

RG: Mr. Piaget, I will start by asking you for your date and place of birth, please

CP: So I was born on July 23, 1928 in Besançon. Some three hundred meters from here

RG: What about your family of origin?

CP: My father was from Switzerland. He studied watchmaking in Neuchâtel. And he is from a small country near the border, called Les Verrières. And so, I don't know why he came to Besançon. I don't know. In any case, my grandfather and my father came to Besançon. Here. But i don't know why

RG: But were they Swiss?

CP: They were still Swiss. He kept Swiss nationality until his death

RG: And your mother?

CP: My mother was French and my faith, when I was born she left and I haven't heard from her again. So I had dual nationality, Swiss and French, but from the moment we did our military service we were, we only kept French nationality. That's what I did

RG: And can you tell me about your childhood?

CP: Well, I was in a poor part of the city, the Battant district. And my father was a watchmaker, which means he worked at home to repair watches. He had his workbench, his tools, his little machines. And I was rather abandoned, all alone. My father, unfortunately he didn't have much time to take care of me. And I started in the gangs, the gangs of a little thug, of the neighborhood, of the Battant neighborhood. I also believe that if - my father died, so in 1943, and he had organized the follow-up, in the event of death I had to go to a

family of Italians, of Italian origin, from Besançon - I believe that It saved me a bit, because if I had stayed at Battant, I would probably have ended badly. My friends around me, there are several that ended badly. So in the, from thefts, all kinds of incivility, well there were real problems for them, for others, afterwards. I was out of that environment and I came to live almost at the start of the campaign, some five hundred meters from here. And maybe that's what brought me back to another path

RG: In an Italian family?

CP: Very religious Italian family, so who... The father was a mason, the mother at home, there you have it. With three children. Three children, and so I was coming, the fourth

RG: And so you lived the occupation here, the war and the Occupation?

CP: Of course, of course, yes yes. Until the Liberation in September '44. So I took the road to the Technical School, of mechanics, so I did three kilometers, four kilometers! I did four kilometers four times a day to go to school, go out for lunch and eat with the new parents, and go back to school, etc. Here. So I did three years of technical school

RG: What kind of training was it?

CP: So it was training so what is called CAP, that is to say the Professional Aptitude Certificate. And then, a little higher, an industrial teaching certificate. It was a little pompous, but let's say we had the basics, the theoretical and practical bases of mechanics. Point. It went no further than that anyway

RG: So that was until what age?

CP: So there I went out he was, I was seventeen and a few, seventeen and a half, I don't know anymore.

RG: And in the meantime you say that your family was practicing Catholic?

CP: Yes

RG: Did you also practice?

CP: Me no. No, I was... My father was a Protestant but did not practice. So he gave me - at the time it was like that - I had a godmother who, who was a neighbor, who took care of me and who enrolled me in catechism, etc. This is how I followed the Catholic journey. But otherwise, I was not really prepared for this by my father

RG: Okay. But later did you discover Catholic Action?

CP: Yes, so later .. As I reflect, I believe that I never really, I never really entered Christianity, Catholicism. On the other hand, all the social gospels, all that, all that I had learned from all that interested me a lot. I was interested in that: the concern for justice, the concern for fraternity, and finally good on the bottom of religion much less

RG: Okay. So you started to work towards ...

CP: So yes, I was almost eighteen, so in Lip. So the daughter of the family where I was who was the first, who was twenty years old, so came from this - maybe a little bit older, yes, no, she had a little bit more at that time - she was married and therefore her husband who became my brother-in-law worked at Lip and he said to me: 'For the moment they are hiring, if you want to come you can come, they are hiring'. So I went there and got hired. here

RG: So it was in ...

CP: In 1946

RG: And it started calmly at the beginning?

CP: Oh yes, I was enthusiastic. There is, let's say that when I was hired, I was told: 'Listen, we know the young people who come out of technical school well, they don't know how to work, they have the basics but they don't really know how to work. '. So I was offered to go into an improvement workshop that existed in the factory. You had to spend a little over a year in this workshop before being assigned to the workshops. So I agreed to do a year, a little over a year of development. Here. And it was very good. The boss, I didn't know him, but he had given instructions for us to have a small playground, which was not very far from the factory, for sports. Well, there was even a volleyball net, well, well. And then he had, also ordered that we have a certain number of hours of sport in the week. We went either to the swimming pool or to the stadium, well, well. There was at the same time the work and at the same time the concern of a life a little sporty. He even was up to pay us a week's vacation in the mountains

RG: Really? Not bad !

CP: Ah yes, it was really... I discovered the mountain I did not know at all what it was, and I was enthusiastic. So there you are, he had us... it was a week in the Alps, it was very very good.

RG: Yeah, great. And you have, did you start as an OS or...?

CP: So I started, like OP1. So when we left school with certificates, etc., we had the title of professional first-level worker, that's it.

RG: Okay, and in mechanics what exactly were you doing?

CP: So there, at Lip... Because we had the basics of general mechanics, and at Lip we improved on precision mechanics, small volume. So precise, machined parts, whether on conventional machines - lathe, milling machine - and finished by grinding or adjustment, etc. We learned to make pieces that fit together prefiguring the tools, the tools that we would make in the workshops. We got a little into this way of working

RG: And boss Fred Lip, they say he was a bit special

CP: Well yes, but then, when I arrived, I didn't, at first we had no contact with the boss. We heard about him, yes, we heard things said. But anyway we are the only ones - we when I say we are the young people who were in this workshop - the only thing we heard about him was that he had given instructions for us to be treated that way. So that's all, we were rather, I remember - me and then others - we were rather confident. Confident in the employer, and we thought it was... And it was true that it was a modern factory for the time, which was at the cutting edge in terms of work. And all those who were in there all said: 'There really we learn to work, and we have an interesting job'

RG: But at times there were conflicts?

CP: So, yes, so everything went well, and I remember my brother-in-law saying to me: 'Do you want to unionize?'. Well, I said yes because he was there, but it wasn't really out of conviction. He told me that, so he was unionized, he had even been a permanent member of the CFTC at one point. So I joined a union but without conviction at all

RG: Was it still called the CFTC?

CP: It was called the CFTC at the time today has become the CFDT, and there is a part that remained CFTC and a part that became CFDT. So at the time the CFDT did not exist, it was the CFTC. So here I am I discovered the first time is when I went to soldier. So I did my year, a little over a year as a soldier. Then when I came back, just as the business was in - well, we can't talk about a crisis, but it was in - the expansion was stopped, they weren't hiring anymore. Well, okay, they're not hiring anymore, but we were already hired and the head of personnel receives us, there were seven, eight of us, and he said: 'We can't take you back'. 'But hey, wait, we were hired ...' 'Yes, but I remind you - and he released a text telling us so

- I remind you that compulsory military service is a breach of employment contract. ' It was like that at the time

RG: What year are we in?

CP: We are in 1949

RG: Ah ok already, yes

CP: Yes, because there was the school workshop, we started to work a little in the workshops, and I left as a soldier. So there he explained to us, because I did not know at all, that it was a breach of the employment contract and that there was no obligation for the employer to resume. Ah well then I was completely stunned, without saying anything. And then there is one, only one, a young one, in the group who spoke and then that said: 'I do not understand. You spent a lot of money to train us in this refresher workshop and today you tell us that you want more from us, you are losing your training job '. I was stunned to see this argument, this way he answered, while I was unable to say anything. And the chief of staff maintained but, he said, 'Look, we can... I will think, and I will write to you. And two weeks later, ten days later, we received a letter telling us that, after reflection, he was taking us back (Laughs from RG). So, it is not necessarily the person who intervened, perhaps there were changes in the program, but still it is that they took us back. But still, it left traces in my head, because, I didn't think there were things like that. There you go, so this is the first confrontation. after reflection, he took us back (laughs from RG). So, it is not necessarily the person who intervened, perhaps there were changes in the program, but still it is that they took us back. But still, it left traces in my head, because, I didn't think there were things like that. There you go, so this is the first confrontation. after reflection, he took us back (laughs from RG). So, it is not necessarily the person who intervened, perhaps there were changes in the program, but still it is that they took us back. But still, it left traces in my head, because, I didn't think there were things like that. There you go, so this is the first confrontation.

And then, a second confrontation, maybe a year later, so the person in charge of the mechanics who comes to see us saying to us - We were doing a lot of hours at the time, it was crazy! We managed to do seventy hours of work in the week, there were electricity restrictions, so we had to, the city was divided into pieces, we would go to work very early in the morning or very late at night to share a little electricity what. And so there were a lot of working hours, especially in mechanics where we were always waiting on tools. And at

one point, then, when I say seventy hours it wasn't all the time, but often there were, at least we were doing more than sixty hours. And at one point the chief of staff, the chief of mechanics said to us, 'Listen, there is a problem of profitability. We can no longer pay for overtime. If you want to do it, so above forty eight hours, you can continue to do it, we are moreover interested, but we no longer pay the supplements', the overtime that was paid.

I also remember that, I was rather among those who said beh too bad, we are going to go there, we are going to work for hours since they ask us to do them and then they can no longer pay them. And then there are others who reacted very strongly by saying: 'Well, it's incredible, all the struggle that there has been in relation to fatigue, paying overtime since 1936, and suddenly we would drop all that '. Besides, it wasn't legal, I don't know how they would have done it, but hey, they were working illegally. And finally, inside the workshops, there was a majority who voted to say no, we do not accept that. Well, beh, I know that I was on the side of those who would have liked to accept (laughs from RG and CP). But the arguments that were developed shook me, telling me yes, I didn't think either that there had been all that, all that was done. There you go, so it was the second event in my professional life.

And then, a third, a little later, all of a sudden, there is a withdrawal of a bonus. Because the salary consisted of a lot of bonuses. There was of course a base salary, but several bonuses were added to this base salary. And so, they remove one. And this bonus, it was a piece for us. On the other hand, the old ones had a base salary, the highly qualified professionals had a very, very high base salary. And then the bonus was something, but not as important as for us. And they didn't say anything. And we reacted. So there I reacted with it and we said we don't accept that, and as there was no answer, we stopped working, and we stayed near our machines without moving

RG: So it was you and more of the young people?

CP: Yes we were one... twelve, fourteen, a good dozen, maybe a little more

RG: And in what year?

CP: So that was in 1950 or '51, I don't remember that exactly. And there we thought about it. We said no, things are in a hurry, there are plenty of tools that are in a hurry, there is

abuse, we do not understand why we are being suppressed, we are maintaining our position. And there I participated with another to energize the group, there were two of us to say: 'We have to make efforts on this'. And finally, the mechanical director asked for someone to come and see him, and finally we were thrown both, the coworker and then me and we were said: 'Beh go ahead since you have well ... '. And, we defended the song. It was not really our explanation that made things change, it just pressed a lot, there were a lot of tools that pressed, and thirteen, fourteen people who stop work, it was a piece, a weight in the balance. And there he told us that they were going back and giving the bonus back. So here we are, we were satisfied. And at that moment, maybe a month later, he came to the trade union official of the CFTC in Lip, who came to find me saying: 'Well here it is, I learned what happened ...' '. Finally in mechanics, because there were thirteen of us, fourteen in the workshop but there were others, young people too, who were in the other workshops, there was not just one mechanic workshop. And they too have benefited from the return of the premium. And there he said to me: 'Well, do you want to introduce yourself as a staff representative?' Because it was every year, there was an election. So I said straight away, 'no question, I want to have a professional career, I know that if I put myself in this it will be screwed up for my career, no, no, no, I don't want' (Laughs from RG). So he said to me: 'Well at least you could agree to help us, there is your brother-in-law who is still with us at the CFTC, you could at least, we would put you at the bottom of the list, that way you don't risk being elected, and then ... There you go, at least you will have helped us'. Well finally I said yes. And in fact, I did not know at all that we had the right, in this kind of election, to cross out names and there were names crossed out and I found myself elected (Laughs from RG)! I was less barred than the others. So I was really not happy, I explained again, There are some who don't believe me, but it's true I was not happy, I thought it was going to break my thing. Because my dream was to become a highly qualified professional, that's all

RG: How about becoming a boss yourself?

CP: Oh no. No, no, I wasn't thinking about that at all, I was thinking of becoming... Because I admired the highly qualified very much. They really were, they had a helping hand, a capacity for work, precision and all. So I said to myself if ever one day I arrived like them, I would be really proud of myself, well, well. And there, good, elected, I can still not, before saying you annoy me, I resign or I do not know what, I went to see. Here. A first meeting, so ... Are you okay?

RG: Yes, it's going very well, yes.

CP: And there I went to see and found myself with two or three young and elected CGTs, and then two or three CFDT... CFTC elected too, there was a renewal of some young people.



And there we cut our teeth, we listened to what was being said. And it was more of a crying office. Those who came there were to complain about everything that was wrong in the workshops, but by saying that nothing could be done. There were in the strikes at the time, national or regional, it was going out, fifty people out of a thousand in Lip. Fifty of them were coming out, that's all. The boss had really succeeded in dealing with the distribution of housing - he was the one who owned the housing - the bonuses, the hiring of the children of the family, there was coal ... Finally,

RG: Is it paternalism?

CP: Yes. Every Friday, not every Friday but every other Friday, he spoke, all the workshops and offices were equipped with loudspeakers, and he spoke, on Friday evening from time to time, to give explanations, on the bonuses, on salaries, on the progress of the company, etc. He had a newspaper which was distributed to everyone, which also gave a lot of information, even information that you could not find in other newspapers, on life in the United States or in Europe, because it traveled a lot

RG: What was this newspaper called?

CP : Horizons Nouveaux. Donc, de même qu'il avait une grande ardoise devant le gardiennage, et là dedans il y avait des résultats sportifs, ils écrivaient à la craie, le gardien était chargé d'écrire les résultats sportifs. Il y avait un certain nombre de choses qui faisait que l'entreprise était assez tributaire de ce patron et de tous ces cadres qui étaient là. Donc voilà un petit peu, c'est là que je me suis rendu compte plus précisément de tout ça. Là, en entendant, en écoutant tout ce qui se passait. Et, comme on avait le droit de circuler dans l'usine sous certaines conditions, moi j'ai commencé moi aussi à aller voir une personne aux ébauches, une autre personne qui avait demandé à voir un délégué. Et là j'ai vu – on avait jamais visité l'usine, jamais, on était cantonnés dans notre atelier, point, on n'avait pas le droit d'en sortir. Ou bien si, on pouvait aller jusque à l'atelier de presse pour essayer un outil, pour voir s'il fonctionnait bien, etc. Mais on devait rester, chacun devait rester dans son atelier, interdiction de se retrouver dans un couloir ou dans un bureau, ou dans un autre atelier qui n'était pas le sien.

And there, I saw, I realized what the factory was like. We were privileged, in tools and mechanics, because we had the possibility of circulating in the workshop by work, we used a machine there, then we went to another place to use another machine. So we could talk. Of course without exaggeration, but you could say a few words to colleagues and all that.

While when I returned to the sketches, to the factory, so it was all women on the machines, standing, on machines to make the parts, with the oil projections, with the noise, the noise that had there -in! The noise ! And then the adjusters who shouted, in relation to such bad position of part. And then all that, oh la la! There I realized that I was seeing the factory through my own prism, which was not too bad. But elsewhere, it was not the same. I said to myself good beh it's the OS, the workers who have no professional knowledge, but the watchmaking professionals, it must be something else. And when I went there, it was the same. It was not at all the mechanics, all the professionals were online on each his little workbench, one behind the other. And then the stage was behind them behind their backs with the chief overseeing the entire line of professionals who were working. And it was total silence in these workshops. And when I came to see the chief there, who was on his platform, to talk to him about a bonus, because I was told, 'Good beh t' you're a bit of a bonus specialist, go and see when there are people who are surprised and who don't understand a bonus story. So I went to see him for that, to ask him for information on the watchmaking premium. And he wasn't listening to me at all. He wasn't listening! He was there, and I was like, 'What's wrong with him?' He was there watching. And at one point, he got up without paying attention to me, he went around the workshop, he came back and he said to me: 'Ah, I heard, I believed hear a whisper '. He heard something like a background, the sound of voices. I hadn't even heard it, not at all! And it was unbearable for him. Unbearable to hear some kind of background noise in there, probably one or two people must have been talking a little, in low voices. And so he took care of me to give me information about the bounty, etc.

So this tour of the factory showed me that the factory was not what I believed, it was not at all what I believed. Here. And from there, there was a monthly meeting of the staff representatives with the management and there it was dismal. We were ridiculed for our questions, our requests, we had poorly prepared, the head of staff was very well in the game, he showed us a little that it was really zero our demands, etc. And at one point, it wasn't the first reunion but maybe the second, and now Fred Lip shows up in the reunion. With fury, angry! There had been a leaflet distributed at the level of the CGT which accused the level of wages, well I remember more exactly the terms that were used in the leaflet, but that had put in a black anger! He arrived, I had him, we had seen him once or twice, we never saw him, and there I saw someone who was angry, who could not control himself, who was screaming, and who was The chief delegate of the CGT is attacked, calling her all names, really, it was awful, awful! And we were completely collapsed in our place, without daring to say a word! Really terrified about that. And then he left, slamming the door. And the meeting resumed, but we couldn't even talk anymore after a demonstration like that. And there, we saw, one: that we were ridiculous, two: that the boss was, despised us, in the sense that for him we were nothing at all. And then the vision for this business which was not what I thought. And there, I remember, we tried to talk. We had hours when we could see each other. We tried to talk and said, 'Look, we're giving up! Either we give up, or we do it seriously. What are we in there? ' And there are several young people who held this language there: 'But yes it is, we are not going to continue like that', 'So what can we do? Do we do something first? ' And there yes there was a decision saying yes we must try to do something. If we do something, what can we do? As long as there are not the people of Lip

who will be mobilized, will take each other, and that it is indeed their demands, well it is not even the trouble to continue to see the direction. Listen, we're giving up! Either we give up, or we do it seriously. What are we in there? ' And there are several young people who held this language there: 'But yes it is, we are not going to continue like that', 'So what can we do? Do we do something first? ' And there yes there was a decision saying yes we must try to do something. If we do something, what can we do? As long as there are not the people of Lip who will be mobilized, will take each other, and that it is indeed their demands, well it is not even the trouble to continue to see the direction. Listen, we're giving up! Either we give up, or we do it seriously. What are we in there? ' And there are several young people who held this language there: 'But yes it is, we are not going to continue like that', 'So what can we do? Do we do something first? ' And there yes there was a decision saying yes we must try to do something. If we do something, what can we do? As long as there are not the people of Lip who will be mobilized, will take each other, and that it is indeed their demands, well it is not even the trouble to continue to see the direction. we're not going to continue like this ', ' So what can we do? Do we do something first? ' And there yes there was a decision saying yes we must try to do something. If we do something, what can we do? As long as there are not the people of Lip who will be mobilized, will take each other, and that it is indeed their demands, well it is not even the trouble to continue to see the direction. we're not going to continue like this ', ' So what can we do? Do we do something first? ' And there yes there was a decision saying yes we must try to do something. If we do something, what can we do? As long as there are not the people of Lip who will be mobilized, will take each other, and that it is indeed their demands, well it is not even the trouble to continue to see the direction.

So there, we started to think, and there is one who launched an idea, because it had been taken up in mechanics. So what was this idea? Well, when we arrived in the workshops, all the young people from the improvement workshop, when we arrived in the workshops, oh surprise! There was no question of asking the professionals, the highly qualified, for information. They sent us out for a walk. And we would try to go and see how they were doing, to make a success of a play, and when we approached them, they would ask us to leave, or even they would put a large white cloth on their helmets, so that we wouldn't way (RG laughs). And there we had been, because we didn't have that state of mind. We understood later that they were defending their fat, their salary. Because we were competition. And they had such an aura, that in the square, they could move from one factory to another, there was a bidding up between the bosses to have these highly qualified who were nevertheless quite rare at the time. And so, they saw us as competition. And then we said: 'But then we will never get there, it's so difficult, and there is so much to learn that we will never get there!' And there was one who said: 'Well I suggest that we each write down in a small notebook all the difficulties we have, why we failed and then why we succeeded. And we pass the notebook every week, so that it circulates'. And he even added saying: ' Logically we should go eight or ten times faster, at least, all together, than one alone. And we took that idea back. It was not me who had this idea, but we took it up by saying we have to take a notebook as we used to do in mechanics and that we go wherever the employees when there is the break - employees are used to meeting during the break, in groups, in the corridors or outside, etc. And we are all responsible for going to

these groups. To listen. To listen only, we have nothing to say, but we listen. And we write it down on the notebook. They talk about the rain, the good weather, what they are going to do on Sunday, but they also talk about what is happening in their workshop, in their offices, and they say a little about what is wrong. Note all that, and let's take it all together, in the union room. And let's try to build concrete leaflets, which correspond to what people are going through and what they are saying. Here it was the start of a production of, here it is, I think that's how it happened

RG: And have you tried to increase union participation?

CP: Not really. There were few union members. As we have said, it is necessary that ... There was an extraordinary individualism! If we want people to believe in the collective, they have to have proof. But like that, there is no proof. So there were a few adherents anyway. And there we said we are unable to make believe in the collective, which has the credibility of the collective. We are incapable of it. We are unable to strike, we are unable to come forward. So the first thing we have to do is now that we know everything that goes on in the workshops, etc., the offices, we have to try to see, to get help from the community. law. Are there things that Fred Lip does not respect, in general there always are. And we started to peel, to watch. The payrolls were incredibly complex! Most people didn't understand the payroll, there was a slice of bonuses, of this, of that. And we went to train, at the local CFTC union. And we ended up finding something out, looking at all those payslips, Fred Lip wasn't paying overtime legally (RG laughs). It did not include, but it was not the only one! In many other companies they did not include production bonuses in the calculation of overtime. So we said, 'we're fine, we have to be sure'. We said, 'all information must be verified, controlled'. And we went to train, at the local CFTC union. And we ended up finding something out, looking at all those payslips, Fred Lip wasn't paying overtime legally (RG laughs). It did not include, but it was not the only one! In many other companies they did not include production bonuses in the calculation of overtime. So we said, 'we're fine, we have to be sure'. We said, 'all information must be verified, controlled'. And we went to train, at the local CFTC union. And we ended up finding something out, looking at all those payslips, Fred Lip wasn't paying overtime legally (RG laughs). It did not include, but it was not the only one! In many other companies they did not include production bonuses in the calculation of overtime. So we said, 'we're fine, we have to be sure'. We said, 'all information must be verified, controlled'. other companies did not include the production bonuses in the calculation of the overtime hours. So we said, 'we're fine, we have to be sure'. We said, 'all information must be verified, controlled'. other companies did not include the production bonuses in the calculation of the overtime hours. So we said, 'we're fine, we have to be sure'. We said, 'all information must be verified, controlled'.

So we checked, yes we are of course. We went to see at the level of, at the local union, the court of cassation rulings, the justice system, how it had ruled. And when we were sure of

ourselves, we distributed a leaflet demanding a year of recall, on everything. And there, well I remember, a lot of people laughed at us: 'Oh la la... You attack Fred Lip, you are kidding!' and all that. And finally, in front of the departmental direction of the work, in front of the judgments of court of justice, Fred Lip was obliged to bow, because, indeed, everything was true. And there it was a thunderclap in the factory. Because, but it was not the collective that Lip had made to bow, it was a collective work of delegates, union, etc. And there people were absolutely amazed that Fred Lip bowed,

The second we tried to think, and there is one who had found an idea. There was the secret of salaries. Everyone hid their pay, their payroll, (laughs from RG) convinced that they were paid more than the others, we made them understand that it was... And we distributed, in the form of leaflets, a certain number pay slips that mechanics had agreed to give us by crossing out names, etc. We distributed that, it was a tidal wave. Because the people who were - an individual tidal wave, not at all collective! - they were so imbued with the idea that they were favored, and when they saw... 'But say, but, how?' They went to see the chef: 'But you told me that I was well graded, well paid, look! There are other OP1s who have significantly more than me, what is this story ?' (RG laughs). The OP2, the OP3 alike. And there, there was such a stir in the company, that the management was forced to start giving some rules in the salaries, saying: 'Beh here are the mini and then here are the maxi'. They started to give mini and then maxi. And little by little, we managed to make the first salary scale, which we distributed to everyone. There you have it, the first one: you enter Lip, you have such and such a category, and well you have to situate yourself in there, between that and that. You are in watchmaking, you are... And that was something that contributed a lot to the credibility of the collective, that's it. There was such a stir in the company, that the management was forced to start giving some rules in the salaries, saying: 'Beh here are the mini and then here are the maxi'. They started to give mini and then maxi. And little by little, we managed to make the first salary scale, which we distributed to everyone. There you have it, the first one: you enter Lip, you have such and such a category, and well you have to situate yourself in there, between that and that. You are in watchmaking, you are... And that was something that contributed a lot to the credibility of the collective, that's it. There was such a stir in the company, that the management was forced to start giving some rules in the salaries, saying: 'Beh here are the mini and then here are the maxi'. They started to give mini and then maxi. And little by little, we managed to make the first salary scale, which we distributed to everyone. There you have it, the first one: you enter Lip, you have such and such a category, and well you have to situate yourself in there, between that and that. You are in watchmaking, you are... And that was something that contributed a lot to the credibility of the collective, that's it. And little by little, we managed to make the first salary scale, which we distributed to everyone. There you have it, the first one: you enter Lip, you have such and such a category, and well you have to situate yourself in there, between that and that. You are in watchmaking, you are... And that was something that contributed a lot to the credibility of the collective, that's it. And little by little, we managed to make the first salary scale, which we distributed to everyone. There you have it, the first one: you enter Lip, you have such and such a category, and well you have to situate yourself in there, between that and that. You are in watchmaking, you are... And that was something that contributed a lot to the credibility of the collective, that's it.

So there was that, there were the salaries, after what was there? There were other elements that arrived, and gradually, we started to have union members, and we started to have a force, but it took a long time, and we arrived in the mid-sixties, '65 to have sufficient force to start a walkout, a strike on an important problem. There you have it, but we had to wait for all that! It took years to build, that's what we sometimes explain, we built that but it took a long time. And we had a complete agreement between the CGT and the CFTC. Suddenly the chief of staff came to see us, the CFTC, saying, 'We are Christians too, so we are going to come to an agreement on the wage agreements. But we don't want to deal with the CGT'. Ah well we had said no. He had been completely surprised. 'We don't work that way'. And, immediately we went to tell the CGT, we said here: 'We have just seen the head of personnel and this is what he has just told us'. There was trust between us, we were one of the few companies in Besançon where there was that trust. So much so that the preparation meetings for the staff representatives and all that, we did them together, the brainstorming meetings on what to do, we did them together, and that was very new. In Besançon was new We just saw the head of personnel and that's what he just told us'. There was trust between us, we were one of the few companies in Besançon where there was that trust. So much so that the preparation meetings for the staff representatives and all that, we did them together, the brainstorming meetings on what to do, we did them together, and that was very new. In Besançon was new We just saw the head of personnel and that's what he just told us'. There was trust between us, we were one of the few companies in Besançon where there was that trust. So much so that the preparation meetings for the staff representatives and all that, we did them together, the brainstorming meetings on what to do, we did them together, and that was very new. In Besançon was new

RG: And when the union changed its name?

CP: So in '64, he changed his name, we all went to CFDT. At least in Lip, there are others who stayed with the CFTC, but in Lip we switched to the CFDT. here

RG: And, to advance a bit, how did you experience '68 in Lip?

CP: Yes, so there it was... It must also be said that, in the factory, we had our work. And the work required a lot. We had delegate hours, we had union hours, but we didn't take them all, we only took part of them. And we forced ourselves to see each other in the evening, after work. And we went from, some came here, we sometimes went to Roland Vittot's or someone else's, and we spent the whole evening there until midnight, between 8:30 p.m.

and midnight, to think: 'What' can we do to improve the collective spirit, to improve democracy? '. And so, we were finally close when May '68 arrived. We had really set up a lot of things, and there was a specific fight in Lip. Everywhere else there were pickets, to start the strike there were pickets, etc. And we don't. We asked the pickets that arrived to leave immediately. CGT, CFDT, saying: 'We, on the contrary, are distributing a leaflet to go home. So it's not about going out, it's about going back. ' 'But you're completely sick, what's going on, you don't want to get into the fight?' 'Yes, but not that way.' And everyone was summoned to the restaurant at eight in the morning to think. And we really did a very important democratic job. With micro-walkman, etc. And at one point, we said before voting, everyone must think properly, as a group by their affinities. And so we stopped the general assembly for three quarters of an hour. Everyone is distributed everywhere, in, outside and inside the restaurant, in small groups to think. What are we doing, where we are going, and how, and why, and on what basis. And when they came back, we voted by asking to respect those who abstained, those who would vote against, those who would vote yes. And so, that was one of the first ways of working collectively, on strike, democratically. And there, there were immediately notebooks of grievances, people started to say: 'Beh us in our office here is what is going and this is what is not'. So there were, all the notebooks of grievances everywhere, and then the strike committee, unionized or not, it is each sector designates or elects its representative no matter what it is. it is CFDT or CGT or that it is nothing at all. So that's how it started and we had a very important '68 at the factory. The management, we made an agreement with them, they stayed in the factory, we simply asked them not to act openly against the strike, and otherwise they could. And yes, we warned them that we would use the equipment a bit. Whether it is the copier, whether it is typewriters, etc. This is how it went we would use the material a little. Whether it is the copier, whether it is typewriters, etc. This is how it went we would use the material a little. Whether it is the copier, whether it is typewriters, etc. This is how it went

RG: How long did the strike last?

CP: So us, it only lasted two weeks. While elsewhere it lasted a lot. But at the end of the first week, we had an agreement with Fred Lip, we had signed an agreement that seemed correct to us. But we said we are not going back to work, we are waiting for everyone at the country level to get back to work. And so the majority of the country went back to work the following week. And there were terrible conflict lines, like at Peugeot, as elsewhere, there were conflict lines where it lasted another two weeks. But it was, there were the national Grenelles agreements, so we felt that we had obtained satisfaction. Nationally and in Lip. So other factories still had one, two, three weeks of conflict behind. This is how it happened. And we made a qualitative leap at the democratic and collective level, and at the community level, there we really made a leap. On the other hand, the vote was against the foreign presence, students, that's it. There was a vote, and there it is the CGT which largely won

RG: So there was no contact with the students?

CP: Yes, but outside. They didn't want them to come home, so we bowed. It was not yet ripe for them to return at the time. We had contacts, we tried to chat a bit with them and all that, but there you go. So here's how it went

RG: So when the question of layoffs came later, were you already well organized?

CP: Oh yes. There had been another fight, in 1970. Fred Lip understood that union strength had grown very strong. And he looked, they thought: 'How can we tear it down, this union force'. And they had found something pretty solid. They had imagined a restructuring, in the company, in which disappeared the workshop where was born, the large tool workshop where unionism was born a little, activists like Roland Vittot, Picard, Cunier, me and others . And so it was quite clever, but he had, he hadn't noticed that the strength now was so great, that everything had changed. Everything, the whole factory protested against this provision. But without going on strike, rather with a kind of civic disobedience. And so, it was so strong in this internal struggle that Ébauches-SA, which already had the majority of the shares, asked Lip to leave. And then he put, they put a man of their own. Here. So it also showed, there was not a strike. Well if there were a few small moments of strike, but very few, for months it was a confrontation of the whole, whether it was the offices, whether it was everywhere, it was really very solid. This is a bit of what there was whether it was the offices, whether it was everywhere, it was really very solid. This is a bit of what there was whether it was the offices, whether it was everywhere, it was really very solid. This is a bit of what there was

RG: So to arrive at the great conflict, what strikes me is that, well, we often say that the Lip are a working class aristocracy.

CP: Oh yeah, that's what they say

RG: And what do you think?



CP: Well there was a leaflet, there were leaflets from the Maoists in particular, from the far left, which effectively took up this idea by saying: 'It is not with Lip that we will do something in, in Besançon. But fortunately there are other factories, there it is a kind of aristocracy which will never leave anything. And then, during the conflict of '73, they redistributed a leaflet to apologize (laughs from RG) saying: 'We were wrong. Indeed, it was, it's not an aristocracy. So here's a little bit of how, so yes, we had a kind of, I don't know. Why ? Because, it was the watchmaking industry that wanted that. The people were well dressed, the watchmakers were good. We mechanics were a bit annoyed because, Fred Lip wanted to force us to put on a white blouse, so we said: 'Look, it's not possible! Are you not dreaming a little? It must be changed every day, every day, every day! We can't even keep it, even one day it will be... '. So finally, he had accepted blue coats, so, but everyone was trying to have something more clean than average. So in everything, everywhere. Fred Lip besides he had ideas sometimes which were really good. We thought it was completely crazy. He had come back from the United States saying: 'The mechanical workshops are not cheerful, this is all dark, it's ugly. You have to paint the machines in two colors: a very light color for the bottom, then a slightly more conspicuous color but, different for... ', he still has one of his fads. But when he did that it really changed everything

RG: Really?

CP: Ah! he was right, the workshop was completely changed, it gave a completely different note from the grayness of the workshops. So there you have it, so he could afford it because it was watchmaking, there weren't any quantities of shavings, etc. It was rather precision work. But it was, we thought it was still a crazy idea in fact no, it was not a bad idea. So there it was, it was a bit 'aristocracy' in quotes. here

RG: Yes. But in addition you were well organized.

CP: Oh yes, that yes. We had made a plan of the factory. We had, we had become attached, we could not find the plans of the factory, we had made one and had reproduced it in several copies. And each point of the factory, the work, the objective, was to have a correspondent. The factory was, swarming with workshops, offices, in each office we wanted to have someone, in each workshop, we wanted to have at least someone who is solid and then who gives, that's it. So we had a network, we had built a network. A strong network

RG: Okay. And the strike committee was part of that network or was it something else?

CP: No, it was something else. Once we got down to it, we started this fight, the idea we had developed at the CFDT was to say it's something other than '68. We hang on, we fight against a group: Ébauches-SA, which has eighteen factories, it is a multinational group. There are factories in Germany, France and Switzerland of course. And so, how to fight against this company? If everyone does not set off, at the level of the head, at the level of the arms, well we are lost. We really do not see how we can develop a sufficient balance of power. And so the idea is, we are about fifteen CFDT delegates, there are about fifteen CGT delegates, well if we are the only one thinking and making proposals, that will not work. There must be, many other places must develop, we had not imagined an action committee, no. It doesn't matter what it will be called, but there have to be groups that start, autonomously, to think outside of us and with us. And they decided to call it action committee, they started like that. And it was beautiful, it was the idea that was interesting, whether it's called an action committee or whatever, that there is one, two, three, four or five, that's is even better! Provided that there are places for reflection, proposal and action. So that was what mattered to us. That worked well autonomous, to think outside of us and with us. And they decided to call it action committee, they started like that. And it was beautiful, it was the idea that was interesting, whether it's called an action committee or whatever, that there is one, two, three, four or five, that's is even better! Provided that there are places for reflection, proposal and action. So that was what mattered to us. That worked well autonomous, to think outside of us and with us. And they decided to call it action committee, they started like that. And it was beautiful, it was the idea that was interesting, whether it's called an action committee or whatever, that there is one, two, three, four or five, that's is even better! Provided that there are places for reflection, proposal and action. So that was what mattered to us. That worked well there are places of reflection, proposal and action. So that was what mattered to us. That worked well there are places of reflection, proposal and action. So that was what mattered to us. That worked well

RG: But the people who were there at the Action Committee were new people from the point of view of activism?

CP: There you go. There were, there were a few, like Raguénès and all that, who had already started a little, or Margéun (?) That had already started a little, or Burtz. But most, and yes it was, they didn't really feel comfortable around us. We had formed a sort of group, we saw each other frequently in the evening, so we were homogeneous, quite solid, very solid on information, on our knowledge and everything. And there are some who did not feel very comfortable, and they were very happy to find themselves in less homogeneous, less formalized groups, and they felt more at ease, more relaxed in there than with us. With us there was a kind of fear, of not being up to it, or sometimes of getting out of things that weren't, that's it. So that yes, it did exist, we did not understand that we were gradually

isolating ourselves in our training. By self-training, we isolated ourselves little by little from the mass. Anyway, a way of speaking what. So that was excellent, excellent! And there should have been others, that there was not just one action committee! (CP laughs)

RG: Okay. But you had, there were also commissions that were important, right?

CP: So, we understood that the General Assembly was the place where we all had to feel the conflict, feel the main lines of the conflict, but that it was not democracy. There are too many people, we can't talk, there were a few who spoke but no. On the other hand, the commissions, where they were more than fifteen, twenty, it was easier to talk, easier to express. So the committees had a job to do, but within this work there was something that was very important, and that was the debate. Each time they left a general assembly, the debate continued for a little while. As they began to work, as they worked on preparing this, preparing that, and this debate there was more, too, and perhaps more important than the general assembly. Because there, everyone could talk. And others who did not speak told us: 'Yes, but I am learning a lot of things. I learn in the general assembly and I learn in the commission. In what is rediscussed in the commission I learn. I don't speak much but I learn'. Here. And at the same time it was democracy because if he was in opposition to what was being said, he could have intervened. So it was democracy In what is rediscussed in the commission I learn. I don't speak much but I learn'. Here. And at the same time it was democracy because if he was in opposition to what was being said, he could have intervened. So it was democracy In what is rediscussed in the commission I learn. I don't speak much but I learn'. Here. And at the same time it was democracy because if he was in opposition to what was being said, he could have intervened. So it was democracy

RG: And Jean Raguénès, for example, I see that he is a priest, but he was a worker priest? What was he doing at Lip?

CP: No, he was not a worker priest, he had not, he was a priest who took care of the prisoners. So he had a small hut that he had obtained like that, the municipality must have helped him at some point. He had a small barracks which was not far from the prison. And so the prisoners that would take it all out, could go there and he would see them first. So that was his job, and to be able to eat, to be able to manage, he had taken a job from Lip. So he was not a worker priest, but he got involved, little by little. He came in '71 and started to engage in some little things that had taken place then, there you have it. And so, he took an important place in the Action Committee, in the CFDT

RG: And you talk a bit about the Maoists, a lot of people came from outside to comment, to help you, to even annoy you?

CP: Yeah, so what we were saying there was that, well, we had won the internal battle. Everyone started, well when we say everyone, it's a percentage, it's fifty percent, after that it was maybe fifty-five percent, but it was still not bad. There was everything, but we said: 'It's not enough yet! You have to open up to the outside, because there are a lot of things you don't know. We know things but there are plenty of others that we don't know. And others will be able to bring us things. And so we have to open up '. And that was not easy. It was necessary that, it was a suffering, it was a suffering for a Lip, to see someone walking in the factory. In the beginning. Because it is : ' Yes but what is he doing here? ' 'Beh you know we said it in general assembly' 'Yes but still, there are three or four there, there is no one with them?' 'Well yes, they can move around'. It was, it bothered them a lot, it was difficult mentally, to accept that the company was invaded. Be careful, we had closed the workshops, we had closed a number of things, which were closed. But, we had defined a whole area of free access, for everyone. And in this free access area, they were bothered to see it. At times they felt more like Lip, we got to know them, and we saw lots of people arriving. So, that was at the beginning, little by little they got it better. Because everything that was said in the general assemblies, they understood that, elsewhere there was a whole support which was put in place, and all a concrete help which was put in place. And so they understood better that, after all, it was good that people were walking around the factory, even if they were not from here.

RG: And in time that, finally I hesitate to say leader but, as one of the leaders of ...

CP: One of the animators yes

RG: Host, you were dealing with some high profile activists who came from outside, do you have a memory of ...?

CP: Other activists from outside?

RG: Yes from the outside. For example Maoists or Trotskyists

CP: Oh yes! Oh yeah, yeah

RG: Les Cahiers de Mai, Liberation?

CP: There you go. So on this I am formal, I think it is wrong to open the factory, to open the possibility of discussing with employees, if the employees have not started to form a collective and start to have some experience and some knowledge. Because otherwise, the speech that can happen can disturb and then not be swallowed, not be supported, that yes. Despite all our efforts, there are still a number of Lip who have succumbed to all kinds of talk. But not much anyway. It was bearable. But if not, yes it's dangerous, because people who haven't yet, it's as if to a child, I exaggerate a little, it's as if to a young person who has not yet had much experience of life, there is a guru who comes to maintain and then take charge of him, at that point everything is, he does not yet have the capacity to analyze what is good in what the guru says, and what is not good. So that was our concern, but we said yes, we are quite mature. We are mature enough to open. So well, there was in the second conflict, I remember, when I was in the queue, to go to a restaurant, in our restaurant, there was a little group of girls back there, then there is one who said: 'Yes this is the traitor, this is the one who is talking about cooperatives for the moment' (RG laughs), so they pointed out to me: 'Yes it' is that one, look, it is that Piaget, it is the traitor who speaks of cooperatives'. So there you have it, but we were still able to endure it and respond. And there are those who bring things that were valuable

RG: For example?

CP: Well, for example, what we have been criticized for at the CFDT. Where Jacques Chérèque was not always very happy with what he was told. When they gave us information, first of all the information was always vertical, there was no question of having information, a business-to-business information system, or metal companies with chemical companies, etc. So we had vertical information, especially from top to bottom, well from bottom to top anyway, but especially from top to bottom. And when they explained to us, we received bulletins, we were told: 'In such and such a place there was a fight, here are the demands and this is what they obtained' 'We said to the federation:' But, this' is good but it is insufficient, you have to know how the fight went, what happened, how they won, in what way, etc. That's what matters to us'. We never had this kind of information.

On the other hand, the leftists did. They had their ballots, they had people who had participated in such a conflict, and they told how it had happened, with the failures, sometimes when there had been mistakes made by the union. Was it true? Wasn't that right? Maybe there were things to think about, but in the explanations there were things that were interesting. So that, we took them on our own. As an element of reflection. For example at Peugeot, there were a number of delegates who were dismissed immediately because people invaded the manager's office and, who were very angry, there were employees who were very angry, and they ended up roughing up the manager. Good with offices etc. And thus the departmental direction of the work gave the authorization to dismiss the delegates who were present there. So we understood that, and we had put it into practice: one day Fred Lip, with ten or twenty executives, had come to force the roadblock that was placed in front of the expedition service. And we were called straight away, I know straight away I said: 'Oh my, Peugeot, be careful!'. And we immediately asked the delegates to put themselves in a barrage, in front, like that, in front of the pressure exerted by Fred Lip and the have nothing. And the people who didn't have that experience behind. So here we are, we got there and hey so, we asked people to push, to push against, so as not to they come to invade. Here it is, it ended without, well there were exchanges a little, but without really battle, without blows. But that we knew, otherwise we could arrive at a dramatic situation, quickly. So all these experiences, which were not given enough by the federation, we took them here and there. For example, in leftist magazines or elsewhere, there you have it, Les Cahiers de Mai or, that's a little bit that which has us ... In fact, we said: 'Of course there is, we know very well that there is. has utopia, there are things that do not correspond to reality. But, they live things, and they write it down, let's see what can be interesting in there ' But that we knew, otherwise we could arrive at a dramatic situation, quickly. So all these experiences, which were not given enough by the federation, we took them here and there. For example, in leftist magazines or elsewhere, there you have it, Les Cahiers de Mai or, that's a little bit that which has us ... In fact, we said: 'Of course there is, we know very well that there is. has utopia, there are things that do not correspond to reality. But, they live things, and they write it down, let's see what can be interesting in there ' But that we knew, otherwise we could arrive at a dramatic situation, quickly. So all these experiences, which were not given enough by the federation, we took them here and there. For example, in leftist magazines or elsewhere, there you have it, Les Cahiers de Mai or, that's a little bit that which has us ... In fact, we said: 'Of course there is, we know very well that there is. has utopia, there are things that do not correspond to reality. But, they live things, and they write it down, let's see what can be interesting in there ' that's a little bit that which has us... In fact, we said: 'Of course there is, we know very well that there is utopia, there are things that do not correspond to the reality. But, they live things, and they write it down, let's see what can be interesting in there ' that's a little bit that which has us... In fact, we said: 'Of course there is, we know very well that there is utopia, there are things that do not correspond to the reality. But, they live things, and they write it down, let's see what can be interesting in there '

RG: So you've dealt with people like Robert (inaudible 1:02:00)

CP: Yes, there was Lutte Ouvrière, there was the League, several groups of maos, that's it. Besides, it was quite surprising because one of the leaders of a Mao group the hardest, oh la la the clash we had during '73 in town compared to him! And hey beh now I saw that he was at the UMP, behind Sarkozy

RG: Ah! What is his name ?

CP: Ah I don't know, I don't really want to say his name, it's not worth it. But I said, 'Well, do you remember how you were?'

RG: Yes, it's true that people are changing course

CP: Why not, people can change, but between the speeches he made on capitalism and then today ... There really is a huge change! Let's stop talking about it...

RG: After you were kicked out of the factory, it all got a lot harder

CP: Ah, of course, occupying the factory is a big advantage, and having the government occupying it is a big advantage for them, of course. And there it was necessary to imagine, to rebuild the factory in Besançon, good with palliatives, we know very well that it is never the factory, but good. We had a sector like the Janzay gymnasium, we had made partitions, the committees could meet inside, so we had built partitions, and all that. And then it replaced with difficulty, painfully, the factory. Just as there was the restaurant, which we rebuilt in Brugey, in an old fort in the city, and then the clandestine workshops, which we had set up before, because we had thought that there would one day be the occupation. So we had removed workbenches, machinery and equipment to be able to continue assembling watches outside the factory. Well all that was not so good, but it was something that usually breaks and knocks the movement.

Usually when the government occupies a factory, drives out the workers, it is often the end, because they are stunned. And there, we managed to bounce back, we managed to show that we were not stunned, etc. In fact on reflection, she was always like that. For example,

Henri Giraud, government envoy, will come to Besançon, will come to Lip. Well, we were waiting for it, what are we going to do at the general meeting? We thought, like that, a little bit also for fun, but also by reflection, we said: 'Well, what is he going to say to us?'. So we were all together, there was one who said: 'Well, it's fashion, he will say that he was also unemployed!'. So, we hold back. He is going to tell us that he was unemployed, what can he tell us? He will tell us that he understands us, so we hold back, etc. (RG laughs). And when Giraud arrived, he took back almost everything we had thought about (Laughs from RG)! He said: 'I understand you, I too have been unemployed'. Everyone started to laugh, the whole mass of people laughed, so he didn't understand, he said: 'But what's going on, why do we laugh when I say that I was unemployed? '. And then he told us about the division, so everyone understood. Otherwise we had prepared the event. Similarly, when Minister Charbonnel launched his plan, we said: 'What plan is it going to be?'. His plan will certainly resemble that of Ébauche-SA, so we thought about it in the general assembly, together, and that allowed us to cushion the blows and turn them around a bit,

RG: What's amazing is that you kept the people with you, the Lip community went on for months. How do you explain that?

CP: Precisely because we had reached a degree of collective credibility in solving our problems, a significant degree. But when you see that, the film is little compared to the second conflict. Four years. We started the second conflict at six hundred, six hundred and thirty, because there was a part of it that was so stunned. When they put the key back under the door, 'Oh no, no, we're not going to fight again like we did', there was a part that said: 'Me, I'm giving up, because really that' is too hard '. The six hundred and thirty that we were, four years later, when we signed the agreement with the government on cooperatives, well there were still a little more than four hundred, four hundred and five, four hundred and six, all to come. in the mornings in front of the factory at seven in the morning to fight, to get to win. Four years later

RG: The second conflict was in '76?

CP: Yes, it started in '76, in May '76, and it ended in '80, when we had a factory in Besançon, when we were given a factory in Besançon, finally given, where you had to pay for the rental, etc. But there was the regularization of cooperatives. But it took four years of fighting. Then after years of fighting inside the cooperatives. I was so exhausted (CP laughs) during the cooperative that two and a half years later I was unable to continue. Because I couldn't stand a five-minute discussion, I had terrible headaches, and then I was completely, the nerves had taken over. So I took advantage of a system that the government put in place, to exchange an old for a young one, so I went on pre-retirement,



RG: In '80?

CP: In '83, I went on pre-retirement because I was at the end of my rope. I brought nothing more in this cooperative, when you are at the end of the roll, you bring nothing more. It continued, they succeeded, they ended up succeeding in making this cooperative profitable

RG: It's great. How many cooperatives were there?

CP: There were six. Plus the company that was built by executives and mechanics, which arose out of the reflection of the second conflict. We reflected in the second conflict on: what can we do? And there was a whole group that had gone to see customs, and to see what was important. We realized that we were importing a lot of medical equipment, and this medical equipment was within our reach. And so we had visited a whole series of hospitals, seen the heads of the hospitals, and so we started a medical equipment business. And it is on this basis that Statis (?), Which is still in Besançon, which is a cutting-edge company, continues on this. So there were lots of ideas that came out of there. Well, there were cooperatives that unfortunately collapsed, after ten years, eight years, twelve years. It's never easy

RG: We haven't talked about your family

CP: So I only had my father

RG: Yes but I mean, they say that there are a lot of families who suffered during the struggle

CP: Oh okay! So my family, my wife and then my six children, yes, well yes, my wife suffered, here she suffered a lot, because I was not there enough. And then six children ... Even if at the time we did not take care of them as much as we do when there are one or two today, and today the child is. take him to culture, to sport, we take him to do a lot of things, at the time that was not done. So the big one took care of the other, the little one, but despite

everything, it was very, very difficult. The beautiful moments, my wife told me: 'It's when we're on vacation, and then you refuse to go anywhere else, and then we're all together, that's fine, otherwise it's difficult to bear in relation to your absences'

RG: But what carried you during thirty years of struggle, what supported you?

CP: This is the discovery, little by little I was forced, in unionism, to take an interest in something else. First of all, what formed us politically was the war in Algeria, we had to take an interest in all that. And we realized when we came up against the government, the CRS, etc., and journalists who came from there explained to us what was happening. And we understood that there was an analogy between the oppression that was exercised against the Algerians there, by colonialism, and then here a different oppression, very different, but which still existed, in relation to the employers. So that forced that. Then we were forced to take an interest in the world, and so I had to read. I felt like an obligation, if I wanna be in the game I had to read newspapers, which talked about all this. And so from there I got interested, how domination in the world, how it started, long before the Greeks, long before. Why there have always been dominants and then dominated ones, what can we do to change all that, that's it. Once you're hooked on all of that, it's not easy. I remember, I was so tired, and then I stopped, I did not dare to resume the commitment, because I said to myself, if I resume the commitment I will devote myself to it, and that's fine start over, I'm going to have all this pain, etc. Well, I waited as long as possible, and finally someone came over and said, 'We set up a group called Act against unemployment, you can not not come, what are you doing there? You're sicker now, it's been a while! '. So I got back in there, and then it started again

RG: When was that?

CP: I've been in this for fourteen years. So it's not the union

RG: No, no. Is it an association?

CP: There you go, a national association. We had dreamed, tried to shake up the unions and associations a bit, to form a kind of federation to fight against unemployment. Well, we gargled a little, we didn't succeed. But we still shoved a number of things, today there are things that remain. The movement had its heyday, then there was a spinoff from '98, '99,

and then now it's more what it was. But we are still useful! Because we bring the voices of the unemployed, we denounce, for example, when trade unions gargle at the newspapers saying: 'We have just signed at Unédic an agreement which is very honorable, very respectable'. We say what this respectable and honorable agreement is for the unemployed, we say what it is, we deepen the agreement and we try to look at the consequences. We are still useful, but we have lost hope of federating a vast movement. We know that the unemployed must ally themselves with the employees in order to make things happen. We are still far from the mark, I will not see the end

RG: Is it regional or national?

CP: National. There were at least one hundred and fifty groups that had formed, five hundred and fifty groups [sic] or associations that had formed in France. There are more than sixty left, maybe not even sixty. So it turned down well. But that's how it is

RG: Last quick question: When you think about those years, the Lip years, the beginning of the sixties, what do you think of? What's left for you? And even, how did it influence your life afterwards?

CP: I had dreamed of becoming a good professional. Finally the company made me go up all the levels, and then I was even appointed at one point for the workshop manager. It was a professional consecration. But when I arrived at the workshops, I no longer had this hope that I had when I was young to come back to tell myself this is the top. I knew, yeah, it was interesting professionally, but I keep, I got the shirt wet. As an employee, as a professional, I really wet my shirt, thought about it, found solutions to problems that came up very often, etc. But I also knew that at the same time I had to fight because that was not what was changing society, that there was another fight that was just as important, elsewhere. And that hasn't left me since that moment. What are we at?

RG: Very well, we have worked very well, thank you for your testimony