them of the atrocities that occurred at Almería, and condemning them to face their sins forever.
"El General Franco en los infiernos" also makes accusations (See Appendix I.) It describes Franco in acrimonious terms and then condemns him to hell, where he will remain awake for eternity in order to be tortured by his dead victims. I chose to analyze this poem because it is one of a trilogy of poems in España en el corazón that make attacks on specific individuals, and in order to indicate a parallel with Canción de gesta and Nixonicidio, which also have poems that accuse and condemn specific historical people.

Like other poems in the "Residencia" cycle, "El General Franco en los infiernos" is written in free verse. It contains many of the poetic devices typical of this period, such as parallelism, repetition and enjambment. A majority of the lines are syntactically connected to the following verse. In many cases, enjambment was used so that several lines would start with the same word (See lines 10, 11, 15, 16 or 42, 43, 44.) Another type of repetition, alliteration, occurs throughout the poem. For example, the reiteration of the sound "s" reminds the reader of the sizzling and crackling fires of hell.

In this poem the poet combines many contrasting elements. The first two lines bring together the destructive elements of fire and ice. In lines 40 through 44 there is a striking contrast between the images of death and children at play, making the tragedy of war very vivid. Another example of the union of disparate elements is the "fiesta fría" that Neruda uses as a metaphor for Franco's time in hell (lines 39 to 52). We usually associate a party with joviality and warmth, not with coldness.

This poem contains many images that suggest, rather than define, a
situation. For example, we can imagine that the "estiénol de siniestras
gallinas de sepulcro" to which Franco is compared is a very vile thing,
but it has no literal correspondent in reality. Another such passage
describes the general's hell: "ni la tortuga pútrida que ladrando y
llorando con voz de mujer / muerta te escarbe la barriga" (lines 3 and
4). Again we get an impression of something extremely disgusting, yet
completely surreal.

"El General Franco en los infiernos" contains many images of anni-
hilation and putrefaction. For example, blood, a symbol of death that
recurs throughout the book, is mentioned three times. Other images of
death include: "las recién paridas, ametralladas en Otoño"; "niños
negros por la explosión"; and "rostros huecos de pólvora perpetua."
Putrefaction is also described, in phrases such as "la tortuga pútrida,"
"ojos podridos," "comiendo silenciosa pus," and "entre la podredumbre de
las recién paridas." Other recurring motifs are tears and lamentations,
adding to the poem's dismal tone, and eyes, which we will discuss in
more detail later.

In "El General Franco en los infiernos," Neruda lays the conse-
quencies of Franco's sins before him, and sentences him to eternal tor-
ment. The poet describes in vivid detail the ravages of the war --
death, disintegration, and decay. He enlists the reader's empathy by
describing what has happened to the young mothers and children of Spain;
they were once the hope for the future of Spain, but now are "materia
asesinada y harina muerta." In addition to describing Franco as "es-
tiénol de siniestras gallinas de sepulcro," Neruda calls him "pesado
esputo," "perro de la tierra," and "maldito."
Along with the insults and accusations that Neruda levels against the general, there is a final judgment made against Franco. He is sentenced to be awake for eternity in a silent hell, "comiendo silenciosa pus y sangre por una eternidad maldita y sola." Moreover, his eyes will be pinned open so that he cannot evade the accusing gaze of his victims: "y que un agonizante río de ojos cortados / te resbale y recorra mirándote sin término" (lines 68 and 69).

In contrast to poems like "El General Franco en los infiernos" and "Almería," "Oda solar al ejército del pueblo" has a tone of hopefulness and vitality. (See Appendix II.) This poem is typical of Neruda's political poetry in its call to the people to trudge onward in their fight against oppression; it is a call to solidarity.

Like many other poems in España en el corazón, "Oda solar..." is written in free verse. It contains many of the poetic techniques that Neruda has used throughout the book. Parallelism and the repetition of words and phrases add to the rhythm of the poem. Enumeration is used in line 8, which lists natural elements and in lines 38, 39, 41, 42 and 43, in which Neruda lists the Spanish people's occupations. These techniques give the poem a fast tempo, which is reminiscent of a march. This fast tempo and the repetition of the word adelante, which pushes the poem onward, are used to incite emotion and to raise morale. Also, Neruda probably uses a great deal of repetition in this poem to facilitate its memorization. In addition to the aforementioned devices, the poet uses apostrophe and addresses the Spanish pueblo in the familiar tú and vosotros forms, indicating solidarity and comradery with the people.
In this poem Neruda salutes the people of Spain, the Republican side, with the wish of health. The word salud, the Republican salute, appears fourteen times in the poem, reiterating the message of brotherhood. Neruda also spurs the people on to action with the word adelante, which appears fifteen times. This word encourages the people to move onward in their fight for peace, liberty and justice.

The pueblo is comprised of the common man: the fotógrafos, mineros, ferroviarios, hermanos del carbón y la piedra, parientes del martillo, etc. Neruda associates the pueblo with the good things in life: vibrancy, the land, strength, mineral and vegetable matter, and "todas las mercaderías fragantes de la tierra." All of these things are behind the people's army, urging it on. The word tierra appears six times in this poem, bringing to mind the agrarian reform that was a major goal of the Republican government. The association of the common people with images of earth and nature is common throughout Neruda's political poetry.

España en el corazón is a book with a dual purpose. On the one hand it is an attack against the enemies of the people; on the other hand, it is a glorification of the people. This dual purpose will be noted later in Canción de gesta and Nixonicidio.
NOTES


CHAPTER II

CANCION DE GESTA

Neruda published several books of poetry between the appearance of España en el corazón in 1936 and the publication of Canción de gesta in 1960. Although most of the poetry written in that twenty-four-year period is not politically oriented, it does include the political works, entitled Canto general (1950), Poesía política (1953), and Las uvas y el viento (1954). Poesía política is a two-volume work comprised of Neruda's political discourses. Although this work is important to the understanding of Neruda's political beliefs, it does not have much bearing on the author's poetic evolution, because most of the book is written in prose. However, a brief outline of the other two works mentioned is necessary for an understanding of Canción de gesta.

Canto general is Pablo Neruda's most extensive and most famous volume of political poetry. It is a giant epic that depicts the historical, natural, and cultural development of America, and the worldwide class struggle. It presents the struggle of the oppressed throughout the history of America. On the one hand, Canto general is a call to the workers and the oppressed people to unite against the oppressors. On the other hand, it is an attack against the enemies of America: the Latin American dictators, the oligarchy, the North American imperialists, and specific people, such as González Videla. In most of the poems of Canto general Neruda uses strings of images to depict his themes of
liberty, justice, peace, anti-racism, anti-fascism, and anti-imperialism. Unlike some of Neruda's earlier works, *Canto general* uses many simple and concrete images, which help to make the book accessible to a wide audience.

Just as Neruda fought against the enemies of the people in works such as *Canto general*, he was quite outspoken in his private and public life. This frankness often got him into trouble. In 1946 Neruda had helped González Videla, who had the backing of the Left, to become the president of Chile; afterward González Videla turned traitor to the Left and to the people who had elected him. Neruda, disgusted with the situation, went about making public speeches against González. Because of his outspokenness, a warrant was sworn out for his arrest, and he had to go into exile.

In *Las uvas y el viento* Neruda describes his travels while he was in exile from 1948 to 1953. The book is a salute to peace, liberty, and socialism. In the book the poet uses the wind to symbolize liberty and grapes to symbolize peace. He praises the U.S.S.R., East Germany, China, Czechoslovakia, North Korea, and Communist Indochina, because, in his opinion, these are the lands of liberty. Also, in *Las uvas y el viento* Neruda speaks of an old theme -- that of Spain. He calls to Spain to wake up and fight for its liberty and to break away from the Fascists' rule.

*Canción de gesta* is closely related to both *Canto general* and *Las uvas y el viento* in that its main theme is the struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed. Although the details are different, the story is the same: the rich take from the downtrodden. Since *España*
en el corazón, Neruda's attacks against the rich have become directed more and more toward the United States; the North American imperialists have become the principal enemies of the people. In the prologue to Canción de gesta, Neruda makes it clear that the enemy against which the Caribbeans are fighting is the United States: "Lo dedico a todos los que, en Puerto Rico y en todo el crepitante mundo Caribe, combaten por la libertad y la verdad siempre amenazada desde los Estados Unidos de América de Norte."¹ Canción de gesta began as a book about Puerto Rico in its condition as a colony. However, during the time Neruda was writing the book, Fidel Castro instigated the Cuban Revolution and the poet decided to encompass the whole Caribbean area and to place an emphasis on Cuba.

As in his other collections of political poetry, Neruda points out both the faults of the oppressors and the virtues of the oppressed. His poetry is intended not only as a weapon against the imperialists, but also as a means of boosting the morale of the people. In the prologue to the book, Neruda states its purpose: "Este libro no es un lamento de solitario ni una emanación de la oscuridad, sino una arma directa y dirigida, una ayuda elemental y fraternal que entrego a los pueblos hermanos para cada día de sus luchas."²

Although Canción de gesta shares many of the same themes of Neruda's previous political works, its style is different. It is comprised of forty-three poems written in hendecasyllables with alternating assonant rhyme or, romance heroico. This form had often been used in Spanish verse for heroic narrative, and Neruda intended for his book to be a heroic narrative about the struggles of the Caribbean people.
The poet uses the title to further emphasize the epic nature of his book; the French *Chansons de geste* were epic poems relating heroic deeds and history. However, although *Canción de gesta* aspires to be an epic poem, it is not. It is a book of separate poems with many different topics and no central heroic character. In several poems it not only loses its epic tone, but the book degenerates into a diatribe against imperialism and its followers. For example, there is nothing epic or majestic in these lines from "Muñoz Marín": "Hay un gordo gusano en estas aguas / en estas tierras un rapaz gusano: / se comió la bandera de la isla..."(lines 1-3).

As I mentioned in the introduction, in some respects *Canción de gesta* is similar to other works that Neruda wrote in the period beginning in the late 1950's and ending in the 1960's. His work shows a movement toward a clearer style; *Canción de gesta* and other books of the period use less complicated imagery and vocabulary than do his earlier surrealist works and the poems of the "Residencia" cycle. Neruda's work also shows a movement toward more traditional verse forms; in *Canción de gesta*, as in several other works, such as *Extravagario* (1958), he uses metered lines. However, he does not generally make all poems in a book uniform, except in *Canción de gesta* and *Cien sonetos de amor*, in which one verse form is used throughout the book.

In *Canción de gesta* Neruda presents his world view, which divides people into the oppressors and the oppressed. Although it is evident from some of his works that he is aware that the divisions of life are not so clear-cut, the poet uses broad categories such as good-evil, oppressed-oppressor, just-unjust, light-dark, etc., to express his point
of view. In Canción de gesta he places North America on the side of imperialism, injustice and darkness. Also, in the same category he includes the Latin American political leaders who collaborate with and work for the United States imperialists. Some of these satraps that he mentions are Muñoz Marín, Somoza and Trujillo. Neruda devotes several poems to these traitors of the people, whom he characterizes as puppets of the United States. For example, "Un demócrata extraño" describes Betancourt of Venezuela as follows:

los gringos lo estudiaron un momento
y lo depositaron en Caracas,
empaque
tado en sus conocimientos:
aprendió inglés para cumplir órdenes,
en todo fue cumplido y circunscrito:
ojos y oídos hacia Norteamérica
y para Venezuela sordo y ciego
pedía a un sastre norteamericano
sus pantalones y sus pensamientos
hasta que hablando con la Voz del Amo
olvido a Venezuela y a su pueblo. (lines 10-20)

And in "Desaparece un profesor" the poet describes one of these satraps as "un satánico mono sostenido / allí por el State Departamento" (lines 21-22). Neruda has contempt for these men, because they are selling out their people and because they are pawns in the imperialists' game.

Neruda employs a number of denigrating images to describe the U.S. imperialists; he refers to them as pirates, thieves, and mercenaries and associates them with dollars and whiskey. In the following passage from "Antigua historia," the poet describes how the United States infiltrated Cuba:

...llegó del Norte una semilla
amenazante, codiciosa, injusta,
que como araña propogó sus hilos
y extendió una metálica estructura
que hundió clavos sangrientos en la tierra
y alzó sobre los muertos una cúpula.
Era el dólar de dientes amarillos,
comandante de sangre y sepultura. (lines 17-24)

In this passage Neruda uses several different images to portray the cancer of imperialism spreading throughout Cuba. First of all, the seed from the North is menacing, greedy and unjust. Although the poet does not develop this image any further, we are still prompted to imagine a bad or poisonous seed sprouting and spreading its malignant roots all over. The next image is that of a venomous spider spinning its web, clawing viciously into the precious earth, and covering its victims. Finally, Neruda says that this seed that is like a spider is the dollar, the symbol of imperialism, which links imperialism to the other images in the passage. Neruda personifies the dollar as having gold teeth and as commanding blood and graves, two more images of death and destruction. From this passage and others like it in Canción de gesta, we can see that Neruda viewed imperialism as both immoral and destructive.

In Canción de gesta, as in España en el corazón, Neruda uses many negative images to describe the oppressors, yet also describes the virtues and the suffering of the oppressed at length. The oppressed countries that he speaks of in the book are Puerto Rico, Cuba before the Revolution, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Venezuela and Panama. In many poems he speaks of these countries before they were invaded by imperialism, when they were beautiful and full of life and joy, associated with stars, jewels, birds and flowers. In the following passage
from "La libertad," Neruda describes the countries of the Caribbean:

Tesoros del Caribe, espuma insigne
sobre ilustres azules derramadas,
costas fragantes que de plata y oro
parecen, por la arena elaboradas,
archipiélago intenso de sueños
comarcas de susurro y llamada,
castillos de palmeras navegantes,
montañas como pinas perfumadas (lines 1-8)

As in many of Neruda's poems in Canto general and España en el corazón, the poet uses strings of images. For example, the passage cited above contains six images presented one after another. Each one is a picture in itself, but all of the images put together form a panoramic view of the subject, in this case the Caribbean.

In the images of the above passage and throughout the rest of "La libertad," Neruda brings together some surprising elements, a technique which is reminiscent of his earlier poetry. For example, in line 6 he puts together the antithetical elements of whispers and outbursts; the Caribbean is a region of calmness and passivity on the one hand, and activity and vibrancy on the other. In line 7 Neruda speaks of navigating palm trees, a description of boats made out of palm-wood that alludes to The Odyssey.

Throughout "La libertad" the author uses images that awaken our senses of sight, sound and smell. He uses colors, such as gold, silver and blue; sounds, such as whispers and outbursts; and smells, such as the scent of pines and jasmine, to depict the wonderful, natural, vibrant world of the Caribbean. This creates a sharp contrast with the destruction that imperialism brought to the region.
Besides describing the land of the oppressed and its people in positive terms, Neruda also describes the region as impoverished, victimized and enslaved. For example, in "Puerto Rico, puerto pobre" he says this:

allí crece el dolor de los que esperan y se desangra un río de lamentos, es una pobre isla encarcelada,... y allí sigue, allí está la encarcelada la isla rodeada por el sufrimiento. Y se desangra nuestra sangre en ella porque una garra de oro lo separa de sus amores y su parentesco. (lines 13-15 & 19-23)

This idea of a victimized people is carried through in "Tierra central":

Pobre América en sangre sumergida a medio cuerpo en tantos cenagales, clavada en una cruz y con espinas, maniatada y mordida por los canes, despedazada por los invasores herida por torturas y desmanes, arrasada por vientos fabulosos, ventas sacrílegas, robos colosales. Oh delgada cadena de dólares, oh reunión del llanto de los mares. (lines 27-36)

The poet uses such words as dolor, lamentos, encarcelada, herida, etc., to describe the suffering of the Caribbean people. Also, in line 29, he uses the image of the Christ-martyr to symbolize the Caribbeans as suffering and betrayed; this image recurs several times in the book.

In such poems as "Recuerdo a un hombre," "Aquel amigo," and "A Fidel Castro," Neruda eulogizes the heroes of the people, in contrast with the acrimonious poems about Muñoz Marín and the other vassals of imperialism. In Canción de gesta the author presents such popular leaders as José Martí, Augusto Sandino, and, of course, Fidel Castro;
these revolutionaries are consistently associated with the ideals of equality, justice and freedom.

Fidel Castro's role in Canción de gesta is central, because he is the symbol of the Cuban Revolution, which is seen as the hope of Latin America. The Revolution is portrayed as an end to the slavery of imperialism, and as thus the prototype of what should take place in the other Latin American countries. For him Cuba's victory is a victory shared by all of the people oppressed by imperialism:

Y están contigo porque representas
todo el honor de nuestra lucha larga
y si cayera Cuba caeríamos,
y vendríamos para levantarla,
y si florece con todas sus flores
florece con nuestra propia savia.
Y si se atreven a tocar la frente
de Cuba por tus manos libertada
encontraran los puños de los pueblos,
sacaremos las armas enterradas:
la sangre y el orgullo acudiran
a defender a Cuba bienamada.
("A Fidel Castro," lines 39-50)

Besides giving the reader an account of the battles and descriptions of the oppressors and the oppressed, Neruda also explains his reasons for writing this socio-political poetry in poems such as "No me lo pidan" and "Vengo del sur." These poems parallel the poem "Explico algunas cosas" in España en el corazón, in which the author responds to the question of why he is not writing about metaphysical ideas or the beauty of nature, by saying:

Venid a ver la sangre por las calles,
venid a ver
la sangre por las calles
venid a ver la sangre
por las calles! (lines 75-79)

The answer is quite simple; the poet cannot remain silent about the in-
justices in the world and man's inhumanity toward man.

In "no me lo pidan" it seems that some of Neruda's critics have
asked him not to write political poetry:

Piden algunos que este asunto humano
con nombres, apellidos y lamentos
no lo trate en las hojas de mis libros,
no le dé la escritura de mis versos:
dicen que aquí murió la poesía,
dicen algunos que no debo hacerlo. (lines 1-6)

Neruda goes on to explain that he cannot accommodate those critics be-
cause it is his duty to write this kind of poetry in order to help man-
kind: "debemos hacer algo en esta tierra / porque en este planeta nos
parieron / y hay que arreglar las cosas de los hombres" (lines 25-27).

Neruda again states the purpose of his poetry in "Vengo del sur";
his poems are intended as tools to enlighten and praise the people, and
as arms against the enemy: ". . . de que me servirá el canto, / el don de
la belleza y la palabra / si no sirvieran para que mi pueblo / conmigo
combatiera y caminara" (lines 25-28). In the last lines of the poem
Neruda sums up his view of his poetry:

es porque allí pasó mi poesía
con su rueda de amor y de venganza
a establecer la claridad del mundo
y dar la luz a los que la esperaban
y a acercar la victoria a los que luchan
y a dar la tierra a los que la trabajan. (lines 51-56)

I will now analyze three poems which are representative of Neruda's
dual political purpose and are parallel to the poems analyzed in the
chapter about España en el corazón. "Tristes sucesos" and "Muñoz Marín" are attacks against the enemy, and "Cuba aparece" is a poem about the people.

Tristes sucesos

Si Nueva York reluce como el oro y hay edificios con quinientos bares, aquí dejaré escrito que se hicieron con el sudor de los canaverales: el bananal es un infierno verde para que Nueva York beban y bailen. Y cuando a cinco mil metros de altura van los chilenos escupiendo sangre para mandar el cobre a Nueva York los bolivianos se desploman de hambre arañando las cuevas del estaño, rompiendo las paredes de los Andes, y el Orinoco desde sus raíces en el lodo desgropa sus diamantes. Por tierra panameña que robaron, Por aguas que robaron, van las naves a Nueva York con el petróleo nuestro, con los arrebatabados minerales que con gran reverencia les entran nuestros condecorados gobernantes. El azúcar levanta las paredes el nitrato de Chile las ciudades, el café del Brasil compra las camas, el Paraguay les da Universidades, de Colombia reciben esmeraldas, de Puerto Rico a sus batallas salen los soldados de aquel pueblo "asociado" (De esta manera singular combaten: los norteamericanos dan las armas y los portorriqueños dan su sangre).

In this poem the rich imperialists are portrayed as sucking the wealth and life out of Latin America. Whereas in España en el corazón the author attacks the rich in general, in his political poetry since Canto general he more clearly defines the enemy as the imperialists, who respond to the Latin Americans' all-giving attitude by taking all.
Unlike the poems in España en el corazón, "Tristes sucesos" and all the other poems in Canción de gesta are written in a strict meter of hendecasyllables with consonant rhyme; i.e. in the form of the romance heróico. There are several instances of parallelism in the poem, such as lines 11 and 12 and lines 15 and 16, but the poem does not have the repetitious quality of the poems in España en el corazón. There are many action verbs in this poem which give it a narrative and almost prosaic quality. Finally, most of the images in "Tristes sucesos" are less complex and more realistic than those in España en el corazón, as are the majority of images in Neruda's two later books of circumstantial poetry. For example, the following lines provide the reader with a realistic and stark image: "los bolivianos se desploman de hambre / arañando las cuevas del estano" (lines 10 and 11).

"Tristes sucesos" lists the products that Latin America has contributed to the United States, including agricultural products, minerals, jewels, petroleum, the Panama Canal, and even human lives ("y los portorriqueños dan sangre," line 30). The Latin Americans have labored and suffered to produce these things; they have gone hungry, been injured and even died, while the North Americans, symbolized by New York, "drink and dance," live a life of luxury.

Neruda presents the imbalance of this "exchange" by singling out one particular case; the North Americans provide arms so that the Puerto Ricans can give their lives in battle. Neruda's disdain for Puerto Rico's colonial situation is subtly emphasized by placing the word asociado in quotation marks. For him, Puerto Rico is not really an associate or commonwealth nation, but a slave nation owned by the
United States.

Whereas "Tristes sucesos" attacks imperialism in a general sense, "Muñoz Marín" attacks a specific person, the satrap of Puerto Rico:

Muñoz Marín

Hay un gordo gusano en estas aguas en estas tierras un rapaz gusano:
se comió la bandera de la isla
izando la bandera de sus amos,
se nutrió de la sangre prisionera,
de los pobres patriotas enterrados,
En la corona de maíz de América creció la gusanera gusano
prosperando a la sombra del dinero,
sangriento de martirios y soldados,
inaugurando falsos monumentos,
haciendo de la patria que heredaron sus padres, un terrón esclavizado,
de la isla transparente como estrella
una pequeña tumba para esclavos,
y convivió este verme con poetas
por sus propios destierros derribados,
repartió estímulo a sus profesores
pagando a pitagóricos peruanos
para que propagaran su gobierno,
y su Palacio era por fuera blanco
y adentro era infernal como Chicago
con el bigote, el corazón, las garras
de aquel traidor, de Luis Muñoz Gusano,
Muñoz Marín para la concurrencia,
Judás del territorio desangrado,
gobernador del yugo de la patria,
sobornador de sus pobres hermanos,
bilingüe traductor de los verdugos,
chofer del whisky norteamericano.

This poem is typical of Neruda's attacks against specific persons, of which there are several examples in Canción de gesta. In addition, it parallels poems in España en el corazón, such as "El General Franco en los infiernos," and poems attacking Nixon in Nixonicidio. In this poem the author lists the evil qualities and deeds of Muñoz Marín,
describing in a sardonic tone how Muñoz Marín sold out Puerto Rico to the United States.

"Muñoz Marín" is comprised of two long sentences with the same meter as the other poems in the book, except that the assonant rhyme is irregular. It follows the assonant rhyme scheme of the romance until line 12; then line 13 picks up the assonant rhyme in "a-o" and alternates in the odd lines until 21; finally, in line 22, the rhyme begins alternating in even lines until the end of the poem. In this poem Neruda uses more parallelism and repetition than in most poems in the book, which gives the poem a sing-song quality. Neruda also uses many action verbs to enumerate the crimes of Muñoz.

The poet recurs to the image of a fat worm, a lowly creature, to describe Muñoz. He also uses the word verme to imply that Muñoz is a destructive parasite. Neruda emphasizes Muñoz's wormliness by using the word gusano and its variants several times, as well as the image of a leech: "se nutrió de la sangre prisionera" (line 5).

The author presents Muñoz Marín's association with the United States symbolically. In lines 3 and 4 he mentions that Muñoz destroyed Puerto Rico's flag and hoisted up the flag of his masters, suggesting that Muñoz sold out his country. The poem calls Muñoz a bilingual translator, which implies that he is two-faced, and a chauffeur of North American whiskey, which is one of Neruda's symbols for North American imperialism.

"Muñoz Marín" uses the contrasts of light and darkness, goodness and evil. In the following lines transparente suggests light and goodness, and tumba symbolizes darkness and evil: "de la isla transparente
como estrella / una pequeña tumba para esclavos" (lines 14 & 15). Lines 21 and 22 contrast the white exterior of the Governor’s palace with the hellishness that goes on inside. Neruda summarizes his diatribe by calling Muñoz Marín "Judas," suggesting that Muñoz Marín has sold out Puerto Rico to the enemy. This Judas image appears in other poems in the book, along with the Christ-martyr image of the Caribbean.

 Whereas "Tristes sucesos" and "Muñoz Marín" are attacks against imperialism, "Cuba aparece" is a poem about the positive aspects of the people’s struggle as carried out in the Cuban Revolution:

**Cuba aparece**

Pero cuando torturas y tineblas
parecen apagar el aire libre
y no se ve la espuma de las olas
sino la sangre entre los arrecifes,
surge la mano de Fidel y en ella
Cuba, la rosa limpia del Caribe.
Y así demuestra con su luz la Historia
que el hombre modifica lo que existe
y si lleva al combate la pureza
se abre en su honor la primavera insigne:
su crueldad y sus ojos insensibles,
el oro arrebatado por sus uñas,
sus mercenarios, sus jueces caribales,
sus altos monumentos sostenidos
por el tormento, el deshonor y el crimen:
todo cae en el polvo de los muertos
cuando el pueblo establece sus violines
y mirando de frente corta y canta,
corta el odio de sombras y mastines,
canta y levanta estrellas con su canto
y corta las tineblas con fusiles.
Y así surgió Fidel cortando sombras
para que amanecieran los jazmines.

"Cuba aparece" describes the Cuban Revolution in symbolic terms; the Revolution brought light to a dark world. In the poem Neruda uses this opposition between light and dark several times. Fidel and Cuba
are the lightbearers who cut through the shadows of hatred, cruelty, crime and tyranny; torture and darkness were about to suffocate freedom when they came along to save it.

In this poem Cuba is described as a pure rose; images of both purity and flowers are associated with the Caribbean in other poems in the book. "Cuba aparece" also states that, with purity as a weapon, a brilliant new beginning, "la primavera insigne," will come about.

For Neruda, when the Cuban Revolution took place, torment, dishonor, crime and injustice crumbled to dust at the hands of the people, who are described with positive and forceful images. They are strong enough to cut through darkness and evil, but they are not unduly harsh. They are associated with music and stars, and they (represented by Fidel) cut through the darkness so that jasmines (a symbol of goodness) can grow again in Cuba.

_Canción de gesta_ is on the one hand, a eulogy about the Cuban Revolution and the fight of the people, and, on the other hand, an attack against imperialism. Neruda uses images of purity, naturalness, and martyrdom to describe the oppressed Latin American people, and images of darkness and betrayal to describe the imperialist United States.

In "Juicio final," the last poem of the book, Neruda restates one of his goals in writing _Canción de gesta_, which is to defend the Cuban Revolution:

_Yo llegare con la canción que tengo:
con lo que mi partido me enseñara:
llegare con los mismos ojos lentos,
la misma voz, y con la misma cara,
a defender frente al insulto muerto,
Cuba, tu gesta revolucionaria._ (lines 50-55)
Although Canción de gesta differs greatly in form from España en el corazón, it retains many of the themes found in its predecessor, such as justice, liberty and anti-imperialism. Whereas Canción de gesta is written in the metered verse and assonant rhyme of the romance heróico, España en el corazón contains poems written in free verse. Moreover, Canción de gesta uses less complicated imagery and is more accessible to the average reader than España en el corazón. Nevertheless, even though the poems in the two books differ greatly in style, the underlying theme of the struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed is central to both books.
NOTES


2Neruda, Canción de gesta, p. 7.

3For example, Neruda knows that all United States citizens are not evil imperialists; he does have some good feelings toward the United States, as is evidenced in "Al norteamericano amigo" in Canción de gesta.

4The Random House College Dictionary defines commonwealth as: "a group of sovereign states associated by their own choice and linked by common objectives and interests" (p. 271).
CHAPTER III

INCITACIÓN AL NIXONICIDIO Y ALABANZA DE LA REVOLUCIÓN CHILENA

Incitación al Nixonicidio y alabanza de la revolución chilena (1973) has many things in common with Neruda's previous political works. It is very circumstantial, like España en el corazón and Canción de gesta. Nixonicidio attacks Richard Nixon's imperialist beliefs and actions; it also praises the Latin American people, especially those involved in the Chilean Revolution.

Nixonicidio was written during the time that the Chilean revolutionary government was declining rapidly (1973). Neruda knew of the U.S. interventions taking place in his country and could sense that the end of the Allende regime was at hand. In an interview with Margarita Aguirre, Neruda offered his thoughts on what was happening in Chile at the time:

...Estamos en una situación bastante grave. Yo he llamado a lo que pasa en Chile un Vietnam silencioso, en que no hay bombardeos, en que no hay artillería. Fuera de eso, fuera del Napalm, se están usando todas las armas, del interior y del exterior, en contra de Chile. En este momento, pues, estamos ante una guerra no declarada. La derecha --acompañada por sus grupos de asalto fascistas y por un parlamento insidioso, venenoso, una mayoría parlamentaria completamente opositoria, adversa, estéril y enemiga de pueblo, con la complicidad de los altos tribunales de justicia... está tratando de provocar una insurrección criminal de la cual deben tomar inmediato conocimiento los pueblos de América Latina. Se trata de instaurar un régimen fascista en Chile.¹

Soon after this interview, Allende was ousted by a military coup d'état...
and the Pinochet regime took over. Three days after that coup in 1973, Neruda died from a heart attack.

The tone of the poems in Nixonicidio is that of an angry man who is using his pen as a weapon to strike out at the imperialist enemies of his country; he was outraged because the rich and powerful imperialists of North America were covertly ruining his country. In the preface Neruda explains the purpose of his book:

Esta es una incitación a un acto nunca visto: un libro destinado a que los poetas antiguos y modernos, extinguidos o presentes, pongamos frente al paredón de la Historia a un frio y delirante genocida.
En el libro se suceden: su llamamiento, su juicio y su posible desaparición final causada por la numerosa artillería poética aquí por primera vez puesta en acción.²

Later on in the preface, Neruda lists the crimes of Nixon and the U.S., and then goes on to defend his political poetry:

También debo explicar que este libro...no tiene la preocupación ni la ambición de la delicadeza expresiva, ni el hermetismo nupcial de algunos de mis libros metafílicos.
Conserve como un mecánico experimentado mis oficios experimentales: debo ser de cuando en cuando un barro de utilidad pública, es decir, hacer de palanquero, de rabadán, de alarife, de labrador, de gasfiter o de simple cachafas de regimientos, capaz de trenzarse a puñete limpio o de echar fuego hasta por las orejas.
Y que los exquisitos estéticos, que los hay todavía, se lleven una indigestión: estos alimentos son explosivos y vinagres para el consumo de algunos. Y buenos tal vez para la salud popular.³

The poet ends his preface with: "Ahora, firmes, que voy a disparar!" thus forewarning us that the poetry contained in Nixonicidio is going to be extremely pragmatic and propagandistic but not necessarily eloquent.
Nixonicidio is closely related to Canción de gesta in style and content. As in Canción de gesta, Neruda's main theme in Nixonicidio is the world class struggle. The book both ardently attacks imperialism and eulogizes the Chilean Revolution. Whereas in Canción de gesta the Cuban Revolution is personified as the hero of the book, the Chilean Revolution is the hero in Nixonicidio. The two books are similar in form. Whereas Canción de gesta was written in the form of the romance heroico, Nixonicidio was written in the form of the endecasilabo heroico, with full rhyme.

Whereas the poems of Canción de gesta frequently begin as elegant poetry and then degenerate into diatribes, Nixonicidio consists of a series of outright diatribes directed against Richard Nixon and United States imperialism. One of the key words used to describe Nixon is criminal; Neruda uses the leitmotif of a criminal trial and verdict to unify the book. The oppressed people of the world are the judge or jury and Neruda is their prosecuting attorney:

Al criminal emplazo y lo someto
a ser juzgado por la pobre gente,
por los muertos de ayer, por los quemados,
por los que ya sin habla y sin secreto,
ciegos, desnudos, heridos, mutilados,
quieren juzgarte, Nixon, sin decreto.
("él," Nixonicidio)

Other words and phrases used to describe Nixon are: malvado, delincuente, escarabajo, insecto voraz, ratón, gusano, etc. As in Canción de gesta, Nixonicidio uses images of lowly creatures, worms, insects and rats to describe the enemy. Not only is Nixon attacked, but his co-
conspirators, including the Kennecott Company, I.T.T., the assassins of Schneider, the Pepsi-Cola Company, and the ex-president of Chile, are also berated.

Like España en el corazón and Canción de gesta, Nixonicidio is also a book written in praise of the people, and it calls to them to unite against the enemy. In "A tí te llamo" Neruda says:

te necesito, mi joven hermano,
joven hermana, escucha lo que digo:
yo no creo en los odios inhumanos,
y no creo que el hombre es enemigo
creo que con tu mano y con mi mano,
frente al malvado y contra sus castigos,

llenaremos la Patria de regalos
sabrosos y dorados como el trigo. (lines 4-11)

This poem calls for the people to unite against the enemy, not in a hateful and bitter way, but as upright people opposing the villains. The poet calls not for a destructive revolution, but for one that is joyful and wholesome. In this poem, as in many of Neruda's political poems, wheat, which represents nature, is associated with goodness and justice.

Another example of Neruda's idea of a just revolution is found in the poem "Son los de ayer," which says:

Amo la paz por variadas razones:
una es porque el canto del trabajo
se une al calor solar de los limones.

Y porque los programas populares
producirán tractores y cerezos:
todo lo hace el amor y los amores
del pueblo en su batalla y su proceso. (lines 14-21)
Again the poet identifies the people's struggle with peace, love, and natural things. Throughout his political poetry he places a high value on honest labor, the fruits of nature and brotherly love.

As the full title suggests, many poems in *Incitacion al Nixonicidio y alabanza de la revolución chilena* eulogize the Chilean Revolution. In "La victoria" Neruda praises Allende and the revolution:

Y así llegué con Allende a la arena:  
al enemiga de un orden insurgente,  
a la legal revolución chilena

que es una roja rosa pluralista.

Y fue con mi Partido Comunista  
(bello como un desfile proletario),  
cuando en el mundo un día sobrevino.

Hacia los pueblos alzo nuestro vino  
con la copa a la altura del destino.  
("La victoria")

In this poem Neruda classifies the revolution as legal, reminding the reader that Allende was a duly elected leader. For this reason, the author felt that it would be unjust for Allende to be ousted from his position by the imperialists. Neruda also calls the revolution a *rosa pluralista*; in many of his other political poems the people and their revolutions are associated with purity and natural objects such as flowers. The word *pluralistic* suggests the large backing that the revolutionary movement had.

As in *España en el corazón* and *Canción de gesta*, the poet devotes several poems in *Nixonicidio* to explaining why he is writing socially and politically committed poetry. In "Me despido de otros temas" Neruda again bids farewell to noncommitted poetry: "Amor, adiós, hasta mañana,
besos! / Corazón mío, agárrate al deber / porque declaro abierto este proceso" (lines 1-3). In "Ven conmigo" he calls his poetry a weapon; and in "Una lección" he defines his duties as a poet:

Volviendo a Nixon vuelvo a ser dichoso:  
porque jugar delitos incesantes,  
ordenados por un ignominioso,  
es deber de un poeta caminante. (lines 1-4)

In "Yo no me callo" Neruda admits that the subjects he has written about aren't pleasant, but argues that it is necessary to write about them nevertheless: "Por eso en el combate nadie espere / que se quede sin voz mi poesía" (lines 13 & 14).

Unlike Neruda's other two circumstantial books of poetry, Nixonicidio does not use many strings of images; rather, it has many simple narrative sentences with an abundance of action verbs. While this book does contain many instances of imagery and metaphors, they are not piled on top of one another. For example, in "A verso limpio" the poet compares his poetry to a firearm:

Horademos a Nixon, el furioso,  
a verso limpio y corazón certero.  

Así pues, decidí que falleciera  
Nixon, con un disparo justiciero:  
puse tercetos en mi cartuchera. (lines 1-5)

This metaphor is simple and has a correspondent in the real world, unlike many of the images found in Neruda's earlier political works.

Another characteristic of the poems in Nixonicidio is their brevity; this, combined with their narrative quality and uncomplicated imagery,
gives the poems a sense of urgency. They are easy to read, short and fast-tempoed. This quick pace suggests the weapons that appear in images throughout the book; like a machine gun, these poems can strike down the enemy with swiftness and precision.

Neruda's attack on Nixon in "La canción del castigo" recalls poems in Canción de gesta and España en el corazón, such as "Muñoz Marín" and "El General Franco en los infiernos."

La canción del castigo

No hay que contar con su arrepentimiento, ni hay que esperar del cielo este trabajo:

el que trajo a la tierra este tormento debe encontrar sus jueces aquí abajo, por la justicia y por el escarmiento

No lo aniquilaremos por venganza sino por lo que canto y lo que infundo: mi razón es la paz y la esperanza.

Nuestros amores son de todo el mundo.

Y el insecto voraz no se suicida sino que enrosca y clava su veneno hasta que con canción insecticida, levantando en el alba mi tintero,

llame a todos los hombres a borrar al Jefe ensangrentado y embusterito, que mando por el cielo y por el mar que no vivieron más pueblos enteros, pueblos de amor y de sabiduría que en aquel otro extremo del planeta,

en Vietnam, en lejanas alquerías, junto al arroz, en blancas bicicletas fundaban el amor y la alegría:

pueblos que Nixon, el analfabeto, ni siquiera de nombre conocía y que mandó matar con un decreto
el lejano chacal indiferente.

This poem is written in endecasílabos heróicos, like the other poems in the book. It is made up of cuartetos, except for lines 5 and 26, with a rhyming pattern of ABAB. Although there are several instances of parallelism (for example, lines 1 and 2), "La canción del castigo" does not have a repetitious quality.

Neruda once again uses the motif of a trial; lines 1 through 9 state the purpose of the trial, and the rest of the poem describes some of the crimes that Nixon committed. In the first part of the poem, the poet mentions that Nixon won't be punished out of vengeance, but that he must be punished so that peace, love and justice may reign. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, Neruda does not want to combat the enemy in a hateful and bitter way, but rather as a good citizen upholding the ideals of love and justice.

The second part of the poem describes Nixon as an insect that shoots its venom into its victims. The insect, a lowly creature, is an image used to symbolize Neruda's enemies throughout his political poetry. As in many other poems in Nixonicidio, the poet alludes to the atrocities committed in Vietnam. In Neruda's mind, Vietnam was another Cuba; it was another instance of the popular struggle against the imperialists in an attempt to regain liberty, peace and justice. But Nixon, symbol of imperialism and evil, ordered bombing in Vietnam in order to thwart the revolution. In Neruda's opinion, Nixon's crime consists not merely in murdering people; it also involves trying to stamp out happiness and justice in the name of capitalism. The poem ends by calling Nixon a
jackal. In the author's earlier poetry, the term "jackal" was applied to Franco and his men. For Neruda, Nixon is another fascist; as a matter of fact, in one poem he calls Nixon the new Hitler.

Besides making direct attacks against Nixon in the book, the poet also describes the people and their struggle. Copper is very important in Neruda's political poetry. Because it is the major product of Chile, Neruda uses it to symbolize his country. The poem "El cobre" briefly tells the history of the Chilean copper mines; it describes how Frei allowed North American imperialists to gain control over the mines and how Allende then nationalized them and returned them to the people of Chile:

**El cobre**

Al cobre lo llamábamos chileno
porque nacía de chilenas manos
y nuestro territorio estaba lleno

del subterráneo sol cordillerano,
del cobre que no estaba destinado
a los piratas norteamericanos.

Hasta que yankizado hasta el ombligo
el presidente Frei, momiocristiano,
regaló nuestro cobre al enemigo.

Pero mi pobre Patria intransigente
esperó entre el saqueo y las escorias,
entre Chuquicamata y El Teniente,

la hora de despertar, y se comprende
que, con el pabellón de la victoria,
de un solo golpe Salvador Allende,

de los colmillos norteamericanos
rescató el cobre, para siempre ahora,
devolviéndolo a Chile soberano.

This poem consists of three long sentences divided into tercets of
hendecasyllables. It contains full end rhyme with an ABA pattern in each tercet. The rhythm and rhyme scheme make the poem fast-paced, with a sing-song quality, thus making it easy to read aloud and to memorize.

In this poem Neruda describes the North American enemy in his typical, biting fashion. He calls North Americans "pirates," an image used earlier in Canción de gesta, and portrays them as a beast with fangs from which the copper (fair maiden) was rescued (lines 16 and 17). The reader almost pictures Salvador Allende as a white knight brandishing his sword against the North American monster. Also, Neruda accuses Frei of selling out his country and levels the ultimate insult at him by saying that Frei was "yankizado hasta el ombligo" (line 7).

In describing Chile, the poet employs images that are typical of his political poetry. For example, the virtue of labor is implied in the first stanza; Neruda often uses the word manos to describe the labor force (synecdoche). The poet often describes Latin American countries as being abused and exploited; in the fourth stanza the poet describes Chile as a victim: "Pero mi pobre Patria intransigente / esperó entre el saqueo y las escorias" (lines 10 and 11). Two phrases that the author uses in connection with the Chilean Revolution are "pabellón de la victoria" and "Chile soberano."

In "4 de septiembre de 1970" Neruda also sings the praises of the Chilean Revolution. He uses short, patriotic phrases at the beginning of the poem to promote unity around the revolution. These slogans give the poem an ebullient tone, reminiscent of the rallying cries at political rallies. The poet then goes on to describe what occurred when
Salvador Allende won the elections in 1970; when the good people won, the evil ones crept back into their hiding places:

4 de septiembre de 1970

Un recuerdo: ¡por fin hay unidad!
Viva Chile, Aleluya y Alegría.
Viva el cobre y el vino y el nitrato.

¡Qué viven la unidad y la porfía!
Sí, señor. Tiene Chile candidato.
Costó trabajo, era una fantasía,
hasta que hoy la lucha se comprende.

Marchar, marchar como la luz del día.

El Presidente es Salvador Allende.

Toda victoria es un escalofrío,
porque si gana el pueblo hay una racha
que entra por el testuz del envidioso.

(Uno sube y el otro a su covacha
baja huyendo del tiempo y de la historia.)

Mientras que Allende sube a la victoria
se van los Baltras como cucarachas.4

One of the phrases that the author uses to describe the revolution is "¡por fin hay unidad!" (line 1). Unity, a theme that recurs throughout Neruda's political poetry, is mentioned again in line 4, along with tenacity. The use of the word "tenacity" suggests that not only were the people united, but they had great strength and were faithful to their principles. Another slogan, "Viva el cobre y el vino y el nitrato" (line 4), is representative of the Chilean Revolution, because copper, wine and nitrate are the principal Chilean exports.

Several additional phrases and images in this poem are typical of Pablo Neruda's political poetry. For example, he describes the Chilean
Revolution as being characterized by hard work. Throughout his political poetry he considers labor as virtuous and associates it with the struggle of the people. Another image that appears is light; for Neruda, a revolution of the people will bring light to our dark and evil world.

At the end of the poem, the poet describes the trade-off of power that took place in Chile in 1970. As the just representative of the people came to power, the evil fascists lost their power. As in other poems of Neruda, the enemies of the people are described as insects, vile and lowly creatures.

Although Nixonicidio contains many poems lamenting the destruction wrought by Nixon and the imperialists, and others ardently attacking them, the book ends on an optimistic note, as do España en el corazón, in which Neruda ends the last poem with the word "hope," and Canción de gesta, in which he declares that the Cuban Revolution will be defend.

In the poem "Mi compañero Ercilla," Pablo lauds Ercilla for serving as a mouthpiece of the Chilean nation in La Araucana, Ercilla's epic poem describing the Indians' resistance to the Spanish conquest. Neruda calls on Ercilla to join his poet's voice to the people's Revolution:

Lo llamo a la batalla y la esperanza,
a la Revolución y a mi Alabanza
y termino con él en compañía,
cantando a coro y a plena alegría:
la misma antigua lucha esplendorosa
viene del fondo de la Araucanía
y nuestra poesía no reposa. (lines 7-13)
The following poem is an excerpt from *La Araucana*, and the final poem is a combination of the excerpt with Neruda's own lines; every third line of "Juntos Hablamos" is taken from Ercilla's poem. The poet ends the poem, and thus the book, by stating that Chile will always be free:

Y aunque sea atacada y agredida
Chile, mi Patria no sera vencida
ni a extranjero dominio sometida. (lines 21-23)
1Aguirre, pp. 329-330.


4The Baltras is a fascist group.
CONCLUSIONS

The three circumstantial books that I have studied clearly show that, from the time that Neruda became politically committed (1936) until the time he died (1973), he felt a responsibility to be a political spokesman of the people. When a circumstance arose that required a public bard, Neruda put aside his other, more personal poetry and wrote socially committed verse.

This committed poetry shows a distinct evolution which parallels that of his other political works. In general Neruda's poetic trajectory shows a development from surrealistic poetry with complicated imagery, to poetry that is clear and easy to read, with simple vocabulary and imagery. Of the three books of circumstantial poetry, España en el corazón uses an abundance of imagery and poetic tropes, while Canción de gesta and Nixonicidio use simpler images and do not pile image upon image, as does the earlier book. This tendency toward increasing simplification can be attributed to the fact that, as a public poet, Neruda wished to make his poetry accessible to the common man. In addition to adopting a clearer style, Neruda's circumstantial poetry also takes on an increasingly rigid poetical form. Whereas in España en el corazón there is a tendency toward free verse and a lack of rhyme, Canción de gesta and Nixonicidio use the forms of the romance heróico and the endecasílabo heróico.

Although the form of Neruda's political poetry changes radically
in the course of his career, the themes remain the same. Neruda continues to narrate the world class struggle, speak out against the enemies of the people, and to praise the masses who struggle for peace, liberty and justice.

It is evident from poems such as "No me lo pidan" and from the prologue to Nixonicidio that Neruda's circumstantial poetry was attacked for its political intent. Undoubtedly, some critics must have attacked this poetry merely on the basis of political disagreements. Andrés Iduarte answered these critics thus:

No hagamos el agravio de ver a su poesía -- a pesar de que nazca de una tragedia política, la española, y de que esté al servicio de sus ideas políticas -- como política. Es eso exteriormente, pero sigue siendo poesía, como Neruda lo sabe y lo quiere, y como seguirá siendo aunque amigos y enemigos de Neruda se empeñaran en lo contrario.¹

Many critics, including Jaime Alazraki² and Salvatore Bizarro,³ agree that España en el corazón is a work of high quality that deserves the utmost praise for its strings of images, metaphors and symbols, and its long and intricate descriptions. This book uses an abundance of poetic tropes to portray the situation of Spain in 1936 as Pablo Neruda perceived it. However, Canción de gesta and Nixonicidio lack the subtler poetic techniques of the earlier book. The poems in these two books are clear, straightforward and almost prosaic. This prosaic quality is often criticized, and some critics, including Camacho Guizado, have said that these books are mere political diatribes that lack true poetic inspiration.⁴

Two factors must be taken into consideration when trying to evaluate these two books. The first is that, in Canción de gesta and Nixoni-
ciclo, Neruda was trying to achieve an epic tone. Unlike his lyrical poetry, the poems in these two books are written in a narrative style; they are more reminiscent of poems like *La Araucana* in that they attempt to narrate historical events and circumstances, rather than to paint a picture or evoke a feeling. Moreover, they are written in the Renaissance epic forms of the *romance heróico* and the *endecasílabo heróico*. For this reason, I would say that *Canción de gesta* and *Nixoncidio* should be judged according to different poetic criteria than *España en el corazón*.

The other factor that must be considered in evaluating Neruda's last two books of circumstantial political poetry is the author's purpose in writing them. His purpose was to be a mouthpiece of the people. He was speaking out against injustice and oppression; and he wanted his poetry to be used to generate action against the enemy. In order to reach a wide audience, it was necessary for Neruda to write his poetry in the clearest and most straightforward manner possible. As a committed poet, he believed that accessibility to large numbers of people had to take precedence over pleasing the critics and *literatos* of his day.

Keeping Neruda's purposes in mind, I think we should evaluate his political poetry in conjunction with other poetry of its kind. Just as it is unfair to judge a poem by the standards of a good novel, it is also unfair to evaluate political poetry by criteria devised for other types of poetry. One of the main criteria on which political poetry should be judged is whether or not it effectively communicates its political propositions in an artistic and entertaining manner. Moreover,
such poetry should be easily accessible to a wide range of people, not just to critics or intellectuals.

Neruda's circumstantial poetry definitely fits the above criteria. His political convictions come through quite clearly in his poetry, yet he still manages to dress his convictions in a poetic and entertaining form. Only a master poet and outstanding humanitarian like Pablo Neruda could combine politics and poetry to create an art form that has both social and artistic merit.
NOTES

1Andrés Iduarte, "Tercera Residencia de Pablo Neruda," Revista Hispánica Moderna, 13 (1947), 41-43.


4For example, in a discussion of Canción de gesta, Camacho Guizado says:

...es un libro que, en nuestra opinión, añade poco, poquísimo, a la obra de Neruda, desde el punto de vista poético. Retórica, reiteraciones con respecto a otros libros, lugares comunes y lenguaje que no ofrece mayores sorpresas ni novedades, hacen que el libro tenga más un valor de testimonio político, y aquí, como ya hemos dicho antes, tampoco encontramos variaciones de nota...aparece como un libro de circunstancias (no en el mejor sentido de la expresión) al que el poeta ha llegado cumpliendo con un deber externo, con una "meditación," como él mismo dice, más que obedeciendo a una inspiración verdadera (p. 233).
APPENDIX I

EL GENERAL FRANCO EN LOS INFIERNOS

Desventurado, ni el fuego ni el vinagre caliente
en un nido de brujas volcánicas ni el hielo devorante
ni la tortuga putrida que ladrando y llorando con voz de mujer
muerta te escarbe la barriga
buscando una sortija nupcial y un juguete de niño degollado,
serán para tí nada sino una puerta oscura,
arrasada.

En efecto.
¿De infierno a infierno, qué hay? En el aullido
de tus legiones, en la santa leche
de las madres de España, en la leche y los senos pisoteados
por los caminos, hay una aldea más, un silencio más,
a una puerta rota.

Aquí estás. Triste párpado, estiercol
de siniestras gallinas de sepulcro, pesado esputo, cifra
de traición que la sangre no borra. Quién, quién eres,
oh miserable hoja de sal, oh perro de la tierra,
oh mal nacida palidez de sombra.

Retrocede la llama sin ceniza,
la sed salina del infierno, los círculos
del dolor palidecen.

Maldito, que solo lo humano
te persiga, que dentro del absuelto fuego de las cosas,
no te consumas, que no te pierdas
en la escala del tiempo, y que no te taladre el vidrio ardiendo
ni la feroz espuma.

Solo, solo, para las lágrimas
todas reunidas, para una eternidad de manos muertas
y ojos podridos, solo en una cueva
de tu infierno, comiendo silenciosa pus y sangre
por una eternidad maldita y sola.

No mereces dormir
aunque sea clavados de alfileres los ojos: debes estar
despierto, General, despierto eternamente
entre la podredumbre de las recién paridas,
ametralladas en Otoño. Todos, todos los tristes niños
descuartizados,
tiesos, están colgados, esperando en tu infierno
esde día de fiesta fría: tu llegada.
Niños negros por la explosión,
trozos rojos de seseo, corredores
de dulces intestinos, te esperan todos, todos, en la misma actitud
de atravesar la calle, de patear la pelota,
de tragar una fruta, de sonreír o nacer.

Sonreír. Hay sonrisas
ya demolidas por la sangre
que esperan con dispersos dientes exterminados,
y máscaras de confusa materia, rostros huecos
de pólvora perpetua, y los fantasmas
sin nombre, los oscuros
escondidos, los que nunca salieron
de su cama de escombros. Todos te esperan para pasar la noche.

Llenan los corredores
como algas corrompidas.
Son nuestros, fueron nuestra
carne, nuestra salud, nuestra
paz de herrerías, nuestro océano
de aire y pulmones. A través de ellos
las secas tierras florecían. Ahora, más allá
de la tierra,
hechos substancia
destruída, materia asesinada, harina muerta,
te esperan en tu infierno.

Como el agudo espanto o el dolor se consumen,
ni espanto ni dolor te aguardan. Solo y maldito seas,
solo y despierto seas entre todos los muertos,
y que la sangre caiga en ti como la lluvia,
y que un agonizante río de ojos cortados
te resbale y recorra mirándote sin término.
APPENDIX II

ODA SOVAR AL EJERCITO DEL PUEBLO

Armas del pueblo! La amenaza, el asedio
suen detrarran la tierra mezclándola de muerte,
áspera de aguijones!

    Salud, salud,
salud te dicen las madres del mundo,
las escuelas te dicen salud, los viejos carpinteros,
Ejército del Pueblo, te dicen salud, con las espigas,
la leche, las patatas, el limón, el laurel,
todo lo que es de la tierra y de la boca
del hombre.

Todo, como un collar
de manos, como una
cintura palpitante, como una obstinación de relámpagos,
todo a ti se prepara, todo hacia ti converge!

    Día de hierro,
azul fortificado!

Hermanos, adelante,
adelante por las tierras aradas,
adelante en la noche seca y sin sueño, delirante y raída,
adelante entre vides, pisando el color frío de las rocas,
salud, salud, seguid. Más cortantes que la voz del invierno,
más sensibles que el párpado, más seguros que la punta del
trueno,
puntuales como el rápido diamante, nuevamente marciales,
guerreros según el agua acerada de las tierras del centro,
según la flor y el vino, según el corazón espiral de la tierra,
según las raíces de todas las hojas, de todas las mercaderías

    fragantes de la tierra.

Salud, soldados, salud, barbechos rojos,
salud, tréboles duros, salud, pueblos parados
en la luz del relámpago, salud, salud, salud,
adelante, adelante, adelante, adelante,
sobre las minas, sobre los cementerios, frente al abominable
apetito de muerte, frente al erizado
terror de los traidores,
pueblo, pueblo eficaz, corazón y fusiles,
corazón y fusiles, adelante.
Fotógrafos, mineros, ferroviarios, hermanos
del carbón y la piedra, parientes del martillo,
bosque, fiesta de alegres disparos, adelante,
guerrilleros, mayores, sargentos, comisarios políticos, aviadores del pueblo, combatientes nocturnos, combatientes marinos, adelante:
frente a vosotros
no hay más que una mortal cadena, un agujero
de podridos pescados: adelante!
no hay allí sino muertos moribundos,
 pantanos de terrible pus sangrienta,
no hay enemigos: adelante, España,
adelante, campanas populares,
adelante, regiones de manzana,
adelante, estandartes cereales, adelante, mayúsculos del fuego,
porque en la lucha, en la ola, en la pradera,
en la montaña, en el crepúsculo cargado de acre aroma, llevais un nacimiento de permanencia, un hilo de difícil dureza.

Mientras tanto,
raíz y guirnalda sube del silencio
para esperar la mineral victoria:
cada instrumento, cada rueda roja,
cada mango de sierra o penacho de arado,
cada extracción del suelo, cada temblor de sangre quiere seguir tus pasos, Ejército del Pueblo:
tu luz organizada llega a los pobres hombres olvidados, tu definida estrella clava sus roncos rayos en la muerte y establece los nuevos ojos de la esperanza.
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