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# Stalin's Translator Dead at 90

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Vladimir Yerofeyev, the personal interpreter of Soviet leader Josef Stalin after World War II, died of a heart attack in Moscow on Monday. He was 90.

He will be buried Thursday at Vagankovskoye Cemetery, Interfax said.

Leningrad-born Yerofeyev served in the central office of the Soviet Foreign Ministry in the mid-1940s and was an aide to Stalin's close associate Vyacheslav Molotov from 1949 to 1955.

During that time, Yerofeyev translated for Stalin at his talks with French leaders, including Charles De Gaulle. He also translated Stalin's letters to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill into English.

Stalin's death in 1953 did not hinder Yerofeyev's career, which included ambassadorial posts in Senegal and Gabon in the 1960s and a stint as UNESCO deputy secretary-general from 1970 to 1975.

"He was a decent, bright, wonderful man," said Yerofeyev's son Viktor, a prominent writer, Interfax reported Tuesday. In his 2005 novel "The Good Stalin," Viktor Yerofeyev detailed

how his own dissident activities in late Soviet times harmed his father's career.

The elder Yerofeyev was reluctant to speak in public about his experiences with Stalin. But in 2009, he told PBS television that "when Stalin believed that something was in his own interests, he could be cruel and merciless, even toward the people closest to him."

Vladimir Yerofeyev is also survived by his younger son Andrei, an art curator.

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