



## STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (192)

**TEXT:** *Red October in Asturias* (1935)

**AUTHOR:** José Díaz Fernández

**EDITOR:** Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo

### PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the Introduction by Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo and historical accounts)

#### 1. THE ASTURIAN REVOLUTION OF 1934: A PRELUDE TO CIVIL WAR:

##### *Historical Significance:*

The general strike in Asturias in October 1934, though suppressed, is considered a pivotal event preceding the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). It was a worker-led uprising against the conservative government's perceived threat to the newly established Second Republic.

##### *Political Context:*

Triggered by the CEDA's (Confederation of Autonomous Right Parties) ascent to power in 1933, the left feared a rollback of republican reforms. The strike found its strongest support in Asturias, where a radicalized mining community, armed and organized, fought for workers' rights.

##### *Brutal Repression:*

The uprising was brutally suppressed by the Spanish army, with General Francisco Franco playing a key role, deploying Moroccan colonial troops whose legendary cruelty spread terror.

#### 2. JOSÉ DÍAZ FERNÁNDEZ AND "LITERATURA DE AVANZADA":

##### *Documentary Novel:*

*Red October in Asturias* is categorized as a "documentary novel" within the "proletarian novel" genre, characterized by "implacable realism," "minimal elaboration," and a direct, raw style aimed at emotional impact.

##### *"Rehumanizing Art":*

As a key figure in the "literatura de avanzada" (New Romanticism) movement, Díaz Fernández aimed to "rehumanize art," combining experimental aesthetic discoveries with political commitment, directly challenging the "dehumanization of art" advocated by Ortega y Gasset.

##### *Nuanced Perspective:*

Unlike purely propagandistic accounts, Díaz Fernández's narrative is remarkable for its moderation and nuance, carefully structured to invite reflection on the consequences of ill-advised confrontation, even while sympathizing with the miners' cause.

#### 3. NARRATIVE STYLE AND THE "COLLECTIVE PROTAGONIST":

##### *Eisenstein's Influence:*

The novel's "collective protagonist"—comprising various miners and soldiers—evokes the revolutionary films of Sergei Eisenstein, popular among Spanish intellectuals for their "dramatology of the masses."



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The narrative is presented through the perspective of José Canel, a fictionalized alter ego of Díaz Fernández, a rhetorical device used to create a sense of direct witness while allowing for narrative flexibility.

#### **Violence and Detachment:**

While depicting numerous scenes of violence, Díaz Fernández deliberately uses them to promote critical detachment rather than emotional identification, urging readers to analyze the senseless toll of armed conflict.

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## **PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION**

#### **The Asturian Revolution as a Catalyst:**

Discuss the historical significance of the Asturian Revolution of 1934 as a prelude to the Spanish Civil War. What were its immediate causes and consequences?

#### **"Literatura de Avanzada" and Political Commitment:**

How does *Red October in Asturias* exemplify the principles of "literatura de avanzada"? How does Díaz Fernández balance artistic experimentation with political engagement?

#### **The Documentary Novel:**

Analyze the characteristics of *Red October in Asturias* as a "documentary novel." How does it combine factual reporting with narrative techniques to present a historical event?

#### **The Collective Protagonist:**

Discuss the concept of a "collective protagonist" in the novel. How does Díaz Fernández use this narrative choice to portray the experiences of the working class during the revolution?

#### **The Role of Rhetoric and Propaganda:**

Examine the "rhetorical radicalization" of political leaders, both on the left and right, and how it contributed to the escalation of conflict. How does Díaz Fernández's narrative critique this?

#### **Repression and Its Symbolism:**

Discuss the brutal repression of the uprising, particularly the role of Franco and the Moroccan troops. How does the destruction of historical landmarks (Sacred Chamber, University) serve as symbolism in the narrative?

#### **Nuance in Political Commentary:**

Despite his clear sympathy for the miners, how does Díaz Fernández maintain a nuanced critical stance in his narrative, avoiding simplistic demonization?

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## **PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Díaz Fernández, José. *Red October in Asturias*. Stockcero.
- Campoy-Cubillo, Adolfo. "Introduction" to *Red October in Asturias*. (This edition).
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## PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

### 1. Who is the author of *Red October in Asturias*?

- A) Ramón J. Sender
- B) Fermín Galán
- C) José Díaz Fernández
- D) Joaquín Arderíus

Correct Answer: C

### 2. What historical event is the central subject of the novel?

- A) The Spanish Civil War
- B) The Jaca Uprising
- C) The Asturian Revolution of October 1934
- D) The Rif War in Morocco

Correct Answer: C

### 3. What literary movement did José Díaz Fernández belong to, advocating for a combination of artistic innovation and political commitment?

- A) Surrealism
- B) "Literatura de avanzada" (New Romanticism)
- C) Modernismo D)
- Pure Aestheticism

Correct Answer: B

### 4. According to the introduction, what aesthetic influence is evident in the novel's use of a "collective protagonist"?

- A) Realist painting
- B) Neoclassical theater
- C) Revolutionary Russian cinema (e.g., Eisenstein)
- D) Impressionist poetry

Correct Answer: C

### 5. Which historical figure, who would later become Spain's dictator, played a key role in suppressing the Asturian uprising?

- A) Manuel Azaña
- B) Francisco Franco
- C) Alejandro Lerroux
- D) José María Gil Robles

Correct Answer: B

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