

2024-09-29

## The creation of FIDE in Paris in 1924



— Dominique Thimognier and Frank Hoffmeister

Here is the support for the 1<sup>st</sup> conference given in Budapest as part of the CH&LS General Assembly.

Dominique Thimognier presents an in-depth study of the creation of FIDE in 1924.

Dominique focuses in particular on the various protagonists of this creation, and he has uncovered some previously unpublished documents.

This work complements my series of articles on this website about events in Paris in 1924.

Here is an extract from the presentation text for the General Meeting on 13 and 14 September 2024.

In the first lecture, Dominique Thimognier, who runs the highly recommended website [Héritage des échecs français](#), reported on the creation of FIDE in 1924 with many new insights. He revealed that, on the one hand, famous players (such as Lasker) and officials (such as the Secretary-General of the British Chess Federation) had already supported the idea to establish a world chess federation before the first World War. On the other hand, the act of establishment at the margins of the 1924 Paris Olympiad was also the result of a spontaneous action of those, who were present at the end of the team championships. Some delegates appear to have acted without a clear mandate from their federation, and some federations (such as the Spanish Federation) had not even been founded yet. The question discussed at the conference as to whether the Finnish participant was present at the founding meeting or was added later still seems unresolved. It should also be noted that the long-simmering controversy between a players' association or a federation of nations was decided in favour of the second option, which was particularly favoured by England.

## Dominique Thimognier: FIDE's foundation Paris July 20, 1924

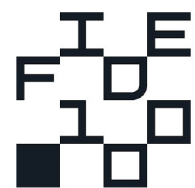
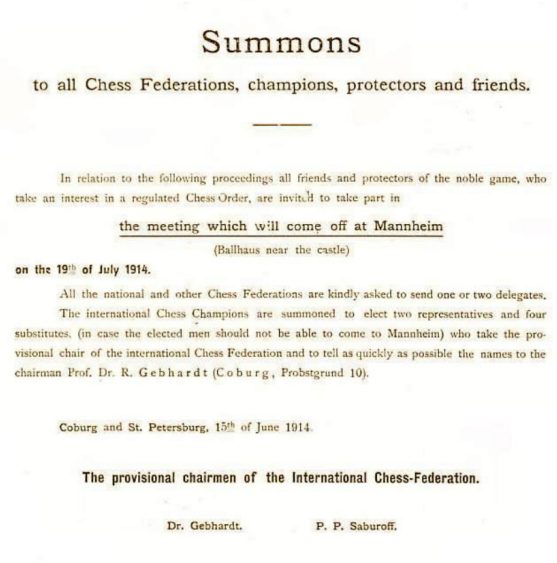
FIDE's  
Foundation  
Paris July 20,  
1924

Budapest September 13, 2024.



Many previous attempts:

- 19th century: Staunton, Von Heydebrandt und der Lasa, Arnous de Rivière, ...
- 20th century: Munich 1900, Saint Petersburg 1914, Mannheim 1914, Göteborg 1920, Lasker ...



## The French Initiative.

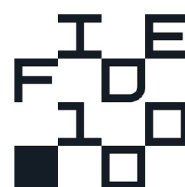
### Les Echecs aux Jeux Olympiques

Les démarches entreprises par M. Fernand Gavarry, président de la F. F. E. pour faire admettre les échecs dans le programme des Jeux Olympiques de Paris 1924, quoique très favorablement accueillies dans les milieux gouvernementaux et sportifs, se sont heurtées à un règlement inflexible.

Le programme des Jeux a été établi une fois pour toutes à Lausanne et ne peut être modifié qu'en un Congrès Olympique international, convoqué par le Comité international olympique, seul juge

de tirer des jeux d'une Olympiade des enseignements pouvant entraîner une modification du programme.

M. Léon Bérard, ministre de l'Instruction publique et des Beaux-Arts, dans une lettre amicale adressée à notre Président, dit que, sur sa demande, il n'a pas manqué d'intervenir auprès du Comité Olympique français et regrette qu'une section « échecs » ne puisse être admise au programme des jeux de la VII<sup>e</sup> Olympiade.



*Bulletin de la FFE* (October-December 1922) p.1-2

Fernand Gavarry

## A World's Amateur Championship during the Olympic Games

### Tournoi international d'Amateurs d'Echecs

Les jeux olympiques de 1924 devant amener à Paris un grand nombre d'étrangers, un comité a été formé pour organiser avec la collaboration de la *Fédération Française des Echecs*, un tournoi international d'amateurs d'Echecs.

Ce tournoi aura lieu dans les salons de l'hôtel Majestic du 13 au 20 juillet 1924.

Les champions amateurs de toutes les nations inscrites aux jeux olympiques sont invités à participer à ce tournoi.

Le nombre des concurrents éventuels est limité à 4 par nation, sans remplaçants.

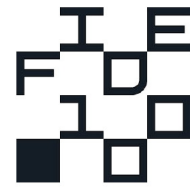
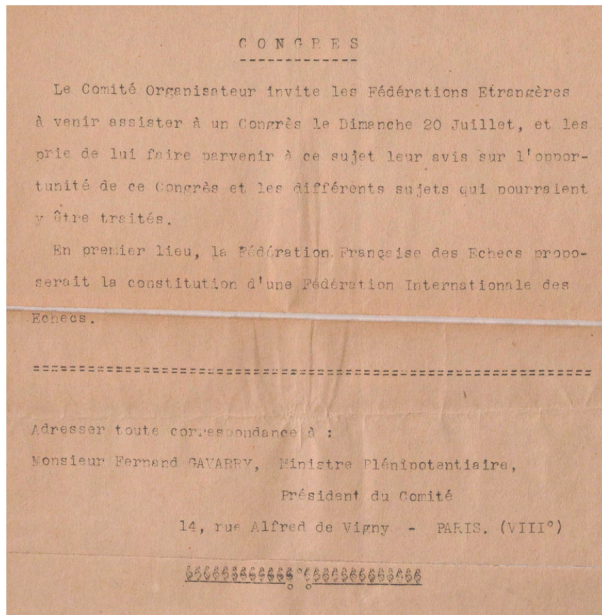


*Bulletin de la FFE* (January-March 1924) p.1-2

Pierre Vincent



## Congress to create the F.I.E.

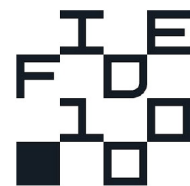


### **Congress**

*The organizing committee invites foreign federations to attend a congress on Sunday July 20, and asks them to send us their views on the relevance of this congress and the various topics that could be addressed.*

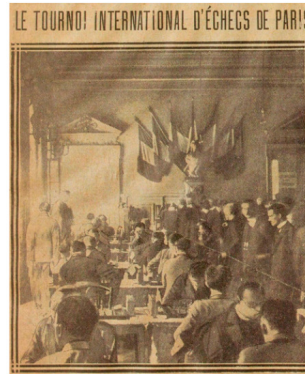
*First of all, the French Chess Federation would propose the creation of an International Chess Federation.*

## The International Amateur Chess Tournament July 12-19, 1924





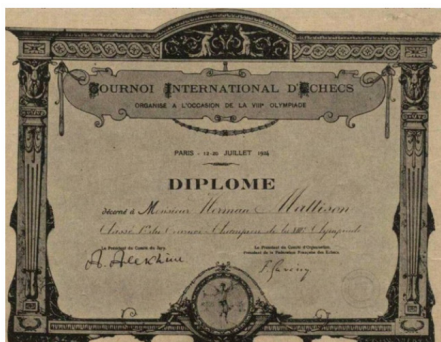
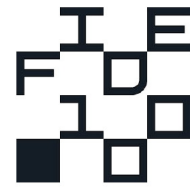
## The Venue – Mairie du 9<sup>ème</sup> Arrondissement



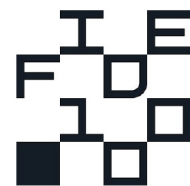
*Excelsior 13/07/1924*



FIDE's 100th Anniversary – Replica Signature  
20/07/2024



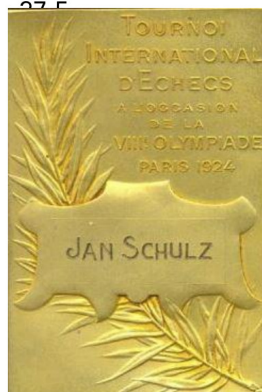
1. Matisons H.  
5,5
2. Apsenieks F.  
5
3. Colle E.  
4,5
4. Euwe M.  
4
5. Vajda A.  
4
6. Tschepurnoff A.  
4
7. Palau L.  
3.5



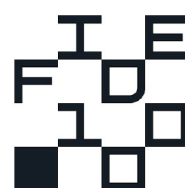


The decisive game Colle-Matisons

1. Czechoslovakia  
31
2. Hungary  
30
3. Switzerland  
29
- 4-5. Argentina  
27.5



Jan Schulz's gold medal for Czechoslovakia

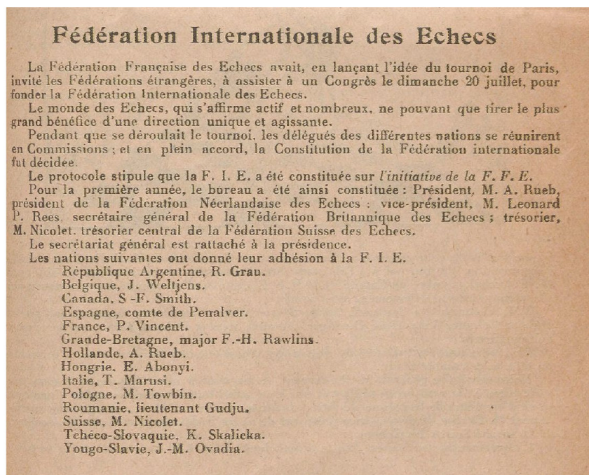


Federations Congress  
July the 20th, 1924



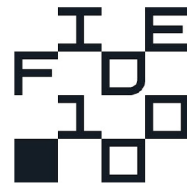


The 15 (or 14 ! ?) pioneers who signed the document creating the F.I.E. on Sunday 20 July in Paris.



**Bulletin de la Fédération  
Française des Echecs  
(October 15, 1924) p.11-12**

**Tijdschrift van den  
Nederlandschen Schaakbond  
(July 1924) p.190**



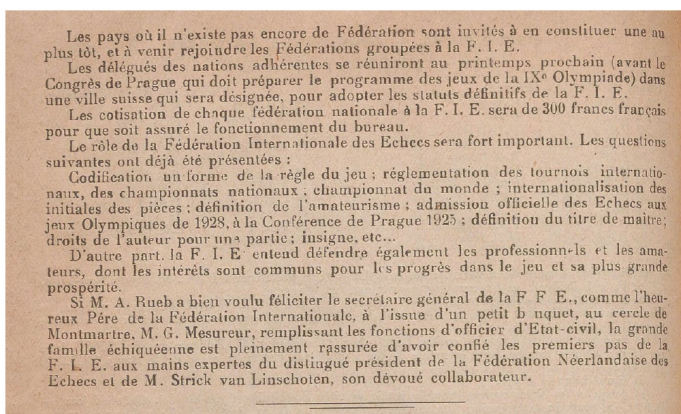
Hierop volgen de handteekeningen en wel voor de :

Fédération Française des Echecs : P. Vincent.  
Fédération Yougoslave des Echecs : J. M. Ovadia.  
Société Suisse des Echecs : M. Nicolet.  
British Chess Federation : Major I. H. Rawlins.  
Federazione Scacchistica Italiana : F. Marusi.  
Voor Rumenië : J. Gudju.  
Nederlandsche Schaakbond : A. Rueb.  
Canadian Dominion Chess Association : S. F. Smith.  
Fédération Belge des Echecs : L. Weltjens.  
Ustredni jednota ceskoslovenskych sachistu : K. Skalicka.  
Federación Argentina de Ajedrez : R. Grau.  
Voor Spanje : Comte de Penalver.  
Voor Polen : I. Towbin.  
Voor Hongarije : E. Abonyi.  
Voor Finland : A. Tscherpunoff.

En ten slotte : wij zijn er van overtuigd, dat al onze Nederlandsche schakers met vreugde zullen begroeten, dat de voorzitter van onzen Bond tot voorzitter van den wereldschaakbond werd gekozen, eene welverdiende hulde voor het werkzame aandeel, dat deze nam in de stichting van dien bond. Leve de Wereldschaakbond !

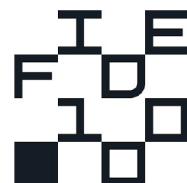
H. S. v. L.

The Goals of the new F.I.E.



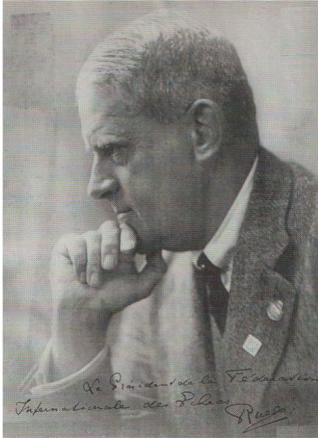
**Bulletin de la Fédération  
Française des Echecs  
(October 15, 1924) p.11-12**

- Codification of the game rules
- Rules of International tournaments, National Championships and World Championship
- Définition of amateurism
- Defense of professional and amateur chess players
- Admission to the Olympic Game programme
- Definition of the master title
- Copyright of the games
- Etc.





## The First Bureau



President  
Alexander Rueb (1882-1959)

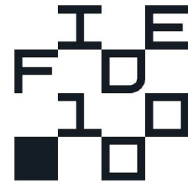


Vice-President  
Leonard Percy Rees (1862-1944)



Treasurer  
Marc Nicolet (1876-1942)

Secretary  
Hendrik Strick van Linschoten (1879-1945)



## Pierre Vincent (1878-1956)

Fédération Française des Echecs

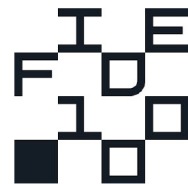
The key man. « Father of FIDE »



Mechanical engineer.  
Sports and Chess love led him to the French Olympic Committee and the French Chess Federation.

Has never been a good chess player but was a great organizer and propagandist. As general secretary of the FFE, was the key man in the organisation of the Amateurs Championship and the Congress of Chess Federations of July 1924 in Paris.

Universally regarded as the 'father' of FIDE. Remained general secretary of the FFE and French delegate to FIDE until 1928 when the FFE preferred Alekhine to him.



## Pierre Vincent (1878-1956)



Alekhine's blindfold exhibition, Paris 1925.

He left the FFE over this disagreement. Reappeared in the 1950s, when he was associated with the FSGT, a rival of the FFE. He died in Nice and is buried in Montmartre cemetery.



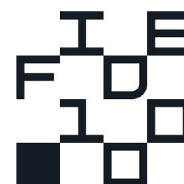
Vincent's family tomb Montmartre cemetery.



Tournament in Paris 1929, with Duchamp.



Commemorative plaque unveiled on 20 July 2024.

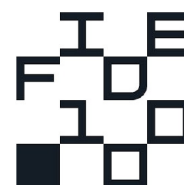


## Roberto Grau (1900-1944)

Argentina – Federación Argentina de Ajedrez



The « father » of Argentine chess. Won 7 times the Argentine champion title. Played for Argentina in 6 olympiads. Funded the Circulo de Ajedrez de Buenos Aires. Leading force of the creation of the Argentine Federation in 1922. Director of the periodicals *El Ajedrez Americano* and *El Ajedrez Argentino*. Author of *Tratado General de Ajedrez* in 4 volumes that he finished shortly before his death.



## Léon Weltjens (1887-1975)

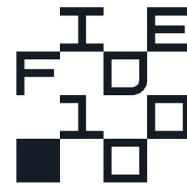
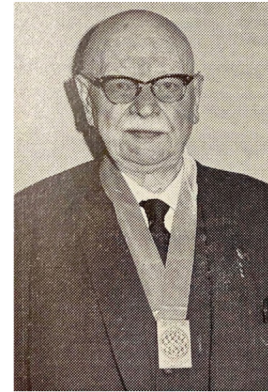
Belgium - Fédération Royale Belge des Echecs



Willem was his official first name, but everyone called him Léon. He was a military pharmacist and then a professional sommelier.

He was one of the founders of the Belgian Chess Federation in 1920. He was its Secretary from 1921 to 1927, its President from 1957 to 1967, and then its Honorary President. He was never a strong chess player, but was an organiser in the chess world throughout his life.

In 1974, he was awarded the FIDE Gold Medal as co-founder.



## Stephen Francis Smith (circa 1861-1928)

Canada / Canadian Dominion Chess Association - Own initiative ?



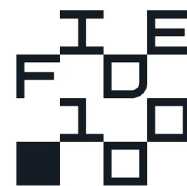
Physician, born in Canada but spent most of his adult life in England.

Played in the City of London Chess Club at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century. Returned to Canada during 1st World War.

Notable player in Vancouver.

Back in Europe played in a lot of minor tournaments.

Sole representative of Canada in the tournament and signed on his own authority.



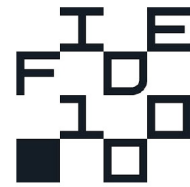


## Karel Skalička (1896-1979)

Czechoslovakia / Ustredni Jednota Ceskoslovenskych Sachistu



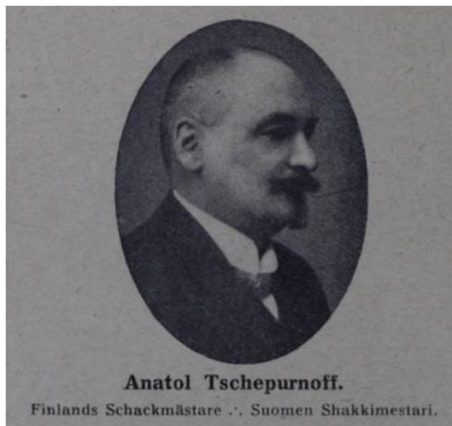
One of the members of the Czech team who won the Gold medal in Paris. Lawyer and Judge in Prague. Represented Czechoslovakia at the olympiads of 1931 and 1933, then Bohemia-Moravia in 1939. One of the numerous European masters who elected to stay in Argentina after the 1939 Buenos Aires olympiad. Remained in Argentina until his death. Known as Carlos Skalicka, he was a pillar of the famous Club Argentino de Ajedrez. Also a problem composer.



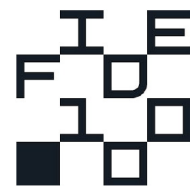
The Finnish mystery !

## Anatol Tschepurnoff (1871-1942)

Finland / Finnlands Schackförbund

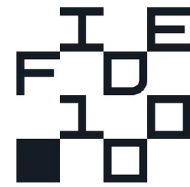


Born in Finland in a family of Russian origins when Finland was under Russian sovereignty. Worked as a Railway official first in Petersburg then in Finland. Finland's champion from 1922 until 1931. Represented Finland in numerous FIDE tournaments.



## Francis Hooper Rawlins (1861-1925)

Great Britain / British Chess Federation



Ex major of the Royal Anglesey Engineers Corps.  
Lived in Paris in 1924 and died there in 1925.  
Was a painter in Paris.  
Surprising signatory as he was almost unknown in Great Britain.

## István Abonyi (1886-1942)

Hungary / Magyar Sakkszövetség



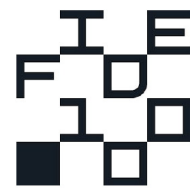
Studied law and practised as a lawyer. When his father died in 1914, inherited a large fortune and devoted himself entirely to chess. Between 1914 and 1940, he was in turn secretary, general secretary and president of the Budapest Chess Club.

In 1921 he was one of the founders of the Hungarian Chess Federation, serving as secretary and then president until 1937.

He was also president of the ISFB (International Fernschachbund) from 1935 to 1939.

Editor-in-chief of the magazine Magyar Sakkvilág for several years.

Abonyi was not only a great chess official, but also an excellent player. He is known as one of the first theoreticians of the Budapest Gambit.



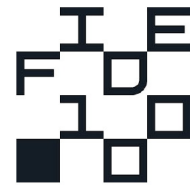
## Terenziano Marusi (1868-1936)

Italy / Federazione Scacchistica Italiana



He was a musician. A composer of sacred music, he was director of music at the cathedrals of Parma and Milan. He died in a retirement home for musicians in Milan.

He was one of the founders of the Italian Federation in 1920. General Secretary of the Italian Federation from 1923 to 1926. He remained Italian delegate to FIDE until 1928. Worked hard in his country to have chess admitted to the CONI.



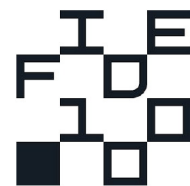
## Alexander Rueb (1882-1959)

Netherlands / Nederlandsche Schaakbond

The first FIDE president



Lawyer and diplomat.  
Became a member of Discendo Discimus Chess Club in 1909, president from 1920 to 1928.  
President of the Dutch Chess Federation from 1922 to 1928.  
First president of FIDE, a position he held until 1949.  
Passionate about endgame studies.  
Chess Book collector.





## Izaak Towbin (1899-1941)

Poland / Warszawskim Towarzystwem Zwolenników Gry Szachowej



Born in Ukraine into a Jewish family, he entered a gymnasium in Kiev and then Kiev University.

In the early 1920s, he moved to Warsaw where he graduated in law, and became a lawyer.

He played in a number of Polish tournaments in the 1920s, but never reached the top.

After 1930, he became mainly an organizer and propagandist for a Warsaw club and at the Polish Federation.

He was living in Warsaw during the German occupation and was one of the victims of the Holocaust. His exact date of death is unknown.



## Ion Gudju (1897-1988)

Rumania / Federation in formation



His father played in café de la Régence in the 19th century.

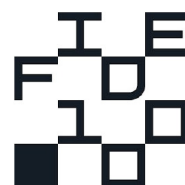
Studied in France as his father, Doctor in Chemistry.

Military in the Air Force.

Best Romanian player for years.

Elected Honorary Vice-President of FIDE in Lucerne 1982.

Funded Federația Română de Șah in January 1925.



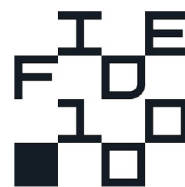
## Enrique de Peñalver y Zamora (1857-1932)

Spain / Own initiative



Manuel Golmayo playing against the King of Spain Alfonso XIII in Madrid, 1921.

Enrique de Peñalver, seated in the centre with moustache.



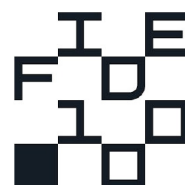
Not to be confused with his younger brother Ignacio, mayor of Madrid.  
Spanish noble man, diplomat.  
Lived in France for most of his life.  
Wealthy, he patronized chess in the French Basque country.  
He signed on his own initiative, as the Spanish Federation was not created until 1927.

## Marc Nicolet (1876-1942)

Switzerland / Société Suisse des Echecs – Schweizerische Schachverein



Mathematics teacher in Neuchtel.  
Very good musician.  
Treasurer of the Swiss Chess Federation and  
Treasurer of FIDE from its foundation until his death in 1942.



## Jakov M. Ovadija (1878-1941)

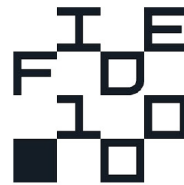
Yugoslavia / Savez Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca



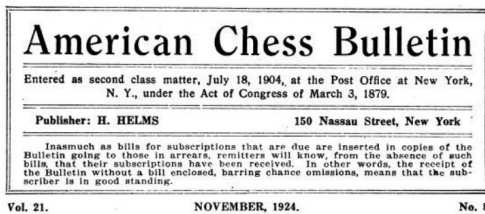
Dr. Jakov M. Ovadija was a Belgrade lawyer,  
He played a major role in the development of chess in Belgrade and Serbia.

Organized two trips to Serbia by world champions: Emanuel Lasker in 1924 and Alexander Alekhine in 1931.

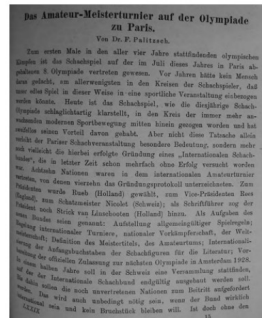
When the Nazis rounded up the Jews of Belgrade in early 1941, he tried to flee with his family, but was arrested and handed over to the Nazis. His exact date and place of death are unknown.



## A warm welcome worldwide



**THE NEW INTERNATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION.**  
Not so long after Dr. Emanuel Lasker, in reply to a question propounded, stated that, so far as another world's championship match was concerned, an international movement was necessary to bring it about, his suggestion seems to have been acted upon, although it is quite possible that such a move had been contemplated independently of the wish expressed by the former world's champion. Quite a few attempts have been made in the past to bring together the various chess interests of the world into one body, but until this year the well-meant efforts have been fruitless.



Ett världsschackförbund bildades på denna olympiad.  
Man beslöt att hålla nästa schackolympiad 1928 i samband med de olympiska spelen i Amsterdam. En av förbundets uppgifter varmed man snarast kommer att taga itu med blir fastställt av regler för världsmästerskapet. Därjämte kan man ta för givet att förbundet går i förtäring om ordnandet av landsmatcher, kanske också turneringar. Förbundets säte förlades första året till Schweiz.  
Till förbundets förste president valdes presidenten i Holländska schackförbundet dr. A. Rueb, och vice president blev L. P. Rees, hon. secretary i Brittiska schackförbundet Schweizaren M. Nicolet valdes till skattmästare, och sekreterare hos presidenten blev

Jonkher Strick van Linschoten. Sekreterare för förbundet är ännu ej utsedd men man kan ta för givet att det kommer att bli en schweizare.

Париж. По окончании турнира победителей, устроенного в связи с Олимпиадой, был по инициативе французского Шах. Союза, организован Всемирный Шахматный Союз. По мысли инициаторов он должен объединить шахматные организации всех культурных стран в одно целое. Германскому Шах. Союзу (самому большому в мире), который, к слову сказать, не был приглашен на участие в Олимпиаде, будет также предложено присоединиться к новому объединению. В президенты этого В. Ш. С. избран д-р Рюб (префект Голландии, Шах. С.). вице-президент — Риз (секретарь Британок. Ш. С.); казначей — Николе (казначей Швейцарок. Ш. С.). Бюро Союза предполагается устроить в Гааге, а пока (до созыва съезда, который намечен в 1925 году) оно находится в Швейцарии. На Бюро возложена миссия выработать к съезду устав союза, а также предпринять все шаги необходимые для упрочения и дальнейшего развития союза. Главной своей задачей союз считает организацию турниров (профессионалов и любителей), изменение правил игры, если с этим возникнет надобность, а также установление единой формы шахматной нотации (записи ходов).

Идея организации Всемирного Шах. Союза не нова. Ее в свое время с жаром выдвигал д-р Эм. Ласкер, причем мыслил себе эту организацию как профсоюз международных мастров, разрешающий также и все вопросы «высшего шахматного порядка», как то, — организация матчей

за первенство мира, устройство интернациональных турниров и пр. не малой достаточного отклика, он оттолкнулся от своей мысли. Такой же неудачей окончилась и венская попытка 1922 г. (в связи с происходившим тогда международным турниром).

## Aus aller Welt. Schachereignisse des Jahres 1924. Schacholympiade in Paris.

Zum ersten Male seit Einführung der olympischen Spiele wurde im Juli 1924 den körperlichen Kämpfern ein Schachwetstreit angegliedert, der den besten Spielern aller Nationen Gelegenheit geben sollte, die Amateurweltmeisterschaft im Schach zu erringen. Jedes Land hatte das Recht, die besten vier Amateurspieler nach Paris, dem Schauplatz der VIII. Olympiade, zu entsenden. In Vorgruppen waren die Kämpfer zu sieben, nur dem Sieger war der Eintritt in die Siegergruppe gestattet, aus welcher der Amateurweltmeister hervorzuziehen hatte. Die Unterlegenen hatten ein Konsortium nach dem Schweizer System zu bestehen (es werden in jeder Runde Spieler mit möglichst gleichem Zählerstand gepaart). Die von jedem Vertreter einer Nation erzielten Zähler (aus Vorgruppe und Siegergruppe, beziehungsweise Trostturnier zusammen) waren zusammenzuzählen und so die im Mannschaftswetstreit siegreiche Nation zu ermitteln. Fürwahr, ein großangelegter, bewundernswerter Plan! Leider hat seine Durchführung sehr darunter gelitten, daß eben in Frankreich die VIII. Olympiade abzuhalten war, jenen Lande, das im Abbau des Kriegsschasses am wenigsten weit vorgeschritten ist. Demgemäß blieben Deutschland mit seinen zahlreichen Amateuren und die Deutschen der Tschechoslowakei ohne Einladung, auch Nordamerika und die nördlichen Staaten hielten sich fern, Österreich erklärte aus finanziellen Gründen eine Teilnahme für unmöglich, Rußland blieb unberücksichtigt, sogar England entsandte eine ganz unzulängliche Mannschaft.



## The start of a great adventure

1925 / 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress – Zürich - F.I.E. becomes F.I.D.E.

- Correspondance Chess League of America \*
- Finland ?/!

1926 / 3rd Congress – Budapest

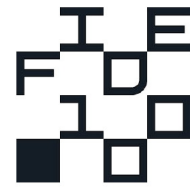
- Sweden
- Catalonia \*
- Denmark
- Norway
- Germany
- Austria
- Isolated Russian players \*

1927 / 4th Congress – London

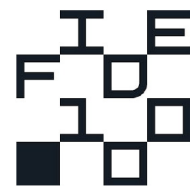
- Yugoslavia
- Portugal
- Poland
- USA instead of Correspondance Chess League of America
- Latvia
- Uruguay

1928 / 5th Congress – The Hague

- Spain instead of Catalonia
- Brazil
- Mexico
- Club de Ajedrez de Cuba



# GENS UNA SUMUS



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jQuery.fn.rstSlider) { init(); } else { document.addEventListener('DOMContentLoaded', init); } function  
init() { var $ = jQuery; var slider = $(sliderElement); slider.find('video[data-rsts-background], [data-rsts-  
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dummyLinks.appendTo(dummyLinksWrap); links.each(function() { var href = $(this).attr('href');
dummyLinks.each(function() { if (href === $(this).attr('href')) { $(this).detach(); } }); });
links.colorbox(lightboxConfig); }); slider.on('rsts-slidestart rsts-slidestop', function(event) {
update(slider.find('a[data-lightbox]')); }); update(slider.find('a[data-lightbox]')); }); } }();

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[The presentation as PDF file:](#)

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[FIDE's foundation Paris July 20, 1924 \(compressed\) - Dominique Thimognier \(4.0 MiB\)](#)