The Origin of Economic Interest

Manufacturing Demand in Modern France

[*book manuscript under review*]

Gunnar Trumbull

February 2019

# Chapter 3. Apostles of Demand

The rapid growth in mass production that followed World War II elicited a range of anxieties about French consumption. Would the French find sufficient appetite to consume the new volume of products that was being produced? Would they adjust their tastes to meet the large runs of standardized products demanded by Fordist manufacturing? Would retailers allow the cost savings from new industrial investments to be passed on and enjoyed by consumers? If planning allowed rapid and rational capital allocation toward new technologies in crucial sectors, what set of policies would ensure that consumers would keep up with the new frontiers of production? This chapter focuses on the role of three French technocrats—Alfred Sauvy, André Romieu, and Jean Fourastier—who imagined how consumers might be made to support the new economic planning state. All three operated at the periphery of French planning. But their ideas about modern consumption helped to shape France’s nascent consumer movement and the way the state’s economic regulators responded to it. Taken together, their theories and projects launched the idea that a successful economic recovery required that the state address issues of modern consumption and that consumers’ actions as buyers were critical to national economic performance.

Even as World War II was raging on, plans for rebuilding after the war already contemplated the role of consumption in an economy managed through economic planning. The Courtin Report, drafted by the expatriate French resistance led by Charles de Gaulle as a template for postwar reconstruction, emphasized the inefficiencies of the retail sector, the challenges it would pose for competition and rationalization, and the need to promote large format retailing like the *prix uniques.[[1]](#footnote-1)* Economist and demographer Alfred Sauvy came to a similar conclusion. Sauvy had been part of the pre-war X-Crise group that collected and analyized French macroecononic data during the 1930s—he helped to invent what the French call *conjuncture*—and when he applied his theories of *conjuncture* to the period of German occupation, he concluded (implausibly, but he was working for Vichy) that France’s principle economic challenge under economic planning came from inefficient retail. “An excess of distribution has created a general penury that little by little infects all sectors.” This, he argued, led producers to hold down supply.[[2]](#footnote-2) Another work of postwar planning addressed the role of consumers explicitly. This was a manuscript circulated within occupied France by the lawyer Georges Blanc, and that was published in 1945 as *Economic Organization and the Consumer: Free Consumption or Guided Consumption?* In it, Blanc raised the seeming contradiction of marrying economic planning to France’s tradition of individual liberties.[[3]](#footnote-3) His argument, which proved prescient for the reconstruction period of the 1950s, was that a *dirigiste* economic policy would require an organization of consumption that relied not on direct state guidance, but on a strong coordination of consumption by independent consumer associations. “Even in a guided economy, the initiative of certain organized consumers…can be extremely fecund and offer considerable support to public authority.”[[4]](#footnote-4) A strong state, in this formulation, implied a strong but independent consumer organization.

With the end of the war, however, consideration of the role of consumers in France’s economic recovery was pushed to the edges of the state’s planning apparatus. The main roadmap for recovery was the Plan Monnet, financed out of the *Fonds de modernisation de l’équipement*, and guided by a tiny cadre of hand-picked technocrats within the *Commissariat general du plan*.[[5]](#footnote-5) Relying on direct government allocation of funds and technology to key sectors, the economy grew rapidly, while also generating large trade deficits and massive foreign exchange financing needs. Short-staffed and burdened with intensive negotiations with France’s key ministries, Monnet’s planning staff paid little heed to concerns about consumption. Consumers were invited into the planning process first in 1962, as part of the Fourth Plan, but only to provide witness on questions about retail modernization. The Sixth Plan included a working group on consumer-producer negotiations, but France’s new national consumer groups mostly boycotted it.

The important early work on consumption took place in the 1950s within France’s new Commissariat General de la Productivité (CGP) that was formed in 1948 to help upgrade the technical expertise of France’s private sector firms. The agency, with joint financing from France and the United States, sponsored learning tours to the United States in which an estimated 4,000 French industry leaders participated.[[6]](#footnote-6) Less noticed, the CGP sponsored a series of working groups on topics related to productivity, and it was this policy arena that provided a home to two of France’s important early thinkers about consumption: Jean Fourrastier and André Romieu. Fourrastier, who had trained at Sciences Po and worked in insurance regulation prior to and during World War II, led the productivity research group. As the French economy boomed, he began to worry whether what he described as “consumer productivity” would be able to keep up. [[7]](#footnote-7) If it did not, then industrial investment could be expected to slow. As he explained: “The move to mass production, requiring major investment…, must be mirrored by a coherent organization of consumption.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Fourastier saw pro-consumer policies as discernable a part of the broader productivity-regime. His proposals focused on market solutions, including greater competition in retailing, as well as a rationalization of home economics to encourage households to consume “productively.”

Within the CGP, Fourastier formed a study group focused on consumption, where André Romieu found a home. Romieu, a lawyer by training who like Fourastier had been a Vichy bureaucrat, used this position to launch France’s first truly national consumer federation, the Federal Consumers Union (UFC). For Romieu, the whole point of economic planning was to increase consumption. “A production program,” he explained, “is nothing other than a provisional program of consumption.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Romieu’s ideas for the UFC built on Fourastier’s concern about the demands of consumption under new mass production technologies. He noted that increased mechanization, with its emphasis on heavy capital equipment, longer planning cycles and longer production runs, tended to create *more* tensions between producers and their consumers, who Romieu felt were interested in “diversity, mobility, and the ability *not* to buy.” To find a “synthesis between these antagonisms,” he advocated an organized consumer base. [[10]](#footnote-10) Borrowing ideas from pre-war consumer advocates and his own experience during the war, he argued consumers should become a third power in society that could negotiate policies on a par with producers and workers. If Fourastier and Romieu shared a similar analysis of the problem of modern consumption, their solutions were very different. While Fourastier was a consummate bureaucrat, Romieu was a man of action. Their different visions—Fourastier’s state-led consumerism versus Romieu’s consumer self-empowerment—set the basic organizational tension in French postwar consumer policy.

The third French voice on postwar consumer issues did not have any formal role in the French postwar bureaucracy. Alfred Sauvy was a graduate of the Ecole Polytechnique and alumnus of the X-Crise project (the letter X was an informal designate for *polytechniciens*) and had worked with Fourastier in the statistical offices of Vichy. His primary interest was in demographics, and he went on to found and lead the French Demographic Society, where his work on economic development led him to, among other achievements, coin the term “third world.” In the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, he was a close confidante and advisor to Jean Monnet, as well as a prolific public intellectual who wrote regularly on the economic and demographic challenges of the French recovery. Sauvy saw no reason to worry about French consumption rising to meet its higher output levels, but worried deeply about those critics of economic planning who *were* worried about inadequate consumption. These included men like Maurice Allais, who argued that France could never emulate rapid American growth due to its stagnant population. Allais warned that the Marshall Plan funds would be “a shot of morphine in an otherwise sick body,” unless it accompanied expanded markets in Europe.[[11]](#footnote-11) Sauvy, who also supported the European market project, nonetheless vehemently disagreed with Allais’s diagnosis of demography as economic destiny. If France was to break from its 19th and early 20th century trajectory of underwhelming growth, Sauvy warned, it could not be allowed to repeat the mistakes of those earlier eras. And its primary mistake was to allow coordination by producers determined to hold down output in order to drive higher prices and profits. The key to growth, then, was to focus economic influence away from France’s powerful producers, and he saw a new emphasis on consumer interests as a means to break with the past.

## Alfred Sauvy and the Anxiety of Demand

Sauvy’s concerns about postwar “neo-Malthusian” forces had its roots in a 19th Century debate over the possibility of consumption to rise adequately to meet the new production possibilities of industrial technology. In England, the economic autodidact Thomas Malthus took the pessimistic view that it could not. He predicted that, as new investments in production raised industrial output, returns on those investments would fall with falling prices associated with over-supply. In Malthus’ words, “an inordinate passion for accumulation must inevitably lead to a supply of commodities beyond what the structure and habits of … society will permit to be profitably consumed.”[[12]](#footnote-12) His argument echoed that of the Italian alarmist Sismondi, who predicted that all of Europe was “arrived at a point to have, in all its parts, an industry and a manufacture superior to its wants.”[[13]](#footnote-13) His French epistolary counterpart, Jean-Baptiste Say, who in 1821 became France’s first chaired professor in economics, countered that a “general glut” of this kinds was not conceptually possible, since all production created income that would be spent.[[14]](#footnote-14) In Say’s formulation, “No one sells but with the intention of buying some other production.”[[15]](#footnote-15) His insight has been captured in the modern dictum that supply creates its own demand.[[16]](#footnote-16)

For Sauvy, however, the problem was not Malthus but his French disciples, the so-called neo-Malthusians who became influential in the wake of the Great Depression. In England, Keynes had won out over Malthus. He diagnosed the problem of the Great Depression as merely a short-term lack of demand, in response to which he prescribed debt-financed government spending. While his argument has been interpreted as a critique of Say, Keynes embraced Say’s idea that there *could be* adequate demand if consumers could be encouraged to spend.[[17]](#footnote-17) For Keynes, the problem of the Great Depression was a problem of short-term excess savings, not of long-term consumer demand. But Malthus proved to be more of a prophet in France. His French intellectual followers, the neo-Malthusians, asserted that the underlying problem of the Great Depression was a long-term imbalance created by a generalized glut in production. Under-consumption was not a short-term problem, but a structural feature of liberal economies. The solution was not to stimulate demand, but instead to coordinate a general restriction in production.

France’s experience with the Great Depression was somewhat delayed and less acute than that experienced in the United States. Economic contraction began only in 1931, and reached its peak in 1936, with GDP down 28% and an estimated 1 million workers left unemployed. France’s initial response to the Great Depression was a project of economic liberalization. French intellectuals on the left and right concluded that it had been statist intervention in the economy that had kept production from falling even as demand dropped.[[18]](#footnote-18) With liberalization, they expected prices to fall, to which consumers would respond with heightened demand. In the words of Frank Dobbin, France in the early 1930s “replaced *étatisme* with liberalism.”[[19]](#footnote-19) Yet, as France continued to lag economically even as other countries recovered from the depression, this liberal experiment came under attack by the neo-Malthusians. In their interpretation, it was *liberal* economic policies that had over the course of the 1920s allowed output to exceed the ability of consumption to absorb it. That excess output in turn led to deflation, which stalled demand.[[20]](#footnote-20) Alice Buttner, writing in 1936, pointed to the resulting paradox: “overabundance in the markets and indigence a home.”[[21]](#footnote-21) The answer, for the neo-Malthusians, was a coordinated reduction in output that would raise prices and profitability. Industrialists in sectors ranging from steel, coal, cloth, and chemicals coordinated to restrict production.[[22]](#footnote-22) New farm policies worked to limit yields, new entrants in retailing were thwarted, and trade unions negotiated work-time reductions. In what François Crouzet has described as a “growth-restricting alliance between the upper class and the peasantry,” organized economic actors agreed to limit new investments and restrict output in order to increase prices and capture rents.[[23]](#footnote-23) For Sauvy and France’s postwar technocratic planners, who had high aspirations for rapid state-led economic recovery and growth, the prospect of a neo-Malthusian restriction of output in order to raise prices had to be confronted and defeated. The problem was that the more they asserted control over the primary sectors of the economy, as both De Gaulle and Monnet intended, they more susceptible those levers of control would be to capture by industry.

Sauvy’s idea to respond to this threat was to construct a new, if abstract, ally of the state: the rational French consumer. Sauvy, who like Jean Monnet had grown up in a wine family, understood from direct experience that organized economic interests could influence government policy in support of their own goals. The impediments to growth had their roots not in weak consumer demand, in his view, but in this sort of interest-group politics. Specifically, neo-Malthusian pessimism was anchored in a political economy phenomenon characterized by the anticompetitive coordination of embedded interests. Those interests, including producers and distributors, but also labor, “reinforce their latent opposition and end up with restrictive ideas that are opposed to the general interest. The fear of excess takes form and leads to a destructive pessimism.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Sauvy saw the state playing a supporting role in these policies, and perceived economic actors working strategically to gain support from the state. Large producers, for example, might accept to limit their expansion in order to preserve small producers who were politically influential and could push for policies that sustained the rents in their sectors.[[25]](#footnote-25) Employers also struck a deal with organized labor that had pushed for a return to the pre-war 40 hour work week, a policy that Sauvy warned would force producers to reduce output.[[26]](#footnote-26) Sauvy’s political economy of economic retrenchment presaged a generation of academic scholarship that diagnosed France’s economic and policy schlerosis.[[27]](#footnote-27) His anxiety about a Malthusian restriction of supply was, as Charles Kindleberger notes, echoed in the analysis of France’s Ministry of Finance, which worried that “Industrialists and agriculturalists…are organized into coalitions [that] have as their purpose to maintain production at a relatively low level and to assure high prices for sale.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

French industry emerged from World War II embattled but determined. The active participation of France’s large producers in the Vichy project and their role in meeting of German production quotas left them politically compromised by the taint of collaboration, and they feared this weakened position would leave them open to control by the state. France’s early postwar economic policies, including De Gaulle’s initial nationalizations and the proposals of the Monnet Plan to take over banking and credit allocation, certainly looked to industry like a direct attack on their independence.[[29]](#footnote-29) They reignited the memory of the 1936 Matignon Accords imposed under the leftist government of Léon Blum. Those pro-labor regulations—including shorter work weeks, centralized wage bargaining, and worker representation with management—served as a reminder of what could happen if industry found itself weak and disorganized in the face of a concerted political project.[[30]](#footnote-30) Industry’s response to this threat from the state was to organize. In 1944, Léon Gingembre gathered small producers and independent retailers under the CGPME, over which he would maintain an iron control until 1978.[[31]](#footnote-31) In 1946, Henry Davezac, a graduate of Sciences Po and president of the electrical manufacturing union, created an umbrella group for all large French producers, the CNPF. The goal of these groups was explicitly to defend private firms against what Emmanuel Mayolle announced as the “interference of the state.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

For all of the concerns of France’s managerial class about being controlled by government policy, the French state also emerged from World War II weakened. The idea of the strong French state is a trope of French political economy, and French scholars have tended to trace a straight historical line from the pre-revolutionary Colbertist tradition to postwar economic planning.[[33]](#footnote-33) Yet historians of French industrial relations have also noted the ways in which French state has repeatedly been susceptible to capture by industry interests.[[34]](#footnote-34) At no time was that vulnerability greater than in the late 1940s, when the French state emerged from World War II in an especially weak condition. The economic mis-management of the 1930s, patent failure to defend the country from German invasion, and continued rationing after the war all pointed to a state that was unable to exercise effective authority. Early postwar policymakers especially worried that the French state, as it took the reins of industrial growth, would lose its autonomy to private corporatist interests.[[35]](#footnote-35) A similar concern drove de Gaulle’s push in his 1946 Bayeux speech to create a stronger executive for France, a model that would become the template for the constitution of the 5th Republic.[[36]](#footnote-36) Worse, the very centralization of power that was needed to guide the country through a rapid economic recovery was likely to exacerbate the pressures behind industry capture, leaving the French state even more vulnerable to a loss of autonomy.

The solution for Sauvy was not to eliminate the role of the state in the economy, but to direct policy toward a goal that would help to combat the influence of industry, namely toward increasing consumption. For Sauvy and other liberal planners, satisfying consumer demands was the whole point of economic planning. Sauvy writes: “The consumer reveals the needs that we must satisfy; it is he who should be the master of the economy…. It would be an error to imagine that the consumers simply follows production…The consumer does not follow, he leads.”[[37]](#footnote-37) Sauvy’s point was not that producers should be left to meet consumer demands, but that state policies should support industrialization so that *it* served consumer needs. A focus on consumers would help insulate the planning state from being captured (again, in Sauvy’s mind) by other economic interests. The focus on consumer interests would, he hoped, “avoid a return to state *dirigisme*.” He was clearly worried about business leaders influencing the planning process, but also about the misuse of planning to meet other social and welfare goals. “It is illogical,” he wrote, “to manage the economy based not only on the needs of consumers, but on the goal of full employment in a particular sector.”[[38]](#footnote-38) In order to avoid the interest group influence that led to restrictions on output and growth, France had to refocus economic policy on the interests of the consumer. And, since consumer interests were presumably relatively stable, focusing on them would allow business leaders to make rational long-term investments. Detecting and pursuing that interest therefore became a central question of postwar growth.

What was critical about this idea of consumer-led economic policy was the link that Sauvy made to France’s demographic crisis. Since the early 19th Century, French birth rates had been low, and the resulting stagnation in population had been seen as the cause of manifold economic and social woes. Sauvy was himself fascinated by population dynamics and went on in the 1950s to found and lead France’s Demographic Society. He attributed France’s loss in World War II to “demographic aging,” and he worried that a philosophy of slow growth could be self-reinforcing, with a “fear of excess” leading to pessimism about the possibilities for growth.[[39]](#footnote-39) The prospect of low growth in turn could discourage families from having more children, reinforcing the sense of pessimism. As Sauvy noted, “a reduction in births implies a certain fear of the future.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

These demographic ruminations allowed Sauvy to forge a rough coalition between Catholic conservatives and economic liberals. For him, demographic restriction (birth control) and economic restriction (restrained output) were two sides of the same Malthusian coin.[[41]](#footnote-41) His arguments against birth control were both eugenic and psychological. He worried that the most “evolved” families would be most likely to use birth control. And, with birth control, the single child would show “excessive egocentrism” and its parents “fear [when] faced with the least illness,” together creating “an absolutely deplorable psychological logic.”[[42]](#footnote-42) It was also, of course, a central concern for France’s Catholics. In the world of French neo-Malthusians, economic prosperity—i.e., an increase in output per capita—required that population be restricted. The emphasis on reducing childbirth by workers carried a particular anti-Socialist critique. The economist Joseph Garnie, a contemporary of Sauvy, warned that poor relief would reinforce this problem by giving working families an incentive to have more children than they could afford.[[43]](#footnote-43) It didn’t take much of an intellectual leap to connect this Malthusian critique of the welfare state to social-Darwinist concerns about the “dysgenic” consequences of un-natural selection.[[44]](#footnote-44)

For France’s Catholics, Sauvy offered a vision of economic policy that, because it envisioned unlimited consumption and therefore unlimited growth, was compatible with unrestrained population growth. There would be no need for birth control, nor any need for concern about pro-natalist welfare policies. So long as economic planning focused on the needs of consumers, and allowed those needs to set policy priorities, economic policymaking could be saved from anti-competitive economic interests that sought to restrict output in order to capture their share of rents. In this way, the idea of an independent consumer interest formed the basis for an alliance between Catholic social thinkers and advocates for a liberal version of economic planning that emphasized economic competition to promote growth.

## André Romieu and the Organized Consumer

Sauvy laid out an economic agenda that made consuming households the center of a liberal-Catholic coalition around economic planning and high growth. What he lacked was any genuine consumer organization to express that consumer interest in policy. André Romieu, a lawyer and bureaucrat in the Ministry of Economic Affairs who joined Fourrastier in *Commissariat general de productivité*, stepped in to fill that gap. Romieu was perhaps the only person within the new government who had practical experience organizing around consumer issues, and in 1951 he launched France’s first dedicated consumer association, the Federal Consumers’ Union (UFC). Romieu invited Sauvy to sit as an independent expert on its advisory board, but explained the purpose of this group in ways that echoed Fourastier’s analaysis: “The growth in productivity, whose goal is an increase in the quality of life, depends less today on technical progress in production than a more precise determination of the service to the final consumer and the spontaneous subordination to this imperative.”[[45]](#footnote-45) The UFC, in Romieu’s vision, would bring together associations that represented existing interests that also shared concerns about the conditions of consumption. Some of these included family and women’s groups who were already addressing consumer issues in the years prior to World War II. But he also drew into the group employer and labor groups, with the idea that all of these groups, together, could provide input on government consumer policies that would balance the concerns of different groups. The idea was not entirely new—it echoed the federated structure of the pre-war Confédération Générale des Consommateurs—but Romieu was unusually in emphasizing the alignment of consumer interests with those of employers and organized labor.

Consumer protection was not a natural inclination for either group. Producers argued that market competition would naturally generate consumer benefits, and that any organization of consumers could only impede that competition. Trade unions argued that fighting for better wages already *was* consumer protection, and that any organization around non-wage consumer benefits was a distraction. To the extent that unions had been willing to mobilize around consumer issues rather than worker issues, as with the 1919 *comités de vigilance*, these efforts had focused on confrontations with retailers whom they saw as both an economic rentier and a class enemy. Even as retail cooperatives of the interwar period moved to the left, embracing workers and opposing traditional retailers, France’s trade unions remained skeptical of a consumer identity that was different from workers’ status and priorities.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Romieu’s idea that the new consumer federation should include workers and employers had roots in his wartime experience, when he led the Paris Office of Social Committees, which in turn oversaw the creation and operations of firm-level consumer cooperatives.[[47]](#footnote-47) Such firm cooperatives were located on the premises of individual companies and sold mostly food products directly to workers. They were not a new form—the SNCF, for example, had run a chain of *économats* since the late 19th century. But French labor law restricted the ability of private firms to sell food or other products to their workers, and article 75 of the 1910 Code de Travail specifically banned company cafeterias. By the mid-1930s, a moment of widespread retail innovation, some companies and administrative agencies of the government began experimenting creating group buying organizations for their own members. With the retail crackdown in 1938, all buying groups were forced to re-organize as cooperatives. Further decrees of July and September 1939, immediately before Germany’s offensive against France, required that new enterprise cooperatives be financially independent from the company that created them and that they be approved by their local prefecture. [[48]](#footnote-48) Germany’s invasion of France coincided with the harvest season, and the resulting chaos rapidly plunged occupied France into food scarcity. What had started as more of an economic experiment to ease the time and pricing concerns of workers began to be adopted broadly among French firms hoping to assure adequate rations for their employees. [[49]](#footnote-49)

Initially, the scale of wartime firm cooperatives was limited. A study in the fall of 1941, for example, showed that only 2.5% of the French public had access to company cooperatives.[[50]](#footnote-50) In more industrial areas, however, and as the war progressed, their impact could be dramatic. A survey conducted in Saint-Pol-de-Léon, in Brittany, found that retail cooperatives had accounted for 16% of retail sales in 1937-193; by 1942, with the growth of enterprise cooperatives, that share had grown to almost 80%.[[51]](#footnote-51) In part in response to protests in worker communities that focused on rationing and access to food, the Vichy regime actively supported the creation of the new enterprise cooperatives, many of which were granted initial food stocks at the time of their launch.[[52]](#footnote-52) For sectors that were especially strenuous, like mining, supplemental worker rations were allocated directly to the producers, who then set up enterprise cooperatives in order to distribute them. [[53]](#footnote-53) Policies governing the cooperatives were also relaxed. For example, the strict financial separation from the firm imposed by the law of July 1939 was supposed to be enforced by workplace inspectors. Critics noted that this was far outside their normal inspection function and unlikely to occur. In August 1940, Minister of Industrial Production and Work Alexandre Parodi called on prefects to liberally grant companies the right to form consumer cooperatives, and on France’s workplace inspectors to overlook firm-level cooperatives that failed to meet requirements of the law.[[54]](#footnote-54) With these moves, enterprise cooperatives expanded more rapidly. For many producers, the new buying cooperatives offered an introduction to the challenges of modern retail.

Their importance for the nascent consumer interest was the role they played in educating both employers and organized labor about consumer issues. In October 1941, the Vichy government issued a *Charte de Travail* that sought to organize French production by introducing corporatist bodies that would smooth relations between labor and employers. In announcing the Charter, Maréchal Pétain called on firms to form social committees what would see to the many needs of workers beyond mere wages and working conditions. Because the functions of the social committees were never enumerated, their activities varied from firm to firm. Some ran health and child services, and organized food packages to be sent to workers who had been relocated to work in Germany. The most common activity was to ensure adequate food and supplies for their own workers. Of the roughly 9,000 social committees operating in 1943, 70% managed worker cantines, 25% ran company gardens, and about 50% operated enterprise cooperatives.[[55]](#footnote-55) All new firm cooperatives had to be created in liaison with the *comité sociaux*, which workers came to refer to as *comités patates*, or potato committees, for their role in feeding the workforce.[[56]](#footnote-56)

The enterprise cooperatives faced withering criticism from France’s small retailers. As with their critique of other new forms of distribution of the late 1930s, retailers attacked the company cooperatives for evading taxes that retailers had to pay, and for artificially raising prices and then offering sales on those higher prices.[[57]](#footnote-57) They also worried that companies were subsidizing their buying groups, and that the additional cost would be passed on in their products.[[58]](#footnote-58) Some of the company cooperatives began to sell products that were otherwise extremely rare, and became something of a black market.[[59]](#footnote-59) Also, most firm buying groups seem not to have been following the rules.[[60]](#footnote-60) Many did not register as cooperatives, and labor inspectors turned a blind eye. Finally, beleaguered retailers warned of social discord, argued that the company buying groups would create tensions among French workers, as some gained privileged access to food and others did not, thus harming social harmony “at a time when unity is so important.”[[61]](#footnote-61) Other critics noted that France already had too many stores, and that allowing new entrants was just going to make the oversupply worse. Defenders of the firm cooperatives rebutted that they were not equivalent in their function to retail stores: they offered lower prices not because of company subsidies but because they sold a limited number of products and provided no advice to consumers. [[62]](#footnote-62) With pushback from the General Committee on the Organization of Retail (CGOC), a new circular of 5 August 1942 revisited the question, and led to a new treatment of enterprise cooperatives that was friendlier to retailers. These were limited to firms with at least 500 workers. They also had to work through existing whole sellers rather than buying directly from producers, and the kinds of products they sold had to be specified in their authorization decision. A requirement that they be re-registered yearly was introduced to sunset the system of enterprise cooperatives once the war ended.[[63]](#footnote-63)

The activities of the social committees were overseen by a national Office of social committees, with a main office in Paris overseen by André Romieu, as well as departmental offices.[[64]](#footnote-64) The departmental branch offices, which offered modest salaries, were occupied mostly by ex-trade union members from the communist trade union CGT, which supplemented their salaries. These departmental representatives were often at odds with Romieu, who emerged from the Catholic corporatist tradition and had previously worked in the Catholic *Comité d’action corporative*, a group the trade union movement saw as anti-union and reactionary. In 1943, with support from the CGT, Labor Minister Hubert Largardelle attempted, unsuccessfully, to displace Romieu in favor of a more labor-friendly leader.[[65]](#footnote-65) With Romieu out of the way, Largardelle and the CGT hoped to push for a more formal role for the enterprise social committees in the management of the firm. In a tension that would dominate France’s postwar consumer movement, the labor groups saw organization around workers’s consumer identities as a means to get the state to help increase worker leverage with management. This view was antithetical to the approach advocated by Romieu, who saw consumer organization as representing a “third way” that avoided the flaws of liberalism while also obviating the need for direct state intervention in the economy.

Following the war, Romieu’s work on enterprise social committees landed him as head of the new *Bureau de la Consommation* formed within the *Direction des Programmes Economique* of the Ministry of National Economy.[[66]](#footnote-66) The project fell under Fourrastier’s *Commissariat general de productivité*, which from 1950 formed a range of subcommittees to deal with specific challenges impeding productivity gains, including the role of public marketplaces, agriculture, the artisan class, managerial training, worker organization in the company, and others.[[67]](#footnote-67) Alongside these it formed a commission that explicitly focused on consumption: the Commission on Retail, Consumption and Quality, headed by Paul Gros, who ran the acquisitions department for the SNCF. The goal of the commission was to address the provision of information to consumers, including the roles of labeling, standards, quality certificates, and comparative product tests. It recommended the formation of a technical body to survey household consumption, which in 1953 led to the creation of CREDOC. It also became the sponsor and initial source of financial support for Romieu’s new consumer federation, the Union Fédérale de la Consommation (UFC).[[68]](#footnote-68) With this financial backing and with broad associational support, Romieu launched the UFC in October 1951.

The idea of the UFC emerged from initial discussions that took place within UNAF, the Union of National Family Associations founded immediately after World War II to support family interests in reconstruction. Family and women’s associations participated in the discussions, as well as consumer cooperatives, and they reached out to Romieu for support.[[69]](#footnote-69) Following a study tour to the United States accompanied by UFCS vice-president Irène Mançaux, Romieu proposed forming an independent organization that would bring together the range of French associations that had concerns related to consumption.[[70]](#footnote-70) In addition to family and women’s groups, the idea received support from France’s largest catholic labor union, the CFTC. Their focus was traditionally on wages and dignity in work, and Romieu—drawing on Sauvy’s analysis—emphasized their shared interest in a non-Malthusian corporatism that would ensure “the development of a free economy, but one guided by consumers.”[[71]](#footnote-71) He also emphasized that the first quality labels developed in the U.S. were promulgated by labor unions to certify that adequate working conditions, and that France’s labor law included a provision for similar labels.[[72]](#footnote-72) The UFC’s mandate, as laid out in Article 2 of its founding statute, was notably diverse: “to undertake all actions oriented toward education, to organize for consumer defense, to represent its members both with the government and with private organizations.”[[73]](#footnote-73) As a federation, it did not represent individual consumers, but instead a group of member associations that included women’s groups, family groups, some labor unions, and consumer cooperatives. By 1955, the UFC had 24 member organizations from these various groups.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Romieu tied the new organization directly to the goals of postwar economic recovery. Through information to consumers, it would help bridge the “apparent contradiction between the needs of production (uniformity, series, constancy, guaranteed sales) and the desire of consumption (diversity, mobility, freedom to not buy).”[[75]](#footnote-75) More concretely, the UFC justified its existence in terms of its long-term benefit for French productivity. “The pursuit of a project of economic expansion and increasing the living standards (*niveau de vie*) in France requires a focus on choosing the most useful activities…in which consumers can only play their essential role to the extent that the are appropriately informed and armed.”[[76]](#footnote-76) It also explicitly made the link to democracy, on the grounds that an organized consumer base made mass production consistent with decentralized consumption, allowing what the UFC called “an authentic democratic economy.”[[77]](#footnote-77) This idea of a democratic economy harkened back to the third-way logic of Romieu’s wartime work with enterprise social committees. He saw consumers as “conduits to bypass considerations of function, class or party and to try to make a synthesis. Because they are close to the needs of men, they are driven to recreate a principle of unity in our economy characterized by antagonism, and are therefore a means toward order and progress.”[[78]](#footnote-78) This coordinating function was abetted by the French government, which afforded the UFC access to important policymaking forums for a range of issues related to consumption. The group was quickly invited to sit on the Economic Council, the Conseil superieur de commerce, and national industry councils. They also worked with France’s major product and food safety organization, the *Service de la repression des fraudes*, to define the allowable features of products, including jams and jellies, oysters, wool products and furs.[[79]](#footnote-79) They joined the *Institut des vins de consommation courante*, with the goal of cleaning up the wine market and improving its quality.[[80]](#footnote-80)

But the goal was also tied to the challenges associated with productivity growth. By creating a “permanent liaison” among groups interested in consumption, individual consumers could “participate by their actions in the growth in productivity,” thereby increasing France’s standard of living.[[81]](#footnote-81) It was a message that fit well with Fourastier’s priorities for the CGP, which was providing funds to launch and sustain the UFC in its early years.[[82]](#footnote-82) The main emphasis of this economic focus was in providing research and information on products. Consistent with its role as a point of contact for France’s consumer-related interests, the UFC’s early publications, including the *Bulletins d’Information* launched in 1951 and the later *Notes documentaires*, were both targeted at a consumer specialist or a consumer product management (*cadres de la consommation)* audience.[[83]](#footnote-83) Early product studies published in its *Informational Bulletins* included the sale of meat under cellophane (September 1952), fat content of milk (April 1953), imposed prices (November 1953), and knitting wool (February 1954).[[84]](#footnote-84) The studies were carefully researched, but, with a narrow focus on consumer policy professionals, reached a small audience. In 1956, the *Bulletin d’Information* had just 257 subscribers.[[85]](#footnote-85)

To broaden the audience for their research, the UFC launched a series of *How to Buy* (“Savoir Acheter”) brochures in 1955 that were intended for broader consumer distribution.[[86]](#footnote-86) The first, in 1955, was on textiles; subsequent printings treated detergents, meats, fruits and vegetables.[[87]](#footnote-87) The *How to Buy* series launched the UFC into direct-to-consumer information provision, and they quickly embraced it. In 1956, the UFC organized the *Journée du consommateur* at the Salon des Arts Menagers, focused on the theme “applying science to life.”[[88]](#footnote-88) Echoing strategies of contemporary women’s magazines, they also began publishing recipes in the Salon’s monthly review, *Art Menager*.[[89]](#footnote-89) The addition of direct-to-consumer publishing helped their finances. In 1955, they had 24 member organizations, two permanent delegates and two secretarial staff, 100,000 active members and 200,000 “correspondent” members. Of their total budget of almost 15 million francs, 300,000 came from member fees, 1 million from sales of the *Information Bulletin*, and 2 million from sales of their *How to Buy*, brochures. The remaining 70% of their support came from the CGP.[[90]](#footnote-90)

The turning point in this move to provide direct consumer information came in September 1957, when the UFC under Romieu launched a daily information dispatch that reported on market conditions at Paris’s central wholesale market, Les Halles. Called *Conseils quotidiens pour menageres parisiennes*, or Daily advice for Parisian housewives, the short spot was broadcast at 8am as part of the radio show *Journal Parlé*, presumably in time for women to use the information in their food shopping. This information was based on early morning visits to Les Halles by a representative of the UFC, accompanied by the *Inspecteurs de la police economique*, who oversaw the market. They reported high and low prices for different products, and pointed out those products that were most attractive in terms of price. The focus was on perishable goods, ones that may change day-to-day. What was abundant, at what price? From 1959, the UFC also contributed to *Radio Parlé* at 8:00pm information for the markets the following morning, including fishing catches from that day that would make it to the market the following morning. They also generated a report to the newspapers, called *Météo de la menagère*, or Weather report for the housewife, that was distributed by France-Presse.[[91]](#footnote-91) Romieu, who did his own announcements, and went by the radio name Mr. Menu, compared it to helicopter-based traffic reporting.[[92]](#footnote-92) By pushing demand toward more abundant products, it should keep down inflation.[[93]](#footnote-93)

Romieu’s UFC drew in new organizations, with an associational membership that peaked at 36 participating associations by the mid-1950s. But as consumer policymaking became more prominent, the UFC also began losing some of its founding members. In 1954, the retail cooperatives left the UFC to create their own product testing lab, the *Laboratoire Cooperatif d’Analyses et de Recherches* (Labo-Coop).[[94]](#footnote-94) And, as the UFC attempted to consolidate its role as a central voice for consumer concerns, this pushed away other groups. In November 1956, the UFC called on its member organizations to recognize the UFC as presenting the single voice of consumer groups in discussions with the government. The family association FNCC rejected this, arguing it would weaken their role protecting consumers, and pointing out that they already had 2.8 million family members, while the UFC had few individual members. They simultaneously pulled out of the UFC.[[95]](#footnote-95) Other groups that remained, like the UFCS, also complained that the UFC was expanding beyond its original coordinating role, and requested, for example, that the UFC stop communicating directly with their own members rather than going through the head office.[[96]](#footnote-96)

Romieu put special effort into wooing labor unions to join. His arguments were mostly economic, and seemingly naive. He emphasized that consumer and union interests were naturally aligned, for example, since, as Sauvy had argued, only with a proper understanding of consumer needs could full employment be achieved.[[97]](#footnote-97) The main factor that seems to have convinced unions to take consumer issues seriously was the willingness of the French government to give consumer groups a voice in important economic policy forums. But the importance of that access, which the UFC sought to control, also meant that labor unions were not going to be satisfied for long with expressing their views via the UFC. In 1959, four of France’s unions pulled out of the UFC and banded together to form a new labor-oriented consumer group, the *Organisation général de la consommation* (ORGECO). With its formation the Catholic labor union UFTC, which had been present at the founding of Romieu’s organization, also quit the UFC. ORGECO launched in 1959 but, with little serious consideration about what activities to pursue, began work only in 1961, with a decision to follow the work of *Labo-Coop* and focus on conducting comparative tests. It saw these as “a stimulant for producers, a way to shine the light on certain failings of their commercial services, or further to attract producer attention to the differences in quality of European products.”[[98]](#footnote-98) It’s first product tests included yoghurt, butter and margarine, white goods, and textiles.[[99]](#footnote-99) UFC relations with ORGECO and with the cooperatives’ Labo-Coop remained cordial, and when the UFC launched its own product test magazine, *Que Choisir?*, in 1961, they included test results from both Labo-Coop and ORGECO.[[100]](#footnote-100)

## Jean Fourastier and Consumer Productivity

The third voice for the role of consumers in early postwar France was Jean Fourastier, the administrative head of the Productivity Commission (CGP) from which Romieu had launched his UFC. Trained at the *Ecole libre des sciences politiques*, the antecedent to today’s *Sciences Po*, he had worked for the government as an insurance commissioner in the 1930s and joined the Committee on the organization of insurance under Vichy.[[101]](#footnote-101) With the end of the war, he was swept into the administration that would help to channel U.S. funds into productivity projects in France. The result of this effort would be a generation of unprecedented economic growth in France that Fourastier himself later described as *les trentes glorieuses*.[[102]](#footnote-102) Like Sauvy, Fourastier provided an optimistic response to the neo-Malthusian critique of fast growth. Far more than just the size of France’s market, what mattered for Fourastier was the *quality* of consumption. He grappled with what productivity might mean in the context of household economics and concluded that more efficient purchases rested on three kinds of reforms. These reforms amounted to a rationalization of household consumption that meshed with the prevailing postwar Catholic-labor consensus that emphasized the professionalization of women’s work *inside* the household. France’s female labor participation rate, which peaked at .54 in 1920, was .47 at the end of World War II and declined to .38 by 1950.[[103]](#footnote-103) Fourastier’s conclusion was that if productivity in the workplace was important, so was productivity in household consumption, and he saw postwar inflation as one indicator of this low productivity.

His first priority was rational family budgeting. Households had to make optimal decisions about how to allocate their income across different kinds of products. This implied better training in economics and home economics. One piece of the solution was better consumer education, and he proposed the creation of a *Centre Technique de la Consommation* to address this need – a proposal that presaged the National Consumption Institute (INC) that would be created in the 1960s.[[104]](#footnote-104) Household equipment was also an important part of his vision for consumer productivity. He placed particular weight on the salutary benefits of refrigeration. Household refrigeration would allow consumers to purchase in bulk when prices were low, thus lessening the incentives by wholesalers and retailers to speculate—a charge that had been leveled at French retailers since the pre-revolutionary period.[[105]](#footnote-105) In part because of poor electricity distribution, and in part due to inadequate consumer credit financing options, French households were especially slow to adopt new kitchen technologies. In 1962, only 40 percent of households had a refrigerator, and only 30% had a washing machine.[[106]](#footnote-106) His second priority was greater transparency about product quality and price. Fourastier emphasized the link to inflation, noting that pricing transparency in particular would allow consumers “to buy when prices are lowest.” His third priority was on accessible consumer credit. Whereas many observers warned that consumer credit would drive demand and inflation, Fourastier felt it could help to hold prices down. With credit, he argued, consumers could stock up at moments when prices were low. Fourastier was a strong supporter of liberal consumer credit terms in the early 1950s, although this policy was reversed in the mid-1950s with the imposition of controls on the terms of sale credit as part of a broader effort to manage inflation.[[107]](#footnote-107)

While this focus on the household was important, Fourastier also felt that consumers could only act efficiently if the retail distribution system did not hold them back. But he struggled with the problem of increasing productivity in retail, which he felt was being impeded by two specific obstacles. One was the role of local market syndicates that policed prices in public markets and punished retailers who sold at low prices—so-called *casseurs*—either by assigning them stalls in bad locations within the market or even by refusing to sell them stalls at all. The second problem came from government restrictions that placed limits on innovations in retailing. Fourastier especially criticized the government’s prewar and wartime restrictions to protect small retailers. Fourastier was especially critical of the prewar ban on *prix uniques* and *camions bazaar*, which he saw as a “Malthusian” law that blocked retail innovation.[[108]](#footnote-108) While France would later become a leader in large-scale retail formats, with global leaders like Carrefour and Leclerc, retailers in the late 1940s were broadly perceived as economically backward. Self-service stores only appeared in France in 1948, and the first supermarkets would not appear until 1958.[[109]](#footnote-109) Most food stores at the time lacked basic refrigeration. Protected from consolidation, France had too many stores, which kept profits in the retail sector low, and left little capacity to make new business investments. The consequence was that price reductions coming from productivity gains in manufacturing were being absorbed as rents by an inefficient distribution system. His proposal, embedded in the *plan Monnet*, was therefore to break the pricing stranglehold of traditional retailers.[[110]](#footnote-110)

High prices and food scarcity in the late 1940s led to a new wave of group buying organizations that had a variety of sources. Some enterprise cooperatives remained in the wake of the war, and despite promises to not renew their licenses after the end of the war, they were gradually shut down starting only in 1950. A survey of firm and administrative buying groups in 1953 found only 2,700, and a visit to one of them revealed facilities that were simple and run-down, with only 20 items for sale.[[111]](#footnote-111) At the same time, new “fake cooperatives” emerged that operated as direct purchasing groups but falsely sold themselves as cooperatives.[[112]](#footnote-112) The Association of Consumers and Users (ACU) in Neuilly-sur-Seine formed as a buying group in in 1948. Like the prewar buying groups, members paid 200 francs to join and received a 20-30% price reduction on basic foods, including meat, butter, eggs, cheese, oil, sugar and others. By 1955 it had 850 member families.[[113]](#footnote-113) The family associations FNAPF and UFCS both encouraged the creation of new local buying groups through the country. Many of these groups survived into the 1970s, when they were absorbed into the country’s expanding national consumer association.

Fourastier was skeptical that such collective buying schemes could ease the pricing pressure from traditional retailing. Instead, he emphasized the need for modernization of the existing retail and distribution system. He thought that a national cold chain, for example, in which food remained under refrigeration all the way from the farm producer to the household, would help eliminate the market power of economic middlemen. For meats, the cold chain would allow for slaughtering at the point of production, which would limit the ability of urban slaughterhouses to ration meat in order to maintain high prices. He also argued for a rationalization of retailing itself, but a modernization driven by traditional retailers. One solution was to gather them together in commercial centers that would offer consumers a single access point for the whole range of goods they sought. The template was the grand magasin, except that independent retailers would run each of the departments. By the mid-1950s, such centers had already formed in some of France’s provincial cities, including Tours (the “Passage de Tours”), Buebwiller, Mulhouse, and Limoges.[[114]](#footnote-114) But these commercial centers highlighted a key conceptual problem with retail modernization with which France’s economic planners struggled. By bringing together individual shops in one place that was accessible by car – a move that would give consumers greater convenience – one also eliminated competition among retailers that would hold down price. The solution, Fourastier concluded, was either price fixing by the state, which he opposed, or the construction of active consumer groups that could police retail prices.[[115]](#footnote-115)

Initial efforts to force rationalization of this kind onto retailers focused on direct manipulation of taxation. The *patente*, a local tax paid by retailers, was progressively increased. France also introduced a value added tax (VAT) that not only required more detailed reporting of store accounts, and hence limited opportunities for tax evasion, but also allowed firms to skip taxes on capital outlays. For the retail sector, the VAT put a hand in the fiscal scale in favor or larger, more capital intensive distributors, to the detriment of small independent retailers.[[116]](#footnote-116) Retailers were also forced to join, and make contributions to, France’s new social security scheme. For independent retailers, who had traditional relied on the sale of their shop to finance their retirement, the new social benefit looked like an additional tax. But the French state had over-estimated how much leverage it had over independent retailers, and France’s independent retailers responded to this assault on their livelihoods by mobilizing. In 1953, the bookseller Pierre Poujade launched a tax strike in his home town of Sain-Céré (Lot) that quickly spread to most of France. Poujade’s rise was rapid. By 1955, his movement to promote traditional sectors in France, the Union for the Defense of Retailers and Artisans (UDCA), had gathered 400,000 members. When Poujade threw his support behind the French Popular Party (PPF), they won 11% of the national vote in the 1956 elections.[[117]](#footnote-117) Yet his fall was almost equally precipitous. Once in power, he turned on de Gaulle, and his supporters, who were dominated by Gaullists, abandoned him. This collapse, occurring just as retail modernization was beginning in earnest in France, left traditional retailers without little recourse. It was in that context that many small shopkeepers turned to a new set of local consumer groups to help weave a viable path through modernization.

## Experiments with Retail-Consumer Coordination

Many of the groups they reached out to had their roots before World War II in a movement to promote women’s expertise. The idea traced its roots to a Catholic project of the 1930s that sought, during a period of high unemployment, to bring women back into the home by professionalizing work in the house. Supported by the rise of home economics training, new household equipment, and Paulette Bernege’s ideas about the optimization of household tasks, the UFCS launched the Ligue de la Mère au Foyer to encourage and support women working at home.[[118]](#footnote-118) They successfully lobbied for France’s *allocation familiale*, a pro-natalist welfare transfer intended to top up salaries for *familles nombreuses*, to be increased when a housewife opted not to work.[[119]](#footnote-119) They also promoted the idea of the homemaker as a profession with specific expertise. Trade unions, who hoped to lure housewives out of the work place, endorsed the idea of women’s work in the house as embodying expertise analogous to shop floor skills. Through the 1950s, the UFCS continued to be an advocate for professionalization of the household, and in the winter of 1956 the UFCS organized its first *Journées de la bonne acheteuse*. Women who completed the session received a “good shopper card.” A brochure for the program explained “By your wise purchase, you contribute, to a large extent, to improving the standard of living of your family and of the whole of France.”[[120]](#footnote-120) This linking of consumer savvy with national economic success became the foundation for a set of regional projects that emerged in the early 1950s to help control inflation and manage consumer-retail relations. These experiments helped to institutionalize the idea that critical technical expertise necessary to properly managing product markets resided with household consumers.

In 1950, after her study tour to the United States with André Romieu, Irène Mançaux, vice president of the UFCS, proposed the creation of local groups of “femmes acheteuses.” The pilot program was launched in Lyon, where a Ligue de la Mère au Foyer had already existed from before the war. Initially, the group’s activity was limited to recording precise accounts of their household spending. In 1952, as worries about inflation rose, Pierre Massenet, Prefect of the Rhone department, proposed the creation of a Retail-Consumer Conciliation Committee (Comité d’entente commerce-consommateurs). The idea, proposed by the state-sponsored Departmental Union of Family Associations—which the UFCS had refused to join—was to bring consumers, workers and employers together to promote better information about product markets and pricing.[[121]](#footnote-121) With help from UFCS volunteers, the committee assembled daily lists of products sold at market and the best prices they found for them. The lowest prices they found for “good quality products” were then distributed every Thursday by radio and via the local press.[[122]](#footnote-122) Women also reported each week the budget for a family of five.[[123]](#footnote-123) Their price information became the basis for a price labeling scheme, in which retailers could market products that met the average (“indicative”) or best price from the survey by employing special colored stickers.[[124]](#footnote-124) The consumer representatives to the Committee also received complaints from consumers and worked with their counterparts in the retail sector to resolve them. The committee, which became a template for similar projects in an estimated 40 cities across France, was praised for holding prices down, and for creating “an atmosphere of mutual understanding between researchers and consumers.”[[125]](#footnote-125)

The Lyon liaison “Commerce-Consommation” extended its goals beyond mere price surveillance. They were credited with helping retailers transform their businesses to keep up with the evolving demands of consumers. They helped some failing bakeries to transform into retailers that sold basic consumer goods: radios, baby product, even hair styling, or goods that were used for travel. In some cases, meetings with consumer groups convinced local retailers to shift to self-service format. In other cases, the committees helped to advocate frozen foods, to help with sales of foods that were in over-supply, or to advocate for distinctive local products. They participated in radio broadcasts that announced products that were in surplus and therefore “momentarily advantageous,” and including their recommended price.[[126]](#footnote-126)

The Comité d’entente idea from Lyon spread first to Lille, Strasbourg, Toulouse and Grenoble, and then ultimately to Paris. Their activities varied by region, but most undertook similar projects to the liaison group in Lyon. The comités de liaison in Grenoble, Reims, Strasbourg, and Lille all gave radio emissions on products that were temporarily abundant along with a survey of prices.[[127]](#footnote-127) In Vitry-le-François, the lowest prices found by consumer committee were posted in the local market for consumer reference.[[128]](#footnote-128) The Consumer liaison committee in Mulhouse worked with retailers to help to commercialize the local breed of Sungau chickens.[[129]](#footnote-129) In Paris, the Conseil de Clientele de l’Alimentation Parisienne, in which unions will also participated, combined product information for consumers with consumer surveys to collect and share their opinions on products.[[130]](#footnote-130) In other cities, the local consumer-retail committees also invited representatives of industry and even the media to join them.

One of the most ambitious of these spin-offs appeared in Alsace. The Consumer Association of the Haut-Rhin (ACOHR, “L’Association des Consommateurs Haut-Rhinois), launched in November 1953 under joint impetus from family associations and local trade associations. Like many similar groups around France, they began by conducting price surveys, with special attention to butchers and grocers. In one of its first collective efforts, for example, ACOHR organized 100 consumers to survey butchers in Mulhouse. Participating housewives each asked for 100 grams of rumpsteak. They then recorded the price, noted which stores had labeled prices, and which stores actually sold rumpsteak or recommended another cut of beef.[[131]](#footnote-131) What was new about ACOHR’s strategy was that it also reached out to a small group of retailers who agreed to commit to a common code of practice (*code de loyauté*). The code focused on issues of quality and pricing, with a special emphasis on getting retailers to post prices in their display windows, at a time when posting of prices was both uncommon and not legally required. Participating stores indicated compliance by displaying an ACOHR signboard in their window. ACOHR in turn took out advertisements in the local paper that explained their code of practice and listed participating stores. For participating retailers, ACOHR became a means to differentiate themselves as consumer-friendly. They posted signs, for example, that read: “Buy only in shops that display their prices.” The group also gave retailers a channel to get information to consumers. In one effort, in the summer of 1954, participating grocers coordinated to offer sales on specific products, like peaches and plums. Another example was their campaign, reminiscent of the social buying clubs of a generation earlier, encouraging consumers to do their Christmas shopping early.[[132]](#footnote-132)

Mostly these schemes applied to small retailers, especially in the food sectors. But France’s large stores also embraced the idea of the expert consumer, although on a store-by-store basis. Starting in 1953, many of France’s *grands magasins* as well as retail chains formed customer advisory groups (*conseils de clientele*). Drawing from members of local family and women’s groups, including the UFCS, they gave feedback on choice of products to sell, on sales techniques, or the organization of the store, even on opening hours.[[133]](#footnote-133) One common practice was to rely on the consumer advisory group to help select clothing for the upcoming summer and winter collections. Some asked their consumer advisors to evaluate samples of potential products on a scale of 1-10, the results of which they either employed for making purchase decisions or even passed back to producers. Others allowed their consumer advisors to take products home and use them, then report back. And, like the local consumer-retail groups, the customer advisory councils were found not just in Paris: they began to appear across France’s larger cities, including Villefranche, Nimes, Nantes, Lyon, and others. In one case, this sort of consultation even extended to a retail association. In 1954, in an effort to promote paper and plastic packaging, the association of the French food packaging industries formed a “Study and liaison committee” that included prominent consumer representatives (the UFC and Conseil national des femmes), regulators (AFNOR and Répression des Fraudes) and industry groups (Société de la Cellophane and the retailer BHV).[[134]](#footnote-134) The UFC observed that, for the first time, “retailers have admitted that they don’t always know what consumers want, and that they should give them a voice.”[[135]](#footnote-135)

These mostly-local consumer-retail liaisons arose primarily in response to pressures from departmental prefects to deal with inflation. But they also responded to a growing criticism of France’s retail sector, one that Fourastier had emphasized in his work on productivity, that retailers were keeping prices up even as producers were increasing productivity and driving costs down. This “distortion,” as it was called, had to be caused by a lack of productivity growth in retailing to match productivity gains in manufacturing. [[136]](#footnote-136) In 1954, Conseil Superieur du Commerce formed a Commission Liaisons Productions-Commerce-Consommation, that would focus on the role of retailers in promoting productivity, and appointed André Romieu, who was still running the UFC, to head it. The Commission’s purpose was to make preparations for France’s *États Generaux du Commerce*, a meeting that took place every seven years, and whose theme for 1955 was to be the role of retail in promoting productivity.[[137]](#footnote-137) Not surprisingly, the Estates General vaunted the promise of the new consumer-retailer liaisons. While they had no authority to encourage retailers to act, M. Barrier, president of the CSC, began to advocate for organized meetings of retailers, consumers and producers. He called them *liaisons production-commerce-consommation*. They would, he argued, help producers “recognize the real needs of consumers.” [[138]](#footnote-138)

The collegial nature of the consumer-retailer liaisons, without a strong role for the state, clearly fit well with André Romieu’s conception of a corporatist third way for France, and it was with his attention and support that they came to be publicly embraced. Romieu’s consumer association, the UFC, had for several years worked with the local comités de liaison to help them identify local consumer partners they would work with.[[139]](#footnote-139) His support, along with renewed concern about inflation, led to a formalization of the legal status of the local committees. In March 1959, the Minister of the Interior issued a circular asking departmental prefects to institutionalize what it dubbed *comiteés d’entente*. A subsequent letter from Pierre Chatenet, Minister of the Interior, to departmental prefects in August 1959 encouraged them to “instantly” launch new consumer-retailer liaisons, with the goal of “assuring a harmonious development of market activities and of living standards for the population by an effort to adapt as well as possible production and services to the demands of consumers.”[[140]](#footnote-140) He also laid out a standardized and elaborate formal structure for the new committees, including tripartite retailer-producer-consumer “committee offices,” temporary working groups, a press liaison office, and a printed “bulletin de liaison” to be distributed by unions, family associations and other civil society groups. Formal notes of their meetings were to be passed to the Interior Ministry.[[141]](#footnote-141) By August of 1959, there were 12 such committees around France, several in Paris, and 11 new ones in the process of formation.[[142]](#footnote-142) A year later, in the early fall of 1960, there were an estimated 40 of these groups, half of which were reportedly extremely active.[[143]](#footnote-143) But the surge in liaison group formation clearly put pressure on the local offices of France’s nascent consumer groups. The UFCS, for example, which by 1961 was working with retailer liaison committees in Lille, Lyon, Strasbourg, and Toulouse, reported that its local representatives were, in addition to their other activities, attending weekly meetings with retailer associations.[[144]](#footnote-144) They also reported a lack of sufficient preparation by some members of the committees, insufficient rigor in discussions, and inadequate coordination across the committees.[[145]](#footnote-145)

In 1960, in preparation for the Fourth Plan, the Commissariat Général du Plan launched its first working group with a mandate to look at consumer issues. It was inspired by the local liaison committees, and dealth with consumer-retailer-producer relations. André Romieu, ever at the center of new consumer initiatives, was tapped to head the working group. At its first meeting, Romieu argued that the local consumer-retail liaison groups “offer a means of acting both on the practices of retailers and on the habits and behavior of consumers.”[[146]](#footnote-146) It was exactly the kind of win-win arrangement that appealed to his corporatist aesthetic. But it also signaled the beginning of a much more direct government role in consumer markets: to promote local consumer groups, to provide product information for consumers, and to encourage consumer input into all areas of government policy. This entrance of the French state into consumer field took place over the course of the 1960s, and is taken up in the following chapter.

\*\*\*

The 1950s in France saw the rise of direct engagement with consumers both by the French state and by retailers. In each case, that engagement arose as a consequence of postwar planning. But the path from economic planning to consumer organization was plural. France’s postwar apostles of consumption identified three problems to which they saw consumer organization as a response. The first problem, emphasized especially by Alfred Sauvy, was the risk that new planning powers arrogated to the state would lead French industry to capture those powers for their own interests. In particular, they would use them to coordinate ouput restrictions that would keep production low and prices high. The answer, Sauvy argued, was to target planning at the consumer welfare, and to encourage consumer input into economic policymaking. A second problem for France’s planning technocrats was that successful growth in productivity raised concerns about the willingness and ability of French consumers to adapt their consumption patterns to new fordist modes of production. Would consumer demand rise with increasing output? Would their product preferences shift to meet the new kinds of supply from mass production? Both Jean Fourastier and André Roumier argued that a positive answer to these questions depended on the education and organization of consumer interests. Finally, Fourastier in particular worried that inefficiencies in retailing might impede consumers from reaping the benefits of productivity gains in manufacturing. Even as production costs fell, retail inefficiencies meant that consumer prices continued to rise. This anti-modernization critique of traditional retailers led them to approach France’s nascent consumer organizations in order to coordinate around product pricing and sales practices. Taken together, these three channels linked the rise of France’s nascent consumer interest directly back to the expanded powers of the French state in the form of indicative planning.

1. Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981),172. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Alfread Sauvy, *La Prévision économique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1943), 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Georges Blanc, *Le Consommateur dans l’Organisation de l’économie: Consommation Libre ou Consommation Dirigée* (Paris: Librairie generale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1945. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Commissariat general du plan has received wide academic attention. See Peter Hall, *Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Marie-Laure Djelic, *Exporting the American Model: The Postwar Transformation of European Business* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Andrew Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism: The Changing Balance of Public and Private Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. AN 81AJ/185, Commissariat general a la productivite, “Projet special d’exploitation des missions, July 1, 1955. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Philip Nord, France’s New Deal (2012), 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, Union Federale de la Consommation, Rapport du conseil d’administration a lassemhlee generale annuelle du 15 juin 1956, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. AN 81AJ/183, “Pourquoi les Etats-Généraux du Commerce 1955?”, Association pour les états généraux du commerce, c1954, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. “Vie des mouvements,” *Bulletin D’information* *(UFC)* 4, no. 7 (September-October 1956), 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. AN 81AJ/176, M. Fourastié, Groupe de Travail de la Productivité, M. Allais, “Pouvons-Nous Atteindre les Hauts niveaux de vie Americains?”, c1948, Section V, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Malthus, *Principles of Political Economy*, 2nd ed., 325 (Cited in B. A. Corry, “Malthus and Keynes – A Reconsideration,” *The Economic Journal* 68, no 276 (1859), 721.) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Cited in Jean Baptiste Say, *Letters to Thomas Robert Malthus on Political Economy and Stagnation of Commerce* (London, 1821), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. William J. Baumol, “Retrospectives: Say’s Law,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13, no. 1 (1999), 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Jean Baptiste Say, *Letters to Thomas Robert Malthus on Political Economy and Stagnation of Commerce* (London, 1821), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. It is a fascinating footnote in European economic history that Malthus both drew his inspiration from and had his most profound impact on French, rather than British, economic debates. Malthus’s own thinking seems to have been deeply influenced by France’s 18th Century physiocrats—François Quesnay, physician to Mme. Pompadour, and his student Dupont de Nemours—who were skeptical of state-led industrial policies and emphasized the value of agriculture. Malthus felt that while industrial workers would not consume beyond bare necessities, agricultural workers, in part because they were poor, could be expected to create new demand. This French-inspired insight was important because it became the basis for an intellectual case for free trade, first in England, and later in post-World War II France. Malthus, who had initially supported protectionism under the Corn Laws, later shifted to support free trade on the grounds that it would allow Britain to exchange its excess industrial goods for foreign agricultural outputs that would find adequate demand at home. In postwar France, a similar Malthus-inspired anxiety over inadequate domestic demand created the platform for a broad liberal-Catholic coalition in support of a common European market. Samuel Hollander, “On Malthus’s Physiocratic References,” History of Political Economy 24, no. 2 (1992), 370-371; Thomas Sowell, “The General Glut Controversy Reconsidered,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 15, no. 3 (1963), 196; Yves Charbit, *Economic, Social and Demographic Thought in the XIXth Century: The Population Debate from Malthus to Marx* (New York: Springer, 2009), 101; Samuel Hollander, “Malthus’s Abandonment of Agricultural Protectionism: A Discovery in the History of Economic Thought,” *American Economic Review* 82, no. 3 (1992), 650-651. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Say accepted the idea that there might be temporary periods of hoarding (saving). William J. Baumol, “Retrospectives: Say’s Law,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13, no. 1 (1999), 201-202 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Kenneth Mouré, *Managing the franc under Poincaré*??? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 8. (from Dobbin) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Frank R. Dobbin, “The Social Construction of the Great Depression: Industrial Policy during the 1930s in the United States, Britain, and France,” *Theory and Society* 22, No. 1 (1993), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. J. Vialatoux, “La These Malthusienne devant l’epreuve de la crise,” *Les Études philosophiques* 6, nos. 2-3 (September 1932), 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Alice Buttner, “L’Abaissement du prix de revient dans le commerce de detail,” Doctoral Thesis presented to the Law Faculty at the University of Paris, (Paris: Éditions A. Pedone, 1936), 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 94-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. François Crouzet, “The Historiography of French Economic Growth in the Nineteenth Century,” *Economic History Review* 56, no. 2 (2003), 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Alfred Sauvy, “Le Malthusianisme Anglo-Saxon,” *Population* 2, no. 2 (April – June 1947), 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Alain Berger, “Sortir du Malthusianisme Éconmique,” *Esprit* 210 (January 1954), 24; also Charles Kindleberger, “Postwar Resurgence of the French Economy,” in Stanley Hoffmann et al., eds., *In Search of France: The Economy Society, and Political System in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Alfred Sauvy, “’Maturité Économique’ et Malthusianisme,” *Revue économique* 1, no. 2 (July 1950), 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Guy Palmade (Capitalisme et capitalistes français au XIXe, Paris: 1961) argued that a Malthusian tendancy in French capitalism had caused France to modernize slowly. Stanley Hoffman, et al. eds., *In Search of France* (New York: 1963, p. 17) diagnosed France’s Third Republic has having “more breaks than motor.” Michel Crozier (The Bureaucratic Phenomenon, Chicago: 1964) traced France’s lack of dynamism to a sort of organizational pathology in which bureaucratic norms trumped effective governance. Sauvy’s political economy logic was more overtly political, with an account that would later be reprised by Mancur Olson in his *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Pierre Lalumieère, *L’Inspection des finances* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959, p 194, cited in Charles Kindleberger, “Postwar Resurgence of the French Economy,” in Stanley Hoffmann et al., eds. *In Search of France: The Economy Society, and Political System in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Heny W. Ehremann, *Organized Business in France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Richard Vinen, *The Politics of French Business, 1936-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Frank L. Wilson, *Interest Group Politics in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 101-102. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Béatrice Touchelay, “L’INSEE et le CNPF de 1946 a 1961: lhistoire d’une alliance modernisatrice*,” Le Mouvement social* 191 (April-June 2000), 30; Richard Vinen, *Bourgeois Politics in France, 1945-1951* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Andrew Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism: The Changing Balance of Public and Private Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969; Peter Hall, *Governing the Economy* (Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. H. B. Feigenbaum, *The Politics of Public Enterprise: Oil an the French State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Ezra N. Suleiman, “State Structures and Clientelism: The French State versus the “Notaires,” *British Journal of Political Science* 17, no. 4 (1987); Michel Bauer and Elie Cohen, “Le politique, l'administratif, et 1'exercice du pouvoir industriel,” *Sociologie du Travail* 27 (1985), 324-327; Robert Elgie and Steven Griggs, *French Politics: Debates and Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 13-15; Philip H. Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France: French Security Policy and the Gaullist Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 11; Ezra N. Suleiman, *Private Power and Centralization in France: The Notaires and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 259; [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Christopher Flood, *Political Myth* (New York: Routledge, 2002),194-215. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. “Vie des mouvements,” *Bulletin D’information* (UFC) 4, no. 7 (September-October 1956), 13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ibid., 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Léon Tabah, “Alfred Sauvy: Statistician, Economist, Demographer and Iconoclast (1898–1990),” *Population Studies* 45, no. 2 (1991), 354-355. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Alfred Sauvy, “Le Malthusianisme Anglo-Saxon,” *Population* 2, no. 2 (April – June 1947), 223. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ibid., 221. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ibid., 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Joseph J. Spengler, “French Population Theory Since 1800,” *The Journal of Political Economy* 44, no. 5 (October 1936), 585-586. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid., 597. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, André Romieu, Le Role du Commissariat general a la productivite dans le domaine de la consommation, July 19, 1956. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ellen Furlough, *Consumer Cooperation in France: The Politics of Consumption, 1834-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ministère de l’intérieur, *Informations générales*, June 23, 1942, 555-556. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Maurice Guérin, Rapport concernant la modification et la codification de la legislation relative aux cooperatives de consommation,” Assmblée Consulatative Provisoire, no. 209, Feb. 20, 1945, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. AN 68AJ/11, Groupements de consommateurs (groupement d’achats), Service Interprofessionnel de la Distribution, Definition des Organismes d’Achat en Commun, January 16, 1946. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Albin Gontard, Rapport sur le problem des economats Patronaux et groupements d’achats, October 10, 1941, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Comité general d’Organisation du commerce, Rapport sur: Les cooperatives d’usines, d’entreprises et d’administrations, November 14, 1942, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Fabrice Grenard, “La Question du ravitailement dans les entreprises francaises: insuffisances et paradoxes,” in Christian Chevandier and Jean-Claude Daumas, editors, *Travailler dans les entreprises sous l'Occupation* (Beçanson: Presses universitaires de Franche-Compté, 2007), 396; AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Groupe des Industries Métalurgique, Méchaniques et connexe de la Region Parisienne, Note sur les cooperatives entreprises, August 29, 1941. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Comité general dorganisation du commerce, Rapport sur: Les cooperatives d’entreprises, November 14, 1942, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Letter from A. Parodi, the Ministere de la production industrielle et du travil, to the Inspecteurs divisionnaires du travail et de la Main-d’oeuvre, August 16, 1940, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Jean-Pierre Le Crom, “La naissance des comités d’entreprise: une revolution par la loi?” Travail et Emploi 63 (1995), 60, 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Max Bonnafous, Secretariat d’Etat pour l’agriculture et la ravitaillement, May 5, 1942, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. AN 68AJ/11, Groupements de consommateurs (groupement d’achats), Comité Général des Organisations de Commerce, Les Groupements d’Acheteurs: Note sur l’Etat de la Question, November 9, 1943. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Albin Gontard, Rapport sur le problem des economats Patronaux et groupements d’achats, October 10, 1941, 1-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Comité general d’Organisation du commerce, Rapport sur: Les cooperatives d’usines, d’entreprises et d’administrations, November 14, 1942, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Service des Études Générales, Note pour M. Gilles, June 27, 1945. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. *L’Épicier*, July 4, 1941, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Office interprofessionnel de la distribution, “La politique de loffice interprofessionnel de la distribution à l’égard des coopérativers d’entreprises,” July 6, 1945, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. AN 68AJ/11, Cooperatives d’Entreprises, Comité general dorganisation du commerce, Rapport sur: Les cooperatives d’entreprises, November 14, 1942, 2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. The president was Jacques Warnier, a textile industrialist with roots in the Catholic social movement that advocated corporatist economic organization for France. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Jean-Pierre Le Crom, *Syndicats, nous voilà!: Vichy et le corporatisme* (Paris: Les editions de l’atelier, 1991), 297-299. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. “La Naissance de l’U.F.C,” *Bulletin D’Information de L’UFC*, September-October 1973 ; PJW, Box 366, Letter from UFCS to A. Romieu, 23 June 1951. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. AN 81AJ/179, Memorandum sur l’assistance technique et la politique francaise de la productivité, c 1951, 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. “La Naissance de l’U.F.C,” *Bulletin D’Information de L’UFC*, September-October 1973. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. FMPL, 12 D 1, Folder 571, Note d’information sur l’Union Fédérale de la Consommation, dossier d’information prepared by J. Picard, February 1968, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. “Deux reunions syndicales sur la consommation,” *Bulletin D’information* *(UFC)* 4, no. 9 (December 1956), 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ibid., 22-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Paul Maquenne, “la qualite et les droits des consommateurs,” *L’Actualité fiduciaire*, April 1953. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. AN 81AJ/183, Commissariat general de la productivite, “Programme d’action 1954-1955 de l’Union Federale de la Consommation,” c 1955, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, Union Federale de la Consommation, Rapport du conseil d’administration a l’assemblee generale annuelle du 15 juin 1956, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid., 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Ibid., 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. André Romieu, “Les Producteurs sont-ils des coquins et les consommateurs des imbeciles?” *La France Catholique*, May 8, 1953. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. AN 81AJ/183, Commissariat general de la productivité, “Programme d’action 1954-1955 de l’Union Fédérale de la Consommation,” c 1955, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid., 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Alexandrian Marie-Odile, L’Institut National de la Consommation, thesis prepared for the Universite de droit, d’économie et des sciences d’Aix-Marseille, 1993, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. AN 81AJ/183, UFC, “Rapport du conseil d’administration a l’assemblee generale ordinaire,” March 25, 1954, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. FMPL, 12 D 1, Folder 571, Note d’information sur l’Union Fédérale de la Consommation, dossier d’information prepared by J. Picard, February 1968, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. AN 81AJ/183, Commissariat general de la productivite, “Programme d’action 1954-1955 de l’Union Federale de la Consommation,” c 1955, 1-2.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, Union Federale de la Consommation, Rapport du conseil d’administration a lassemhlee generale annuelle du 15 juin 1956, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. The Savoir Acheter pamphlets were published in collaboration with the *Société Auxiliaire pour la Diffusion des Editions de Productivité* (SADEP), the publishing house for Fourastier’s economic productivity work. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. AN 81AJ/183, Commissariat general de la productivite, “Programme d’action 1954-1955 de l’Union Federale de la Consommation,” c 1955, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, Union Federale de la Consommation, Rapport du conseil d’administration a lassemhlee generale annuelle du 15 juin 1956, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. PJW, Box 366, UFC, Rapport du conseil d’administration a l’assemblee generale du 8 november 1968. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. AN 81AJ/183, Commissariat general de la productivite, “Programme d’action 1954-1955 de l’Union Federale de la Consommation,” c 1955, 8; AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, Union Federale de la Consommation, Rapport du conseil d’administration a lassemhlee generale annuelle du 15 juin 1956, 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. PJW, Box 366, André Romieu, Trois Ans d’information des consommateurs sur les ressources du marche, 12 Avril 1960, 4-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. *The New Yorker*, 1957. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. PJW, Box 366, UFC, Les “conseils aux menageres” au Journal Parle, sept 1957, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. François Daujam, Information et pouvoir des consommateurs: Le role de l’union federale des consommateurs, These, presentee a la faculte des sciences economiques et socials de l’Universite de Toulouse, 29 April 1980, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. PJW, Box 366, Letter from M. Brot, FNCC to A. Romieu, UFC, 5 Feb 1957. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. PJW, Box 366, Letter from UFCS to A. Romieu, UFC, 7 may 1958. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. “Deux reunions syndicales sur la consommation,” Bulletin D’information (UFC) 4, no. 9 (December 1956), 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. FMPL, 12 D 1, Folder 571, Note d’information sur l’Union Fédérale de la Consommation, dossier d’information prepared by J. Picard, February 1968, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. “Avis et Rapports du Conseil Economique et Social,” Journal Officiel, March 23, 1963, 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, André Romieu, Le Role du Commissariat general a la productivite dans le domaine de la consommation, July 19, 1956, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Régis Boulat, “Jean Fourastié ou le prophète repenti,” *Vingtième Siecle* 91, no. 3 (2006), 11-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Jean Fourastier, *Les Trentes Glorieuses: Ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979). [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Claudia Olivetti, “The Female Labor Force and Long-run Development: The American Experience in Comparative Perspective,” NBER Working Paper, November 2013, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. AN 81AJ/176, M. Fourastié, Groupe de Travail de la Productivité, “Presentation et Resumé des rapports sur la consommation et la distribution,” Consommation et Distribution 20 (29 September 1948), 2-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. AN 81AJ/176, M. Fourastié, Groupe de Travail de la Productivité, “Resumé sur le Probleme de la Distribution,” Consommation et Distribution 20 (September 29, 1948), 3-4, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Ministry of Economics and Finance, Conférence de Presse tenue par Madame Christiane Scrivener, May 26, 1976. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Sabine Éffosse, *Le crédit à la consommation en France, 1947-1965: De la stigmatisation à la réglementation* (Paris: Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, 2014); Gunnar Trumbull, *Consumer Lending in France and America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. AN 81AJ/176, M. Fourastié, Groupe de Travail de la Productivité, “Resumé sur le Probleme de la Distribution,” Consommation et Distribution 20 (September 29, 1948), 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. “La modernization de la distribution satisfait-elle les besoins du consommateur?,” *Consommateur Actualité*, no 14, 25 november 1969, 3-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. AN 81AJ/176, M. Fourastié, Groupe de Travail de la Productivité, “Resumé sur le Probleme de la Distribution,” *Consommation et Distribution* 20 (September 29, 1948), 3-4, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Marcel Rives, “Coopératives d’entreprises et d’administrations,” *La Revue administrative* 9, No. 53 (September-October 1956), 508-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Bulletin municipal official de la Ville de Paris, December 11, 1950, 822. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. AN 81AJ/183, “Association des consommateurs et usagers de Neuilly-sur-Seine,” c 1954. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, André Romieu, Le Role du Commissariat general a la productivite dans le domaine de la consommation, July 19, 1956, 21; AN 81AJ/176, M. Fourastié, Groupe de Travail de la Productivité, “Resumé sur le Problème de la Distribution,” Consommation et Distribution 20 (September 29, 1948), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, André Romieu, Le Role du Commissariat general a la productivite dans le domaine de la consommation, July 19, 1956. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Gabriel Goodliffe, *The Resurgence of the Radical Right in France: From Boulangisme to the Front Nationale* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) ,219. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. For more on Poujade, see: Romain Souillac, *Le mouvement Poujade: de la defense professionnelle au populisme nationaliste, 1953-1962* (Paris: Sciences Po Press, 2007); Stanley Hoffman, [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. “La Mère au Foyer,” *Etudes* (July 1937), 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. *Les libertés dans la vie sociale* (Lyon: Imprimerie Express, 1938), 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. AN 81AJ/183, UFCS, “Journées de la Bonne Acheteuse, 23-27 October, 1954. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Thérèse Doneaud and Christian Guérin, *Les femmes agissent, le monde change: histoire inedited de l’union feminine civique et sociale* (Paris: 2005), 120; Jean Meynaud, “Les groupement de defense des consommateurs,” *Revue économique* 12, no. 2 (1961), 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. AN 81AJ/185, “Les acheteuses et les problèmes de la consommation,” La Femme dans la Vie Sociale (UFCS), No. 264, c1954; Thérèse Doneaud and Christian Guérin, Les femmes agissent le monde change: histoire inedite de l’Union feminine civique et sociale (Paris: Les Éditions du cerf, 2005), 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. AN 81AJ/183, UFC, “Quelques Exemples de l’action des consommateurs sur les marques,” September 1954, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, André Romieu, Le Role du Commissariat general a la productivite dans le domaine de la consommation, July 19, 1956, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. “Les comités locaux d’entente ‘commerce-consommation’,” *Bulletin d’Information* (UFC) 6, No. 4 (June 1958), 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Jean Meynaud, “Les groupements de defense des consommateurs,” *Revue économique*, vol. 12, 1961, 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. AN 81AJ/183, “Commissarit general a la productivite, “Program d’Action 1954-1955 de l’Union feminine civique et sociale”, October 1, 1954. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. AN, 19930275/36, Commissariat Général du Plan, Besoins des Consommateurs, Procès-verbal de la séance du 24 Octobre 1960 du groupe de travail no. 5, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. “Le Conseil de clientele de l’alimentation parisienne,” *Bulletin d’Information* *(UFC)* 6, no. 7 (November-December 1958), 15-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. AN 81AJ/183, UFC, “Quelques Exemples de l’action des consommateurs sur les marques,” September 1954, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. “L’Association des Consommateurs Haut-Rhinois,” *Bulletin d’Information* (UFC) 28 (February 1955), 21-22; Marie-Emmanuelle Chessel, *Histoire de la consommation* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012), 90; Jean Meynaud, *Les Consommateurs et le pouvoir* (Lausanne: Études de science politique, 1964), 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, Union Federale de la Consommation, Rapport du conseil d’administration a l’assemhlee generale annuelle du 15 juin 1956; AN 81AJ/185, “Commissarit general a la productivite, “Program d’Action 1954-1955 de l’Union feminine civique et sociale”, April 15, 1955, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. *Bulletin d’Information* (UFC) 23 (June-July 1954), 23-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. “Les Conseils de clientele*,” UFC Bulletin d’Information* 21 (April 1954), 28-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. AN 81AJ/183, “Pourquoi les Etats-Généraux du Commerce 1955?”, Association pour les états généraux du commerce, c1954, 3-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. AN 81AJ/183, “Preparation des Etats Generaux du Commerce de 1955,” 1955, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. “Vie des mouvements,” Bulletin D’information (UFC) 4, no. 7 (September-October 1956), 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. AN 81AJ/189, File 26.07.56, Union Federale de la Consommation, Rapport du conseil d’administration a l’assemblée générale annuelle du 15 juin 1956, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. PJW, Box 366, Note à Messiers les Préfets concernant les Comités Locaux de liaison entre la production, le commerce et la consommation, 18 August 1959, Annex 1, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. AN, 19930275/36, Commissariat Général du Plan, Besoins des Consommateurs, Procès-verbal de la reunion du 21 November 1960 du groupe de travail no. 5 (Besoins et comportement du consommateur), 8; PJW, Box 366, Letter from Minister of the Interior to Messieurs les prefets, 18 Aug 1959; PJW, Box 366, Note à Messiers les Prefets concernant les Comités Locaux de liaison entre la production, le commerce et la consommation, 18 August 1959, Annex 1, 4-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. PJW, Note à Messiers les Prefets concernant les Comités Locaux de liaison entre la production, le commerce et la consommation, 18 August 1959, Annex 2, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. AN, 19930275/36, Commissariat Général du Plan, Besoins des Consommateurs, Procès-verbal de la séance du 24 Octobre 1960 du groupe de travail no. 5, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. PJW, Box 366, Letter from UFCS to UFC, 4 October 1961. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. PJW, Box 366, Letter from A. Romieu, UFC, to M. Brossier, UFCS, 21 July 1961. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. AN, 19930275/36, Commissariat Général du Plan, Besoins des Consommateurs, Procès-verbal de la séance du 24 Octobre 1960 du groupe de travail no. 5, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)