

S.O. Prokofieff: Myth and Reality/Irina Gordienko

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English translation by Graham Rickett

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This is a new publication in English of a critical examination of the work of S.O. Prokofieff, translated from the German, originally from the Russian. The author is a scientist and mathematician in her own right, with scientific publications to her credit. Taking Prokofieff to task for the gap between his interpretation of the body of Steiner's work and what Steiner himself has stated so clearly about the supersensible world, Gordienko outlines for the reader in a close step by step evaluation of Prokofieff's writings, his shortcomings, and the way in which his analysis draws a flawed picture of Anthroposophy. She makes clear the obvious discrepancies between his picture and Steiner's vision of the spiritual world and its beings, the fundamental concept of evolution and even of the Christology. The Christology is presented in an entirely new light by Prokofieff. Emphasis is placed more on a return to a group spirituality, to a morality dictated from above, rather than an autonomous thinking based on the central importance of "I" development which Rudolf Steiner again and again made fundamental to his whole teaching and which he referred to frequently as the "Christ Impulse".

This is a hard hitting, closely reasoned, and razor-sharp reading of Prokofieff's thinking -- perhaps, not a book for the faint-hearted. Yet, its powerful logic is necessary study material, especially for

Anthroposophists, because it has important implications for the direction of the Anthroposophical Society as a whole now that Sergei Prokofieff has been welcomed into its leadership as a member of the executive council.

Lest this work be considered an unjust personal attack, let us conclude with a statement by the author:

... errors on the path of occult development, arising from insufficient or incorrect knowledge, can have the most far reaching consequence for his destiny, not only with regard to the psychic health of the human being in his present incarnation, but for his entire future destiny. (Gordienko, pgs. 12 - 13)

Further she goes on to point out that:

Any attempt to criticise such printed assertions is condemned out of a false ethical principle: tolerance towards a person is confused with tolerance of his mistakes. The ideal of brotherly love comes to mean little more than the maintaining "diplomatic relations" with one's neighbour, while remaining indifferent to his spiritual destiny. (Gordienko, pgs. 13 - 14)

The distinction needs to be made between the personal element and the objective search for the truth. As Steiner makes very clear; "a false result of investigation in the spiritual world is a living reality: it is there, and one has to battle with it, do away with it." (p. 125, English translation, 22/10/1915, GA 254).