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## **THE WINDOW OF THE "OLD SHEEP SHOP"**

**Ninel Podgornaja : "Mafalda of Savoy Hesse", Solfanelli Editore, Chieti 2009**

Like any life, even that of Mafalda di Savoia Assia coincides with a series of frames that the author delivered to the readers away from the chaotic flow of memoirs to reassemble on the texture of her forty years "removed from the destruction of time".

The mysterium iniquitatis rests on Mafalda martyr in Buchenwald, a victim of Nazi fury. Perfectly match the human drama, historical and individual along the path "jagged" and "sharp" in the second world war.

Several ideas of the biography of Princess coalesce into a "music" with painful and deadly note which clash in the ears of the man of 2000, but only to remind him what can not be forgotten, abjection, the ultimate step has reached the human nature.

(Comment by [Cristina Raddavero](#))

The text represents the outcome of a dual commitment informative and popular. If the Author is credited with divulging in their native language the story of Princess Mafalda of Savoy Hesse, perhaps otherwise unknown in the Soviet environment, on the same line there is the work of the translator, who has spread the work out using an effective review of literature.

In the pages of Ninel Ivanovna Podgornaja there is a heartfelt sharing the events of Mafalda, whose biography is exposed to the light of authoritative historical and documentary sources. Thanks to careful psychological analysis, the figure of the princess, outlined with sharp features, is the fulcrum around which both unravel the complex dynamics of dynastic relationships and developments of Nazi delirium, which also marked the Mafalda existence.

It is the human drama of the woman that the Author's attention is focused with particular intensity.

Following internment treacherous suddenly cut not only the splendor of the palace, but also of freedom, affect and even dignity, in the concentration camp of Buchenwald Mafalda found herself to be a number among many other numbers, an object without name lumped together to her fellows by an inhuman fate of loneliness and inhuman horrors. Even after death, when a priest was able to give her battered body furtive burial for a long time memory of the Princess was tied to a number, 262, which in the SS military cemetery marking the grave of an "Unbekannte", a victim not otherwise known.

Through the biography of Mafalda, the work of Ninel Podgornaja Ivanovna is a new opportunity to reflect, not to forget.

(Comment by [Valentina Incardona](#))

The tragic story of Princess Mafalda of Savoy, which has greatly shaken the hearts because of the tragic end she came across in the concentration camp of Buchenwald, was recalled with accuracy in the book recently published by Ninel Podgornaja Ivanovna, born in Pavolge near Stalingrad.

The biography, "Mafalda di Savoia Assia. Easy being a princess ... ", translated for the first time in Italian by the Governor of the Cultural Association "La Corallina", dr. Alfredo Bertollo, is full of anecdotes that make it possible to bring readers to a period very problematic, not without contradictions.

Touching the love affair of the parents, the King Vittorio Emanuele III and Queen Elena, the characters of the people are more human than ever, and represented both in their official capacity, both in the private dimension, perhaps the most popular of the two. Few of the royal marriage had a sentimentally so successful, full of genuine affection, gladdened by the birth of four daughters and a son, the future King of May ", Umberto II, the couple also joined the interest of the storm of World War II, Second, for the pain and grief that followed, especially in despair over the death of adored Mafalda, buried August 29, 1944, at the military cemetery of the SS, not far from the Nazi concentration camp of Buchenwald.

On the tomb, a single word: Unknown. So begins the exposition of Mafalda in her tragically short existence, rendered so captivating, so as to leave no space for distraction. No wonder that Queen Elena, always devoted to his family affection as a wife and mother, has fallen into

a swoon in the arms of the governess to the fatal news, the writer tells how, with specific references to events that occurred, but also with understanding and compassion that must be shown to those who steal a child, with undeniable ruthlessness.

Queen Jane, to whom the protagonist was tied by a strong, loving sister of complicity, King Boris of Bulgaria, her husband, emerge with their characters, included in the full respect for history. Jeanne was just to accept the confidences of Mafalda, when he fell in love with the fascinating Prince Philip of Hesse. The book of Podgornaja is accompanied by pleasant photographs: one, in particular, recalls the marriage of Mafalda and Philip, in front of the castle Racconigi (is the book's cover), the newlyweds are elegant and composed according to the ceremonial; She, beautiful and refined in light dress, adorned by a trail of light material, and he, attractive, tall, wearing a uniform. The images are interesting, the writer has addressed his thanks to the young Princess Mafalda, grandson of the Princess martyr, for having sent the photos from the family.

Beautiful pages dedicated to His Highness, the Landgrave Maurice, head of the House of Hesse, the meeting, the awareness of the world where the Princess Mafalda moved, the welcoming, nothing short of exquisite, is an experience memorable for those who have lived and, consequently, for those who read. And then, finally, a wish fulfilled after forty years of waiting: the homage to the last tomb of the princess, victim and martyr still at an early age, along with the ancestors of land that had become her ...

History, events, monarchs, emotions, love, tragedy, everything blends in this compelling text, which is more significant than many other biographies, make reading an unforgettable moment.

(Comment by Raffaella Saponaro Monti-Bragadin)