

## ENEZIA – VENICE extended survey, original by Jan van Reek

The first series of international invitation Italian tournaments (before Reggio Emilia and later Rome were launched) has been played in Venice.

Three World Chess Champions competed at Venice – **but all were not winning !** **Euwe** failed in 1948, **Smyslov** in 1950 & in 1974, and **Petrosian** as reigning WC in 1967.

Preliminary events happened in 1929 (the inaugural edition of the series) and in 1930 (five players, this tournament was not numbered). In total, eleven numbered editions.

Venice chess tournament series was restarting in 1947, played annually the first four editions in 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, then in 1953, afterwards held very irregularly, in 1966, 1967, 1969, 1971, and finally in 1974.



Tartakower in a Cartoon by **Oliver Schopf**

([http://www.oliverschopf.com/html/d\\_archiv/schach/schach\\_allgemein/schach\\_tartakower.html](http://www.oliverschopf.com/html/d_archiv/schach/schach_allgemein/schach_tartakower.html))

**Savielly Tartakower** (also known as *Xavier* less often *Tartacover* or *Tartakover*; 1887–1956) was a leading Austrian, then Polish, and finally French chess grandmaster. He was also a leading chess journalist and author of the 1920s and 1930s whose chess books remain popular even today. Tartakower is remembered for his sharp wit and aphorisms. (Wikipedia)

Savielly Tartakower, winner of Hastings 1945/46, also took clear first in **Venice 1947** at age of 60 and a half! He won unbeaten ahead of O'Kelly and Canal as runners-up, followed by 4. Monticelli, and 5. Grob, including also Medina (14 players).

Tartakower went on to win the 11<sup>th</sup> Hoogovens tournament at Beverwijk in 1949 at age of 62, the oldest winner ever at the traditional Beverwijk / Wijk aan Zee series.



Der populäre argentinische Schach-Großmeister  
**MIGUEL NAJDORF**  
 in seiner typischen Pose beim Kiebitzen  
 Gezeichnet am Internationalen Meisterturnier in Venedig 1948

**Look at that painting of great Miguel Najdorf by Henry Grob**, both players at Venice tournament 1948. Source: **Joaquim Travesset**, *Ajedrez y Pintura*, Grob (1904-74) See: <http://www.schachmuseum.com/henry-grob---grosse-partie.html> based on <https://www.ajedrez365.com/2012/03/ajedrez-y-pintura-henry-grob-1904-1974.html#more>; CN 10217 by Edward Winter, R. Forster: <https://www.chesshistory.com/winter/winter148.html>

Miguel Najdorf won in **1948** ahead of 2./3. Canal, Barcza, 4. Euwe, the former World Champion, 5. Castaldi, 6./7. Tartakower, Lokvenc, 8. Grob, including Monticelli and Opocensky (14 players).

Szabo triumphed in **1949** above 2. Rossolimo, 3. Prins, 4.-7. Golombek, Gligoric, Barcza, Foltys, 8. Paoli, 9. Kottnauer, 10. Tartakower, etc. (16 players).



Winner at Venice 1949: Laszlo Szabo (Photo 19 July 1965, Joop van Bilsen, Anefo)





Winner at Venice 1950: Alexander Kotov (Photo 17 July 1967, Jac de Nijs, Anefo)

Note:

For Esteban Canal, winner at Venice 1953, see the portrait in detail at the bottom!

The tournaments were played in fine buildings each time. Venice **1950** became a great event: Kotov won before Soviet compatriot Smyslov, Rossolimo finished third, Pachman fourth, Wade, Herman Steiner, and Letelier shared fifth to seventh place, including also Donner, Czerniak, Golombek, Paoli as sole 13<sup>th</sup> (in total 16 players).

Enrico Paoli from Italy won the brilliancy prize for a famous game he played against Soviet grandmaster and eventual tournament winner Alexander Kotov.

→ Replay with background comments in Chessgames: [Kotov vs E Paoli, 1950](#).



2nd round at Venice 1950 – Smyslov and Kotov can be seen in play on the left of the photo. On the right, Golombek faces Steiner (Photo: <http://www.gpntb.ru>)

Kotov wrote a detailed report on the event for the Soviet Chess Yearbook from 1950:

*On the 25th September 1950 grandmaster Smyslov and I flew to Italy, in order to take part in the fourth Venetian International Tournament. Accompanying us were the Honoured Master of Sport V. Makogonov and the Deputy Chairman of the Lithuanian Committee of Physical Culture and Sport, K. Krupin.*

*After ten hours we were in Prague and two hours later found ourselves on board a Czech aeroplane, directed across the difficult route Prague-Rome, across the Alps and along the Appenine Ridge. That same evening, having briefly seen Rome by night, we left on a fast train for Venice, since we were in a hurry to arrive at least a day before the start.*

*It is easy to understand the feelings of a person arriving for the first time in Venice. They involuntarily recall everything that they had read in childhood about this unusual city-island, the capital of the formerly powerful Venetian Republic, now spending its days like a peculiar city-museum, in peace and quiet.*

Read more, pictures, standings and annotated games in a blog by **Douglas Griffin**: <https://dgriffinchess.wordpress.com/2019/11/08/smyslov-and-kotov-at-venice-1950/>

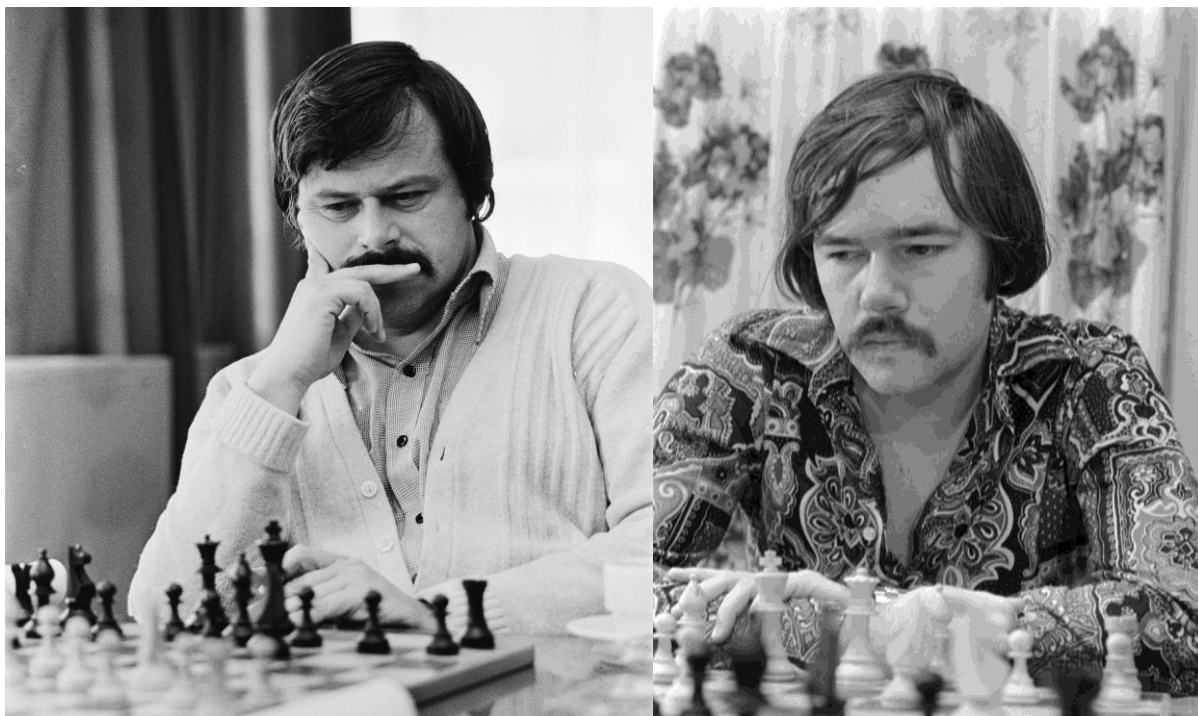


Winner at Venice 1966: Borislav Ivkov (Photo 29 May 1972, R.C. Croes, Anefo)



Winner at Venice 1967: Jan Hein Donner (Photo 29 June 1977, Bert Verhoeff, Anefo)





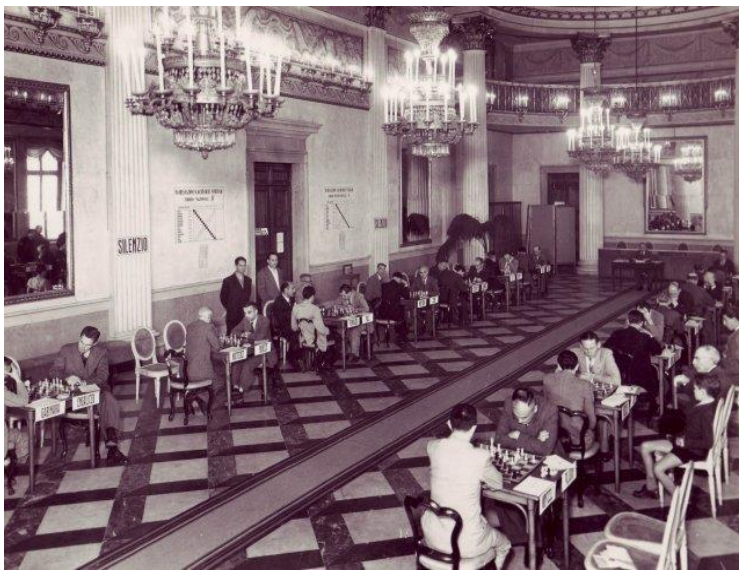
Winner at Venice 1969: Vlastimil Hort (Photo 29 July 1974, Hans van Dijk, Anefo),  
 Winner at Venice 1971: Walter Browne (Photo 20 Jan. 1976, Bert Verhoeff, Anefo)



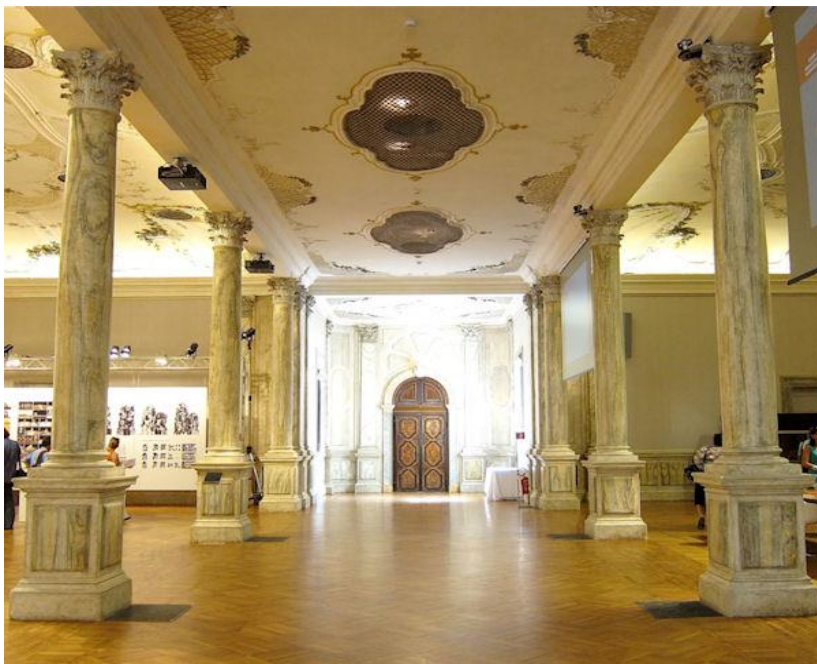
Winner at Venice 1974: Vladimir Liberzon (Photo 13 July 1977, Hans Peters, Anefo)



Hotel Lido Tournament hall 1929



Salone delle feste dell'Ala Napoleonica Tournament hall 1947



Sala delle Colonne di Ca' Giustinian Hall in 1948, 1949, 1950 and in 1953



In the next edition in **1953** succeeded Esteban Canal, legendary Peruvian player domiciled in Italy (incl. L. Schmid, Udovcic, Toran Albero, Bhend, Castaldi, Paoli).

After a longer break, the event moved to the Casino Municipale in the 1960s. Ivkov won in **1966** (incl. Antoshin, Lengyel, Golombek, Tatai, L. Schmid again). A great Dutch success happened in **1967** when Donner surpassed *reigning World Champion Petrosian*, who shared second place with Evans, above Pachman, and Janosevic (incl. also Canal, Lengyel, Robatsch, Kupper, Tatai, Paoli, 14 players).

In **1969**, Hort won two full points ahead of joint 2.-7. Robatsch, Taimanov, Tatai, Lengyel, Benkö, and Dr. Saidy, followed by 8. Matulovic, 9. Ivkov 10./11. Unzicker and Medina, 12. Paoli, 13. Zichichi, etc. (16 players). Browne took Venice in **1971**, ahead of surprising 2. Mariotti, incl. Hort, Kavalek, Gligoric, Bobotsov (12 players).

The last winner of the major series at Venice was Liberzon in the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of **1974**, winning outright, ex-World Champion Smyslov was clear runner-up in a field including Andersson, Timman, Savon, Suttles, Benkö, Tarjan, Bilek, and Ostojić (14 players).

**The event has been an elite tournament from 1947 until 1974.** The closed series definitely ended with a minor master in 1980, won by Karaklajic ahead of Nemet. Later Venice hosted small, national closed tournaments, and some Open Festivals.



Casino Municipale  
Tournament hall in 1966, 1967,  
1969, 1971 and 1974



Ca' Flangini (at the left)  
Tournament hall 1980.

(All photos taken from Jan van Reek, [endgame.nl](http://endgame.nl))

Albo d'Oro (international tournaments)

*Preliminaries:*

**1 1929 Pitschak** In occasione del 6° Congresso della FIDE  
**1930 Mieses** (five players, not numbered in the series)

*Master tournaments:*

**2 1947 Tartakower**  
**3 1948 Najdorf**  
**4 1949 Szabo**  
**5 1950 Kotov**

**6 1953 Canal**  
**7 1966 Ivkov**  
**8 1967 Donner**  
**9 1969 Hort**  
**10 1971 Browne**  
**11 1974 Liberzon**

*Minor:*

12 1980 Karaklajic

Three World Chess Champions competed at Venice – **but all were not winning !**  
**Euwe** failed in 1948, **Smyslov** in 1950 & in 1974, and **Petrosian** as reigning WC in 1967.

Further prime players were Mieses, Tartakower, Najdorf, Szabo, Kotov, Ivkov; Donner, Hort, Browne (all won), and Gligoric, Taimanov, O'Kelly, Pachman, Unzicker, Timman, Andersson.

The merit of having organised these tournaments belongs to energetic Venetian chess personalities, in the main that of the president of the Chess Federation, chess master **Szabados**. He has succeeded in attracting progressive public figures from Venice to the organisation of these events, and the international tournaments have had every support on the part of the city's Mayor.

Main organiser **Eugenio Szabados** (3 July 1898, Hungary – 6 March 1974, Venice), was himself a Hungarian–Italian chess master.

In 1921, he won the *Società Scacchistica Torinese* Championship, and tied for 5–7th in Viareggio. In 1923, he took 3rd behind Romeo Ferrari and Zdenek Formanek in Trieste. In 1928, he took 5th in Venice (national). In 1929, he took 8th in Venice. A year later, in 1930, he finished 2nd, behind [Jacques Mieses](#), in Venice.

In 1950–1958 he was president of the [Italian Chess Federation](#). Szabados was awarded the [International Master](#) title by FIDE in 1951. (Wikipedia)

### EUGENIO SZABADOS

(born Jul-03-1898, died Mar-06-1974, 75 years old) Hungary (federation/nationality Italy)

Hungarian-Italian chess master. In 1921 he won the Società Scacchistica Torinese Championship. In 1950-1958 he was President of the FSI (Italian Chess Federation). He was awarded the IM title in 1951. He built and owned a fleet of ships and was a millionaire. He spoke 10 different languages. He sponsored four major international tournaments in Venice. In 1956 Szabados lost all his ships due to the Suez crisis and became a poor man. (Chessgames)

#### May-03-09 **myschkin:**

Eugenio Szabados (1898-1974) was a great man both in Venetian and Italian chess. Himself a player of master strength, he was also the organiser and patron of many fine chess events. ... He was rich, being the owner of many ships, among other things. In 1956 there was the so-called Suez crises, when the Suez canal was closed off by the Egyptian president Nasser, who wanted to nationalise it. Almost all of Szabados' ships were inside the canal at the time. According to Jan Hein Donner, they were confiscated. Szabados had not insured his ships, because for an owner of a big fleet insurance is usually senseless. Once in a while you lose a ship, but insurance for the whole fleet would be much more costly. . . .

In 1956 Szabados lost all of them and his whole fortune and was a poor man afterwards.

(Source: <http://www.chesscafe.com/text/hans1...> by [Hans Ree](#))

Trivia:

**The first Chess Clock was invented at Venice in 1499!**

Source: <http://www.cci-italia.it/ving/ivoro.htm> (inactive)

Sources:

#### **Overall survey:**

[http://www.torneionline.com/loto\\_albi.php?path=albi/06\\_Grandi\\_Tornei\\_e\\_Festival/&link=95\\_Venezia.htm](http://www.torneionline.com/loto_albi.php?path=albi/06_Grandi_Tornei_e_Festival/&link=95_Venezia.htm)

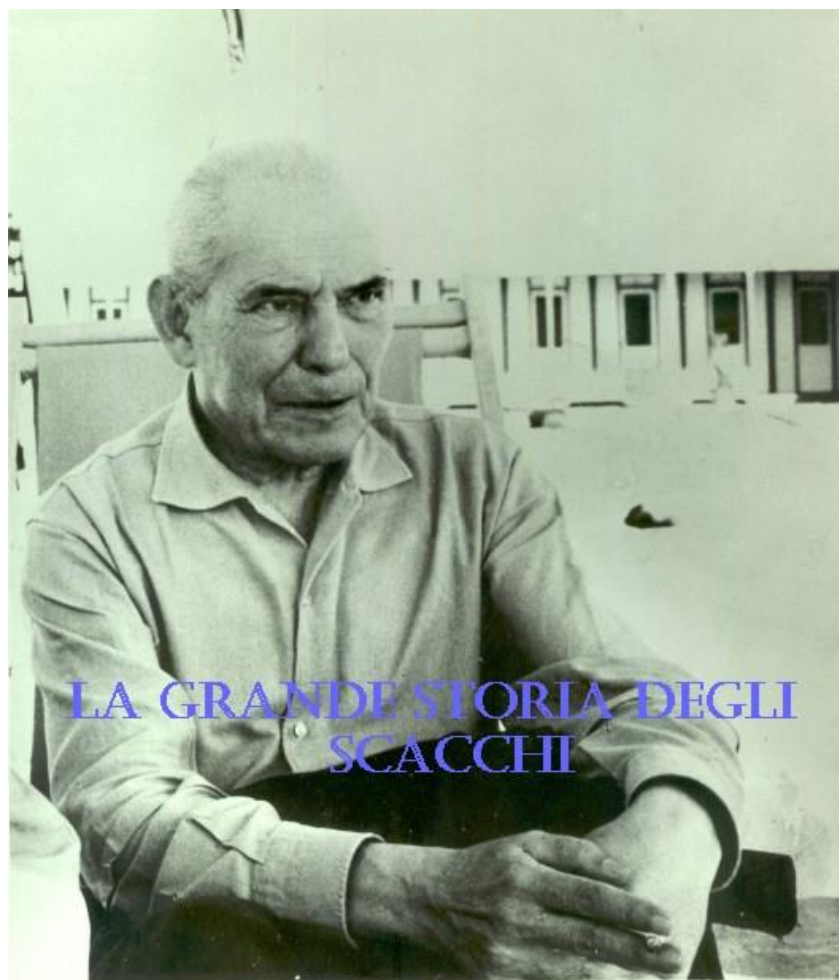
<http://www.endgame.nl/paoli.html> (historical survey by **Jan van Reek**, no longer available)

<http://www.kwabc.org/index.php/17-latest-news-and-reports/235-in-memoriam-jan-van-reek>

[International tournament, Venice – Belgian Chess History](#) (Venice 1947, won by Tartakower)

[International tournament, Venice – Belgian Chess History](#) (Venice 1953, won by Canal)

[Argentina, and Italy - www.chessdiagonals.ch](#) (scroll down for the pdf of Venice series)



Esteban Canal, winner at Venice in 1953

Photo: <http://storiascacchi.altervista.org/storiascacchi/foto/canal.jpg>

Canal Esteban (19.04.1896 - 14.02.1981)

Peruvian Grandmaster Hon. (1977 at eighty-one years) and IM since 1950, born in Spain of a Spanish mother and a Peruvian father, he lived the youth years of his life in Peru but from 1923 onwards, Canal was domiciled in Italy. He died in Varese, Italy.

Champion of Leipzig in 1916. **Winner of the Hungarian Championship in 1933 hors concours\***.

**Best results:** *2nd Trieste Internazionale 1923* (Paul Johner, Switzerland, won the top group ahead of 2. Canal, then 3. Yates, 4. Tarrasch, etc.), = *2nd Merano 1926* (Colle won), *2nd Budapest 1932* (Maroczy won, international championship), **1st Budapest (international championship) 1933**, compare the footnote below\*, **1st-2nd Reus 1936** (joint with Silbermann), = *2nd Venice 1947* (Tartakower won), **1st Reggio Emilia (Prequel) 1947**, 1st Bari (national) 1948, **1st Venice 1953**.

**Canal played in one Chess Olympiad, representing Peru on board 1 at Dubrovnik in 1950.**

\*Biggest success: From April 8-26, 1933, the 11<sup>th</sup> Hungarian National Championship was held in Budapest as International Tournament and won by Esteban Canal, who scored 10 out of 14 points, followed by Pál Réthy (9½), Andor Lilienthal (9), Lajos Steiner (8½), and Erich Eliskases (8). According to the French Wikipedia, Esteban Canal and Erich Eliskases played *hors concours* concerning the national title of the Hungarian Federation, stipulating that Pál Réthy was awarded as national champion of Hungary. Certainly, Canal was clear first in that very strong tournament.