

The Tree of Life

Irina Gordienko's on Sergei O. Prokofieff

An excerpt from Irina Gordienko's Sergei O. Prokofieff: Myth and Reality

From the Wellspring Bookshop: (<http://www3.mistral.co.uk/wellspringbooks/sergeip.htm>)

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).

Irina Yurievna Gordienko

Irina Yurievna Gordienko, born in Moscow in 1964, studied biology, mechanics and mathematics at Moscow State University. After the successful completion of her studies, she published a series of scientific papers on set theory and general typology in specialist publications both in Russia and abroad. Her considerable knowledge of Anthroposophy combined with her academic training led her to undertake this study of the work of Prokofieff, which led her to some surprising results. Tragically, Gordienko died in a traffic accident in 1999.

7.1. The First Sacrifice on the Altar of the “New” Mysteries: the Biography of Rudolf Steiner

Already in his first book Prokofieff began to introduce a new ideal of initiation. On his path to this ideal the human being must surrender more and more of his individual consciousness, in order to become a highly moral automaton, a kind of medium for spiritual beings, through which they can translate their will into deeds. Thus Prokofieff interprets Rudolf Steiner’s biography in such a way that it corresponds to the archetype of this ideal. In order to forestall any element of surprise or protest that may come from his reader he draws attention to the unusual nature of his approach and declares that he has seen “through the veil of outer events” and takes as his starting-point “those cosmic forces” which “worked continually” in Rudolf Steiner’s life [I, p. 20]. From there, from out of the cosmos, Prokofieff describes “the archetype of the new, modern path of initiation ... which today’s civilization as a whole must tread” [ibid., p. 99]. From this unfathomable height Prokofieff looks down upon the biography of Rudolf Steiner, just as though it were lying in the palm of his hand and appeared in the form of a simplified scheme consisting of a succession of seven-year periods. In connection with periods four to seven in this scheme Prokofieff develops the view of the four life-sacrifices of Rudolf Steiner, or the four stages of his path of sacrifice. Let us now examine this – from the “cosmic” standpoint.

Steiner sacrificing his Earthly ‘I’ to Christ?

In Chap. 2 of his book Prokofieff says that in 1899 Rudolf Steiner had a personal meeting with Christ in the sphere of intuition, and he concludes from this:

“At the moment when Rudolf Steiner, at the end of his great Sun-epoch, lived consciously through the Pauline Damascus experience and thus realized the word ‘Not I, but the Christ in me’, he made a truly spiritual sacrifice: he sacrificed as an Initiate his earthly ‘I’ to the Being of the Christ. In this deed we have the first stage of the great path of sacrifice of Rudolf Steiner ... From now onwards the Christ himself is working through the ‘I’ of Rudolf Steiner” (ibid., p. 61; emphasis S.O.P.).

And straight away he explains:

“If we ... ask ourselves what these words of St. Paul mean in the occult sense, then we must say: the human being who realizes it within himself has thereby offered up his earthly ‘I’ in sacrifice to the Christ” [ibid., p. 72].

Does Christ demand back what He has once given to the human being?

Succinctly and with a single imperious gesture Prokofieff here misrepresents the innermost nature of the Christian Mysteries. If we call to mind what has been described already, it is not difficult to recognize this distinction. – And we ask: Did not Christ Himself, for the sake of the salvation, the development and the strengthening of the earthly human ‘I’ – this free ‘I’, which stands on its own ground, and acts out of itself -make the unique, the greatest, sacrifice in the history of humanity through his enactment of the Mystery of Golgotha? From then on the human being was endowed with the possibility of uniting his ‘I’ with the Christ and thereby realizing the true nature of his ‘I’.

“Through the receiving of the Christ-impulse into human nature ... this nature will be deepened ever further; this human nature will receive ever more light and love into his own being, so that human nature will have to experience light and love as something that is its very own. The inwardizing of the human soul into infinite depths, this will be the gift of the Christ impulse” (9.1.1912, GA 130).

So speaks Rudolf Steiner, and so we too ask: Who sacrifices to whom? Does Christ demand back what He has once given to the human being? Never does the Christ work through the human ‘I’ as though it were an instrument, but He lives within It as its very own, innermost essence. Did the Apostle Paul say: “Not, I, but the Christ through me”?! As He was in ancient, pre-Christian times, the Christ remains for Prokofieff a purely external, cosmic Being, to whom sacrifices can be brought, a Being who approaches Man from above and works through him. The impression arises that the essential nature of the Mystery of Golgotha, as a result of which the Christ united Himself with the Earth, does not exist at all for Prokofieff. For the human being the experiencing of the Christ had to become something ever more inward. Rudolf Steiner pointed this out on many occasions.

Christ as the Greater Guardian

As Prokofieff assures us in his “Autobiography”, he understood already in his childhood when he read the book “Knowledge of Higher Worlds” ... that the meeting described in it, of the pupil with the Greater Guardian of the Threshold, is the meeting with the Christ Himself. He says: “For me personally, however, it was a fact of great significance that I had discovered, not from ‘Occult Science’ but from an intensive experience of the contents of ‘Knowledge of Higher Worlds’, who is revealed in the picture of the Greater Guardian of the Threshold” (“My Path. ..”, p. 83).

The Greater Guardian does not ask the pupil to sacrifice his earthly ‘I’

It is quite clear that Prokofieff had an intensive experience of something different, and a meeting of quite another kind. If one turns to the corresponding passage in Rudolf Steiner’s book one will recognize this without difficulty. The Greater Guardian does not ask the pupil to sacrifice his

earthly 'I'; on the contrary, he challenges the pupil to sacrifice his egoistic striving, in order to enter the higher regions of the spirit-world (- that "spiritual cosmos", those "most sublime, most spiritual" cosmic spheres, towards which Prokofieff is ceaselessly striving), that he should make a sacrifice for the sake of the freeing of his fellow human beings who are still fettered to the sense-world, and of all living beings in the entire world! It is not to the Christ that the pupil makes his sacrifice, but to all suffering creatures on the Earth, and he does not sacrifice his 'I', but only his egoistic wish to accomplish the ascent alone.

Christ sacrifices Himself for human beings. He says: "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give up his soul for the redemption of many" (Matth. 20; 28). And further: "Yea, I say unto you, what you have done to the least of my brethren, that you have done to me" (ibid., 25; 40). A sacrifice of this kind on behalf of our fellow-men, which represents a true "imitatio Christi", is what ought to have been spoken of in regard to Rudolf Steiner's life. But let us not forget: Prokofieff's intentions are not connected with the quest for truth, but in them is concealed the passionate wish to proclaim the denial of the individual 'I'.

If the human being surrenders his own 'I' he becomes a medium. And if we are to believe Prokofieff, this is precisely what happened to Rudolf Steiner; through his "sheaths" countless other beings had begun to work.

One can be persuaded of the baselessness of Prokofieff's theory even if one knows nothing of Rudolf Steiner himself; one only has to examine the theory as such in order to discover that it lacks all consistency and logic; the case is similar with the misleading "arguments" which he brings forward in its support.

Steiner sacrificing his Astral body to the Bodhisattva?

As Prokofieff goes on to describe the next sacrificial deeds, he forgets the preceding ones. For just supposing Rudolf Steiner sacrificed his 'I' to the Christ who from that time onward worked through him, then the consequence of this would be that Rudolf Steiner did not himself make the subsequent sacrifice of the sheaths, but the Christ through him. Could there be anything more absurd? In spite of this, Prokofieff solemnly reveals to us "one of the most important mysteries on Rudolf Steiner's life-path", which consists in the fact that "from a certain moment of his life. .. gradually the Being of the new Bodhisattva begins to work through him" [I, p. 82]. Thus was made the second sacrifice that of the astral body. Here Prokofieff's enthusiasm is heightened to such a degree that he presumes to confirm Rudolf Steiner's communication, with the help of his (**Prokofieff's**) conjectures:

"Thus we may suppose that the permeation of the astral body of Rudolf Steiner by the new Bodhisattva began in the period around 1902-1903. ..This is at the same time a further confirmation of Rudolf Steiner's words to the effect that the Bodhisattva was already incarnated, and that he was born at the beginning of the 20th century" (ibid., p. 71; emphasis S.O.P.).

If it is a truism that conjectures cannot give confirmation, but are in need of confirmation themselves, how can one here equate the "permeation of the astral body" with "being born" or "incarnation"? Who, then, is the person who is describing all this in Prokofieff's book? Is it Prokofieff himself, who was born, or somebody else, who has permeated his astral body and writes through him? Are these all the same thing?

And now Prokofieff unabashedly asks the reader to realize in full consciousness “that this connection (made by himself) between Rudolf Steiner and the new Bodhisattva (which was formerly a conjecture) is a real occult fact”. From the heights which have now been scaled he now begins “to cast an entirely new (?) light on certain parts of Rudolf Steiner’s biography”. A feeling of the author’s superiority in relation to the man he refers to elsewhere as “my teacher”, cannot be overlooked (let us not forget that this is his first book). The intention is, therefore, to cast “an entirely new light” on the following passage in Rudolf Steiner’s Autobiography: “... a time in which with all my soul-forces I stood under the impression of the facts and B e i n g s of the spirit-world which were approaching me” (I, p. 72; emphasis S.O.P.). At this point he begins to fabricate proofs by means of verbal manipulation:

“If we become aware of the fact that the ‘soul-forces’ must be brought into connection with, above all, the astral body(?), and if we take quite literally the statement ‘the Beings of the spirit-world which were approaching me’ (i.e. we come closer to them in the way Rudolf Steiner approached them, for example in his lectures on the Gospels -what parallels!), then the total picture grows much clearer for us” (ibid., p. 72).

“Clearer”, but still not entirely clear. Why did Rudolf Steiner use the word Beings in the plural if, as Prokofieff wishes to persuade us, he was pointing to the Bodhisattva? Prokofieff has no difficulty coming to terms with this. He resorts to the well-tried procedure: ascribe no independent value to the individual and treat him as an instrument t h r o u g h which (the word “through” is usually given affectionate emphasis by Prokofieff) other beings are working, through whom yet others. ..Thus we have the continuous stream of a faceless spirituality which strives towards the infinitude of a “Cosmos of desire” where everything finally loses its “egoistic wholeness”. The Bodhisattva would also be regarded as no more than a medium t h r o u g h whom the college of Bodhisattvas works; and for us it grows much clearer that he ought to be referred to in the plural – after all, we are, without exception, group beings (cf. § 5.4.)

One might now object that with the method applied here by Prokofieff, anything can be proved. This is undoubtedly true. Therein lies the secret of its “power”. By means of it Prokofieff has “fortunately” to “prove” only Rudolf Steiner’s communications plus a dozen of his own absurd theories; and now and then he “proves” that there exists a connection between them.

Here he “proves” that the Masters of Wisdom and the Harmony of Sentiments are the Bodhisattvas (we have discussed his “proof” in § 2.3.), and then he brings, as final confirmation of Rudolf Steiner’s mediumism, the following words from an esoteric Lesson: “The great Masters of Wisdom and the Harmony of Sentiments guide us in our inner striving for knowledge” (14.11.1906, GA 245).

Rudolf Steiner says “guide”, and not “influence” or “permeate the astral body”, but this does not disturb Prokofieff. How, though, are we to view the “us”, the plural, when Rudolf Steiner speaks of himself? Here Prokofieff commits the next travesty, but this time in reverse: by casually mixing up the plural and the singular. He instructs the reader as follows: “One ought to realize quite clearly (not suppose or assume, but realize quite clearly!) that in these words the regal plural, the [rhetorical] ‘us’ can in the case in question refer above all to Rudolf Steiner (i.e. he actually wanted to say “me”, but could not, as the l e c t u r e r , bring himself to do it!), and their meaning will become clearly apparent (no question of that!). This utterance is a further proof (where are the rest?) of the fact that through the future Maitreya Buddha the e n t i r e Bodhisattva circle, the great Lodge of the ‘Masters of Wisdom and the Harmony of Sentiments’ worked in upon Rudolf Steiner” (I, p. 74 [p. 87]; emphasis S.O.P.).

And as if that were not enough Prokofieff adds to the twelve yet another five teachers, only to proclaim solemnly in conclusion:

“And all these exalted Teachers of humanity worked from then onwards upon Rudolf Steiner, and made possible through their inspiration the birth of Anthroposophy on the Earth” (ibid., p. 87).

Mighty efforts indeed were required to motivate Rudolf Steiner to bring Anthroposophy into the world! Up till then he had worked doggedly at Theory of Knowledge, Goetheanism and the Philosophy of Freedom – subjects that were of no use to anyone apart from Schroer and Hartmann, and he refused to understand what the exalted leaders wanted of him!

Finally Prokofieff promises to show the reader the passage in a lecture “where Rudolf Steiner says, in a form which admits of no other explanation, that through him the new Bodhisattva [together with other great teachers] works inspiratively .” How interesting! But what comes now? Well, the same as before:

“One must only put in the place of the [usual] ‘we’ (the regal plural), a (normal human) ‘I’ (he should rather have said “fabricate”), [and the true sense becomes clear]” (ibid., p. 75 [p. 87]).

It remains only for us to thank Prokofieff for revealing the *t r u e s e n s e* of Rudolf Steiner’s words, which the speaker has concealed from us with his orator’s tricks!

And now, printed with extra emphasis, so that it is impressed more easily upon the reader’s memory, we read the following:

“Rudolf Steiner sacrificed ...his earthly astral body, placing it at the disposal of the exalted spiritual Being of the Bodhisattva and, by extension, to the entire circle of the above-named Master individualities, who spoke through him from then onwards. ...the word ‘my’ (from the title of the book “The Path of My Life”) can be applied henceforth not only to himself as an earthly human being, but also to the Cosmic beings working through him. From this time onwards (1907) the Being of the Bodhisattva begins to [take possession of] the astral body of Rudolf Steiner ever more strongly” (ibid., p. 76/77 [p. 89]).

Changes year from 1902-3 to 1907

Even the “pious” Anthroposophical reader, who knows the basic truths concerning the nature of the modern Mysteries, which can only be founded upon the individual human ‘I’, and who knows also what Rudolf Steiner says about mediumism – the illegitimate entry into the spiritual world out of the forces of the astral body – and is familiar with the nature of human freedom, individual creative power etc., this reader’s “hair should stand on end” in face of the above statements. But why does nothing of the kind happen? Has no one read Prokofieff’s book? But we have made yet another amazing discovery, namely that Prokofieff now places the entry of Beings of cosmic rank – especially the Bodhisattva – into the astral body of Rudolf Steiner, in the year 1907 instead of the years 1902-1903 as he had done before. With this, everything that arose before 1907 was not Anthroposophy. Highly interesting! What was it then?

Finally Prokofieff concludes that Rudolf Steiner completely sacrificed all the fruits of his individual development (including the fulfillment of the words “Not I, but Christ in me”) to the spiritual stream which had poured itself through him. Thus Rudolf Steiner’s individuality was dissolved into countless streams of cosmic spirituality (including the “Christ in him”).

At this point Prokofieff brings a remarkable Footnote which begins as follows:

“These words must not be taken to mean that the entire content of Anthroposophy flows [from the inspiration of these Teachers of humanity]” (ibid., p. 396, Footnote 39; [p. 442, Footnote 46]).

A seed of hope springs up in the reader, that Rudolf Steiner might yet be allowed to play a certain part in the coming into being of Anthroposophy, but this proves to be without foundation!

[Those Beings] work from now onwards” – Prokofieff continues – “primarily through the astral body of Rudolf Steiner ... Through his other bodies work other World-Forces (!) ... in the different periods of Rudolf Steiner’s life these different Beings work upon him with varying intensity ... The alternating influences can be seen in their differentiation if one familiarizes oneself with the development of the basic themes which pass through the entire lecturing activity of Rudolf Steiner” (ibid.).

Rudolf Steiner simply did not exist; there were only “Cosmic streams” which were working through him.

It is really no pleasure for us to trace the content of this sacrilegious and cynical “Biography”. The principle underlying it should by now be quite clear: Rudolf Steiner simply did not exist; there were only “Cosmic streams” which were working through him. Is there perhaps no “Prokofieff” either, only “streams” working through him?

On the third stage of his path of sacrifice, Rudolf Steiner offers up his ether-body. The Nathan Soul is claimed to have made use of this sacrifice. “ Thus it can be said categorically: ” – so we are assured just as on Earth we have four Gospels, the Gospel of John, Luke, Mark and Matthew, so do we have in the Fifth Gospel the Gospel of that Being whom Rudolf Steiner calls the heavenly soul of the Nathan Jesus [it] is that Being thanks to whom the Fifth Gospel was able to come to the Earth through Rudolf Steiner” (ibid., p. 86-87 [p.99-1 00]). And again Rudolf Steiner is only the mediator, the medium. In contrast to John, Luke, Mark and Matthew, who are acknowledged as the writers of the Gospels, Prokofieff does not raise the question of Rudolf Steiner’s authorship – but only that of the Nathan Soul, and answers it – as we might have guessed – in the negative:

“In this sense the Nathan Soul does not appear as the author of the Fifth Gospel, but [through the Nathan Soul there also worked] ...” (ibid.).

But why the endless discussion? Why don’t we adopt the “very highest”, the “most spiritual”, the “most absolute standpoint” of Prokofieff “himself”, and come to full realization of the fact that the source of everything is the Creator of the Universe, and everything else is only creatures, mediums and plagiarists!

We recall that Rudolf Steiner, on the previous, the second, stage of his path of sacrifice had – according to Prokofieff – already surrendered all the fruits of his individual development, so that he had nothing left. How great is our astonishment, therefore, when we now read:

“ That is the third stage of the [sublime] path of sacrifice of Rudolf Steiner, which consisted in the surrender to the [true leaders of World evolution]” (*does this mean that the leaders of the previous stage proved not to be genuine and could not receive the sacrifice?*) “of the spiritual forces which he had been able to acquire in his ether-body on the path of his individual development, and the renunciation of all personal advantage that might have been gained through these forces” (ibid., p. 104 [p. 118]).

In the transition to the third sacrifice Prokofieff forgot not only the second, but also the first. Can one at all speak of “personal advantage from one’s own achievements” with regard to a person who has already sacrificed his ‘I’? In what state of mind does Prokofieff write down revelations of this kind? Could he conceivably have sacrificed “all the fruits of his individual development”, including rational thinking, logic and, finally, his conscience? *Which of the “ever-changing influences” cause him continually to forget what he has just written?*

The last sacrifice, Rudolf Steiner unites his karma with that of the Anthroposophical Society. It is obvious that Rudolf Steiner, as we learn from Prokofieff, did not live through the next phase in his life independently either, for now Michael worked through him. As a consequence of this, Anthroposophy completely altered its “signature” once again. Initially it was inspired by the seventeen Teachers of humanity, then they were joined by the Nathan Soul and the rest of the World-forces, who finally withdrew again. In his later booklet “The Cycle of the Year and the Seven Liberal Arts” (VII), Prokofieff defines Anthroposophy as follows: “Anthroposophy is a gift of Michael to humanity through the mediation of Rudolf Steiner” (p. 9). This would mean that those Teachers and the rest of the World-forces had “given notice”. If Michael were also to go, then no one would be left but our author, who through Rudolf Steiner’s mediation has made the gift of Anthroposophy to mankind. He leads us to this bitter conclusion. In the final stage of his path of sacrifice Rudolf Steiner brings about the Christmas Conference and thereby unites his karma with that of the Anthroposophical Society. In a later book Prokofieff manages, as we have seen in § 5, to make a caricature of the nature of this sacrifice also. But he had already in his work drawn an entirely false picture of the Christmas Conference, and in so doing misrepresented completely the true principle of modern initiation, No doubt this was from the beginning the aim of those cosmic beings who have spoken and worked through Prokofieff.

At the close of this section we would like to assure those who continue (in the spirit of Prokofieff’s favorite expression “in spite of all this”) to seek the actual grain (like the hen in the proverb) in his incorporation “theory”, that we do not question the possibility of the incorporation of spiritual beings, and their working through human beings incarnated on the Earth. But our task here is a different one: **it is to show that the way in which Prokofieff deals with this enormously difficult theme, where one can, more easily than anywhere else, confuse the gift of God with a pancake, is inadmissible. A deepened understanding of the phenomena of the individual ‘I’ (we repeat: *this understanding is entirely lacking in Prokofieff*) is the first and overriding prerequisite for anyone who wishes to recognize the difference between a medium and an initiate, or even an ordinary, but self-assured personality; and the difference between an unconscious incorporation and one that is entered into consciously by the individual. And in many other questions too, there is the need to bring clarity. Otherwise one risks coming into a situation where one is oneself “incorporated” – who knows by whom?**

7.2. The Christmas Conference – A View Taken from the Land Behind the Looking-Glass

In Chap. 5 of his first book **Prokofieff** says:

“Now, nearly 60 years after [that decisive] event (the Christmas Conference), we can experience inwardly that this event is truly imperishable; that a real act of initiation [of modern times took place. In this act of initiation not only the deepest mysteries of the new Christian path of initiation became manifest, but they took place in the souls of those 700-800 members of the Anthroposophical Society who were present]. For what happened on that occasion is a real mystical fact , the fact that since that time there has been a modern path of initiation for human beings” (which till then had not existed – Rudolf Steiner is not modern enough), “which leads directly to the Temple of the new Christian Mysteries” (I,p,215-217[p.242-243]).

Thus, according to Prokofieff, at the Christmas Conference **a new collective Christian initiation was performed.** (Even under the Soviet regime a person was received individually into the Party.) But Prokofieff always works as one who brings renewal. And he is right, because previously there had been no Christian collective-initiates. In 1912 **Rudolf Steiner** said:

“No soul is in the same position as another. Therefore...the path up into the supersensible worlds is, for every soul, an individual one” (30.8.1912, GA 138).

He did not yet know what our author knows today.

In Chap. 7 **Prokofieff** gives us some essential details. We learn what was the state of consciousness of the 700-800 human beings, the Conference participants, when above their heads this mystical act was performed; we also learn about their state of consciousness before and after the Conference. Prokofieff characterizes this as follows:

“Since the burning down of the first Goetheanum the [general] consciousness of the Society Members was dimmed to a considerable degree. But when the Anthroposophical Society had failed to save the ‘House of the Word’ through wakefulness and inner activity, it was unable, after the fire, to recover from this (terrible) blow. The actual inner cause of the decline was the fact that the members sank into an ever deeper sleep. ..up to the moment. ..when he (Rudolf Steiner) took the decision (to carry through the Christmas Conference) ... in complete isolation. But even the Christmas Conference [which then followed] was not able in sufficient measure to arrest the process’ of falling asleep. For the awakening that was necessary did not take place, despite the grandiose activity of Rudolf Steiner after the Christmas Conference” (I, p. 353-354 (p. 389-390)).

So it appears that before, during and after the Christmas Conference the Anthroposophists slept. And that they are sleeping to this very day – Prokofieff speaks of this on p. 355 [p. 391]. And is he likely to be wrong in this? He can allow himself to write such things, and nobody notices; many are even enthusiastic when they read them, as his popularity amply demonstrates. The Anthroposophists are sunk in a profound sleep and are not even in a position to notice how he ridicules them – but perhaps he is sleeping too, and writes his books “in his sleep”.

Healthy common sense cannot directly grasp the staggering nature of what is being perpetrated here. Let us just imagine: In a respected Anthroposophical publishing house a basic work appears, written not by a slanderer or opponent of Rudolf Steiner, but by someone who is to become one of the leading figures of the Anthroposophical movement. In this work, which contains countless references to Rudolf Steiner, innumerable quotations which are supposed to endorse the standpoint of the author, the world at large is being told of Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual mission, of the Anthroposophical movement and Society. The fulfillment of this mission – so the author writes – reached its climax at the Christmas Conference where the founding of the new Mysteries took

place. Their central core is the modern Christian Rosicrucian initiation, which belongs according to the words of Rudolf Steiner to the basic principles of civilization. It is in this direction that the newly-founded General Anthroposophical Society should be working. This new initiation, which was performed as “a real mystical act” by Rudolf Steiner at the Christmas Conference, was brought about through a powerful influence exerted (with the help of the seven initiation rhythms of the Foundation Stone meditation) simultaneously upon all those present, without the participation of their own consciousness. Thus they do not know what is happening to them, as they are in a sleeping state! In this way they all together – in sleep – pass by the Greater Guardian and cross the Threshold to the spiritual world!

Let us now compare this with the words of **Rudolf Steiner**:

“The science of initiation addresses itself exclusively and in every case to the *individual human being*. Even when it speaks to a group of people it is still actually addressing the individual human being. One cannot represent the true science of initiation in the way one worked upon human beings in earlier times. The Catholic Church, for example, carried over this approach into the present day; not only the Catholic Church, but certain Party directions use the same method still today. One worked in such a way that, if I may use the expression, one made use of the mass-psyche; one appeals to that which instills something into a community of human beings in a certain, I might say, hypnotic way. You know that, as a rule, if you only apply the right means, it is easier to convey things to a gathering of people than to each individual to whom one would wish to speak ... Such means, which are highly effective, cannot be used by a true wisdom of initiation. ..It must speak in such a way that it addresses each individual human being and appeals to the power of conviction of every single human being” (17.1.1920, GA 196).

Rudolf Steiner says the exact opposite of what this author maintains.

Already in Prokofieff’s first work the method of massive suggestive influence is falsely ascribed to Rudolf Steiner (whereby no mention is made of the true method of spiritual science), and the essential character of the **Christmas Conference is represented as a séance of a collective “initiation”**. In this way the author (or the spirit working through him) has attempted to legitimize such a procedure in Anthroposophical circles in order to be able to apply it himself with impunity at a later date. We will speak of this in § 8.

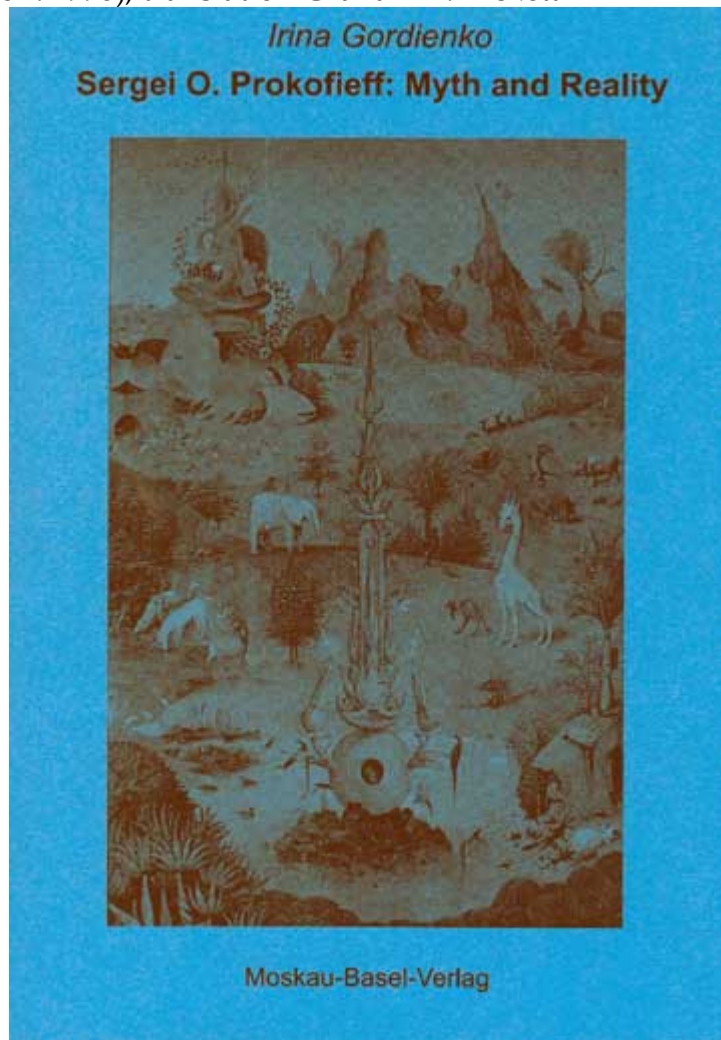
Meanwhile this book is becoming a kind of Anthroposophical classic, and plays an essential role in the shaping of the world-view of the members of the Society. The author develops further with unerring consistency the theses put forward in it. And the majority of Anthroposophists agree with what he writes and says, accept it without reservation. He thereby becomes the messenger and prophet of an eternally “living Christmas Conference”, which he has himself thought up. The books are sold and anyone can form a judgment about Anthroposophy on the basis of the distorted picture contained in them, which transforms the innermost nature of the modern path of initiation into heaven knows what.

Why is this noticed only by very few people? And why do even they keep silent with hardly any exceptions? It is not a matter of hair-splitting, but of the crudest distortions of the basic truths of spiritual science. The answer could be very straightforward: the distortion is so outrageous that one can scarcely believe it to be really there. It dulls the consciousness and rushes past it in wild tumult. And the intellectual, sensible and rationally-thinking people of the West “knock” with their ears,

instead of acquiring more thorough knowledge of Anthroposophy. In the phenomenon described we can see in addition one of the dishonest methods of this author Sergei O. Prokofieff or, rather, of his inspirer (nothing will prevent us from believing that, in spite of everything, he is asleep).

He contradicts himself openly, in a crude manner, without showing any embarrassment. Thus in Chap. 5 of the book in question he tells of a shared, but nevertheless c o n s c i o u s , crossing of the Threshold (I, p. 255). Then in Chap. 7 he describes in detail the “sleep” of the Anthroposophists, but says nothing about initiation. Between Chaps. 5 and 7 there is Chap. 6, which deals with quite other things. After the reader has perhaps “dozed off” in the course of Chap. 6, he moves on to Chap. 7 and has totally forgotten what was in Chap. 5. It is thus all the easier for this content to sink as a residue into the subconscious. If someone were now to draw Prokofieff’s attention to all the incorrect things he has written, he would immediately cite a passage where everything is described correctly – with regard to the same questions. In this way certain spirits are working to confuse the author. This does not mean that he has no weak points. The “incorrect” things he says form, as we have tried to show, a unified and essentially clear world-view with an un-Christian tendency. This is sufficient to cancel out the legitimate force of the correct views which are also contained within it.

pp. 143 ? 155 of the 2001 Lochmann-Verlag English edition (Die Grundlegung der neuen Mysterien durch Sergei O. Prokofieff: 1998), translation Graham B. Rickett



Translator’s Note; In the following the author I. Gordienko quotes from the original Russian text of a number of published works of Prokofieff;
I Rudolf Steiner and the Founding of the New Mysteries

- II The Cycle of the Year as a Path of Initiation ...
- III The Twelve Holy Nights...
- IV The Spiritual Origins of Eastern Europe?
- V The Occult Significance of Forgiveness
- VI The Karma Research of Rudolf Steiner and the Tasks of the Anthroposophical Society
- VU The Cycle of the Year and the Seven Liberal Arts
- VIII The Spiritual Tasks of Middle and Eastern Europe
- IX The Case of Tomberg

We refer to them by means of the Roman numerals. Words, phrases etc. contained in the Russian, that were omitted in the German translations [together with their page numbers in the original text], are here printed in square brackets [...]. Where there is no indication to the contrary, all that is contained in (round) brackets within the quotations is a comment by Irina Gordienko.

Contents

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD 7

1. How THE MYTH AROSE 17

1.1. The "Lohengrin" of the 20th Century 17

1.2. The Question of Method: the Occult Autobiography of Prokofieff 24

2. PROKOFIEFF'S CONCEPT OF EVOLUTION 44

2.1. The New "Task" (Mission) of the Earth 44

2.2. The Five-Membered Superman of the Earth Aeon. From Individual Death to Group Freedom 50

2.2. Dawn of a Light-filled Future 59

3. THE SPIRITUAL WORLD AND ITS BEINGS IN THE VIEW OF S. PROKOFIEFF 69

3.1. Which Folk has the Larger Soul? 69

3.2. Mental Arithmetic as a Means of Bringing Order into the Angelic Worlds 74

3.3. From Arithmetic to Algebra. The Spiritual Beings as Variable Quantities 80

3.4. Occult Materialism Makes its Debut in Anthroposophy 88

4. PROKOFIEFF AS PROPAGANDIST AND TEACHER OF MORALS 94

4.1. A Few Instructive Generalizations 94

4.2. The Theory of Occult Non-Forgiveness 98

4.3. From the Experiencing to the "Overcoming" of the Consciousness-soul 99

4.4. Occult-ideological echoes of the Categorical Imperative 106

4.5. The End Justifies the Means 109

5. CHRISTOLOGY IN AN ENTIRELY NEW LIGHT 113

6. PROKOFIEFF AS META-HISTORIAN AND RESEARCHER INTO WORLD-KARMA 123

6.1. The Rescue-Mission of Bolshevism in Russia 124

6.2. The "Karmic Biography" of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the Creators of "Meta-History" 134

7. PROKOFIEFF AS RENEWER OF THE MYSTERIES 142

7.1. The First Sacrifice on the Altar of the "New" Mysteries: the Biography of Rudolf Steiner 143

7.2. The Christmas Conference – A View Taken from the Land Behind the Looking-Glass 152

7.3. The Race of the Future -"The Coming Race" 156

7.4. Prokofieff's "Metamorphoses ": Anthroposophy- Theosophy – Theology ? Ideology 159

8. ANTHROPOSOLOGY OR JESUITISM? 166

ANNEXE 183

Talkativeness – an Obstacle 186

<http://www3.mistral.co.uk/wellspringbooks/sergeip.htm>

(<http://www3.mistral.co.uk/wellspringbooks/sergeip.htm>).

COMMENTS (4) TRACKBACKS (1)

#1 by [Fairoaks](#) on May 4, 2012 - 8:58 pm

Rather than having someone else tell you what Rudolf Steiner means, its always best to try and sort it out yourself. To help with that a new online study course on Rudolf Steiner's core book, The Philosophy Of Freedom, is available at <http://www.philosophyoffreedom.com>. Its free and includes videos, illustrations, observation exercises and diagrams to help study the book. In this book Rudolf Steiner gives his principles of free thinking and morality. It empowers one's life through deepening scientific inquiry and living according to one's highest ideals.

#2 by **christopher bodame** on December 28, 2012 - 4:23 am

If we are not the Master of our own Thinking...then we are the susceptible and pliable Slave to the Thinking of others...

#3 by [John Dalton](#) on December 9, 2020 - 7:46 pm

Thank you very much for this article, which I think is excellently presented. I've been interested in anthroposophy for some half century now and I first encountered Prok's books when I edited New View, the ASGB newsletter and ran RSP in Bristol and London. I remember the 1990s excitement about Prok and picked up his books... and could not read them, however hard I tried. I couldn't explain then precisely why. They exuded something which made them utterly dry, unengaging and unconvincing, and I saw no need for them to be added to anthroposophical literature. Your article above is very helpful, and reminds me of things I read and could not swallow, especially all that 'this was the path of RS, his initiations, only now made intelligible by me, SOP'. The only one I got through was The Occult Sig of Forgiveness, and the ONLY memorable thing in it were the quotes from George Ritchie's book. The rest was chaff, words. One day, when I was staying in the Temple Lodge guesthouse in Hammersmith, I encountered Prok at breakfast, in fact we were the only two at the table. I expected a larger than life character, a best-selling author, a personality. He was peculiarly stiff, grey and unexpressive in my view, and had no charisma, personality at all. His face was not mobile and there was no humour in him, unusual for a Russian, I thought. We talked (or rather I, an ex-journalist, put questions) and I remember he told me he had been up to Wales, to Penmaenmawr stone circle and also to the hotel where RS had stayed, which was then being demolished. I remembered him as dry, rather cold, watchful, cautious in his responses and hard to like at all, but then that was hardly unusual with anthropops. I've hardly given him a thought since but I'm amazed that people can get through his books and rate them so highly. There still seems no need for

them. Steiner's books and lectures are full of heartfelt warmth and love for humanity, full of courage and optimism. Prok's words entirely lack heart and warmth in my view, and I wonder what really drove him to be so productive. Thanks again.

#4 by **Richard Desrosiers** on February 19, 2022 - 6:01 pm

Thank you for this author much needed clarity. Never did I want to read Prokofieff for I already sensed it would pollute my mind.

1. [Sergei Prokofieff, Judith von Halle and the Representative of Humanity | anthropopper](#)

[Create a free website or blog at WordPress.com.](#) [Do Not Sell or Share My Personal Information](#)