

Poet Pablo Neruda Buried as Troops Guard Cemetery

Reuter

SANTIAGO, Sept. 25, —Chilean poet and Nobel Prize-winner Pablo Neruda was buried here today to the strains of the Communist "Internationale," as troops guarded the cemetery.

About 500 people, including foreign diplomats, Chilean literary figures, several former Communists militants and dozens of workers, attended the funeral.

Neruda, who died on Saturday night at the age of 69, was a lifelong Communist.

The poet died only 11 days after his friend, President Salvador Allende died during the military coup which overthrew his leftist government two weeks ago.

Neruda suffered a heart attack in a Santiago clinic after struggling for months against cancer of the prostate.

Troops were called in as the funeral cortege moved slowly through the hushed streets of the capital—still under virtual martial law—chanting Communist slogans.

As the procession entered the cemetery gates, shouts of

"Long live Chile! Long live the Communist Party! Long live freedom Long live Salvador Allende" burst out.

The military junta praised Neruda at his death, but denied him a state funeral because the city still has not returned to normal.

Neruda, widely regarded as Latin America's greatest poet, won the Nobel Prize in 1971.

As the cortege approached the cemetery, the whispered refrain of the "Internationale" was heard. Soon the crowd was singing in full voice, and three army jeeps carrying 14 men joined the end of the column.

The coffin, draped in a Chilean flag, was carried from Neruda's study in the house in a Santiago suburb where he began his literary career 52 years ago.

Dozens of floral tributes, interspersed with broken glass and furniture, stood among the wreckage of the house, searched by the military after the coup and later sacked by souvenir hunters as the poet lay dying in a hospital.