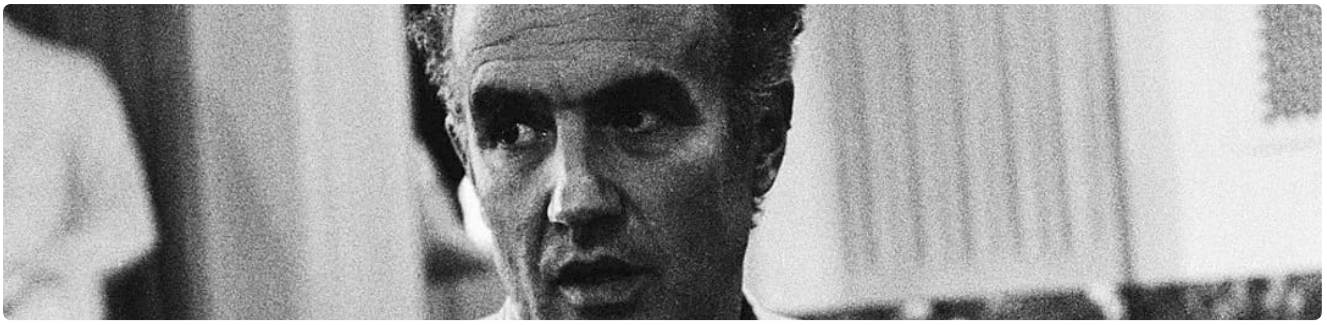
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Luigi Nono: Revolutionary Experiences and American Networks

Jean-Sébastien Noël

During his travels in Latin America and the United States, the composer and Communist activist Luigi Nono forged intense ties with artistic, intellectual, and political circles, reflecting the ideological issues of the Cold War and contributing to the circulation of aesthetic and technical innovations.

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"Hollywood: its impressive buildings, lights, billboards and, I would say, its oppressive power, like all Los Angeles: what is hiding behind all that? Who wants, who uses and who oppresses others with such power?" [1] While it would be unfair to label Italian composer Luigi Nono (1924-1990) a political artist, his music, especially from the 1950s to 1970s, emerged from an in-depth dialogue with Marxism, the writings of Antonio Gramsci and Latin American revolutionary experiences. Nono's work, whether his *azioni sceniche* or his main electro-acoustic pieces, was a milestone in Europe's post-serial avant-garde that offer a reflection on power, fascist, colonial or capitalist domination and the possibility of connecting with revolutionary struggles. Nono travelled to the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Poland, but also, decisively, to the United States in 1965 and Latin America in 1967, 1968 and 1971, where he wove a dense, fertile network of political and musical friends. An active member of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) since 1952, he was welcomed as a "comrade" to Castro's Cuba and Allende's Chile. But the often critical content of his positions adds nuance to the idea that he was (as Carola Nielinger-Vakil suggests) a "cultural ambassador of the Party". [2]

The outline of a transatlantic tropism in his formative years

Born into a cultured, anti-fascist, bourgeois Venetian family, Nono studied with composers Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), Bruno Maderna (1920-1973) and Second Vienna School conductor Herman Scherchen (1891-1966), who introduced him to the summer courses in Darmstadt, where he wrote *Variazioni canoniche sulla serie dell'op. 41 di Arnold Schoenberg* in 1950. The Berlin maestro's international fame and influence also opened the door to meeting Brazilian pianist and composer Eunice Katunda (1915-1990), a member of the avant-garde group Musica Viva founded in 1939 in Rio de Janeiro by Hans-Joachim Koellreutter (1915-2005). Katunda introduced her Italian companions to the traditional songs and beats of Mato Grosso. United by a shared passion for Federico García Lorca, together they studied Brazilian, Arab and Andalusian rhythms. In 1951, Katunda's influence was heard in Nono's *Polifonica-Monodia-Ritmica*, a piece for six instruments and percussion created under Scherchen's baton in Darmstadt. Dedicated to Katunda, its structure is based on the intervals and rhythmic motifs of the song *Yemanja* (the name of the goddess of the sea in afro-Brazilian worship

Darmstadt is also where Nono met Edgard Varèse (1883-1965), whom he acknowledged as having a considerable influence on his own compositional technique. Nono underscored the link between nature and music in Varèse's work, his groundbreaking analysis of the role of technological change in refining the ear's perception and the importance he gave to African percussion in the composing process:

> *"Varèse was familiar with drum orchestras where the skins on the opposite sides of the drum are tuned differently. The drums are played with fingers, fingernails and the palm by doing scales with one hand and simply striking with the other. The last time I went to see Varèse in New York, he showed me new drums that he had just received from Africa. I don't think it's by chance that Varèse's Ionisation was performed for the first time in Havana in 1931."* [?]

Varèse's fundamental lesson proved fertile ground for some of his greatVIII* for wind, brass and percussion (1955-1956). [3] The late 1950s climaxed with the tumultuous premiere of the one-act, two-part opera *Intolleranza 1960* at the Venice Biennial in April 1961: Nono became a figurehead of avant-garde music. In works with strong ideological undertones, he condemned the atrocities and fascist reflexes of the police state, just as he denounced the corruption of Italian and German Christian Democracy. The "cops"

in scene four of the first part of *Intolleranza* are depicted as torturers. The protestors' cries of "Nie wieder!", "No pasaran!", "Morte al fascismo! Libertà ai popoli!", "Down with discrimination!" and "La sale guerre!" refer to historical contexts that Nono juxtaposed with each other*.* In his triptych *Canti di Vita e d'Amore (1962)*, he denounced the French army's atrocities in Algeria. The work's central part is a monody for soprano entitled "Djamila Boupacha" in reference to a young woman who, after being tortured by the French army, became an emblem and martyr of the Algerian resistance.

In Darmstadt, the composer's convictions were divisive. In his lectures "*Geschichte und Gegenwart in der Musik von heute*" (1959) [4] and "*Text-Musik-Gesang*" (1960) [5], Nono criticized the ahistorical conception of music espoused by American composer John Cage (1912-1992) and the compromises with the capitalist system made by German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007). In other words, Nono set a Gramscian conception of the composer's intervention within society in a dialectical relationship to history and the socioeconomic contexts of creation in opposition to a *tabula rasa* based on the sclerotic abstraction of integral serialism or the introduction of chance and randomness in music. He rebuked Stockhausen for being fascinated by technology and remaining silent about the capitalist production process of electronic equipment and instruments to the point of becoming a stooge for US imperialism.

US cultural policy: "reverse Zhdanovism"

Nono directly confronted the North American capitalism he so vehemently inveighed against during his 1965 stay in the United States, when the head of the Opera Company of Boston, Sarah Caldwell (1924-2006), staged *Intolleranza 1960 at* the Boston Opera House, while Bruno Maderna conducted the soloists, the mixt choir and the orchestra. The US consulate in Trieste had rejected the composer's visa application based on his PCI membership, but he eventually prevailed after the Boston Symphony Orchestra circulated a petition on his behalf. In "Letter from Los Angeles," [6] published in *Rinascita* on April 17, 1965, Nono described the orchestra's functioning as "an example of non-organization and non-practical experience, devoid of any creative intelligence, a private enterprise based exclusively on the dollar and its sanctity: time and performance possibilities are limited in this sense." The composer claimed that he and his team came under pressure, especially of a political nature. For example, Czech set designer Josef Svoboda (1920-2002) sparked an outcry when he wanted to project slogans like "Cuba yes, Yankees no!" and "Down with discrimination" on screens. Clearly, Nono's aesthetic-political choices would have embarrassed the orchestra's management. Caldwell, he alleged, arranged the text to soften its impact on the audience. [7] The premiere of *Intolleranza* was met with anti-Communist demonstrations. Nono noted the protests of Polish refugees: "Comrade Nono, go back to Moscow. Stay on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Senator Kennedy, *Intolleranza* is red propaganda by those who want to destroy the USA."

However, the subversive dimension of Nono's music should be nuanced. *Boston Globe* theater critic Kevin Kelly wrote: "The success of Josef Svoboda's set for *Intolleranza* lies in the fact that, while Nono's atonal music leaves you cold, Svoboda's optical counterpoint haunts your mind." What is more, while Nono's works were seldom performed in the United States, he was not ostracized. Between 1964 and 1973, three of them were performed at the Tanglewood festival: *Polifonica-monodia-Ritmica* and *Il Canto Sospeso, II*, conducted by Gunther Schuller in 1964 and 1970, and *Sarà dolce tacere* in 1973. Moreover, the New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein performed *Canti de vita e d'amore* on October 14 and 18, 1971.

For Nono, the limitations of art produced in the United States were less aesthetic than ideological: American music is "reverse Zhdanovism", a new form of propaganda engineered by the Federal government, a mirror image of Soviet Realism. In his view, the new currents of typically American creation revealed a trend towards simplification, if not hypnotic entertainment, that tends to distance the audience from its political responsibilities. In contrast, in the work of engineer and composer John Chowning (born 1934), whom he met in Los Angeles, he detected the possibility of using technology free from academicism or the acritical fascination of someone like Stockhausen. Chowning, a Stanford University professor and director of the Center for Computer Research and Musical Acoustics (C.C.R.M.A.) in 1975, was a trailblazer of computer-generated music. Nono believed that his work could help to dust off aging European institutions like RAI's musical phonology studio in Milan.

By highlighting the common failings of the United States and the USSR, Nono showed the limits of American culture and its indoctrination potential. He called the New York intelligentsia "integrated rebels." As for the radical left students he met at Harvard, Nono lamented their unambitious initiatives ("a demonstration every once in a while").

Nono's critiques of the United States fueled his composing process. As musicologist Laurent Feneyrou shows, his works at the time were characterized by the frequent use of non-musical materials (flyers, poems, political speeches recorded on vinyl discs) and electroacoustic work on the sung or spoken voice at RAI's musical phonology studio in Milan. Two pieces particularly attest to the aesthetics of struggle: *A Floresta é jovem e cheja de vida *(1966) and *Siamo la gioventù del Vietnam *(1970).

The libretto by Giovanni Pirelli (1918-1973), *A Floresta*, was dedicated to the National Liberation Front, the Viet Cong. It juxtaposes several texts by freedom fighters in no geographical order. PirelliCastro [8] with the lastdoes not start here, in the coal mines, in the auto, steel and electrical industries, there shall be no freedom" [9]) and a student at Berkeley ("Is this all we can do?"). Nono also denounced the barbarityburns and tortures. Its world is made of lies and becomes the truth, where war is freedom, pain is peace, murder is honor."* [10]

Nono seldom limited his message to a single issue. Here, he connected US imperialism to the country's own social dysfunction and put Americans face-to-face with their own responsibilities. He used the article by Herman Kahn (1922-1983), published in April 1965, about the theory of escalation, a process that could lead the Cold War into a nuclear one.

"*Uncle Sam wants you nigger*": speeches and pieces in the fight for civil rights

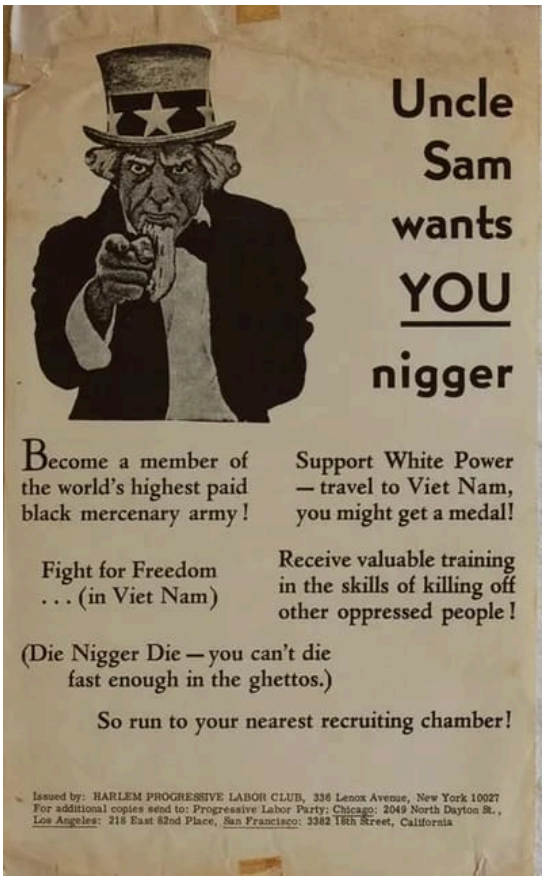
In 1968, the civil rights movement inspired Nono to write the electroacoustic piece *Contrappunto dialettico alla mente,* based on a madrigal comedy by Adriano Banchieri (1568-1634).

VIDEO

View online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTBgICecZ50&frags=pl%2Cwn

> The broadcast of the work, commented sequence by sequence on R.A.I. on November 17, 1968, preceded by an introduction.
>
> **Source:** Youtube

Contrappunto dialettico alla mente is a musical reflection using voice and sounds, such as the fishmongers' cries at the Rialto market in Venice. The choice of texts was based on current events: the writings of Nanni Balestrini, a poem about the death of Malcom X by African American writer Sonia Sanchez (born 1934) and a flyer distributed by the Harlem Progressive Labor Club, "*Uncle Sam Needs You Nigger*". *Contrappunto dialettico alla mente* is dedicated to Douglas Bravo (born 1932), head of Venezuela's Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN).



Harlem Progressive Labor Club, "Uncle Sam needs YOU nigger," Roz Payne Sixties Archive, accessed May 26, 2019

Source: https://rozsixties.unl.edu/items/show/33

References overlap in the work's complex weave, as though signifying that a political struggle is never isolated from the rest of the world, including as an abstract entity, cut off from life. The noisy intrusion of cries from the Rialto market are not anecdotal, but allowed Nono to integrate the struggles evoked in ordinary daily life. He explained it this way:

> *"My material at the start was the voices and sounds of the Rialto fish and produce market in Venice. Through elaboration and electronic composition, the initial naturalism is semantically transformed into the voices and sounds of the people—a popular aspect of the assassination of Malcom X (episode one) and the imperialist aggression in Vietnam (episode four)* [24] *."*

Much more than just a broadside against the plight of African-Americans, Nono's work aimed to put different struggles and life situations into a dialectical relationship with each other. This is especially obvious in the last episode, which incorporates a Harlem Progressive Labor Club pamphlet:

> *"UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU NIGGER*
> *Become a member of the world's highest paid black mercenary army!*
> *Support White Power—travel to Viet Nam, you might get a medal!*
> *Fight for freedom... (in Viet Nam)*
> *Receive valuable training in the skills of killing off other oppressed people!*
> *(Die nigger die—you can't die fast enough in the ghettos.)*
> *So run to your nearest recruiting chamber!"* [25]

Nono made no distinction between the slogan *Black Power* and the *Black Panther Party*; nor did he bother with the details of factional in-fighting. He made no allusion to its leaders, like Eldridge Cleaver and Stokely Carmichael. What mattered was that *Black Power* could stand in for the politically disactivated working class as a driving force of revolution against the hegemony of the capitalist bourgeoisie.

"A river of strength and clarity": Nono and Latin America's avant-garde

In 1967, Nono made his first trip to latin America, a three-month journey with his wife Nuria (Arnold Schoenberg's daughter) and their daughters Silvia and Bastiana to take stock of the political and cultural situation in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Panama, Mexico and Cuba. In the autumn of 1967, he, like many other European and North American composers, was invited to Buenos Aires to teach at the *Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales* (CLAEM), which was hosted by the *Instituto di Tella* from 1961 to 1971*.* His course was called "The reality of the Word, text and music in electronics." There he met engineer Fernando von Reichenbach (1931-2005) at the electronic music laboratory led by composer Francisco Kröpfl (1931-2021). As a witness to political violence in Argentina a year after the coup that established Juan Carlos Onganía's military dictatorship, Nono questioned the relevance of teaching the latest musical language and techniques from Europe (influenced by the Second Vienna School, Varèse and the Darmstadt school) to students with an autonomous culture and a specific relationship to their own history.

> *"These young people are keenly interested in a union of, on the one hand, learning indispensable technical knowledge, life possibilities and music in their countries, where the consequences of yesterday's colonial rule, exploitation and imperialist violence spawn problems and the difficulties of life today, and, on the other, the struggle and objective challenges of a new musical organization (and not only of the organization of electronic music). These issues are linked to the historical difficulties of the country's social development caused precisely by imperialist exploitation, the omnipotence of a culture it serves and the appalling living conditions that oppress the people under the yoke of murderous generals who are merely puppets in the hands of the present United States government. Together we have found a new social relationship, where analysis of the score and theoretical discussions of acoustics, electronic technology and aesthetics intersect with conversations about the responsibility of composers in the current Latin American situation* [26] *."*

However, Nono's enthusiasm and confidence in his Latin American students' determination to rise up against "the imperialist exploitation" of the United States was dampened when his call to rise up against Onganía went unheeded. While they applauded his works, dedicated in this instance to Che Guevara, the CLAEM students—funded by the Rockefeller Foundation—paid no attention to call for resistance.

In the autumn of 1968, Nono was invited to the first Caracas international music festival, organized by the cultural department of the University of the Andes in Mérida. Nono, who backed the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) and the FALN guerilla movement, said that Venezuela was "exploited and oppressed by North American neo-colonialism, but the opposition and the struggle for liberation are alive and well on various levels [11]." He accepted an invitation from the *Instituto nacional de cultura y bellas artes* (INCIBA) to participate in round tables with Venezuelan musicologist Eduardo Lira Espejo (1912-1980) and the Polish and Chilean composers Krzysztof Penderecki (1933-2020) and Leon Schidlowsky (born 1931). A music festival was jointly organized with Latin America's first documentary film festival, where he met Fernando Solanas (born 1933), one of the *nuevo cine argentino* directors. In *Che Lives in Caracas*, Nono wrote about the political climate in the weeks leading up to the election of university representative bodies, when two lists, the revolutionary (Movimiento de Izquierda Revoluionaria) and Christian left, merged under the banner "Christians and Marxists, together we will win." In his description of Caracas, Nono simultaneously denounced American capitalism's economic and cultural influence, investment in oil projects and cultural creation:

> *"Caracas, a monstrous city that, with other Latin American capitals, embodies the stark contrast between North American oppression and inhuman local life. About two million inhabitants, at least 700,000 of whom live in cardboard shacks and slums around the city a few hundred meters from arrogantly luxurious buildings such as the Hilton Hotel, national and North American banks, and the Rockfeller [sic], Esso and Creole centers: a socio-economic feature that Caracas shares with Lima and Buenos Aires. Venezuela accounts for over 60% of American capital's total investments in Latin America, especially by the 'liberal' Rockfeller [sic], the main exploiter of Venezuelan oil (the Creole group). The spoils of American plunder are apparently not limited to oil, but also include iron, gold, salt, copper and bauxite. This is economic and cultural domination through a characteristic oligarchic government, a puppet whose strings are pulled on Wall Street, in the Pentagon and in the anti-guerrilla training camps in Panama and Florida [27]."*

On his third trip, from December 8 to 22, 1971, Nono was invited to Piriápolis by the Uruguayan contemporary music society, represented by pianist and composer Héctor Tosar (1923-2002), composer Coriún Aharonián (1940-2017), a student of Tosar and Nono's, and pianist María Teresa Sande. Although the Buenos Aires CLEAM did not officially participate in the event, two young argentine composers, Eduardo Bértola (1939-1996) and Mariano Etkin (1943-2016), were there to discuss the contribution of electroacoustics to contemporary music creation in Latin America, while Uruguayan composer Conrado Silva de Marco (1940-2014) noted the impact of John Cage. Musicians who were not in the experimental avant-garde, such as Uruguayan guitarist and educator Abel Carlevaro (1916-2001), highlighted the desire to break down barriers between traditional, modernist and contemporary music while breaking free from the rigors of the new European academicism denounced by Nono:

> *"This is the opposite of academic and authoritarian European music courses, of which the Darmstadt Summer School is the worst example, because it is based on the individual and unilateral 'personality' of certain musicians who limit themselves to imposing their own aesthetic and technical vision according to the 'myth of technology as progress' and correspond to the position of European and North American official and government-sponsored music, a cultural tool that enforces capitalist and imperialist domination* [28] *."*

The meetings' goals were creative, compositional, philosophical and political, according to Nono. The aim was to decolonize music:

> *"Everyone realized the need to analyze, overcome and break European and North American cultural penetration and domination, imperialist colonization, in order to give life, including music, its own original creative practice: to destroy the cultural superstructure imposed by foreign domination for centuries and recognize one's own autochthonous practice (to recognize one's own origins in it)."* [29]

The debates aimed to foster a new approach to the West's technological and cultural legacy by no longer considering European penetration an inexorable part of the historical process of South America's development but a means to advance the emancipatory struggle. The Cuban revolution's cultural dimension and the figure of Castro played a key role in this rising awareness.

"Cuba yes, yankees no": Nono and Cuba, between "infatuation" and blindness

In 1967, Nono took his first trip to Cuba, where he met Castro, who made a strong impression on him, and writers Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014) and Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980), a friend of Varèse. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, complex feelings of admiration and empathy for the social model that Cuba was building could be found in Nono's articles in the *Italian* leftist press *(L'Unità, Rinascita* and *L'Astrolabio*) and its latin American counterparts (*Música*, the magazine of the *Casa de las Americas* in Havana, and *Il Siglo* in Santiago, Chile).

In a December 1968 *Rinascita* article titled "Che Lives in Caracas", Nono enthusiastically recalled the guerilla movement's impact on Venezuelan youth. In another *Rinascita* article, [12] he quoted an Italian worker who had immigrated to Germany: "Che Guevara lives, and so do I." Death must have a purpose. It must advance the struggle that survives its fallen heroes. After the anti-Franco epitaph-works written in memory of Federico Garcia Lorca in the 1950s, in the 1960s and 1970s Nono composed symbolic memorials dedicated to Che and Luciano Cruz, the leader of Chile's revolutionary leftist movement MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria), who died under mysterious circumstances in 1971. The composer wanted to keep places of remembrance alive to give the struggle new momentum. Thus, *Como una Ola de Fuerza y Luz* (1971-1972), a work for soprano, piano, orchestra and magnetic tape, was dedicated to "Luciano Cruz, to live." As a staunch Marxist, Michael Struck-Schloen wrote, Nono conceived of death "not as a moment of passive resignation but as a situation in a much larger evolution." [13]



america latina

Nella Sierra e in parlamento

di Luigi Nono

Reduce da un lungo viaggio nel subcontinente latino-americano e a Cuba, il maestro Nono illustra in questo articolo le difficoltà e i progressi della lotta per il socialismo, documentando le vittorie conseguite dalle masse popolari e dalle loro avanguardie nei vari paesi e sottolineando l'unicità del processo rivoluzionario, pur nella diversità delle esperienze contingenti (lotta armata-via parlamentare). Sulla questione del rapporto fra intellettualità e lotta rivoluzionaria, particolarmente attuale a Cuba dopo il « caso Padilla », l'artista italiano ammette con franca autocritica le distorsioni eurocentriche, ma condanna gli eccessi burocratici.

Scrivere su Cuba, sul suo continuo processo rivoluzionario, sulla sua continua militanza continentale, significa, oggi più che mai, scrivere sulla lotta di liberazione *non armata e armata*, di cui la prima non esclude la seconda perché può necessariamente diventare armata (come compagni cileni precisano), che si sta svolgendo nei paesi latino-americani contro l'imperialismo e il neocapitalismo Usa, contro la presenza della Cia, contro le oligarchie nazionali strettamente vincolate a essi. Lotta per il *socialismo*, in un durissimo e sanguinoso scontro di classe, che rappresenta il salto qualitativo politico oggi chiaramente significante della lotta stessa. Di questa unità continentale tra Cuba socialista e gli altri paesi è testimone recente il compagno del PC cileno Volodia Teitelboim, il quale parlando prima del comandante Fidel Castro nel X anniversario della vittoria cubana di Playa Giron, celebrato in Avana il 19 aprile, afferma: « Siamo coscienti che se Cuba non avesse iniziato la strada al socialismo nei nostri paesi, non sarebbe stato concepibile l'esito rivoluzionario del popolo cileno. Perché senza il vostro trionfo a Playa Giron, tanto meno noi avremmo ottenute le vittorie del 4 settembre del 1970 e del 4 aprile del 1971 » (le due vittorie elettorali per le quali l'unità popolare con il presidente Salvador Allende conquistò il governo e iniziò la lotta per la conquista del potere e la trasformazione socialista del Cile).

Un manifesto dei contadini cileni

Esattamente come, scrivere sul nuovo processo rivoluzionario cileno, significa non intendere il Cile come una isola o peggio come un « modello pacifico » che smentisce la lotta armata, ma intenderlo, ancora con le parole di Volodia Teitlboim « scritto nel contesto del processo rivoluzionario mondiale. Esso è anche un indice di come l'America vive un momento, un periodo esplosivo e vulcanico, che conferma la direzione storica iniziata dodici anni or sono dalla gloriosa Cuba ». In questa America Latina l'assassinio del Che Guevara, di Inti Peredo, di Carlos Marighella, pur costituendo un grave colpo al movimento, ha germinato positivamente nuova coscienza di lotta per *il socialismo*, nuova organizzazione *socialista*, nuova strategia *socialista* all'interno dei singoli paesi e tra essi, come compagni in Cile in Perù in Venezuela in Messico e in Cuba stessa mi hanno confermato durante il mio recente viaggio. E si consideri in Uruguay l'azione straordinaria dei Tupamaros e il loro appoggio al « frente amplio » (ben distinto dall'unità popolare cilena) costituitosi per le prossime elezioni di novembre, sulle quali incombe possibilità di interventi golpisti e Usa, in Argentina l'impetuosa azione degli operai a Cordoba e a Rosario e quella dei movimenti di liberazione (Mra - movimento rivoluzionario argentino, Far - forze →

Nella Sierra e in parlamento

Source: https://astrolabio.senato.it

In the first lines of *"Nella Sierra e in parlamento"* ("In the Sierra and in parliament"), [14] a four-page article published in *L'Astrolabio* on June 20, 1971, Nono wrote:

> *"Now more than ever, writing about Cuba, the ongoing revolutionary process and continuing continental activism means writing about the armed liberation struggle [...]in latin American countries against US imperialism and neo-capitalism, the presence of the CIA and the national oligarchies to which they are closely bound."*

These words state two things that are often found in Nono's texts, explicitly or between the lines. First, the enemy is North American socio-economic imperialism; second, only Cuba can serve as the model for struggles against neo-colonialism.

However, Nono seldom, if ever, addressed South America's political and diplomatic context. For him, there was no point going back over the pre-1959 situation: the island's socialist present and the revolutionary process were all that mattered. He presented the revolution, from the first failed storming of the Moncada (July 26, 1953) to entering Havana with Guevara (January 4, 1959), from a perspective that is partial in both senses of the term, sometimes bordering on a golden legend. In the June 1971 *L'Astrolabio* article, Nono wrote:

> *"Revolutionary and socialist Cuba is moving forward in continuous unity between its peoples, government and party, in a continuous deepening of its characteristics, in exemplary community and in a continuous relationship with the political and cultural struggles of Latin America."* [30]

However, when speaking of the "exemplary community" between Cuba and the rest of Latin America, Nono ignored the increasing tensions between communist and Cuban leaders and, within the island's government, persistent quarrels between the opportunists, who wanted closer ties with the USSR, and the autonomists, who did not, believing in the purity of the Cuban road to communism.

In the article "In the Sierra and in Parliament," Nono highlighted the fundamental aim of guerilla warfare on the continent, i.e., the necessary unity of the revolutionary process beyond specific national characteristics. Otherwise, the communist guerillas risked failing for two reasons. First, the danger of military dictatorship looming over the continent, especially since the end of the Second World War; second, the threat of what Nono called "capitalist restructuring," i.e., the use of capitalist solutions to solve problems, backed by most OAS governments.

At the beginning of the article, Nono quoted Chilean communist Volodia Teitelboim (1916-2008) speaking in Havana on April 19, 1971 alongside Castro to mark the tenth anniversary of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion: "America is experiencing an explosive, volcanic period that confirms the historical direction taken by glorious Cuba twelve years ago now." Further on, he made a connection between Castro's 1959 victory and Salvador Allende's election in November 1970. In his article, Nono extolled the solidarity between South American revolutionaries and guerillas. However, he glossed over the fundamental differences of opinion between communist leaders at the Tricontinental Conference, especially on the recourse to armed struggle, to highlight the same remarks by Guevara that he quoted in the composition *Y Entonces comprendió *(1970).

> *"Wherever death surprises us, may it be welcome if our combat cry reaches a receptive ear and if another hand stretches out to pick up our weapons and other men prepare, under crackling gunfire, to sing funereal songs and utter new calls to fight and to victory."* [31]

This passage from the work's fifth episode, sung live by the chorus, injected something new into Nono's message. After optimism in struggle, he advocated optimism in failure and called for a kind of willpower that would allow death to be overcome, or sublimated, by learning from mistakes. The sacrificial figure of the martyr, already present in the work on texts by Federico Garcia Lorca, can be found here. Nono sanctified Guevara: he did not die in vain, but must inspire the *guerilleros* to fight on even more spiritedly.

Nono and the Cuban revolution: lessons from the "Padilla case"

The political-cultural affair around Cuban writer Heberto Padilla (1932-2000) in 1971 reveals Nono's ambiguity towards Castro. The regime had already banned Padilla's books after his anthology *Fuera del Juego was* published in 1968. On March 20, 1971 he was arrested for treason, spying for the CIA and counter-revolutionary activities. A protest letter signed by American and European intellectuals, including Simone de Beauvoir, Italo Calvino, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Alberto

Moravia, Jean-Paul Sartre and Mario Vargas Llosa, was sent to Castro shortly after Padilla was sentenced. Nono, then in Chile, joined the protest. In Castro's view, the international reactions to Padilla's plight allowed him to separate Cuba's unconditional friends from those who offered their friendship only in return for guarantees. After Padilla's self-criticism, written in prison, was solemnly read before the Union of Writers and Artists on April 24, 1971, another, more vehement and indignant letter was sent to Castro. This time, it was signed by Pier Paolo Pasolini, Marguerite Duras, Alain Resnais and Jorge Semprún in addition to the previous signatories, except Nono and García Márquez, who declined. Nono, whose attachment to Castro and, even more so, to the spirit of Cuba, was well known, published an apology in the Chilean newspaper *El Siglo* dated May 9, 1971 in which he clarified his positions and his conception of the european intellectual's role in the context of South America's revolutionary struggle. In particular, Nono stressed the need to "overcome the euro-centric and backward 'libertarian' impulse with a new reality of struggling for necessary perspectives within the framework of a revolutionary historic dimension, to which all the countries fighting for their freedom and all the working and peasant classes are contributing." [15] Nono depicted the european intellectual as an individual subject to a certain form of "conditioning", a socio-historical determinism, which it was difficult, if not impossible, to ignore. Like many European intellectuals, Nono claimed to be a victim of "euro-centric" blindness, but unlike them, he thought it was necessary to overcome it.

Nono's attachment to Castro dated back to their 1967 meeting in Havana during his first trip to Latin America. Far from being ruffled by the Padilla affair, his admiration was still felt in composer Enzo Restagno's 1981 autobiography. [16] Nono repeatedly evoked Castro in his works by quoting his speeches (*A Floresta é jovem e cheja de vida*, *Ein Gespendt geht um in der Welt*, 1971, *Al Gran Sole Carico d'amore,* 1974) or electronically processing the leader's voice in his music.

As musicologist Luis Velasco-Pufleau showed in *Für Dessau* (1974), dedicated to German composer Paul Dessau (1894-1979), Nono processed Castro's recorded speeches in RAI's music phonology studio in Milan. The rhythm of the speeches, punctuated by vocal outbursts, became musical parameters structuring the work. Several years earlier, in his electroacoustic composition *Y Entonces comprendió (1969-1970)* dedicated to "Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and all the comrades of all the Sierras Maestras in the world," Nono had already used Castro's voice reading the last letter Guevara sent him in 1965. With this process, he portrayed Castro as Guevara's spiritual heir. Castro became Guevara's voice. Moreover, Nono glossed over Castro's form of *realpolitik*, making no mention of his late, opportunistic conversion to Marxism-Leninism and his proposal to stop anti-American propaganda if the United States broke its ties with counter-revolutionaries (*New York Times* interview, July 6, 1964).

Nono's references to the Cuban revolution and Guevara are poetically assimilated by syncretism with the island's magic rituals. The first episode of *Y Entonces Comprendió* is dedicated to the "horse as the embodiment of magic". [17] In the fourth, Nono speaks of "nature's nocturnal magic".

The Chilean experience: hopes for an ideal society

The Chilean experience was doubly important for Italian Communists. Salvador Allende's 1970 election raised hopes and led to a shift in political strategy: Enrico Berlinguer launched the "historic compromise" following the September 1973 coup. After returning from his third journey to South America in 1971, Nono considered Chile a shining example of solidarity (embodied by Allende's Popular Unity government) and resistance against all the attempts to destabilize the regime. For Nono, the mobilization of the working

class, the trade unions' demand to manage the mines, the Temuco and Valdivia peasants' struggle to take their land back from the big landowners and the student movement and its openness to workers all raised hopes of seeing the foundation of a second South American socialist republic.

Rising political instability in Santiago, Allende's overthrow on August 22 and his death on September 11, 1973 after Augusto Pinochet took power ended the optimistic period of the construction of socialism. Other forms of resistance had to be found. The work following Allende's death, *Al Gran Sole Carico d'Amore * (1974), stresses the difficulty of acting and the tragic dénouement of attempted revolutions, from the Paris Commune and the Versaillais repression to the 1905 Russian revolution and bloody battles at La Moncada. Guevara, Louise Michel and Ulricke Meinhof are portrayed as martyrs. While Victor Jara (1932-1973) does not appear in the work, he ranks among them.

Nono first met Jara on a 1967 trip to Santiago, Chile and again in September 1972, a year before his death, at a Latin American music festival in Havana. They became friends; Nono deemed the singer-songwriter an antidote to the "record companies' industrialized neo-folklore used by the reactionary bourgeoisie." To him, the *Nueva Canción Chilena* participated in the social, cultural and political transformation brought about by Allende while denouncing "the cultural penetration of imperialism and its cultural colonialism." Several months after Jara's death, Nono paid him tribute in *L'Unità* [18] :

> *"While a prisoner in the Santiago National Stadium, Victor Jara is said to have started singing. Immediately, his wrists were broken. They smashed his head and left him in a pool of blood for a long time. Then, they killed him. But his songs live on. Now more than ever, they are hymns of struggle for the saltpeter, coal and copper workers and all those who are organizing united resistance to free Chile from the criminals who have overturned freedom, whether they be at home (military and civilian) or abroad (the USA, CIA and North American capital), exhorting them to resume the march to socialism even more resolutely than before."*

Nono's articles after Allende's death attest to a shift in his commitment, now focusing more on action in the face of reaction than on a society-building project. On October 9, 1973, he published an appeal in *Paese Sera* [?] to protest against the treatment of the Tupamaro revolutionaries imprisoned by the Uruguayan army. He emphasized the concomitant dangers of "the Nazi criminality of generals" after the coup in Chile and the "intensification of harsh repression to the point of death in Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia and other Latin American countries."

From the fertile friendship with Katunda early in his career to Varèse's lesson on African American percussion or the nature of listening, links with musician-engineers John Chowning and Fernando von Reichenbach and his deep influence on young Latin American composers such as Coriún Aharonián and Edouardo Bértola, Nono helped forge a transatlantic network of the musical avant-garde.

In his view, Latin America was on a "young and vibrant" road to socialism between an intrinsically abhorrent US social model and a partly dysfunctional soviet model that produces poor aesthetics. The continent, he believed, was constantly swinging back and forth between utopia and reality, a land of a new religiosity, of a pagan faith in the revolution's new heroes. It also gave birth to the martyred fighters of its liberation and saw them die. Nono considered South America an intricate web of fundamental political issues (the struggle against Western neocolonialism embodied by Castro's Cuba and the military and "fascist" threat), trailblazing achievements, rising awareness, and mysticism. A maternal figure and a figure of death, it also seemed above all to embody life in its most stubborn and persistent form. "They

cannot destroy the forest because it is young and full of life," said an Angolan partisan quoted by Nono in *A Floresta é jovem e cheja de vida* (1966). Thus, the forest, the theater of the life, struggle, and death of the *guerilleros*, a magical place harboring the beliefs of old Cuba, metaphorically evoke the nature of the emotional and political ties between Nono and Latin America.

After emerging from a creative and intellectual crisis in the late 1970s, Nono breathed new life into his composing process by drawing from new sources of inspiration, such as Hölderlin's poetry, Kabbalistic writings and a fertile friendship with philosopher Massimo Cacciari. Live, in-concert, real-time experiments at the *Südwestrundfunk* Heinrich-Strobel studio in Freiburg-im-Brisgau led to his last works, including the opera *Prometeo, Tragedia dell'ascolto* and a triptych based on an Antonio Machado poem and an inscription on the wall of a cloister in Toledo: "*Caminantes, no hay caminos, hay que caminar*." The first of these three pieces, *Caminantes… Ayacucho* (1986-1987), is another ode to Latin American revolutionaries, especially Shining Path in Peru. However, these late works no longer express the "infatuation" of the previous decades but explore the dialectical relationship between space, sound and musical territories sometimes perched on the edge of silence.

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NOTES

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5. Nono, *Écrits* (2007), 80-103.
6. Nono, *Écrits* (2007), 208-212.
7. Nono, *Écrits* (2007), 210.
8. Nono, *A Floresta é jovem e cheja de vida, in Voices of Protest*, ensemble Vox Nova, dir. Carol Thompson, Label Mode, 87, 7 64593 00872 9, 2000. 3'40-3'55. *Text from* Fidel Castro's speech on September 28, 1963. "*Sabemos que esta es una lucha entre pasado y futuro*" ("We know that this struggle is a struggle between past and future").
9. Nono, *A Floresta*, 36'09-36'29, anonymous worker in a Detroit factory quoted by Charles Denby, *Workers Battle Automation*, News and Letters, 1960. "If the struggle does not begin here in the coal mines in the auto steel electrical industries there shall be no freedom."
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20. Nono, *A Floresta,* 9'17-9'34. From Patrice Lumumba's last letter to his wife: "Do not mourn me".
21. Nono, *A Floresta,* 21'50-22'05. Remark by South Vietnamese fighter Nguyen van Troi. "*Chung no sap giet chong em*" ("They are going to shoot your companion").
22. Nono, *A Floresta*, 34'42-35'23, remark by Gabriel, Angolan partisan. "*Nao poden queimar a floresta pois ela é jovem e cheja de vida"* ("They cannot burn the forest because it is young and full of life").
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