abstract

In this article, I tackle and reflect on the vegetarian movement of the Russian empire. By examining the All-Russian Vegetarian Congress in Moscow in 1913, I scrutinize 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 its implications for the fledgling vegetarian activism. I 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 unfold 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 uniformity of the vegetarians in the country.

Aims, scope and sources

The epigraph belongs to Semen Poltavskii, 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. I scrutinize 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 the congress legitimized, organized and conducted? What were the outcomes and possible implications of the congress for the movement? How did the congress reflect the diversity of ideas? How were the ideological disputes, for constructing collective identities, a vegetarian self, and much more. Regarding source-critical pitfalls, the factual coverage of the congress, its organization, and reporting on the congress was reliable, whereas the discursive representations of the congress, its organization, and reporting on the congress was reliable, whereas the discursive representations of the congress, its organization, and reporting on the congress 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.

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 treaties of the activist’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. 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. Similar to Ron Eyerman’s observations of the new social movements, 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. Finally, it is a promising arena for exploring the formation and manifestations of vegetarian ideologies, as well as the rifts and tensions that emerged within the reformist movement, 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, and reporting on the congress will be critically considered in this study.

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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

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“The All-Russian Vegetarian Congress and the Making of the Vegetarian Movement in the Early 20th Century Russian Empire” by Julia Malitska

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

**Theoretical framework**

My perception of movement-making activity and collective action is inspired by sociological scholarship on social movements, specifically Alberto Melucci’s collective identity and Ron Eyerman’s and Andrew Jamison’s cognitive praxis. 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. I view the fledging 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 models 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 to create a symbolic system that people construct and manipulate, that makes sense to a specific group of people. This ideology provides both meaning and direction to social movement participants, giving them a sense of purpose and the momentum to act. Theorists 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 the role of the ideology should be presented to potential adherents. 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 actors through their interaction. Collective identity as a process involves cognitive definitions about means, ends, the field of action and the activations of relationships among actors. This process is voiced out through a common language and enacted through a set of rituals, practices and cultural artifacts. Actors do not clearly 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.

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 zones 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 capacity to create a 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 pattern.

**COLLECTIVE IDENTITY**

The result is 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 not received as a requirement to strengthen and sustain movements – but it is really so? Boundary work can lead to divisive opinions because strong group collective identities or different understandings of collective identity can work against movement cohesion. Collective identity can work against movement cohesion because of strong differences between movement sub-groups to form alliances. Strong collective identities at the group level can have an “extol” function again because of strong differences between movement sub-groups. At the same time, movement building and movement collective identity cannot exist despite a strong collective identity at the group level.

**“TOLSTOYAN ACTIVISTS CHOSE TO HIGHLIGHT THE MORAL AND HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF TOLSTOY’S ‘THE FIRST STEP’, RATHER THAN THE ASCETIC AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS.”**

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 1937. Both national and international congresses had a powerful symbolic and mobilizing role for building networks of
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 13th 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.

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 transcendental and trans-impersonal 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. 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 was an established historicotropic tradition of re-vegetarianization in the Russian empire to Tolstoyanism, 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 life-force movement or Lev Tolstoy’s radical philosophy, re-

Doctor of Medicine Aleksandr Zelenkov (left). Source: The Vegetarianism-obozreniie, no. 4 (1914): 139.

Cover page of the cookbook (Don’t Eat Anyone: 365 Vegetarian Menus and a Guide for Preparing Vegetarian Meals. 1000 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.
The Saratov Vegetarian Society’s initiative was taken over by the “Spiritual Awakening” Society (Duhovnoe probudenie), another vegetarian society, founded in Moscow in 1912, which aimed to develop ethical vegetarianism as part of a humanitarian doctrine.48 The preparatory work for the organization of the congress and exhibition started on November 27, 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 in Moscow on December 28, 1912 to January 6, 1913. The event was to take place on the premises of the Muscovite Women’s Educational 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.49 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.50

On March 10, 1913, the “Spiritual Awakening” Society received official permission from the Interior for convening the congress in Moscow from April 16–20, 1913, although earlier, on June 23, 1910, a decision was made to forbid non-Muscovites or people without a residence permit for Moscow from being among the congress attendees.51

The second section would include the portraits of “prominent figures in vegetarianism”, while the section would also involve 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, as well as cookbooks, samples of vegetarian food, and kitchen utensils.52

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, including admission as a congress attendee, contacts with authorities, delivering of drafts from Russia, of Ukraine, of other differences, taking over the organizational part of the congress, the Presidium, would meet for a discussion. He optimistically presented the congress as a historic and important step in the development of vegetarianism in Russia.53

The congress comprised full and competitive participants. Full participants could be: delegates from various vegetarian societies, members of the board, or members of vegetarian societies who were appointed by the general assembly; competitive participants might be vegetarian societies. 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 buy 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, several agencies, and subscribers. 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.54

Man does not live by bread alone: Event branding

In this section, I focus on three texts in The VR written by Joseph Perper, someone whose influence in promoting vegetarian activism is hard to overestimate.55 These texts, which were published 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 benefit of our movement, you become ashamed of the present status, you discover that you share collective action project, and a joint effort of all vegetarians 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 buy an entrance ticket to the congress.

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Then he turned to a critique of the vegetarian societies, which, in their opinion, were mostly occupied 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 something to do for something for our movement”. At the end of this text, Perper mentioned Tolstoy and also referred to the “First Step”. 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 Nikolayevich 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,48 Interestingly, Perper connected vegetarianism with man’s moral self-performance, considered with Tolstoy, in the texts entitled “The Aim of the Congress” (The VR, 1912 issue of The VR) and “The First Step” (The VR, 1913 issue of The VR). In the first text, 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. The first text, which appeared under the title “The Aim of the Congress would be to unite all vegetarians living in Russia and systematically promote the idea of vegetarianism”, was published in The VR, 1912 issue of The VR. In the first text, 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. The first text, which appeared under the title “The Aim of the Congress would be to unite all vegetarians living in Russia and systematically promote the idea of vegetarianism”, was published in The VR, 1912 issue of The VR. The second text, which appeared under the title “The Aim of the Congress would be to unite all vegetarians living in Russia and systematically promote the idea of vegetarianism”, was published in The VR, 1912 issue of The VR. The second text, which appeared under the title “The Aim of the Congress would be to unite all vegetarians living in Russia and systematically promote the idea of vegetarianism”, was published in The VR, 1912 issue of The VR. The second text, which appeared under the title “The Aim of the Congress would be to unite all vegetarians living in Russia and systematically promote the idea of vegetarianism”, was published in The VR, 1912 issue of The VR. The second text, which appeared under the title “The Aim of the Congress would be to unite all vegetarians living in Russia and systematically promote the idea of vegetarianism”, was published in The VR, 1912 issue of The VR. The second text, which appeared under the title “The Aim of the Congress would be to unite all vegetarians living in Russia and systematically promote the idea of vegetarianism”, was published in The VR, 1912 issue of The VR.
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 is equality and respect for all living things...”, Perper stated. He also appealed to 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 this, the future “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”.

Josef Perper had discerningly 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, he was aware of the challenges of conceiving 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 published in a local Jewish newspaper The Russian Shovel (Ruskie vedomosti). Other dailies of the empire also reported on the congress, among them, the Catholic Old Vegetarian (Russkie vedomosti). The congress participants, wishing them success in strengthening and spreading the idea of “compassion for all living things”, wished 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.

Greetings to the congress, received from different vegetarian groups and individuals, 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 kazh'dogo, published from 1907–1915 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”. They spoke of the congress as an event that could potentially bring vegetarians of the empire also reported on the congress, among them, the Catholic Old Vegetarian (Russkie vedomosti).57 Other dailies 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” (Svoebornoe vospitanie). Its editorial board expressed the hope that the congress would 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.

Greetings and brief welcoming speeches were delivered by delegates of vegetarian societies, and other individuals and organizations. Natal’ia Nordman-Severova, a sufragette and suffragist, together with Vladimir Chertkov, another “fighter for vegetarianism”, provided a detailed description of the congress on behalf of its vegetarian children readers, “future vegetarians of the children’s journal “Lighthouse” (Detskiy eternosti obrazovaniya). This greeting emphasized that vegetarianism is a great development, but only the first step in the spiritual rebirth of a person.

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, two “fighters for vegetarianism”, founded the Intermediary Publishing House. 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” (Svoebornoe vospitanie). Its editorial board expressed the hope that the congress would 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.

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amian to “a kitchen doctrine” in which morals presumably be-
came less significant.” The second evening speech, delivered by V. Tottominets, was about the history of the “Eiders” life reform colony, located nearby Berlin suburb.

On April 15th, the administration of the congress banned jour-
nalistic work, followed by a series of lectures of which there were only closed meetings. On this day, talks were delivered on “The Influence of Vegetarianism on Human Spiritual Life” by P. Skorogliadov, “Where Vegetarianism Takes Us” by I. Priklachishkov, “The Main Questions of the Life Programme of Vegetarian Federation” by S. Andreev, and “Vegetarianism in Krinis” by B. Iakovlev-Orlov. The issue of the promo-
tion 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
question of vegetarianism through the organization of consumer
ism in Krinis” by B. Iakovlev-Orlov. The issue of the promo-

the resolutions passed at the congress reaffirmed the confidence in the
idealist ambitions of vegetarianism. Overlooking the time hon-
ered scientific debate on dietary reform, one of the resolutions
nevertheless inscribed itself into a global debate on vicesion.

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.
In the fall of 1913, the “Spiritual Awakening” Society launched a series of internal discussions on theoretical foundations and the consolidation of vegetarianism. The assessment of the congress became one of the subjects of these discussions. In September 1913, L. Flakhov, chairman of the society’s board, opened a meeting by presenting the society’s aims and the direction in which it was moving toward its ideological foundations. He stated that the society had pioneered the convocation of the vegetarian congress and had laid the ideological foundations for a new way of promoting a series of internal discussions on theoretical foundations and the consolidation of vegetarianism. Flakhov was enthusiastic about the ideological differences articulated at the congress and believed that ideological diversity did not harm the collective cause. Flakhov 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 program and working ideologically with its members. The VR provided an opportunity to share impressions of the congress. As Old Vegetarian wrote, “1913 would remain a memorable year for the vegetarian movement in Russia” due to the convocation of the congress and exhibition, which demonstrated the viability of the idea of vegetarianism, its growth and flourishing in recent years. For the first time, the authors were able to be at the congress and unite with like-minded people living in Russia, and it was expected that this unity could be achieved in the future.

Being a Tolstoy devotee, Estiphan Khalilov praised the congress for the opportunity it gave to personally interact with like-minded persons. However, many vegetarians were not permitted to attend the congress. In his opinion, the congress was a large family, in which the participants showed goodwill and love toward each other, and flourished in the context of the congress.

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

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 Cherkov, Ivan Gorbonou-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 veg- erarians with Tolstoyanism. 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.

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 surplus shared interests among vegetarians, encourage current vegetarians to become more involved in movement activities, yet it became too strong, vegetarian ad- vocates risk alienating some of their potential members. The congress resolutions appeared to be exclusive, endorsing one strand of the vegetarian argument. The moral-ethical vegetarianism with some Christian religions undermined the “moralistic vegetarians” of the Tolstoyan camp had been losting their influence within the movement, as Ronald LeBlanc has noted. Those who advocated vegetarianism on the basis of Tolstoy’s teachings, for example, this could have deepened the existing contradictions between vegetarianism as manifested in the congress program and as publicly discussed and academically developed. The so-called “medical” or “scientific” vegetarianism in Russia was created as a separate strand of the movement, 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 los- sing their influence within the movement, as Ronald LeBlanc has noted. Those who advocated vegetarianism on the basis of Tolstoy’s teachings, for example, this could have deepened the existing contradictions between vegetarianism as manifested in the congress program and as publicly discussed and academically developed. The so-called “medical” or “scientific” vegetarianism in Russia was created as a separate strand of the movement, 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 los-
defend their motivation for abstaining from eating meat. And participants at the congress with voting rights that favored contributed to the prevalence of people among the delegates gained a disproportionate influence. Overall, these could have

1 Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru, “

9 References

1 Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” Vegetarianism: Movement or Moment. Promoting A Lifestyle (Spb: Tipografia V.A. Tsoborbir, 1903). Zelenkov was well

104. In 1885, Chertkov organized and financed a publishing house called O bezuboinom pitanii (o vegetarianstve i vegetariantsakh, “the organ of the Kiev Vegetarian Society”, had been intermittently published in Kiev from May 1914—December 1917. Ivan Nazhivin, “O veg-


100. It is the most important to bear in mind that vegetarian circles were multilingual and

25 Flesher Fominaya, 398.

4 Julia Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarianism: The Periodical Press and New...

3 The name of the cities in Ukrainian and Moldavian provinces of the Russian empire (such as Odessa, Kiev, Khar'kov, Ekat'rinol'sk, and Kar'lovo) journalists or newspapermen translated from Russian original appear in the source material. The Russian language was the communication medium 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 Schuh. However, important to note that vegetarian circles were multilingual and multiracial in their cultures.

Julia Malitska, “O bezuboinom pitanii (o vegetarianstve i vegetariantsakh, “the organ of the Kiev Vegetarian Society”, had been intermittently published in Kiev from May 1914—December 1917. Ivan Nazhivin, “O veg-

13 LeBlanc, “Tolstoy’s Way of No

9 Iosif Perper, “Dobavlenie k stat’i, ‘Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi kak vegetari-

14 L.N. Tolstoy, “Na boine (Iz “Pervoi stupeni”)” (Moscow: Posrednik, 1911).


45 “Proekt programmy Pervogo Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo S’ezda v Moskve, “

40 On the evolution of vegetarian activism, see, Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarian-

41 “LeBoix, Philip, and Robert S. Brang, eds. ‘Vegetarianstvo kak sredstvo dlia lecheniia i preduprezhdeniia boleznei (Chislo

100. It is the most important to bear in mind that vegetarian circles were multilingual and

27 Ivan Nazhivin, “O veg-

26 Flesher Fominaya, 394—400.


20 Pismno v redaktsiiu, ”


21 Zelenkov was well versed in German language in literature on the topic of dietary reform. He was specifically fond of Dr. Dietrich Laden’s naturopathic medicine and

1909, a member Sergei Bykov spoke of the scientific promotion of vegetarianism and mainly focus on its ethical side. This was supported by Aleksandr Zemtsov, whereas Fedor German considered vegetarianism to be the basis of the ethos of vegetarianism and all animal life on earth to be sacrosanct. The list of the locations of world congresses is long: Stockholm (Sweden), London (London), Chicago (Illinois), Berlin (Germany), Dubai (UAE) and online (2021). Grant Melucci and his colleagues found that the symbolic challenge of contemporary movements is to respond to the “amplification” of new social movements around the world. The symbolic challenge of contemporary movements is to respond to the “amplification” of new social movements around the world.

42 The Moscow Vegetarian Society founded in 1891 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 health 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 21, 1909, a member Sergei Bykov spoke of the scientific promotion of vegetarianism among the population and suggested seeking doctors’ opinions on vegetarianism. Melucci proposed that they should conceal the hygiene side of vegetarianism and mainly focus on its ethical side. This was supported by Aleksandr Zemtsov, whereas Fedor German considered vegetarianism to be the basis of the ethos of vegetarianism and all animal life on earth to be sacrosanct. The list of the locations of world congresses is long: Stockholm (Sweden), London (London), Chicago (Illinois), Berlin (Germany), Dubai (UAE) and online (2021). Grant Melucci and his colleagues found that the symbolic challenge of contemporary movements is to respond to the “amplification” of new social movements around the world. The symbolic challenge of contemporary movements is to respond to the “amplification” of new social movements around the world.

26 Flesher Fominaya, 394—400.

27 Ivan Nazhivin, “O veg-

28 On the evolution of vegetarian activism, see, Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarian-

12 On the evolution of vegetarian activism, see, Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarian-

96 and participants at the congress with voting rights that favored contributed to the prevalence of people among the delegates gained a disproportionate influence. Overall, these could have

4 References

9 References

1 Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” Vegetarianism: Movement or Moment. Promoting A Lifestyle (Spb: Tipografia V.A. Tsoborbir, 1903). Zelenkov was well

104. In 1885, Chertkov organized and financed a publishing house called O bezuboinom pitanii (o vegetarianstve i vegetariantsakh, “the organ of the Kiev Vegetarian Society”, had been intermittently published in Kiev from May 1914—December 1917. Ivan Nazhivin, “O veg-

25 Flesher Fominaya, 398.


100. It is the most important to bear in mind that vegetarian circles were multilingual and

25 Flesher Fominaya, 398.


100. It is the most important to bear in mind that vegetarian circles were multilingual and

25 Flesher Fominaya, 398.


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For more about Iosif Perper, see Malitska, “Mediated Vegetarianism.”


Ibid., 271–272.

Ibid., 272.


Ibid., 90.

“Itsrovnu v Moskve, ” Utro, April 20, 1913, 3.

“Old Vegetarian” was a pseudonym that most probably belonged to Alye- sandr Zankovskii. Staryi Vegetarianets, “Pervyi Vserossiiskii Vegetarianskii S’ezd (Moskva, 16–21 aprelia 1913),” VO, no. 4–5 (1913): 136–140.

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 many 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.

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. Staryi Vegetarianets, “Vegetarianskaia Vystavka (16–21 aprelia 1913),” VO, no. 6 (1913): 241–243.


Georgii Bosse (1887–1964) was a Soviet botanist, professor, doctor of biological sciences and member of the Board of the Moscow Esperanto Society.


Ibid., 144.

Ibid., 141.

Ibid., 141.


Ibid., 157.


Anna Sharapova (1863–1923), a Russian translator and activist in the international Esperanto movement and vegetarianism. She was also sister-in-law of Pavel Birilukov, 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 Dobrzanski, 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 Soiuzu Esperantistov-Vegetariantsev (Internacia Unuigo de Esperantistaj Vegetaranoj),” VO, no. 2 (1910): 28–29; “Mehzdunorodnyi Soiuze Esperantistov-Vegetariantsev,” VO, no. 2 (1910): 29–30.

Ibid., 136–140.

“Rezoliutsii Pervogo Vserossiiskogo Vegetarianskogo S’eza (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.

Kimental’, “Vegetarianstvo i vospitanie.”

Rezoliutsii, 132.


Old Vegetarian reproduced the discussions (with citations) conducted at the Saratov Society, see Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” VO, no. 6 (1913): 243–244.

Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” VO, no. 6 (1913): 244.


It is worth mentioning that The VR’s editorial board disagreed with Gu- rov’s statement, as revealed by the reference attached to it, yet published his critique in the journal.

P. Guruv, “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.

Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” VO, no. 1 (1914): 34.

Mira K, “Dni Radosti (Vospominanija o I Vserossiiskom Vegetarianskom S’eze),” VO, no. 4–5 (1913): 133–135. Esfr 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. Esfr was married to Iosif Perper in 1917.


Ibid., 129–131.


Ibid., 136.

Staryi Vegetarianets, “Po miru,” VO, no. 7 (1913): 283. Élisée Reclus (1830–1905) was a renowned French geographer, writer and anarchist.

Staryi Vegetarianets, “Pervyi Vserossiiskii Vegetarianskii S’ezd (Moskva, 16–21 aprelia 1913),” VO, no. 4–5 (1913): 140.

Maurer, 121, 124, 128–129.


Ibid., 25.


Staryi Vegetarianets, “Pervyi Vserossiiskii Vegetarianskii S’ezd (Moskva, 16–21 aprelia 1913),” VO, no. 4–5, (1913): 132. 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.

For more about this, see LeBlanc, “Vegetarianism in Russia,” 12.