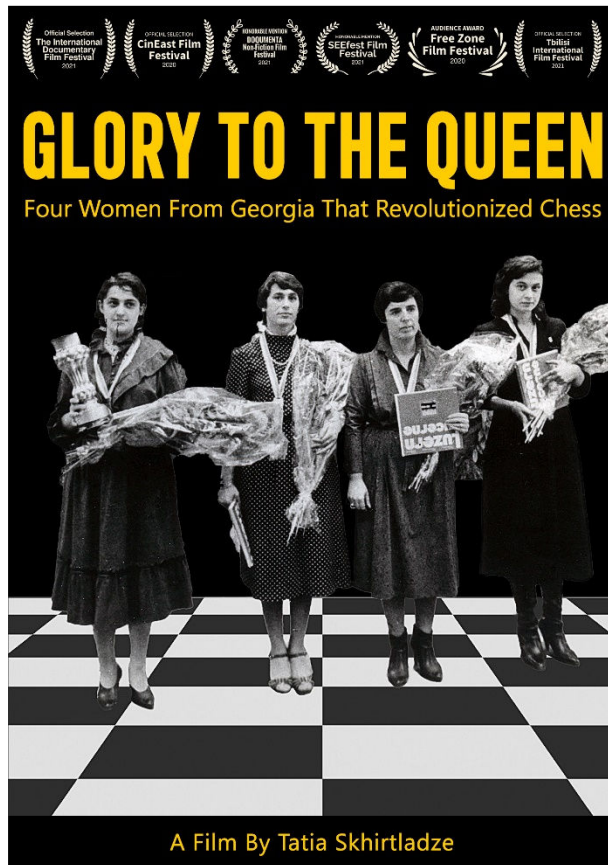# GLORY TO THE QUEEN
FOUR WOMEN FROM GEORGIA THAT REVOLUTIONIZED CHESS

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Glory to the Queen

Glory to the Queen reveals the intertwined lives of international chess heroes: Nona Gaprindashvili, Maia Chiburdanidze, Nana Alexandria and Nana Ioseliani. These four legendary female players from Georgia revolutionized women's chess and became Soviet icons of women's empowerment. The women leave a lasting legacy. They played together on the Soviet Union's Olympic team, but they were also competitive with each other. Glory to the Queen brings them together again after a 25-year break, to remember their competitions and friendship. Now older, they are still important icons of the sport and the country.

About the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union, or Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was a country in eastern Europe and Asia. It stretched from the Black Sea in the west, to the Pacific Ocean in the east. The Soviet Union was established in 1922 after Russian revolutionaries overthrew the monarchy that had ruled Russia for hundreds of years. It was the world's first communist country. Its first leader was Vladimir Lenin.

The Center for European Studies explains communism. It says, "Communism is a political ideology and type of government in which the state owns the major resources in a society, including property, means of production, education, agriculture and transportation. Basically, communism proposes a society in which everyone shares the benefits of labor equally, and eliminates the class system through redistribution of on income."[1] Communism was an attractive alternative to many people in Russia after years of rule by a monarchy that had lived in luxury, while the rest of the population lived in poverty. However, in reality, life did not become better under communism for many people. For example, shortages of consumer goods were common, and government suppression of the press and freedom of speech was also widespread.

The Soviet Union began as four republics, and later expanded to fifteen: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Moscow, which is located in Russia, was the capital city. While it existed, the Soviet Union was the largest country in the world by area. After political and economic problems, the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, becoming fifteen independent countries, including Russia.

The Cold War

The Cold War was a period of rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union—and their allies—stretching from the 1940s until 1991. It began after World War II, as the United States tried to keep the Soviet Union from expanding its communist influence around the world. As the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum explains, the Cold War did not involve direct military conflict or actual declarations of war. Instead, "The two superpowers continually

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[1] https://europe.unc.edu/iron-curtain/history/communism-karl-marx-to-joseph-stalin/

antagonized each other through political maneuvering, military coalitions, espionage, propaganda, arms buildups, economic aid, and proxy wars between other nations."[2] They also competed with one another in various sports, including chess. As part of the arms buildup that took place, each country amassed a large number of nuclear weapons, and there were widespread fears that nuclear war would eventually break out. The Cold War ended in 1991, with the end of the Soviet Union.

About Georgia

Georgia is a country in southeastern Asia. It borders Russia in the north and northeast, Turkey and Armenia in the south, Azerbaijan in the east and southeast, and the Black Sea in the west. Its capital city is Tbilisi. Georgia has a population of almost 5 million people.[3] Its official language is Georgian, and the majority of its people are Georgian in ethnicity. Georgia was forced to become part of the Soviet Union in 1921, then regained its independence in 1991 after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Chess Competitions and Rankings

There are a number of international chess competitions, but two of the most well-known are the Chess Olympiad and the World Chess Championship. The Chess Olympiad is a large world event where two separate teams of men and women compete for their countries. The first Olympiad was unofficial, and took place in 1924 in Paris. The first official Olympiad was in 1927 in London. The International Chess Federation chooses the country that hosts the competition, and Olympiads have been held in countries all over the world. The Soviet Union first competed in the Chess Olympiad in 1952, in Helsinki. From that year until its last participation, in 1990, the Soviet Union won every year, except in 1976, when it did not participate, and 1978, when it placed second.

The World Chess Championship is another large world chess competition, and it determines the chess world champion. It began in 1886. When the event began, the chess matches were organized by players. In 1948, the International Chess Federation began organizing the event. Both women and men are allowed to compete in the World Chess Championship, however a woman has never won it. There is also a separate Women's World Chess Championship competition.

In addition to winning titles in competitions, chess players can also receive various types of rankings. Grandmaster is the highest ranking that a chess player can receive, other than world champion. It Is awarded by the International Chess Federation, and based on a number of different criteria established by the organization. Nona Gaprindashvili was the first woman to receive the title of grandmaster. The majority of grandmasters are men.

[2] https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/the-cold-war
[3] https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/georgia/

The Chess Players

Nona Gaprindashvili was born in 1941 in Zugdidi, Georgia. She was the women's world chess champion between 1962 and 1978. In 1978, she lost the title to Maya Chiburdanidze. Between 2014 and 2019, she competed in the World and European Senior Championships, where she won every year except 2017.

Nana Alexandria was born in 1949 in Poti, Georgia. She was challenger for the women's world chess championship twice, however she lost to Nona Gaprindashvili in 1975, and when she played Maya Chiburdanidze in 1981, it ended in a draw. She also competed in six chess Olympiads.

Maia Chiburdanidze was born in 1961 in Kutaisi, Georgia. She won the Women's World Chess Championship in 1978—defeating Nona Gaprindashvili —and held the title for thirteen years. She was the second woman in the world to be awarded the title of grandmaster (in 1984).

Nana Ioseliani was born in 1962 in Tbilisi, Georgia. She participated in numerous Chess Olympiads, and was the winner of the Women's Soviet Chess Championship four times. She was also challenger for the women's world chess championship twice, however she lost both times; to Maia Chiburdanidze in 1988 and to Xie June in 1993.

All four woman competed twice together as the Soviet Union's Olympic team; in 1980 in Malta and in 1982 in Lucern. Both times they won.

Glossary

- **communism:** Communism is a system where all property is owned and shared by everyone in the system. Each community member works, and is paid according to his or her needs.
- **Bobby Fisher:** Fisher was an American-born chess player who set numerous records in chess, including becoming the youngest grandmaster in history, the youngest player to win the World Chess Championship, and the first American-born chess player to win it.
- **pioneer:** The Pioneer movement was an organization for children and teenagers within the Communist Party.
- **socialism:** Socialism is a system where all the means of production are owned publicly, rather than privately.
- **Young Communist:** The Young Communist League was a youth communist organization.
- **Yuri Gagarin:** Gagarin was a Soviet cosmonaut who became the first person to fly into outer space.

Additional Resources

Books

- Mark Edele (2019). *The Soviet Union: A Short History*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Donald Rayfield (2012). *Edges of Empires: A History of Georgia*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Cathleen Small (2018). *The Collapse of Communism and the Break Up of the Soviet Union*. New York: Cavendish Square Publishing.
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  https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/cold-war
- Center for European Studies. "Communism: Karl Marx to Josef Stalin."
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