

**FIDE Historical Committee**  
**7 June 2021, 4pm (Swiss time) by Zoom**

**Presents:**

Berik Balgabaev FIDE, Russia  
Casto Abundo FHM, Philippines  
Andrzej Fillipowicz FHM, Poland  
Boris Kutin FHM, Slovenia  
Mehrddad Pahlevanzadeh, Iran  
Abdulrahim Mahdi, UAE  
Pelissier, Paraguay  
Horst Metzinger, Germany  
Duchovny, USA  
Shaedler Museum, Switzerland  
Bastian, Germany  
Leconte, France  
Inal, Belgium  
GM Lev Alburt, USA  
Allred WCHOF, USA  
Allan Mc Gowan, Scotland  
GM Mykhalchyshyn, Ukraine  
IM Goran Antunac, Croatia  
Mario Petrucci, president of Argentina CF  
Lindberg, Sweden  
Morgado, Argentina  
Villegas, Argentina  
Carlos Rivero Gonzales, president of Cuba CF  
Hoffmeister Historian, Belgium  
Allan Herbert, president of Barbados CF  
FM Van Hoolandt, president of AIDEF  
Péchiné, France  
Herman Hammers, Netherlands  
Stere, Romania  
Pilpel, Israel  
FM Willy Iclicki, Belgium

**Absent with apologies**

Vadim, Faibisovich  
Tomba, Hungary  
Max Euwe Centrum  
Brekke, Norway  
Frick, Liechtenstein  
Linder, Russia  
Wilshire, USA  
Tsedanova, FIDE Greece

## MINUTES

Committee Chairman Willy Iclicki opened the meeting at 4pm Swiss time.

### 1. FIDE Chess Museum project

Chairman Iclicki said that a big part of the FIDE Archives were sent to Holland to an archive of the Dutch National Library. Archives of Max Euwe and F. Campomanes are there. Archives of Dr. Rueb are in the Archives of the library of the University of Amsterdam. He said he was asked to find these archives and visit in the coming months and try to put them in future at the disposal of FIDE.

He said we have pre-war FIDE Congress minutes from 1925 to 1939 but minutes from 1940 to 1960 have disappeared.

Archive documents before the Ilyumzhinov period have disappeared and Mr. Iclicki asked for help in trying to gather the missing documents.

He thanked Committee members, federations and collectors for sending him documents and photos in preparation for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of FIDE.

He explained the idea of a virtual museum and said there is an investor ready to invest millions in this project. He said the idea is to have interactive and virtual presentation which can be moved from city to city in all continents around the world. He said the contract is under preparation and it should take one year to prepare the software. FIDE shall control contents of museum. The plan is to be ready by 2024.

### 2. FIDE Jubilee Book project

Mr. Iclicki reported that the next 100 years Jubilee Book will be illustrated with history of world championships and Olympiads.

It was suggested to contact John Promilo, a prominent chess collector from the USA.

The president of Fed. Cubana de Ajedrez offered photos of the Havana Olympiad 1966.

Mr. Iclicki thanked current and former world champions for sending photos of medals of world championships and Olympiads. He also gathered photos, medals, coins, chess stamps. He also has received help from chess collectors but much more are to be found.

### 3. FIDE 2024 ceremony project

Mr. Iclicki said that the idea is to make 10 ceremonies around the world from July 24 to finish at the Olympiad in Budapest in September 2024. But since it is not possible to hold 10 events in a short period of 8 week, then we can hold celebrations until the end of the year 2024.

Ceremonies will be similar format with first day a massive tournament, then on the second day a simultaneous exhibition given by world champion(s) for top VIPs, then academic lectures and award of medals or decorations followed by dinner gala.

There may be more than 10 federations to organize such a ceremony. We can start with federations who organized three top events since 1924: France should open celebrations since it is where FIDE was founded, Argentina, USA, England, Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Georgia, Germany, Turkey, China, Philippines, South Africa (we need one place in Africa) and

Spain. Other second levels are Italy, India, UAE, Iran and and Israel. We should have celebrations in Hungary at the Budapest Olympiad since hopefully we shall be present there. Goran Antunac suggested instead of Yugoslavia, indicate national federation of Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and they will meet to decide how to stage the anniversary celebration,

After FIDE approval later this year, Mr. Iclicki will meet with organizers and see what dates are feasible

We will contact organizers and discuss partnership to work together. We can have special movies, parties, lectures, exhibitions. FIDE and the host country will share costs.

For Paris the plan is to hold in in the Senate or town hall inviting all Honorary Members and Federation Presidents

Ceremonies will be held over two days: day of arrival, two days of activities with gala dinner on the last day, then departure.

Ceremonies can consist of mass Simultaneous games by limited invitation, Rapid chess tournaments, Blitz tournament with locals.

Mr. Iclicki said he is waiting for FIDE to approve the concept including a Torch ceremony starting from Paris and going to the 10 participating cities around the world.

Ceremony should be to introduce history of chess, story of the host national chess federation and ceremonial signing of a FIDE document commemorating the anniversary

Allan Herbert repeated his proposal to invite federations to issue Commemorative Stamps

#### **4. FIDE Movie project**

Mr. Iclicki reported that FIDE wants to make a series of movies about world champions. So far, Producers want to make 8 episodes only. Negotiations are going on.

#### **5. Update of FIDE Handbook**

Mr. Iclicki reported that FIDE asked to update the Handbook. The Historical Committee should present a list of nominees per Award Category to the President who will choose.

#### **6. Case of the Missing FIDE President**

Mr. Iclicki reported that he found documents in the Dutch Library from 23 April 1914, where they discussed the creation of an International Chess Federation. Unfortunately, the war came but it shows the idea of FIDE came ten years earlier.

In 1939 Buenos Aires organized the Olympiad with some 40 federations. It was by preliminary groups with qualifiers advancing to the finals. Many sailed from Antwerp in one ship to Buenos Aires. The tournament started normally. During the tournament on September 1, Germany invaded Poland. Three days later England and France declared war on Germany.

As usual the FIDE Congress was held together with the Olympiad. The main point was the control of the World Championship. Before that time FIDE was struggling to take over the

World Championship from the champion. FIDE was looking for possible challenger to Alekhine and FIDE decided to take over the World Championship with or without Alekhine. European players were concerned about returning to Europe and some sought to stay and seek political asylum to avoid a possible war.

At the end of the General Assembly the Delegate of Paraguay asked the FIDE President to accept the motion that because of the war, chess will be impossible in Europe since the war will become worse in a couple of months. Rueb said Holland was neutral in the first world war and hopefully will be neutral again.

He also said it is hard to accept the motion since it was not in the Agenda. The Statutes of FIDE then stated that items for the Agenda should be sent at least four months before start of GA to be included in the Agenda. Mr. Iclicki said that there was no war four months before the GA and, as history has shown, FIDE General Assembly can decide to include new matters in the Agenda.

Dr. Rueb allowed the General Assembly to continue with the debate which came to a vote and there were about 12 Delegates out of 25 registered. On the same day Alekhine organized a tournament and during that time players were also Delegates. Most of the Delegates did not attend the last session of the General Assembly.

There was a vote and instead of stopping it, Rueb continued and the vote was 8 in favour of the motion, four abstentions and nobody against. The decision of the General Assembly was that the President of Argentine Chess Federation Mr. Augusto De Muro will become FIDE President and Dr. Rueb will become Honorary President and that the FIDE Secretariat will move from Den Haag to Buenos Aires.

Mr. Iclicki showed the Minutes of the Congress of 1939 signed by Dr. Rueb. The motion was signed by the 12 Delegates who were there. Rueb insisted that he will not accept despite it being a General Assembly decision.

Media reports in 1939, received from Mr. Morgado, an Argentine historian, published this story extensively. The Congress and Olympiad ended and most of the participants returned to Europe but some stayed in Argentina.

Two months later Dr. Rueb published a letter to all federations saying that he was against the decision and threatened federations to accept the cancellation of the decision or be excluded from FIDE. There were 42 FIDE member federations at that time and it is not clear if they can convene a General Assembly with only five members attending.

This was in November 1939 and Mr. Iclicki said he could not find documents of replies to that letter. In 10 May 1940 Germany invaded France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and FIDE could not continue any activities. Part of the assets were sent to Zurich. In 1945 FIDE office in den Haag was burned and all archives were gone.

Mr. Iclicki said that what Rueb could have done to change the decision was to call an extraordinary General Assembly although it would have been difficult in pre-war November 1939. The 1940 Olympiad and General Assembly would have been in Budapest, Hungary but it was impossible to organize anything.

Mr. De Muro was reported in 1940's newspapers as travelling to Brazil and other countries in South America as FIDE President inaugurating tournaments. De Muro wrote Minutes of 1939 Congress, a bit different from the Minutes signed by Rueb. The economy in Argentina became very difficult also from the war and the Argentine federation FADA collapsed and a

new group fought with the old group and probably Dr. Rueb saw the opportunity to bury the decision by recognizing and helping the new Argentine federation.

Mr. De Muro and Mr. Grau, a strongman in Argentine chess who had been to Paris in 1924 to sign the FIDE protocol, had no news from Europe about chess since letters were difficult to reach their destination and became inactive and disappeared from the chess world 1943 to 1944.

In Europe the war ended in 1945 and Dr. Rueb managed to contact a few people for a meeting. Note that normally he was elected until 1940 which was his argument that he could not be removed in 1939 but as history has shown, the General Assembly can make such decisions.

In 1946 Dr. Rueb called for a meeting in Winthertur, Switzerland where only 8 federations came. We have Minutes of the meeting where only Delegates from France, Belgium, Netherlands, U.K., Greece, Czechoslovakia Spain and Italy. With only 8 out of 42 they elected a new body and Rueb became President again and the story about 1939 disappeared and seems to be purposely buried.

Mr. Petrucci, President of the Argentine Chess Federation, said Argentine historians were investigating in the last decade and he said that Mr. Iclicki is doing a great work gathering these facts. He said Argentina wants to know the truth because the documents cannot just be dismissed. War is a difficult time but it is part of our history.

Mr. Iclicki said he consulted the FIDE Legal Advisor and Constitutional Commission Chairman Dr. Roberto Rivello who were of the opinion that the General Assembly can make such decisions against Statutes. The point is the 1939 General Assembly made a decision and the GA did not meet again to reverse the decision. Therefore there was another President elected for the wartime period.

Mr. Lindberg said he saw documents in Sweden which show that there was a power struggle between Rueb and the Argentinians. Rueb and the Treasurer Mr. Nicolet tried to overturn the FIDE decision the year before. The Swedish Chess Federation discussed the matter internally and with the Norwegians. Neither of them were in Buenos Aires. Letters were exchanged with the FIDE in Argentina and the Swedes did not agree. So records show that the events Mr. Iclicki narrated did happen in Buenos Aires. Mr. Lindberg said he could not judge if the events were legal but the Swedish and Norwegian Chess Federations at that time did not support the Buenos Aires decision.

Mr. Iclicki added that there are two books published about the Buenos Aires Olympiad which clearly state that FIDE elected De Muro as President by the General Assembly. In another book an Australian journalist wrote that with the war in Europe the decision was made to appoint the Argentine Mr. August De Muro as new FIDE President. There are also newspaper clippings stating this fact that he was elected President. The only question is was it legal or not.

If the answer is positive, Mr. Augusto De Muro should be in the history books as FIDE president during wartime.

Historical Committee members agreed it was an interesting subject which should be studied specially on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FIDE to settle this controversy. If there is documentary evidence, then Mr. De Muro should be recognized as past president.

Regarding the objection of Dr. Rueb, the Committee noted that any organization can make changes during such extraordinary circumstances as a World War.

The Committee agreed that it is important is to have such official documents in the FIDE Museum for future reference.

## **7. Other Matters**

Mr. Uvencio Blanco said he will send to all member his paper on "Chess as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity". GM Andrei Mykhalchyshyn said he will distribute his interesting paper on prizes in chess.

Mr. Ilicki asked for documents on 1947 FIDE decision to give the title to Max Euwe for two hours because of the late arrival of the Soviet delegation at the FIDE meeting. But once the Soviets arrived, the story was forgotten.

Mr. Ilicki said we should investigate the number of FIDE Congresses for the next meeting.

Mr. Ilicki thanked participants for attending and said the next meeting will be in September/October.

Casto Abundo  
Committee Secretary