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Exploded Memory review: Nils Andersson, the
journey of an international activist

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We already knew a large part of Nils Andersson's commitments from the book which was devoted to him in 2007, *Book and Militancy*. La Cité Editeur 1958-1967, published by Editions d'en bas. Here, the man expresses himself. And he has an elephant memory ... but also an extraordinarily rich archive: we know this for having worked on this historical material for a long time.

Nils Andersson was born in Lausanne in 1933, to a Swedish father and a mother of French origin. All his childhood and youth were spent in the then modernist building of the Métropole Bel-Air, which he described briefly, but with the correctness of tone which characterizes his evocations of the different places of life he knew during his wanderings. His father being a decorator, he will therefore be a decorator, with no particular taste for this profession. But he also frequents the Barbarian, a meeting place for all of Lausanne's trendy youth. His first engagement was not political, but poetic, through the review Pays du Lac, which brought together Gustave Roud, Jacques Chessex and other important French feathers. Thanks to Henri Rusconi, then head of Free Youth (the youth organization of the POP), he participated in the summer of 1953 in the Bucharest Youth Festival. It is the beginning of his police file, while his political conscience is formed. He will also live in 1957 the Moscow Festival, whose participants will be greeted by a crowd violently hostile to Zurich station: the crushing of the Budapest revolt in 1956 has warmed up Swiss anti-Communism. He participates in a review, which is clearly politically engaged, "Clartés". Among the

"left extremists" who write there, for example, we find Georges Haldas, Walter Weideli, Freddy Buache... In order not to lose his Swedish nationality, Andersson must in 1955 do his military service in the frosts of his passport country, including he doesn't even know the language. He tells this episode with humor. while his political conscience is being formed. He will also live in 1957 the Moscow Festival, whose participants will be greeted by a crowd violently hostile to the Zurich station: the crushing of the Budapest revolt in 1956 has warmed up Swiss anti-communism. He participates in a review, which is clearly politically engaged, "Clartés". Among the "left extremists" who write there, for example, are Georges Haldas, Walter Weideli, Freddy Buache ... In order not to lose his Swedish nationality, Andersson must in 1955 do his military service in the frosts of his passport country, including he doesn't even know the language. He tells this episode with humor. while his political conscience is being formed. He will also live in 1957 the Moscow Festival, whose participants will be greeted by a crowd violently hostile to Zurich station: the crushing of the Budapest revolt in 1956 has warmed up Swiss anti-Communism. He participates in a review, which is clearly politically engaged, "Clartés". Among the "left extremists" who write there, for example, we find Georges Haldas, Walter Weideli, Freddy Buache... In order not to lose his Swedish nationality, Andersson must in 1955 do his military service in the frosts of his passport country, including he doesn't even know the language. He tells this episode with humor. The crushing of the Budapest revolt in 1956 blanketed Swiss anti-communism. He participates in a review, which is clearly politically engaged, "Clartés". Among the "left extremists" who write there, for example, we find Georges Haldas, Walter Weideli, Freddy Buache... In order not to lose his Swedish nationality, Andersson must in 1955 do his military service in the frosts of his passport country, including he doesn't even know the language. He tells this episode with humor. the crushing of the Budapest revolt in 1956 blanketed Swiss anti-communism. He participates in a review, which is clearly politically engaged, "Clartés". Among the "left extremists" who write there, for example, are Georges Haldas, Walter Weideli, Freddy Buache ... In order not to lose his Swedish nationality, Andersson must in 1955 do his military service in the frosts of his passport country, including he doesn't even know the language. He tells this episode with humor. Andersson had to do his military service in 1955 in the cold weather of his passport country, whose language he did not even know. He tells this episode with humor. Andersson had to do his military service in 1955 in the cold weather of his passport country, whose language he did not even know. He tells this episode with humor.

Serious things began in 1956, with the creation of La Cité, first a distributor of French publishers, with the best of whom he developed close contacts: Jérôme Lindon from Editions de Minuit or François Maspero. If activist Andersson has been talked about a lot, we too often ignore the eminent connoisseur of French literature. But the urgency of the time was the war in Algeria and its procession of "disappearances" and torture. The Indochina war had already determined its "horror of the colonial order". In March 1958, Henri Alleg's Question, which has just been published, was seized by the French government. Nils Andersson takes a decisive step: he decides to publish this overwhelming and overwhelming testimony in Lausanne. The City becomes an editor, by force of circumstances and a moral commitment. She will also publish La Gangrène and La Pacification, where it is notably a question of a torturing parachutist lieutenant by the name of Jean-Marie Le Pen. Exploded memory also tells, in a very detailed way, the multiple forms of support in Switzerland for the Algerian liberation movement: publication of FLN leaflets, reception of Algerian fighters and French deserters, clandestine passage in France of copies of El Moudjahid, etc. . It is a whole network of resistance to the war in Algeria, but also of friendships, which is being set up. Without denying or obscuring his personal role, Nils Andersson highlights these many righteous men whose names were Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Father Davezies, Francis Jeanson, Henri Cornaz, among many others that we cannot all mention here. where it is notably a question of a lieutenant paratrooper torturer of the name of Jean-Marie Le Pen. Exploded memory also recounts, in great detail, the multiple forms of support in Switzerland for the Algerian liberation movement: publication of FLN leaflets, reception of Algerian fighters and French deserters, clandestine passage in France of copies of El Moudjahid, etc. . It is a whole network of resistance to the war in Algeria, but also of friendships, which is being set up. Without denying or obscuring his personal role, Nils Andersson highlights these many righteous men whose names were Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Father Davezies, Francis Jeanson, Henri Cornaz, among many others that we cannot all mention here. where it is notably a question of a lieutenant paratrooper torturer of the name of Jean-Marie Le Pen. Exploded memory also tells, in a very detailed way, the multiple forms of support in Switzerland for the Algerian liberation movement: publication of FLN leaflets, reception of Algerian fighters and French deserters, clandestine passage in France of copies of El Moudjahid, etc. . It is a whole network of resistance to the war in Algeria, but also of friendships, which is being set up. Without denying or obscuring his personal role, Nils Andersson highlights these many righteous men whose names were Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Father Davezies, Francis Jeanson, Henri Cornaz, among many others that we cannot all mention here. the multiple forms of support in Switzerland for the

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La Cité Editeur also publishes plays with political and social content, such as *Le Procès de la sow* by Henri Debluë, *Le soleil et la mort de Bernard Liège*, which recounts the assassination in Athens of deputy Gregorios Lambrakis (this will be the subject of the film *Z* by Costa-Gavras), or *Le Banquier sans visage* by Walter Weideli, devoted to Jacques Necker, which will raise an uproar in Geneva and indirectly provoke the creation of the Vigilants party.

Militant actions will henceforth succeed in the life of Nils Andersson. He is a member of the Partisans editorial board, where we find, among others, writings by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, Pablo Neruda, Togliatti, Giap and Mao Zedong. Then it's African Revolution, launched by the sulphurous Jacques Vergès, who goes on with Revolution, Africa, Latin America, Asia in the title of which we recognize the spirit of Che's slogans. Andersson resolutely engages in third worldism and internationalism. The Sino-Soviet split is a real break in the world communist movement. However, according to the author, the writings containing the Chinese positions are

systematically ostracized by the orthodox communist parties. No debate of ideas is possible. This is what leads La Cité to publish them. It is also clear that Andersson is on the side of the Maoist theses and not that of Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence", where he sees a sort of sell-off of the Leninist heritage and an abandonment of support for the liberation movements. The reader is not obliged to share his convictions, which lead him to create a "Marxist-Leninist" organization. In our country, it is the Lenin Center, which will become the Organization of Communists of Switzerland (OCS), which has the newspaper Octobre, but which will remain fairly confidential.

All this, as well as anti-Franco or pro-Jura positions, provides a good pretext for the Federal Council to get rid of the "Swedish" Andersson! In enthralling pages, this one recounts the multiple reasons and the undersides of his expulsion, which occurred in 1967, despite many supporters, including personalities who do not share his political convictions.

Where to go? The couple Andersson answers a call from Albania. Nils is primarily attached to Radio Tirana. It also has the task of reviewing the drafting of ideological and political publications. The pages he devotes to his four-year stay in this country are undoubtedly the most original and "human" of the book. Without idealizing the Enver Hoxha diet, the author-witness breaks a certain number of prejudices. He insists that "for the Albanians the national question is fundamental". This is due to their history made of struggles against successive occupiers, Ottoman, Italian, German. This fierce desire for independence, this spirit of resistance of "Lilliput facing the Goliaths" explains for example the alignment of forts, so mocked, on their beaches. Andersson also highlights a certain number of successes of this much-maligned regime: the emancipation of women, literacy, the birth of an intellectual and artistic elite, in a country which in 1944 came out of the Middle Ages and where 90% of the girls were illiterate! By the way, he launched a point against the great author Ismail Kadare who, protected by Enver Hoxha, succeeded after the fall of communism in posing as a political opponent. "This people and this country that I loved so much" is the title of one of the chapters. Indeed, all this part of his memories devoted to Albania shows great empathy. We will read with great interest his notations of an "ethnographic" character on this isolated and unrecognized country: customs, food, social relationships, etc.

For family reasons linked to the education of their children, the Andersson couple decided in 1972 to leave Albania and settled in Sweden. In the old university town of

Uppsala, Nils created the bookshop Au Quartier latin, which will play an important role in the dissemination of French culture. Still prohibited from entering France, he nevertheless received the Academic Palms from it! Even if he joined the Communist Party of Sweden (SKP), he was attentive to the development of social democracy, which had brought so much to the working classes on the social level and created a real spirit of equality, the famous jämlighet. He was deeply touched by the assassination in 1986 of Olof Palme, who embodied the most noble of Sweden: internationalism, cosmopolitanism, active neutrality, opposition to the Vietnam War. In 1991, Nils Andersson left Sweden and settled in Paris. Even as he advances in age, he continues to be a "rebellious", an active activist and engaged in various organizations, in particular Attac and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, multiplying symposia, missions abroad, testimonies and writings. He puts an end to his memories with this beautiful sentence: "Yes, it's always a nice word Comrade!"

Nils Andersson, Exploded Memory. From decolonization to the decline of the West. Preface by Gérard Chaliand, Lausanne, Ed. D'en bas, 2016, 544 p.

michelle

I advise you to watch this RTS document on Nils Anderson:

<http://www.rts.ch/archives/tv/information/3466612-nils-andersson.html>

it reveals a humanist soul.