

Victor EROFEEV

Biography



Victor Erofeev is a widely acclaimed Russian author who published several significant works in the 1980s glasnost period and continues to write in Moscow today.

Born in Moscow in 1947, Erofeev was the son of a high-ranking Soviet official (one of Stalin's personal interpreters). He spent many of his childhood years in Paris where he gained exposure to literature which had been banned in the Soviet Union, while simultaneously studying great writers such as Vladimir Nabokov and Marquis de Sade. After completing his undergraduate schooling in Moscow during the late 1960s, Erofeev began working with the Institute of World Literature.

Erofeev was extremely familiar with the strict USSR censorship policies. He made his first major literary contribution in 1979 when he helped complete a scandalous almanac called "Metropol," but Soviet officials deemed the compilation as "pornography of the mind" and refused to publish it in the USSR. To make matters worse, Erofeev was targeted as a dissident after his father had to resign from Stalin's crew, and so the Soviet government censored all of his work.

When Gorbachev initiated his glasnost policies in the 1980s, Erofeev finally had the opportunity to publish his pieces. His first novel, *Russkaia Krasavitsa* (Russian Beauty), hit the Russian literary scene in 1990, while he also published two essays entitled "Pominki po sovyetskoi literature" (An epitaph of Soviet literature) and "Russkie tsverty zla" (Russia's Fleurs du mal). Erofeev deemed Socialist Realism a lifeless literature and instead attempted to espouse a new style of literature, namely "the literature of evil."

Erofeev became the editor of the first Russian edition of Nabokov's work as well as several other Russian literature anthologies, and he frequently writes to *The New Yorker*. In the past decade he has also published an autobiography called *Khoroshii Stalin* (The Good Stalin) and a collection of stories called *De Profundis*. Today, Erofeev lives in Moscow. It has been said that of all Russian writers, Victor Erofeev has made among the most notable attempts to secure creative freedom and expand the limits of literature.