

War Made Lyudmila Petrushevskaya Put Down Her Pen

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Writer Lyudmila Petrushevskaya. Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Lyudmila Petrushevskaya, one of Russia's most renowned literary and cultural figures, [announced](#) in a Telegram post that she could no longer write. "That's it," she wrote. "I've always written about my people. About the people who live in Russia. I felt sorry for them, the drunks and wretches... But now I don't feel sorry for my people — invaders, thieves and rapists, murderers of children and destroyers of other people's lives — or their hateful families, their wives and mothers."

"I will never write about them or for them."

Petrushevskaya has never quietly acquiesced to regimes or public opinion. Born in the Metropol Hotel in 1938, three years later her father, a Bolshevik intellectual, was declared an enemy of the state. He abandoned the family, who fled to Samara (then Kuibyshev). She and her mother returned to Moscow only after the war.

During the Soviet period she was under KGB surveillance and her early prose was not printed

— it was not considered Soviet enough — although she was able to publish and put on plays she wrote. And in 1979 she was the author of a famous animated film by Yuri Norstein, “Tale of Tales.”

Only under Gorbachev and in the post-Soviet period was she finally able to publish her novels and short stories. Many of her works have been translated, and she has won several prestigious awards. Petrushevskaya is also [a painter](#) with works in major museums in Russia and abroad. In her 60s she became a cabaret singer.

Now she has stopped writing. “This aggressive war, the sudden and inexplicable hatred by the majority of our (Russophone) nation for our neighbors and family, the Ukrainian people, have put an end to my profession.”

She scorned the “hundreds of well-paid scum and journalists who have sold out” and justify the aggression on television. Russia is now a “nation of marauding soldiers, rapists and thieves,” she wrote.

Petrushevskaya compared the release of men from prison to join the war to what Vladimir Lenin did during the 1917 Revolution. “He threw open the gates of all the prisons of Petrograd, gave the convicts military uniforms and loaded guns. They became devils, servants of the revolution...”

Petrushevskaya ended her post with a reminder of her own prophecy: “Way back in 1977 I predicted an epidemic in 2022 and civil war in 2024.”

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