



The group of participants of the First All-Russian Vegetarian Congress. Note: According to Old Vegetarian, this picture was taken on the last day of the congress when not all participants were present. Source: Vegetariankoe obozrenie, no. 3 (1913).

“There is no salvation outside our church”

by **Julia Malitska**

THE ALL-RUSSIAN VEGETARIAN CONGRESS AND THE MAKING OF THE VEGETARIAN MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY RUSSIAN EMPIRE

abstract

In this article, I tackle and reflect on the vegetarian *movement* of the Russian empire in its making, branding, and imagining by examining the All-Russian Vegetarian Congress in Moscow in 1913. By scrutinizing its organization, agenda and resolutions, the study brings to the surface and explores the ideological imaginaries and the dynamics of vegetarian collective action. I discuss the organization and convening of the congress, analyze the discursive activity around it, as well as hint at its implications for the fledgling vegetarian activism. I also contextualize the event within a broad reform-oriented social movement space, as well as spotlight the diversity of understandings of vegetarianism. The case study hints at the manifestations of movement making and branding, as well as unfolds the ideological foundations that were given preferences and why this was so. The congress apparently favored the ethical strand of vegetarianism and aimed at life reform in a broader sense. However, it did not really succeed in bringing about the long-awaited consolidation and unification of the vegetarians in the country.

KEY WORDS: Life reform, vegetarianism, Russian empire, collective identity, All-Russian Vegetarian Congress, social movement, modernity, counterculture.

Among us, as it seems to me, there is no one with a narrow conviction: “There is no salvation outside our church,” and therefore, no matter how great the ideological divergence, our “unity in love” will not become either lesser or paler because of it.¹

Aims, scope and sources

The epigraph belongs to Semen Poltavskii,² a vegetarian activist and member of the Saratov Vegetarian Society, who positively evaluated the ideological differences expressed at the All-Russian Vegetarian Congress. The aim of this study is to tackle and reflect on the vegetarian *movement* in its making, branding and imagining by scrutinizing the All-Russian Congress that took place in Moscow in April 1913. With the available sources at hand and a sociological analytical framework in mind, I discuss the organization and convening of the congress, analyze the discursive activity around it, as well as hint at its implications for the fledgling vegetarian activism. I am specifically guided by the following questions: What was the idea behind and the purpose of convening the congress? How was convening the congress legitimized, discussed and evaluated? What were the outcomes and possible implications of the congress for the *movement*? How did (if at all) the congress reflect the diversity of vegetarian ideas in the Russian empire and the forces that drove its convocation? What meanings were generated around the congress and as a result of it? By analyzing its organization, agenda and resolutions, and placing the event in a broader context regarding the progress of vegetarian thought and vegetarian movement activity, the study brings to the surface and explores the ideological imaginaries and dynamics within the social movement space.

To contextualize the event within a broad reform-oriented social movement space, as well as spotlight the diversity of understandings of vegetarianism, I analyze the texts and treatises of the activism’s intellectuals and the materials of the vegetarian societies. The All-Russian Vegetarian Congress is studied through its coverage and representation on the pages of *The Vegetarian Review* (The VR), a Kiev-based pressure group periodical.³ The VR staged and documented the preparations for the congress and its convocation, published its resolutions and participants’ talks, thereby disseminating information about the event. I scrutinize reviews of and press notes on the congress, the memoirs of its participants, lectures and talks, greetings and congress resolutions – all of which were published in The VR. The role of print media as meaning-makers and opinion builders has been acknowledged in previous research, as did its consolidating role in the collective identity building of the reformist environments in Europe.⁴ Similar to Ron Eyerman’s observations of the *new* social movements,⁵ the reform-oriented movements of the Russian empire were shaped by the print media. Periodicals helped to “create” reform-oriented social movements in the empire. Reformists were conscious of media attention; they were also aware of their own importance in making and shaping events and in catching the public eye.

Vegetarians, dispersed across the Russian empire, committed to and enthusiastic about the fledgling activism, would learn about the congress from *The VR*. Moreover, they would make sense of the event and relate to it based on the information from the daily press and *The VR*. Thus, *The VR* is a valuable resource not only for its basic reporting of events and activities, but for its recordings of the ideas, dreams, debates and disappointments communicated at the congress. It is the perfect resource for tracing the process of the formation and consolidation of the collective action, mobilization strategies and movement imagining and making. It is a rich terrain for studying the construction of a collective identity, as previous research has proved.⁶ Finally, it is a promising arena for exploring the formation and manifestations of vegetarian ideologies, as well as the rifts and tensions that emerged as a result of the formative processes, and the role of the different actors in all this. The periodical gave room for debate, negotiation and fashioning of the *movement*, for voicing ideological disputes, for constructing collective identities, a vegetarian self, and much more. Regarding source-critical pitfalls, the factual coverage of the congress, its organization, convocation and results in *The VR* are reliable, whereas the discursive and intellectual activity around the event pursued on its pages will be critically considered in this study.

Finally, this study has no ambition to be exhaustive. Although beyond the scope of this study, an additional analysis of materials from the Tolstoy Museum and possibly the archives of Moscow might be insightful.

Tolstoy’s vegetarianism and its contested legacy

In the last decade, researchers have begun conducting empirical investigations into the practices and ideas associated with



The cover page of *The Vegetarian Review* with handwritten lines and signed by Lev Tolstoy, dated November 7, 1908. Source: *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie* no 9-10 (1910): 1. Lev Tolstoy enjoying a vegetarian meal in his garden, right.

contemporary vegetarianism.⁷ However, socio-historical studies of the vibrant vegetarian activism of the *ancien régime* in Eastern Europe have not hitherto attracted the attention of researchers. Although the All-Russian Vegetarian Congress has been mentioned in previous research,⁸ thus far, no one has attempted to unpack and conceptualize the event by placing it within the context of movement-making activity.

THIS ESSAY IS a continuation of a breakthrough discussion initiated by Ronald LeBlanc and Darra Goldstein on the ideological fashioning of vegetarianism in Russia and the mythologizations of Lev Tolstoy. Ronald LeBlanc conducted a revisionist account of Lev Tolstoy's conversion to a meatless diet in order to demythologize an established view of his vegetarianism as being essentially "ethical". By thoroughly reading "The First Step" essay, which was canonized as a "bible of vegetarianism",⁹ and contextualizing it with other literary works by Tolstoy, he argues that Tolstoy's conversion to vegetarianism was part of his quest for ascetic discipline and moral self-perfection, rather than non-violence and animal rights.¹⁰ He argues for a distinction to be made between Tolstoy's own vegetarian beliefs and those advocated by Tolstoyans. In their efforts to convince people to adopt a meatless diet, Tolstoyan activists chose to highlight the moral and humanitarian aspects of Tolstoy's "The First Step", rather than the ascetic and religious aspects.¹¹ According to LeBlanc, Tolstoy's colleagues at the Intermediary Publishing House (*Posrednik*) were animal rights activists who contributed to the creation and dissemination of what Darra Goldstein calls the "disingenuous myth of Tolstoy as a compassionate vegetarian"¹²

in order to promote their own cause. Vladimir Chertkov and Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov, public promoters of the Tolstoyan movement, sought to fashion a more appealing image of their leader by toning down some of his old-fashioned views with respect to food abstinence and carnal pleasures. One way this was achieved, as LeBlanc's study implies, was by reprinting only the final section of "The First Step", in which Tolstoy describes his visit to the Tula slaughterhouse, thereby excluding the part devoted to the reflections on gluttony, fasting, abstinence and self-abnegation.¹³ The practice of reprinting only the final section of Tolstoy's essay, as LeBlanc implies, seems to have originated with Chertkov, whose Intermediary Publishing House published Tolstoy's depiction of the Tula slaughterhouse in "The First Step" as a separate article entitled "At the Slaughterhouse" ("На бойне") (1911).¹⁴

The ascetic and religious motivations that led Tolstoy to adopt a slaughter-free diet did not escape the attention of competing groups within vegetarian activism.¹⁵ The literary works, writings and personality of Tolstoy came under scrutiny and close reading of fellow vegetarians, who urged for a holistic approach to Tolstoy's legacy.¹⁶

The dispute over competing vegetarian ideologies intensified right before and during the First World War. In his article "On Vegetarianism and Vegetarians," published in the 1915 spring issue of *The Vegetarian Herald* (*The VH*), Ivan Nazhivin criticized moralists for their moral hypocrisy, doctrinaire attitude and sect-like spirit. The article prompted criticisms and responses, published in subsequent issues of *The VH*. In his article, Georgii Bosse disentangled Tolstoy's motivation for vegetarianism from

the one that was promoted by some of his disciples, reminding readers that Tolstoy's teaching about vegetarianism in "The First Step" was religious and ascetic. Bosse insisted that the dogmatism of Chertkov and "his like-minded associates" was antithetical to vegetarianism and had no place in "the movement".¹⁷

The capitalization on Tolstoy's name and philosophy by his disciples in order to promote their reform agenda is not something unusual. As sociologist Donna Maurer reminds us, cultural movements use cultural products such as values, beliefs, stories, art and literature to spur collective change.¹⁸

Theoretical framework

My perception of movement-making activity and collective action is inspired by sociological scholarship on cultural social movements, specifically Alberto Melucci's *collective identity* and Ron Eyerman's and Andrew Jamison's *cognitive praxis*.¹⁹ A cognitive praxis, the core of collective action and the cornerstone of the identity of a vegetarian movement, includes: a new "cosmology"/"utopian mission" (worldview assumptions), the practical or technological dimension (media, means of transportation and communication, instruments of production), the mode of organization for the production and dissemination of knowledge (science, education, interpersonal contacts, cooperation), and the proliferation of the roles of intellectuals necessary to implementing ideas in a given context.²⁰ I view the fledgling vegetarian activism as constituting knowledge producers, new venue creators, propagators of alternative values, reformers, meaning-makers, "new" producers of consumer culture and information managers. Popular movements aimed at change and innovation, pushed for reform, provided new elites, created new patterns of behavior and new models of organization.

Vegetarianism, as the movement's ideology, comprises a set of ideas, practices and values that people and organizations can draw from and combine in different ways; it is a symbolic system that people construct and manipulate, that makes sense to a specific group of people. An ideology provides both meaning and direction to social movement participants, giving them a sense of purpose and the momentum to act. Expressions of ideology, Donna Maurer reminds us, can both increase commitment within a movement and attract new members. Vegetarianism was and is a multifaceted set of ideas. Advocates and movement leaders sometimes debate the finer points of vegetarianism, but they rarely, as Maurer suggests, contest its basic tenets. Instead, vegetarian leaders are more likely to debate *how* these tenets of the ideology should be presented to potential adherents.²¹

I adhere to the process-oriented concept of collective identity, which is concerned about shared meanings, experiences, and reciprocal emotional ties as experienced by movement ac-

tors through their interaction.²² Collective identity as a process involves cognitive definitions about ends, means, the field of action and the activation of relationships among actors. This process is voiced out through a common language and enacted through a set of rituals, practices and cultural artefacts. Actors do not necessarily have to be in complete agreement on ideologies, interests or goals in order to come together and generate collective action. For Melucci, collective identity refers to a network of active relationships and he stresses the importance of the emotional involvement of activists.²³

Movements are *action systems* and their structures are based on aims, beliefs, decisions and exchanges operating in a systematic field. Melucci speaks of *movement networks* or *movement areas* as a network of groups and individuals sharing a conflictual culture and a collective identity. The function of movement actors is to reveal the stakes, to publicly announce that a fundamental problem exists in a given area. They have a growing symbolic function, a *prophetic* function, in Melucci's opinion. They fight for symbolic and cultural stakes, for a different meaning and orientation of social action, trying to change people's lives, and society at large. Since their action is focused on cultural codes, the *form* of the movement is a message, a symbolic challenge to the dominant patterns.²⁴

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY is the result of an interaction between more latent day-to-day activities and visible mobilizations. Both types of activities provide crucial arenas in which activists can foster reciprocal ties of solidarity and commitment, and clarify their

understandings of who they are, what they stand for and who the opposition is. Collective identity is usually perceived as a requirement to strengthen and sustain movements – but is this really so? Boundary work can lead to divisive opinions because strong group collective identities or different understandings of collective identity can make it difficult for movement sub-groups to form alliances.²⁵ Strong collective identities at the group level can work against movement cohesion because of strong differences between movement sub-groups. At the same time, movement building and move-

ment collective identity can exist despite a strong collective identity at the group level.²⁶

Social networks and personal interactions appeared to be particularly critical in maintaining a vegetarian diet, as well as sustaining the *movement*. Vegetarians gathered for congresses across Europe, as well as in their own countries. The International Vegetarian Union, established in Leipzig in 1908 by British, Dutch and German activists, evolved into a quasi-European organization whose congresses took place exclusively in Europe until 1957.²⁷ Both nationwide and international congresses had a powerful symbolic and mobilizing role for building networks of

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Doctor of Medicine Aleksandr Zelenkov (left). Source: The *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 4 (1914): 139.

Cover page of the cookbook *I Don't Eat Anyone: 365 Vegetarian Menus and a Guide for Preparing Vegetarian Meals. 1600 Vegetarian Recipes by Seasons for Six Persons*, written by Olga Zelenkova and under the editorship of Aleksandr Zelenkov. Due to its popularity, the book was republished on several occasions.

active relationships, for formulating and effectuating common purposes, for activating and consolidating resources. There is one more dimension to mention. As Julia Hauser argues, the 15th World Vegetarian Congress of the International Vegetarian Union, the first event to take place outside Europe, was seized and instrumentalized by its Indian hosts in order to promote their global political aims and impact on domestic politics.²⁸

A worldview or a diet? Vegetarian thought(s) and the fledgling movement

In this section I briefly illustrate the diversity of intellectual trends of vegetarian thought. Vegetarianism was one of many transcultural and trans-imperial phenomena of the 19th and early 20th centuries, commonly regarded as a corollary of modernization and as a protest against it. As in many European countries and the USA, vegetarian activism in the Russian empire, stimulated by societal change and urbanization, was also an aspect of broader reformist environments. In the decade following the Revolution from 1905–1907, a network of vegetarian circles appeared in the cities in the European parts of the Russian empire. By the 1910s, vegetarian enthusiasts of different ethnicities and from different backgrounds had mobilized themselves into vegetarian societies, re-launched an advocacy journal and developed an infrastructure to propagate the *movement* in many of the empire's cities.²⁹ The management and dissemination of information on the cause, as well as public outreach via the press, became one of the key activities of vegetarian activism. Vegetarians were aware of the power of the printed word in promoting their cause and made good use of it.

Though there is an established historiographic tradition of reducing vegetarianism in the Russian empire to Tolstoyism, or to fasting and religious calendars, the sources are outspoken about the heterogeneity of ideas and views on vegetarianism. Depending on their ideological orientation, whether enthused by the *lebensreform* movement or Lev Tolstoy's radical philosophy, re-

form-oriented environments, or *radical habitus*, to quote Pierre Bourdieu, addressed a wide range of issues concerning hygiene and consumption habits, compassion for animals, temperance and anti-vivisection, and called for a return to “natural ways of living,” as well as endorsing abstinence and moral self-perfection. Concerns about social reform and questions about raising children became part of the reform-oriented social movement space. Similar to Western and Central Europe, vegetarianism in the Russian empire was an embodiment of a broad reformist agenda and also had its supporters in the scientific world.

In 1878, Professor Andrei Beketov (1825–1902), botanist and rector of St. Petersburg University, published the essay “Human Nutrition in its Present and Future”, where he argued for the benefits of a plant-based dietary regimen and promoted the need to scientifically identify a “new formula” for a nutritionally rich plant-based diet. The author employed a set of arguments from different spheres: physiology and comparative anatomy (the structure of the human digestive system is adapted to a soft and semi-soft plant-based diet), economy and ecology (the production of plant-based food requires less resources and soil; the earth's capacity would not suffice to produce meat for the ever-growing mankind) and ethics (a plant-based diet promotes the optimal development of the human intellect; love for all living things is the main attribute of a “morally-developed person”).³⁰ In his article “Future Human Nutrition”, Professor of St. Petersburg University Aleksandr Voeikov (1842–1916), climatologist and geographer, chairman of the St. Petersburg Vegetarian Society, discussed the nutritional value of nuts, vegetable oils and plant-based alternatives to milk, and argued for the replacement of dairy products with nut-based products.³¹ It was Aleksandr Voeikov who represented the St. Petersburg and the Kiev vegetarian societies and The VR at the Third World Vegetarian Congress in Brussels from June 10–12, 1910.³²

The rationale of so-called medical vegetarianism, which asserted the physiological, biological, health and hygiene ben-

efits of a meat-free diet and frequently referred to evolutionary theory, anatomy and physiology, was represented by the couple Aleksandr (1850–1914) and Olga Zelenkov (1845–1921). Aleksandr Zelenkov, who obtained a title of a Doctor of Medicine at Derpt (Tartu) University, came to vegetarianism and temperance largely due to his own health condition. While staying in Germany, he learned about and became interested in naturopathic medicine and homeopathy. He was a founder and the first chairman of the St. Petersburg Vegetarian Society, and a founder of a sanatorium near Riga. Zelenkov authored works on meat-free diets as a means of treating and preventing diseases, an approach which he promoted and practiced as a physician.³³ Olga Zelenkova wrote a culinary book entitled “I Don't Eat Anyone,” (*Ia nikogo ne em!*), which became very popular, and also wrote about vegetarianism.³⁴

ANOTHER PROMINENT figure representing this trend of vegetarian thought and practice was Aleksandr Iasinovskii (1864–1913), a graduate of the University of Vienna, a renowned surgeon and Doctor of Medicine, as well as an ideological guru of Odessa's vegetarian circle.³⁵ In his book about a slaughter-free diet, Iasinovskii, like Beketov, put forward various arguments in favor of a meat-free regimen and dietary reform, yet, as a man of medicine, he still leaned towards hygiene and health reasons. An overabundance of animal proteins caused constipation, putrefaction and diseases, Iasinovskii argued. Animal proteins produced toxins – purines – which cause uric acid diathesis, gout and arthritis, Iasinovskii stated. Plant foods, he argued, contained a sufficient amount of digestible proteins, and a meat-free diet had a therapeutic effect in cases of diseases. Iasinovskii was in favor of dairy products.³⁶

The question of *why* a person should abstain from eating meat divided vegetarian activists and reformist groups. Some advocated a meat-free diet on scientific grounds while others avoided meat out of moral and humanitarian convictions. This latter group was divided between ethical but secular vegetarians and those who abstained from meat consumption for religious and ascetic reasons. Also, discussions regarding not only *what* brand of vegetarianism to propagate, but *how* to do so, were pursued with increased intensity. Moralists wanted dietary issues to stop being the focus of vegetarians' attention and instead prioritize morals in discussions about vegetarian doctrines. They viewed vegetarianism as an aspect of a humanitarian doctrine, an ethical philosophy, a *new* worldview, a life reform and a counterculture. There were those who supported a slaughter-free diet based on the principle of “no kill”. Critical voices attacked gluttony, since eating was not supposed to be seen as an act of pleasure, but as a satisfaction of basic needs.³⁷

Philosophizing on slaughter-free diet at times intersected

with advancing social justice, free pedagogy and moral education (*nравstvennoe vospitanie*), general attitudes to the non-human world, equality in family and society, and the critique of hired labor. Vegetarianism was presented as the panacea for many physical ills and social troubles. If urban dwellers could be persuaded to abstain from meat (and alcohol), as advocates of vegetarianism argued, then the “social question” could be solved. “Scientific” or “medical” vegetarians advocated a dietary reform based on the (then) scientific evidence from the fields of medicine, anatomy, physiology and pathology. Some medical professionals viewed meat eating, along with tobacco and alcohol consumption, as harmful. A general dietary reform was a way of improving people's health. A dispute between professors and students at the meeting of N. I. Pirogov's Scientific Circle in Saratov in February 1913 is a telling illustration of the clash between and diversity of perspectives on vegetarianism, as a teaching and a practice.³⁸ Reconciliation between the different approaches to and views on vegetarianism was hardly possible and a middle ground between the paradigms was never found.

The congress: Preparation, organization, proceedings and aftermath From a word to an action

At different times, various strategies regarding the promotion of vegetarian ideas and forms of consolidation of vegetarians across the Russian empire had been articulated. In 1909, Mikhail Pudavov, the then chairman of the Kiev Vegetarian Society and member of the Moscow Vegetarian Society, suggested founding an All-Russian Vegetarian Society.³⁹ This society with its board in St. Petersburg, would extend its activity throughout Russia,

enjoying the right to open its branches in various parts of the country, and promote vegetarianism locally.⁴⁰ This idea was, however, not realized. Iosif Perper, a co-founder and editor of *The Vegetarian Review*, persistently promoted the idea of organizing a vegetarian union inspired by the example of German-speaking vegetarians, united under the banner of the German Vegetarian Federation (*Deutscher Vegetarierbund*).

Print media, postal service and railroads, which represented a powerful way of consolidating vegetarians across the Russian empire, could not,

however, replace the vitality of personal interaction, which was crucial for building ties and networks of active relationships, formulating and enabling the realization of common goals. The very idea of an All-Russian Vegetarian Congress stemmed from the Saratov Vegetarian Society. Its chairman, L. Chernyshev, asked The VR's editor to publish the society's appeal to the readership of the journal and vegetarians in the country. Finding the idea of convening of the First All-Russian Vegetarian Congress as something that was both timely and urgent, the Saratov Vegetarian

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Society called for all Russian organizations and individuals interested in the idea of a congress to send their proposals regarding the time and place for such an event, approximate number of participants, and general considerations regarding the practical realization of a congress. Most of the responses received were enthusiastic about the event.⁴¹

The Saratov Vegetarian Society's initiative was taken over by the "Spiritual Awakening" Society (*Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie*), another vegetarian society, founded in Moscow in 1912, which aimed to develop and promote ethical vegetarianism as part of a humanitarian doctrine.⁴² The preparatory work for the organization of the congress and exhibition started. At the end of September 1912, the Board of the "Spiritual Awakening" Society petitioned the Minister of the Interior to authorize the convocation of the congress and exhibition scheduled to be held from December 28, 1912 to January 6, 1913. The event was to take place on the premises of the Maria Briukhonenko's Women's Gymnasium. Perceiving the upcoming congress as an event of major importance for the "vegetarian movement in Russia", whose members were described as being of different confessions and nationalities, the society's board asked the Minister of the Interior to temporarily lift restrictions on entering Moscow for the participants of the congress for its duration. The society planned to appeal to the country's vegetarian societies for financial support.⁴³ However, the convocation of the congress was not destined to take place in December 1912. The society's board had to postpone the congress and exhibition until Easter 1913 for several reasons, primarily because of a lack of official permission.

ON MARCH 10, 1913, the "Spiritual Awakening" Society received official permission from the Minister of the Interior for convening of the congress in Moscow from April 16–20, 1913, although under certain conditions. Firstly, Jewish people without a residence permit for Moscow were not allowed to attend the congress. Secondly, a list of congress participants was to be presented to the city mayor beforehand and approved. Thirdly, the participants were required to be issued with membership cards, as a condition for participating in congress meetings. A separate authorization was required for organizing the congress exhibition. The "Spiritual Awakening" Society took care of accommodation for non-Muscovites.⁴⁴

The congress welcomed talks on the following topics: What is vegetarianism? Vegetarianism and ethics (*nравственность*); vegetarianism and beauty; vegetarianism from a religious perspective; vegetarianism and upbringing; vegetarianism and health; vegetarianism from an economic perspective; vegetarianism and labor (*труд*); vegetarianism in connection with mankind's general worldview; outstanding vegetarian figures; human diets compatible with vegetarianism; the current state of the vegetarian movement both in Russia and abroad; discussion about the

ways of disseminating vegetarianism: about organizing a Central All-Russian Vegetarian Bureau, and the perspectives of organizing an All-Russian Vegetarian Union, publication of a consolidating vegetarian media outlet, vegetarian literature; ways of implementing ideas about vegetarianism: food, footwear and other everyday items.⁴⁵ The organizer's inclination towards the *ideal* vegetarianism becomes noticeable when comparing the order of the topics of the All-Russian Vegetarian Congress with the order of the topics of the Third World Vegetarian Congress in Brussels in June 1910.⁴⁶

The draft of the Vegetarian Exhibition comprised eight sections. The first section would be about the "scientific grounds of vegetarianism" (comprising books, tables, diagrams) and would focus on foodstuffs, their composition and digestibility. The second section would be about the "social significance of vegetarianism", covering hygiene, economic, moral, aesthetic and educational aspects. The third section would illustrate the dissemination of vegetarianism, and focus on vegetarian societies in different countries, vegetarian trends in Russia, and other trends related to vegetarianism. The fourth section would showcase "vegetarians' cultural products" such as writings, fine arts, handicrafts. The fifth section would include the portraits of "prominent figures in vegetarianism", while the six section would include vegetarian literature. The seventh section would present household items made from animal-free products. Finally, the eighth section – culinary – would cover the theoretical and practical aspects of food preparation, and comprised cookery books, samples of vegetarian food, and kitchen utensils.⁴⁷

The congress was scheduled to start on April 16 with a meeting of delegates from the various vegetarian societies. The entire organizational part of the congress, such as admission to the congress, participants, contacts with authorities, delivering drafts of talks, etc. was to be taken over by the meeting of the delegates. The meeting of the delegates would also suggest candidates for the Presidium of the Congress. The evening of April 16, the opening of the congress, was scheduled for electing the Presidium and announcing the congress program.⁴⁸ The congress comprised full and competitive participants. Full participants could be: delegates from vegetarian

societies, appointed by their general assemblies or boards; full participants of vegetarian societies who had certificates from the boards of these societies confirming their useful activities in promoting vegetarianism; authors of literature on vegetarianism; finally, individual vegetarians, who were neither authors of literature on vegetarianism nor were members of vegetarian societies, but were recognized by a majority vote at the meeting of delegates as being valuable when it came to promoting vegetarianism. People who did not meet the above-mentioned criteria but who wanted to be given full participation at the congress had to submit an application. Competitive participants might be veg-

etarians or people interested in vegetarianism. Full participants had the right to make a decisive vote at the congress meetings. A president/chairman of the congress had the exclusive right to vote more than once. Competitive participants only had the right to make a deliberative vote at the congress meetings. When attending congress meetings and sessions, all participants were supposed to have an entrance ticket to the congress.

The organization of the congress was mainly funded by the "Spiritual Awakening" Society, the Moscow, Kiev and Saratov vegetarian societies. Eventually, more funds than required were raised for the organization and convening of the congress. After the event, the remaining funds were proportionally returned to the four societies.⁴⁹

"Man does not live by bread alone": Event branding

In this section, I focus on three texts in *The VR* written by Iosif Perper, someone whose input in promoting vegetarian activism is hard to overestimate.⁵⁰ These texts, which were put before the information about preparations for the congress, presented the event in a certain way.

In the first text entitled "Our fragmentation", which was a sort of preamble to the Saratov Society's letter, Perper called on readers to respond to the Saratov Society's request and send proposals regarding the organization of the congress. He believed the time had come to consolidate the efforts for the cause of vegetarianism. In his opinion, little had been achieved in recent years regarding the promotion of vegetarianism. Even though there had been an increase in the amount of literature on vegetarianism, no fundamental works, either original, or translations, had been produced. At this point he mentioned Lev Tolstoy, asserting "[...] when you remember that Lev Nikolaevich lived in our country and worked so much for the benefit of our movement, you become ashamed of the present state of vegetarianism in Russia, of our indifference, disregard [...]". Perper poses a rhetorical question about the point in time when fragmentation would end and vegetarians across the empire would meet for a discussion. He optimistically presented the congress as a solution to all the challenges of the fledgling vegetarian activism. Eventually, Perper turned to the Saratov Society's letter itself, which followed his text, and encouraged readers to react and respond to it. "It is enough to fight individually, without any system. We need to unite", Iosif Perper insisted claiming that at the upcoming congress, it would be possible to organize a vegetarian exhibition and discuss the founding of an All-Russian Vegetarian Union, which would unite like-minded people from all over the country, and greatly advance the idea of vegetarianism and other related humanitarian movements.⁵¹ Before even taking any tangible form, the upcoming congress was perceived and discursively branded as a joint enterprise, a shared collective action project, and a joint effort of all vegetarians in the country.

In his commentary in the July 1912 issue of *The VR*, Iosif Perper gave his parting words and his assessment of the planned congress and exhibition, inviting readers to study the draft program of the event. According to Perper, the fact that the first

congress and exhibition were organized by the young "Spiritual Awakening" Society was a symbolic act. He continued:

We vegetarians should have spiritually awakened long ago and not limited our activity and aspirations to the mere organization of beautiful dining rooms with various rich menus, expensive dishes, waitresses in strange-looking dresses. We should be ashamed of this superficiality and unnecessary tinsel ...⁵²

Then he turned to a critique of the vegetarian societies, which, in his opinion, were mostly preoccupied with increasing the number of vegetarian canteens, forgetting that "man does not live by bread alone". Perper was confident that the upcoming congress would propose a new way of promoting the idea of vegetarianism. He presented the organization of the congress as a joint venture, when "each of us now has the opportunity to do something for our movement". At the end of this text, Perper mentioned Tolstoy and also referred to the "First Step".⁵³ He continued:

The upcoming congress and exhibition should serve the widespread propaganda of vegetarianism. Our movement should flow throughout Russia as a wide river, so that it will be as Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy envisioned it. [...] This movement should be particularly attractive to people who want to realize a kingdom of God on earth, not because vegetarianism itself is an important step towards this kingdom [...], but because it serves as a sign that a man's effort to achieve moral self-perfection is serious and sincere, [...] and starts with the first step.⁵⁴

Interestingly, Perper connected vegetarianism with man's moral self-perfection, consonant with Tolstoy's very idea expressed in "The First Step". The convening of the congress is presented as an embodiment of collective action. Perper's text is a sort of ideological marker. By invoking Tolstoy and including a reference to his "First Step", Perper brands the alleged congress in a certain way.

IN THE MARCH 1913 issue of *The VR*, on the eve of the congress, Iosif Perper wrote another text on the upcoming event. According to Perper, the aim of the congress was to unite all vegetarians living in Russia and systematically promote the idea of vegetarianism. For the first time, like-minded people from different parts of Russia would come together and discuss the issues that interested them. Perper spoke about the lack of a "unifying center". Thus, the main task of the First Congress, in Perper's words, should be the founding of an All-Russian Vegetarian Union, which it was believed would bring a sense of belonging and commonality to the country's vegetarians and reduce the apparent inconsistency in the activities of vegetarian societies and individual vegetarians. Perper praised the First All-Russian Vegetarian Congress for being a historic and important step in "our movement", since its convening was perceived as a sign of

a firmly strengthened movement that was looking for new forms of growth. Tensions were seen as unavoidable as witnessed by international vegetarian movements and which Perper also highlighted. On the other hand, Perper hoped that participants at the upcoming congress would still avoid unnecessary friction. “Our great idea teaches us love and respect for all living things...”, Perper stated.⁵⁵ He also commented on the Minister of the Interior’s decision regarding Jews’ participation at the congress:

In spreading the vegetarian movement in Russia and in preparing the congress, we Jews had taken an active role, but we are not allowed to “enter it”. Let us hope this will not happen again. Upcoming congresses must be arranged in cities of the “Pale of Settlement”, so that like-minded Jews can freely partake in them. And in the future, this “pale” will disappear, and heavy yokes will fall off the necks of millions of people, their only fault being that they are people of the “Jewish faith”.⁵⁶

Iosif Perper had discursively placed great faith in the congress as an event that could potentially bring vegetarians of the empire closer, find new ways of promoting vegetarianism, as well as consolidate activists. At the same time, as a member of the German Vegetarian Federation, Iosif Perper was aware of the challenges of movement consolidating activity, fragmentation and alienation. It is also worth noting how, by invoking Tolstoy and speaking of self-perfection, Perper colored the event.

The finest hour

Thanks to the attention given to the congress by the Moscow press, readers had the opportunity to learn about the event, which, however, could not be easily attended by the public. An informative report on the congress was provided by the newspaper *The Russian Sheet* (*Russkije vedomosti*).⁵⁷ Other dailies of the empire also reported on the congress, among them, the *Khar’kov’s Morning* (*Utro*).⁵⁸ The congress participant with the pseudonym *Old Vegetarian* provided a detailed description of the event.⁵⁹ This section seeks to reconstruct the event.

The congress comprised around 200 participants and representatives of different vegetarian societies, as well as individual vegetarians. It was open from 10.00 to 23.00. A vegetarian buffet with appetizers was organized by Jenny Schulz⁶⁰ and other female colleagues at the congress. The Vegetarian Exhibition presented information on the current state of vegetarianism, Russian and foreign vegetarian literature, the documentation of vegetarian societies, household items and kitchen appliances, photos and portraits of well-known vegetarians, vegetarian soap, foodstuffs and samples of dried vegetables, non-animal footwear, briefcases, belts and suitcases, Natal’ia Nordman-Severova’s exhibits and much more. The Jewish section com-

prised brochures and books on vegetarianism in Yiddish.⁶¹ The *Russian Sheet’s* journalist paid attention to a map showcasing the geographical dissemination of vegetarianism in the country, highlighting canteens, sanatoriums that offered vegetarian meals, agricultural colonies, lectures, etc. The vegetarian movement had apparently spread mainly in the northwest and southwest of the empire, from Petersburg to Moscow, Kharkov, Poltava, all the way to Odessa.⁶²

THE FIRST DAY of the congress started with a meeting of the delegates of vegetarian societies at which the candidates for the Presidium of the congress were proposed and a number of technical and organizational questions were resolved. The congress was opened during the evening of the same day by Georgii Bosse,⁶³ chairman of the “Spiritual Awakening” Society. The Presidium was elected unanimously: Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov – honorary chairman of the congress, Aleksei Zonov – chairman, Georgii Bosse – deputy chairman, Semen Poltavskii – secretary, Mikhail Pudavov – deputy secretary. The congress participants listened to a funeral march, dedicated to the memory of Tolstoy, whose portraits decorated the premises.

Greetings to the congress, received from different vegetarian groups and individuals,⁶⁴ voiced the expectations and hopes for the congress, sometimes revealing their ideological orientation.

The first four greetings, which were very detailed and loaded with meaning, were likely a form of a discursive activity of ideological branding of the event.

On behalf of the editorial board of the periodical “Calendar for Everyone” (*Kalendar’ dlia kazhdogo*, published from 1907–1918 in Moscow), Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov and Aleksei Zonov greeted the congress participants, wishing them success in strengthening and spreading the idea of “compassion for all living things”. On behalf of the Inter-

mediary Publishing House, an extended greeting was delivered, indicating the self-perceived role of the publishing house in vegetarian activism. The Intermediary Publishing House, which had apparently been working on spreading the ideas of humanity and vegetarianism in Russia for 20 years, greeted its “brothers in spirit and cause”, who attended the congress. When the publishing house started publishing books on vegetarianism, the few vegetarians in Russia were regarded as mere curiosities, according to Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov and Aleksei Zonov. The Intermediary acknowledged the great importance of the issue of nutrition and the replacement of slaughter food, yet hoped that the congress would:

ensure that its main focus was on mankind’s spiritual rebirth through an increase in the spirit of love, the spirit of active brotherhood of all living things, the spirit of eternal peace, the spirit of universal justice, remem-

bering that vegetarianism is a great development, but only the first step in the spiritual rebirth of a person.⁶⁵

The Intermediary Publishing House expressed its deep regret that the congress had not been held during the lifetime of Lev Tolstoy, “our greatest apostle of love for all living things”, who, together with Vladimir Chertkov, another “fighter for vegetarianism”, founded the Intermediary Publishing House.⁶⁶ This greeting allowed a self-image of the publishing house as an important agent in the *movement*, its founder, to emerge.

E. Gorbunova, E. Korotkova and I. Gorbunov-Posadov, editors of the children’s journal “Lighthouse” (*Mayak*), also greeted the congress on behalf of its vegetarian children readers, “future participants of the vegetarian movement in Russia”. This greeting also permeated by the idea that compassion for all animals was paramount to the congress. Another extended greeting delivered by Gorbunov-Posadov was from the editors of the journal “Free Education” (*Svobodnoe vospitanie*). Its editorial board expressed the hope that the congress would work on the issue of raising children in the spirit of humanity, sympathy and respect for all living things, as well as the active protection of all life. Also, the vegetarian movement, perceived as a movement that was striving for a natural, truly healthy and joyful life close to nature, should specifically work on the issue of raising children in such settings, and the editors of “Free Education” expressed the hope that the congress would specifically address this issue. The editors wanted the congress to particularly focus on the development of standards for slaughter-free food which, it was believed, would enable the proper physical and spiritual development of children. The greeting ended with the glorification of life, love for all living things, and “natural education” (*estestvennoe obrazovanie*).

AS WE CAN SEE, the four greetings had the same ideological content, projecting the idea of compassion for animals and an ethical vegetarianism on the congress.

Regular citizens across the country also greeted the congress. Seven peasants from the Saratov province sent their greetings to the congress. Three vegetarian esperantists sent their greetings in Esperanto. Having acquainted himself with the All-Russian Vegetarian Congress in *The VR*, a “lonely vegetarian”, F. Frey and his wife wished good luck to the initiators and participants in the founding of the All-Russian Vegetarian Union. According to the couple, no one needed it as much as provincial vegetarians and rural inhabitants. Short greetings were sent from chairman Vasilii Zuev on behalf of the Board of the Odessa Vegetarian Society, as well as from vegetarian gardeners from Ekaterinoslav, a vegetarian group from Kishinev, Tobol’sk vegetarians, as well as the first vegetarian canteen in Ekaterinoslav. Personal greetings were also received from people from Samarkand and Tashkent. A group of Vitebsk Jewish vegetarians, as they called themselves, sent their greetings to the congress. Anna Kamenskaia, chairwoman of the Russian Theosophical Society, sent greetings on its behalf. Samuil Perper, a doctor, columnist at *The VR* and Iosif Perper’s brother, together with his wife, sent their greetings to the congress from Rome.



A report on the opening of the congress in Moscow in the *Khar’kov newspaper Morning*. Source: “Poslednie novosti. Vegetarianskii s’ezd v Moskve,” *Utro*, April 20, 1913, 3.

Членами съезда занималось около 200 лицъ, какъ представителей разныхъ вегетарианскихъ организацій, такъ и отдельныхъ вегетарианцевъ; большинство членовъ прибыло изъ провинцій; бросается въ глаза отсутствие важныхъ вегетарианско-московскихъ именъ: нѣтъ В. Г. Чертова, Н. И. Буровскаго и др. Утромъ происходила общаго делегатовъ вегетарианскихъ организацій, носившее разносторонний характеръ. Въ 4 часа дня была товарищеская встрѣта; въ послѣднюю гитарная для членовъ съезда устроена вегетарианская столовая и буфетъ. На просьбу подать чай отвѣчаютъ возросомъ: «Вамъ обмыюемъ-то!». Въ буфетѣ есть чай и изъ слѣд. Даже на уютомъ залѣ имѣется печать вегетарианства: для умиланія рукъ—вегетарианское яблоко.

Открытие съезда происходило вечеромъ. Члены съезда стои выслушали исполненный на фортепьяно похоронный маршъ, посвященный памяти Л. Н. Толстого. Портреты великаго писателя, окруженные зеленымъ, украсили залу заседаній. Были прочитаны приветствія. Краткяя приветственные рѣчи произносили делегаты отъ имени московскаго, ижевскаго, саратовскаго, харьковскаго вегетарианскихъ обществъ, российскаго эсперантистскаго общества, редакцїи «Вестника Знаниа» и др. Г-жа Нордманъ прочтала приветствїе отъ Н. Е. Рашина.

И. О. Перперъ прочталь докладъ «Вегетарианство и его значенїе». Своимъ докладомъ иллюстрировалъ картинными описанїями бойни, которая кладеть путь на культуру человека. Въ эволюционномъ отношенїи воздержанїе мяса создаетъ будущее вегетарианству. Въ заключенїе докладчикъ обрисоваль историю вегетарианскаго движенїя въ Россїи.

Greetings and brief welcoming speeches were delivered by delegates of vegetarian societies, and other individuals and organizations. Natal’ia Nordman-Severova, a suffragette and a champion of vegetarianism, read greetings on behalf of her partner, Ilja Repin. In his talk entitled “Vegetarianism and Its Significance”, Iosif Perper spoke about vegetarianism from ethical, educational and economic perspectives. The second talk was given by Dr. Dokuchaev on “Vegetarianism as the First Step to a Healthy Life”.

On April 17, during the morning session, the reports of I. Tregubov on teetotalers and their vegetarianism, and Iosif Perper on the “Contemporary State of Vegetarianism in Russia” were delivered. Perper promoted the founding of the All-Russian Vegetarian Union, which, in his opinion, would propel the success of the *movement* even more. The questions about a unified center, consolidation and organization of vegetarians were heatedly debated resulting in a resolution on the establishment of a Vegetarian Enquiry Office (*vegetariankoe spravochnoe biuro*). In the evening, Semen Poltavskii discussed whether “a vegetarian worldview” was possible and criticized the reduction of vegetari-

anism to “a kitchen doctrine” in which morals presumably became less significant.⁶⁷ The second evening speech, delivered by V. Totomianets, was about the history of the “Eden” life reform colony, located nearby Berlin suburb.

On April 18, the administration of the congress banned journalists from attending the sessions and there were only closed meetings.⁶⁸ On this day, talks were delivered on “The Influence of Vegetarianism on Human Spiritual Life” by P. Skorogliadov, “Where Vegetarianism Takes Us” by I. Prikashchikov, “The Main Questions of Vegetarianism” by M. S. Anderson and “Vegetarianism in Krinitsa” by B. Iakovlev-Orlov. The issue of the promotion of vegetarianism through the organization of consumer vegetarian societies and shops, and an increase in the number of vegetarian canteens was raised. The canteen issue caused a particularly long and heated debate. In the evening, Poltavskii’s report had been debated for many hours, as well as the question of the enquiry office.

ON APRIL 19, during the morning session, chairman Zonov read out the resolution on the Vegetarian Enquiry Office accepted by all participants. Viktor Lebren’s report proposed to initiate an international encyclopedic periodical, preferably in Esperanto which, for example, would disseminate *progressive* ideas about free upbringing, combating alcoholism and prostitution, promoting women’s emancipation and the true and holistic enlightenment of people and children.⁶⁹ Vladimir Kimental lectured on “Vegetarianism and Upbringing”, pointing out that vegetarianism can go hand in hand with an ideal (*ideal vospitaniia*) and rational upbringing (*ratsional’noe vospitanie*), since, in his view, both preached love, willpower, the value of life, respect for individual rights, emancipation of an individual from *zhivotnoe “ia”*, i.e. from “the animal within”.⁷⁰ The lecture resulted in the congress passing a resolution on education. During the evening session, K. Iunakov talked about “Vegetarianism in Connection with a Human Being’s General Outlook”

and an exchange of opinions followed. Three more lectures were delivered that evening. Based on B. Ioffe’s report “On the Propaganda of Vegetarianism”, a resolution was adopted. After extended discussions, the congress voted to condemn vivisection. The evening session ended with a reading of the resolutions passed after the lectures of Lebren, Poltavskii and Kimental.

The morning session on April 20 started with a report on “the life ideal” (*ideal zhizni*). Later, decisions about publishing a vegetarian handbook and creating a mobile vegetarian exhibition were made. The congress greeted the Esperanto Union and thanked its representative Anna Sharapova for two reports and overall fruitful cooperation.⁷¹ After a few more congress greetings to individual vegetarians, as well as speeches, Zonov read the resolutions, summarized the work of the congress and

thanked all the participants and organizer. Farewell speeches were delivered by Gorbunov-Posadov, Zonov, Bosse, as well as delegates of vegetarian societies. The congress participants then attended a banquet organized by the Moscow Vegetarian Society. On April 21, the remaining congress participants visited the Tolstoy Museum, the Tretyakov Gallery and the Kremlin. Afterwards, a small group of participants visited Iasnaia Poliana (literally “Bright Glade”), Tolstoy’s residence 200 kilometers from Moscow.

The delegates from the vegetarian societies of Moscow (I. N. Morachevskii), Kiev (M. Pudavov and E. Sklovskii), St. Petersburg (N. Evstifeev), Saratov (K. Iunakov), Poltava (M. Dudchenko), Khar’kov (A. Gurov) and Rostov-on-Don (A. Kovalev) attended the congress. It seems that no delegates from the Odessa, Warsaw and Minsk vegetarian societies attended the congress. Vegetarian groups and reformist circles operated in many more cities of the empire than those mentioned above. Speakers who did not attend the congress in person sent their talks and reports via the postal service. They were then read out at the congress.⁷²

The manifesto: Congress resolutions

The Presidium was permitted to propose a resolution based on a speech, which, for instance, provoked a lively discussion, as in the case of Lebren’s talk. Congress participants could also propose ideas for resolutions. A majority vote was needed in order for a proposal to be adopted. The issue regarding potential manipulations and mechanisms of influence on the resolution adopting process requires further research. Through a majority vote, the congress adopted seven resolutions.⁷³ Let us have a closer look at them.

According to the first resolution, based on Poltavskii’s talk, the All-Russian Vegetarian Congress, recognizing the need for new and broader ways of developing the idea of vegetarianism, stated that it wanted dietary issues to stop being the focus of vegetarianism. When addressing the theoretical issues of vegetarianism, the primary focus would be on the spiritual aspects (*dukhovnaia storona*). Vegetarianism would only achieve the highest value when it was sanctified by moral ideas, which was the realization of the kingdom of harmony and justice on earth. Through this resolution, the congress was clearly distancing itself from the hygiene and health tenets of vegetarianism.

The second resolution was inspired by Kimental’s report.⁷⁴ Acknowledging the great importance of vegetarianism in child-rearing, the congress considered it necessary to promote the idea of vegetarianism in both family and at school. Recognizing the importance of parents and caregivers as living examples, the congress expressed a strong desire for parents, educators and vegetarians to fully invest in building their lives on the foundations of humanity, in the constant work of creating an atmo-

sphere for the natural, harmonious and holistic development of children’s bodies and souls. The congress identified a number of most urgent tasks of cooperation for all vegetarians. Among them were the establishment of agricultural settlements, urban gardens, gardens for workers, school gardens, etc., and in general all the ways of unity with nature and life of the family and society, particularly for children’s lives and the lives of working urban people. In this regard, the task was also about organizing children and youth clubs at schools for the “protection of all living things”.

THE NEXT RESOLUTION was based on B. Ioffe’s report. The resolution claimed that one of the main tasks of social and educational work was addressing the active struggle of the family, school and society against everything that contributes to the “development of cruelty, sexual promiscuity, relaxation of will, and confusion in the souls of children and young men”.⁷⁵ The congress drew the attention of parents and educators, school and society to the importance of the struggle against alcoholism, to organizing children’s clubs of sobriety, and combating depictions of all kinds of atrocities and sexual promiscuity in the content of movie theatres. The congress unconditionally condemned experiments on live animals known as vivisection.

The congress initiated the founding of the Vegetarian Enquiry Office aimed at establishing contacts between and consolidating the activities of vegetarian societies and individual vegetarians by responding to queries, sending vegetarian literature, etc. The office, according to the congress, should consist of delegates from Moscow and other vegetarian societies, as well as all those willing to contribute to its work, to include three appointees from the congress (Zonov, Gorbunov-Posadov, Bosse). The latter were to take on the responsibility of organizing the office.

According to the sixth resolution, based on Lebren’s report, the congress considered it necessary to establish a media outlet that would bring together individuals and organizations seeking spiritual rebirth based on vegetarianism. Thus, the congress expressed the desire that not only vegetarian but also other Russian (*russkie*) *ideinye*, socially oriented organizations such as religious, ethical, peace, cooperative, educational and temperance organizations would engage with the Vegetarian Enquiry Office in order to establish such an outlet. Until this had been achieved, the congress considered it necessary for all vegetarian societies to support The VR by sending donations so that it could expand its program, thereby bringing it closer to the type of periodical in question. In addition, the congress considered it necessary to actively promote and support Zonov’s periodical “Calendar for Everyone”. As previously stated, Zonov had been compiling articles and information on all aspects of “spiritual revival”.

Believing that one of the reasons for the spread of alcoholism among the urban working population was a meat-based diet, the congress took it upon itself to appeal to the boards of trustees and temperance societies to introduce an optional plant-based diet in their public canteens. Sympathizing with the development of vegetarian consumer and productive cooperatives, the congress expressed the desire that the vegetarian societies

would contribute to their organization. The congress instructed the upcoming Vegetarian Enquiry Office to publish a handbook of vegetarianism, as well as arrange a mobile vegetarian exhibition. The congress wanted the Second All-Russian Vegetarian Congress to be convened in Kiev in 1914 during Easter week.

The resolutions of the congress aimed to forge and cement the ideological orientation of a fledgling vegetarian activism, thus endorsing life reform and cultural critique. The resolutions also concerned consolidation and the organizational elements of social movement activity, and included aspects of information management, communication and coordination. The resolutions passed at the congress reaffirmed the confidence in the idealistic ambitions of vegetarianism. Overlooking the time-honored scientific debate on dietary reform, one of the resolutions nevertheless inscribed itself into a global debate on vivisection. As sociologist Julia Twigg states:

Nature is a framework of meaning, not just an alien object for our regard and exploitation. This is the significance of the deep hostility of the counterculture to science.⁷⁶

The counter-cultural imaginary emanating from the congress resolutions resonates well with Mary Douglas’s ideas and Twigg’s reflections on purity and vegetarianism.⁷⁷ The resolutions evoke dichotomies of purity/impurity, body (stomach)/spirit, meat/vegetables, structure/antistructure and so forth. Vegetarianism was imagined to be concerned with the control of “passions” and the improvement of “will”. Passions represent man’s carnal instinct, the “animal” instinct of humans, antithetical to rational, spiritual and moral persons. The underlying idea was the subduing of the flesh, the holistic development (read *subjection*) of the body and (*to*) the spirit. Consuming meat was linked with the rise of instincts beyond control and an appetite for food, alcohol and sexual congress. The ethics of wholeness and the ethics of naturalness were undeniable. Vegetarianism was quintessentially about renewal, New Life, New Man, new relations based on the egalitarianism of all forms of life, the unity of all living things. Having all these in mind, it is no wonder that the two resolutions heavily focused on educational aspects and the imagined role of children in the movement.

Aftermath: Make no one happy?

The congress was followed by assessments, exchange of opinions and even critiques of the congress’ work and outcomes. The assessments varied and revealed conflicting views on the congress’ work, as well as deeper frictions on doctrinal issues.

On May 5, 1913, K. Iunakov, a delegate from the Saratov Vegetarian Society, shared his impressions of the congress with the society’s members. Iunakov spoke of the technical shortcomings in the development of the congress program which, however, in his opinion, did not diminish the fruitfulness and value of its work. He expressed overall satisfaction with the results of the congress and gratitude to its organizer. The speaker mentioned the ideological differences that regrettably appeared during the

congress. In his opinion, three “conflicting currents”, – “religious,” “scientific-positivistic” and “hygiene”, – perceived vegetarianism from different angles. In Poltavskii’s opinion, the goal outlined by the congress was realized beyond what the organizer had hoped for. Poltavskii considered the ideological dissent (*ideinoe raznomyslie*) spelled out by Lunakov not to be regret, but rather deepest and sincerest joy. In Poltavskii’s opinion, the diverse assessments of vegetarianism indicated that it concerned different aspects of life. In his words, from the “conflicting currents of vegetarian thought”, from a very “clash of opinions”, a *new* and a *broad* vegetarianism, “closely connected with life”, must be born.⁷⁸ Poltavskii continued:

This struggle of thoughts, which – let us hope – will flare up with even greater force and passion at our Second Congress in Kiev, will only strengthen the unity of spirit firmly established by the First All-Russian Congress in Moscow. Among us, as it seems to me, there is no one with a narrow conviction: “There is no salvation outside our church,” and therefore, no matter how great the ideological divergence [*ideinoe raskhozhdenie*], our “unity in love” will not become either lesser or paler because of it.⁷⁹

In the fall of 1913, the “Spiritual Awakening” Society launched a series of internal discussions on theoretical foundations and the consolidation of vegetarians. The assessment of the congress became one of the subjects of these discussions. In September 1913, L. Plakhov, chairman of the society’s board, opened a meeting by presenting the society’s aims and the direction of its activity, as well as its ideological foundations. He stated that the society had pioneered the convocation of the vegetarian congress in Russia, laying the foundation for a new way of promoting a high moral (*npravstvennaia*) doctrine and the humanitarian trends connected with it, as well as the “brotherly unity of Russian [*russskikh*] vegetarians”.⁸⁰ At the meeting in October 1913, P. Gurov started his speech on the aims, forms of propagation and mobilization activity of the “Spiritual Awakening” Society, with a critique of the congress, judging its results as insignificant and its scale as limited.⁸¹ According to Gurov, it was not worth gathering the congress to pass resolutions on movie theatres, Mr. Zonov’s and Mr. Perper’s periodicals, and the “dogmatic resolution” on vivisection. He added that it was pointless to spend time on needless conversations about the benefits and hazards of medicine, when questions of paramount importance were not raised, such as: what was vegetarianism? Or, propaganda about what type of vegetarianism the congress considered to be the most rational; how to make the idea and practice of veg-

etarianism available to the masses, the working class, and other important questions. According to Gurov, the failure of the congress stemmed from the vagueness of the organizer’s perception of the task they faced, and from the vagueness of their practical program. Had the “Spiritual Awakening” Society presented clear views about the idea of vegetarianism, about the obligations to be imposed on its members, the members of the society would have likely voted unanimously at the congress, and the society would have been able to develop a program for the congress and draft resolutions that would meet its objectives. In his subsequent speech, he reflected on how to understand vegetarianism, with whom to unite and on which grounds. Humanistic socio-ethical worldview based on justice and “active love” was a nodal point of the ethical vegetarianism about which Gurov spoke. Interestingly, he did not mention Tolstoy, but cited Jean-Marie Guyau and Nikolai Nekrasov.⁸²

AS THE ABOVE examples show, there was no consensus in either the assessment of the work of the congress or the doctrinal foundations of vegetarianism. Poltavskii was enthusiastic about the ideological differences articulated at the congress and believed that ideological diversity did not harm the collective cause. Plakhov and Gurov evaluated the work of the congress from the point of view of promoting ethical vegetarianism. Gurov criticized the “Spiritual Awakening” Society for not being proactive in preparing drafts of the congress resolutions and working ideologically with its members.

“SOME ACTIVISTS WELCOMED THE DIVERSE ASSESSMENTS OF VEGETARIANISM ARTICULATED DURING THE DISCUSSIONS, WHILE OTHER ACTIVISTS WANTED TO FIX ITS PERCEIVED DOCTRINAL SHORTCOMINGS.”

The VR provided an opportunity to share impressions of the congress. As Old Vegetarian wrote, 1913 would remain memorable for the “vegetarian movement in Russia” due to the convocation of the congress and exhibition, which demonstrated the vitality of the idea of vegetarianism, its growth and flourishing in recent years. For the first time, the author continued, an attempt had been made at the congress to unite like-minded people living in Russia, and it was hoped that this would be achieved in the future.⁸³ Being a

Tolstoy devotee, Esfir Kaplan highly praised the congress for the opportunity it gave to personally interact with like-minded people. In her opinion, the question of vivisection raised the most heated debates, and a few of the talks on the religious aspects particularly resonated with her. Hinting at the official antisemitic decision, she regretted that many vegetarians were not permitted to attend the congress.⁸⁴ In Iosif Perper’s opinion, the congress was like a large family, in which the participants showed love to each other. Yet, he acknowledged that there had been friction in some of the debates and that the issue of vegetarian canteens created tensions when “passions ran too high” and too much was said. According to Perper, the most important aspect of the congress was the unity of like-minded people, “a feeling

of unlimited love for all living things”, as well as the resolution that “vegetarianism only then acquires the highest value when it is sanctified by moral ideals...”.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the congress did not manage to launch the All-Russian Vegetarian Union, as Perper had hoped.⁸⁶

Some activists welcomed the diverse assessments of vegetarianism articulated during the discussions, while other activists wanted to fix its perceived doctrinal shortcomings. Although heated debates may have preceded the adoption of the congress resolutions, the resolutions that were adopted did not reflect the diversity of the ideological tenets of vegetarianism – rather the opposite. It seems that Tolstoy was not a unifying symbol, as some activists had wanted him to be. Old Vegetarian spoke of at least two portraits of Tolstoy and a picture of “Jesus with his followers in the corn field” which decorated the walls of the main hall of the congress building.⁸⁷ Remarkably, the “Spiritual Awakening” Society published a postcard in memory of the congress with a portrait of Élisée Reclus and his views on vegetarianism.⁸⁸ Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov’s verse “Happy is the one who loves all living things”, preaching compassion for animals and all living creatures, voiced out at the congress, became a vegetarian hymn.⁸⁹

Concluding remarks

As Donna Maurer reminds us, to succeed, vegetarian advocates and activists must balance practicality with moral consistency. Although activist groups want to promote an inclusive vegetarian message, the development of a vegetarian collective identity requires the ability to identify with the various motivations for vegetarianism. A vegetarian collective identity can create a sense of commonality and shared interests among vegetarians, encourage current vegetarians to become more involved in movement activities, yet if it becomes too strong, vegetarian advocates risk alienating some of their potential members.⁹⁰

The congress resolutions appear to be exclusive, endorsing one strand of the vegetarian argument. The moral-ethical vegetarianism with some Christian religious undertones (the third resolution with references to God) was decreed a priority for imperial Russian vegetarian activism. Beside resolution on vivisection, there was no resolution that addressed vegetarianism from a scientific, economic, human health or environmental perspective, even though these perspectives were included in the congress program draft, as well as publicly discussed and academically developed. The so-called “medical” or “scientific” vegetarians were steadily increasing in number and influence, particularly during the 1910s. On the eve of convening the congress some of the leading Tolstoyans themselves were aware that the “moralistic vegetarians” of the Tolstoyan camp had been losing their influence within the *movement*, as Ronald LeBlanc has noted. Those who advocated vegetarianism on the basis of rational or modern scientific considerations showed growing displeasure with the doctrinaire views of “moralistic vegetarians”.⁹¹ The second part of the resolutions focused on efforts to consolidate and mobilize, as well as information management. The congress resolutions made clear which ideological foundations

were given priority and which standpoints were favored by the congress. Enforcement of a certain brand of vegetarianism, and absolutization of its ethical-humanitarian aspects could have disenfranchised all those who sympathized with vegetarianism for health reasons, for example. This could have deepened the existing frictions between movement groups, causing further disintegration and alienation, a tendency which was common in many reformist environments of Europe. The flash of ideological polemics occurred on the eve of the First World War and the congress results might have fueled it.

According to LeBlanc, a rift that developed in the 1910s between “moralistic vegetarians” and “hygiene vegetarians” clearly had a profound impact on the direction that the movement took. By refusing to tolerate any departure from the ethical vegetarianism, Vladimir Chertkov, Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov and other influential Tolstoyan activists alienated and disenfranchised many of those who were attracted to vegetarianism for reasons other than the principle of not killing other living creatures. They were also solely responsible for identifying vegetarianism with Tolstoyism. According to this outlook, not only were all Tolstoyans expected to practice vegetarianism, but all vegetarians were also expected to abide by Tolstoy’s teachings.⁹² At the same time, it seems that so-called “moralistic vegetarians” were not united either.

It also appears that the congress participants had different expectations about the congress, which were evident in its diverse assessments. Some participants criticized the congress for its ideological vagueness, weakness and indecisiveness, other participants praised it for providing a forum for communication and interaction between vegetarians from across the empire, while other participants mentioned the significance of the ideological rifts and debates during the sessions. These diverse assessments echoed well with the discussions on the ideological tenets of vegetarianism, which appeared in The VR’s column “The conversations on vegetarianism” and were pursued long before convening the congress. According to Perper, it was not the task of vegetarianism to make a “careful distinction” between “ethical” and “hygiene” vegetarians. The history of the international vegetarian movement, as Perper maintained, included examples of people who adhered to vegetarianism for hygiene reasons, grew subsequently concerned about its ethical side, and became adherents of “our idea”. Thus, in Perper’s view, it was not “we”, who had been striving for unity, who should be obliged to make any distinctions.⁹³

THE PRESENT INQUIRY has barely scratched the surface of vegetarian movement activity, its branding and ideological anxieties. In order to further our understanding of these processes, it is crucial that more research is conducted. However, let us speculate on the factors that might have contributed to the dominance of a certain orientation of vegetarianism as manifested in the congress resolutions. First, in The VR, the congress was discursively (and beforehand) branded as the event that placed an ethical vegetarianism at its center. This is the impression that is gained when reading Perper’s texts, which served as a preamble to

information about the congress. This might have discouraged activists who did not associate their vegetarian regime with ethics, or their ethics with Tolstoy, in order for them to participate in the congress. Administrative barriers and official antisemitic decision could also have diminished the ideological diversity of the congress participants. The “Spiritual Awakening” Society, the organizer and the host of the event aimed to promote an ethical vegetarianism, as part of a humanitarian doctrine.⁹⁴ The triumvirate of Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov, Georgii Bosse and Aleksei Zonov gained a disproportionate influence.⁹⁵ Overall, these could have contributed to the prevalence of people among the delegates and participants at the congress with voting rights that favored moral-ethical/humanitarian vegetarianism. Yet, this point requires additional verification, since the present sources do not hint at the voting process. Due to the outbreak of the First World War, the second congress in Kiev did not take place. The outbreak of war corresponded with the flash of ideological polemics, forcing vegetarian activists to reexamine and more explicitly defend their motivation for abstaining from eating meat.⁹⁶

The congress resolutions witnessed the absolutization of one line of argument in favor of vegetarianism, promoted by certain activist groups with resources. Out of seven congress resolutions, four were about doctrinal aspects and three were about the promotion and realization of these. The educational agenda, which preoccupied two out of seven resolutions, seemed to be one of the milestones of the vegetarian imaginary, promoted by the congress resolutions. The resolutions deliberately overlooked the hygiene and health considerations of vegetarianism. Was the congress and its resolutions representative of the vegetarian activism of the Russian empire? Due to the partiality of the resolutions, it is unlikely that the congress became a consolidating event, as it was hoped. On the contrary, it could have deepened the fragmentation and rifts between the different reformist groups. Micro-historical studies of local vegetarian and reformist environments across the former Russian empire are crucial not only for the nuancing of the historiographic image of vegetarianism in Eastern Europe, but also for comprehending a variety of grassroots initiatives and philosophies from these milieus. The mere fact that journalists were ousted from the congress is intriguing. Did the congress administration want to hide something from the public? Was it a way of influencing, if not controlling, the media image of the event? ❌

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references

- 1 Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie* [The Vegetarian Review, further on – VO], no. 6 (1913):244.
- 2 Semen Poltavskii (1887–ca 1960) was a Soviet journalist, critic, author of prose, translator. He graduated from Saratov University as a physician. In the 1930s, he was subjected to repressions.
- 3 The name of the cities in Ukrainian and Moldavian provinces of the

Russian empire (such as Odessa, Kiev, Khar’kov, Ekaterinoslav, and Kishinev), journals or newspapers are translated from Russian as they appear in the source material. Russian was the language of communication within and between the vegetarian societies in the empire. The source material that was produced and left by the respective societies is also in Russian. The activists’ names are translated from Russian as they appear in the source material, with the exception of Jenny Schulz. However, important to bear in mind that vegetarian circles were multilingual and multiethnic in their nature.

- 4 Julia Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarianism: The Periodical Press and New Associations in the Late Russian Empire,” *Media History* (2021): 1–22; Liam Young, *Eating Serials: Pastoral Power, Print Media, and the Vegetarian Society in England, 1847–1897* (A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English) (University of Alberta, 2017).
- 5 Ron Eyerman, “Modernity and Social Movements,” in *Social Change and Modernity*, ed. Hans Haferkamp and Neil J. Smelser (University of California Press, 1992), 52.
- 6 Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarianism.”
- 7 Matthew B. Ruby, “Vegetarianism. A Blossoming Field of Study,” *Appetite* 58 (2012): 141–150.
- 8 In his pioneering book, Peter Brang narrated about the event, see Peter Brang, *Rossia neizvestnaia: Istoriia kul’tury vegetarianskikh obrazov zhizni s nachala do nashikh dnei* (Moskva: Iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2006), 301–308.
- 9 Iosif Perper, “Dobavlenie k stat’e, ‘Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi kak vegetari-anets,’” VO, no. 2 (1909): 24. An essay, “The First Step” (*Pervaia stupen’*), originally appeared in the journal “Questions of Philosophy and Psychology” in 1892.
- 10 Ronald D. LeBlanc, “Tolstoy’s Way of No Flesh: Abstinence, Vegetarianism, and Christian Physiology,” in *Food in Russian History and Culture*, ed. Musya Glants and Joyce Toomre (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 85, 87.
- 11 Ronald D. LeBlanc, “Vegetarianism in Russia: The Tolstoy(an) Legacy,” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 1507 (2001): 7
- 12 Darra Goldstein, “Is Hay Only for Horses: Highlights of Russian Vegetarianism at the Turn of the Century,” in *Food in Russian History and Culture*, 104. In 1885, Chertkov organized and financed a publishing house called “Intermediary” which specialized in art and edifying literature. The new publishing house was supported by many outstanding writers of the country.
- 13 LeBlanc, “Vegetarianism in Russia,” 17; LeBlanc, “Tolstoy’s Way of No Flesh,” 97.
- 14 L.N. Tolstoy, “Na boine (Iz ”Pervoi stupeni”)” (Moscow: Posrednik, 1911). LeBlanc, “Tolstoy’s Way of No Flesh,” 102.
- 15 Ronald LeBlanc highlighted a growing ideological polemic within the imperial Russian vegetarian circles, see LeBlanc, “Vegetarianism in Russia,” 18–21.
- 16 E. Dymshits, “O L. N. Tolstom,” VO, no. 8–9 (1914): 265–267; VO, no. 1(1915): 10–15; VO, no. 3 (1915):90–95.
- 17 The *Vegetarian Herald* (*Vegetarianskii vestnik*, further on – VV) subtitled “the organ of the Kiev Vegetarian Society”, had been intermittently published in Kiev from May 1914–December 1917. Ivan Nazhivin, “O vegetarianstve i vegetariansakh,” VV, no. 4–5 (1915): 6–7; G. G. Bosse, “Voz-mozhno li vegetarianskoe mirosozertsanie?” VV, no. 11–12 (1915): 9, 14.
- 18 Donna Maurer, *Vegetarianism: Movement or Moment. Promoting A Lifestyle for Cult Change* (Temple University Press, U.S., 2002), 48.
- 19 Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1991).
- 20 Eyerman and Jamison, 68–70.
- 21 Maurer, 70–71.
- 22 Cristina Flesher Fominaya, “Collective Identity in Social Movements: Central Concepts and Debates,” *Sociology Compass* 4/6 (2010): 397.
- 23 Flesher Fominaya, 394–396. Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); Alberto Melucci, “The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements,” *Social Research* 52, 4 (1985): 789–816.
- 24 Melucci, “The Symbolic Challenge,” 793–794, 798–799, 797, 801.
- 25 Flesher Fominaya, 398.
- 26 Flesher Fominaya, 399–400.
- 27 Julia Hauser, “Internationalism and Nationalism: Indian Protagonists and Their Political Agendas at the 15th World Vegetarian Congress in India (1957),” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 44:1 (2021): 158. Here are some examples: in 1908 the First World Vegetarian Congress took place in Dresden; 1909 – Second World Vegetarian Congress in Manchester; 1910 – Third World Congress in Brussels; 1913 – Fourth World Congress in The Hague. The list of the locations of world congresses is long: Stockholm (Sweden), London (UK), Steinschönau (Czechoslovakia), Berlin/Hamburg (Germany), Daugaard (Denmark) etc.
- 28 Hauser, “Internationalism and Nationalism,” 152–166.
- 29 On the evolvement of vegetarian activism, see: Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarianism”; Julia Malitska, “The Peripheries of Omnivorousness: Vegetarian Canteens and Social Activism in the Early Twentieth-Century Russian Empire,” *Global Food History*, 7:2 (2021): 140–175; Julia Malitska, “Meat and the City in the Late Russian Empire: Dietary Reform and Vegetarian Activism in Odessa, 1890s-1910s,” *Baltic Worlds*, 2–3 (2020): 4–24.
- 30 A. N. Beketov, *Pitanie cheloveka v ego nastoiashchem i budushchem* (Moskva: Tipografiia I.D. Sytina i Ko, 1893).
- 31 A. Voeikov, “Budushchee pitanie cheloveka,” VO, no. 5 (1909): 9–14; no. 6 (1909): 20–21. In his other contribution Voeikov discussed the latest scientific evidence in favor of a plant-based diet, see A. Voeikov, “Voprosy pitaniia po noveishim nauchnym dannym,” VO, no. 6–7–8 (1910): 59–71.
- 32 A. Voeikov, “Mezhdunarodnyi vegetarianskii kongress v Brussele,” VO, no. 6–7–8 (1910): 19–22; no. 9–10 (1910): 20–23.
- 33 A. Voeikov, “A. P. Zelenkov,” VO, no. 4 (1914): 125–126; Iosif Perper, “Pamiati d-ra A.P. Zelenkova,” VO, no. 4 (1914): 139–141. A. P. Zelenkov, *Vegetarianstvo kak sredstvo dlia lecheniia i preduprezhdeniia boleznei (Chitano na zasedanii St. Peterburgskogo vegetarianskogo obshchestva 25 ianvaria 1903 g.)* (Spb: Tipografiia V.A. Tsovorbir, 1903). Zelenkov was well versed in German language literature on the topic of dietary reform. He was specifically fond of Dr. Heinrich Lahmann’s naturopathic medicine and visited Lahmann’s Physiatriic Sanatorium at Weißer Hirsch, outside of Dresden.
- 34 Olga Zelenkova, *‘Ia nikogo ne em!’: 365 vegetarianskikh menu i rukovodstvo dlia prigotovleniia vegetarianskikh kushanii: 1600 vegetarianskikh retseptov po vremenam goda, s raschetom na 6 person*. Pod red. A. P. Zelenkova. 4-e izdanie (Petrograd: Tipografiia t-va A. S. Suvorina “Novoe vremia,” 1917); Olga Zelenkova, *Nechto o vegetarianstve: vyp.1–4* (St. Peterburg: Tipografiia Doma prizreniia maloletnikh bednykh, 1902–1904).
- 35 For more about Iasinovskii, see Malitska, “Meat and the City,” 6–8. Doctors and medical students comprised a sizeable part of Odessa’s vegetarian circles and were therefore dominated by medical, health and hygiene vegetarianism derived from the latest knowledge from the fields of medicine, anatomy, physiology. Leonid Kaplan, a student at a medical faculty in Odessa, was another promoter and public mouthpiece for the so-called hygiene vegetarianism, see Leonid Kaplan, “Gigienicheskoe i obshchestvennoe znachenie vegetarianstva: Iz rechi L. D. Kaplana v den’

godovshchiny osnovaniia stolovoi Odes. Vegetar. Ob-va, 5 maia 1915,” VO, no. 5 (1915):155–157.

- 36 A. A. Iasinovskii, *O bezuboinom pitanii (o vegetarianstve)* (Odessa: Tipografiia Torgovogo Doma Br. Kul’berg, 1906).
- 37 Vladimir Kimental’, “Vegetarianstvo i vospitanie (Doklad, chitannyi na I Vegetarianskom S’ezde),” VO, no. 4–5 (1913): 144–155.
- 38 Ot redaktsii, “Dysput o vegetarianstve v stenakh Universiteta,” VO, no. 4–5 (1913): 185–196.
- 39 Ot sostavitelia proekta ustava “Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo Obshchestva,” VO, no. 1 (1909): 28–29.
- 40 “Proekt ustava Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo Obshchestva,” V, no. 1 (1909): 29; no. 2 (1909): 35–36; no. 5 (1909): 39; no. 6 (1909): 35–36.
- 41 For more about the start-up see the columns: “Pis’mo v redaktsiiu,” VO, no. 5 (1912). Accessed June 14, 2021. <http://www.vita.org.ru/veg/veg-literature/veg-viewing1912/31.htm> ; “Pis’mo v redaktsiiu,” VO, no. 6 (1912). Accessed June 14, 2021. <http://www.vita.org.ru/veg/veg-literature/veg-viewing1912/32.htm> ; Sovet Vegetarianskogo Obshchestva “Dukhovnoe Probuzhdenie,” Vegetarianskii s’ezd i vegetarianskaia vystavka, VO, no. 10 (1912). Accessed June 14, 2021. <http://www.vita.org.ru/veg/veg-literature/veg-viewing1912/71.htm> .
- 42 The Moscow Vegetarian Society founded in 1909 on similar grounds and with the same aims as other vegetarian societies in the empire. In his speech at the first General Meeting of the Moscow Vegetarian Society on March 16, 1909, Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov, chairman of the meeting, asserted that vegetarianism was part of the humanitarian movement, aiming at life reform on the grounds of humanity and that all vegetarian societies must serve a great idea – “establishing love between all living things”. Interestingly, at the second General Meeting of the society on April 29, 1909, a member Sergei Bykov spoke of the scientific promotion of vegetarianism among the population and suggested seeking doctors’ opinions on vegetarianism. V. Molochnikov proposed that they should conceal the hygiene side of vegetarianism and mainly focus on its ethical side. This was supported by Aleksei Zonov, whereas Fedor German considered hygiene to be the basis of the ethics of vegetarianism. For further information, see the Moscow Vegetarian Society’s report from 1909 and the minutes of its meetings: *Moskovskoe Vegetarianskoe Obshchestvo. Obzor sostoianiia i deiatel’nosti Obshchestva za 1909 g. (Pervyi god sushchestvovaniia obshchestva)* (Moskva, 1910). Accessed June 14, 2021. <http://www.vita.org.ru/veg/history/mosveg1909.htm>. Moscow had become the center of the Tolstoyan movement to an even greater extent after the “Spiritual Awakening” Society was founded there in 1912. The society declared its abstention from the dietary aspects of vegetarianism, see Obshchestvo “Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie,” VO, no. 8 (1913): 321–322.
- 43 Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” VO, no. 7 (1912): 273–274.
- 44 Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” VO, no. 3 (1913): 125–126.
- 45 “Proekt programmy Pervogo Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo S’ezda v Moskve,” VO, no. 7 (1912): 272–273.
- 46 The following topics were planned in Brussels: vegetarianism and hygiene; vegetarianism as a treatment; the economic and social aspects of vegetarianism; and only then – the moral side of vegetarianism. “O predstoiashchem Internatsional’nom Vegetarianskom kongresse,” VO, no. 3–4 (1910): 51–55.
- 47 “Proekt vystavki pri Pervom Vserossiiskom Vegetarianskom S’ezde,” VO, no. 7 (1912): 273.
- 48 “Proekt raspisaniia zaniatii Pervogo Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo S’ezda v Moskve,” VO, no. 3 (1913): 91–92.
- 49 “Otchet po ustroistvu Vegetarianskim Obshchestvom ‘Dukhovnoe Probuzhdenie’ Pervogo Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo S’ezda i Vystavki v Moskve, s 16 po 20 apreliia 1913 goda,” VO, no. 7 (1913): 279.

- 50 For more about Iosif Perper, see Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarianism.”
- 51 Iosif Perper, “Nasha razroznennost’” (Po povodu predpolagaemogo sozyva Pervogo Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo S’ezda), *VO*, no. 5 (1912). Accessed June 14, 2021. <http://www.vita.org.ru/veg/veg-literature/veg-viewing1912/30.htm>
- 52 Iosif Perper, “Vegetarianskaia vystavka i s’ezd vegetariantsev,” *VO*, no. 7 (1912): 272.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 271–272.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 272.
- 55 Iosif Perper, “K otkrytiiu Pervogo Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo S’ezda,” *VO*, no. 3 (1913): 89–90.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 90.
- 57 “V mire pechati,” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 198–200.
- 58 “Poslednie novosti. Vegetarianskii s’ezd v Moskve,” *Utro*, April 20, 1913, 3.
- 59 “Old Vegetarian” was a pseudonym that most probably belonged to Aleksandr Zankovskii. Saryi Vegetarianets, “Pervyi Vserossiiskii Vegetarianskii S’ezd (Moskva, 16–21 aprelia 1913),” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 136–140.
- 60 Jenny Schulz, a renowned vegetarian chef and activist from West Prussia, contributed to both the opening and the work of vegetarian canteens in Budapest, Zurich, Berlin, Locarno, as well as in a number of cities in the Russian empire. In 1909, she became a member of the Moscow Vegetarian Society. For more information, see Malitska, “Meat and the City,” 14–16.
- 61 Natal’ia Nordman-Severova (1863–1914), a friend of the Perper family, suffragette and promoter of vegetarianism, and much more. She was also the partner of painter Ilja Repin. Saryi Vegetarianets, “Vegetarianskaia Vystavka (16–21 aprelia 1913),” *VO*, no. 6 (1913): 241–243.
- 62 “V mire pechati,” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 199.
- 63 Georgii Bosse (1887–1964) was a Soviet botanist, professor, doctor of biological sciences and member of the Board of the Moscow Esperanto Society.
- 64 “Privetstviia Pervomu Vserossiiskomu Vegetariankomu S’ezdu,” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 141–144.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 141.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 141.
- 67 Semen Poltavskii, “Sushchestvuet li vegetarianskoe mirosozertsanie? (Doklad, chitannii na I Vegetarianskom S’ezde),” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 157–170.
- 68 “V mire pechati,” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 199.
- 69 Viktor Lebrén, “O neobkhodimosti osnovaniia novago entsiklopedicheskago progressivnago organa pechati,” *VO*, no. 6 (1913): 207–213.
- 70 Vladimir Kimental’, “Vegetarianstvo i vospitanie (Doklad, chitannii na I Vegetarianskom S’ezde),” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 144–155.
- 71 Anna Sharapova (1863–1923), a Russian translator and activist in the international Esperanto movement and vegetarianism. She was also sister-in-law of Pavel Biriukov, Lev Tolstoy’s secretary. She corresponded with Tolstoy and translated a number of his works and the works of other writers into Esperanto. She translated materials from Esperanto for The VR. Sharapova, who was from Kostroma and Roman Dobrzhanskii, who was from Kiev, were national secretaries for imperial Russia in the International Union of Esperantist Vegetarians founded in 1908. Tolstoy was elected as honorary president of the union. See, inter alia: A. Sharapova, “O Mezhdunarodnom Soiuzze Esperantistov-Vegetariantsev (Internacia Unuigo de Esperantistaj Vegetaranoj),” *VO*, no. 2 (1910): 28–29; “Mezhdunarodnyi Soiuz Esperantistov-Vegetariantsev,” *VO*, no. 2 (1910): 29–30.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 136–140.
- 73 “Rezoliutsii Pervogo Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo S’ezda (Moskva, 16–21 aprelia 1913),” *VO*, no. 4–5, (1913): 131–133. I have tried to summarize and convey the content and rhetoric of the resolutions as close to the original as possible.
- 74 Kimental’, “Vegetarianstvo i vospitanie.”
- 75 Rezoliutsii, 132.
- 76 Julia Twigg, “Food for Thought: Purity and Vegetarianism,” *Religion*, vol. 9 (1979): 22.
- 77 Twigg, “Food for Thought,” 13–35. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002).
- 78 Old Vegetarian reproduced the discussions (with citations) conducted at the Saratov Society, see Saryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” *VO*, no. 6 (1913): 243–244.
- 79 Saryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” *VO*, no. 6 (1913): 244.
- 80 Obshchestvo “Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie,” *VO*, no. 8 (1913): 321–323; Obshchestvo “Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie”: Svedeniia o namechennoi rabote i planakh Vegetarianskogo Obshchestva “Dukhovnoe Probuzhdenie” v 1913 godu”, *VO*, no. 7 (1913): 277–278.
- 81 It is worth mentioning that The VR’s editorial board disagreed with Gurov’s statement, as revealed by the reference attached to it, yet published his critique in the journal.
- 82 P. Gurov, “Nashi tseli i nashi zadachi,” *VO*, no. 10 (1913): 390–393. Jean-Marie Guyau (1854–1888) was a French philosopher and poet. Nikolai Nekrasov (1821–1878) was a Russian poet, writer, critic and publisher.
- 83 Saryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” *VO*, no. 1 (1914): 34.
- 84 Mira K, “Dni Radosti (Vospominaniia o I Vserossiiskom Vegetarianskom S’ezde),” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 133–136. Esfir Kaplan had a pseudonym *Mira K*. Born in Volhynian province, she was secretary of The VR from 1909–1911, led a culinary section in the journal, and was one of the initiators of the vegetarian canteen in Poltava. Esfir was married to Iosif Perper in 1917.
- 85 Iosif Perper, “Nash pervyi S’ezd,” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 130.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 129–131.
- 87 Saryi Vegetarianets, “Pervyi Vserossiiskii Vegetarianskii S’ezd (Moskva, 16–21 aprelia 1913),” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 136.
- 88 Saryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” *VO*, no. 7 (1913): 283. Élisée Reclus (1830–1905) was a renowned French geographer, writer and anarchist.
- 89 Saryi Vegetarianets, “Pervyi Vserossiiskii Vegetarianskii S’ezd (Moskva, 16–21 aprelia 1913),” *VO*, no. 4–5 (1913): 140.
- 90 Maurer, 121, 124, 128–129.
- 91 LeBlanc, “Vegetarianism in Russia,” 12.
- 92 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 93 Iosif Perper, “Besedy o vegetarianstve (Otvety Evgeniiu Lozinskomu),” *VO*, no. 9–10 (1910): 51–54. Evgenii Lozinskii’s text “Vegetarianism and Anthropophagy,” published in The VR, triggered a debate on the ideological foundations of vegetarianism, see Evgenii Lozinskii, “Vegetarianstvo i antropofagiia,” *VO*, no. 6–7–8 (1910): 93–95.
- 94 Obshchestvo “Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie,” *VO*, no. 8 (1913): 321–323; Obshchestvo “Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie”: Svedeniia o namechennoi rabote i planakh Vegetarianskogo Obshchestva “Dukhovnoe Probuzhdenie” v 1913 godu,” *VO*, no. 7 (1913): 277–278.
- 95 Saryi Vegetarianets, “Pervyi Vserossiiskii Vegetarianskii S’ezd (Moskva, 16–21 aprelia 1913),” *VO*, no. 4–5, (1913): 137. From 1909–1912, all three were influential members of the Moscow Vegetarian Society and directly involved in its activity. Zonov was the first chairman of the society.
- 96 For more about this, see LeBlanc, “Vegetarianism in Russia,” 12.