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Olena PYVOVARENKO

PhD History, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities, National University of Food Technologies, 68 Volodymyrska street, Kyiv, Ukraine, postal code 01601 (pyvovarenkoo@gmail.com)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0941-8070>

ResearcherID: D-5100-2019

Олена ПИВОВАРЕНКО

кандидат історичних наук, доцент кафедри гуманітарних дисциплін Національного університету харчових технологій, вул. Володимирська 68, Київ, Україна, індекс 01601 (pyvovarenkoo@gmail.com)

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**ODESA VEGETARIAN SOCIETY AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE XXth CENTURY: ISSUES OF FOUNDATION AND MAIN ACTIVITY
DIRECTIONS. ON THE PERIODIC MATERIALS**

Abstract. *The Purpose of the study* is to reconstruct and analyse the peculiarities of the formation, functioning and main activities of the Odesa Vegetarian Society. **The methodology.** Taking into account the specifics of sources, the research is based on a method of critical analysis of documentary on the ground of such principles as objectivity and historicism. Also, common scientific methods have been used. These are analysis and synthesis, inductive and deductive structural-functional, statistical methods. **The scientific novelty.** For the first time in domestic historiography the topic of the distribution of vegetarian ideas in Ukraine is raised in general as well as the activity of the Odesa Vegetarian Society is analysed in particular. The early 20th century vegetarian periodicals were introduced into scientific circulation. Information potential of these sources has been revealed. **The conclusions.** The Odesa Vegetarian Society was registered for ideological reasons only four years after prerequisites for its creation had appeared in Odesa. Having determined its quantitative composition, it can be argued that it was the largest in number among the societies operating at that time. The analysis of the sources and dynamics of its budget gives grounds to state that financially it was extremely successful. Financial stability was primarily provided by profits from a public vegetarian canteen. That is why this business was constantly in a spotlight of both the leaders and ordinary members of the society. This allowed setting up proper work of a large and successful public catering establishment, which invariably enjoyed popularity and effectively contributed to the promotion of a vegetarian idea. None of active at that time vegetarian societies throughout Ukraine demonstrated such unity and trust in its leaders. The leadership of the company practically did not change during all its existence and certainly enjoyed the authority among its members. Support for all initiatives of the Board of the Society has become the key to its dynamic and successful development, as a result of which the Odessa Vegetarian Society has become the benchmark for all the vegetarian societies of the Russian Empire.

Key words: Odesa, vegetarian, vegetarian society, chart, canteen, lunch, O. Yasynovskiyi.

ОДЕСЬКЕ ВЕГЕТАРІАНСЬКЕ ТОВАРИСТВО НА ПОЧАТКУ ХХ СТ.: ПРОБЛЕМИ ЗАПОЧАТКУВАННЯ ТА ОСНОВНІ НАПРЯМИ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ

Анотація. *Мета* дослідження полягає у реконструкції і аналізі особливостей утворення, функціонування та основних напрямів діяльності Одеського вегетаріанського товариства. **Методологія дослідження.** Зважаючи на специфіку джерельної бази, дослідження базується на методи критичного аналізу документального матеріалу, виходячи з принципів об'єктивності та історизму. Використані загальнонаукові методи: аналізу та синтезу, індуктивний та дедуктивний, структурно-функціональний, статистичний. **Наукова новизна.** Вперше у вітчизняній історіографії піднімається питання розповсюдження вегетаріанських ідей в Україні загалом і аналізується діяльність Одеського вегетаріанського товариства зокрема. Введено до наукового обігу та розкрито інформаційний потенціал вегетаріанської періодики початку ХХ ст. **Висновки.** Одеське вегетаріанське товариство через ідеологічні перепони було зареєстроване лише через чотири роки від часу, коли в Одесі виникли передумови для його створення. Визначивши його кількісний склад, можна стверджувати, що воно було найчисельнішим з-поміж інших тогочасних товариств. Аналіз джерел та динаміки наповнення бюджету товариства дає підстави стверджувати, що воно було надзвичайно фінансово успішним – стабільність забезпечували передовсім прибутки від громадської вегетаріанської їдальні. Саме тому справи їдальні були постійно у центрі уваги як очільників, так і рядових членів товариства. Це дало змогу належно налагодити роботу великого і успішного закладу громадського харчування, що незмінно користувалося популярністю і ефективно сприяло популяризації вегетаріанської ідеї. Жодне чинне на той час на українських землях вегетаріанське товариство не продемонструвало такої згуртованості та довіри до своїх очільників. Керівництво товариства практично не змінювалося протягом усього його існування і, безумовно, користувалося авторитетом серед членів. Підтримка усіх ініціатив Ради товариства стала запорукою динамічного і успішного його розвитку, в результаті чого Одеське вегетаріанське товариство стало орієнтиром для усіх вегетаріанських товариств Російської імперії.

Ключові слова: *Одеса, вегетаріанець, вегетаріанське товариство, статут, їдальня, обід, О. Ясіновський.*

The Problem Statement. Vegetarian idea is gaining popularity in the world in general and in Ukraine in particular. Its supporters actively create groups in social networks, organize festivals, and so on. It is hard to ignore a large network of vegetarian catering establishments, which attract not only adherents of the vegetarian way of life but also cause an interest, as something exotic for ordinary citizens. But such a process is not a novel. Another hundred years ago, large cities, and especially Kyiv and Odesa, have already experienced a similar boom of vegetarian dining.

The Analysis of Sources and Recent Researches. Unfortunately, neither scientific nor even popular research on this topic in Ukraine actually exist. A tangent issue is covered only in the works of the German linguist P. Brang (Brang, 2006a.; Brang, 2006b). At the same time research of different social aspects of vegetarianism are constantly ongoing (Smart, 2004; Miller, 2011; Yeh, 2013). The lack of publications on vegetarians in Ukraine is primarily connected with a weak general situation regarding the research on everyday history issues on Ukrainian territory. With regard to the problems associated with vegetarianism, on the one hand, this topic has long been considered as marginal, on the other hand, the lack of documentation became an obstacle after the removal of the ideological taboo. Despite the lack of archival sources, we consider discovered periodicals, which have never been in scientific circulation so far to be sufficiently representative.

The Purpose of the Research. To explore the background of a nascence of a vegetarian community in Odesa at the beginning of the 19th century and to analyse the main directions of its activity.

The Statement of the Basic Material. In 1908 a vegetarian society was to be founded in Odesa, but the official bodies refused to register it (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1909, p. 37). One of the charter's paragraphs was not approved by local authorities. This became a formal reason for refusal. Undoubtedly, it was a manifestation of outright prejudice, since the charter submitted for registration was an exact copy of other legalized vegetarian societies' charters in the Russian Empire (Perper I, 1909, p. 25).

Only in three years, in 1911 Odesa vegetarian community dared to file documents on the registration of the society. It happened after the replacement of the mayor of Odesa I. Tolmachov, who was an opponent of the establishment of the Society, primarily due to his anti-Semitic views (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O, 1911, p. 53–54). Active work on the organization of the society was deployed by the initiative group in the spring of 1912 (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O, 1912a, p. 151). In six months, when I. Sosnovskyi became a mayor of Odesa, the Charter of Odesa Vegetarian Society (further – OVS) was approved. On May 26, 1912, the Society was included to the Register of Societies with the number 146. V. Doks, O. Yasynovskyi and V. Zuiev were determined as its founders (Ustav Odesskogo vegetarianskogo obshchestva, 1912, p. 1, 12)

The first meeting of OVS took place at the beginning of June 1912 in the premises of the City Credit Union. The hall was overcrowded. Among the participants, there were many women, prominent public figures, mostly intelligentsia, although a number of officials were also enrolled in the OVS. Also some proletarians visited the opening. There were few of them but still, they were present. The local press widely covered this event (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1912b, p. 231). One of the co-founders of the OVS V. Doks had been chairing these meeting and delivered the first welcome speech. About 270 people were enrolled in the OVS, of which 192 were valid members and 74 were “members-contestants” (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1912a, p. 372). V. Zuiev was elected to act as a Head of the Society, O. Yasynovskyi as a Deputy Head, doctor I. Hershanskyi as a Secretary, S. Fridman as a Treasurer, I. Spafaris as a member of the Board and V. Doks as an honorary member of the Society (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1912b, p. 232).

This brand new Society planned to open a vegetarian canteen immediately. Several special meetings were devoted to this issue. On August 9, the General Assembly meeting approved the project of an arrangement of the unitary canteen with a budget of 4750 rubles with 10 rubles cost of each unit. Subscription for shares among members of the company gave 1000 rubles, which made it possible to start searching for a suitable premise (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1912b, p. 232). But following this, mayor of Odesa immediately prohibited OVS members to collect money for a vegetarian canteen through a subscription for shares (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1912c, p. 274–275). However, the Society managed to circumvent this ban formally and on November, 18 the General Assembly meeting finally decided to open a public vegetarian canteen where vegetarian culinary courses, a library and a vegetarian club were to be organized. Expenditures for these needs had to be covered in the amount of 9,000 rubles with own OVS's funds allocated. 3,000 rubles out of these were to cover rent in the city centre. Since the company did not have this amount, the members of the Board of the Society gave 100 rubles each, and ordinary members added from 10 to 50 rubles each. There were also donations (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1912, p. 232). Thus, the necessary funds have been collected. To manage the canteen it was planned to invite a famous culinary specialist E. Schultz (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1912a, p. 372).

In early 1913, the OVS suffered a great loss. A prominent figure in the vegetarian movement, one of the initiators, founders and active members of the OVS, doctor Oleksandr Yasynovskyi

died on January 10, 49 years old. During annual General Assembly meeting of the Society, which took place on March 31, 1913, as a sign of honour and in order to immortalize the memory of the deceased, its Head suggested renaming the Society to “Odesa Vegetarian Society named after Dr A. Yasynovskiy”. This proposal was warmly and unanimously supported by the General Assembly meeting, which authorized the Board to request this before the state authorities (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1913b, p. 201). This time the mayor gave his consent and throughout its existence, the Society had the name of Dr O. Yasinovskiy.

The long-awaited opening of the public vegetarian canteen in Odesa took place on May 5, 1913, in a primarily renovated premises of the International Restaurant at the Paris Hotel at Derybasivska str., 7. Organizers of the celebration firstly familiarized guests with an exemplary cuisine, which was headed by E. Shultz. After prayer all presenters took a joint photo. In honour of the opening, a gala dinner was held, which was initiated by the Chairman of the Society V. Zuiev. Series of greetings from other societies were read. Few more people came up with toasts and speeches, which sometimes were more like lectures. Since vegetarians did not drink alcohol, kvass was fed as a festive drink. Dinner was held in the elated festive atmosphere. Participants repeatedly expressed their pleasure about delicious food and a variety of dishes (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1913b, p. 201–202).

The next day, May 6, the canteen was open to the wide public. Lunch which included 2 dishes cost 35 kopecks, 3 – 45 kopecks. Discounts were provided for those who bought the subscription. The success of the canteen surpassed the wildest expectations. The very first day it experienced a large queue of people with food to be over by 2 p.m. Given this excitement, the Society’s Board decided to double staff and have daily meetings for rapid response in order to prevent such a situation in future and satisfy all those who want to visit the canteen (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1913b, p. 202; *Otkrytie vegetarianskoy stolovoy*, 1913).

Such interest of Odesa audience to a public vegetarian canteen was not an interest to something fundamentally new. By that time 5 private vegetarian canteens had been operating quite successfully (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1911, p. 32). But the very establishment of the OVS stirred up an interest in vegetarianism and greatly increased the number of visitors to private vegetarian canteens.

The most famous and revered in the vegetarian community was a private vegetarian dining room founded on January 15, 1904, by O. Podunenko. In the first years of its existence, the canteen had a modest name “Vegetarian Lunches”, occupying only one small room at Uspenska str., 15. It had to deal with a few dozens of visitors. In 1910 it was already situated at Uspenska str., 42, apt. 10. In 3 years it moved to a separate adapted building at Zhukovskoho str., 22 on the corner of Rishelievskaya str. In the autumn of 1913, it was expanded and transferred to Sobornaya Square 6 entitled “Normal food” (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914f, p. 36–37; *Vegetarianskie stolovye v Rossii*, 1914, p. 203; *Odessa*, 1914a, p. 15; *Adressa vegetarianskikh stolovnykh*, 1913, p. 176).

The opening of a public vegetarian canteen by the OVS did not destroy business of already existing private canteens. The Society’s Board was pleased to announce that since the day it was opened, none of the existing canteen was closed. On the contrary, they noted a desire to improve and increase such business that fully corresponded to the goals and objectives of the OVS (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914a, p. 115).

The issue of ensuring the effective functioning of the public canteen was constantly in the sight of the leaders of the OVS. The most controversial issues were left for the General Assembly meeting. Thus, the report of the Board on the state of affairs of the Society and the canteen,

presented on November 5, 1913, at the extraordinary General Assembly meeting, caused serious debates (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1913d, p. 361). Due to the lack of funds, it was impossible to increase the number of staff of the canteen, but available staff was not able to provide proper service to visitors. Measures taken by the Board were insufficient, given an excitement noted by Odesa local press (В мире печати, 1913, p. 239). Therefore, it was agreed to set an alternate duty for members of the Society in the canteen (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1913a, p. 403).

Separate “Duty Commission” had to ensure such alternation. In fact, it already existed. This issue was considered at the regular reporting-election meeting on April 21, 1914. H. Rubliov was suggested to lead the Commission. As a secretary of the Society, he actively participated in the organization of the public canteen, was very well informed on a wide range of issues concerning this (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914c, p. 155–156). But consideration of the issue of the powers and activities of this commission was, due to lack of preparation, postponed to the next General Assembly meeting.

On May 6, previously postponed meeting continued. The instructions for the mentioned regular commission were provided in 2 parallel editions that were printed out and sent to all members of the OVS for familiarization in advance. In the edition suggested by the Board, the Duty Commission had a role of supporting the commission with a Head appointed by the Board. Another one, which was proposed by the Commission itself, envisaged wider powers, including the right of self-government. General Assembly gave preference to the Board’s version (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914f, p. 7).

This was expected, as the OVS Board enjoyed undisputable authority among its ordinary members. Its composition had practically not changed during the entire period of the Society's activity. Thus, V. Zuiev was a constant Head of the OVS. M. Dmytriev was a Deputy Head during the first 3 years and replaced by S. Povies in 1915. I. Hershanskyi and then H. Rubliov were Secretaries of the Society and left this position only due to personal reasons (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1913b, p. 201; Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914c: 155–156; Staryy Vegetarianets, 1915b, p. 152).

General Assembly meeting unanimously elected V. Zuiev to be an honorary member of the OVS as far as he was “the chairman of the Society from the day of its emergence and with great love he puts his energy to the affairs of the Society. The latter owes its skilful leader to its present flourishing position” (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1915b, p. 152).

Annual reports of the Society’s Board caused only rare insignificant remarks and were approved by the General Assembly unanimously with no significant discussions, constantly expressing gratitude for the work of the Board. Constant accountant of the OVS I. Kryve has repeatedly been rewarded for his excellent performance as a bonus in the amount of his 3-months salary. Annually awards were appointed for other employees during the General Assembly meeting. In 1914 the remuneration amount was relied on for consideration by the Society’s Board and in 1915 1,000 rubles were allocated for these needs. Herewith, the accountant’s assistant also got a reward in the amount of his 3-months salary in line with his superior. Apparently this was a deserved reward, because clearly there was no lack of work for accountants, given that the budget of the OVS on 1914 amounted to 60,000 rubles (Staryy Vegetarianets & Perper S. O., 1913b, p. 201; Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914c, p. 156; Staryy Vegetarianets, 1915b, p. 152).

The main funds undoubtedly came from the profits of the vegetarian canteen, since membership fees for 1914 amounted only to 446 rubles (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1915a, p. 111). Only for the first 8 months of 1913 it was visited by 125,471 people (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914a, p. 115).

In a year after the opening, the number of visitors in summer months reached 700 people per day, and the turnover of funds reached 8,000 rubles per month (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914d, p. 250). Profit ranged from 19 % to 22 % of the money received (Novyy vegetarianets, 1915, p. 16). This led to the expansion of the existing canteen and the question arose about the establishment of a national vegetarian canteen (Odesskoe Vegetarianskoe Obshestvo, 1914). However, the beginning of World War I made adjustments to these plans. Spare funds the Society spent for charity (Novyy vegetarianets, 1915, p. 17).

Meanwhile, the popularity of a public canteen continued to grow. On April 5, 1915, personnel had to lock the door with a chain and admit visitors one by one. In addition to the queue on the street, visitors had to wait a long time inside because the staff did not manage to serve everyone in a timely manner. There were suggestions to use the courtyard at Derybasivska str. 7 in summer for the arrangement of a summer ground of the canteen (Novyy vegetarianets, 1915).

This influx of visitors was due to the fact that at the beginning of 1915 the OVS public canteen was the only solely vegetarian canteen in Odesa. O. Podunenko handed her canteen named "Normal nutrition" (Soborna str., 6) to another owner due to family reasons and fatigue from eleven years of hard work. Since then, the canteen functioned under the name "Barskaya Cafe-Canteen" and served mainly meat lunches. Private "Exemplary Vegetarian Canteen" (Poshtova str., on the corner of Preobrazhenska) at the beginning of 1915 also changed a sign-board to "Exemplary Vegetarian and Meat Canteen" (Odessa, 1914a).

A transition from pure vegetarian dining to a mixed canteen could be explained neither by a lack of demand nor by competition with the OVS public canteen since its prices were significantly higher than in private ones (Upadok vegetarianskikh stolovykh v Odesse, 1915, p. 18). In addition, according to the analysis of public canteen's expenditures for products, milk, eggs, honey, which were recognized as non-killing and allowed for consumption, but still played the role of auxiliary accounted for 47 % of the cost of cooked lunches (Novyy vegetarianets, 1915). Therefore, the transition to animal products certainly had to significantly increase prices, although vegetarian food attracted a significant number of non-vegetarians exactly due to its low cost.

However, interests of the OVS were not limited only to the canteen. So during 1913 37 meetings of the Board of the Society and 2 General Assembly meetings took place. In 1914 the Board met 27 times and General Assembly meetings were held 7 times (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1915a, p. 110). General Assembly meetings on May 6 and December 4, 1914, were devoted to the issues of the Duty Commission, 4 meetings – to the discussion and approval of the new Chart. These took place on October 14 and 25, November 1 and 5 (Novyy vegetarianets, 1915, p. 16).

Questions about amendments to the OVS's Chart have risen from the very first days. But, given the problems of registering this society, only in 1914 it became possible to do the conceived. The Chart was drafted by the Deputy Head of the OVS S. Poviesia. Changes and additions introduced actually changed the type of the Society, bringing it closer to the companies of the commercial and industrial type (Pyvovarenko, 2018, p. 109–110).

The updated charter allowed the establishment of a number of new commissions. Temporary Commission, which was mentioned above, was agreed to replace with a constant "Commercial Commission". This issue was considered on December 4, 1914 at the General Assembly meeting, which rejected the proposal of 12 members of the Society to approve the instructions of the Duty Commission, but approved the draft of the establishment of the economic commission and instructions for it, proposed by the Society's Board (Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914e, p. 303; Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914b, p. 223). One more commission named "Cultural-Educational" was established. An ideologist of its creation was O. Inber, who at

the beginning of 1914 posed the question of the need for a special commission to take care of readings and publishing cheap brochures on issues of vegetarianism organization (V vegetarianskikh obshchestvakh, 1914, p. 7; Staryy Vegetarianets, 1914e, p. 302). This proposal caused keen interest and on the meeting on December 4, 1914, it was decided to create a Cultural-Educational Commission. The budget of the Society for 1915 provided 1,500 rubles for its needs (Novyy vegetarians, 1915, p. 17).

Unfortunately, the break out of World War I and unstable following years did an irreparable harm to the vegetarian movement of Odesa, which eventually led to its complete decline.

The Conclusions. The OVS was registered for ideological reasons only four years after prerequisites for its creation had appeared in Odesa. It was the largest in number and the most financially successful among all the legitimate vegetarian societies of the Russian Empire. Interests of the OVS were not limited only to the issues of arrangement and maintenance of the vegetarian canteen, which was typical for most similar societies. Much effort was directed at ideological work. No acting at that time vegetarian society demonstrated such unity and trust to its leaders that, as we believe, ensured such a dynamic development of the OVS. However, within the framework of one article, it is impossible to highlight the whole spectrum of the activities of such organization. A number of issues connected to the OVS in particular and vegetarian movement on Ukrainian territory in general that require further research left outside of the article. Such research we are planning to proceed.

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