

A number of members have written in to the Newsletter, having read a book by Irina Gordienko, recently translated into English, under the title *Sergei O. Prokofieff: Myth and Reality*. Their comments point to a number of important issues. A selection of these letters is printed below. *Sergei Prokofieff* has been contacted and offered space in the next Newsletter to share his own comments on the book. – Editor

Dear Editor

The last edition of the Newsletter contained a letter from Robert Johnstone about Irina Gordienko's book, *Sergei O. Prokofieff: Myth and Reality*. After reading it I find that I am very largely in agreement with the author. If its cogent, well-marshalled arguments are seen to be justified, we confront a situation far more disturbing than the one which ensued from the Tomberg affair. Frankly, it seems to me that the question of how Prokofieff, for all his virtues, came to be appointed to the Vorstand and of what this signals for the future direction of Anthroposophy, needs to be explored.

Irina Gordienko is, or rather was, an academic. Tragically, she died in a road accident, aged 34. Trained in the Sciences and yet surprisingly well-read in Anthroposophy (in the context of her age and life-situation, that is), she brings an impressive acuity of observation to bear on her subject, and leaves one in doubt as to whether Prokofieff has fully assimilated that element in *The Philosophy of Freedom* which deals with the *developing* relationship of Ego and ego-consciousness; an omission which could account for the relative marginalizing of this key work in his presentations of Anthroposophy, with their tendency to emphasise his personal orientation. There are also interpretations of other Spiritual Scientific material which do not square with Rudolf Steiner's teaching, as Gordienko notes in some detail.

Yes, this is a serious charge, but I urge you to acquire a copy of this book and examine the evidence. I could elaborate on Gordienko's critique, but my object in writing this letter is to bring the matter to your attention, doing so out of concern for the implications of allowing this issue to be smothered under a fait accompli brought about by what would seem to be a major failure of perception. On the other hand, I understand that Anthroposophical journals in the German-speaking world have so far refused to publicise Gordienko's book, which if true, does nothing to quell disturbing rumours of a directive from Dornach.

Whatever your personal views, I am sure that, like me, you find all this very disagreeable when reflecting on how the history of our Society has been punctured by internal dissensions; nevertheless I am convinced, along with others of like mind, that Gordienko has presented us with a challenge that needs to be met.

Yours sincerely

Paul Stanjer
London

Dear Editor

In the last *Newsletter* Robert Johnstone mentioned the book by Irina Gordienko, *S.O. Prokofieff: Myth and Reality*. Having been provided with a copy by the Library I settled down to read.

The subject I will not deal with but the style I found stimulating. I became alert with an inner awareness of grasping facts with a new concentration. I am familiar with the established reading required as an Anthroposophist in order to grasp something of the fundamental scenario that stretches one's mind and imagination. Yet only on matters concerning drama and speech have I applied such a watchful eye. Now I was scrutinising information fundamental to Anthroposophy with a new found eagerness. I went back to reading *Occult Science* and found that the style of Steiner, even in translation, suddenly appeared clear as crystal and I was reading *Occult Science* with the same alertness as when I started Irina Gordienko's book. I think to experience this lady so stoutly defending the results of Rudolf Steiner's research, as a scientist of the spirit, awoke old enthusiasms. There is talk of the 'New Anthroposophy', well, for me this lady demonstrated the style of the New Anthroposophy. I began to wonder if such a book, although challenging, could be good reading for young Anthroposophists? Such a refreshing burst of sparkling thoughts would stimulate the student to see with bright eyes, the science of the spirit, set out like a new city. The style could open doors to adult and lively debate. Have we the courage to discuss openly all manner of things pertaining to a Society such as ours?

The subject may be dimly alarming but those that are challenged in the book can well look after themselves and the true gain would be, I believe, a sense of the future blowing into our faces, clean, fresh, re-invigorating the research into the truths, described by Rudolf Steiner.

Peter Bridgmont
London

For those members who wish to read Irina Gordienko's book and form their own independent judgement, a copy is available through the Library at Rudolf Steiner House, or it can be obtained from the Wellspring Bookshop, 5 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1BA; telephone 020 7405 6101. – Editor

Dear Editor

I would like to thank the friends of Rosemary Taylor, and all those who made it possible for her autobiographical sketch to be included in the obituaries. I was deeply moved and impressed by such honesty and courage: and found many

aspects very helpful towards the care work I am involved with in terminally ill people.

I do hope this will encourage further autobiographies to be included in the obituary section.

With thanks,

Alison Hodge