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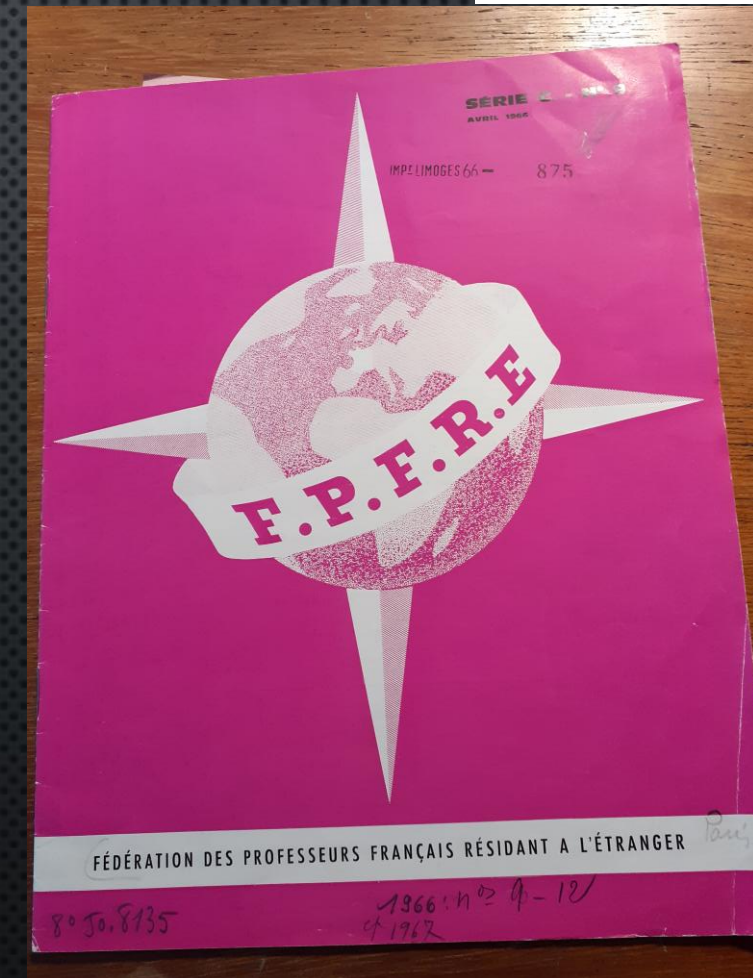
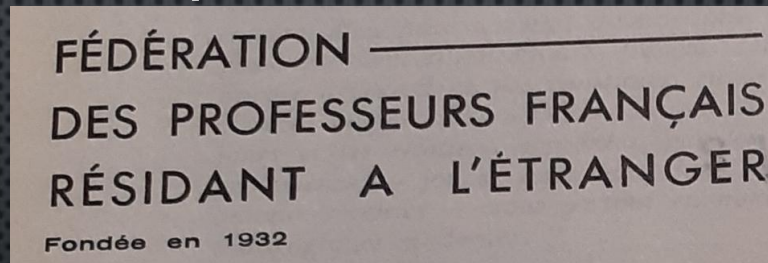
HAL Authorization

Defending and Representing French Teachers Abroad: The Role of the FPFRE after the Second World War (1945–1970)

Antoine Vermauwt (University of Lyon), 2025-07-10



- Federation of French Teachers Residing Abroad (**FPFRE**)
- Founded in **1932**
- A unique and influential actor
- Responds to **a need for unity and solidarity**



La FPFRE, a « mutual aid association »

- A representative body, a “**mutual aid association**” uniting those “whose daily task is to serve, outside our homeland, as effective promoters of our language” (***BnF, Bulletin de la FPFRE et du FPFE, no. 53–54, October 1959–March 1960, p. 3***)
- Representative **of whom?**
 - Of seconded teachers (*enseignants détachés*) working in the French overseas school network, but also in foreign (non-French) educational institutions
 - Of locally hired teachers (*enseignants employés localement*)

A pivotal period marked by the gradual recognition of rights for French teachers abroad

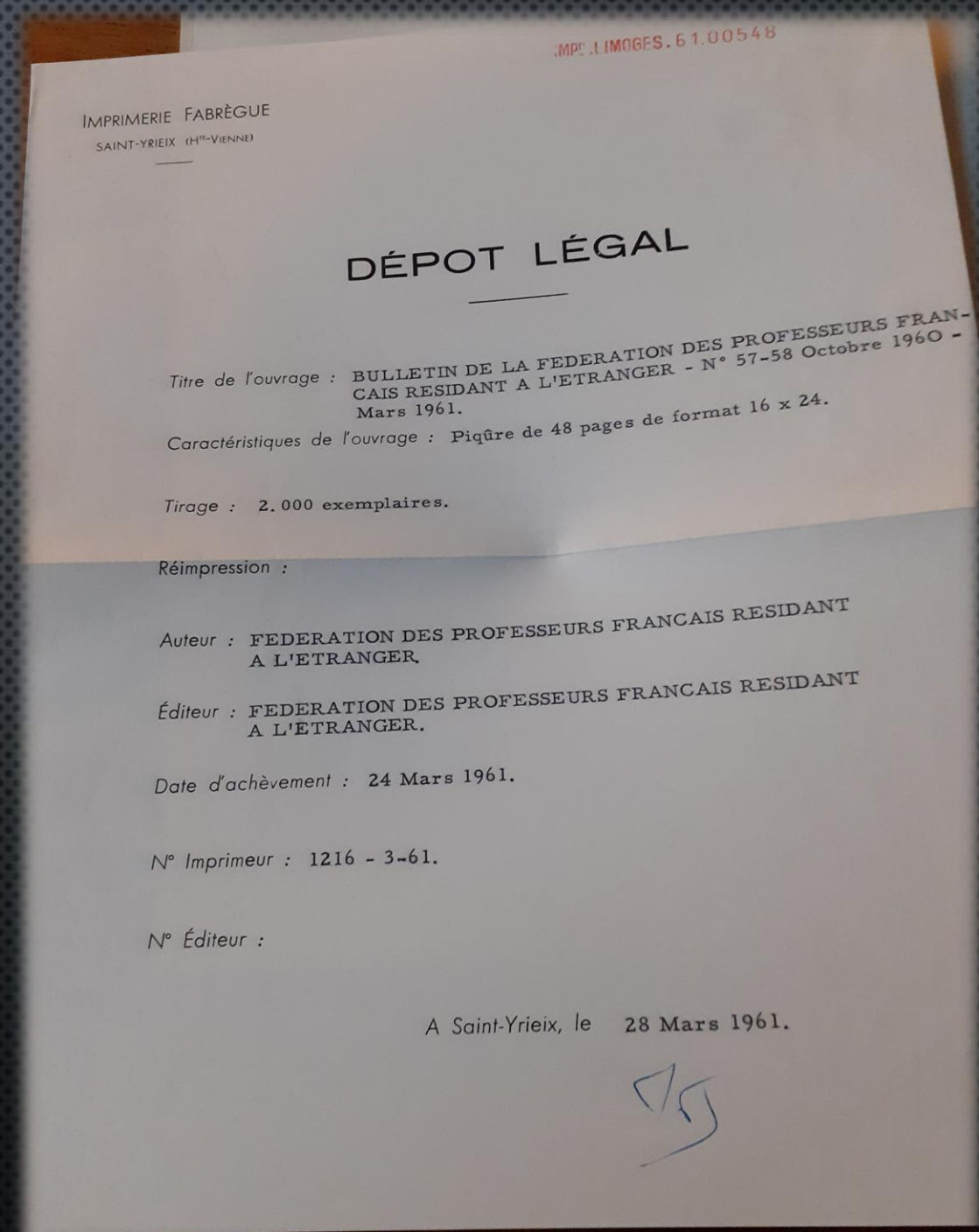
- This was the era of the “**world educational revolution**” (1950–1970)
(John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, Richard Rubinson, John Boli-Bennett, “*The World Educational Revolution, 1950–1970*,” *Sociology of Education*, 1977, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 242–258)
- After 1945, France sought to **compensate for a loss of hard power** by reaffirming its soft power (Frank, 2012).



- An **ideology of national greatness**, embodied by de Gaulle (though not exclusively), serving a **French messianic cultural vision**.

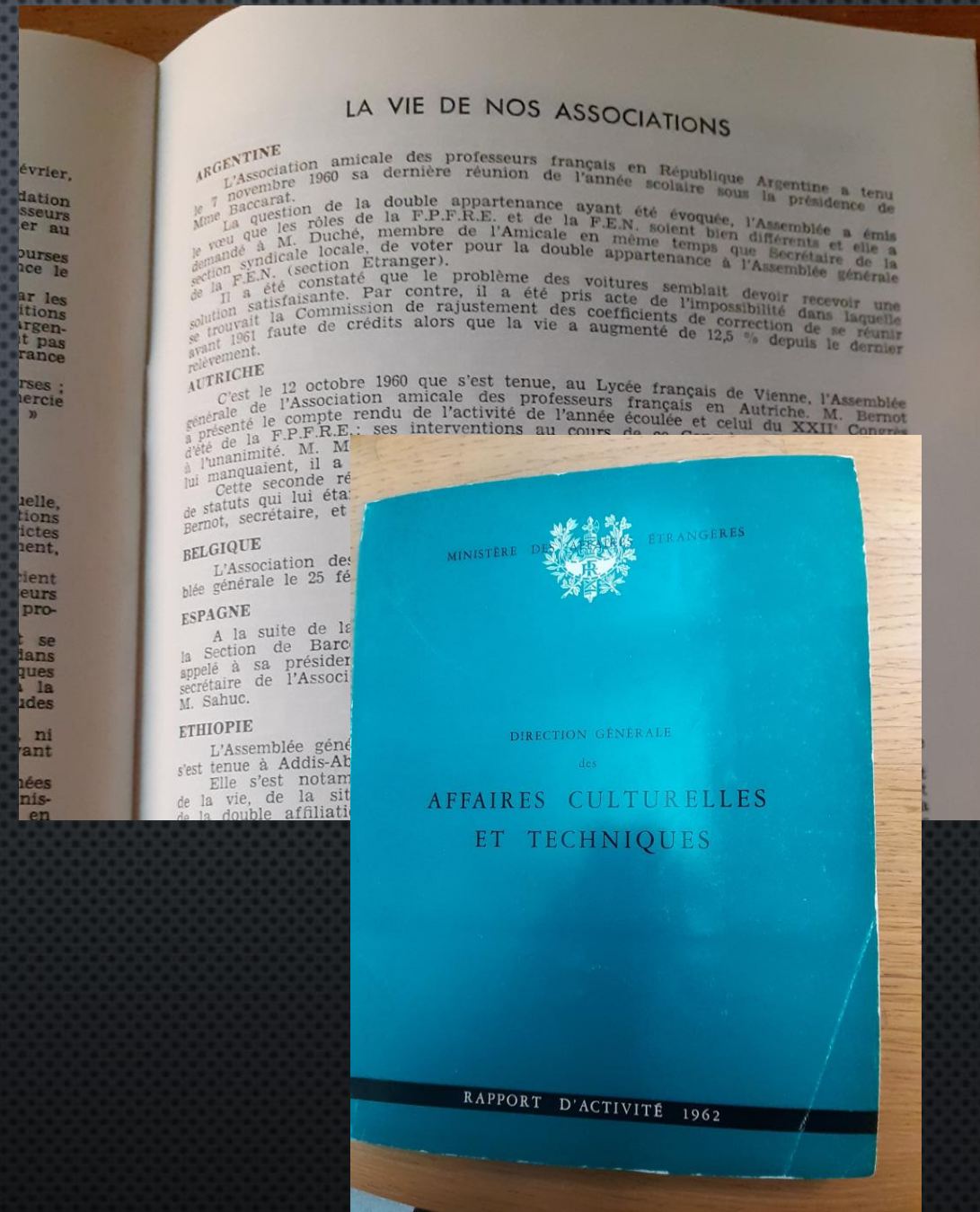
The sources of the FPFRE

- A key **intermediary** between teachers and the State, particularly the **DGRC**.
- Federal bulletin, published **twice a year**
 - Print run of **1,500–2,000** copies
- Preserved at the **BnF** (Bibliothèque nationale de France)



An interesting source to balance the administrative perspective on French Education Abroad (EFE)

- It therefore helps to **balance** the reports of the DGRC and to highlight the **challenges, limitations, and shortcomings** of an education system that was otherwise expanding, especially from around 1963–1965 onward.



Summary

I. Historical Origins and Missions of a “Mutual Aid Association” of French Teachers Abroad

II. The Remarkable Continuity of the Major Struggles of the FPFRE

III. The FPFRE: An Actor in Dialogue with Institutions

I. Historical Origins and Missions of a “Mutual Aid Association” of French Teachers Abroad

- Founded in Paris in **1932**
- Context of **global economic crisis**
- Based at the **Sorbonne**

“What the F.P.F.R.E. set out to do in 1932, at a time when French teachers scattered around the world **felt singularly isolated** — and thus forgotten or unrecognized — was to bring together all those who **felt the need to unite, to help them organize** into communities of varying sizes within different national borders, to facilitate comparison of their respective situations, to **support them** in fulfilling their mission, to encourage better mutual knowledge, and to work towards ensuring that their efforts and results were duly appreciated in France. This **applied equally to civil servants and non-civil servants**, to teachers paid by the French administration or by a foreign administration, as well as to independent teachers.”

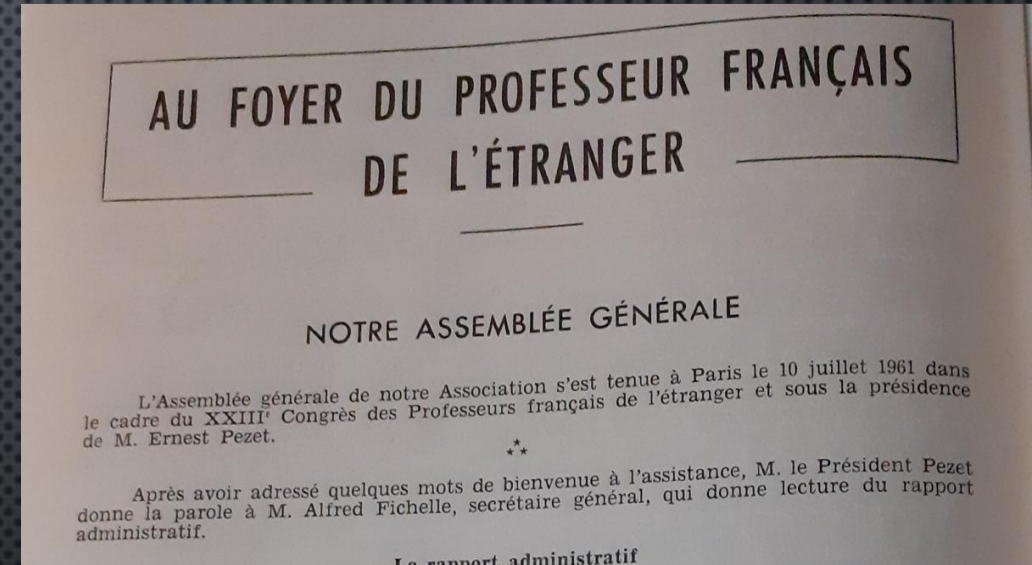
(BnF, Bulletin de la FPFRE et du FPFRE, no. 53–54, October 1959–March 1960, p. 3)

A claimed neutrality

- In 1936, its statutes specified that it aimed to “**contribute to the development of French culture worldwide**” and to “**defend the moral and material interests**” of its members.
- Political and religious neutrality: the Federation “**prohibits any political or religious activity**” (Art. 4).
- **Federal organization**: president, vice-president, general secretary, treasurer... By 1957, it united **25 national teachers’ associations**.
- Published federal bulletins.
- Organized **two congresses annually**. These congresses resulted in the adoption of motions, which were then presented to the DGRC.
- The FPFRE operates without state subsidies. It relies on **membership fees**.

A Charitable Association within the FPFRE: the FPFRE

- Founded in **1935** under the initiative of Senator Ernest Pezet of a “**Foyer du Professeur Français de l'Étranger**”.
- This charitable association provides monthly allowances to former teachers without pensions, **deprived of social security benefits**, and depends on public and private donations (Renault, Alstom, Saint-Gobain...) as well as contributions from institutions, such as the Lycée Chateaubriand in Rome, where a solidarity contribution is deducted monthly from salaries.

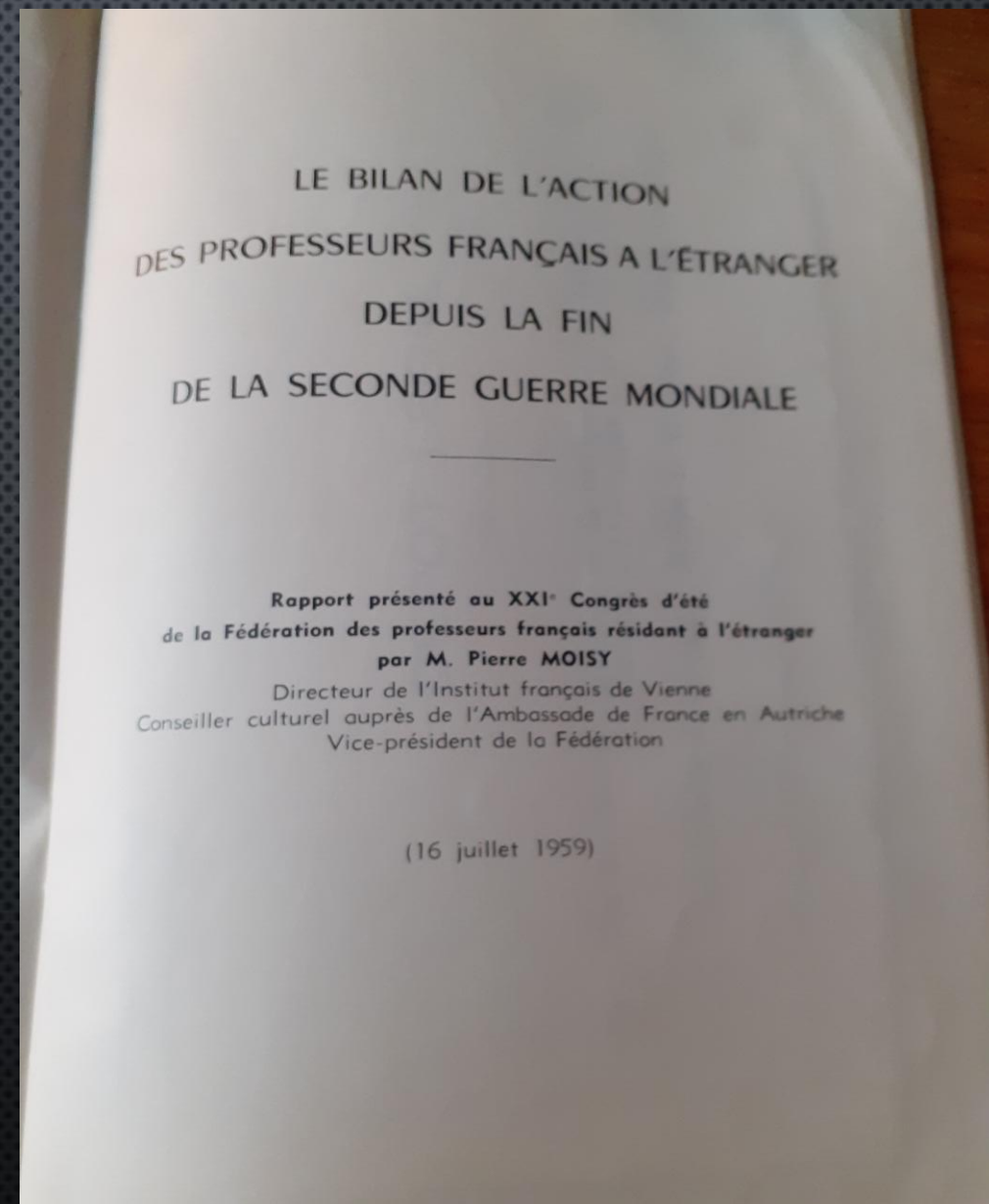


boration.

Comme les années précédentes, notre œuvre a eu pour première mission de verser des allocations mensuelles régulières à 35 anciens professeurs de l'étranger remplissant la condition d'avoir été rétribués, à un moment donné de leur carrière, sur les fonds du Ministère des Affaires étrangères. A cet effet, le Département a accordé au « Foyer » un crédit de 40 704 NF, dont jusqu'à présent 20 000 lui ont été versés.

II. The Remarkable Continuity of the Major Struggles of the FPFRE

- Summer congresses: an opportunity to **take stock**—**sometimes alarmingly**—of the working conditions of French teachers abroad.
- Also an opportunity to **present various reports**: on the spread of the French language (Montera, 1958), on teachers' work (Moisy, 1959), on the future of French as an international language (Teynier, 1960)...



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**Example of
content: Table of
Contents of the
Federal Bulletin
No. 14
(September 1968)**

Salaries

Administrative disfunctions

Working conditions

Mobility

Status

*State assistance in times
of crises*

Retirement

III. The FPFRE: An Actor in Dialogue with Institutions

Teachers

School Principals

Inspectors

Alliance française, Mission laïque française,
Alliance israélite universelle

Teaching congregations

Institutes

Ministries (Ministry of National Education,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.)

Local authorities

Federations and associations

Institutions such as BEL and CREDIF



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The FPFRE: one of the many actors in French Education Abroad (EFE)

The 22nd Summer Congress of 1960: An Illustration of the Diversity of Invited Actors

Senate	Senators Armengaud, Carrier, and Gros, representatives of French citizens living abroad
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Philippe Rebeyrol, director of the Education Service (DGACTION)
Ministry of National Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stéphane Hessel, Director of Cooperation with the Community and Abroad- M. Gossart, inspector general- M. Lacroix, inspector general
Superior Council of French Abroad (CSFE)	René Seydoux, Vice-President of the CSFE
International Center for Pedagogical Studies (CIEP)	M. Quignard, representing Inspector General Edmée Hatinguais, Director of the CIEP (1945-1966)
Confederation of Intellectual Workers (CTI)	M. Rosier, President of the CTI
Study and Liaison Office for the Teaching of French Worldwide (BEL)	M. Capelle, Director
Mission Laïque française (MLF)	Marcel Fort, Secretary general of the MLF
Alliance française (AF)	Miss Besson, representing Marc Blancpain, Secretary General of the AF.

Interministerial Tensions Reflected in the FPFRE's Sources

- Roger Seydoux described the DGACT officials as **“advocates”** of the Federation, while also acknowledging the budgetary constraints imposed by the Ministry of Finance: **“I recognize that the Ministry of Finance also has its difficulties and that, sometimes, the efforts of our parliamentary friends have not always managed to convince their colleagues of the necessity to grant us the funds we needed.”**
- Tensions with the “Rue de Rivoli” [i.e., the Ministry of Finance] are **a recurring theme** in the FPFRE archives.

Bulletin of the Federation of French Teachers Residing Abroad and the Foyer of the French Teacher Abroad, BnF, no. 47–48, May–September 1958, p. 13.



**Roger Seydoux, diplomat
and Director of the
DGACT (1956–1960)**

- These interactions also resulted **in institutionalized practices**. Annual receptions in July:
 - At the **Salon de l'Horloge** of the Quai d'Orsay by the Director General of Cultural and Technical Affairs,
 - At the **Palais du Luxembourg** by the President of the Senate.
- According to Senator Longchambon's words, the **"concerns [of the FPFRE] always coincide with the deep necessities of France's influence abroad."**

BnF, Bulletins no. 51–52 of the FPFRE and FPFRE, May–September 1959, p. 9.

BnF, Bulletins no. 55–56 of the FPFRE and FPFRE, April–September 1960, p. 13.



- A correspondence between the Director of the DGACT and the President of the FPFRE **marked by cordiality**. Lucien Bochet notes that the DGACT holds an “**undeniable sympathy**” for the FPFRE and that it is **an ally against the Rue de Rivoli**.
- However, the FPFRE strongly criticized its exclusion from the consultations held in July 1957, which aimed to establish a “program for the expansion and restructuring of France’s cultural and technical activities abroad.” The failure to consult field teachers was perceived by the FPFRE as **technocratic disdain**.

Sources: Bulletin of the Federation of French Teachers Residing Abroad and the Foyer of the French Teacher Abroad, BnF, no. 47–48, May–September 1958, p. 35; no. 53–54, October 1959–March 1960, p. 7.

Conclusion

- An **indispensable actor** in the French educational network abroad.
- A vital **link between the field and the central administration**.
- Its struggles — for salary equity, recognition of status, and the dignity of the profession — still **resonate today in debates on French education outside France**.

