

RG: Okay I think that's it. Okay, madam I will start by asking you for your name and your date and place of birth if you allow

FP: You start by being very indiscreet (FP laughs)

RG: Yes finally, yes

FP: So, my name is Françoise Picq. I was born on August 2, 1944 in a small village which was called Mûrs and which is now called Mûrs-Erigné, and which is near Angers

RG: Okay, okay. And can you tell me something about your family and your childhood at that time?

FP: So my childhood took place in Mantes-la-Jolie, that is to say in the suburbs of Paris, the western suburbs. My father was a doctor and therefore more of a local petty bourgeoisie. Rather notable but notable anti-conformist, on the left. Good having participated a little in things with the Communist Party, with the Union of the Left etc., on my father's side ...

RG: Straightforward, downright communist or ...

FP: No, no, no

RG: Or rather socialist or ...

FP: No, it was a bit for example. He had been a candidate for a while in municipal elections

RG: Yes

FP: Where he was on a list that was a third communist, a third socialist and a third personalities. So it was kind of the intellectuals, all things considered, because he was not a great intellectual. But it was still a bit of this type of participation, he was never a member of a party

RG: Okay, and you were more secular?

FP: On my father's side, yes, it was quite secular with even a taste for anticlericalism. On my mother's side it was much more traditional, my mother having been brought up in a convent. Not at the convent, well, I don't know what it's called anymore, in Angers

RG: Yes, yes I know

FP: She was from Angers, Bellefontaine was called. Finally here, so an education. Both being children of soldiers, but ...

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: But my father having been very opposed to this family origin, my mother much less. So a lot of political conflicts between them each time there were questions about secularism in particular. every time there were crises over secularism, my parents were opposed

RG: Yes

FP: And then on anything, on the Algerian war, on May 68 ... so I had always been on my father's side.

RG: And what, what were their opinions at the time of Vichy and the German Occupation?

FP: So my father had been, he had waged a strange war

RG: Yes

FP: He had been .. By then he had left the army. He had studied medicine within the framework of the School of Military Health and the war was the occasion for him to leave... well after the funny war he left. So they were, my father was not resistant but he was obviously completely on that side and. And my mother, my mother yes I think she was a Gaullist at the time. It was, they... they were not on the side of Vichy and the Occupation, certainly not but they were not resistant

RG: Okay, so you came to Mantes-la-Jolie in...

FP: When I was little, I was 18 months old

RG: It was for professional reasons or ...

FP: Yes, my father found his first, he set up a doctor there

RG: Okay, how did your studies go?

FP: So I did my studies, well I studied at Mantes-La-Jolie until the university where I came to Paris

RG: In the public or Catholic system?

FP: Uh Catholic no. No, I have never been in Catholic education, but I did primary in a private school, but private secular

RG: Yes okay

FP: Even when I was in nursery school, I was always told that, because it was the municipal school, and I was told that I said I was going to the communist school. It made a lot of laughs, well but, no I have never been to the priests, to the sisters, things like that, never

RG: Okay

FP: Never, and in addition I have always been in mixed education and I discovered late that it was not general

RG: Yes okay

FP: But in fact it was really the beginning... When I returned to middle school and high school, it was the first mixed middle and high schools and I didn't know it wasn't like that everywhere...

RG: It started, it started after the war?

FP: Oh no much later. It started in the years, it was in the 50s, I went to college in 54 or 55

RG: Okay, and did you go to high school in Mantes?

FP: Yes

RG: And then you did ...

FP: After I came to Paris

RG: Preparatory school or did you go straight to university?

FP: No, no I went to university

RG: At the Sorbonne or what happened then?

FP: So I started, I was hesitant about my studies. Well I did a good high school education

RG: Yes

FP: Well, pretty brilliant and in any case I was ... well I think it wasn't very, very obvious for the girls at the time either.

RG: No

FP: It was necessary, it was necessary, well the family would not have pushed me as they pushed the boys. So I didn't have to push myself. I had a little the feeling that I had to prove, in particular to my older brother who would tell me willingly "but I'm smarter than you since I'm a boy", so school was the way to have a, something outside that says I was better

RG: Yes

FP: So, so I had a good education and my father was very interested in ... well he was very present

RG: Yes

FP: From the point of view of studies

RG: Yes

FP: I had an intellectual communication with him, from the point of view of literature, politics, I don't know what, which he did not have at all with my brothers

RG: Oh good

FP: Well, well, he was very disappointed not to have it, but they weren't interested in them. What interested them was the car, I don't know what, it was not the video games but it was things corresponding to the time what, so they were not connected intellectual

RG: And what explains your interest in political things and, at that time?

FP: I think it's my father's influence

RG: Yeah, yeah, so what did you do in college?

FP: So, so I was hesitant about my studies. I wanted to do sociology

RG: Yes

FP: And my father encouraged me to save money. And as I hesitated between the two, I enrolled in the Faculty of Law and the Sorbonne in propaedeutic, and in fact the courses at the Sorbonne did not interest me at all

RG: Why not?

FP: I don't know, it was a bit elusive, it was a bit of everything and anything

RG: Yes

FP: I did not feel, and on the contrary I was very seduced at law school, in particular by the course of Maurice Duverger

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: The political sociology course

RG: Yes

FP: And so I left the Sorbonne and I went to law school during (apart from my first year which I repeated), I went to law school to the end and I think I did not want to leave studies. Anyway, when I was done, I asked myself the question of what I was going to do now as studies. I didn't imagine anything else at all, so that's when I returned to the Sorbonne

RG: Yes

FP: I enrolled in socio so I did - since there were equivalences - so I did license and master's degree in socio and that's where May 68 arrived.

RG: So you, to go back a bit, you started law school in which year?

FP: Oh that must have been 61 or 62

RG: Yes, and you were in the process of doing a master's, a bachelor's or a master's degree in sociology when May 68 arrived?

FP: Yes, I was in sociology in May 68

RG: And were you politically motivated before 1968? How did that happen ?

FP: Yes, yes, yes I have always been motivated but always a little bit in line with my father's as well, which was a commitment with a certain critical distance

RG: Yes

FP: Especially when I was in high school, I participated in, well I wrote a high school newspaper, good during the Algerian war, I was in an anti-fascist committee in high school, and in this anti-fascist committee. there were communists and fellow travelers, what in the end. I was a traveling companion. Well, I have always been quite critical of a commitment a little without, without, without what distance

RG: Yes

FP: But at the same time still engaged

RG: Okay, and engaged with certain people in particular or has that changed from high school to law school, to the Sorbonne? Were there a certain number of people, comrades with you, with whom you worked regularly?

FP: Not so much, not so much because when I came to college, I didn't have any, I didn't meet the people before. I struggled eh when I arrived at the university because I did not find a group with which I share a lot of things. And politically, law school was really not, it was not easy. So I, I signed up for the law school UNEF thing

RG: Yes

FP: it was AGDSEP, but it practically did not exist, it was a, it was a commitment. At law school they were all in the right-wing union

RG: Yes, yes

FP: And so I wasn't there, and I didn't have that much relationship at law school. Finally I had work colleagues what

RG: Yes

FP: but I didn't have much affinity groups, in fact until May 68. Finally, I had friends that I met at the café or in the evening at the bistro or whatever. But I was pretty lonely until May 68

RG: Did you live in Paris or with your parents?

FP: I lived in Paris, so I lived in Paris during the week. I still had to be in Mantes. I still had to be there more than that because for most of my studies, I was a pioneer

RG: Ah yes

FP: In Mantes, at the high school where I had studied

RG: During the day?

FP: Uh yes finally, it's a statute, a statute for the students who ... We did I don't know how many days a week. Well, we were disciplining etc., and we won, and suddenly we had a certain autonomy from the family, I never asked my parents for money.

RG: Okay, okay. So comes May 68, tell me a little about your, your trajectory

FP: So May 68, May 68 I had this double affiliation

RG: Yes

FP: From Mantes high school, where I was a pioneer and where I really had friends. Well, really the group of pawns, we were very close, we discussed politics a lot. And then, and then the college where I had, I didn't have very, very close friends, but I still had people I chatted with. And then May 68 arrives, obviously it falls suddenly on me. At that time I had no commitment, I was a member, but I was not in a group. And May 68, for me it's clear it's May 3, 68 at 4:20 am, because I had class at the Sorbonne at 4:00 am, I arrived late because my father was coming on Friday. When I was in Paris, I lived with my grandmother

RG: Yes

FP: And my father came every Friday to have lunch with his mother

RG: Yes

FP: And went to the cinema in the afternoon. So I went to the cinema with him eventually. I don't know anymore, I was with him a lot during the beginning of my studies, he also made my film education. And so that day, we had lunch at my grandmother's and we went to the Latin Quarter together. I put him down in front of the cinema where he was going and I wanted to go back to the Sorbonne and the Sorbonne was therefore surrounded by the CRS. And here it was a very brutal realization because I still lived in the idea that we are in a liberal democracy, that the police are not the Gestapo and I was very shocked to see that the Sorbonne was barred

RG: Yes

FP: I said "but finally I have lessons"

RG: Yes

FP: "I have to go home" and, well, without knowing very well what was going on, but there was still a scandal. So I protested with everyone, and then hey I don't know how it went. The first things that left, the first tear gas canisters, everyone is scattered. I did the same and then I saw that the students who were there were coming back to the assault and I did the same and, then I was both scared to death because violence is not to be expected. all my stuff, but at the same time there was really something. I remember having fled in front of the CSRs and getting on a passing bus and calling people to witness absolutely scandalous violence, with the idea, but you have to call the press, you have to let it be known. Finally, my awareness was still quite strong, and so I stayed around the Sorbonne until the end of my father's film. I went to wait for him in front of the cinema, I told him what was going on, he was really excited

RG: Oh good

FP: And then he was there really so, here's something going on. So we went back to the cops he provoked in a way, which scared me what, by saying "well done the cops, and well you protect us". And finally I held it back a little bit, "no, but listen, how are you", and then he was..., he May 68 he lived it as one, he said, now is the time to be 25 years old

RG: Oh good

FP: So I was 24 years old, and my brother was 26 years old and he was finally reliving a little bit what he had missed during, during the Resistance

RG: Yes

FP: But in the end during the Algerian war, we nevertheless, we mobilized quite a bit. Finally we had demonstrations, we had ...

RG: Yes absolutely ... but the Sorbonne was closed and then

FP: So, then, so I had the Sorbonne side as a side, here I lived it, and the Mantes side

RG: Yes

FP: So there was also mobilization in the school and there ...

RG: Right away?

FP: Rather after May 13, in fact

RG: Yes

FP: But, but my fondest memory is also on May 13

RG: Yes

FP: Because I went from one to the other a bit, but on May 13 the school came to demonstrate in Paris in buses that had been hired by the CGT. And, before leaving there was a small meeting at the departure of the coaches where there was a little clash between a high school student in particular who had a little confusedly said "down with capitalism, yes okay, but also down with the Communists ". And then the CGT had reacted quite strongly and then on that by entering the buses, the high school students would have liked to stay between them, which did not please the others etc. And so finally I found myself in a bus and during the trip, finally it was necessary to burst the abscess, to burst the abscess on this question, and I found myself, in a position of political animator.

RG: Yes

FP: I held a meeting in this bus to ensure that communication takes place between the workers and the high school students. So from a high school perspective I was still, I was a pioneer, I was above them, but I had done a lot of debating in high school and all that. Well, I was still in this position, personality, I really remember, in addition our bus broke down. We stopped by the side of the road

RG: Is it coming back from the demo?

FP: No, no on the way. On the way, we broke down and therefore we had to wait for another bus which came to help us out. And we were on the side of the road, finally I remember the old workers who told us about the Popular Front

RG: Yes

FP: Finally, the story happened like that in the news, so here is the memory of a formidable demonstration, and the great regret of my life there, it is not to have returned to the Sorbonne, at the opening of the Sorbonne, since May 13

RG: Yes

FP: But I had, I felt, the responsibility of these high school students that I had to bring back safely, and then I believe that I did not fully understand what was happening at the Sorbonne. In particular because those who called to go to the Sorbonne, at least to the place where I was, the activists who called to go to the Sorbonne, they were people with whom I was not at all of Okay, it was the Lambertist Trotskyists, the most sectarian of all sectarians and ...

RG: Okay

FP: Well I was, I was not in this trend, but hey then it was not true, the Sorbonne was everyone's place

RG: Yes, yes, yes

FP: So then I went back. So I divided the days between myself, so I went back, so there were the days when I was in Paris and the days when I was in Mantes

RG: And were you part of the action committees or the grassroots committee or the strike committee or anything

FP: In Mantes, it was obvious but it was, it was not named, I was a leader, but hey we were not structured so much like that

RG: Yes

FP: In Paris less, I was, I participated. So afterwards, on the other hand when we were busy — not so much at the Sorbonne — it was still a bit of a fair, eh. So good I was going there I participated in stuff, etc., but on the other hand we occupied Censier

RG: Yes

FP: and there I was very, very, very, more than present. In particular, you may have, if you have seen my archives, well, I have a slightly structured temperament, organization and memory. And so I stood for this action committee. I don't know what it was called anymore, but in any case there was a room The socio room which was therefore a bit of our base, and I kept a kind of logbook there, considering that it was collective,

RG: Yes

FP: But actually. It was only me who. Finally it was there in the room, everyone could consult it, everyone could read. But in fact I had this, and the day we learned that the police had decided to take Censier back, I took this notebook on board, because there you are, it was, and therefore it is one of the things that I have. data at the BDIC

RG: Yes, yes

FP: I've never been to see, but it makes me laugh when I was told

RG: Yes it exists

FP: That there is a Françoise Picq fund

RG: But because, explain something to me, Censier was a different university or was it part of the Sorbonne?

FP: No, it was part of the Sorbonne but the lectures took place at the Sorbonne and the tutorials [tutorials] took place at Censier. And so it was a small university dependent on the Sorbonne. Before May 68, there were no separate universities, Paris I, Paris II, Paris III, IV, V

RG: Yes, yes, okay

FP: At that time, Censier was a dependency of the Sorbonne

RG: Yes, and I saw in these papers that it was at one time a wild crib

FP: Ah, it's the wild crib later

RG: It's later, yes

FP: It's after, after

RG: After all these events

FP: After 68, it's after the official reopening of ...

RG: It's back to school or ...

FP: So, to be honest I don't know very well because I wasn't there anymore

RG: Okay

FP: What did I do at the start of the school year after 1968? so I was at the Sorbonne, yes, so there I changed because I left Mantes. I left Mantes for another suburban high school because at that time, I still had a license in law and a license in socio and being a pioneer was not necessarily what there is. had better

RG: Yes

FP: And I could teach what, I could be an assistant teacher, and what happened? It happened that there was a colleague in Mantes who was sent to the Lycée de Poissy, and who, for personal reasons was devastated at this idea, I said "well I don't care. I want to go to Poissy ". I went to Poissy so as a pioneer and then in fact the administration there, I said a little about my skills. And there was an available post of assistant master in eco science I don't know what ...

RG: Was it a college, a high school, in Poissy?

FP: A high school, a high school. A high school since I taught in second, first and final. And so I did a year. It was heavy because I was doing anyway, I had to have a half service anyway since I was doing college at the same time, but it was heavy

RG: Yes

FP: First year of teaching

RG: Was it in 68-69?

FP: Yes, but from 1968 onwards, I was much more integrated into militant groups.

RG: Yes

FP: At the Sorbonne... and I was at that time...

RG: Which for example

FP: I was at that time, the group I was closest to was Rouge

RG: Yes

FP: Rouge was good, and then I got to know the people who finally became, in particular Nadja Ringart who was, who still is my best friend.

RG: Yes

FP: That I knew in 68 in Censier

RG: Okay

FP: And so that lasted a year

RG: And Rouge was what kind of organization, with what point of view?

FP: Well it was the LCR, Rouge was the intermediary between what became the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League) and what was in May 68 the JCR (Revolutionary Communist Youth)

RG: Yes

FP: Before 68, before the dissolution. So they were the most open-minded Trotskyists

RG: Open to what?

FP: Well the rest, and especially the questions, well, the sexual questions. Questions of, finally who were most likely to be a place in which to have discussions, not to agree with everything. Me I never, I never am, I never asked to join, whereas I was really very, very close to them, I did not understand

RG: Yes, yes

FP: Why I didn't want to. Well, I have always had a certain reluctance to enroll, to be totally in, in a ...

RG: Yes absolutely, so we start to talk about sexual issues as well as political issues

FP: yes, yes

RG: For example

FP: Well, so for example we read Reich

RG: Yes

FP: This is the time when the sexual revolution was, and it is in this context that I have this kind of ...

RG: Okay

FP: And, and I went with them. So I had to, it had to be an action committee I do not remember, in any case I went to the UNEF congress in Marseille in December 68

RG: Yes

FP: Well, and it was, there I plunged into the world of activists

RG: Yes

FP: And then also with the discussions on the relationship between men and women, on all kinds of things

RG: And apart from Nadja Ringart who did he have at Rouge at that time?

FP: So there were those who have, finally who had to be responsible for bringing me back I think

RG: Yes

FP: The Trat twins, so the twins, it was especially Janine who was in charge of me, but I lost contact with her a bit. On the other hand, Josette Trat, I always see her since she is a feminist researcher.

RG: Yes, and

FP: And that until very recently she ran Les Cahiers du féminisme, which was the feminist journal of the LCR ...

RG: And ...

FP: As a leader, that's what interests you, as a leader

RG: It's good, you, you only cite women but it's great, but were there a few men in there

FP: Ah yes of course, but what was there, for example there was someone who fascinated me a lot, and before 68 and after, but I saw him very rarely

RG: Yes

FP: It was Jean-Michel Gerassi

RG: Yes

FP: There was also the political current to which I felt closest, it was called the MAU, a university action movement.

RG: Yes

FP: And in fact it was the Cahiers de Mai trend. Finally, when I heard these people talk about it, I felt closest to them. So it's people who have become .. (proper names, I really have a problem), Marc Kravetz, Jean-Louis Péninou

RG: Yes

FP: Well, people who have often made a career as a journalist elsewhere. So it was to them that I felt closest to. But I was not so connected, it was, it was people that ... And then something happened all the same, it is that until May 68 and in May 68 including, I did not doubt my ability to be, to speak, to etc ... For example there was a day when we decided to have mini meetings and to gather everywhere in the street

RG: Yes

FP: And so it didn't scare me to go and call a meeting, to go. And what happened after 68? That the student movement as a whole dispersed a little bit and only the organizations remained, and in the organizations there were people who, there were leaders who knew how to speak

RG: Yes

FP: And in relation to which I did not feel that capacity there. That is to say that I was at the same time, well I had political knowledge all the same quite important, I was not one of the activists who arrived, who knew nothing, I had read a lot of things

RG: Yes

FP: But I had not read the canonical texts of Marxism-Leninism, Trotskyism. I had a more modern outlook, let's say, and so I went to Rouge training schools quite a bit, stuff like that

RG: Who trained who?

FP: Well who trained the militants

RG: Alright, alright

FP: It's a group that had a very important educational dimension

RG: And how was it in the groups, in the seminars, in the ...

FP: Yes, they were meetings where there were seminars yes

RG: Yes, there was another movement called Vive La Révolution...

You were part of it, was it later?

FP: It was later

RG: Yes

FP: It's a little bit later, not a lot, it's a year. Since in 69, I applied to university, to Dauphine, to have lessons

RG: Yes

FP: So in the Public Law and Political Science team, I was recruited at the same time as others. Well there I was recruited on political bases, because those who held the team wanted to bring in militants, and they had a lot of fun saying that they had taken up the great tradition of the liberal university because they had recruited two

Trotskyists and two Maos. So how they recruited us. They had made contact because through me I had a friend of my brother's who I had told, that I could teach in college and who had spoken to his political science assistant. I must have met them before. And so, they briefed me so that I pass the commission by appearing not to be on their side, but on the side of the teachers.

RG: Yes

FP: And there you have it, that's how, finally I was recruited because I had the dual competence of Law and Sociology in fact that

RG: So it wasn't just for political reasons

FP: No, but there was a kind of passage like that. I did not know them, it was not the piston but I did not need to situate myself in relation to them, but only in relation to the teachers to whom I could tell that I had done surveys, I do not know not what

RG: Yes

FP: This is what they were going to like, and so I met Tiennot Grumbach there, who had been recruited at the same time as me.

RG: As a Mao or as a Trotskyist?

FP: As a mao. I was recruited as a Trotskyist, well the other Trotskyist who had been recruited, she ended up at Chirac's office, eh, so it's still quite variable (laughs)

RG: Yes

FP: She was social advisor for Chirac at one point

RG: What is her, what is her name?

FP: I don't know anymore. Finally she had done a thesis on Trotskyism. But she didn't stay long at Dauphine... And so when I met Tiennot... well on the one hand I met Tiennot and on the other hand my friend Nadjia, whom I had not seen for some time. started calling me, leaving me messages and saying that she wanted to see me ... So at that time I was living at home, I had my first apartment, behind Censier, in the street behind Censier, I had to cross the street, I also took classes at Censier, in socio. And so Nadjia came to see me at my house, she was the first person and therefore explained to me that she was in an activist group and that they were interested in meeting me. Because as I was in Mantes - I was also in Mantes in a militant group, an action committee in Mantes.

RG: High school students or ...

FP: No, no, well yes there were high school students but there were, there were also, teachers, pawns, workers finally ...

RG: Yes

FP: Local action committee what

RG: Yes okay

FP: We were a handful, and so it interested the group in which Nadjia had joined, because they were active on Flins

RG: Who is next to Mantes

FP: Yes, and, and it sounded like to me what I had heard about Tiennot

RG: Yes

FP: So I asked Nadja, "but isn't it the same as Tiennot's?" " and yes. So Nadja was at the Base Ouvrière and I was therefore a very interesting recruit for them, because they wanted to get in touch with my Mantaïs group.

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: So I made the connection and therefore started a militant nucleus there, very marked by Tiennot's personality. And so I got into it, It meant getting up at 4 a.m. from time to time to go and distribute leaflets at the exit of the factory.

RG: Was it the Base Ouvrière?

FP: Yes

RG: Who was also, was it part of Vive La Révolution?

FP: Yes, yes

RG: Okay

FP: And, and it is true that this group Vive La Révolution, there I felt really good there. I wasn't asked to join, I wasn't asked to agree to everything

RG: Yes

FP: and on top of that, at Dauphine, we had.... Because we had places like that everywhere. So I had Mantes, the Base Ouvrière and in Dauphine, we also created a movement, well there was a big strike

RG: Yes

FP: Students at Dauphine, but in which the teachers were also very present, which ended with an occupation of the premises

RG: Okay

FP: And those who had occupied the premises then formed a group called the MLEE, the Student-Teacher Struggle Movement.

RG: Yes

FP: And that was a pretty marvelous place, because everyone was there, That is to say everything that on a general level was groupuscularized, that is to say not only the Trotskyists, the Maos, but all the small groups what

RG: Yes

FP: There were chapels everywhere, and in Dauphine there were no chapels, in Dauphine we were all in the MLEE

RG: Because Dauphine was like a university? A new university or ...

FP: Yes Dauphine opened, finally Dauphine had opened in 68 and there we were in 69

RG: As in, a bit like Vincennes

FP: Yes at the same time, finally there were the two universities that opened

RG: Okay

FP: But obviously in different niches

RG: So at Dauphine it was more like ...

FP; So it's a university that was going to become a management university

RG: Yes

FP: But at the same time which, good privileged by the fact that there was a very important framework and that, as that had opened in 1968, all those who had invested, as teachers in the first cycle, it was the committee of 68 law school strike so it was very, very militant

RG: Okay

FP: Very, very to the left. Finally it was not bad elsewhere. There are plenty of friends at Dauphine, although it has become very "management" anyway.

RG: Okay and to come back to Flins, you, as you say you were in a good position because you have, you were part of a lot of networks and you were a bit of a pivot between the two or the three

FP: Yes

RG: And how did it go?

FP: Well, it went well, I don't know, well if, the level of activism around Tiennot and the Base Ouvrière was still much higher than what I had experienced before.

RG: Yes

FP: That is to say, it was much more demanding in terms of time, in terms of commitment

RG: Yes

FP: And so, at the same time, the closeness we had in the group was very, very great, there we lived together, we never left each other, we ...

RG: Where did you live together?

FP: We lived together, we were together a lot, so for example my apartment was ...

RG: Yes

FP: Occupied by everyone, the key was available

RG: Okay

FP: As I lived, not only next to Censier, but also next to the bookstore, the "la Commune" bookstore which was VLR's bookstore, everyone knew where my key was hidden and therefore at home it was. was open to everyone. And then also, quite quickly we lived in community, in Mantes

RG: In Mantes. It's with, finally I just read Hélène Bleskine's book, was she there? (FP laugh). Why are you laughing ?

FP: Yes, well here I am going to have to, here we are, we are coming ...

RG: Were you there? (to laugh)

FP: Well yes I was there, I was there. I am the unnamed one of this book

RG: Oh okay

FP: Which ends with "and when is Pierre's child? ", Well, Pierre's child was in my womb

RG: Oh yes, okay, okay

FP: That's it, because Pierre was obviously Tiennot

RG: Okay

FP: Who has been my companion since that date, the father of my two children

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: And, well, so the community was, there on the other hand it was very, very confrontational, very, very hard

RG: But it's not easy to live together, it's a good idea but

FP: No, there was, the community was, in fact there were several houses

RG: Yes, okay

FP: And so there was Mantes where I was, but I wasn't completely there, and then there was Gargenville

RG: Yes

FP: That's what Hélène Bleskine says

RG: Yes, yes

FP: And the girls of Gargenville, I was their bête noire

RG: Why?

FP: Well for real, of course, for the sake of jealousy. At the time, I didn't have a stable relationship with Tiennot, but there was still something. He was still kind of the one everyone wanted

RG: The chief what

FP: Not really the chef because it was a period when you could no longer be a chef

RG: Yes

FP: But, but there was a kind of fascination with ...

RG: Yes

FP: No, it was a period when... Finally, there was such a questioning of leaders that he could not position himself as a leader. But hey... on the one hand there was that, and on the other hand there was a political rupture. Because compared to what was the MLF which started, I left MLF completely, while the girls of Gargenville remained nevertheless very workerist, Base Ouvrière. Their main thing was turned to men

RG: Yes

FP: Especially the men of the working class and there was a side... the MLF was a break in the sense that we were now taking care of ourselves.

RG: Yes

FP: Our, our problem was us, it was the women, it was the community of women

RG: ok

FP: And the girls from Gargenville did not come into this, except on an occasional basis, of course. They came to the demonstrations, they came to specific things, but their main affiliation was the region, etc. And I have, I had to leave the community because it was still painful

RG: But you had discussions about sexual liberation, what that meant. And what did it mean to live in a community, the abolition of the family or did it mean that women began to campaign themselves?

FP: Ah well all that of course, but there was at the same time a questioning of the couple, of the family, of monogamy etc., So it was also our lives which were ...

RG: Yes of course, but you start to talk about MLF. But can you explain to me a little your feminist awareness, how it happened and when?

FP: So I think I've always been a feminist. But how did I express it? finally I think I saw my personal position as a collective position. I think it has always existed

RG: Yes

FP: That is to say, I have always... Well we can still say Simone de Beauvoir, I read Simone de Beauvoir, I was in second

RG: Yes

FP: And so it was a very, very, very, very strong thing. I found myself there totally. So from there, well, nothing was happening there, but I was in there, no doubt. So as

soon as I started hearing about things like that. So we heard about it. You read Generation I imagine, so there, the first moment we heard about... What happened during May 68 at the Sorbonne, I didn't know, the FMA stuff, I haven't heard of it. The first thing we heard about was the Vincennes meeting in May, I believe, 70

RG: Yes

FP: And someone came to bring us a text which has since appeared in L'Idiot International which told of the first meeting of women in Vincennes, which the men had tried to prevent from being held and there had been an exchange of polemics

RG: Yes

FP: And so someone came to bring us this text to VLR so that we could publish it in Tout, so the newspaper that we published and that was ... there we felt in the community of ideas about those women who, in the name of the revolution, demanded the right to free themselves

RG: And, but for a while there was a kind of, coexistence, even convergence if you want a feminist leftist

FP: Yes, well there was the women's group from VLR, the women's group from VLR, it started in August 1970 with the first meeting we held.

RG: Yes

FP: Well, of course there were divisions, but we started off with a bit of a feeling of holding on at both ends

RG: Yes

FP: Politics and feminism, and then until the dissolution of VLR. VLR dissolved in March or April 71

RG: Yes

FP: And the VLR women's group merged into the MLF completely. But we were, anyway, even when we were the women's group of VLR, we had contact with all the rest of the movement.

RG: And who was in this women's group?

FP: So there was Nadja of course, there was Annette Levy-Willard. There was Sophie, Sophie Cartier-Bresson. There was I don't know, I remember there was a girl called Martine

RG: And VLR erupted in part because of these tensions between feminists and, or on the issue of feminism?

FP: Not just on feminism. Also young people and homosexuals

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: That is to say all the groups, since VLR was very open to what he called the autonomous mass movements.

RG: Yes

FP: So who was completely in favor of women organizing themselves, young people forming their groups, homosexuals - so who was the FHAR - forming their groups

etc. sides. There were contradictions on all sides and I VLR felt good there, and so the day the dissolution was decided, I was very surprised

RG: Yes

FP: Because especially since the dissolution was proposed by Roland Castro who was the ... Not only was it proposed by Roland Castro, but it was accepted as obvious by everyone ... And hey I found that a shame, because it is true that from that moment, we each left in their own specificity

RG: Yes

FP: We had private relationships of course, but as a collective we no longer had any relationships, I no longer had any mixed collective thing

RG: So why did he come up with this?

FP: Well actually Roland, it seems that he had a very violent conflict with Richard Dehayes, who was the leader of the FLJ, Front de Liberation de la Jeunesse

RG: Yes

FP: Who was now disabled as a result of police brutality. He had lost his eyes

RG: Oh good

FP: And, and they had had a rather violent thing where finally Richard had reproached Roland for having sent him to the pipe breaker. He said that besides Roland, he said, well he no longer saw how to hold together the contradictions between young people, women, homosexuals ...

RG: Because the FHAR had started at that time?

FP: it had started. Yes, yes it had started at that time and it was at the time of the dissolution of VLR that the number 12 of Tout came out, so the number of FHAR

RG: Yes

FP: Which made the women react very strongly, Well then the homosexuals took a big part at that time and the women reacted to it because the vision of sexuality that was in this issue really made our hair stand on end. on the head. And we started to denounce the conception of sexual liberation that there was around Everything and ...

RG: Did you denounce him?

FP: Yes in Everything,

RG: Okay

FP: In Tout, well I tell that in my book

RG: Yes

FP: Without obviously saying who does what, but we started. Finally, some wrote a paper called "Vie et Mœurs des Tuotiens" and which told how sexual liberation was used to bring women to all beds, to share women and all that. They took the allegory very, very badly and they ordered us to explain ourselves politically. And so we wrote a text called "Your sexual liberation is not ours", in which we give explanations. Anyway, it's a text that has really been a collective text

RG: Yes

FP: And so we went to issue 15 of Tout

RG: Okay and because you were proposing what instead of sexual liberation?

FP: Well what we explained in ...

RG: Not the bourgeois family (laughs)

FP: No, what we explained in that text is that their vision of sexual liberation was, there is no limit in the search for jouissance, the more one enjoys, the better it is. 'is. However, given the reality of relationships between men and women, until now, women have always been in a situation of domination, and it is not their own desire that they know, but they submit to desires. men. So our search for liberation was to know our own desire and to build relationships that are not power relationships.

RG: And so when you say that it's a text, a collective text, you wrote it with ...

FP: There were, there were quite a few of us and above all what was quite funny was that, well, it took a long, long time to find the thread to write this text. So we had several meetings and finally I remember that it was Elisabeth Salvaresi who gave the initial idea which was jealousy, the jealousy of men and the jealousy of women, it's not the same

RG: Oh yes

FP: So the idea that men's jealousy was the fear of losing what was theirs and women's jealousy was the fear of losing what gives us a connection to the world.

And we left on that, This text was written in a day, it took place at Elisabeth's, it was not always the same one who held the pen and it was not always the same people who were there. So it circulated, people gave an idea, we wrote etc., and at the end of the day this text was written. We found it completely and it was really collective, I can say the initial idea was that of Elisabeth, But impossible to say who wrote this text. It was neither a closed group nor always the same

RG: Yes okay, okay

FP: Because it had circulated during the day and therefore we went to bring this text. We were really happy and proud of ourselves. We went to bring this text to the Tout editorial committee, then we had also beaten the reminder a little bit, there were also plenty of people who had not written the text but anyway, there were many of us and there, we had won the game

RG: Okay

FP: And they crashed, and they crashed with something on top of it. We used to, after the Tout editorial committee, which was held in a historic room since it was after the MLAC room, we would dine in a nearby restaurant called "Chez Mohammed", and there we met for dinner and we were very numerous. And there were two rooms, so we were in one room, all the women, and there were two or three boys on the editorial board who had no problem with women, who we called "the good guys" (laugh from RG). No power relationship with them. They were always a bit in competition because they had romantic relationships with some women who could at the same time have romantic relationships with the chefs, but those were our friends.

RG: Yes

FP: And in this restaurant when they came to the women's room, they were greeted without any problem and that annoyed some. There was one who said "what hurts my guts are the little ones saved", so the little ones saved were the men who were on the side of the women.

RG: Okay

FP: So the harkis what. They were on the side of women there is no doubt. And besides in the first text of women that we had written at Dauphine, we were somewhat on this idea. In the criticism of power, it was not only women who were concerned, there were also many men.

RG: Yes

FP: But it was only with women that it was collective and that's why it was from women that it could change. But that there were men who were on our side

RG: But who does not, it did not last, the diversity

FP: Well it didn't last, because the mixed collective places didn't last.

RG: Okay

FP: Afterwards, after the FHAR crisis, after the dissolution of VLR etc., we no longer had the opportunity to do things together

RG: Okay

FP: Besides, it was also the crisis of male activism. There were, the men stopped, the militant groups, well there remained some among the Trotskyists, more solid than others but Maoism, well our Maoism

RG: Yes

FP: Libertarian Maoism has ceased to exist

RG: Yes okay

FP: The end of VLR was still uh. Everyone left for an analysis, left to have children or to do such and such a thing but the

RG: Yes

FP: It stopped a bit at that point

RG: But coming back to MLF, are you called MLF at that time? But because in your book and in several books we talk about several trends within the MLF

FP: But I am precisely saying: when we talk about several trends, I do not recognize myself in them. That's how the idea for my book started, from this thing that was rehashed all the time: the three trends

RG: Yes

FP: And I don't recognize myself in any trend. However, I never felt marginalized in the MLF, so my idea was to try to show how the MLF only structured itself into contradictory tendencies after a while. At the beginning it circulates between the trends

RG: Yes

FP: So I was in the women's group of VLR, I was in Psychépo. But, but being at Psychépo I was not an enemy of revolutionary feminists. I've been in stuff where we hang out ... I was mostly on the Thursday group, which was a splinter group from all sides. I made Tea Towels, finally I was on all sides what

RG: You were good with everyone

FP: Yes, well, I was discussing with everyone, because I was absolutely ... The Thursday group is a group that refused to allow the MLF to become, to polarize, to bi-polarize and to divide itself between, between Psychépo, feminists, class struggles, since we wanted to do with everyone, we did with everyone

RG: Yes

FP: We did before the Thursday group. What determined the Thursday group was a demonstration that we did, so there with the neighborhood groups. And so the class struggle trend, we did, I'm asking myself a question, that's it, yes that's it, the text "abortion, contraception, sexuality, reformism". Finally it was still with people who were everywhere

RG: Okay

FP: We were not closed blocks. Until 74 ... so Psychépo closed a lot and good with a Stalinist thing, with lawsuits, with exclusions etc.

RG: Yes

FP: And made itself against others, by fabricating a false image of feminism. And me at that time, well like others, in the Thursday group we refused this division

RG: Yes

FP: And at the same time we were very well in the Thursday group but we wanted, we didn't want to be between us, so we made public what we were

RG: Yes

FP: So we went to distribute, in Psychépo meetings, the text that we had written which was called “ones” in the plural, “do not divide only in two”, which was therefore a refusal of the idea of two lines

RG: Yes

FP: Right and wrong, which was Psychépo's point of view. And so we explained how we were in there, all the problems we were asking ourselves, all the contradictions we had on all sides etc., And this text appealed to many

RG: Yes

FP: And so at the next meeting, the Thursday group was a bit overwhelmed by lots of people who thought we were great and our goal was to do Torchon number 7

RG: Yes

FP: And we wanted to do this Torchon with the group from Marseille

RG: Yes

FP: With whom we were in contact, who came from time to time. Finally there were two Marseillaises who came, every time they came to Paris, they came to the meetings and we got along very well and there you go. So we had this idea of making the Torchon, and in the summer of 1974 we went to Marseille. We went down, there were five of us, so in Marseille. And in fact the group from Marseille was much more complicated than we thought, there were Psychépo in it

RG: Yes

FP: And these Psychépo had invited Psychépo

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: And they intended to ... well it went very, very badly

RG: Yes

FP: So with the girls from Psychépo who arrived and the atmosphere became very tense without us knowing very well what was going on. And the second day, when we were trying to say but what is going on, there is one, it is the first time that I saw her and who said to me "in two words, I ask you news of your thesis that you are doing on our back! "

RG: Yes

FP: And curiously on this terrible accusation of doing a thesis, all of a sudden we were naughty. So at the time I was doing my thesis with Nadja

RG: Yes

FP: And there you have it, so after that we obviously knew that the girlfriends who had brought us in, they weren't there because they had already suffered this ostracism from intellectuals who were rejected because they were doing a thesis and therefore returned in the institution, they betray somewhere ...

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: The mobilization of women and that's it. So we were in the same thing, and what was ... so well it was obviously very, very hard

RG: Yes

FP: But our group of five remained united at that time and ...

RG: So who was, who was in your party of five?

FP: The five who had gone to Marseille?

RG: Yes

FP: So there was, therefore, there was Nadja and me, there was Marthe, What's her name Marthe? I no longer remember, she was a doctor. And I remember her because, because she had started reacting to the accusations by saying, "What about Antoinette, is she not taking advantage of this?" Finally accusations that seemed to me, well no anyway we are not going to say such things. So we let each other be treated as we let ourselves be treated, but we weren't doing that, and then two, two who were new recruits, whose names I don't remember, but there is one who returned to Libé as keyboardist

RG: Finally Nadja was the main

FP: Well, that is to say that we were, the, the, the thesis that is done "on our back", we were both. And the Thursday band couldn't resist that thing

RG: Yes

FP: So there you have it, the Thursday group has ended, and I think the end of the Thursday group is the end of the movement in the sense that there is mobility.

RG: And you say it's the summer of, of ...

FP: It's summer 74

RG: And after you joined which, which group, which tendency?

FP: So at that time I stopped active militancy a bit and on the other hand I developed a lot what went from activism if you will, to research. So at that time my reference groups are .. well just after the end of the Thursday group, we did the GEF, the Feminist Studies Group of the University of Paris VII

RG: Yes

FP: So, there you go, we're going into research, very historical. I was not a historian but in the end we all set out to research the history of feminism

RG: and can you explain to me, well in two words, the root of the problem with Psychépo? What was your real difference?

FP: well it was the practices eh, it is the Stalinist side. We wanted to be able to discuss, to be able to disagree and we didn't want to be parrots, we didn't want things of exclusion, of having to be like this, to be like that, etc. , it is, it is, it is the chapel

RG: Because Psychépo had an exact point of view on the nature of the oppression of women, right?

FP: Psych-et-Po had only one word... which was Antoinette's

RG: Yes

FP: Antoinette considering, finally her theoretical contribution, which is real, which was the articulation of politics and psychoanalysis... could not be discussed by anyone

RG: Yes

FP: So anyone who had a skill in either of those areas equivalent to his was a danger. Here, there were phenomena of exclusion as soon as there were disagreements about its practice. It was a phenomenon of power quite extraordinary, since she had in analysis half of the women of the group

RG: Yes

FP: Who were totally fascinated. She said fascinating things at times But, well, it was not possible to disagree, to discuss, and then at the same time she said interesting things, but which were repeated by a whole bunch of people around, who were completely brainless and who only repeated, without possibly fully understanding the words of the master. It was unbearable, and as soon as someone had an original point of view, it was, ..

RG: And was there a relationship between the different feminist points of view and personal practice, well the personal choices of different personalities?

FP: Well then that too, for example

RG: Yes

FP: We could be judged on our practices, if they were not sufficiently in accordance with a rule which, moreover, could vary completely.

RG: Yes

FP: So for example homosexuality was a must

RG: Yes

FP: But as soon as, for example, on this question of homosexuality, I remember that it was in La Tranche-sur-Mer, so it was 73, so it was not yet the break I was talking about. At La Tranche, homosexuality dominated as a model, and I felt, as it was a national thing, there were women coming from all over, and I felt uneasy. There were a lot of women who felt that we couldn't talk about our relationship problems because we would immediately be accused of being traitors. And hey since there was still a spontaneous organization, I made the proposal, I announced a meeting on heterosexual relations

RG: Yes

FP: A lot of people came, and the great chefs also came there, so Antoinette and her friend Marie-Claude who came. Before that, there had been a debate on homosexuality where one had said "I am homosexual by political choice" well a debate on it, well whatever. In any case, to this thing about heterosexual relations, they came to Antoinette and Marie-Claude ... explain that, of course, that moreover they had continued to have relations with men, that it was very important, that it was out of the question to consider that it was wrong, etc., etc., so there was a diffuse obligation

RG: Yes

FP: But as soon as we put things openly, we said "but, of course, there is no standard here, we are not ..."

RG: Yes, was there in these debates, was he in contact with feminists abroad or was it ...

FP: Ah yes, this meeting for example at La Tranche, it was, it was a European meeting. So in particular I have fond memories of Italian women who were magnificent and that we can now find of course in feminist research because it happened like that.

RG: Do you remember some names?

FP: Ha well I remember Luisa Paserini

RG: Oh yes Paserini was there?

FP: Yes

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: But I remember her, no I remember the Italians

RG: Yes

FP: Who were great because they dressed at night, they were good. And when I met Luisa Paserini at a conference, I don't think she remembered me either. But she

remembered La Tranche and so we talked about this place, so it obviously brought us closer, we had this memory ...

RG: Remember the Slice it was ...

FP: La Tranche, so it's what you could call a summer school. It was a European meeting at La Tranche-sur-Mer in a summer camp that we occupied and where there were a few hundred women, therefore Europeans.

RG: Yes okay

FP: Which had been organized by Psychépo. Finally, when I say Psychépo, by the group around Antoinette. So I was going and I kept going after in the ...

RG: Was it this stuff in Marseille?

FP: No

RG: This is where La Tranche is at sea ...

FP: La Tranche-sur-Mer is in Vendée

RG: In Vendée

FP: It's on the Atlantic

RG: So there were the summer schools...

FP: No it was not called university, it was called meeting

RG: Yes, yes okay

FP: It's meetings, European meetings

RG: And there were also, British, Germans, ...

FP: Yes

RG: Any names in particular?

FP: No

RG: No, mostly Italians

FP: Yes, well I remember the Italians, no, but I also remember others. Of course there were Swedish women, so there were exchanges, we compared a little what was happening in the different countries

RG: Yes. Okay one last question, when you look at this from now. Finally you, you wrote your book etc. But what is your point of view now on that period, with regard to your own life and then French society in general? It's a big question, sorry but ...

FP: Good

RG: You see that rather positively or ...

FP: Oh yeah, it was a wonderful time

RG: Yes

FP: And then me, I did not deny anything, I did not need since. Well I made mistakes of course but I did not do things that I can be ashamed of, and I have evolved but without changing, it is not a parenthesis

RG: No

FP: I was interviewed once by a journalist who told me, it was about marriage and who told me "so when the parenthesis is closed". Well I said but me it's not a parenthesis, my life started there, my youth, because I was not a teenager, even when I was 25 years old at the beginning of the movement and my life started there. She landed there, she sought herself, she found herself and, and there you have it, I continued, with an evolution all the same, I became more a researcher than an activist

RG: Yes

FP: But, but really my story ...

And my private life, well it's a bit the same, eh. I lived the period, the great period of sexual liberation with complicated relationships at one time. The best period for me was when I had two men and suddenly I was respected, because when there was one who told me I would spend tonight or tomorrow, I told him well, I have to tell you when you pass, because I have to organize myself (RG laughter). And here it is, that is, it was when I had just one, a double relationship with one, one ...

RG: | Was it Tiennot?

FP: Yes and the other was a good guy of ...

RG: A nice guy, that's it

FP: There you go, and they loved each other a lot by chance

RG: Oh yes, okay

FP: So there was no trick between them. Well I happen to see him again, so it was very good

RG: Yes

FP: Good and then obviously there was the question of having children. Not easy in this type of situation, we still have to cheat to find ourselves in the situation of having a child.

RG: So you had children with Tiennot?

FP: Hm, but the first one wasn't easy, eh. When I found myself in the situation of being pregnant and deciding anyway to keep it no matter what, and say you do what you want and

RG: Who was born in what year?

FP: 73

RG: What ... were you at that time, you were involved in the movement for the right to abortion?

FP: Hmhm... yes well, I was demonstrating pregnant with signs that said, "we will have the children we want"

RG: Wait, one last quick question, did, did your relationship with your parents change during that time?

FP: Yes of course

RG: They supported you or they were shocked or...

FP: So, no, what is a little complicated is that, at the same time, there was a crisis between my parents

RG: Yes

FP: And uh first, the MLF was a way of reweaving a bond with my mother

RG: Yes

FP: I had a very bad relationship with my mother and with the MLF I understood, I understood why she had been such a pain in life, how she was

RG: Yes

FP: And how I had constituted myself against her, and finally she was in a very difficult position. So I got pretty close to her

RG: Yes

FP: And also my father at that time left with a young girl. Finally there was a somewhat long and complicated period, in which we were in this moment of sexual liberation. And my father didn't want to leave my mother and wanted to have a double life

RG: Yes

FP: And for a while my mother accepted, my father left Mantes, so he was going to settle in the South and therefore he thought of living with two women.

RG: Oh good

FP: Finally the agreement being besides that there was no sexual relations with the young one but there is a moment when it happened like that. And it is true that at that time I considered that my mother was the underdog and the one who had to be supported. And I remember one day my father said to me "I don't understand why you beat me cold and you are on your mother's side all the time" and all that. I explained to him. It was my mother who was the first to tell me the secret, while my father had told my sister

RG: Okay, good

FP: And so after when my mother left and he therefore stayed with his young wife, my mother, on the other hand, absolutely wanted to prevent any relationship with my father. And I didn't accept that. So I went to see him, I met him, eh. My children went on vacation to my father and, while the other grandchildren took a lot longer. So my mother was very angry with me for not having made the besieged fortress around her

RG: But your parents did not reconcile?

FP: Well my mother died, and before, so we knew she was going to die, and there were two marriages in the family. And my father came for his eldest granddaughter's wedding without his wife, because my mother wouldn't have accepted. And he said he didn't think it was normal and that he wouldn't come to another wedding without his wife. And when my nephew got married, he didn't want to come to the wedding if his wife didn't come. And I wrote to my father telling him that I had a dream. So I told her my dream, and I said that I couldn't stand the idea that, that my mother was going to die and that they weren't going to see each other, see each other again on this last occasion.

RG: Yes

FP: So he came

RG: Well on that note a little sad, very sad even, I think we can ...

FP: Not so sad.