

# Marc Émile Tomsin

## By Hugues Lenoir<sup>1</sup>

Born on 15 June 1950 in Paris (XXth arrondissement), died on 8 June 2021 in Crete (Greece); coordinator [and web administrator] of the *Comité de solidarité avec les peuples du Chiapas en lutte* (CSPCL), CGT<sup>2</sup> militant, proofreader.

He lived in Paris (XIXth arrondissement) until 1974, then in Poitiers from the fall of 1974 to the summer of 1976, in Toulouse until the spring of 1977 and in Barcelona until the fall of 1979, when he returned to Paris. He was the son of Jacques Tomsin, born in Paris (20 September 1922 – 9 July 1970), and Claudine Labadie, born on 9 October 1926 in Bayonne. His father was a teacher of classical literature at a secondary school until 1965, when he became a teaching assistant at the University of Poitiers. He participated in a libertarian movement after the war and remained an anarchist at heart, belonging to SNES and then SNESup,<sup>3</sup> and generally voting for PSU<sup>4</sup> candidates. His mother was a nurse at the Public Assistance Hospital in Paris, was on the Left politically and had libertarian sympathies during the demonstrations of May 1968.

From 1993 on, Marc Tomsin lived with Eva Ruschmann, a German national from Saarland, born on 13 September 1963 in Neunkirchen, a translator and later a proofreader, a member of the Proofreaders' Union since 1993.

Marc pursued his secondary education at the lycée Voltaire in Paris (majoring in philosophy, 1969). In 1974, he enrolled in the Philosophy Department of the University of Paris, from which he was expelled following an active boycott of examinations during the summer of 1976, which took place in the context of a practical questioning of the university and its role in society. After reenrolling at the University of Toulouse in 1976, he finally obtained a Bachelor's Degree in philosophy.

At the lycée Voltaire, in the fall of 1967, he undertook his first political engagements, which were influenced by the Provos (Amsterdam, 1966), the *Comité Vietnam national* (CVN), and the *Comités d'action lycéens* (1968). He joined the *Jeunesse anarchiste communiste* (JAC) in January 1968 and participated actively in the May-June 1968 movement (assemblies, demonstrations, riots), often in the company of Guil Teitler, a companion from Voltaire, and Madeleine Mallet (daughter of Serge

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<sup>1</sup> From the *Dictionnaire des anarchistes*. First posted: 13 April 2014; most recent update: 10 June 2021. <https://maitron.fr/spip.php?article155092>. Translated by NOT BORED! 12 June 2021. All footnotes and [bracketed remarks] by the translator.

<sup>2</sup> The *Confédération Générale du Travail* (General Confederation of Labor).

<sup>3</sup> The *Syndicat national des enseignants de second degré* (National Union of Secondary Education) and the *Syndicat national de l'enseignement supérieur* (National Union of Higher Education), respectively.

<sup>4</sup> The *Parti Socialiste Unifié* (Unified Socialist Party).

Mallet, the founder of the PSU). Raoul Vaneigem's *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations*<sup>5</sup> was major influence on Marc.

Between the fall of 1968 and 1971, he participated in the *Comité d'action place des Fêtes*, coming up with a concept of self-management founded on assemblies and total horizontality (no leaders or administrators). When the short-lived JAC came to an end in 1969, he joined the *Informations correspondance ouvrières* (ICO) network. He became friends with Christian Lagant (*Noir et Rouge*), a proofreader whose critical anarchism was also a powerful influence. At the time, Marc worked as a warehouse clerk for the NMPP<sup>6</sup> (1971-1972) and as a delivery driver for *Le Monde* in 1973, in the company of Germinal Clemente, a courier, with whom he started a conspiratorial friendship that later blossomed in Barcelona in 1977.

The destruction of the Place des Fêtes neighborhood and the end of the ICO (1973) caused Marc to leave for Poitiers, then Toulouse, all the while participating in the production of the Parisian journal *La Lanterne noire* (1974-1977, during which time he first started using the pseudonym Béliat) and the *IRL (revue libertaire lyonnaise)*. In the fall of 1976 he met Maria Mombiola, who, in Toulouse, was drawing attention to the experiments of the Aragon collectives [of the 1930s]. The paths of Germinal and Maria drew Marc to Barcelona and the *Journées libertaires internationales* (July 1977), where he forged an unbreakable friendship with Diego Camacho (aka Abel Paz). In Barcelona, along with Quim Sirera and Santi Soler (ex-MIL),<sup>7</sup> he participated in the Etcetera collective and engaged in long discussions with Xavier Garriga Paituvi (also ex-MIL).

Upon his return to Paris in the fall of 1979, he was initiated into proofreading by Georges Rubel and joined the CGT proofreaders' union. He worked for three years in labor-related print shops, at the *Encyclopædia Universalis*, and then for the daily press (*L'Humanité*, 1987-1999, and *Le Monde*, 1999-2006). He was a member of the Union Committee – the annually elected leadership of the Proofreaders' Union – for seven years, between 1992 and 2001; he was in charge of international solidarity and [job] placement (he was Secretary of Placement in 2001).

In 1985, along with Angèle Soyaux – whom he knew from the ICO back in 1970 – he founded éditions Ludd, which, until its dissolution in 1998, published texts by Kraus, Panizza, Wedekind, Dagerman and Vaneigem.<sup>8</sup>

Ties to Mexico led Marc to participate in the foundation of the *Comité de solidarité avec les peuples du Chiapas en lutte* (CSPCL) in January 1995. A constructive agreement and solid friendship developed in the collective between Marc and Mexican members Raúl Ornelas Bernal and Jorge Hernandez. In 1996, Marc participated in the European Meeting for Humanity and Against Neo-liberalism, held in Berlin in May, and the Intercontinental Meeting in Chiapas (July). Ten trips to Mexico between 1996 and

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<sup>5</sup> For Vaneigem's statement about Tomsin's death:

<http://www.notbored.org/RV-tomsin.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> The *Nouvelles Messageries de la presse parisienne* (New Distribution Company of the Parisian Press).

<sup>7</sup> The *Movimiento Ibérico de Liberación* (Iberian Liberation Movement), a Catalan separatist group active between 1971 and 1973, based in Barcelona, Spain, and Toulouse, France.

<sup>8</sup> Karl Kraus, Oskar Panizza, Frank Wedekind, Stig Dagerman and Raoul Vaneigem.

2006 consolidated his solidarity with the Zapatista villages in Chiapas. He conducted frequent interventions in France and Belgium concerning the situations in Mexico (Chiapas and Oaxaca). In 2007, in Ménilmontant, he founded éditions Rue des Cascades,<sup>9</sup> whose “*Les livres de la jungle*” collection was dedicated to the indigenous peoples of Mexico. In 1997, Marianne Palmiéri made a 28-minute-long documentary about Marc’s libertarian journey titled *Anarchiste* (G.H. Films).

Upon moving to Greece, he settled in the Exarchia neighborhood [in Athens] around 2017. He died in Crete on 8 June 2021 following a serious accident.

#### Works:

Articles for *La Lanterne noire*: “De la grève sauvage à l’autogestion généralisée,”<sup>10</sup> #1, July 1974; “Charles Fourier et les détours de l’utopie,” #4, December 1975; and “Efficacité et stratégie . . . à la Lanterne!” (letter declaring his break with the group), #8, April 1977.

Spanish and French translations of the interview *Die Unbeugsamen von der Spree* (Ralf Reinders, Fritz Teufel, Gerald Klöpffer and Ronald Fritsch, all of whom were participants in the June 2d Movement),<sup>11</sup> published simultaneously in Barcelona by *Ajo blanco* and in Paris by *Les Temps modernes*, # 396-397, July-August 1979.

Articles for *Cantonade* (the bulletin of the CGT Union of Proofreaders): “Stig Dagerman, un escritor anarquista,” published in 1997 by Etcetera, in Barcelona, as an appendix to “Nuestra necesidad de consuelo es insaciable” (reprinted in 2007 by Pepitas de calabaza, in Logroño, Spain).

Response to an inquiry by *Chiapas*, “¿Cómo ve Europa a los zapatistas?” *Chiapas* # 4, June 1997, UNAM,<sup>12</sup> Mexico; in French in *Les Temps maudits*, # 1, June 1997, Paris.

Articles in *Le Monde libertaire*: “L’expérience zapatiste du soulèvement des montagnes,” and “Par les sentiers de la création et de la rébellion,” hors-série # 21, July-August 2002 ; “Les barricades ferment les rues et ouvrent le chemin,” hors-série # 31, December 2006 - January 2007; and “Le début d’un combat pour l’autonomie individuelle et collective,” hors-série # 34, May-June 2008.

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<sup>9</sup> Website: [https://www.rue-des-livres.com/editeurs/633/rue\\_des\\_cascades.html/](https://www.rue-des-livres.com/editeurs/633/rue_des_cascades.html/)

<sup>10</sup> Title of a work by Raoul Vaneigem that was published in 1974.

<sup>11</sup> A violent far-left organization active in West Berlin between 1972 and 1980.

<sup>12</sup> The *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (Autonomous National University of Mexico).