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**Carl Beck
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The ideologues of the exploitative classes, in their attempt to hide from the toiling classes the true causes of economic inequity, strongly support all sorts of anti-scientific doctrines which, by means of the moral principles of “personal self-perfection,” mask the class essence of oppression. This explains the widespread popularization of vegetarianism in the capitalist countries. All the arguments advanced by vegetarians to support eating exclusively herbivorous food are antiscientific.

— “Vegetarianism,” *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (1951)

The contradictions in Tolstoy’s works, views, teachings, in his school, are indeed blatant. . . . On the one hand, we have his remarkably powerful, forthright, and sincere protest against social falsehood and hypocrisy; while on the other hand, we have the “Tolstoyan,” i.e., the haggard, hysterical sniveller called the Russian intellectual, who publicly thumps his chest and says, “I am foul, I am vile, but I am striving for moral self-perfection; I no longer eat meat and I now live on rice patties.”

— V. I. Lenin, *Lev Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution* (1908)

The collapse of communist rule in Russia at the beginning of the 1990s revived a whole series of social, cultural, and ideological phenomena that had either lain dormant or been almost entirely absent during the Soviet period, phenomena ranging from pornography and prostitution to religion and real estate. Vegetarianism, which had been demonized under Stalin as a pernicious and insidiously “antiscientific” doctrine promulgated by the ideologues of the exploitative classes in the capitalist West, experienced a revival that began during the *glasnost*’ years; it has continued to remain popular in postcommunist Russia as well. The Vegetarian Society of the USSR, which was created in the late 1980s under Gorbachev, helped to bring together—and, more importantly, to bring out of the proverbial closet—Russian vegetarians of various hues, organizing health groups in different cities across the former Soviet Union. The vegetarian cause in Russia has also benefited from the resurgence of the Russian Orthodox Church, which prescribes abstinence from meat during regular periods of fasting, as well as from the new religious freedom enjoyed by sects such as the Hari

Krishna, whose members actively advocate and proselytize a vegetarian diet. Numerous vegetarian cookbooks have become available for sale in Russian bookstores, and vegetarian entrees—from “veggie burgers” to falafel sandwiches—can now be found in many Moscow restaurants and cafes. Notwithstanding the presence of McDonald’s hamburger franchises all over the capital, it seems fair to say that the vegetarian movement has been accorded a relatively warm and friendly reception in postcommunist Russia.

One might reasonably expect that this vegetarian revival would be accompanied by the frequent invocation of the name of Lev Nikolaeovich Tolstoy, who remains, after all, Russia’s most famous and well-recognized vegetarian. Although he did not write extensively on the topic of vegetarianism per se, either in his fiction, his essays, or his correspondence, Tolstoy’s name has become nearly synonymous with vegetarianism during the course of the twentieth century, both in Russia and around the world. A number of Tolstoyan agricultural colonies, in which vegetarianism was rigidly practiced, were founded at the turn of the twentieth century not only in Russia, but also in England, Holland, Bulgaria, and America.¹ Indeed, vegetarianism eventually came to be one of the essential tenets of “Tolstoyism,” the ideology of radical Christianity that shaped the lifestyle of thousands of people who became converts to the social, moral, and religious teachings of the apostle of Yasnaya Polyana. Along with pacifism, temperance, chastity, anarchism, antimilitarism, and nonviolent resistance to evil, vegetarianism came to constitute a basic component of the message of Christian love that Tolstoy’s followers sought to incorporate into their daily lives.² “Vegetarianism in Russia,” Darra Goldstein observes, “inevitably conjures up Count Leo Tolstoy, a guru for vegetarians of all stripes in his day.”³ The famous Russian author has had his name added to the long list of philosophers, writers, artists, and celebrities who are regularly singled out in vegetarian literature as wise and enlightened historical figures preaching abstinence from meat. These include, among others, Pythagoras, Plato, Plutarch, Leonardo da Vinci, Rousseau, Shelley, Thoreau, Schopenhauer, Wagner, G. B. Shaw, Gandhi, and, in recent years, Linda McCartney. Historical studies of vegetarianism, as a rule, almost invariably contain a brief section on Tolstoy and the fate of the Dukhobors, the members of the peasant religious sect who shared many of his radically Christian principles, such as pacifism, nonresistance to evil, and, of course, vegetarianism.⁴ Vladimir Porudominskii goes so far as to claim that, in his homeland,

the name of “Lev Tolstoy” and the concept of “vegetarianism” have long been conflated and inextricably linked together. Every mention of vegetarianism almost inevitably draws forth, by way of example, a reference to Lev Tolstoy. Vegetarianism invariably appears in the series of associations that follows the mention of Lev Tolstoy’s name, together with *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, Yasnaya Polyana, peasants, plowing, a gray beard, and a gray peasant blouse.⁵

Tolstoy's portrait—along with those of Plato, Buddha, and Gandhi—even adorns the cover of a recent U.S. paperback entitled *Famous Vegetarians and Their Favorite Recipes*.⁶

Despite Tolstoy's well-established reputation as a vegetarian, those involved in the current vegetarian revival in his homeland do not seem very strongly inclined to highlight his famous name, opting instead to showcase other, lesser-known figures in the history of the vegetarian movement in Russia. For instance, the famous prerevolutionary vegetarian cookbook, *I Don't Eat Anyone* (*Ja nikogo ne em*), written at the turn of the century by Olga Zelenkova, was republished in 1991 in a volume that includes excerpts from articles that originally appeared in early twentieth-century vegetarian journals, all of which focus not on Tolstoy, but on other pioneering Russian vegetarians, such as Aleksandr Zelenkov, Aleksandr Iasinovskii, and Natal'ia Nordman-Severova.⁷ Another recent publication, the multiauthored *All About Vegetarianism* (*Vse o vegetarianstve*, 1992), likewise pays relatively scant attention to Russia's most famous vegetarian. Tolstoy's role in helping to popularize vegetarianism in prerevolutionary Russia, it is true, is duly acknowledged, and a brief sketch of his conversion to (and practice of) vegetarianism is included in a section that profiles a number of the world's "Great Vegetarians," but the bulk of *All About Vegetarianism* is devoted to outlining the health benefits and humanitarian concerns that are associated with a meatless diet.

One reason for this relative neglect in contemporary Russia of Tolstoy's vegetarian beliefs, I suggest, lies in the historical fate of the vegetarian movement in both prerevolutionary and Soviet Russia. More specifically, Tolstoy's lack of prominence as a vegetarian in Russia today seems to be due in large part to the motivations and rationales that informed his original decision to refrain from eating meat. He was less interested in the hygienic or humanitarian aspects of vegetarianism than in its ascetic and moral significance as part of the human striving for spiritual self-perfection. As we shall see, even the efforts made by some of Tolstoy's more zealous followers immediately following his death to downplay the old-fashioned religious features of their leader's vegetarian beliefs (such as fasting as a way to tame the flesh) and to highlight the more modern, rational, and humane ones (such as a concern for animal rights) were not entirely successful in protecting him from the charge of preaching a cheerless Christian asceticism, one that was rejected outright by a growing number of advocates of a more life-affirming and health-promoting brand of vegetarianism. By examining the nature of Tolstoy's vegetarian beliefs and by exploring the ways that both his fame and his pronouncements on this topic were manipulated by those of his followers who played a key role in the growth and development of the vegetarian movement in early twentieth-century Russia, this essay seeks to explain why the extent of the Tolstoy(an) legacy—the legacy both of Tolstoy and of the Tolstoyans—seems so circumscribed for vegetarianism in Russia today.

Tolstoy the Vegetarian

The decision to abstain from eating animal flesh, as Colin Spencer reminds us in his recent history of vegetarianism, *The Heretic's Feast* (1993), is a psychological event of considerable importance to the new convert, a decision that “often seems outrageous to the rest of society.” Spencer explains that this is largely because meat-eating has received such widespread acceptance in the West, where meat has traditionally served as a symbol that combines various important social meanings having to do with power, orthodoxy, and dominance. “Often the vegetarian creed has been one of dissidence,” he writes, “comprising rebels and outsiders, individuals and groups who find the society they live in to lack moral worth.”⁸ Tolstoy, who for much of his life could be said to fit perfectly this image of a rebellious moral heretic who challenges the status quo, gave up eating meat during the course of the 1880s, not long after experiencing the spiritual crisis recorded in his *Confession* (1879), and he remained a vegetarian throughout the last twenty to twenty-five years of his life. The decision to abstain from meat was apparently not easy for him. As Janet Barkas observes, “Tolstoy’s conversion to a vegetarian diet was gradual and he struggled with the decision for several years, vacillating back and forth.”⁹ As early as 1882, he indicated in his diary his intention to adopt a meatless diet and to survive mainly on kasha, jelly, and preserves, but it was not until 1885, according to his son Sergei, that Tolstoy was seriously convinced to become a vegetarian.¹⁰ In the autumn of that year he was visited on his estate by William Frey (Vadim Konstantinovich Geins), a former socialist who had traveled to America, where he lived for some seventeen years in agricultural communes in Missouri, Kansas, Oregon, and other western states before returning to Russia during the 1880s, transformed by the experience into a strong advocate of Auguste Comte’s Positivist philosophy.¹¹ “It was from Frey that Lev Nikolaevich first heard vegetarianism preached,” a contemporary witness at Yasnaya Polyana recounts, “and in him [Frey] he first saw a man who had consciously abjured all slaughter.”¹² Although Tolstoy strongly questioned Frey’s Positivism and never accepted his dietary extremism—he refused to eat both plants and animals—there is no disputing Tolstoy’s sincerity when he reportedly said to Frey, “I will follow your example and abandon flesh-meat.”¹³ Two of Tolstoy’s daughters, Tanya and Masha, likewise converted to a meatless diet at this time, apparently convinced by Frey that human beings can survive quite well on a diet of cereals, fruits, and nuts.¹⁴

Another person who is credited with having helped to convert Tolstoy to vegetarianism is his disciple, colleague, and close friend, Vladimir Chertkov, who became a vegetarian while living in England in 1884–1885, and who brought back to Russia some British vegetarian literature published by the Humanitarian League that greatly interested Tolstoy.¹⁵ Chertkov wrote a pamphlet about the evils of hunting, entitled

An Evil Pastime: Thoughts on Hunting (1890), for which Tolstoy agreed to write a brief introduction. In his pamphlet, Chertkov argues passionately that it is no longer necessary, in terms of human evolution, for man to kill animals for his food; as a result, “hunting is no longer now a natural form of the struggle for existence, but rather a voluntary return to a primitive beastlike state . . . for a contemporary person who is civilized, such a pastime encourages, exercises, and develops in him animal instincts that human consciousness has already long ago outstripped.” Citing the example of the gentle Buddha, who forbade his followers to kill any living creatures, Chertkov calls upon his readers to occupy themselves with farming (where a moral relationship with nature is still intact) rather than hunting, and to cultivate within themselves the trait of compassion—one of the most valued features of the human soul. “No matter from what angle you approach it,” he writes, “hunting is a senseless and cruel business that is baneful for moral feeling.”¹⁶ For Tolstoy, whose radical Christian philosophy of brotherly love, pacifism, and nonviolence was taking firm shape during this time, Chertkov’s *An Evil Pastime*, with its strong moral and humanitarian arguments against killing other living creatures, no doubt struck a resonant chord.

In addition to the personal influence exerted by acquaintances such as Frey and Chertkov, two books seem to have confirmed Tolstoy in his resolve to become a vegetarian. The first was an essay on diet that Tolstoy became acquainted with in 1891, *Man’s Diet in Its Present and Future* (1878), written by Andrei Nikolaevich Beketov, the Russian scientist who later served as rector of St. Petersburg University. Beketov’s book provides compelling physiological as well as moral reasons why human beings—in their progression from a primitive to a civilized state of development—should eliminate meat from their diet. In their striving for self-perfection, the author argues, human beings need to diminish the animal side of their nature (what he calls their *zhivotnost’*), which only weighs them down and reduces their spiritual potentialities. Man’s animal nature, according to Beketov, is further strengthened by a carnivorous diet, which, he claims, is characteristic of primitive and barbaric people rather than truly civilized ones.¹⁷ A second work that made a very strong impression on Tolstoy was *The Ethics of Diet* (1883) by the British vegetarian Howard Williams, which he received from Chertkov in April 1891. Williams’s book, subtitled *A Catena of Authorities Deprecatory of the Practice of Flesh-Eating*, consists of various pronouncements about the evils of meat-eating made by some sixty-nine famous historical figures from Porphyry, Plato, and Pythagoras in classical antiquity, to Rousseau, Shelley, and Schopenhauer in the modern period. One contemporary Russian reviewer later characterized it as an “encyclopedia of vegetarianism” that ought to be made required reading for every practicing vegetarian. Tolstoy was so impressed by *The Ethics of Diet* that he insisted on having it translated into Russian and volunteered to write the preface himself.¹⁸

This essay, “The First Step” (“Pervaia stupen”), originally appeared in the journal *Questions of Philosophy and Psychology* in 1892.¹⁹ It constitutes by far Tolstoy’s best-known piece of writing on the issue of vegetarianism. Characterized as one of “the most thorough, soul-searching modern treatments of the moral reasons for vegetarianism,” it is invariably cited whenever Tolstoy’s vegetarian beliefs are discussed.²⁰ Upon examination, one sees that “The First Step” consists of two unequal parts: a rather lengthy sermon preaching against the sin of gluttony, and a brief narrative account of a visit Tolstoy made to a local abattoir in Tula. It is especially the second part that helped to establish Tolstoy’s reputation as “the father of organized Russian vegetarianism,” since it provided such an eloquent and compelling indictment of the unjustifiably cruel, violent, and inhumane exploitation of animals that is necessitated by the widespread use of meat in the human diet. His graphic depiction of the bloody scene in the slaughterhouse succeeded in recruiting numerous converts to the vegetarian cause by helping to forge “the logical link between violence towards animals and violence towards men.”²¹

Tolstoy was initially prompted to adopt and advocate a vegetarian diet more by a deep commitment to a rigid brand of Christian asceticism, however, than by any compassion he may have felt for creatures from the animal kingdom.²² To Tolstoy’s mind, a “carnal” diet (i.e., a diet of animal flesh) directly stimulates a carnal appetite, since eating animal food arouses within us—just as does any rich and tasty food item from which we might derive enjoyment—our animal passions for pleasure. Not unlike his fictional character Pozdnyshev in *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), who claims that gastronomic indulgence in rich and “fleshly” foods leads directly to the arousal of sexual desire (it triggers what he calls “the systematic excitation of lust”), Tolstoy in “The First Step” asserts that there is a direct prophylactic connection between abstinence from fleshly food (vegetarianism) and abstinence from sexual activity (chastity).²³ This famous essay, which one of his Tolstoyan followers later characterized as a veritable “Bible of vegetarianism,” thus turns out to be hardly about vegetarianism at all.²⁴ Instead it is a moral tract that preaches the need to practice abstinence in matters involving diet and sex. Indeed, in his diary entries and correspondence during the summer of 1891, when he was fully engaged in writing “The First Step,” Tolstoy repeatedly referred to his essay as precisely that: an article about gluttony and abstinence.²⁵ Much like Vladimir Solov’ev, who in his essay “On Fasting” conceives of abstinence (*vozderzhanie*) in its widest possible sense as transcendence of our base animal nature and the egoistic urges of what he refers to as our “sensual soul” (*chuvstvennaia dusha*), Tolstoy seems to understand vegetarianism primarily as one means of diminishing our lustful appetite for the pleasures of life.²⁶ Eating meat is wrong not only because animals are slaughtered, but also because meat-eating brings out the base animal personalities of human beings, exciting their sinful desire for sexual pleasure.

Tolstoy, in short, advocates abstinence from meat in large part because it will facilitate abstinence from sex. As we shall see, however, Tolstoyan activists within the vegetarian movement in early twentieth-century Russia, in their proselytizing and propagandizing efforts to convince people to adopt a meatless diet, chose to highlight the moral and humanitarian aspects of Tolstoy's essay, rather than the ascetic and religious ones.

The Vegetarian Movement in Early Twentieth-Century Russia

Unlike the Anglo-American vegetarian movement and the vegetarian movement in continental Europe, both of which arose much earlier in the nineteenth century, organized vegetarianism did not begin in Russia until the very end of the century. When it did emerge in the 1890s, it appeared in the immediate wake—and under the unmistakable influence—of Tolstoy's "The First Step." Indeed, the first vegetarian journal planned in Russia in 1893, which was to have been edited by a student named Konstantin N. Smirnov (who died suddenly), was itself going to be called *The First Step*.²⁷ When two vegetarian journals finally did appear in Russia during the early 1900s—*The Vegetarian Review* (*Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*) and *The Vegetarian Herald* (*Vegetarianskii vestnik*)—they both attempted to enlist Tolstoy's celebrity status to support their cause. This is especially true in the case of *The Vegetarian Review*, which was published in Kiev between 1909 and 1915. Its initial issue bore as its epigraph the following line attributed to Tolstoy: "Meat-eating is a remnant of the coarsest barbarism, and the conversion to vegetarianism is the first and most natural consequence of enlightenment." The journal's editor, Iosif Iosifovich Perper, was himself a fervent believer in Tolstoy's teachings, and he wrote a series of articles about his idol that appeared on the pages of *The Vegetarian Review*. In the first of these, "Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy as a Vegetarian" (1909), Perper claimed that "in the gallery of prominent vegetarian activists, Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy occupies the first place. He is the sun of the international vegetarian world." As proof, Perper noted that at the International Vegetarian Congress held in Paris in 1900, Mr. Moran, the secretary of the French Vegetarian Society, rather than deliver a speech from the tribunal, read excerpts from "The First Step." Perper also cited the testimonial of a twenty-seven-year-old man who claimed that reading "The First Step"—in particular, Tolstoy's description of the Tula slaughterhouse—changed his life radically.²⁸

In the first two years of the journal's existence, Perper published a number of similarly laudatory articles on Tolstoy, such as "Lev Tolstoy's Thoughts on Vegetarianism" (quoting some of Tolstoy's major pronouncements on the topic), "Visiting Lev Tolstoy and His Friends" (describing a visit that Perper paid to Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana and to the Chertkovs at their home in nearby Teliatinka in June 1909), "Lev Tolstoy and *The Vegetarian Review*" (chronicling Perper's correspondence with Tolstoy and

noting the author's willingness to serve as a contributor to the journal), and finally, in a special issue in autumn 1910, "At the Grave of Lev Tolstoy" (providing an eye-witness account of Tolstoy's funeral).²⁹ In numerous other articles and book reviews that appeared in *The Vegetarian Review* during its brief, seven-year existence, Tolstoy's "The First Step" was canonized as the authoritative text of vegetarianism in Russia. In "To the Memory of Our Teacher," for instance, someone using the pseudonym "an old vegetarian" (*staryi vegetarianets*) notes that "by his 'First Step' he [Tolstoy] laid the foundation for the vegetarian movement in Russia." Likewise, in an article entitled "On the Contemporary Situation of Vegetarianism in Russia," Tolstoy's essay is deemed to be the "first step" of the Russian vegetarian movement itself. "'The First Step' shouted out so powerfully about vegetarianism," the author exclaims, "that its voice was heard throughout all of Russia." Elsewhere we read that the essay is considered "the best work of international vegetarian literature" and "the best brochure for propagandizing vegetarianism."³⁰

By the time of his death late in 1910, Tolstoy's seminal essay had already been translated into English, appearing in such Anglo-American journals as *The Vegetarian Review* and *The Vegetarian Messenger*. It had also been republished in Russia as a separate pamphlet by the St. Petersburg Vegetarian Society as well as by the Intermediary publishing house, founded in the mid-1880s by Tolstoy and Chertkov. Indeed, the Intermediary spearheaded the effort to propagandize vegetarianism widely in Russia by publishing over thirty inexpensive brochures, booklets, and pamphlets written not only by well-known Russian vegetarians such as Tolstoy, Beketov, and Evgenii Lozinskii, but also by famous foreign advocates of a meatless diet—activists such as Anna Kingsford, Henry Salt, Howard Williams, and a whole host of German medical doctors.³¹ Vegetarian literature published by the Intermediary included such classic Russian works as Tolstoy's "The First Step," Chertkov's *An Evil Pastime*, and Beketov's *Man's Diet in Its Present and Future*, as well as Russian translations of such seminal foreign works as Williams's *The Ethics of Diet*, Henry Salt's *The Humanities of Diet*, and Anna Kingsford's *The Scientific Bases of Vegetarianism*. Tolstoy himself edited one of these pamphlets, entitled *Slaughterfree Nourishment, or Vegetarianism: The Thoughts of Various Authors*, which, as its title suggests, anthologizes pronouncements by a number of famous historical figures on the evils of killing animals and eating meat.³² Tolstoy's daughter Tatiana, meanwhile, compiled a book with the telling title, *250 Thoughts of Philosophers, Poets, and Thinkers on Vegetarianism and Abstinence*, in which she included some of her father's own pronouncements about the drawbacks and dangers of meat-eating.³³

Tolstoy's growing reputation as a central figure in the international vegetarian movement was bolstered by the publication in 1906 of Theodore von Galetski's monograph, *Leo Tolstoi und der Vegetarismus*, which was subsequently translated

into Russian and published by the Intermediary in 1913. Comparing Tolstoy with Martin Luther as a radical Christian reformer, von Galetski emphasizes how the Russian author's vegetarianism is firmly grounded in his search for moral self-perfection and in his desire to free himself from base animal passions. In addition, Tolstoy's refusal to eat meat, according to von Galetski, is strongly motivated by ethical concerns: that is, his compassion for animals. "The vegetarian spurns animal flesh because he considers it incompatible with the feeling of compassion—the most elevated and most natural of human feelings—forcefully to remove life from living creatures who have the very same right to life as do human beings." For Tolstoy, this compassion constitutes one of man's highest ethical principles and forbids him to kill others. But von Galetski is careful to point out that Tolstoy's ethical reasons for avoiding meat remain secondary to his Christian desire to realize the Kingdom of God on earth. "A large commune, consisting of peace-loving vegetarians, who practice abstinence and who love to work, a vegetarian Eden, would differ little from the Tolstoyan Kingdom of God on earth."³⁴ Abstinence, simple physical labor, and brotherly love—these, according to von Galetski, are the Christian ideals of life preached by Tolstoy, ideals that should coincide with those pursued by every vegetarian.

Tolstoy's international fame as an advocate of vegetarianism also benefited from William E. A. Axon's brief sketch, "Tolstoy and Vegetarianism," which appeared in the British journal *The Vegetarian Messenger* in 1896. Focusing, like von Galetski, on the moral and religious motivations for Tolstoy's vegetarianism, Axon emphasizes how abstinence, self-mastery, and dominion over appetites and passions serve as the foundation of what Tolstoy considers the moral life. Axon quotes him as having said that the vegetarian movement "is one that especially rejoices the hearts of those who seek to establish the Kingdom of God on earth."³⁵

Meanwhile, at home in Russia, proponents of vegetarianism continued to exploit Tolstoy's fame and actively enlisted his support for their cause. Vegetarian periodicals regularly reported his pronouncements on vegetarianism, citing his letters and recording his conversations. We even read about the fate of some of Tolstoy's followers in the United States, members of the so-called Vegetarian Union of Russian Emigrants, who were arrested, thrown into jail, and questioned by the Chicago police for meeting to discuss the "pernicious" teachings of Count Tolstoy.³⁶ Indeed, it is no doubt due in large measure to Tolstoy's high profile as a well-known celebrity who publicly condemned meat-eating that the fledgling vegetarian movement was able to establish itself so firmly in Russia during the 1900s and 1910s. In addition to *The Vegetarian Review* and *The Vegetarian Herald*, and various pamphlets and books published by the Intermediary, the movement was assisted by the establishment of local vegetarian societies in various parts of the country. The first, the St. Petersburg Vegetarian Society, founded in December 1901, soon numbered over one hundred fifty members.³⁷ Others

were organized several years later in Kiev (1908) and in Moscow (1909).³⁸ As Goldstein has pointed out, “Individuals in cities as far-flung as Saratov, Vologda, and Ekaterinoslav expressed interest in forming local chapters.”³⁹ Indeed, by 1915 there were vegetarian societies in twelve different Russian cities, including Odessa, Poltava, Minsk, and Rostov-on-Don.⁴⁰

Many of these same cities also offered vegetarian cafeterias. The oldest one in Russia opened in Moscow in 1894, its walls decorated with portraits of Tolstoy.⁴¹ Ilya Repin has left us an enthusiastic review of this public eatery, which he frequented daily during a week-long stay in Moscow while helping to set up an art exhibit. He positively raves about the tasty and nourishing food. “The choice of entrees is entirely sufficient,” he writes, “but that is not the main thing; rather, it is the fact that the food, no matter what you order, is so tasty, fresh, and nourishing, that the exclamation, ‘Now that’s delicious!’ involuntarily escapes from your lips. And so every day, all week long, while I was staying in Moscow, I would hurry with special delight to this incomparable cafeteria.”⁴² Some twenty years later, we read in *The Vegetarian Review* that over thirteen hundred people were eating there daily and that three new vegetarian cafeterias had opened in Moscow alone.⁴³ During the years immediately before the 1917 revolution, vegetarian cafeterias could be found not only in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiev, but also in cities such as Odessa, Kharkov, Saratov, and Ekaterinoslav.⁴⁴ There was a vegetarian cafeteria even in distant Tashkent, where customers at Slaughterfree Nourishment (Bezuboinoe pitanie) were provided not only with vegetarian cuisine, but also with access to an album containing statements on the topic of vegetarianism by such national luminaries as Tolstoy, Chertkov, Nikolai Ge, and Ilya Repin.⁴⁵

Rifts in the Vegetarian Movement: Moralists Versus Hygienists

In the aftermath of Tolstoy’s death and on the very eve of the outbreak of World War I, the vegetarian movement would seem to have reached its peak in Russia: there were many vegetarian societies, cafeterias, and sanatoriums located throughout the country, as well as a solid supply of vegetarian literature, both books and periodicals, available to attract new members to the cause. Moreover, in 1913 the First All-Russian Vegetarian Congress was held in Moscow, and a second congress was held there the following year. Members of the editorial board of the *Intermediary* had recently composed a vegetarian hymn (score by A. K. Chertkova, lyrics by I. I. Gorbunov-Posadov), and vegetarian merchandise—postcards, envelopes, and so forth, with portraits of famous vegetarians and citations of their pronouncements—was now

for sale.⁴⁶ Yet the second decade of the twentieth century turns out to be precisely the period when the most intense factional in-fighting took place within the Russian vegetarian movement. Goldstein has observed that some of the dissension within the ranks of the movement can be attributed to the acute friction that existed between the elite St. Petersburg Vegetarian Society, which could claim to be the first organization of its kind in Russia, and the highly active Kiev Vegetarian Society, which was seen as rather provincial and possessed a largely Jewish leadership.⁴⁷ But the truly divisive factor—and the one that perhaps contributed most decisively to the disintegration of the movement—was ideological rather than organizational. It centered upon disputes over the issue of why one should abstain from eating meat. Rifts appeared not only between those who advocated a meatless diet on rational or scientific grounds (usually for reasons of health and hygiene) and those who avoided meat out of moral and humanitarian convictions, but also between the members of this latter group who were vegetarians on ethical grounds and those who abstained from meat-eating mainly for religious and ascetic reasons.

Some saw the rifts primarily as a conflict between an older and a younger generation of vegetarians, while others explained them as a clash between the Anglo-American and German traditions of vegetarianism. Von Galetski, for instance, in a “Letter from Germany” that appeared in the March 1913 issue of *The Vegetarian Review*, draws the following distinction: “There are two kinds of vegetarianism: one has certain spiritual experiences as its basis, and the other follows from reasoning. These two approaches to the idea of a meatless diet are profoundly different. The first is indubitably idealistic, while the second is filled with practical considerations.” Vegetarians in Germany, he notes, tend to be of the “rationalistic” type, while those in Russia are “idealistic.”⁴⁸ In a similar way, S. P. Poltavskii, the author of “The Kingdom of Harmony and Justice,” delineated two main trends in the Russian vegetarian movement: (1) those who wish through food reform to create a healthier diet (*mens sana in corpore sano*), and (2) those driven by a feeling of compassion for animals.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, G. G. Bosse, in a 1913 article entitled “Is a Vegetarian *Weltanschauung* Possible?” not only described accurately the parameters of the two opposing camps, but also provided the terminology that would figure prominently in the polemics that ensued during the next few years. The basic difference in the understanding of vegetarianism among proponents of the cause in Russia, Bosse asserts, is one between what he calls “hygienic vegetarians” (*vegetariantsy-gigienisty*) and “moralistic vegetarians” (*vegetariantsy-nravstvenniki*).⁵⁰ The former, influenced by recent findings in medicine and physiology, were attracted to vegetarianism by the promise of leading a natural, hygienic, and rational life, while the latter took very seriously the moral imperative, advocated by Tolstoy and his followers, to respect all living creatures: “Thou shalt not kill.”

The polemics that ensued during the war years (1914–1917) forced members of the Russian vegetarian movement to reexamine, articulate, and defend more explicitly their motivation for abstaining from the consumption of meat. The discussions frequently found expression on the pages of the new Kiev periodical, *The Vegetarian Herald*, whose editor, L. Korablev, in the journal's initial issue in May 1914 expressed the need to distinguish “true” vegetarians—that is, those who subscribe to humanitarian principles and refuse to eat meat out of compassion for animals—from fringe groups, such as religious sects and various schools of dietetics, for whom vegetarianism served only as an outward indication of their worldview rather than as its distinguishing feature.

The external indication of a meatless diet is not sufficient by itself; it is met with among sectarians and advocates of a herbivorous diet on the basis of hygienic considerations. But this does not mean that we are opposed to an appreciation of nutrition from a hygienic point of view. No, and we do not deny such an appreciation, but we do not consider it an essential or distinguishing feature of vegetarian teaching.⁵¹

In an editorial entitled “Where Are We Headed?” that appeared in the next issue, Korablev noted that some vegetarian societies were beginning to forget the basic aims of the movement and its fundamental idea. He reminded members that the vegetarian movement must not stray from its underlying philosophy, which is love for all living creatures, and was extremely critical of advocates of what he called the “culinary-hygienic” (*kulinarno-gigienicheskoe*)—or more simply the “gastric” (*zheludochnoe*)—brand of vegetarianism, who, he claimed, were especially guilty of losing sight of these first principles.⁵²

A resolution approved at the First All-Russian Vegetarian Congress in 1913 proclaimed that vegetarianism has a higher value only when it pursues the moral ideal of realizing a kingdom of harmony and justice on earth.⁵³ And Tolstoy, the most celebrated and esteemed of all vegetarians in Russia, had insisted that vegetarianism, “as long as it does not have health as its object, is always associated with high moral views.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the “hygienic vegetarians” were steadily increasing in number and influence during the 1900s and especially the 1910s. In an article entitled “To What Does Vegetarianism Obligate Us?” M. Dudchenko acknowledged that in 1912 the “moralistic vegetarians” of the Tolstoyan camp were losing sway within the movement: “Concerning vegetarian literature in particular, it must be admitted that within it, with rare exceptions, people are talking more and more about the hygienic advantages of vegetarianism rather than paying attention to its moral significance.”⁵⁵ Those who advocated vegetarianism on the basis of rational or modern scientific considerations showed a growing displeasure with what they considered the life-denying asceticism, religious fanaticism, and doctrinaire views of the “moralistic vegetarians.”

Numerous articles had appeared in the Russian vegetarian journals over the past decade that emphasized the religious aspects of vegetarianism—whether it be the beliefs of Buddhists, Jainists, or the Bogomils—and thus threatened to identify the movement with an ascetic renunciation of life and all earthly pleasures.⁵⁶ In 1913 one recent convert to the Russian vegetarian movement, N. Liapin, author of “Why I Became a Vegetarian,” confessed that in his native village vegetarianism was considered a new religious sect; the local clergy, in particular, equated vegetarianism with Tolstoyism.⁵⁷

Although Evgenii Lozinskii, in *Vegetarianism and Child-Rearing* (1912), would argue that vegetarians are not necessarily prejudiced against the pleasures and joys of earthly life, many of the converts who were attracted to vegetarianism by its putative health benefits sought increasingly to distance themselves from an asceticism that they regarded as merely a characteristic of an extreme branch of the movement, rather than one of its central tenets.⁵⁸ In an article written in response to Lozinskii, F. R. German argued that “vegetarianism is not an ascetic bliss attained by those wealthy tyrants who, having eaten and drunk to excess, now seek redemption; rather, it is a practice of the joy of living [*zhizneradostnost'*] by lively, active people.” In a subsequent article entitled “Vegetarianism As a Practice of the Joy of Living,” German noted that “vegetarianism recognizes only a sound and vivifying asceticism, rather than a righteous, self-sufficient, sanctimonious one that mortifies the flesh.”⁵⁹ Natal'ia Nordman-Severova (1863–1914), a rather colorful and eccentric “apostle” of vegetarianism who preached about the physical and spiritual benefits of a meatless diet, seems to have personified this spirit of *joie de vivre* that the “hygienic vegetarians” advocated so fervently. “Natal'ia Nordman-Severova’s lectures bear a life-affirming hue,” writes one of her contemporaries. “The essence of vegetarianism—‘Long live life!’—is deeply felt in her speech.”⁶⁰ In her obituary, it was said that “she understood the spirit of vegetarianism as the teaching of a joyful, cheerful life that summons us to beauty and gladness.”⁶¹

The cause of these life-affirming “hygienic vegetarians” was championed eloquently by the husband-and-wife team of Aleksandr and Olga Zelenkov. The latter, who wrote under the pseudonym “A Female Vegetarian” (*Vegetarianka*), is perhaps best known today as the author of the most famous Russian vegetarian cookbook of the time, *I Don't Eat Anyone*. In the preface written for a later edition, Zelenkova explained that food diversity in the human diet, which is important for satisfying the gustatory demands of all eaters, is especially important for vegetarians, who, she argued, are more refined gourmets than are meat-eaters.⁶² In an essay called *Something About Vegetarianism* (1902), Zelenkova noted that “the hygienic side of the question about human diet is moving more and more to the forefront, pushing aside its ethical side.”⁶³ Her husband, a physician who had received his medical training at a German university and was extremely well versed in the vegetarian literature

available in the West, likewise emphasized the physiological, biological, and hygienic benefits of a meatless diet. Indeed, he himself converted to a vegetarian diet mainly as a way to cure a serious illness he had contracted in 1893. As the founder of a vegetarian sanatorium in Riga where patients were treated using so-called natural methods of healing, and as the first president of the St. Petersburg Vegetarian Society, Dr. Zelenkov sought to dissociate the progressive philosophy of “hygienic vegetarians” from the gloomy asceticism and general lack of cheerfulness that he observed in Tolstoyans and other sectarians who practiced vegetarianism primarily, if not exclusively, for moral and religious reasons.⁶⁴

For instance, in a lengthy article entitled “A Conversation Between a Writer, a Doctor, and a Farmer About Vegetarianism,” in which Zelenkov spells out the health benefits to be derived from a meatless diet and distances his own rational and scientific brand of vegetarianism from the “fanaticism” of the moralists within the movement, a fictitious doctor vehemently denies the charge that he, as a vegetarian, is necessarily an ascetic. “I beg you not to call me an ascetic,” he pleads.

After all, can the striving for pure, nontoxic, health-promoting food, the striving for spiritual and corporeal well-being as well as moral contentment, the striving, in short, for that which the ancients expressed with the words “a healthy spirit in a healthy body,” can this have anything in common with asceticism? An ascetic refuses all human pleasures and withdraws to the wilderness, to solitude—he feeds almost exclusively on roots and does not want to have anything to do with people, whom he despises. We vegetarians, on the other hand, are in the full sense of the word (*vegetus*) cheerful, even voluptuous, since we sacrifice many things for this passion; we are true followers of the calumniated Epicurus, who did indeed indulge in pleasures, but pleasures of a higher order than food and drink. We feed not on roots but on the sweetest and most wonderful of nature’s gifts: fruits and berries, milk and honey, just like the genuine inhabitants of a “Promised Land.” Every dinner is for us a holiday celebration.⁶⁵

Not unlike German’s disavowal of a sanctimonious vegetarianism that seeks to mortify the flesh, Zelenkov’s description here of a cheerless asceticism actually captures quite accurately the bleak evangelical tone and renunciatory Christian spirit of most of Tolstoy’s essay, “The First Step,” which—contrary to what Chertkov, Perper, and some of the other leaders of the fledgling vegetarian movement in Russia wanted to see in it—offers primarily a religious and ascetic rationale for vegetarianism rather than a moral and humanitarian one.

Tolstoy's Vegetarianism and Tolstoyan Vegetarianism

“Although mythologized as a vegetarian pacifist,” Goldstein explains, “Tolstoy’s abstinence did not initially arise from ethical considerations. Tolstoy struggled against carnal and gustatory temptation alike; the renunciation of sex and meat were equally important for attaining moral purity.” “The First Step,” she points out, “shows far greater concern with the rigors of asceticism than with compassion for animals.”⁶⁶ Although Tolstoy’s views on the issue of vegetarianism would appear to have evolved somewhat over the years, his 1892 essay, written rather hastily and emotionally during a time when he was particularly upset at gentry gourmandizing (that is, soon after his experience helping with famine relief among starving peasants), quickly became canonized and thus fossilized as his definitive position on the question of meat-eating.⁶⁷ Since the primary motivation for excluding meat from one’s diet, according to the arguments against gluttony and in favor of abstinence that Tolstoy advances in this essay, are essentially religious and ascetic, his brand of vegetarianism could easily be dismissed as an old-fashioned, “medieval” one based mainly on a desire to deny the flesh and to overcome troublesome sexual lust. “Medieval vegetarianism,” Julia Twigg explains, “occurs in the context of virtuoso religion, of the patterning of fast and feast days and of a straightforward denial of the flesh that draws on manichean conceptions. The predominant idea is negative, one of avoidance, and I can find no sense of vegetarian food as being in any way ‘better’ or ‘higher’ food or as having its own positive attributes—themes of great importance in contemporary vegetarianism.”⁶⁸ Tolstoy’s vegetarianism can trace its roots back to Greek thinkers like Pythagoras, Porphyry, and Plutarch, for whom voluntary abstinence from eating meat is based largely on spiritual values and beliefs.

But the ascetic underpinnings of Tolstoy’s vegetarianism—and, specifically, the direct linking of flesh-eating with the stimulation of sexual passion—no doubt derives mainly from the Christian era and the teachings of some of the early Church fathers, such as Clement, John Chrysostom, and Priscillian, as well as from medieval advocates of Manichaeism, such as the Bogomils, who professed a highly renunciatory view of human life on earth.⁶⁹ The essay by Tertullian, “On Fasting or Abstinence Against the Carnal-Minded,” for instance, provides a good example of how the dislike of the eating of flesh was traditionally connected with ascetic considerations and with the belief that gluttony obtrudes on spiritual awareness. “Your belly is your god, your liver is your temple, your paunch is your altar, the cook is your priest, and the fat steam is your Holy Spirit,” Tertullian writes, “the seasonings and the sauces are your chrisms, and your eructations are your prophesyings.”⁷⁰ As Spencer explains, “Flesh is linked in Tertullian, perhaps for the first time, with lust and carnal desire.”⁷¹ The “medieval” brand of vegetarianism enunciated in Tolstoy’s “The First Step,” with its austere tone

of self-abnegation and its orientation against a desire for earthly pleasure, is informed by essentially the same religious worldview found in the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church and in the practices of peasant culture in nineteenth-century Russia, where fasting is viewed as one of the means by which the flesh—the libidinal aspect of human nature—is tamed, “not only by enjoining periodic celibacy but also by restricting the consumption of what are seen as the fuels of sexual desire.”⁷² In keeping with what has been called Tolstoy’s “Christian physiology,” meat for him was yet another dangerous “intoxicant”—much like alcohol, tobacco, and sex—that arouses the animal lusts in human beings, stirring up sexual passions.⁷³ Only by refraining from eating rich and stimulating foods, such as meat, can we hope to curb our sensual passions and thus succeed in subordinating our base animal nature to our higher spiritual values.

In “The First Step,” however, Tolstoy’s medieval brand of vegetarianism merges with vegetarian beliefs of a more modern bent. Indeed, the ethical and humanitarian concerns that motivate his horrifying description of the Tula slaughterhouse seem very much in keeping with the philosophical vegetarianism that has become dominant today in the West, where animal welfare and nonviolence occupy a central position. Some of Tolstoy’s more zealous disciples sought to make their teacher’s old-fashioned religious opposition to meat-eating appear more modern, and thus more attractive to potential converts, by downplaying the ascetic motivations behind his vegetarian beliefs while orchestrating their ethical and humanitarian appeal. Chertkov and a few of Tolstoy’s other followers were performing a similar kind of “toning down” of their teacher’s rather extreme views regarding the so-called sexual question during this same time period. As Peter Ulf Møller has demonstrated in his magisterial study of the debate on sexual morality in Russia during the 1890s,

Tolstoy’s sexual morality was so radical in its demand for chastity and in its absolute rejection of marriage as an institution that even his most zealous adherents had their reservations. A distinction might, therefore, be made between *Tolstoy’s* and the *Tolstoyans’* rules of sexual morality. Throughout the 1890s Tolstoyan circles exerted considerable efforts to raise the level of sexual morality in Russia, and Tolstoy’s name was regularly used in order to give these efforts a special authority. In reality, however, *Tolstoyan* sexual morality was a relatively moderate and practical appeal for improvement within the existing framework of marriage.⁷⁴

The same is true in regard to the “diet question,” where a distinction ought to be made between Tolstoy’s own vegetarian beliefs and those advocated by the Tolstoyans. Chertkov, Perper, and several other key figures in the vegetarian movement in Russia chose to ignore the close association between abstinence from meat and abstinence from sex posited by Tolstoy. Instead they highlighted the progressive, humanitarian aspects of Tolstoy’s vegetarianism, emphasizing how his decision not to eat meat stems

from his ethical refusal to commit violence upon any of God's living creatures.

One way this result was achieved was by reprinting only the final section of "The First Step," where Tolstoy describes his visit to the Tula abattoir, and thus excluding the part where he discusses at length gluttony, fasting, and carnal appetite. Chertkov, whose ethical vegetarianism grew out of his compassion for animals, his opposition to hunting, and his support of the principle that we not kill any living creature, had the Intermediary publish Tolstoy's description of his trip to the Tula slaughterhouse as a separate pamphlet entitled *At the Abattoir* (1911).⁷⁵ Perper, meanwhile, whose position as editor of *The Vegetarian Review* between 1909 and 1915 enabled him to play a key role in the construction of Tolstoy's image as a "humanitarian," rather than "ascetic," vegetarian, admitted that when he wrote the article "Lev Tolstoy As a Vegetarian" in 1908, he received his information about Tolstoy's vegetarian beliefs not directly from Tolstoy himself, but rather from the other members of the editorial board at the Intermediary: that is, the Chertkovs and I. I. Gorbunov-Posadov.⁷⁶ The latter, who shared Chertkov's ethical concern for animal rights—a concern that had been inspired in large part from his reading of British vegetarian literature published by the Humanitarian League—was responsible for publishing *A Friend of the Animals: A Humanitarian-Zoological Anthology*, a series of children's books, illustrated in proto-Walt Disney style, that contain stories describing how animals live together in peace, love, and harmony. Gorbunov-Posadov himself contributed an introductory essay, "Compassion for Animals and the Upbringing of Children," to one of these books.⁷⁷ Tolstoy's colleagues at the Intermediary, in short, were essentially animal-rights advocates; whether intentionally or not, they were helping to create and then diffuse what Goldstein calls the "disingenuous myth of Tolstoy as a compassionate vegetarian" in an effort to further their own cause.⁷⁸ In modern parlance, activists such as Chertkov and Gorbunov-Posadov were operating largely as public relations experts (or "spin doctors") for the Tolstoyan movement, seeking to fashion a more appealing image of their leader by toning down, if not muting entirely, some of his old-fashioned views in the closely related areas of diet and sexuality.

In addition to its medieval asceticism, Tolstoy's brand of vegetarianism, unlike that preached by most of his disciples, was never dogmatic or doctrinaire. Indeed, he is reported once to have remarked, in an effort apparently to distance himself from his followers, "I am Tolstoy, but I am not a Tolstoyan" ("Ia Tolstoi, no ne tolstovets").⁷⁹ Tolstoy even said rather cynically of one of his purported followers: "He is a Tolstoyan—that is, a man with convictions utterly opposed to mine."⁸⁰ Throughout his life, Tolstoy displayed a marked dislike for membership in any organized group that sought to follow a strictly defined, ideological position; it is not surprising, therefore, that he never became a "card-carrying" vegetarian in the manner that many of his closest followers did. Unlike his main disciple Chertkov, for instance, who delivered an address

at a vegetarian congress held in London and frequently gave public lectures in the cafeteria of the Moscow Vegetarian Society, Tolstoy refused membership in vegetarian societies and turned down offers from vegetarian advocates to speak publicly about the evils of meat-eating.⁸¹ He did show his support of the vegetarian movement in Russia by agreeing to work “indirectly” for *The Vegetarian Review*; indeed, he even recommended that Perper publish Mikhail Artsybashev’s *Blood (Krov)* in his journal, since this animal tale would be certain to attract people to the vegetarian cause or at least free them from “the superstition about the necessity of devouring live creatures.”⁸² But at the same time Tolstoy saw the inherent danger that vegetarians might become undeservedly self-congratulatory about their abstinence from meat and lose sight of what should be their moral ideal—the striving for spiritual self-perfection.

He praised Lozinskii’s controversial essay, “Vegetarianism and Anthropophagy,” for instance, precisely because it challenged “the mistaken idea held by many vegetarians that they have done something very good and that they distinguish themselves from other people by the fact that they are eating healthy food and not cadavers.”⁸³ As he once explained to Ivan Golodaev, a staunch vegetarian, “Speaking for myself, I would say that there is no need to make vegetarianism the main goal of one’s efforts. The goal worthy and characteristic of man is to strive generally for perfection in one’s moral life. Vegetarianism is merely one of the results of the striving for moral perfection.”⁸⁴ For Tolstoy, the refusal to eat meat remained merely the first of many steps on the long and arduous path to moral self-perfection: at best, it was an effective means of beginning the process of seeking to tame the animal nature within us, thus liberating our spiritual potential from the bodily desires that stifle it. Even when he describes the bloody slaughterhouse in “The First Step,” his concern is centered mainly on the terrible effect that such brutal killing has upon the souls of the people who perform the slaughter rather than on the animals themselves. “This is dreadful,” he writes. “Not the suffering and death of the animals, but that a man suppresses within himself, unnecessarily, his highest spiritual capacity, that of sympathy and pity toward living creatures like himself, and by violating himself becomes cruel. And how deeply seated in the human heart is the injunction not to kill animals!”⁸⁵ Slaughtering animals so that people may eat meat, Tolstoy maintains, not only develops animal feelings within us, promoting fornication and drunkenness; it also deprives us of our natural aversion to all killing. Like alcohol, sex, and other forms of sensual intoxication, killing animals for food “stupefies” our moral sensibilities. Similarly, in a letter, written on August 31, 1893, where he advocated avoiding the use of animal products, Tolstoy made it clear that this eschewal is not owing to compassion for animals but rather out of concern for its effect upon humans. “The first step towards freeing oneself from dependence on animals is not to feed on them, and not to ride on them, but to go on foot. And every one of us ought to start doing this now. Otherwise, if we go on eating

meat, riding on animals, and using all the thousands of products of the animal kingdom, we shall only multiply our desires (and they are growing endlessly).”⁸⁶

Tolstoy(an) Vegetarianism Under Fire

The selective “editing” involved in the public release and dissemination of Tolstoy’s views by those of his followers who served as leaders of the fledgling vegetarian movement in early twentieth-century Russia—and thus the shaping of his image as a compassionate, humanitarian vegetarian rather than a religious, ascetic one—was not entirely successful. As the debate over competing vegetarian ideologies intensified in wartime Russia, the vegetarianism of both Tolstoy and his Tolstoyan disciples came under closer scrutiny and sharper criticism. Spearheading the attack was an article written by Ivan Nazhivin, “On Vegetarianism and Vegetarians,” that appeared in the April-May 1915 issue of *The Vegetarian Herald*. Nazhivin, a confirmed vegetarian for eleven years who was motivated primarily by ethical considerations (to avoid shedding the blood of other living creatures), eventually grew disillusioned with the movement, and this article explains his loss of faith. At the heart of his disenchantment with vegetarianism lies what he calls the “myth” of nonviolent eating and living (*bezuboinost’*). No matter how much a vegetarian may wish to avoid killing any living creatures, he cannot entirely avoid it, even on a cereal diet, because farming inevitably involves the extermination of countless insects. Nazhivin, a purist and idealist, does not find very convincing the rejoinder usually made by humanitarian vegetarians: namely, that they are merely falling short, in a practical sense, of a moral ideal that nonetheless remains highly praiseworthy in principle. “I cannot understand such an ideal, one which it is impossible to attain,” Nazhivin writes. “An ideal should be established within the parameters of human strength and reason. . . . A human ideal that is humane in its relationship to animals can in no way be expressed in the words ‘Thou shalt not kill any living creature,’ since this is an absolutely impossible demand, one that stands outside the parameters of human reason as well as human strength. This ideal ought to be somewhat attainable.” Even such a great mind as Lev Tolstoy, Nazhivin points out, could not escape the paradox of this unattainable ideal presented by the categorical injunction not to kill. “Tolstoy says that all the same it is less serious to kill a weevil than an ox. I maintain that this is very subjective.”⁸⁷ Nazhivin proceeds to express dissatisfaction with other aspects of vegetarianism and vegetarians in Russia: among other things, their moral hypocrisy; their doctrinaire attitude; their arrogant, sectlike spirit; and their ideological maximalism. But his main displeasure remains directed against the ethical vegetarianism advocated by those “moralistic vegetarians” who preach what Nazhivin considers the wholly impractical and unrealizable goal of never killing another living creature.

Nazhivin's censorious article prompted a rash of responses, criticisms, and rejoinders, some of which were published in subsequent issues of *The Vegetarian Herald*. The journal's editor, L. Korablev, in an article entitled "Ethics or Science?" explained that Nazhivin's article "mainly concerns that group of vegetarians—a very significant group, it is true—who are usually called Tolstoyans, since only this group, following the teaching of Lev Tolstoy, considers vegetarianism the 'first step' on the path to self-perfection and recognizes as the main basis of vegetarianism the ethical principle 'Thou shalt not kill,' which was especially vividly and logically put forward by Vladimir Chertkov in his brochure *Life Is One*." Korablev proceeds to explain that the Tolstoyans constitute a relatively significant group among Russian vegetarians due to historical circumstances that influenced the growth and development of the movement in Russia. According to some of the more rigorous advocates of vegetarianism, however, the Tolstoyans are merely "a group contiguous to vegetarianism, and in any case one that does not express it entirely, especially since the teaching of the 'hygienic vegetarians,' which is gaining a larger and larger number of adherents, advances as its basis not ethics, but science." One of the indisputable merits of Nazhivin's article, Korablev concludes, "consists in the fact that its appearance sharply delineated the two main currents in Russian vegetarianism—the ethical and the hygienic—a distinction that, although it was acknowledged, had not been formulated before now with sufficient clarity and completeness."⁸⁸

In reply to the Nazhivin article, V. P. Voitsekhovskii sent a letter to the editor of *The Vegetarian Herald* in which he strongly challenged the ethical brand of vegetarianism preached by Chertkov and other Tolstoyan disciples, asserting that the injunction not to kill represents nothing more than mere sentimentality raised to the level of a higher morality, rather than any true science or knowledge. In "The First Step," "Lev Tolstoy spoke to his Russian readers about vegetarianism not as a trained naturalist, biologist, or physiologist, but rather as a talented artist and publicist," Voitsekhovskii writes. "If Russian adherents of vegetarianism had not been carried away by Tolstoy's sentimentality and his artistic representation of the *ethical side* of vegetarianism, but knew what is being said about it abroad, then there would not have been disillusioned people like Mr. Nazhivin and others who, as he writes, directly became sectarians, thinking that as soon as one ceases to eat meat, this one circumstance alone will raise him up to a position of superiority among humankind." "Among vegetarians worldwide," he asserts, "it is only the Russians who have placed the principle 'Thou shalt not kill' as the main basis for vegetarianism." The clear implication here is that the exclusivity of the Tolstoyans' moral and humanitarian motivations for vegetarianism has prevented the more modern reasons provided by doctors abroad (especially those in Germany)—reasons that are based on science and rationality—from being entertained and adopted in Russia. "And if for eleven

years he [Nazhivin] was one of those who did not eat cadavers in order ‘not to kill,’ just as did many followers of Lev Tolstoy,” Voitsekhovskii observes, “he did so under the influence of ethical concerns that have an abstract significance but not a significance in the positive sense of that word—as does natural science.”⁸⁹

Voitsekhovskii’s attack upon the “sentimental,” unscientific basis for the ethical vegetarianism preached by the Tolstoyans, who to his mind had dominated the vegetarian movement in Russia far too long, was followed by the republication of Bosse’s article, “Is a Vegetarian *Weltanschauung* Possible?” which helped somewhat to disentangle Tolstoy’s motivation for vegetarianism from that advanced by some of his disciples. After outlining the main difference between the “hygienic vegetarians” (who rely upon physiology and other medical sciences) and the “moralistic vegetarians” (who follow Shelley, Tolstoy, and others), Bosse reminds the reader that Tolstoy’s teaching about vegetarianism in “The First Step” is primarily religious; he preaches an ascetic liberation from the passions. It is only some years later that Tolstoy’s views seem to have changed: “In his later years, Tolstoy apparently began to devote more and more attention to another side of vegetarianism—its significance as putting into practice compassion toward living creatures. Many of his ideas in the final period of his life were devoted to this compassion and mercy toward all that is living, one of whose consequences is the refusal to eat meat.” Bosse thus places the author of “The First Step” in the category of those ascetics motivated primarily by abstinence as a means of purification. Compassion for animals, he asserts, served as a motivation for Tolstoy’s vegetarianism only during his final years. Dogmatism, Bosse insists in his concluding remarks, “such as that which has occurred with Chertkov and his like-minded associates,” is antithetical to vegetarianism and has no place in the movement.⁹⁰

Despite Bosse’s urgent plea for more tolerance and less dogmatism, the Tolstoyan “moralistic vegetarians” continued to insist upon the primacy of their moral and humanitarian arguments. During its final year of publication (1917), *The Vegetarian Herald*, the only vegetarian journal still being published in Russia, hired a new editor, Olga Prokhasko from the Kiev Vegetarian Society, who shared the views of the Tolstoyans regarding compassion toward animals and the injunction not to kill other living creatures, but who also appreciated Tolstoy’s religious asceticism. In “What Is Vegetarianism? Its Present and Future,” Prokhasko speaks of the importance that brotherly love holds in the teachings of Tolstoy, “our patriarch of vegetarianism,” and reminds her readers that a meatless diet constitutes merely the first step on the path toward establishing “brotherly relations among people.” “The vegetarian disavows all these worldly pleasures,” she writes in a Tolstoyan spirit of self-abnegation. “Meat, wine, cigarettes, every luxury, the chasing after fashion and high positions in society, etc., etc.—vegetarianism finds all of this repulsive.” “The path of a vegetarian is the path of a heroic deed [*podvig*],” she concludes. “The ideal of vegetarianism is the

building of the Kingdom of God on earth.”⁹¹ And in a later article, “Vegetarianism and the Present Moment,” which appeared in the final issue of *The Vegetarian Herald*, Prokhasko echoes Tolstoy’s own sentiment that to be a true Christian, one must be a vegetarian.⁹² At this apocalyptic moment for Russian vegetarianism, on the eve of the bloody Civil War that ravaged the country for the next few years, the editor of the only remaining vegetarian journal thus insists upon combining the compassionate humanitarianism of Tolstoyan disciples, such as Chertkov, Perper, and Gorbunov-Posadov, with the religious asceticism of Tolstoy himself in “The First Step.” At the same time, however, she refuses to heed Bosse’s dire warning about the dangers of dogmatism and intolerance; thus she fails dismally in the project of unifying—rather than further alienating and fragmenting—the various ideological camps that existed within the Russian vegetarian movement.

The Vegetarian Movement in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia

It is difficult to say with any certitude exactly what happened to the vegetarian movement in Russia immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution, since vegetarian journals—our main source of information—were no longer published after December 1917.⁹³ Goldstein has noted that although membership in vegetarian societies had dwindled and vegetarian journals were forced to close down near the end of World War I, vegetarian cafeterias continued to thrive: “The vegetarian cafeterias that the societies organized developed a reputation for good, fresh, and inexpensive food and were frequented by surprisingly large numbers of people.”⁹⁴ Indeed, severe food shortages during this period of war, famine, and revolution—especially shortages of meat—undoubtedly helped to make these restaurants attractive to Russians who were desperately seeking to avoid hunger and starvation. “Vegetarian cafeterias are now filled to overflowing in all our cities,” Prokhasko had proclaimed enthusiastically in the January 1917 issue of *The Vegetarian Herald*. “Vegetarian cookbooks are all being sold out.”⁹⁵ Maurice Hindus, who traveled extensively in Russia during the 1920s, confirms Prokhasko’s claim, noting that vegetarian restaurants were “among the best in Moscow” and that they had gained “an immense and deserved popularity” owing to the high quality of their food, service, and cleanliness. “The soups, the salads, the cereals, the boiled cauliflower soaked in melted butter, the meat substitutes, the puddings, the incomparable *bliny* with luscious sour cream and fresh butter, the compotes, the other desserts, the rich milk, the well-prepared cocoa—all these would have pleased the most exacting palate. The prices were nominal and the courtesy of the attendants beyond reproach.”⁹⁶ The fact that in Ilf and Petrov’s *The Twelve Chairs* (1928) Kolya Kolachov dines at a vegetarian cafeteria testifies, at the very least, that such eateries had not disappeared entirely from the Soviet scene even by the end of the

NEP period.⁹⁷

Official tolerance of vegetarian eateries—and vegetarian beliefs—in Soviet Russia during the 1920s is not surprising. The rational and scientific arguments in favor of a meatless diet put forward by the “hygienic vegetarians” during the immediate prerevolutionary period were likely to appeal to a young Bolshevik government intent upon enlightening its largely illiterate population to the advantages of a healthier diet through food reform. In their illuminating study of how the culinary arts in Russia were affected by the Revolution, Halina and Robert Rothstein have shown that the Soviet attempt to develop a large-scale system of public food service (*obshchestvennoe pitanie*) exerted an enormous influence upon the popular consciousness about food and nutrition. As they point out, nutritional research institutes were established during this period, and a vast educational campaign was undertaken in an effort to change the eating habits of the Soviet population. These developments seem to mimic the efforts of the “hygienic vegetarians” during the 1900s and 1910s to have people follow a meatless diet for reasons of improved health and hygiene. Indeed, M. P. Dubianskaia’s *Healthful Food and How to Prepare It* (1929) is cited by the Rothsteins as an example of an influential early Soviet cookbook compiled by someone they call “a natural-food advocate” who favored the use of uncooked food (*syroedenie*) and “borrowed from the experience of vegetarian cooking.”⁹⁸ Tolstoyan “moralistic vegetarians” likewise benefited for a time from the atmosphere of relative tolerance and freedom that prevailed during the 1920s. As Mikhail Gorbunov-Posadov (the son of one of the editors at the *Intermediary*) notes in a collection of memoirs written by peasant Tolstoyans, the Moscow Vegetarian Society, founded in 1909 by some of Tolstoy’s disciples, was allowed to continue distributing its monthly newsletter until 1929, when it was finally shut down by the government. Tolstoyan agricultural colonies, such as the Tolstoy Commune founded in 1923 near the New Jerusalem monastery just outside Moscow, were likewise allowed to exist throughout the NEP period, before being forcibly converted into either state or collective farms in 1931 as part of Stalin’s collectivization effort. Most of these Tolstoyan communards sincerely believed that their life and labor would help to achieve the very same goals proclaimed by the Revolution: “the building of a worldwide brotherly, stateless society, free of violence and exploitation.”⁹⁹

Even Tolstoy’s own “medieval” brand of vegetarianism, with its religious and ascetic goal of overcoming sexual lust through abstinence from meat, found a favorable reception in some quarters during the decade immediately following the Revolution. It particularly appealed to those communist zealots who, as Eric Naiman has shown, were nostalgic for the days of War Communism and feared that their ideological purity might be compromised by prolonged contact with bourgeois elements during NEP, when the socioeconomic environment became infected by capitalist values such as

egoism and individualism. “Protecting one’s ideological purity during NEP,” Naiman writes, “entailed not only controlling sexual urges but also refraining from overeating and, in general, from surrounding oneself with opulence.”¹⁰⁰ These communist zealots thus abstained from eating meat and other foods that were considered luxuries. The striving for moral self-perfection that prompted Tolstoy to advocate both sexual and gastronomic abstinence thus finds its echo, recontextualized and reaccentuated, in the striving for ideological purity and personal self-mastery that we find in those idealistic Bolsheviks who placed the goals of the Revolution high above their own selfish, personal pleasures. Tolstoy’s life-denying Christian asceticism could be said to have been mirrored by Bolshevik self-renunciation undertaken for the sake of preserving the ideals of communism. In fact, as early as 1921, in an article entitled “Asceticism or Communism?” serious concern had been voiced that party members were being “transformed from militant revolutionaries with rifles and hammers into Gospel-toting Tolstoyans concerned with refraining from sin rather than with annihilating the bourgeoisie.”¹⁰¹

All in all, however, vegetarianism did not fare well under Soviet rule and would eventually die out as a movement in twentieth-century Russia, to be resurrected only with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.¹⁰² During the 1920s, when radical new experiments in lifestyles and living arrangements were being attempted (and tolerated), vegetarianism, it is true, could still find a legitimate place within a relatively pluralistic society. As Richard Stites has argued, NEP provided a remarkably hospitable political, social, and cultural context for a revolutionary utopianism that was often religious and sectarian—rather than socialist—in nature. This environment evaporated at decade’s end, however, with the victory of Stalin’s “revolution from above” over the revolutionary utopianism that flourished in the 1920s.¹⁰³ During the long years of Stalinism (and neo-Stalinism), vegetarian beliefs—along with a whole host of other kinds of progressive thinking—were looked upon initially with grave suspicion as utopian fantasies and later with increasing scorn and censure as threats to the hegemony of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The 1951 edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* categorically condemns vegetarianism as an antiscientific doctrine that masks class oppression; the 1971 edition identifies the refusal to eat meat not with progressive thinking or high ethical standards, but rather with poverty, backwardness, and even primitivism.¹⁰⁴ As Mikhail Gurvich, a noted Soviet nutritionist, has observed, “They taught us in school and at the institute that vegetarianism was not medicine; it was seen as foolish. Vegetarianism was considered a bourgeois theory of nourishment.”¹⁰⁵ During the long cruel years of Stalinist rule—a period that Tatyana Tolstaya has referred to as “cannibalistic” times¹⁰⁶—vegetarianism not only lacked official governmental approval. It also failed to gain much public support among the common people, most of whom continued to consider meat a highly prized, and

extremely desirable, food item. Although in *The Twelve Chairs* Kolya Kolachov inveighs passionately to his young wife against the slaughter of animals (he characterizes meat-eating as “cannibalism under the guise of civilization”), the true motivation that impels him to follow a vegetarian diet turns out, after all, to be financial and practical rather than ideological, ethical, or hygienic in nature: on his meager income of forty rubles a month, this poor young man simply cannot afford to buy meat. “Meat would have made an enormous, unfillable hole in Kolya’s budget,” the narrator explains. “In light of his financial situation, to have switched to a diet of meat would have been the death of him.”¹⁰⁷ Andrei Babichev, the commissar of the Food Industry Trust in Iurii Olesha’s *Envy* (1927), likewise values meat highly. He believes the creation of an inexpensive, yet nutritious brand of salami will provide the means for feeding properly those workers who are expected to construct socialism in the young Soviet state.¹⁰⁸ As Goldstein correctly notes, “for most of the Soviet period meat represented a status symbol, its procurement an obsession.”¹⁰⁹

The demise of the Russian vegetarian movement can, of course, be attributed more to the altered social, political, ideological, and economic circumstances that prevailed in Soviet Russia during the 1920s and especially the 1930s than to the factional in-fighting and ideological polemics that took place within the movement during the immediate prerevolutionary period. Nonetheless, the rift that developed during the 1910s between the “moralistic vegetarians” and the “hygienic vegetarians” clearly had a profound impact upon the direction that the movement took and the fate that it eventually suffered. By refusing to tolerate any deviations from the ethical brand of vegetarianism that they championed so insistently, Chertkov, Perper, Gorbunov-Posadov, and other influential Tolstoyan activists managed to alienate and disenfranchise many of those who were attracted to vegetarianism for reasons other than the principle of not killing other living creatures. They also were responsible for identifying vegetarianism with Tolstoyism; indeed, in early twentieth-century Russia being a vegetarian was believed to mean that in addition to disavowing the use of meat, one must also obey the tenets of the Tolstoyans’ radical brand of Christian belief—pacifism, nonviolence, brotherly love, and chastity.¹¹⁰ In other words, not only were all Tolstoyans expected to practice vegetarianism; all vegetarians were expected to abide by Tolstoy’s moral teachings.

The neovegetarian movement that has emerged in Russia during the 1990s seems determined to avoid some of the costly mistakes committed by its predecessor earlier in the century. For one thing, its ideological orientation appears to be much less dogmatic and doctrinaire. Posing the question, “Why do people become vegetarians?” the authors of *All About Vegetarianism* list a range of answers. Noting that in earlier times “vegetarianism was almost always associated with religious or philosophical convictions,” they maintain that people today convert to a meatless diet primarily for

scientific and hygienic reasons. In most cases, they want to preserve and fortify their health, to attain longevity, or to prevent any number of cardiovascular and gastrointestinal ailments. “Right next to these reasons,” they add, “are ecological and ethical concerns. It is impossible to avoid mentioning economic considerations and family traditions as well.”¹¹¹ The authors’ sympathies, it is clear, lie with the practical, “hygienic vegetarians” rather than with the Tolstoyan, “moralistic vegetarians” (or with Tolstoy’s own religious vegetarianism)—with science and medicine, in other words, rather than with ethics, morality, or asceticism. Indeed, the book focuses mainly on the scientific and medical aspects of vegetarianism, with the authors exploring at great length the physiological effects and the health benefits of a meatless diet. Even the one quotation from Tolstoy that is used as an epigraph in chapter 4 is concerned more with health than with ethics: “If people would only eat at those times when they are very hungry and if they would subsist on a diet of simple, pure, and healthy foods, then they would not know any illness and it would become easier for them to control their body and their soul.” In the 1991 edition of *I Don’t Eat Anyone*, two of the three Russian vegetarian activists from the early years of the twentieth century who are profiled are Aleksandr Zelenkov and Aleksandr Iasinovskii, medical doctors who attached great prophylactic significance to eating a meatless diet. Here as well we are told that while in prerevolutionary Russia advocates of a meatless diet were usually motivated by moral, religious, and philosophical convictions (Tolstoy is cited as an example), people in Russia today are deciding to become vegetarians primarily for medical considerations.¹¹²

In their introductory essay, “A Little About Vegetarianism and Vegetarians,” to *Surprises of the Vegetarian Table* (1994), I. L. Medkova and T. N. Pavlova of the Vegetarian Society seek to shatter the popular stereotype of vegetarians as “unhappy people who voluntarily deprive themselves of one of the main joys of life—eating a hearty and tasty meal.” Vegetarians, in reality, “do not look at all the way people little acquainted with vegetarianism imagine them to be; they are not lean, pale, and weak. Among vegetarians, there are many blossoming young women and athletically built young men.” Clearly, the gaunt figure of old Count Tolstoy, with his long gray beard and drab peasant garb, would hardly qualify as an appropriate poster child for the health-conscious brand of vegetarianism that is being popularized today in his homeland. Elsewhere in their essay, Medkova and Pavlova resuscitate the anti-Tolstoyan argument, made at the turn of the century by advocates of a scientific brand of vegetarianism, that in Russia, as opposed to countries of Western Europe, people have been led to believe that moral principles must serve as the main basis for adopting a meatless diet. “Unfortunately, in our country significantly fewer people than in the West are familiar with the salutary effect that a vegetarian diet has on one’s health,” Medkova and Pavlova write. “In the countries of Europe and America, scientific research has long been conducted on the effect of a vegetarian diet on the human organism.”¹¹³ Thus, it

is clearly medicine, health, and science—not morality, ethics, or religion—that seem to be driving the contemporary revival of Russian vegetarianism.

Will this apparent victory of the practical, nonideological camp of the “hygienic vegetarians” in postcommunist Russia prove to be long-lasting? (It occurs, after all, in a country famous for its impracticality, idealism, and ideologism.) Or is it merely a brief, knee-jerk reaction to the Soviet demonization of moral vegetarianism, with its concomitant quest for spiritual self-perfection, ridiculed mercilessly by Lenin and his heirs as not only “unscientific” but even “antiscientific” in nature? Only time will tell whether the Tolstoyan legacy will eventually reassert itself within vegetarian circles in the new Russia and reclaim its leading role in helping people to take that important “first step” on the path to moral self-perfection by giving up the use of meat. Whether Tolstoy’s moral and religious brand of vegetarianism can be revived in his homeland without the dogmatic Tolstoyism that accompanied it at the turn of the twentieth century, however, is a different question.

Notes

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1. For accounts of peasant Tolstoyans who joined agricultural colonies in Russia after the Revolution, see *Vospominaniia krest'ian-tolstovtsev, 1910–1930-e gody*, ed. A. B. Roginskii (Moscow: Kniga, 1989).
2. For a study of the influence of Tolstoy's religious, moral, and social teachings worldwide, see William B. Edgerton, "The Artist Turned Prophet: Leo Tolstoj After 1880," in *American Contributions to the Sixth International Congress of Slavists, Prague, 1968*, 2: *Literary Contributions*, ed. William E. Harkins (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 61–85.
3. Darra Goldstein, "Tolstoy's Table," in her book, *The Vegetarian Hearth* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 205.
4. See, for example, Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast: A History of Vegetarianism* (London: Fourth Estate, 1993), 288–90; Janet Barkas, *The Vegetable Passion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 154–65; and Dudley Giehl, *Vegetarianism: A Way of Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 135–37.
5. Vladimir I. Porudominskii, "L. N. Tolstoi i etika pitaniia," *Chelovek*, no. 2 (1992): 106.
6. Rynn Berry, *Famous Vegetarians and Their Favorite Recipes* (New York: Pythagorean Publishers, 1995). The author provides a brief biographical sketch of Tolstoy the vegetarian on pp. 87–97.
7. *Ia nikogo ne em: 365 vegetarianskikh menui*, compiled by I. P. Tret'iakova (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1991). Due to the notion of animacy operative in the Russian language, an animal is treated grammatically as a "who" rather than a "what"; hence the use of the word "anyone" (*nikogo*) rather than "anything" (*nichego*) when Zelenkova indicates in the title of her cookbook that she does not eat meat (i.e., anything that was once alive or animate). This tends to make the connection between violence toward animals and violence toward people more marked in Russian, where—at least at the level of syntax—being a carnivore (eating animals) seems almost identical to being a cannibal (eating people).
8. Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast*, x, xiii.
9. Barkas, *The Vegetable Passion*, 157.
10. Sergei Tolstoy, *Ocherki bylogo* (Tula: Priokskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1965), 152.

11. For a biographical sketch, see N. V. Reingardt, *Neobyknovennaia lichnost'* (Kazan, 1889). Frey's correspondence with Tolstoy is included in *Pis'ma V. Freia k L. N. Tolstomu* (Geneva: M. Elpedine, 1887). P. I. Biriukov outlines Tolstoy's relationship with Frey in his essay, "L. N. Tolstoi i Vil'iam Frei," *Minuvshie gody* 9 (1908): 69–91.
12. Aylmer Maude, *The Life of Tolstoy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), 2: 169.
13. *Ibid.*, 2: 171.
14. Sergei Tolstoy, *Ocherki bylogo*, 152. According to his wife, Tolstoy's two daughters became vegetarians largely to please their father. See Sonya's diary entry for September 30, 1897, in Sof'ia Tolstaia, *Dnevniki v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1978), 1: 303.
15. See L. N. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1928–1958), 85: 266, 87: 78. Chertkov, incidentally, met with Frey in St. Petersburg in December 1885 and shortly thereafter wrote to Tolstoy to express his disappointment: "I do not feel very much in common with him in regard to his understanding of life." See *ibid.*, 85: 299.
16. V. G. Chertkov, *Zlaia zabava: Mysli ob okhote* (St. Petersburg: tipografiia A. S. Suvorina, 1890), 10, 19. For the exchange of letters between Tolstoy and Chertkov during October 1890 about *Zlaia zabava*, see Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 87: 48–51. When he was sent some vegetarian pamphlets as well as a calendar and two issues of a German vegetarian newspaper early the next year from J. Keidel, a member of the Berlin Vegetarian Society, Tolstoy immediately suggested that Keidel translate Chertkov's pamphlet and publish it in Germany. It appeared the following year in the Riga periodical, *Der Anwalt der Thiere*. See Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 87: 70.
17. A. N. Beketov, *Pitanie cheloveka v ego nastoiashchem i budushchem* (Moscow: Posrednik, 1896), 6, 41. Beketov's essay first appeared in *Vestnik Evropy*, no. 8 (1878), and then was published separately as a pamphlet in 1879.
18. Review in *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 6–7 (1911): 63–64; Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 87: 84. According to R. F. Christian, Williams's book, by acquainting Tolstoy with the dietetic theories and eating practices of many philosophers, poets, and thinkers with which he was not entirely familiar, effectively resolved his lingering hesitations about vegetarianism. See "Tolstoy and the First Step," *Scottish Slavonic Review* 20 (1993): 8. Porudominskii notes that apparently Tolstoy was pleasantly surprised to meet in Williams's book such a large number of worthy adherents of vegetarianism. See "Tolstoi i etika pitaniia," 136.
19. L. N. Tolstoy, "Pervaia stupen'," *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* 13 (1892): 109–44.
20. Barkas, *The Vegetable Passion*, 158.
21. Isaac Skelton, "The Vegetarian Tradition in Russian Literature," unpublished senior thesis, Cornell University (1993), 30, 42.
22. For a fuller treatment of the ascetic orientation of Tolstoy's vegetarian beliefs, see my essay, "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: Indiana University Press, 1997), 81–102.

23. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 27: 23. Tolstoy makes the causal connection between food and sex even more explicit in a letter of May 9, 1891, to M. V. Alekhin, in which he writes: “And I think that the lust for food [*pishchevaia pokhot*] is closely linked with sexual desire, and serves as its basis.” *Ibid.*, 65: 292.

24. Iurii Perper, “Dobavlenie k stat’i, ‘Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi kak vegetarianets,’” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie* 2, no. 2 (February 1909): 24.

25. “Last night I was still thinking about the preface to the vegetarian book, that is, about abstinence, and I wrote not badly all morning,” Tolstoy records in his diary on June 25. On July 13 he writes that he has finished the “article about gluttony.” And again on August 27 he mentions how for the past two days he has been making corrections to the “article about gluttony.” See Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 52: 43, 44, 50. In his letter to M. V. Alekhin of May 9, 1891, Tolstoy writes, “Recently I have had occasion to read and ponder a lot about gluttony . . . and I think that one of the principal sins, and perhaps even the most fundamental sin, the one upon which a whole number of other sins develop, is gluttony—that is, gourmandism and gorging—the desire to eat well and to eat as much as possible.” *Ibid.*, 65: 292.

26. See the chapter, “O poste,” in Solov’ev’s *Dukhovnye osnovy zhizni*, in *Sobranie sochinenii Vladimira Sergeevicha Solov’eva* (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia Pol’za, 1901–1903), 3: 314–19.

27. *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 7 (1909): 22, and no. 4 (1914): 123.

28. *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1909): 19, 24, 16. A similar transformation is recounted by the author of the anonymous “Tri goda (kak ia sdelalsia vegetariansem),” who confesses that reading Tolstoy’s essay converted him to vegetarianism as a way of life. See *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 10 (1912): 360. Tolstoy’s wife, it seems, was not favorably impressed by Perper, who came to Yasnaya Polyana in June 1909 to meet Tolstoy for the first time. In her diary entry for October 17, 1910, she refers to him (whom she mistakenly calls Perker) as “some loathsome Jew.” See S. A. Tolstaia, *Dnevnik v dvukh tomakh*, 2: 219.

29. “Mysli Tolstogo o vegetarianstve,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1909): 1–3; “U L. N. Tolstogo i ego druzei,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 6 (1909): 3–9, and no. 7 (1909): 3–8; “L. N. Tolstoi i *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 8 (1911): 1–6; “U mogily L’va Nikolaevicha,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 6–7–8 (1910): 2–5.

30. “Pamiati uchitelia,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1909): 24; “O sovremennom polozhenii vegetarianstva v Rossii,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 7 (1909): 22; *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1910): 37.

31. As testimony to the close relationship between the Intermediary (Posrednik) and the vegetarian movement in Russia, see “*Posrednik* i vegetarianstvo,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 4 (1915): 119. *Posrednik* also published vegetarian cookbooks—such as *Vegetarianskaia kukhnia*, *Kratkaia vegetarianskaia povarennaia kniga*, and *Vegetarianskii stol*—during these years.

32. *Bezuboinoe pitanie, ili vegetarianstvo: Mysli raznykh pisatelei*, compiled by L. N. Tolstoy (Moscow: Posrednik, n.d.).
33. *250 myslei filosofov, poetov i uchenykh o vegetarianstve i vozderzhanii*, compiled by T. Tolstaia (Moscow: Posrednik, 1903).
34. Theodore von Galetski, *Leo Tolstoi und der Vegetarismus* (Frankfurt: Verlag des Deutschen Vegetarier-Bundes, 1906). The essay appeared initially in serialized form in *Vegetarische Warte*, nos. 17, 18, 19, 20 (1906). I quote from the Russian translation, *L. N. Tolstoi i vegetarianstvo* (Moscow: Posrednik, 1913), 13, 22.
35. William E. A. Axon, "Tolstoy and Vegetarianism," *The Vegetarian Messenger* 10, no. 3 (1896): 75–78.
36. See "Pis'ma iz Ameriki: Presledovanie tolstovtsev," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 10 (1913): 388–89.
37. Some years later, however, the membership is listed as being only thirty-nine. See *Biulleteny vegetarianstva v S.-Peterburge*, no. 1 (1914): 5. Perhaps this precipitous decline in membership was due to the requirement—spelled out in the pamphlet, *Down with Meat! Meat Poisons the Body and the Soul*—that members be "true" vegetarians and renounce alcohol and tobacco as well as meat. See *Doloi miaso! Miaso otravliaet dushu i telo* (Petrograd: Izdanie Petrogradskogo vegetarianskogo obshchestva, 1915), 8.
38. "O sovremennom polozhenii vegetarianstva v Rossii," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 7 (1909): 24.
39. Darra Goldstein, "Is Hay Only for Horses? Highlights of Russian Vegetarianism at the Turn of the Century," in *Food in Russian History and Culture*, ed. Musya Glants and Joyce Toomre (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 106.
40. See *Doloi miaso!* 7.
41. "O sovremennom polozhenii vegetarianstva v Rossii," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 7 (1909): 23. This information is confirmed by Evgenii Lozinskii in *Vegetarianstvo i vospitanie* (Moscow: Posrednik, 1912), 23. On December 1, 1910, an evening in honor of Tolstoy was organized at this vegetarian cafeteria of the Moscow Vegetarian Society. Among those attending was the artist Leonid Pasternak, father of the famous poet, who once painted Tolstoy's portrait. See *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 9–10 (1910): 60.
42. See *Ia nikogo ne em*, 53. Repin goes on to say that he had occasion to visit the Moscow Vegetarian Cafeteria at various times of day, "and every time I came to the cafeteria it was just as filled, bright, and cheerful, and the entrees there were of all different kinds—one more tasty than the other. I must confess that, having gone hungry sometimes owing to my having lost track of time, I would go and overeat there, so much so that while walking along Gazetnyi pereulok toward the Historical Museum, not only was I unable to stand up straight, but I was actually leaning backwards from having eaten so much and from reminiscing about how tasty the food had been" (53).

43. *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 6–7 (1914): 248.
44. *Doloi miaso!* 7.
45. See *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie. Edinstvennyi vegetarianskii zhurnal v Rossii: Ukazatel' knig po vegetarianstvu i drugim voprosam. Ukazatel' statei, pomeshchennykh v zhurnale "Vegetarianskoe obozrenie" za shest' let (s 1909 g. po 1914 vkluchitel'no)* (Kiev, 1915), 6. In a letter to Iurii Iakubovskii (January 17, 1910), Tolstoy acknowledges having written some lines in the album kept at the cafeteria. See Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 81: 53.
46. The vegetarian hymn is reproduced in *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 1 (1914): 5. The merchandise is advertised in *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie: Ukazatel' statei*, 3.
47. Goldstein, "Is Hay Only for Horses?" 106.
48. T. von Galetski, "Pis'ma iz Germanii," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 3 (1913): 114.
49. S. P. Poltavskii, "Tsarstvo garmonii i spravedlivosti," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 7 (1913): 248.
50. G. G. Bosse, "Vozmozhno li vegetarianskoe mirosozertsanie?" *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 10 (1913): 402.
51. "Ot redaktora," *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 1 (1914): 2. This journal, published from 1914 to 1917, is not to be confused with the short-lived *Vegetarianskii vestnik* published in St. Petersburg, which produced only eighteen issues during its brief existence (January 1904 to June 1905). Goldstein describes these two journals in "Is Hay Only for Horses?" 119, fn. 18.
52. L. Korablev, "Kuda my idem?" *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 2 (1914): 1; no. 4 (1914): 1.
53. Poltavskii, "Tsarstvo garmonii," 247.
54. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 84: 152.
55. M. Dudchenko, "K chemu obiazivaet nas vegetarianstvo?" *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 8–9 (1912): 189.
56. In the October 1912 issue of *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, for instance, the reviewer of an article about the Bogomils (a group who taught that one should distance oneself from fleshly temptations such as lust, meat, etc.) sought to soften the effect of the article by noting: "In this method of liberating the 'spirit' from the flesh, there are not, of course, any elements of ascetic liberation." See *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 10 (1912): 367.
57. N. Liapin, "Pochemy ia sdelalsia vegetariantsem," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 3 (1913): 123–24.
58. Lozinskii, *Vegetarianstvo i vospitanie*, 7.

59. F. G. German, "Otvét Evgeniiu Lozinskomu," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1911): 28; "Vegetarianstvo, kak praktika zhizneradostnosti," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 8 (1911): 23.

60. An interesting description of one of Nordman-Severova's lively public lectures—complete with a vegetarian buffet and a vegetarian exhibit (books, shoes, teas, soaps, etc.)—is provided in the July 1912 issue (no. 7) of *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie* and reprinted in *Ia nikogo ne em*, 48.

61. See *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 2 (1914): 3. For further information on this colorful Russian propagandist for vegetarianism and on her highly controversial "hay diet," see Goldstein, "Is Hay Only for Horses?" 109–18. According to Aleksandra Tolstaia, who describes the visit Repin and his common-law wife made to Yasnaya Polyana toward the end of December 1908, her father found Nordman-Severova's "cult" of vegetarianism—with her elaborate ways of cooking herbs and a revolving table that precluded the need for servants to wait on diners—to be "too complicated and artificial." The following spring Tolstoy was visited by another "hygienic vegetarian," the celebrated scholar, I. I. Mechnikov. "They could agree on the bad effects of alcohol and smoking," Tolstoy's daughter writes concerning her father and his guest, "but their approach to those evils, as well as to vegetarianism, was at variance. Mechnikov took the scientific and hygienic rather than the moral point of view." See Alexandra Tolstoy, *Tolstoy: A Life of My Father*, trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 470, 473.

62. *Ia nikogo ne em*, 57–58. Zelenkova's husband, not surprisingly, shared this view on taste. Food can only be beneficial, he maintained, "when it is pleasant to the taste. Vegetarianism does not dull one's taste buds . . . on the contrary, it develops them to a point of refinement and therefore does not exclude refined gastronomy. This is not to mention that vegetarians have always enjoyed a healthy appetite, which has from olden times been considered the best chef." *Ibid.*

63. Ol'ga Zelenkova, *Nechto o vegetarianstve* (St. Petersburg, 1902), 9.

64. On December 20, 1901, Dr. Zelenkov wrote to Tolstoy to inform him of the founding of Russia's first vegetarian society and sent him a copy of the society's statute. "I am very delighted to hear of its founding," Tolstoy replied ten days later. "I think that *all* questions of human life are decided, no doubt correctly and irrevocably, only in those instances where they are examined from a moral point of view. The same is true of vegetarianism: at its basis must be an awareness of the injustice and cruelty involved in killing live creatures, for our own enjoyment, for the pleasure of taste." *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 73: 174–75. For biographical information about Dr. Zelenkov, see the brief sketches provided by Perper and Voiekov reprinted in *Ia nikogo ne em*, 7–13. Among the several works that Dr. Zelenkov is credited with having written is *Vegetarianstvo kak sredstvo lecheniia i preduprezhdeniia boleznei*. See *Ia nikogo ne em*, 13.

65. "Beseda literatora, vracha i sel'skogo khoziaina o vegetarianstve," *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 5 (1909): 22. I am quoting here from the version reprinted in *Ia nikogo ne em*, 42–43. Elsewhere in this article, Zelenkov's doctor explains that "the word 'vegetarianism' derives from the Latin 'vegetus' (fresh, cheerful) and therefore denotes a way of life that leads to freshness, to health, to joy, and to happiness. The meaning of the word is far from exhausted by abstinence from animal food, which extends to all generally accepted poisonous 'flavoring substances.'" See *Ia nikogo ne em*, 22.

66. Goldstein, “Tolstoy’s Table,” 205. Anna Seuron, who served for a number of years in the Tolstoy household, was convinced that the “manias” Count Tolstoy took up during the 1880s—abstinence from tobacco, alcohol, meat, and sex—were adopted “in the spirit of penitence, to subdue his flesh and elevate and enlighten his spirit.” As Seuron puts it, “The Count seemed possessed by a fever of renunciation.” Maude, *The Life of Tolstoy*, 2: 167, 172. Seuron describes her years of service with the Tolstoys in *Graf Leo Tolstoi: Intimes aus seinem Leben* (Berlin: Verlag Siegfried Crohbach, 1895).

67. A number of citations advocating philosophical vegetarianism and compassion for animals are included in *Bezuboinoe pitanie, ili vegetarianstvo*. See also the collection of everyday readings that Tolstoy helped to compile during the last decade of his life: *Krug chteniia: Izbrannye, sobrannye i raspolozhennye na kazhdyi den’ L’vom Tolstym mysli mnogikh pisatelei ob istine, zhizni i povedenii, 1904–1908*. See especially the readings for July 20 and September 24 in Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 41: 511–14, and 42: 74–75.

68. Julia Twigg, “Vegetarianism and the Meanings of Meat,” in *The Sociology of Food and Eating: Essays on the Sociological Significance of Food*, ed. Anne Murcott (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Co., 1983), 19.

69. Spencer notes the similarity between the beliefs of the Dukhobors and those of the Bogomils in *The Heretic’s Feast*, 290.

70. Quoted in *ibid.*, 119.

71. *Ibid.* Vasilii Rozanov, who visited Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana in 1905, saw a similar kind of renunciatory Christianity as the basis of Tolstoy’s vegetarian eating habits, which exemplified for him the monastic and ascetic nature of Tolstoy’s teachings about the body. “Golgotha did not begin to conquer the world until it united with fasting,” Rozanov writes in describing his visit to Tolstoy’s estate. “It discovered the secret way to influence the souls of people by means of mushrooms, kasha, and soup.” See “Poezdka v Iasnuiu Polianu,” in *O Tolstom: Mezhdunarodnyi tolstovskii almanakh*, ed. P. Sergeenko (Moscow, 1909), 288.

72. Leonid Heretz, “The Practice and Significance of Fasting in Russian Peasant Culture at the Turn of the Century,” in *Food in Russian History and Culture*, ed. Musya Glants and Joyce Toomre (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 70.

73. See LeBlanc, “Tolstoy’s Way of No Flesh,” 91–94.

74. Peter Ulf Møller, *Postlude to the Kreutzer Sonata: Tolstoj and the Debate Over Sexual Morality in Russian Literature in the 1890s*, trans. John Kendal (New York: E. J. Brill, 1988), 200.

75. L. N. Tolstoy, *Na boine* (Moscow: Posrednik, 1911).

76. Perper, “L. N. Tolstoi i Vegetarianskoe obozrenie,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 8 (1911): 1. Perper’s journal sometimes published animal stories written by authors such as Lev Gumilevskii, who later achieved some measure of notoriety during the sexual debates of the 1920s with his controversial *Sobachii pereulok* (1926). See, for example, Gumilevskii’s “V pletniake,”

Vegetarianskoe obozrenie, no. 8 (1913): 318–19, and his “Volchenok,” *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 10 (1913): 399–401.

77. I. I. Gorbunov-Posadov, “Sostradanie k zhivotnym i vospitanie detei,” in *Drug zhivotnykh: Zoologicheskaiia khrestomatiia*, compiled by V. Luk’ianskaia (Moscow: Posrednik, 1909), iii–xxxix.

78. Goldstein, “Is Hay Only for Horses?” 104.

79. A. S. Prugavin, *O Tolstom i o tolstovstakh: Ocherki, vospominaniia, materialy* (Moscow: I. D. Sytin, 1911), 227. The editors of Tolstoy’s complete works note that although Chertkov cannot be accused of forcing Tolstoy to forego artistic creation in favor of Tolstoyan proselytizing, “it is impossible not to see that the assiduous zeal of Chertkov, who turned the weakest features of Tolstoy’s worldview and activities into dogma, sometimes acted despotically upon Tolstoy.” See Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 88: xxiv. This unflattering assessment of Chertkov finds support in the testimony of Tolstoy’s youngest daughter, Aleksandra. “He seemed to take possession of all Tolstoy’s thoughts and writings,” she observes, “interpreting them in his own way exactly as if they belonged to him.” Noting that Chertkov “could not tolerate opposition,” she writes: “His social manner and humor, his stubbornness and despotism, the boldness and the narrowness of his views, the impatience of a sectarian—all combined to make him strange and difficult.” *Tolstoy: A Life of My Father*, 350–51, 448.

80. A. B. Goldenweizer, *Talks with Tolstoy*, trans. S. S. Koteliansky and Virginia Woolf (New York: Horizon Press, 1969), 50.

81. Although Tolstoy filled out a questionnaire sent by the St. Petersburg Vegetarian Society in March 1903, he declined to become a member. “Out of principle, I have never belonged to any society,” he explained. “Please, therefore, do not include my name among the ranks of your members and destroy the questionnaire.” “My refusal to become a member,” he added, “in no way lessens my empathy with and respect for your activities. I wish you success in those activities, which I have always promoted and, as far as possible, will continue to promote.” Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 74: 85. About Chertkov’s role as a spokesman for vegetarianism, see *ibid.*, 85: 15–18. Citing poor health and the need to attend to “more important matters,” Tolstoy, on September 30, 1910, declined G. I. Pochevne’s offer to present a lecture on vegetarianism. *Ibid.*, 82: 175.

82. *Ibid.*, 79: 61. Artsybashev’s tale appeared in *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, no. 4 (1909): 30–39, and no. 5 (1909): 25–32. Tolstoy also used his influence with the editors of four newspapers, asking them to run free advertisements for *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 82: 120.

83. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 82: 184.

84. *Ibid.*, 81: 35. “If a man sets himself this general goal [the striving for perfection in one’s moral life],” Tolstoy continues, “then, in all probability, he will find within himself many imperfections upon whose eradication he can direct his efforts before taking his vegetarianism to its strictest level of fulfillment.”

85. This passage is missing from the version published in Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 29: 79. I am quoting here from *The Novels and Other Works of Lyof N. Tolstoi* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 20: 553. The discrepancy can perhaps be explained by censorship problems (or the fear of censorship problems), which resulted in Tolstoy's article being considerably bowdlerized in certain versions. Chertkov read the manuscript and strongly suggested that Tolstoy delete part of the text in section 9, where he ridicules the "tender, refined gentry lady" who "devours the cadavers of animals." Tolstoy had written that "the lady is a predator, and not a simple predator, but an insidious, deceitful predatory beast who forces others to commit the killing by means of which she feeds herself." The majority of readers, Chertkov felt, would perceive this as "abusive" language. See Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 29: 385. The manuscript was further edited after it was submitted to the editors of *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* for publication. "I painstakingly checked 'The First Step' in the form in which it finally appeared in Grot's journal," Chertkov wrote to Tolstoy on June 5, 1892, "and it turns out that even more abridgements were made to it in addition to those already made in the abridged copy that Evdokim had shown you. In general, what has been abridged are all the comparisons made between the way of life of working people and that of the leisure class. No doubt this was necessary to satisfy the Russian censor, but as a result the article has lost much of its power and veracity. Therefore, I have sent out to all four translators, whose addresses I received from you, each a full copy of the article with all of the omitted places restored. So much the better that they will read it abroad in that form in which you originally wrote it." Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 87: 151.

86. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 66: 390.

87. Ivan Nazhivin, "O vegetarianstve i vegetariansakh," *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 4–5 (1915): 6–7. Nazhivin's complaint about the ethical ideal of vegetarianism being unrealizable in practical terms somewhat echoes the argument made by D. V. Zaitsev in his "Letter to My Nephew the Vegetarian," which appeared in the January 1913 issue of *The Spiritual Christian*. See "Pis'mo k plemianniku vegetiantsu," *Dukhovnyi khristianin*, no. 1 (1913): 23–31. Later that same year, in the May issue of the journal, S. Poltavskii published "On Vegetarianism," a strongly provegetarian reply to Zaitsev. See "O vegetarianstve," *Dukhovnyi khristianin*, no. 5 (1913): 39–43.

88. L. Korablev, "Etika ili nauka?" *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 6 (1915): 3–4. Chertkov's *Zhizn' odna* (Moscow: Posrednik, 1911) was originally called "Ne ubii" and was later published as "Ob ubiistve zhivykh sushchestv" in *Vegetarianskoe obozrenie*, nos. 1–5 (1911). See Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 87: 78, 173.

89. *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 6 (1915): 4–5.

90. G. G. Bosse, "Vozmozhno li vegetarianskoe mirosozertsanie?" *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 11–12 (1915): 9, 14.

91. O. Prokhasko, "Chto takoe vegetarianstvo? Ego nastoiashchee i budushchee," *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 2 (1917): 3–4.

92. O. Prokhasko, "Nastoiashchii moment i vegetarianstvo," *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 11 (1917): 2.

93. In *Vse o vegetarianstve*, the authors blame the demise of the vegetarian movement in Russia during the postrevolutionary period upon the “ideologization” of everyday life that began in the 1920s. They contend that this, along with the monopolization of scientific thought (especially in the social sciences and biology), led to the complete elimination from science of Soviet specialists who supported vegetarianism. See I. L. Medkova, T. N. Pavlova, B. V. Bramburg, *Vse o vegetarianstve* (Moscow: Ekonomika, 1992), 11.
94. Goldstein, “Is Hay Only for Horses?” 107. She cites a report from the January 1917 issue of *Vegetarianskii vestnik* claiming that in November 1916 the Kiev Vegetarian Society provided 53,215 dinners at its two cafeterias (108).
95. “Ot redaktora,” *Vegetarianskii vestnik*, no. 1 (1917): 1.
96. Maurice Hindus, *Red Bread* (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1931), 79. When Hindus returned to Moscow in June 1930, however, the situation had changed drastically. “Now a shadow of neglect and desolation had settled over them [vegetarian restaurants]. They were like a house without a mistress—unkempt, sloppy, with littered floors, unwashed windows and swarms of flies. In both quality and variety the food had deteriorated beyond recognition. Seldom was there any cauliflower on the menu, no more *bliny*, no more milk, no more butter—only soups with a dash of oil, meat substitutes made largely of potatoes, salads with unpalatable dressings, cereals so dry that the particles did not cohere. As in the other eating places, bread there was in abundance and the prices had remained low. Otherwise these restaurants were now only a pathetic memory of their former opulence” (79).
97. Appropriately enough, in view of the authors’ cynical view of the NEP mentality, the vegetarian cafeteria in *Dvenadtsat’ stul’ev* is called “Thou Shalt Not Steal!” (“Ne ukradi”), rather than the more expected vegetarian exhortation, “Thou Shalt Not Kill!” (“Ne ubei”). Il’f and Petrov, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1961), 1: 166.
98. Halina Rothstein and Robert Rothstein, “The Beginnings of Soviet Culinary Arts,” in *Food in Russian History and Culture*, ed. Musya Glants and Joyce Toomre (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 182, 185.
99. Mikhail Gorbunov-Posadov, foreword to *Memoirs of Peasant Tolstoyans in Soviet Russia*, trans. and ed. by William Edgerton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 1–2.
100. Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 210.
101. Kommunist, “Asketizm ili kommunizm?” *Voronezhskaia kommuna*, 11 August 1921, 3. I am quoting from Naiman, *Sex in Public*, 212.
102. Chapter 6 of Skelton’s manuscript (“Current Developments of Russian Vegetarianism”) provides an overview of how the religious revival in Russia after the fall of communism has helped to generate renewed interest in vegetarianism. See “The Vegetarian Tradition,” 78–83.
103. Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7.

104. Skelton compares the prerevolutionary Brokhaus-Efron encyclopedia entry of 1892 for “vegetarianism” with the Soviet one for 1971 in “The Vegetarian Tradition,” 13–14. The authors of *Vse o vegetarianstve* likewise trace the growing disaffection in the official Soviet position toward vegetarianism. See pp. 11–12.

105. *Ia nikogo ne em*, 439.

106. Tatyana Tolstaya, “In Cannibalistic Times,” *New York Review of Books*, April 11, 1991, 3–4.

107. Il’f and Petrov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 1: 166. Although Kolya refers to meat-eating rather disdainfully as “devouring the cadavers of slaughtered animals” and as “a dog’s dietary nourishment,” the arguments in favor of vegetarianism that he advances in hopes of convincing his wife to abstain from eating meat are medical and hygienic, rather than ethical or humanitarian. Kolya points out to Liza, for instance, that all diseases derive from meat and that an organism weakened by the constant use of meat simply does not have the strength to resist infection. At one point during their argument he shouts at her in exasperation, “Can’t you understand that a single pork cutlet takes a week away from the life of a person?” The rhetoric continues to focus on the putative health benefits of avoiding meat in one’s diet even when Kolya invokes the name of Count Tolstoy, pointing out that the famous Russian author did not eat meat either. In the humorous exchange that follows, the underlying issue is whether a vegetarian diet provided Tolstoy with enough strength and energy to write his literary masterpieces. Liza reminds her husband that Tolstoy did indeed eat meat while he was writing *War and Peace* and that he positively stuffed himself with meat while he was writing *Anna Karenina*. “And I suppose that while he was writing *The Kreutzer Sonata* he also stuffed himself?” Kolya shoots back venomously. “*The Kreutzer Sonata* is a short work,” Liza explains. “But just imagine him trying to write *War and Peace* on a diet of vegetarian frankfurters!” See pp. 166–67.

108. Iurii Olesha, *Zavist’*, in *Izbrannoe* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1974), 11–94.

109. Goldstein, “Is Hay Only for Horses?” 117. Julia Twigg outlines the hierarchy of foods contained within dominant (meat-eating) culture where “meat is the most highly prized of food. It is the centre around which a meal is arranged. It stands in a sense for the very idea of food itself.” “Vegetarianism and the Meanings of Meat,” 21.

110. As Twigg points out, it has not been unusual throughout history for some parallel causes to accompany vegetarian beliefs. “It is one of the most characteristic features of vegetarianism,” she writes, “that it rarely occurs alone, but comes in conjunction with a complex of other beliefs, attitudes and parallel movements.” See “Vegetarianism and the Meanings of Meat,” 20. For Carol J. Adams, the most important parallel movement to vegetarianism is feminism. Her argument that vegetarianism without feminism is incomplete (since it reproduces the dominant culture’s patriarchal attitudes toward both women and animals) provides a contemporary analogue to the Tolstoyans’ insistence that vegetarianism without radical Christian beliefs is likewise incomplete. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 17.

111. *Vse o vegetarianstve*, 14.

112. *Ia nikogo ne em*, 438.

113. I. L. Medkova, T. N. Pavlova, "Nemnogo o vegetarianstve i vegetariantsakh," in *Siurprizy vegetarianskogo stola* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1994), 5, 7.

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