
Pablo Neruda's Political Poems

Many poets will write on both sides of a war, they either will shield the state or will provoke it. Patriotic and Nationalistic poetry is political. Political Poetry uses people's feelings, and the politics in the poem relates to events that are happening now. Pablo Neruda's poems "To Fidel Castro", "I Explain a Few Things", and "The 'Free' Press", are arguably the most influential poems written, from all of his political poems. I am going to analyze through Pablo Neruda's poems the evolution of the poems themselves, but also his political standpoint.

In "To Fidel Castro" Pablo Neruda talks about how the people of Cuba are living and working at this time. Pablo Neruda addresses obviously Fidel Castro, but also the mass general public. In "I Explain a Few Things" Pablo Neruda discusses about a couple of topics one of those being the sudden change of poetry, and the other being his attitude toward the Nationalists army. In "The 'Free' Press" Pablo Neruda talks about the invasion of privacy, and meted freedom of both journalists and poets, whose works differ from the zeitgeist of the time period. He also discusses how they are then used as hostaged political pawns, and these situations never reach influential publications, then questioning the "free press."

In "To Fidel Castro" published in 1960, the poems progresses with how the people of Cuba are living and working during this time. In the poem Pablo Neruda describes the miners as coming back from work as ghosts because work is draining them. (9-12) "They go beneath the sea for coal but on returning they are like ghosts:" I chose this because it describes the way that the people are having to work during this time, basically coming back home as not even themselves. This part talks about how the people of Cuba are suffering and dealing with what's happening at this time. (27-30) "men hidden in buses in populations of pure nostalgia, women of the fields and workshops, children who cried away their childhoods:" The people of Cuba are suffering, and hiding from the reality of what is happening at this time.

Pablo Neruda than critiques the way that Fidel Castro is ignorant to what he claims to represent. In lines 4 and 31 Pablo Neruda offers Fidel Castro a cup of wine. (3-4) "that is why I bring from far a cup of my country's wine:"(31) "this is the cup, take it, Fidel." These quotes show how Fidel Castro is ignoring the cup Pablo Neruda offered, but also the 'cup' can be interpreted as a religious motif. Neruda than repeats to tell Fidel Castro to drink the wine because it is full of hope. (32-33) "It is full of so much hope that upon drinking you will know your victory." This basically is a contrast to what is happening because, the people of Cuba are suffering but the cup is full of 'hope' which if he drinks he'll see what is supposed to happen with Cuba, because that is his victory. With the main point of this poem to bring attention to the living situations and conditions of the people of Cuba.

In "I Explain a Few Things" published in 1947, Pablo Neruda discusses his thoughts on the Nationalist army and blaming them for the Civil War showing his political views in this poem. Neruda portrays the Nationalist army as 'jackals,' and 'vipers.' (53-55) "Jackals the jackal would despise, stoness the dry thistle would bite on and spit out, vipers the vipers would abdominate." Pablo Neruda is saying that even the Nationalist army's, own people wouldn't like them, Neruda call's the Nationalist army 'jackals' and 'vipers' in the quote it basically says jackals that jackals wouldn't even like, and vipers that would hate the vipers. Neruda than

describes how the Nationalist army is killing innocent children, because they are higher in class. (47-52) "Bandidos with planes and Moors, bandidos with rings and duchesses, bandidos with black friars signing the cross coming down from the sky to kill children, and in the streets the blood of children, ran simply, like children blood." Bandidos meaning "noble class" so Neruda inferences at how the Nationalist army thinks this is okay because they feel superior.

Pablo Neruda then gives us a look at what the Nationalist army is doing, but also the people who are being attacked during the Civil War. Pablo Neruda then describes how the war was very sudden, and the Nationalist army just attacks. (40-46) "And one morning all was burning and one morning bonfires sprang out of the earth devouring humans, and from then on fire, gunpowder from then on, and from then on blood." This further explains Neruda's thought on how the Nationalist army takes fault for starting the Civil War. Pablo Neruda also describes an angry marching mob towards this situation. (25-32) "Everything was loud voices, salt of goods, crowds of pulsating bread, market places in my barrio of Arguelles with its statue like a pale inkwell set down among the hake: oil flowed into spoons, a deep throbbing of feet and hands filled the streets." This shows us how the people are reacting during this, and what the people are doing before the Nationalist army attacks out of nowhere.

In "The 'Free' Press" Pablo Neruda talks about how The 'free' press isn't reporting on serious topics going on, but rather topics that aren't serious or concerning. Neruda begins the poem by telling us what happened that night, and how they want to execute him because they don't believe what he is writing is correct. (1-4) "I want to tell without vengeance and what's more with joy how from my bed in Buenos Aires the police took me to prison." (9-10) "My wife vented her disdain but there were orders to be executed." The first quote sets up the theme for the rest of the poem on how Neruda thinks this will be in the newspaper, but the press doesn't put his story in. The second quote explains how poets, and authors are either executed or used as hostaged political pawns. Neruda then expects to read it in the newspaper but it's not reported. (31-34) "I wanted to read it in newspapers, in La Prensa (which is so informative), yet Mr. Gainza Paz does not know if Argentina prisons are being filled." Showing that they don't want to bring attention to something unless it's going to benefit them.

Neruda then begins to explain how Mr. Gainza Paz is the leader of the free press and acts dumb and only reports things that aren't as important like divorce. (35) "He is the champion of our 'free' press." (44-45) "La Prensa is preoccupied with the last divorce taking place." The press isn't worried about publishing or even mentioning important things because it wouldn't help them. Neruda then begins to make a scenario in which the press would care to publish a story because I would benefit them in sympathy. (49-56) "Oh what silence from the fat press when the people are beaten, but if one of Batista's Jackals is assassinated in Cuba the presses of our poor America confess and print their sensational stories, they lift their hands to their temples, it is then that they know and publish." This was an important quote because it relates to another one of Neruda's poems "I Explain a Few Things" which takes place in Cuba. Neruda states how the press is silent if people are beaten, but if it's a jackal (the Nationalistic army) they would be quick to publish and share this story because it would benefit them by sympathy.

Pablo Neruda wrote many political poems some being "To Fidel Castro", "The 'Free' Press", and "I Explain a Few Things." Which were some of his most popular political poems. The purpose of this was to show the evolution of Pablo Neruda's Political poems but also his standpoint on the situation.

