

Sergei O. Prokofieff: Myth and Reality by Irina Gordienko, Basel: Lochmann-Verlag, 2001

English translation by Graham Rickett, 196 pgs, ISBN 3-906712-16-8

Irina Yurievna Gordienko, born 1964 in Moscow, studied in Moscow biology, mathematics, and mechanics and ultimately published scientific papers on set theory and general typology in specialist publications both in her native country and abroad. 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 book's UK distributor, The Wellspring Bookshop, London, states in a promo for the book that the author is: "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."

In addition, I would unequivocally state that the book is not a personal attack on Prokofieff, even though superficially viewed it appears so, but rather displays spiritual science integrity in a search for the truth and as such is a level headed analysis of his subjective occultism. The author's considerable knowledge of Anthroposophy, plus academic skill, makes her book a search for the objective truth of Prokofieff's brand of occultism. This emphasizes group spirituality or group opinions in which one submits to a collective duty rather than a community in which the principle of ethical individualism is realized. She shows this from citing Prokofieff's writing.

The author makes her objective clear in the book's Foreword wherein she explains the bulk of the readers of S.O.P. are those who view him as surrounded by a special "aura of spiritual presence", and feel that reading his books or attending his lectures gives one a quicker understanding of Anthroposophy that is more effective than reading Rudolf Steiner's own works. She pointedly explains that she does not belong to this larger group but to a smaller body of readers who analyze the inner structure and logic of S.O.P.'s books and compare his writing to Rudolf Steiner "to whose perception reference is continually made."

As a student of Anthroposophy (her only claim to any right to critique Prokofieff) her employment of the skeptical approach to S.O.P., in leu of the worshiped guru orientation she explains, yields shattering discoveries which she hopes will enlighten the larger group of adoring S.O.P. readers, along with beginners in Anthroposophy. It remains to be seen if the outcry from the half asleep anthroposophist sheep (her characterization) she is addressing is a grateful one or just resentment and umbrage over perceived unfairness or malice. I suspect the latter. This book is destined to be either hated or loved. Controversy for sure is in the making here from the pen of this Russian anthroposophist. She makes the case, leaving the reader to infer, in at least two dozen instances in her book that S.O.P. is a tool of Lucifer utilizing spiritual science propaganda and metaphysical falsehoods that have the effect of distorting the life work of Rudolf Steiner. The entire manner of arriving at her conclusions is simple --she just takes what Prokofieff writes and compares to exactly what Steiner said on the same subject. Upon making it obvious and practically incontestable that S.O.P. has distorted occult science to Luciferic aims, she concludes: "Go start your own occult school".

Let's make no bones about it -- she not only asserts the "spirit of his work" is Luciferic, but that beings of such camp are writing through S.O.P. as their agent to falsify Anthroposophy! I tentatively wrote that to be the opening line for this review and thus had to make a choice right away, i.e., is this book review to be a "tiptoeing through the tulips" to upset as few as possible or is it to be a straight forward summarization of the objective facts of the book-- let the chips fall where they may. I soon chose the latter even though it will upset many because such boldness is the hallmark of this Russian author herself. So to get to the point quickly-- Gordienko essentially is saying in her writing that regarding S.O.P. the spirit of his work is to falsify Anthroposophy (see pg 174).

Is Gordienko with her academic training in Russia as a scientist, unfortunately killed in an auto accident only two years after writing her book, posthumously a guardian angel of sorts who will keep us from going astray from the real and true anthroposophy, or is she simply one at odds with Prokofieff and is but a dose of "sour grapes". That question, rhetorically posed, each must decide for himself, and in that fact is a certain challenge for as many as possible to get a copy of this book and give it a good read.

If the author of this critique of Prokofieff is as rock solid in her grasp of Anthroposophy as it comes across in her book, then this book is not to be dismissed easily. Even though she is "attacking" Prokofieff her detractors will protest that you can not dismiss such an enlightening teacher. But if Gordienko is correct in her assesment of S.O.P. as a knight-

guru in shining armor prancing around in a muddy field of metaphysical sloppiness, to paraphrase her, then what she is saying about Prokofieff must not be ignored, but very carefully reflected upon. It is what we must be alert for in this apocalyptic time in which the Anthroposophical Society is searching for direction from the Vorstand, as a true constitutional crisis is occurring at this very moment in time (Summer 2002). If S.O.P., in giving the Christmas Conference a new meaning (see below), banishes the living Christ from Anthroposophy her book, is then, a much needed alarm bell.

Thus far I have only written in eyebrow raising generalizations on Gordienko's view of Prokofieff's brand of "anthroposophy", but this is because the short space allotted for this book review makes it difficult to go into detail on a subject so comprehensively treated by Gordienko with the clearest of logic, but often with mocking sarcasm. However, an example can be taken from Gordienko's book on the subject of evolution and Christian initiation. It is all about counting up to five and seven.

Each evolutionary stage adds a new member to the one(s) previously attained in the seven planetary scheme from Saturn to Vulcan. Presently we are in the Earth or 4th stage of development with the evolutionary task of "I" egohood on the foundation of the threefold soul. In Rudolf Steiner's words, which Gordienko quotes on pgs 46-47: "Up to the end of Earth-evolution the human being should be developing his 'I' . He would have the opportunity to accomplish this within the realm of Sentient, Rational and Consciousness Soul. But the actual Spirit-Self is only to become the possession of man on the later Jupiter; only then will it really belong to the human being. On Jupiter the human being will stand in relation to the Spirit-Self, in approximately the same way as he stands on Earth towards the 'I' ... We say our 'I' : that is what we are ourselves...When in the next 6th post-Atlantean epoch, the Spirit-Self will come to expression, we will not be able to address this Spirit-Self as our Self, but we will say: Yes, our "I" has developed itself to a certain stage, so that, as though from higher Worlds, our Spirit-Self can shine down as a kind of angel-being, which we are not ourselves ... And only on Jupiter will it so appear, that it is our own being, like our 'I' . " (9/1/1912, GA 130)

What Gordienko says however is: "Prokofieff's view of evolution is nowhere formulated openly and clearly, and it thus not easily recognized, but its effect is all the more damaging, as the reader takes it up only by degrees and thus almost unnoticed; it appears as a fragment, occurring singly and often in a secondary context and, without being perceived, calls forth a confused state of mind. The main feature of this concept is the exclusion of the individual 'I' from the general picture of human evolution, in favor of a higher principle, that of the Spirit-Self." (pg 44). She goes on to explain more details of Prokofieff's fictitious evolutionary theory (from Steiner's view she asserts) and on pgs 52- 53 nails Prokofieff for being fanatically fixed on Spirit-Self instead of Christ. Her implication of S.O.P. as a tool of Luciferic beings, constantly repeated throughout her writing, is typical on the pages cited here where she explains that Luciferic beings beg us on with the idea of developing the higher principle, the 5th, prematurely thus bypassing the real task of evolving the "I" with Christ as the model. Ergo, "Not I but Spirit-Self in me." becomes the words of St Paul, revised by S.O.P. in the spirit of Lucifer.

In Gordienko's "Case of Prokofieff" so to speak, with proper tact however often coy, she tries to show dialectically that S.O.P. is less than honest, i.e., he convinces not by staying focused on the spiritual science Dr. Steiner expounded, but by presenting a recurring theme, his own, from different angles. Thus by this kind of skirting and repetition, a propaganda is achieved to unwittingly bring the reader to embrace a "truth" without any employment of Anthroposophical method or ever being presented with a single conclusive "proof".

"...there is scarcely anyone able to unravel the demagogical subtleties into which these texts [*The Spiritual Origins of Eastern Europe...*] are woven, for we have here to do, not with logical errors, but with an absence of logic, an accumulation of arbitrary associations which he succeeds in bringing together only in an external fashion, with the aid of grammar and of easily-overlooked expressions such as ' what is the same thing ' , the assertion thus takes on the appearance of being obvious and universally recognized. This is one of the simple but highly effective means used by Prokofieff to fool the reader." (pg 65)

No review of Gordienko's book pretending to be complete and fair can overlook a major theme found in her book, often as an underground stream bubbling up in a chapter to reappear later. That theme concerns "the crux of Prokofieff's authority" to tell the world of Anthroposophy the meaning of World-Karma, Steiner's biography as the "archetypal image" of the new path of Initiation, or the meaning of the Christmas Conference, for a few examples. In every work of S.O.P. he pretends to be "...in the possession of the absolute, all embracing standpoint, and tirelessly astounds the reader with ever new occult communications, though without informing us of their source or explaining how to gain access to them ourselves." (pg 19) So the question becomes, Gordienko poses, are we being true to the methodology of Anthroposophy when we put on a pedestal, as a guru, a Lohengrin whose forbidden question is "don't ask how I know". In his writing he is always asserting with dogmatic emphasis that what he describes is "extremely occult" along with readers

being admonished to have no doubt.

Gordienko, in her chapter on "How the Myth Arose", references the German and Russian publications of *The Spiritual Origins of Eastern Europe* wherein, quoting S.O.P., "from the highest and most spiritual standpoint" and "from the standpoint of the all-emcompassing World Karma" the meaning of Russian history is explained. Thus the author curiously ponders:

"What kind of beings these powers are Prokofieff does not tell us, but the reader who is prepared for the author's exposition will probably not be surprised to learn that the standpoint of these powers is known to him. The question has to be asked: How does the author know what is the " 'highest' " and the " 'most spiritual' " ? This would require the ability to permeate the spiritual cosmos with one's I-consciousness, the ability to assume the standpoint of the Creator Himself. Were this feasible we would have readily concurred if Prokofieff had gone on to inform us what tasks, " 'the higher guiding powers of Earth evolution' " had to fulfil, and at what point in time (ibid., p.383) without asking, of course, how he came to know that as well." (pgs 19-20)

In this same chapter she points out that whilst Prokofieff's writings extoll Steiner's path to the supersensible, the meeting of the Guardian of the Threshold etc., and the maturing of a high Christian Initiate, he himself does not travel the "canonical" route nor use Anthroposophical methodology. All this can be gleaned from Prokofieff's own autobiographical essay "My Path to the Book '*Rudolf Steiner and the Founding of the New Mysteries*' " (said book published when he had been only 25 years old and his essay at 32 years). Steiner, his professed mentor, waited until he was 40 years mature before emerging to the world as an occult teacher, thus true to the organic seven year stages of development of his own exposition.

The author's criticism of Prokofieff's occultism is at its sharpest, as a theme throughout the book, on the subject of the Christmas Conference (the actual founding of the Anthroposophical Society in 1923). Chapter five of Prokofieff's first book depicts the Christmas Conference to be a historical Michaelic moment when a new collective Christian Initiation was performed "in the souls of those 700-800 members of the Anthroposophical Society present" and was "a real mystical fact". But Rudolf Steiner was explicit in his teaching about modern initiation being one individually experienced as "no soul is in the same position as another." (lec 30/8/12, GA138) Gordienko charges near her book's ending on pages 172-173: " Similar to the way in which the Jesuits created a specific, new Jesus-picture to serve their purposes, Prokofieff creates a new picture of the Christmas Conference. He proclaims a future " '... true Pentecost for the Anthroposophists when the impulse of the Christmas Conference is understood, accepted and brought to realization.' ". (Rudolf Steiner and the Founding... p. 355) Thus he proclaims to us now its hidden being and presents it as an act of suggestive mass-initiation. Selflessly and at the same time with fanaticism Prokofieff places himself in the service of this new reality propagated by him..."

Here again, in this excerpting of Gordienko's book above, the author's warning should be clear to see: "Rudolf Steiner says the exact opposite of what the author (S.O.P.) maintains." (pg 154 her book). And also she charges that this scandalous Christmas Conference is "the main emphasis of his life's (S.O.P.) work" (see pgs 83 -84). Altogether Gordienko's book attacks, on the objective spiritual science level that is not personal (for the most part as she cannot stifel her innate contempt in some places), the weakness of Prokofieff's occultism that is without doubt not Anthroposophy. She structured her book to show that Prokofieff's books, lectures, and essays "stand in striking contrast to his pretentions." (pg 23) If she was alive, one wonders, could she recant all the charges she lays upon Prokofieff. Well perhaps she could but it wouldn't change the fact that facts are facts, so it follows that every serious Anthroposophist should examine its contents to decide if objective truth shines through her book. Her book progresses from solid anthroposophy to logical conclusion, not from a personal brand of occultism to personal opinion.

The Table of Contents for *Sergei O. Prokofieff: Myth and Reality* give a picture of the book's scope so the chapter headings are listed here: (1) How the Myth Arose, (2) Prokofieff's Concept of Evolution, (3) The Spiritual World and its Beings in the View of S. Prokofieff, (4) Prokofieff as Propagandist and Teacher of Morals, (5) Christology in an Entirely New Light, (6) Prokofieff as Meta-Historian and Researcher into World-Karma, (7) Prokofieff as Renewer of Mysteries, (8) Anthroposophy or Jesuitism ?

<http://buncombe.main.nc.us/~grail/morereviews.html>