

Chapter 5

The Sylviac Affair (1904–1910) or Joan of Arc Versus the *Demoiselles du Téléphone*

Dominique Pinsolle

Abstract In April 1904, the well-known French actress Ms. Sylviac had her phone service suspended by the telephone administration after being accused of insulting the *demoiselles du telephone* – France’s then exclusively female staff of phone operators, who failed to connect her to the number she requested. The major newspapers (*Le Matin*, *Le Temps*, etc.) quickly transformed Ms. Sylviac into a symbol of helpless subscribers forced to turn the other cheek before an all-powerful, monopoly-abusing administration. The real question became whether telephone operators should be considered officials receiving special protections in cases of job-related insults. Beyond the actress’s personal situation, the case highlighted the new balance of power being established between subscribers, the telephone administration and its employees.

On 6 April 1904, French actress Marie-Thérèse Chauvin (1863–1948), known as Ms. Sylviac, had her telephone subscription suspended by the government after she was accused of offending the *demoiselles du téléphone* – France’s then exclusively female staff of phone operators, who failed to connect her to the number she requested. The next day, the newspaper *Le Matin* reported the story of Ms. Sylviac’s ‘telephonic excommunication’. The ‘charming dramatic artist’ stated that the ‘epic scene’ unfolded in her dressing room where the telephone was installed. At around 14:00, one of her friends, actress Rosa Bruck, made an urgent communication request. For 45 min, both women continued attempting to call out but failed to reach an employee. Ms. Sylviac then requested 728-00, the number for central management, where she could leave a complaint. The supervisor of Central Gutenberg (located near the Louvre) immediately intervened, blaming the subscriber for not having sought him out earlier, coming to the defense of his employees. The tone mounted, with Ms. Sylviac insisting on her point and calling in one of her servants

D. Pinsolle (✉)

Centre d’études des mondes moderne et contemporain (CEMMC), Université Bordeaux Montaigne, Pessac, France

UFR Humanités-Département d’Histoire, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, 33607 Pessac, France

e-mail: dominique.pinsolle@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr

to corroborate her criticism of the telephone operators' coarse manners towards subscribers. Faced with the supervisor's dismissiveness, the actress lost composure and responded that 'his perfect little employees talk a little too much like milkmaids' (*Le Matin*, 7 April 1904). The phone line was cut. That evening at around 19:00, the phone rang and 'a stringy and ridiculous gentleman' announced to Ms. Sylviac that her subscription was suspended until further notice, pursuant to Article 52 of the Decree of 8 May 1901 determining telephone service regulation. In addition, the actress faced a possible fine. The incident was widely publicised. The press seized upon the case, an association of telephone subscribers was created, and the Sylviac Affair was discussed all the way up to the General Assembly. Yet her telephone privation was in no way an isolated case, nor was she the first to face administrative censure. In fact, in Paris in 1903 there were 10 suspensions for insults; in 1904 there were 11 (*Journal Officiel*, 6 February 1905: 176). Across the entire network, the newly created Association of Telephone Subscribers (*l'Association des Abonnés du Téléphone*) logged an annual figure of approximately 200 suspensions due to insults (*Bulletin de l'Association des Abonnés du Téléphone* (3), 1904: 1), while the Deputy Secretary's chief of staff at the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs (*Ministère de Postes et des Télégraphes*) said this type of suspension occurred 'every 2 or 3 days' (*Le Temps*, 14 April 1904). But the incident with Ms. Sylviac was the first to cause controversy on a national scale. What explains this sudden political and media outrage? Why was Ms. Sylviac 'the straw that broke the camel's back', to borrow a phrase used by her supporters (*Bulletin de l'Association des Abonnés du Téléphone* (3), 1904: 1)? How was the case illustrative of the relationship between the telephone administration, the telephone network and the early twentieth-century telephone subscribers? We will see that although the actress's case became an object of political and media dramatisation, this was counterbalanced by the victim's identity as a woman whose social status opposed that of the *demoiselles du téléphone*. Finally, the case's magnitude shed light on the new relationship between the telephone administration and the subscribers that was in the process of establishing.

5.1 A Political and Media Dramatisation Transforms Ms. Sylviac into a 'Joan of Arc' Against the Telephone Administration

The Sylviac Affair erupted in a context of strong criticism against the telephone administration's management of the network. The Act of 16 July 1889 had ended the private monopoly held by the Société Générale des Téléphones, and since then the State had been regularly challenged, especially with the first 'phone crisis' that accompanied the 1900 report by Alexandre Millerand, then Minister of Posts and Telegraphs.¹ Very quickly, media commentary about Sylviac's case continued in this

¹ Bouneau, Christophe, and Alexandre Fernandez. 2004. *L'entreprise publique en France et en Espagne de la fin du XVIIIe siècle au milieu du XXe siècle: environnement, formes et stratégies*. Pessac: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine.

vein. Take, for example, Henri Rochefort's appropriation of Proudhon to declare that *L'État, c'est le vol* ('The State is theft'), and continuing with a simplified explanation of the dysfunction, he felt the case revealed:

Ms Sylviac's adventure has demonstrated clearly what we experience every day, that the State is the king of thieves. The telephone administration was a single company that worked without a hitch. A gang of minister cops went into their offices one day and took it over *by force of arms*. At this moment, the telephone crisis erupted. (*L'Intransigeant*, 11 April 1904)

From the start, then, the Affair went beyond the case of a bullied actress. Behind what might have remained a passing headline was the issue of the State's relationship with the economy in an era when the notion of 'public services' was just developing.² This explains why the right exploited the scandal against the left-wing coalition that was then in power. *Le Figaro*, in particular, asserted that the unfortunate actress had

allowed all those capable of reflection to see what the fate will be for the thirty-eight million citizens of our Republic on the day when the Bloc's socialist program is applied, and the State is the sole operator of the railways, transportation of all types, lighting, water, banking, mining, and all industries and trade. (*Le Figaro*, 21 April 1904)

Sylviac's telephone service was restored on 15 April. However, she was summoned to Judge Cail, who charged her with offending a public servant (*Le Matin*, 16 April 1904). In response to this prosecution by the postal administration (then led by Under-Secretary for Posts and Telegraphs, Alexandre Bérard), the Association of Telephone Subscribers was created by the Marquis Maurice de Montebello. The nephew of a former French ambassador to St. Petersburg, he was serving as the General Counsel of Canton de Montendre in Charente inférieure. A former official of the Colonial and Commerce Ministry (*Ministère des Colonies et du Commerce*), he had previously founded the French Commercial Alliance (*Alliance Commerciale Française*) to promote the development of French trade in the Far East. The organisation he founded to champion Ms. Sylviac drew 500 members in 4 days; a month later, it had grown tenfold (*L'Humanité*, 17 May 1904) at a time when Paris had 30–35,000 telephone subscribers among its 2.5 million residents – having grown from 8 to 10,000 15 years earlier (National Archives 637/AP/42 Marcel Sembat fund, 1904).

The Sylviac Affair immediately foregrounded the debate over phone malfunctions. Articles proliferated and her misadventure even inspired a musical entitled *Votre abonnement sera suspendu du... au...* ('Your subscription will be suspended from... to...'), by Gabriel Timmory, which opened in Paris on 11 May (*Le Matin*, 12 May 1904). The actress, herself a member of the Association of Telephone Subscribers, was anointed a 'new Joan of Arc' by Montebello at the first general meeting held on 16 May. Besides Montebello, the *New York Times*' Paris correspondent was enthused by Sylviac's 'Joan of Arc attitude' (*The New York Times*, 8 May 1904). But the comparison was not unanimous; it exasperated *L'Humanité* ('Encore Jeanne d'Arc!' 'Once again Joan of Arc!' 13 December 1904) and amused MP

²Lemerrier, Claire. 2007. La construction d'un modèle français de service public avant 1914. *Regards croisés sur l'économie* 2: 47–54.

Marcel Sembat who, in his report on the 1905 budget for Posts and Telegraphs, noted with irony that ‘a fan [of Ms. Sylviac] may venture so far as to proclaim that she is Joan of Arc’ (Chambre des députés, n°1956, 8e législature, 1904 session). The Affair’s drama culminated with this historical reference. Nevertheless, it was merely the result of a campaign by the era’s major newspapers that had begun the day after the inciting event, first among them *Le Figaro*, which praised the ‘gracious and valiant champion of the molested public’ (*Le Figaro*, 13 April 1904) and proclaimed that ‘[i]f the French people was not the most ungrateful in the world, it would raise a statue of gold and ivory, with eyes of precious stones, to Ms. Sylviac’ (*Le Figaro*, 21 April 1904).

The fact that the victim was a woman lent a special tone to the commentary. On 7 May 1904, for example, lawyers of the Paris Bar met to discuss State monopolies’ power to interrupt contractual obligations. One of the speakers, praising the actress and decrying the inertia of ordinary taxpayers, exclaimed, ‘It took a woman to shake us out of our torpor!’ (*Le Matin*, 8 May 1904). Similarly, on 6 February 1905, while speaking to the Chamber of Deputies about ‘administrative abuse’ with regard to the telephone, Fernand Engérand, the Deputy of Calvados, said, ‘It was enough for this abuse to reach a pretty woman and, worse still, a dramatic artist, to immediately trouble public opinion’ (*Journal Officiel*, meeting of 6 February 1905). As MP Engérand’s remark illustrates, the victim’s gender only had an impact because she was also an actress whose charms prevented male commentators from remaining apathetic and who herself ‘benefitted from the windfall to talk about herself’.³ The combination between gender and social affiliation is what made Ms. Sylviac the ideal incarnation of unhappy subscribers in the eyes of the press and all their supporters. But while the victim’s gender may serve the cause of telephone subscribers, it may also be a disservice, since it concerns ‘just a woman’.

5.2 Sylviac’s Fate, from the Perspective of her Gender and the Working Conditions of the *Demoiselles du Téléphone*

The fact that the telephone suspension in this story occurred during an attempt by women to converse can reduce its polemic to an amusing anecdote. There is humour when Louis Brunet, the radical socialist deputy of the Reunion Island at the Chamber of Deputies, interrupts Engérand as the latter evokes Sylviac’s broad support, with a verse by Boileau: ‘All Paris for Chimene has Rodrigue’s eyes’ (*Journal Officiel*, meeting of 6 February 1905). Indeed, the Affair’s alleged seriousness was tempered by the victim’s gender and by the widespread stereotype that women only used the phone for frivolous reasons, as shown in this explanation by *Le Temps* of why the telephone fascinates the French:

³Bertho, Catherine. 1981. *Télégraphes et téléphones de Valmy au microprocesseur*. Paris: Librairie générale française.

[The male] merchant appreciates this invention that facilitates orders and simplifies negotiations; the Parisian [woman] cherishes its easy, elegant conversational style that extends the buzz of the city into the living room and the bedroom. (14 April 1904)

In this quote, men are seen as using the phone for serious and professional tasks, while women are seen as using it to gossip about private or mundane issues.⁴ In *Masculine Domination*, where he analyses typical discourse, Bourdieu asserts that ‘telephone calls’ are part of the social activities assigned to women that are aimed at maintaining relationships between the family and the exterior world. But Bourdieu indicates that ‘[t]his domestic work goes essentially unnoticed, or frowned upon (as for example with the ritual denunciation of women’s taste for chitchat, including over the phone ...).’⁵ In this light, Ms. Sylviac is a romantic symbol subjected to considerable media staging, as well as derision by men who trivialise her case as being about phone gossip. Moreover, the actress’s fate was widely relativised by women who worked on the other end of the telephone line. Indeed, the *demoiselles du téléphone* and their working conditions were at centre stage and overshadowed the empathy for Ms. Sylviac.

In effect, Ms. Sylviac enjoyed popularity as a subscriber standing up to the administration, but much less as a telephone user insulting the employees. At the time, the latter worked in notoriously difficult conditions, which did not always allow them to consistently meet the demands of the thousands of subscribers. These *demoiselles* had a tiring and repetitive job and endured constant pressure by subscribers,⁶ as well as from a meddling hierarchy with an iron discipline. Moreover, they were badly paid: entry-level workers received slightly over 100 francs per month,⁷ and they did not receive the same pay increase as clerks had 11 years earlier. The General Association of Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Workers (*Association Générale des Agents des Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphones*) unsuccessfully requested that the pay of ‘women employees’ be increased to what it had been prior to 1893, which was two-thirds of that of clerks. In doing so, they highlighted a ‘fact duly established by the Administration, that work done in 1 year by three women is equivalent to that achieved by two men’ (*Bulletin officiel de l’Association générale des Agents des Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphones* (47), November 1904: 332–333). From the Affair’s beginnings, *L’Humanité* took up these women’s defence, underscoring that their gender deepened their status as scapegoats:

Even though the *demoiselles du téléphone* have been exonerated, writing is still chiefly published about them, in short because the State is merely an entity despite the responsible person of Mr Bérard, and because it is more convenient to have someone in front of you to easily curse, such as women. (*L’Humanité*, 30 April 1904)

⁴ Bertho 1981: 239.

⁵ Bourdieu, Pierre. 2002. *La domination masculine*. 1st ed. 1998. Paris: Seuil.

⁶ Bachrach, Susan. 1984. *Dames employées: the feminisation of postal work in nineteenth-century France*. New York: Haworth Press.

⁷ Bertho 1981: 250.

Even within the Association of Telephone Subscribers, Montebello believed that ‘the *demoiselles du téléphone* [...] are overworked and we truly must forgive them’ (*Le Matin*, 2 May 1904). The association identified the goal of improving their conditions, because the quality of the phone network and therefore subscriber satisfaction depended on it. The bulletin published an issue on employee grievances and gave detailed information about their working conditions. It informed readers that out of 1,800 employees in the Paris network, only 1,400 were actually assigned to the telephone, a disparity explained by numerous absences,⁸ while other tasks were entrusted to some employees. The *demoiselles du téléphone* worked 7 h per day, and according to the administration they received an average of 70 and up to 150 calls per hour. In addition to the insufficient number of employees, the Association of Telephone Subscribers cited defective equipment, an alarming assertion that appears not to be exaggerated when compared with the documents sent to Marcel Sembat to prepare his 1905 Posts and Telegraphs budget report. One of these documents states that ‘telephony is threatened with collapse if we do not backtrack, if we do not create specialists in large offices to regulate equipment, to test telegraph lines and telephone circuits for all electric operations in order to facilitate the location of defects and the suppression of lines and devices’ (National Archives, 637/AP/42 Marcel Sembat Fund, author unidentified, 1904).

It should also be underscored that the Sylviac case emerged as Georges Trouillot (Minister of Commerce, Industry, Posts and Telegraphs) had just tried unsuccessfully to convince then Minister of Finances Maurice Rouvier of the need for strong job creation to ‘strengthen existing staff, whose duties are already so burdensome that service, on certain points, absolutely collapses’ (National Archives, 637/AP/42 Correspondence with the Ministry of Finance, 1904).

Beyond the difficulties associated with physical working conditions, relations between subscribers and employees were often problematic. The *demoiselles du téléphone*, mostly young single girls,⁹ generally came from the peasantry (hence, perhaps, the inspiration for Sylviac’s ‘milkmaids’ insult) and the *petite bourgeoisie*.¹⁰ Customers, meanwhile, were generally wealthy dignitaries and bourgeois who did not exactly appreciate the idea that employees might have access to their telephone conversations.¹¹ Even if these girls were absolutely obligated to respect the secrecy of communications, the curiosity associated with women inspired mistrust.¹² There were often strained relations, particularly because ‘for wealthier subscribers, the *demoiselles du téléphone* are not citizens, they are servants’

⁸ Le Quentrec, Yann. 2006. Les employées de bureau: un groupe professionnel féminin mais invisible et dévalorisé. In *Le bas de l'échelle. La construction sociale des situations subalternes*, ed. Pierre Cours-Salies and Stéphane Le Lay, 81–96. Paris: ERES.

⁹ Bertho 1981: 250.

¹⁰ Lhomme, Pierre. 2009. Les téléphonistes et leurs luttes jusqu’en 1945. In *Des demoiselles du téléphone aux opérateurs des centres d’appel*, ed. Colette Schwartz, Yveline Jacquet, and Pierre Lhomme, 27–44. Pantin: Le Temps des Cerises.

¹¹ Lhomme 2009: 28.

¹² Julliard, Virginie. 2004. Une “femme machine” au travail: la “demoiselle du telephone”. *Quaderni* 56: 23–32.

(*L'Humanité*, 30 April 1904). Gender and class relations thus intertwined; a *demoiselle du téléphone* often found herself in a position of double subjugation by the user.

This explains the ambivalent commentary surrounding the Sylviac Affair: she complained as a wronged subscriber, was alternately extolled or mocked as a woman, was defended by the press as a respected artist and was criticised by the left as a wealthy socialite. Meanwhile she unwittingly placed the plight of the *demoiselles du téléphone*, whose working conditions were publicly denounced, at the centre of discussion. Moreover, their still unclear status was the subject of important decisions over the course of the scandal, which illustrated the new relations being established between users and the administration at the time.

5.3 Behind the Affair: The Establishment of New Relations Between Users and the Administration

From the outset, the criticism levied against Ms. Sylviac arose from the status of the *demoiselles du téléphone*: with the network subjected to a State monopoly, should they be considered civil servants and receive special protections if insulted in the exercise of their job duties? The question was significant because if an employee of a private company was insulted, the punishment was a mere fine of one to five francs, whereas insults against government employees were punishable by 16–200 francs under Article 224 of the Penal Code regarding offences directed at a functionary.¹³ The matter was left to a judge to decide. On 18 May 1904, the actress was sent to the 11th Criminal Chamber, following the direction of the Under-Secretary of State of Posts and Telegraphs.

On 23 April, meanwhile, another victim of the administration, the Director of a paint and glaze shop, Mr Belloche, was also accused of disrespecting the *demoiselles*. His subscription was not suspended but a complaint was filed against him, and like Ms. Sylviac he was sent to a misdemeanour trial for ‘insulting a functionary during the exercise of her job duties’ (*Le Matin*, 14 May 1904). The cases were tried simultaneously; on 2 June, the judge found that a *demoiselle du téléphone* was indeed a citizen performing a public service, which automatically resulted in a conviction for Mr Belloche and a fine of 100 francs for an infraction of Article 224 of the Penal Code. Ms. Sylviac was acquitted because she had not voiced her insult directly but through the intermediary of a supervisor who was not himself subjected to any verbal aggression.

Mr Belloche immediately appealed the conviction. On 25 October, the Court of Criminal Appeals sided with him; the *demoiselles*’ status was reduced to that of ‘clerks’ not overseen by a public service ministry, which annulled his sentence. The Attorney General at the Paris Court filed an appeal, but it was dismissed on 18 February 1905 by the Court of Cassation, whose decision established that the work

¹³Milhaud, Edgard. 1918. Les régies et leur evolution. *Annales de la régie directe* 103: 5–62.

of the *demoiselles du téléphone* ‘implies neither allocation nor delegation of any part of the public authority’.¹⁴ As agents of operation and not of authority, the *demoiselles* could not be protected by Article 224 of the Penal Code concerning functionaries.

This decision satisfied the Association of Telephone Subscribers, which believed the telephone would now be recognised as an ordinary commercial service to the benefit of its users (*Bulletin de l’association des abonnés au téléphone*, (9), 1905: 2). While Ms. Sylviac did not receive damages after her acquittal in 1907, Montebello’s organisation enjoyed a strong position following the outcome of the Sylviac and Belloche case. After their first victory in the Court of Cassation, a second followed in 1910 when the administration amended the notorious Article 52 regulating telephone operation, which had allowed it to automatically suspend subscriber communications if the latter insulted an employee. Going forward, automatic suspension would no longer be enforced without prior warning and an allowance for the subscriber to explain their side; in cases of proven offenses, the penalty could now not exceed 2 days. Although Article 52 was stopped being applied in effect since the two cases under discussion (*Bulletin de l’Association des abonnés au téléphone*, (66), December 1909: 4), this change reflected the growing influence of organised subscribers.

Indeed, this decision was made in a context of emerging consumer mobilisations, which oscillated between an ‘ethical’ element that prioritised social goals and a ‘consumerist’ element that prioritised price controls.¹⁵ In the Sylviac Affair, it wasn’t price but service quality that subscribers felt was at issue. However, Montebello’s association’s demands clearly tended towards the ‘consumerist’ end of things, in the sense that one of their main objectives was for telephone users to be recognised and treated as consumers. This demand went beyond the scope of the Association of Telephone Subscribers. Marcel Sembat, for example, the former chairman of the Commission of Posts and Telegraphs, wrote a long article in 1909 in the *Annals of Direct Governance* (*Annales de la régie directe*) to welcome the outcome of the Sylviac Affair and emphasise that the decision represented a break in the status of the *demoiselles du téléphone*.¹⁶ The Association of Telephone Subscribers’ role as designated ‘telephone communication consumers’ revealed, in his eyes, that there was essentially no difference between a State-provided service and ordinary commerce:

We made clear to the administration that an individual who buys two meters of tape is not exposed to exorbitant penalties over a quarrel with the vendor, and that common law sufficing to protect the milliner should also suffice to protect her sister who is entered into the telephone system instead of entering into a clothing shop. The administration was also forced to see that given the price of subscription, it has no more right to cut a subscriber’s phone line than a grocer has the right to deliver a pound of sugar to a customer when a kilo is paid for under the pretext that the customer has misbehaved in his shop.¹⁷

¹⁴ Milhaud 1918: 38.

¹⁵ Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle. 2012. *Histoire de la consommation*. Paris: La Découverte.

¹⁶ Sembat, Marcel. 1909. L’organisation du contrôle du public. *Annales de la régie directe* 2: 33–37.

¹⁷ Sembat 1909: 34.

Beyond the specific case of the telephone, Sembat concluded that socialists themselves must now incorporate the consumer into their economic and social model. Such ideas were in vogue at the time. In 1910, Armand Fénérier founded the League of Consumers (*Ligue des consommateurs*), heralding the advent of a new and autonomous consumers' force alongside the working class and employers.¹⁸ The following year, economist Charles Gide followed suit, expressing enthusiasm about the new phenomenon of 'consumer strikes'.¹⁹ The Association of Telephone Subscribers' successes can be placed in this context where the consumer became a full participant both in the private sector and State-provided services.

In an era when 'public services' were still conceived of primarily within a 'framework of local and private management',²⁰ the challenge to the telephone administration's management catalysed a new set of questions concerning the State's relationship with service consumers. In this respect, the Sylviac Affair was a moment for reflection and significant decisions. As Edgard Milhaud underscored in 1918 in the *Annals of Direct Governance*: 'It is the very question of the industrial State's juridical nature, and the character of the relationship between the public and the industrial State, that this debate has engaged'.²¹

5.4 Conclusion

Ms. Sylviac's story was 'the straw that broke the camel's back' for several reasons. First, the fact that the victim was a popular actress was the determining factor in the media's dramatisation of her case. Her gender and class combined to give the scandal a particular twist that resulted in the equally revelatory and ridiculous comparison with Joan of Arc. But the fact that Ms. Sylviac was a woman is ultimately merely anecdotal, as it is primarily her social affiliation that attracted media attention and drew her most virulent critics. It is not for nothing that the actress's own efforts to be talked are part of the story. But it's only because the press rushed into what quickly became a mini-scandal that the 'Sylviac Affair' had such an impact, despite the male taunts and the criticism of *L'Humanité* among others. The attention that the actress enjoyed is explained by the fact that her case generated two debates. On one hand, the controversy, which represents one moment among years of criticism of the administration's management of the telephone network, raises questions of State monopoly and its relevance to the issue. On the other hand, decisions made about the status of the *demoiselles du téléphone* and the administration's ruling on

¹⁸Fénérier, Armand. 1910a. Les grèves de consommateurs. *La Revue de solidarité sociale* 68: 19–21; Fénérier, Armand. 1910b. Les consommateurs s'organisent. *La Revue de solidarité sociale* 70: 52–53.

¹⁹Pinsolle, Dominique. 2013. Les grèves des abonnés du gaz en France (1892–1914): des grèves de consommateurs parmi d'autres? *TST* 25: 130–148.

²⁰Lemercier 2007: 54.

²¹Milhaud 1918: 38.

the Sylviac and Belloche cases show the new balance of power between users and the administration that was being established and, more generally, the new role of consumers in society. Behind an apparently frivolous anecdote of an artist outraged by the shut-off of her phone, we find the larger questions of the economic role the State can and should play in telephony and beyond.

References

- Bachrach, Susan. 1984. *Dames employées: the feminisation of postal work in nineteenth-century France*. New York: Haworth Press.
- Bertho, Catherine. 1981. *Télégraphes et téléphones de Valmy au microprocesseur*. Paris: Librairie générale française.
- Bouneau, Christophe, and Alexandre Fernandez. 2004. *L'entreprise publique en France et en Espagne de la fin du XVIIIe siècle au milieu du XXe siècle: environnement, formes et stratégies*. Pessac: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2002. *La domination masculine*. 1st ed. 1998. Paris: Seuil.
- Chessel, Marie-Emmanuelle. 2012. *Histoire de la consommation*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Fénétrier, Armand. 1910a. Les grèves de consommateurs. *La Revue de solidarité sociale* 68: 19–21.
- Fénétrier, Armand. 1910b. Les consommateurs s'organisent. *La Revue de solidarité sociale* 70: 52–53.
- Julliard, Virginie. 2004. Une “femme machine” au travail: la “demoiselle du telephone”. *Quaderni* 56: 23–32.
- Le Quentrec, Yann. 2006. Les employées de bureau: un groupe professionnel féminin mais invisible et dévalorisé. In *Le bas de l'échelle. La construction sociale des situations subalternes*, ed. Pierre Cours-Salies and Stéphane Le Lay, 81–96. Paris: ERES.
- Lemercier, Claire. 2007. La construction d'un modèle français de service public avant 1914. *Regards croisés sur l'économie* 2: 47–54.
- Lhomme, Pierre. 2009. Les téléphonistes et leurs luttes jusqu'en 1945. In *Des demoiselles du téléphone aux opérateurs des centres d'appel*, ed. Colette Schwartz, Yveline Jacquet, and Pierre Lhomme, 27–44. Pantin: Le Temps des Cerises.
- Milhaud, Edgard. 1918. Les régies et leur évolution. *Annales de la régie directe* 103: 5–62.
- Pinsolle, Dominique. 2013. Les grèves des abonnés du gaz en France (1892–1914): des grèves de consommateurs parmi d'autres? *TST* 25: 130–148.
- Sembat, Marcel. 1909. L'organisation du contrôle du public. *Annales de la régie directe* 2: 33–37.

Archives and Printed Sources

1904. Bulletin officiel de l'Association générale des Agents des Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphones 47.
- Archives Nationales. 1904a. 637/AP/42. *Bulletin officiel de l'Association générale des Agents des Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphones* 47: 332–333.
- Archives Nationales. 1904b. 637/AP/42, Le ministre du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes au ministre des Finances (26 Feb 1904), in file 'Correspondance avec le Ministère des Finances' (5 Feb–31 Mar).

Archives Nationales. 1905. 637/AP/42, fonds Marcel Sembat, Budget des Postes, Exercice 1905, Documents préparatoires, 'Simples remarques sur le fonctionnement des services électriques à Paris et dans les Départements, au point de vue technique et au point de vue de l'exploitation' (6 Nov 1904). Bulletin de l'Association des abonnés du téléphone 1: 2.

Bulletin de l'Association des Abonnés au Téléphone (1904–1914).

Chambre des députés. 1904. 8th legislature, 1904 session, addendum to the minutes of the session of 13 July 1904. *Rapport fait au nom de la commission du budget chargé d'examiner le projet de loi portant fixation du budget général de l'exercice 1905*, by deputy Marcel Sembat (1956): 49 (held at the French National Library).