

Margherita Belgiojoso

## *Là dove s'inventano i sogni - Donne di Russia (Women of Russia)*

*English sample available*

**The upheavals, the dramas, the political and cultural intrigues of Europe between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century through the eyes of 16 relevant Russian women, who all lived at different times but were united by History's invisible thread.**

Margherita Belgiojoso competently creates a brilliant fresco of portraits of famous Russian women. She somehow succeeds in leaving their stories open and limitless, each one leading on to the next.

**Vera Figner**, nicknamed the "Venus of the Revolution" because of her great beauty, who assassinated Alexander II, the reformer tsar, and after 20 years in prison fled to Switzerland where she listened to a conference by Lenin who deeply disappointed her. Then onto **Aleksandra Kollontai**, a Leninist revolutionary, a feminist at the heart of the Soviet movement. Then it is the turn of **Matil'da Kschessinskaya**, the tsar's beloved ballerina who leads us into the grand Russian theatres where we meet a few of the characters already present in the portraits of the previous women; and then naturally the theatre impresario **Diaghilev** and her rival, the symbolist poet **Zinaida Gippius**. From writer **Nina Nikolaevna Berberova**, to **Lili Brik**, Mayakovsky's muse, **Svetlana Alliluyeva**, Stalin's daughter, we finally come up to the present day with **Yelena Bonner**, the dissident who with her husband, Andrey Sacharov, the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize winner, was ultimately rehabilitated by Gorbachev and called back to Moscow. And who was met by a huge crowd at the station on their arrival.



Guanda, October 2018, pp.200

*"... an original gallery furnished with rigorous research."* **La Stampa**

*"They are all "women of Russia". The author, an enthusiastic expert of the country, has followed the trail (...) the lives of these sixteen, very special women who were real, whose lives are documented and not just plausible."* **Isabella Bossi Fedrigotti, Corriere della Sera**

*"a great portrait gallery (...) with an engrossing narrative strategy."* **Benedetta Craveri, La Repubblica**

*"the portraits of women with a strong cultural identity"* **Marta Morazzoni, Il Sole 24 Ore**

(All reviews are available at this link: <https://margheritabelgiojoso.com/it/recensioni/repubblica-45>)

**Margherita Belgiojoso** is a freelance journalist who spent more than ten years writing from Russia for the main Italian papers and magazines on a wide range of issues. She travelled to most of the countries of the former Soviet Union and the Western Balkans. Born and raised in Milan, she earned a degree at the Courtauld Institute and a Master's Degree at the London School of Economics. She lives in Rome and is married with two children. This is her first book.